Chapter 16: Performance Management and Learning and Development

1. About this Chapter

1.1 This chapter explains:

- the aims and principles of the performance management systems
- the arrangements and opportunities for learning and development
- support for professional and education qualifications and other further education
- the availability of careers advice at the House of Commons.

2. Introduction to Performance Management Systems

2.1 The main purpose of the performance management systems is to encourage regular, honest dialogue between yourself and your Line Manager about your performance. The systems are designed to align individual requirements to business requirements, set priorities and to give you an objective assessment of your current level of performance and highlight areas for further development to enable you to reach your full potential.

2.2 There are three performance management systems within the House of Commons covering the pay bands listed below:

- Senior Commons Structure
- pay bands A-E
- staff in Catering pay bands.

Reporting year

2.3 The reporting year for all three pay systems runs from 1 April to 31 March each year.

2.4 Staff in pay bands A-E who have been in post for more than 3 months on 31 March will receive an end of year IPR assessment. See: When is an IPR end of year assessment required.

Manager’s responsibilities

2.5 It is a manager’s responsibility to ensure that all of their team receive an assessment each year. When completing the process for any of the three systems, Line Managers should take care to ensure that assessments of performance are as objective as possible. They must not include remarks about the job holder’s personal life unless this is relevant to the performance. Judgements should be based on performance and abilities of the individual and not on any preconceptions about the capabilities of any group to which they may belong.
Confidentiality

2.6 Access for all appraisal systems is normally restricted to you, your Line Manager, your countersigning manager, and HR staff.

2.7 Staff and Line Managers must keep all electronic and paper copies of performance management reports securely. Electronic copies should be saved into your individual restricted-access folder in SPIRE. Paper copies should be marked Restricted Access Personal Data and sealed in double envelopes during transit.

3. Performance Management Systems

Senior Commons Structure – Individual Performance Review (IPR) for SCS staff

3.1 For SCS staff the system is designed to:

- review and improve the performance of the job holder in order to support the House Strategy or broader Parliamentary objectives
- encourage positive leadership behaviours in delivering the overall goals of the House of Commons
- differentiate between the performance levels of different job holders
- support communication between senior staff and those responsible for overseeing their performance about priorities, progress, plans, performance and personal development

3.2 The main components of the system are:

- objective setting
- development and support needs
- regular in-year conversations
- end of year review (including self-assessment)
- assessment of contribution
- informing the allocation of bonus payments

3.3 Guidance on the process for SCS staff is on the Intranet at:

SCS IPR Performance Management Guidance

Individual Performance Review (IPR) for bands A to E staff

3.4 IPR aims to improve individual and organisational effectiveness through better and more regular conversations between staff and their managers, and to recognise individual contribution.

3.5 The IPR process involves:

- a shared understanding of performance expectations
- setting appropriate and SMART objectives
- regular and effective conversations
3.6 The IPR form helps staff and managers to record evidence of the achievements and progress discussed during in-year conversations.

3.7 The IPR form and guidance is on the Intranet at:

**Individual Performance Review (IPR)**

**Catering staff appraisal system**

3.8 Catering staff in pay bands A – E complete the IPR process. Catering grades CGA1 - CGD1 also complete an IPR form. All other catering grades complete an Annual Job Review (AJR). Catering forms and accompanying guidance notes can be located on the Intranet at:

**Catering Staff Appraisal System**

4. Learning and Development in the House of Commons

**Introduction**

4.1 This section outlines learning and development within the House. It is designed to help you understand:

- the role and commitment of the House in ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to learn and develop in current and for future roles
- your role in identifying, participating in and evaluating learning opportunities
- managers’ role in ensuring skills and knowledge are continuously developed to provide services both now and in the future
- the wide range of learning and development opportunities available and how you can obtain further information about them.

4.2 The Board recognises that to support the House of Commons strategy and the achievement of the business objectives, a skilled and motivated workforce is required that is capable of providing excellent service; and that all staff should have the opportunity to realise their full potential regardless of job role, pay band or other irrelevance.

4.3 This means the House is committed to:

- providing learning opportunities so that everyone has the skills, knowledge and capability in their current role to support the business objectives
- providing opportunities and encouraging individuals to learn additional skills so that they can become more flexible and move around the organisation
- supporting professional development so that individuals can work towards roles with different or increased responsibilities.
4.4 The Board and Line Managers support continuous learning and development through the House performance management systems. See section 3 above for more information about performance management systems.

**Competency Framework**

4.5 The House of Commons has a Core Competency Framework. It has nine competencies – each with four levels - that reflect the behaviours required across the wide range of jobs found in the organisation.

4.6 Individuals and their Line Managers can complete an assessment of the current level of competence using the Competency Diagnostic Tool which generates a report showing the individual’s development needs. These ‘competency gaps’ should be discussed and agreement reached about how they will be filled.

4.7 For those in pay bands A-E, one or two of the competency development areas should be recorded on the person’s IPR form. For line managers one of these competency development objectives should be about developing their line management competency.

**Your learning**

4.8 To ensure that all learning styles are catered for, learning and development is provided in a variety of activities and methods such as on-the-job experience, e-learning, shadowing, coaching and mentoring, research, secondment opportunities and participating in a project, as well as attending formal courses and workshops.

**Identifying your learning and development needs**

4.9 During your induction, there are mandatory courses and e-learning modules which you must attend/complete. Details of these can be found on Act, the parliamentary learning system. Your manager will help you plan this and discuss with you any job specific areas that require development.

4.10 On completion of your probationary period, learning objectives should be agreed with your manager then reviewed regularly throughout the year as part of your regular performance management discussions, especially when you undertake a new task, job or objective. Your development need not be restricted to ensuring capability in your present role; it may also provide development for possible career opportunities in the future.

4.11 Before any learning and development activity takes place, it is essential to spend time beforehand, discussing your learning objectives with your Line Manager. Your discussion should cover the following:

- what is the purpose of the learning (new skill/below standard performance/future role etc.)?
- what is in it for you, the learner? your team? the House?
• what is the desired outcome?
• how and when will the effectiveness of the learning be measured/evaluated? For example, will it be through improved performance or better knowledge?

4.12 You can find out more about different types of learning on Act, the parliamentary learning management system, from the intranet pages, Careers and Development, or from the Learning and Development team.

The role of the Learning and Development team

4.13 The Learning and Development team is responsible for analysing learning needs with teams and from the Corporate Business Plan. The team works with a list of providers from the L&D Procurement Framework to design and deliver a programme of learning activities, where these learning needs are best met internally.

Accessing learning and development

4.14 A full calendar of learning events can be found on Act. You can search for courses and workshops and reserve a place which your line manager will approve. You can also enrol onto e-learning including the mandatory Fire Safety module. The calendar also includes training provided by other teams within the House. This training covers ‘Find It’ programmes, Nexus News and Navigate amongst many others. Managers can provide assistance to staff who do not have ready access to a computer and may book courses on their behalf.

Recording learning and development

4.15 All learning and development that is booked through Act will be recorded on your personal Learning Record. You can also record other learning such as shadowing, working on a project and continuous professional development as informal learning so that you have a complete record of your development.

4.16 Development activities should also be recorded on your IPR form and discussed regularly with your Line Manager.

Evaluating learning and development

4.17 Reviewing and evaluating learning takes place at various stages: immediately after learning and again later when the learner has had an opportunity to use the new or improved skills/knowledge in their job. It is essential that evaluation takes place for a number of reasons, including:

• to ensure the investment in learning, training and development supports the House and/or the team in achieving their business objectives
• to demonstrate to what extent the development has helped the learner in their present role and/or prepared them for a future one
to ratify that the learning activity has met the learner’s immediate needs and expectations and there were no barriers to learning
• to assist those who have organised the event in making any necessary changes or improvements.

4.18 Evaluation of learning and development should be discussed as part of your regular progress discussions with your Line Manager.

4.19 The L&D team collate feedback forms from courses and will follow up any comments by participants which raise concerns. The team will also send out questionnaires or set up focus groups as appropriate to evaluate particular programmes.

5. Support for Professional and Educational Qualifications

5.1 The House is committed to ensuring that all staff have appropriate opportunities to achieve professional and educational qualifications during their employment. If you are interested in pursuing a qualification, you should discuss it with your Line Manager as part of your performance review.

5.2 When thinking about undertaking this type of long-term development, you and your Line Manager should consider:

• how you will manage the additional commitments alongside your workload
• any funding and support which may be available
• any benefits to your team and the House as a result of your successfully completing the qualification.

5.3 Funding for professional and educational qualifications is considered on a year-by-year basis. For funding to be available for further years, there must be sufficient budget available and evaluation of your progress on the previous year must have taken place. If funding is not available, you may need to find a less expensive alternative or your studies may have to be delayed until funding is available.

5.4 All permanent and fixed-term employees can apply to participate in professional and educational development. With fixed-term employees, the length of contract will be taken into account when determining whether or not the House can support this. All staff (permanent or fixed-term) seeking support must have successfully completed their probationary period. Requests for support made before the employee has completed their probationary period will only be considered if agreed at the point of employment.

Professional qualifications

Funding and support

5.5 The following factors are taken into consideration when making a decision on funding and support:
• links to objectives identified in corporate/team business plans
• links to your performance and development requirements (as shown through the individual performance management system)
• input from Head of Profession where applicable or relevant senior manager
• learning and development priorities
• existing commitments against L&D budgets
• satisfactory attendance, performance and conduct

5.6 Funding for professional qualification programmes will normally be granted as follows:

• 100% where the course is basic or foundation and provides an expected level of competence for the role, for example, Certificate in Human Resource Practice (CHRP) for an HR administrator or AAT for a Finance Officer
• 100% if the qualification is an essential element for the role and necessary for business performance, for example, Graduate Diploma in Purchasing & Supply for a Procurement Manager or CiLiP for a Library Executive
• 90% - 40% if the qualification is not essential, but would improve performance in a measurable way, for example, Diet and Nutritional Diploma for a Sous Chef; or if the House has already given you financial support to achieve a prior profession qualification.
• 80% if the qualification is related to long-term career development rather than a direct link with the current role, for example, MBA.

5.7 Funding for equipment and books should be agreed with the team budget holder through your Line Manager and will normally be granted as follows:

• 100% funding where the team purchases then retains equipment and books after the course
• 50% reimbursement when the member of staff purchases the equipment and books and retains them afterwards, up to a limit of £100 per course.

5.8 For reimbursement of travel expenses, see chapter 10.

5.9 Funding for exams will normally be granted as follows:

• 100% for all exams if not included in course costs
• 0% for any re-sits. These must normally be paid for by the employee.

Study leave

5.10 Paid study leave will normally be granted as follows, but must be agreed with the Line Manager:

• foundation course: five days per academic year including exam days
• intermediate and advanced qualification: 10 days per academic year including exam days. Certain professional qualifications such as accountancy may require additional time because of the intensity of the subject. This will be agreed between the Line Manager and Head of Profession.
• Open University degrees: 10 days per academic year including attending summer schools and exam days, but excluding time off to attend evening classes.

5.11 You should give your Line Manager as much notice as possible when booking study leave.

5.12 You have the right to request unpaid time off from work for training and study for accredited, recognised training or for specific unaccredited business skills.

6. Other Further Education

6.1 The House of Commons encourages you to continue your education and may be able to offer financial support for courses that are not directly relevant to your current role, but they must be relevant to the needs of the business overall. All applications for financial assistance should be made to your Line Manager who approves the course. Your Line Manager will then pass your application onto the team budget holder for consideration. The following criteria for approval of your application by your Line Manager will applied:

• attendance will mainly be in your own time
• you will be able to describe the benefits you will gain from the course
• you will be able to describe how the course will benefit your current and future work
• the course should lead to a recognised educational certificate or diploma
• the course should be available under the public education system. In exceptional circumstances, a course at a private college or correspondence course may qualify for assistance.

Course funding for further education

6.2 If your application is approved, assistance is considered within the following limits:

• 80% funding of any amount not paid by your local education authority (LEA).

Resource funding

6.3 For approved courses, the House may be able to help with a contribution towards the cost of fees, books and travelling:

• 50% of the total costs of books up to £100 per course
• for reimbursement of travel expenses see chapter 10
• study leave may be approved at the discretion of the Line Manager - up to 10 days including exam days per academic year.

6.4 In general, you may receive financial assistance for up to two further education courses during your career. Any funding will be considered in light of previous funding.

7. Careers Advice, Coaching Service and Mentoring Scheme

7.1 The House of Commons provides advice about developing your career through:
Coaches and Career Coaches

7.2 A number of staff have undergone a professional qualification in coaching. If you require a coach for your personal development, you should contact the L&D team who will send you details of available coaches.

7.3 Normally, the coaching relationship will last between three and six months and you will agree with your coach how often you meet and what topics you wish to discuss. These meetings are on a 1–1 basis and any discussions are confidential.

7.4 Other staff across the House have been trained as career coaches and can offer information and advice on working in other teams or other roles.

7.5 The range of advice available is tailored to individual needs and includes skills’ review, completing an internal application form and interview practice. You can book an appointment directly via e-mail to careercoaching@parliament.uk. Please ensure that time off to attend is agreed with your Line Manager.

Mentoring scheme

7.6 A mentor is someone outside your reporting line and your own team who will provide a ‘listening ear’, and an impartial viewpoint to discuss issues and ideas with you. A mentor may also act as a guide and share with you her/his experiences of working in the organisation.

7.7 The Learning and Development team manages the corporate mentoring scheme which is open to all staff. There are also regular opportunities for experienced staff to train as mentors. For more information or to book an appointment, telephone the Learning and Development team on ext. 5144.

Return to the Staff Handbook