

Qualification: CIPD Diploma in Applied Human Resources

Module Name: Understanding the Link between Individual and Organisational Performance

Work Activity: Evaluation of Performance Management approach at the NAS

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Signed: 
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Evaluation of current Performance Management Approach at The National Autistic Society

Having researched current trends in performance management, it is apparent that there is an expanding body of research that suggests that management practices and more specifically, performance management practices, designed to correct poor performance, sustain good performance and improve performance (Lee, 2005) have altered very little over the last 100 years and that standard methods like the annual appraisal are not delivering the desired business outcomes. The question which resonated with me was raised by Lauriston (2018) where he said: Are current performance management systems fit for purpose and if not, why not change them?

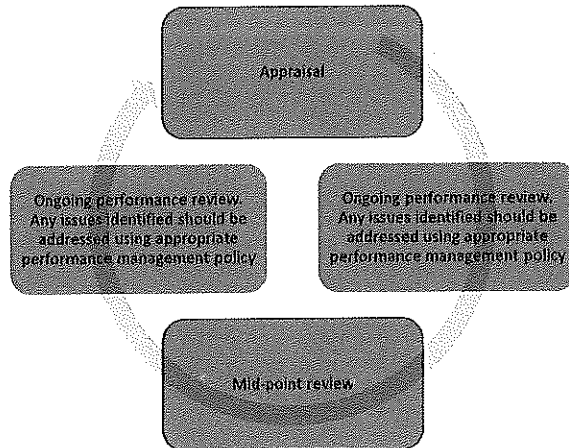
One of the arguments in support of this is that contemporary organisations have evolved over the decades and that innovation, agility and change are now the challenges that organisations grapple with and their employees required to respond to the pace at which the world of work is moving, demand a system that supports flexibility, transparency and collaboration where people are willing to actively engage with the organisational agenda with creativity, initiative and passion (Haak, 2017). I would argue that this holds true in traditional organisations as well because it's the people dynamic that is shifting at a pace that many organisational strategies, policies and procedures don't support, which is true of the National Autistic Society (NAS).

The CIPD, however, argues that there is not much supporting evidence that demonstrates that modern alternatives improve employee performance and that organisations should rather gain employee input as to what elements are working as opposed to abandoning appraisals altogether as there is intrinsic value within evaluation and constructive feedback (CIPD, 2016). This view is supported by Capelli & Tavis who suggests that a hybrid process is an effective solution

There is, however, a general consensus in research that dynamic performance management systems have a positive impact on business outcomes (Armstrong, 2017; Lauriston, 2018; CIPD, 2016). As a rule, these should be designed to establish a continuous dialogue between line managers and employees (through established objectives linked to organisational goals

and regular coaching/feedback) which are deployed across the organisation with fairness and a consistency of approach.

The NAS undertakes performance management using the standard approach of an annual appraisal, supplemented by supervisions, as per the below:



Line managers are obliged to undertake six supervisions a year and the NAS has adopted a reflective model as a means to support, develop and enable good practice through personal and professional development. These discussions focus on well-being, learning and development and on the job experiences / practice and provide a forum for ongoing performance reviews which supports the formal Appraisal process. These sessions are not utilised to discuss performance management issues which are dealt with under the Conduct and Capability Procedure.

As part of the preparation work for this module and having read up on some of the current thinking around performance management, I conducted a survey of 72 employees based in the South West Services to garner their responses using a Likert Scale to the following questions:

- My supervisor provides me with appropriate training opportunities
- My supervisor clearly defines what he/she expects of me
- My supervisor provides clear, helpful feedback about how I'm doing my job
- My supervisor expresses appreciation of my work
- I understand how my job fits into the "big picture" of the work at the service
- My supervisor gives me appropriate notice for my supervision

- I benefit from having supervision
- I feel motivated after a supervision session
- I feel my supervision is worthwhile

Following the feedback received, I am proposing to SMT that our approach requires freshening up in the following areas:

➤ **Development of Supervision Approach**

Provide line managers with further development and direction around the delivery and value of supervisions, ensuring that they are seen as a two way, interactive and positive activity for all, being clear about expectations, aims and goals of supervisions.

➤ **Enhancements in Process**

Better forward planning of supervision sessions will be looked at, where key periods of the year are set over a two week period every six to eight weeks so that staff and managers can prepare ahead of time to meet. Staff will also have designated supervisors that conduct supervisions with their own line managed staff to enable continuity of approach and management relationships.

➤ **Management Conduct & Approach**

Regional senior management will aspire to tackle any inappropriate practice and conduct of supervisors in carrying out their duties to inspire, develop and appropriately manage staff effectively through the supervision process.

➤ **Staff Wellbeing**

All supervisors are currently being put through an “Induction to Leadership Programme” that covers areas than include conducting supervisions, managing staff well-being and managing staff with disabilities and Mental Health conditions. This will continue to rollout across all managers from Senior Support Workers upwards as mandatory training.

References

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