

Development plan

NAME:	Leanne Aitken	MEMBERSHIP NUMBER:	53274276
COVERING THE PERIOD FROM:	September 2018	TO:	May 2020

Planned outcome

Where do I want to be by the end of this period? What do I want to be doing? (This may be evolutionary or “more of the same”).

What do I want/need to learn?	What will I do to achieve this?	What resources or support will I need?	What will my success criteria be?	Target dates for review and completion
Identify the key drivers of employee engagement and partner with lead managers to facilitate a sustainable improvement in engagement levels across their areas.	- Read case studies/evaluation research on the CIPD and “Engage for Success” websites. - Undertake shadow shifts in service. - Attend related events/webinars to obtain latest thought leadership in this area. - Devise tracking tool for related KPI's.	- Time commitment / input from Lead Managers. - Standing slot on the agenda of the staff communication network forum. - Support from the compliance officer to assist in devising management reporting tools and surveys.	Improved retention stats, reduced absenteeism rates.	May 2019
How to identify areas that can increase my contribution to benefitting our employee value proposition.	- Work collaboratively with other HR leads to identify initiatives underway in their areas. - Research alternatives to current benefit incentive schemes and associated costs by researching what other organisations are doing within this sector. - Draft proposal for HR Director's consideration. - Measure impact on attrition letters post implementation of revised offering.	- Time commitment / input from Lead Managers. - Input from key stakeholders across the business (payroll, finance, internal communications teams).	- Feedback / uptake from staff following implementation. - Measurable reduction in attrition levels.	July 2019
Increase my employment law knowledge.	- Attend Employment Law Updates every quarter and related knowledge sharing workshops. - Engage with Employment Law Experts within the organisation. - Regularly review e-updates (eg: Daniel Barnett, Refreshing Law, PM Daily, Acas).	5CELW – Understanding Employment Law Module (CIPD Diploma in Applied Human Resources). - Line manager approval to work flexibility in order to accommodate attendance at updates. - Input from subject matter experts.	- Passing module well. - Reduction in number of consultations with HR Director. - Being able to present topical employment law topics as part of Senior Management Team Meetings.	April 2019

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To contribute more actively to the development of line managers in delivering the people management aspects of their role.	Volunteer to deliver training to line managers across schools and adult services for the UK.	Buy-in from the Wales Director as this work is against the National Agenda rather than having a Wales specific focus.	- Feedback – evaluation forms at the conclusion of these events. - Check-ins with area managers 3 months post the training being completed to gauge whether skills acquired have translated into improved practice.	August 2019
How to embed a wellbeing focus into people management within the organisation.	- Consult with EAP provider and external organisations, as well as the the Employee Wellbeing workstream Leads to identify cost effective initiatives and existing resources that could be leveraged to improve wellbeing amongst the workforce. - Propose revisions to benefits, including abandoning our existing rewards programme (Eden Red) in favour of one that offers more choice to our staff (eg: Blue Light card held by NHS employees) and partner with the Cardiff & Vale Credit Union to provide financial savings / loan alternatives to employees). - Propose that current supervision matrices are re-worked to include a defined wellbeing component. - Ensure that the narrative within the organisation continues to espouse the importance of good mental health and wellbeing (through posters, Yammer, staff communication network meetings and HR clinics in services).	- Support from staff reps to profile the range of training toolkits, programmes and benefits available to them. - Approval from the HR Director for any wholesale change to the benefits offering. - Commitment from the L&D manager and registered managers to facilitate training for staff to become “wellbeing champions”. - Accessibility of toolkits (set-up central repository).	- Reduction in absence levels as a result of work related stress. - Reports indicating that there is an increased uptake in the utilisation of tools available to support wellbeing (ie: number of stress prevention forms completed in service, percentage of online mental health courses completed, attendance stats for WRAP clinics). - Reduction in referrals to Occupational Health for stress & anxiety related absences generally.	December 2019
How to effectively support my organisation through change initiatives.	Provide input on the digitisation project and the pilot programmes being trialled in Wales by identifying the impact on HR resources and proposing work-arounds to address issues in advance of the digitised rota system been rolled out across other areas in the UK.	- Access to the project team / attendance at weekly update meetings. - Training - front-end of People Planner system. - Capacity of myself and my team to perform the reconciliations and checks before final submission to payroll.	- Error margin in April & May payroll runs (first months of go live inputs without timesheets). - Minimal intervention by HR and Finance teams in reconciling data against absence reporting system (FirstCare). - Feedback from registered managers following April reconciliation of systems reports to rota's.	May 2020 [ongoing]

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How to incorporate agile HR working into a traditionally structured organisation.	- I will keep abreast of emerging trends in this area but attending webinars and reading up on this topic. - Continue to collaborate with the Area HR Management Team as we work towards restructuring how the internal support functions serve the business in light of the systems changes and plans are in place to centralise elements of HR into transactional hubs outside of London (eg: Cardiff has the capacity to act as the processing hub for applications and pre-employment checks).	- The buy-in from the HR Director in London in conjunction with the SMT. - Support of frontline managers and support functions (within the Cardiff office). - IT resources to support the increased headcount and demand for increased bandwidth. - Upskilling line managers in order that they become less reliant on business support functions (eg: Finance) and more self-sufficient in using the automated systems at their disposal (eg: People Planner (the removal of manual timesheets and staff fobbing in and out of shifts via keypads which, in turn, will drive payroll inputs).	- Feedback from stakeholders iro levels of support by HR function – annual engagement survey). - Improved metrics (eg: time to hire stats). - Improvement in the both the access to and timeliness of management reports. - Reduction in error rate (payroll).	March 2020

Reflective Summary:

I embarked upon this course having understood that the HR profession was moving and evolving at a pace that meant that I would be left behind unless I engaged more actively in advancing my continuing professional development (“CPD”). This aligns to the definition put forward by the CPD Certification Service (2020) who define CPD as being the *“holistic commitment of professionals towards the enhancement of personal skills and proficiency throughout their careers”*.

Taylor & Woodhams, 2016 make reference to the need for HR professionals to utilise their CPD in order to remain current in an ever-changing world in which organisations are required to innovate and be responsive to change, which has never been more apt, given the unprecedented times in which we now find ourselves.

When looking back on the past 2 years, I have focused on a selection of the 6 stages of the Gibbs reflective model by providing a **description** of the experience, reflecting on my **feelings** and thoughts about the course, **evaluating** the benefits gained during this experience and summarising my **conclusion** (Gibbs, 1988).

I began my HR journey by fulfilling largely operational (and true generalist) roles but what is clear upon reflection, is that whilst there are areas of the CIPD Profession Map (CPD, nd) that I have acquired specialist skills in during my career (primarily talent planning / performance management), I also had gaps in my knowledge and (eg: TUPE and the more complex considerations of managing employee relations).

I have found the course challenging in that I don’t identify as somebody who is academically minded. According to the learning style questionnaire I completed at the outset of the course (Honey and Mumford, 1986), my style is akin to that of a pragmatist so a potential barrier that I had to overcome was ensuring that I adapted my approach to include more of the traits associated with “Reflectors” and “Theorists”, specifically in getting to grips with understanding the underlying reasons, concepts and relationships for theories and models that jars somewhat with my natural inclination towards “experiencing” and getting on with the job at hand.

I have made a concerted effort to avail myself of the tools provided by the CIPD in order to map my journey over past two years and I began my utilising the stages of the CPD cycle to chart my course of action (CIPD, 2020) which included aligning the CIPD development plan with my annual appraisals / performance scorecard in order to leverage both for maximum impact whilst regularly taking the time to reflect, share and apply the knowledge and skills I was acquiring as the course progressed.

The student assessments available on the CIPD website (CIPD, 2018) assisted me in identifying the areas that I was competent in at the outset (eg: Bringing insights into the organisation to identify opportunities, risks and priorities and identifying the capabilities / skills needed to make the organisation competitive) as well as those areas requiring development (eg: Evaluating the impact of HR programmes / projects and needing to network with specialist colleagues and experts to understand trends).

The course was timely in that, I have benefitted from both developing my knowledge and skills through the classroom and e-learning sessions whilst having the opportunity to apply my learnings directly to the business-critical issues facing the charity. These include the various initiatives related to the significant change that the organisation is experiencing as systems and processes are being overhauled, managers roles are being reconfigured to increase their people management responsibilities and large-scale restructuring of the organisation is underway.

In terms of how the organisation has benefitted from this experience, I have been able to collaborate and share my learnings with the team that I manage and there have been a number of improvements in the key metrics for Wales (eg: retention stats falling below the sector average of 30% for the first time in 3 years and the favourable feedback received from the business in regards to the support received from the HR function which increased 12 percentage points year on year in the annual staff survey conducted in October 2019).

There are many lessons I take from this experience, but two significant ones are that developing knowledge through academic means and acquiring skills on-the-job are not mutually exclusive undertakings. I feel like I have retained the knowledge gained by supplementing this through practical day-to-day application, whilst now been able to signpost myself to the host of online resources to support me when dealing with matters that require me to supplement my knowledge on a particular topic. The 2nd lesson is that this experience has re-awoken my desire to achieve more and I wish to build on this experience and continue my professional development by completing a Level 7 (preferably through the experienced route).

References

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Development record

NAME:	Leanne Aitken	MEMBERSHIP NUMBER:	53274276
COVERING THE PERIOD FROM:	September 2018	TO:	May 2020

Key dates	What did you do?	Why?	What did you learn from this?	How have/will you use this? Any further action?
Jan 2019 to May 2020	Attended webinars and HR insights sessions (in person) on at least a monthly basis, which were hosted by Morgan la Roache, Anna Denton-Jones of Refreshing Law, Daniel Barnett and Trowers, Acas and Hays, which covered a range of employment law issues including: TUPE, Employment law updates for April 2020, implications of the furlough scheme during COVID and Trowers Tuesday sessions (which included sessions on: "Working from home – can behavioural science help?" / "Managing a business in the time of a pandemic"	Keeping abreast of changes to employment law and emerging trends within HR is a fundamental requirement of my role and my own professional development and given that I am the lead for HR in Wales, the expectation is that I am able to advise and guide the SMT on all matters of employment law and people management issues.	I applied these learnings to scenario planning in a number of areas relating to current and future changes (including succession planning, devising business contingency plans during the COVID crisis and amending the onboarding process to take account of the legislative changes that took effect from April 2020), thereby protecting my organisation from any associated non-compliance risks.	I have linked the sessions I attended with the key business issues that I was facing at the time (eg: the TUPE refresher which I attended following the decision being taken by the NAS in February 2020 not to retender for the North Wales services contract in September 2020. Communications plans, staff invites and the consultation were all areas requiring my input. A further example is in regards to the changes I have adopted in the management of my team via remote means and the tools that I have been signposted to as a result of a Trowers sessions that have enabled me to support their emotional wellbeing and develop their resilience).
September 2018 to May 2020	I signed up to receive updates from the CIPD, Acas, employment law specialists and kept folders articles that I could refer back to in the future.	For much the same reason as outlined above, the published material gave me more opportunity to reflect on some key trends and upcoming issues that I was able to refer back to at my leisure.	There were many of the PM daily articles that were of particular significance, including identifying emerging trends, government legislative proposals and sector specific articles that I could use to weave into topics for HR clinics and SMT sessions.	The NAS workforce comprises a demographic who frequently come from disadvantaged backgrounds and have accompanying mental health related issues – I have read widely on rulings, particularly in regards to discrimination cases (eg in the article dated 14.02.20, a Manchester ET ruled in favour of a disabled employee who filed a

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				discrimination and harassment claim following being described as “lively” by her employer) to ensure that we mitigate any risk as far as possible by ensuring robust absence management process in place with a case register that I manage and a toolkit that ensures that all reasonable supportive measures have been considered prior to entering into the end stages of capability hearings (eg: comprehensive Risk Assessments, Stress Prevention Forms and regular welfare meetings and supervisions).
22 & 23 April 2020	“Getting it Done” Workshop	Given the increasing demands on my time, I was keen to attend this virtual seminar as it was devised to train attendees in practical techniques that would help people regain control, increase productivity and reduce stress.	How to utilise straightforward, practical methodologies in dealing with changing priorities, shifting resources and the sheer volume of emails, calls and texts.	I have utilised this extensively in prioritising and categorising emails (eg: inserting an “@” symbol before folders that I want to have prominence at the top of the list and I am sharing the tips gained with my wider team (eg: The 5 Phase Workflow, namely: Capture, Clarify, Organise, Reflect and Engage).
31 January - 31 March 2020	Attended multiple “looking-in” sessions in my capacity as UK Recruitment Lead with Marketing, Internal & External Comms and IT as layout and functionality of refreshed NAS webpage was discussed and tested.	Increasing attraction methods and expediting the application process forms part of my remit as the Lead on the Recruitment & Retention workstream.	I was able to convey the key points that the HR team required in terms of how jobs should be categorised and links displayed from the home page (whilst understanding the limitations of how that would link to A-Recruit).	This has been utilised to gauge what our traffic is like in terms of applications and how many of these have been converted to offers (as well as utilising feedback from applicants in terms of how intuitive the system is and whether this can be refined to reduce number of clicks).
October 2018 – December 2019	Presented at 3 x quarterly “Building Capacity for Managers” training events in Nottingham and facilitated table discussions iro assessment days where a values based recruitment model is utilised.	This directly links in with one of my development objectives in that I am keen to play an active role in equipping line managers to become good people managers.	I learnt that preparedness is key especially when delivering sessions over the course of 2 days. I also learnt how to adapt my delivery style to suit a range of different competency levels and the differing agenda's that line managers expected from these sessions.	Albeit that these particular training events have been suspended, I continue to make use of the skills I gained during those sessions by running the absence management component of the current leadership & management training.
25 & 26 November 2019	NAS Leadership Conference (Birmingham)	This conference provides an opportunity to hear firsthand from the CEO, external funding team, schools & adult services directorates	The 100 delegates from all areas of the organisation are divided into working parties and attend break-out groups with Finance, Autism Practice	These leadership conferences have enabled me to incorporate what I do in Wales against the backdrop of the key focus areas of the organisation

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		and parents and is useful in understanding the course that the organisation is taking in the short to medium term.	Leaders and Directors from Schools & Adult Services in order to brainstorm suggestions that would shape the priorities of the NAS for the next quarter.	whilst providing me an opportunity to grow my network of contacts which I continue to leverage for input on projects and HR initiatives.
1 & 2 October 2019	UK Wide HR Manager Conference (Nottingham)	This quarterly forum serves as networking event for the HR management team across the 8 regions whilst enabling the shaping of the People Strategy for the organisation.	This session included: - a presentation by Trowers on the implications of Brexit from an employment law perspective - Policy & Procedure review and updates. - How the NAS were progressing against the 15 criteria for being certified as a Disability Confident Employer. - Review of KPI stats from the previous quarter and implications / actions for Workstream Leads. - Systems overview and impact of ongoing changes on management reporting.	Each Area HR Manager leads on a particular workstream (mine is Recruitment & Retention) and priorities are defined at that session and then handed off to me for action (actions included: the introduction of a "Refer a Friend" scheme, introducing a Retention Initiative that included the introduction of competency frameworks and defined career pathways for high performers and increasing the platforms used for profiling vacancies across the organisation).
13 August 2019	Attended presentation conducted by Women's Aid (Domestic Abuse in the Workplace)	This session coincided with the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Bill in Parliament in July 2019 and was part of the Domestic Abuse campaign, profiled by a consortium of charitable organisations and offering UK employers bespoke support programmes for their employees (funded by Welsh government).	I learned that the cost of domestic abuse in the loss of productivity, lateness, presenteeism and co-workers becoming involved and feeling unsafe themselves cost the UK £2 billion pounds annually and that 80% of women experiencing some form of abuse fail to report it to the police.	A handout was devised for staff that was distributed by the staff reps and a refresher of signs to look out for is included in the quarterly WRAP clinics - posters were distributed across services signposting employees to support networks and an online portal.
22 July 2019	Training Needs Analysis Training	Given that I was involved in compiling material for some modules within the leadership & management training, the L&D manager trained myself and other contributors in the steps that make up a training needs analysis.	I learned how to navigate the stages of a TNA, including: Identifying trainable competencies, evaluating competencies, determining performance gaps, prioritising training needs and how to conduct a cost benefit analysis.	These are continuing to be rolled out to deputies and new frontline managers as they work through the competency frameworks for their roles with a view to addressing gaps in skills / knowledge through on-the-job training, e-learning or classroom sessions.
22 July 2019	A-Recruit Training (London HO)	This was the launch of the new Access based system that replaced ResourceLink.	How to manage the workflow for applications from advert to appointment.	I trained my administrators in the functionality of this system following my return to the office.

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20 June 2019	Safe Screening Webinar	This system incorporated functionality that could combine outsourced reference checks function with DBS checks in a one-stop shop.	System usage and limitations.	Very little traction in terms of usage by my team as people are unable to apply for DBS renewals and capacity constraints make it difficult to run two parallel systems so more work to be undertaken going forward.
9 April 2019	Attended "Stress Awareness & Assertiveness" Training	I wanted to attend this session to see what material was shared with attendees and whether it was an effective means of training people in the identification and management of their triggers.	I learnt a number of ways in which to increase my own awareness of rising stress levels but equally to identify the signs amongst my team (and the coping strategies that could be adopted).	A number of staff members who have incurred high levels of absence were nominated for these sessions so we are tracking whether there is an improvement in attendance as a result.
5 April 2019	"First Year in Practice" Awayday with new joiners from previous 12 months	I wanted to be present to hear what issues people had experienced during their first year and whether there were themes that be incorporated into our retention strategy.	The feedback indicated that there was a disconnect between the two week induction programme in Cardiff and the practice that was being displayed in certain services.	Feedback was utilised to improve the onboarding experience by assigning buddies, defining how shadow shifts would be run and having volunteers from that group speak to inductees regarding how their experience could be improved.
2 April 2019	Attended "Managers Guide to Mental Health" Training	As a collective, the Area HR Managers across the UK are keen to explore initiatives that can support good mental health and enhance wellbeing for staff.	I learnt about the key concepts underpinning a Wellness Recovery Action Plan ("WRAP") and the key elements of WRAP, including: The Wellness Toolbox, devising a daily maintenance plan, identifying triggers/Action Plan, identifying early warning signs/Action Plan, when things are breaking down/Action Plan, crisis planning and post crisis planning Introduced to e-learning short courses available on MicroLearn Workplace Wellbeing range of courses (eg: Healthy Living, Everyday Energy, Resilience, Value & Purpose)	Implemented WRAP clinics in services and included a wellbeing signposting segment in monthly newsletters.
7 & 8 February 2019	UK Wide HR Manager Conference (Nottingham)	Format as indicated above.	Learnings as indicated above.	As outlined above.
12 & 13 November 2018	NAS Leadership Conference (Birmingham)	Format as indicated above.	Learnings as indicated above.	As outlined above.

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1 November 2018	Vulnerable Adult Abuse Investigations Training (Sancus Solutions)	I don't have a background in the care sector and given the high volume of disciplinary investigations that are commissioned within the organisation, I thought it necessary that I become aware of the key considerations during an investigation of this nature given that I manage the 3 step disciplinary process and review all investigation reports and accompanying packs.	I learned to identify what the qualities and abilities are required of an investigating officer, how to provide support to an investigating officer, how to confirm the accuracy of records relating to a Safeguarding Adults investigation and to identify and manage risks to the member of staff involved in the Safeguarding Adults investigation.	The NAS tends not to utilise external investigators with the result that a number of reports that cross my desk are of inferior quality and I am now equipped to identify gaps in the investigation more easily and request further interviews, supporting evidence of a complete re-investigation if required.