

# Personal Development Planning Sessions – Guidance for Leaders

## Introduction

This section provides guidance on leading personal development planning sessions with your team members. **Bold text** provides guidance on what you should say to the member of staff during a personal development planning session. Suggested questions are shown in **blue font**. This is not designed to be a precise script. The questions will vary depending upon the person, your relationship with them and the flow of the session.

## Setting the Frame

Introduce the session; e.g.

**This session is for you; it is designed to give you the space to plan how you will develop your skills and knowledge and how you will improve your practices. All successful people take the time to do this. As you consider what you need to improve, think about what support you need from me.**

Explain that the personal development plans need to be based on personal aspirations and values and the organisation's vision, values, strategy and desired behaviours. Summarise and explain the organisation's vision, values and strategic priorities. Ensure that the member of staff understands the different elements and what they mean to them.

Make the point that the session is confidential and that it is not linked to performance appraisal....honesty and self-awareness is the key.

Give out the Personal Development Plan template (see page ???). Explain that you will send them an electronic copy so that they can type up their plan later.

## Vision and Values

*NOTE: This section is optional, but often a good way to start the discussion. You don't need to see or know the person's personal vision or personal values.*

**Effective personal development planning can't happen in isolation. It has to be linked to your long-term aspirations and personal values. If not, you probably won't stick to your plan!**

**Personal development planning always has to "begin with the end in mind".** Ask the member of staff to consider the following:

**Imagine you are very old!....and are sitting on your rocking chair looking back on your life. You are very happy with your life. What have you done to make you feel so good about everything? What have you achieved this for?**

Ask the member of staff to make some notes to reflect what they are thinking. They can refine and develop this and type it up later.

Explain that personal values are vital to the successful achievement of vision and goals. Values underpin your behaviours, choices and relationships. They should reflect a commitment to thinking 'win/win'. Without values our actions tend to come back to haunt us! So ask the member of staff to consider....

**What principles underpin your behaviours, choices and relationships? What do you value most?**

**What behaviours do you attempt to adopt in order to live your values?**

### **Long-Term Development Goals**

These goals relate to the qualities that the member of staff will develop over the next three years, not personal or career achievements.

**Consider your long-term personal development goals....**

**What qualities do you need and want to have in three years' time?**

**What will this look like?**

**What do you want other people to be saying about you?**

**What will this feel like?**

**These goals become much more powerful if you can imagine this future version of yourself. So when you are feeling relaxed use your imagination to conjure up an image of yourself displaying these qualities.**

**Add these draft goals to their Personal Development Plan.**

### **Personal Development and Improvement Plan**

Now ask the following questions to help the member of staff to establish their current personal development and improvement goals (that they will work on now). If your organisation has a competency / skills / behaviours framework, you need to refer to this at this stage.

**Bearing in mind your work objectives and personal aspirations, what skills do you need to develop?**

**What skills do you want to develop?**

**What do you want to do better?**

**What behaviours do you want to be known for?**

At this stage you could give your feedback on the person's skills and behaviours. Remember the following:

- This feedback has to be based on fact; i.e. your observations or feedback from others. It can't be just your personal opinion.
- Always give feedback on strengths as well as areas for improvement. Try starting and finishing with a strength. You could simply mention an observed strength.
- Be honest!

Ideally they will establish between two and five personal development / improvement goals.

The questions and discussions might cause mental and emotional health challenges to surface (for example anxiety, stress, obsessive / compulsive behaviours, depression, etc). If you have undertaken training in Mental Health First Aid, begin the ALGEE process. If not...

- Listen carefully, without judging – if the person is not happy to discuss the matter further, do not force them
- Signpost the member of staff to the support services offered through the HR team or to a Mental Health First Aider
- Assess for crisis – if you believe that there is a risk that the person will harm themselves or others you must take immediate action (e.g. staying with the person, contacting someone who can help, arranging professional support)

Once the member of staff has established each goal ask the following questions to help them to define success criteria:

**Imagine yourself having these qualities...what will you look and sound like? What will other people be saying about you?**

**How will you know when you have these qualities? How will you know when you have been successful?**

Finish this phase by eliciting and developing the person's commitment to the goals:

**What makes this so important? How will it benefit you? How will it benefit the organisation...and your partners? How will it benefit customers?**

**What would happen if you didn't develop these qualities?**

**How will you feel when you have achieved this?**

**Write these goals and success criteria in your Personal Development Plan. You can refine and type these goals after the session...not for me – for you!**

### **Learning and Development Support**

Ask the member of staff to consider what support they need:

**What support do you need to achieve your personal development goals? This could include formal training, informal training, learning from someone else or learning by yourself.**

At this stage you should give the member of staff information about relevant learning and development opportunities. You might also be best placed to arrange this.

**What other support do you need from me?**

**Who else could help? How could they help?**

**Who needs to know what your plans are?**

**Complete this section of your Personal Development Plan.**

## Commitment to Act!

Ask the following to elicit a commitment to act:

**On a scale of 1 – 10, how committed are you to implementing this plan? What would it take to move you to a 10?**

**Can I take you back a step...remind me of your personal vision and long-term goals. How will this Personal Development Plan help you to achieve this?**

**How will your plan help the organisation?**

**What will this do for you?**

## Summary

Ask the member of staff to summarise their plan. Summarise any actions that you have agreed to take (e.g. arranging informal training, or finding out information about a course, etc).

Remind the member of staff that....

**These are your goals and actions...not mine. My role is to provide support as needed.**

Finish by asking....

**How has this session helped you?**

Thank the member of staff for their time and commitment to personal development.

Agree the next session.