

Qualification: CIPD Diploma in Applied Human Resources

Module Name: Contributing to the Improvement of Individual and Organisational Performance (5AIOP)

Word Count:

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By signing below, I confirm that the work/evidence presented is my own, unaided work. I understand the regulations pertaining to candidate malpractice and the action that may be taken as a result.

Signed: Wendy Roach

Date: 09/09/20

Evidence

- Doc 1 – PM Framework notes
- Doc 2 – Corporate Welcome Booklet
- Doc 2a – Induction Guidance for Managers
- Doc 3 – Performance Appraisal Guidance Notes
- Doc 3a – Personal PA plan
- Doc 4 – Performance Appraisal lesson plan/course notes and handouts manager/employee and collated feedback
- Doc 5 – Performance Wheel
- Doc 6 – Improvement & Support Plan
- Doc 7 – Copy of HR Data Pack
- Doc 8 – Incidents & Accidents
- Doc 9 – Completed Appraisal Stats
- Doc 10 – Performance Appraisal report
- Doc 11 – Online learning report
- Doc 12 – Contact Tracer Record
- Doc 13 – Contact TT welcome webinar induction
- Doc 14 – Contact Tracer email message
- Doc 15 – PCC intro to coaching
- Doc 16 – Coaching application
- Doc 17 – Example of Coachee doc
- Doc 18 – Mediation process in PCC
- Doc 19 – Final stress audit report
- Doc 20 – Group session summary
- Doc 21 – Presentation
- Doc 22 – Sickness Absence
- Doc 23 – Whistleblowing / Grievance / Recruit & Selection
- Doc 24 - CMT report 1
- Doc 25 – CMT report 2
- Doc 26 – CMT report 3
- Doc 27 – Homeworking survey – currently unable to include

1 Be able to provide information on performance management activity within an organisation.

1.1 Explain performance management policies and processes in the organisation and the roles and responsibilities of those involved in them.

The term Performance Management can be used to describe a range of things, more recently it has 'replaced' the process of the stand-alone Performance Appraisal. However, Rees and French (2016) refer to it as a process that follows the employee life cycle commencing before recruitment and continuing throughout the individual's employment with an organisation, formally 'visited' throughout.

(CIPD diploma course slides 2020)

Pembrokeshire County Council has a comprehensive approach to their PM process. Certainly the policies and documents are significant in number as is typical of any government organisation.

PCC have a clear PM Framework (Doc 1) which clearly explains the approach to PM. This framework highlights the link between PM and our corporate objectives. This includes the systems, structures and support and is internally referred to as the 'golden thread' which runs through the organisation. This concept is introduced as part of a new employee's induction (Doc 2 & 2a) programme.

It applies to all service areas and employees within PCC.

Its aim is to help PCC achieve its objectives:-

Corporate Objectives	
Help improve services and outcomes for people	Goals are prioritised and resources are allocated effectively
Empower managers and staff	Staff are motivated, aware of their own targets and goals and understand their contribution to achieving the Council's key outcomes
Ensure the Council and its partners achieve what we have set out to do	Provide early warning of, and an opportunity to rectify poor performance
Drive future improvement	The framework provides an evidence base for improved decision making and the efficient use of resources

According to Bloom et al (2012) an organisation where such an approach exists is more likely to be 23% more productive.

As a local authority we also have a political agenda and Elected Members are expected to work alongside Officers and partners for the benefit of the Pembrokeshire citizen.

Typically the responsibility for an employee's PA 'sits' with a Line Manager and follows a set annual cycle, April until March, following the fiscal year. An interim review is advised as best practice. The employee 'owns' their PA documentation and completes it. The central HR unit provides support and training and a set of guidance notes is available for all LM's and employees to follow along with a choice of personal PM documents.

(Doc 3, 3a)

LM's and team members are encouraged to attend training to undertake a PA.

As part of the Learning & Development team I am involved in providing a range of initiatives including:-

- Management & employee PA courses (Doc 4). Emphasis is placed on setting effective objectives. Latham & Locke (1979) state that setting goals focusses and motivates employees.
- Management Coaching programme – HR have a team of ILM 5 qualified coaches to support LM's
- Appreciative inquiry – a strength based approach to evaluation. CIPD Report (2017)
- Action Set Learning – encouraging managers to address issues as a collective group
- Manager as Coach Sessions – supporting managers to discover techniques that they can use with team members
- Performance Wheel – a visual coaching model which assists in meaningful performance development discussions (Doc 5)

Evaluating the process I would conclude that PCC has a clear strategy to performance monitoring. All employees are introduced to it as part of their Induction and are aware of their role and how it links to the organisation as a whole. The issue seems to lie with the process and its value. Unlike private organisations we do not offer bonus or salary incentives. We are bad at managing poor performance or recognising talent and thus an employee feels no benefit to performing well. This is highlighted in our staff retention and recruitment issues. A local government role no longer echoes security. In PCC we have struggled to recruit into top level management roles and likewise reasons for leaving are often linked to the lack of financial reward or promotional opportunity.

Martin, Whiting et al (2010) remark that there is a conflict between performance management and performance appraisals. PA's are retrospective and only add value if any areas of development are linked to a development plan that is supported moving forward. They go on to state that PM is forward thinking syaytem approach and encompasses a range of activities.

Although PCC has an improvement and support plan to address poor performance (Doc 6), it is hardly ever used. I recently completed a review into our current PA process and found that LM's rarely addressed poor performance and rather than address it at an early stage would wait until they felt the need to seek HR support and the problem became a formal issue. This has been highlighted as a developmnet area for LM's.

A recent Welsh Government audit highlighted the completion rate of PA's as a mere 13% with a decreasing trend.

Feedback suggests:-

- that the process is out of date and not fit for purpose
- doesn't relate to the jobs that individuals do
- is time consuming
- not revisited, only taken 'out of the drawer' twice a year

1.2 Explain key sources of information, including legislative information, which underpin performance management activities.

Initially, it would appear that there is no specific legislation however a number of pieces of legislation underpin the PM activities.

In PCC the Performance Management Framework (Doc 1) adheres to the Local Government Measure 2009. The Wales Audit Office assesses our performance and compliance with this duty as part of their annual report. Following enactment of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, PCC is also required to demonstrate how its priorities contribute to local and national wellbeing objectives.

The Equality Pay Act 2010 and the National Minimum Wage Regulations 2020 both include employee reward and remuneration.

Other legal considerations include:-

- Employment Rights Act 1996, sets out the rights of employees. An employer must show that it has a fair reason for dismissal. There are potentially five fair reasons for dismissal: - misconduct, redundancy, illegality, some other substantial reason.
- Employment Relations Act 2004, a statutory right exists to inform and consult Trade Unions on training plans and policies.
- GDPR 2020 (updated 2020), personal information is gathered and recorded/stored as part of PM and PA processes. This act controls how this information is used, stored and accessed. This includes factual and opinions recorded about performance. Employees are able to have access to this.
- PCC are moving toward an online PA process which will link to our internal HR database.
- Equality Act 2010, includes a range of areas including race/sexual/disability discrimination. An employee may feel they may have been refused promotion, access to training or treated less favourably. Equal pay and conditions are included within this act and encourage organisations to pay and reward employees equally. This would include scrutinising how managers reward employees as part of the PA process.

The ACAS advisory service is regularly used by myself and colleagues, their practical and straight forward advice and information is easy to access and simple to understand.

Internally we have a range of support policies but these are not always simple or straight forward. Each 'directorates' of work is allocated a HR generalist and a Learning and Development specialist as their point of contact. The benefit here is that the individuals build up relationships with their directorate and become more knowledgeable. The downside is that one person holds all the knowledge and if they leave or are absent then this can cause issues.

The biggest issues appear to be linked to poor performance. LM's do not tackle poor performance. They do not acknowledge it either when it happens or as part of a review. At best this results in low team morale, at worst if a manager seeks to take further action then there may be little evidence to support any action. Likewise an employee challenging any reward or recognition given to others but not themselves may seek grievance on the grounds of having no formal or informal knowledge or discussion of poor performance.

Martin, Whiting et al (2010)

1.3 Provide timely and accurate information to colleagues regarding performance management activities.

Each directorate has a quarterly consultative meeting. At these meetings a range of HR data and information is provided to Heads of Service to be fanned out to LM's within that service are (Doc 7 & 8). This includes:-

- Sickness absence statistics which are recorded by sickness reason

- Incidents and accidents
- Vacancies and recruitment
- Employee statistics by gender, age band, contract type etc.

Employees are prompted each year to undertake their PA by an email that is sent out by the Head of HR, although written by myself (Doc 9).

An annual report on PA completion is also produced (Doc 10).

LM's can at any time request information and this includes information regarding completed training in particular mandatory training. PCC is a large and diverse organisation. HR are required to produce completion reports of some mandatory training i.e. safeguarding to the 'Cabinet Team' of Elected Members. Since 'lockdown' our training has moved online delivering e-learning modules and webinars.

The new contact tracer role that we have set up in partnership with the NHS has significantly increased our workload and evidences PM systems at their best. Recruitment and redeployment, training using guided plans to support staff and weekly reporting to both internal and external organisations.
(Doc 11, 12, 13, 14)

2 Be able to support line managers to deliver performance management activities within the organisation.

2.1 Analyse the types of support, line managers in the organisation need from HR, in relation to performance management activities.

There is a range of support options that HR can offer, this will vary according to the size of the organisation but can also be 'bought in'. Each service area in PCC has a dedicated HR generalist advisor and an L&D advisor. The following are typical of these:-

Coaching & Mentoring – both are recognised as effective ways of developing people and empowering them to identify their own solutions to a problem. They are individually focused and can happen any day, any time. PCC has a dedicated team of qualified internal coaches and coaching is promoted. The benefits of coaching & mentoring include:-

- Cost effective – because it addresses the specific issue or need, it is efficient, timely and without waste
- Encourages innovation and new ways of doing things. Flexible and responsive – made available when required rather than waiting for a course
- It is appropriate to management style – more collaborative, manager is supported to seek solutions rather than directed or controlled
- Being coached/mentored as a manager encourages downward coaching/mentoring as manager to team

(Docs 15, 16, 17) (Zeus & Skiffington 2000)

Mediation – HR offer mediation to help resolve issues between parties. It is voluntary and confidential and the mediator is neutral. Its aim is to encourage both parties to resolve the conflict themselves by mutual agreement. Successful mediation can prevent an issue from escalating to a grievance which may involve a tribunal etc. External organisations like ACAS offer a mediation service. The CIPD and Liddle (2020) both suggest that HR should be braver and make more use of mediation.

Although offered as an option in PCC, it is not a favored approach and has not been widely used. Personally, I think this is because the conflict is ignored with the hope that it will go away. It then goes beyond mediation and becomes a grievance.

(Doc 18)

Liddle (2020)

Stress Audit – I recently supported an internal stress audit within a large team. Sickness absence was high, staff retention poor and a number of bullying complaints had been made. Following the HSE approach, we undertook an extensive piece of work, using individual questionnaires, group sessions and development sessions. Unfortunately, evaluation has been delayed during the pandemic.

(Doc 19, 20, 21)

Reporting

Other support activities include:-

- Absence interviews
- Discipline & grievance
- Learning & Development
- Action Set Learning
- Induction
- Payroll support
- Recruitment
- Redundancy
- Health & Safety
- Employee Benefits
- Welsh Language
- Whistleblowing

(Doc 22, 23)

2.2 Support line managers' capability to deliver performance management activities.

2.3 Work in conjunction with line managers in the provision of employee performance and development reviews.

The responsibility for delivering performance management or an appraisal lies with the employee Line Manager. The role of the HR function can be to train the process and support the LM development along with the employee's development.

Not all organisations follow a formal process for performance management and this is an area that has shown significant change in recent years. The benefit of a formal process is challenged by Baker (2013) and the move to more informal regular conversation has been highlighted with the likes of Google, G.E. and Microsoft moving towards this approach.

Most organisations do recognise the benefits of regularly reviewing an employee's performance in line with organisational goals and likewise an employee is more likely to feel valued.

Performance reviews should remain confidential and be a positive experience. PCC are currently moving toward an online approach with an internal system that links our current HR platform allowing for recruitment, development, performance management, talent planning and employee information to be held in one place. If appropriate a LM can request a range of information to support him, typically review PM completions, absenteeism levels and reasons, employee skills and learning etc.

3 Be able to assess the impact of performance management activities on organisational performance and make recommendations for enhancement.

3.1 Evaluate the organisation's approach to performance management, including employee performance and development reviews.

The organisation has a robust and comprehensive PM system. We are a diverse organisation of 6000 employees in varying roles. Like most local authorities we adhere to policies and regulations on paper, but we do find that individuals will often apply their own approach or unconscious bias.

As highlighted earlier, each service directorate has a designated HR generalist and Learning & Development advisor that work together. Both are included in all directorate meetings and decisions linked to supporting any internal change.

Recruitment - all jobs are advertised online and available to everyone via an internal intranet. Completion can be online or paper based. Job role descriptions are broken down into 'families' to allow employees to move around and to support equality in pay linked to role/duties and require personal specifications. The issues appear to arise with individuals rather than the system.

To date PA's follow an annual cycle. I recently undertook an internal review requested as a result of low completion rates and a Transformation Programme.

The review has highlighted that:-

- LM avoid difficult performance conversations. We are very poor at this and LM's will often wait until an issue requires formal intervention and they have the support of HR, when this could easily have been addressed at an earlier stage.
- Employees don't value the process
- It a form that is completed
- The informal conversations that regularly take place are more effective than the formal process
- Organisational performance has not suffered as a result of low completion. Does this highlight the value of regular conversations?

Recommendations:-

- A new online Performance Appraisal approach is shortly to be rolled out online. The process follows a regular conversational approach
- A suite of training to support LM and team members will support the new process
- The Leadership and Management programme will focus on managing performance and difficult conversations
- Accredited management coaching has been introduced

(Doc 24, 25, 26)

Awaiting approval:-

All new LM's must complete Performance Review training which will include equipping them with knowledge and skills around poor performance, developing individuals and strength based conversations.

3.2 Assess the extent to which performance management processes support high performance working (HPW) and contribute to sustained organisational performance.

If we consider the ability, motivation and opportunity model (AMO):-

- Ability – is able to do the job and possess the knowledge and skills
- Motivation – they have the drive to 'do' the job to a high standard, this could be by reward or recognition
- Opportunity – able to use their skills to the benefit of others and the organisation as a whole. This includes autonomy and responsibility.

HPW processes are a contributing factor to support an employee resulting in increased organisational performance. A range of HPW processes need to be in place and practiced but this combination provides an employee with positive beliefs and behaviours that drive commitment, positive results and continual high performance. (Purcell et al)

An interesting example of this lies with public sector organisations. They do not offer bonus or reward schemes based on individual or organisational performance, but do they suffer?

Taylor and Westover (2011) suggest not and that the potential for job security and promotion prospects lead to greater job satisfaction. They highlighted that the employee believed the organisation was 'investing or caring for them'. Steijn (2004) went one step further adding the relationship between the employee and their Line Manager also played a significant part. Although this evidence comes from Dutch research, it correlates to the UK public sector.

A challenge would be to see if these findings would be challenged by the economic change. A public sector role is no longer considered as a safe job for life and salary benefits are not competitive to those offered in private organisations.

On the flip side of this 'Google' has invested time and money in its HR practices to ensure that it recruits innovative people and links all of its corporate objectives to its management practices. It is revered as an employer of choice by employees offering financial and non-conventional benefits and is seen as a 'fun' place to work. It is successful and has continued to be so proving the point the point that HPW practices contribute to high performance working and sustained organisational performance.

(Google's HRM: Compensation, Career Development – Panmore Institute)

3.3 Recommend ways for developing performance management processes to enhance their impact on organisational performance.

Recent research highlights the changes in HPW and performance management practices. Baker (2013) suggests that the annual performance review approach has come to an end. Instead he promotes a conversational approach focused on specific areas. He highlights that the current process followed a military model with a subordinate approach, highlighting what has been done wrong by a superior. He states that this follows a power approach. Baker argues that conversations based on an individual's strengths, development, job satisfaction etc. have greater value.

This is an approach that PCC are moving towards, we recognise that one size will not fit all. We are developing a range of online approaches that will compliment different roles broken down in to vocational or corporate.

This process was approved by our Senior Management Team post an evaluation of the current process and the findings that it was no longer fit for purpose. The following documents follow the approach and approved recommendations (Doc 24, 25, 26)

PCC collects and records information with an integrated 'system' however historically we appear to be poor at what we do with that data. Hence we have struggled to successfully recruit to senior positions and retain those in professional roles. A new, out of county Senior HR Manager has introduced a number of new approaches recognising that we are antiquated in our processes. Recruitment has now gone online, we engage with external recruitment companies and advertise some roles on Facebook to increase interest.

The COVID pandemic has also resulted in speeding up the Transformation agenda that PCC are working towards, home and flexible working has become the norm with reluctant managers having to adapt and recognise the benefits but also become more trustful of their staff.

A recent internal survey highlighted that the majority of employees prefer to work from home and feel more productive. Unexpectedly, this has been echoed by their Line Managers. (Doc 27)

The impact of COVID is likely to be the biggest challenge for all organisations. Peter Cheese (People Management September 2020) highlights the issues to be faced. The role of the HR professional to support organisational restructures, cost cutting, employees working in different ways etc. and ultimately surviving.

HPW and performance management processes are about to be put to the test and are likely to change significantly. Pay freezes, redundancies, drop in recruitment, will all impact now and in the future. Those organisations who were preparing for Brexit, recruiting and upskilling employees are now axing internships and training programmes. Maintaining a 'team' approach has become challenging and some line managers are ill equipped or inexperienced to manage in this volatile time. Mental health issues, digital literacy, annual leave, sickness and quarantining have seen organisational policies change overnight.

Employee morale is struggling and in PCC our Chief Exec has resigned. From a personal perspective he steered the organisation through a very difficult time with calm and control. He has been rewarded with political challenge. (People Management September 2020)

Perhaps the simple answer to question 3 would be to undertake a review in 12 months' time. I think both any organisation and the HR function will look very different. As a HR professional I believe the ability for HR to be flexible and able to adapt quickly will have the greatest impact on its capability and sustainability.

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