



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

A critical evaluation of managerial perspectives and knowledge of performance appraisals within Neath Port Talbot Council

Research project and recommendations

by Laura Parry



Introduction

Good afternoon and welcome to my presentation for my proposed recommendations arising from a recent research project undertaken at NPTC.

Housekeeping for the day. We are not expecting any fire alarm drills so if the alarm does go off please make your way to the nearest fire exit.

Also I am more than happy to answer any questions you may have and there will be opportunity to do so at the end of the presentation.

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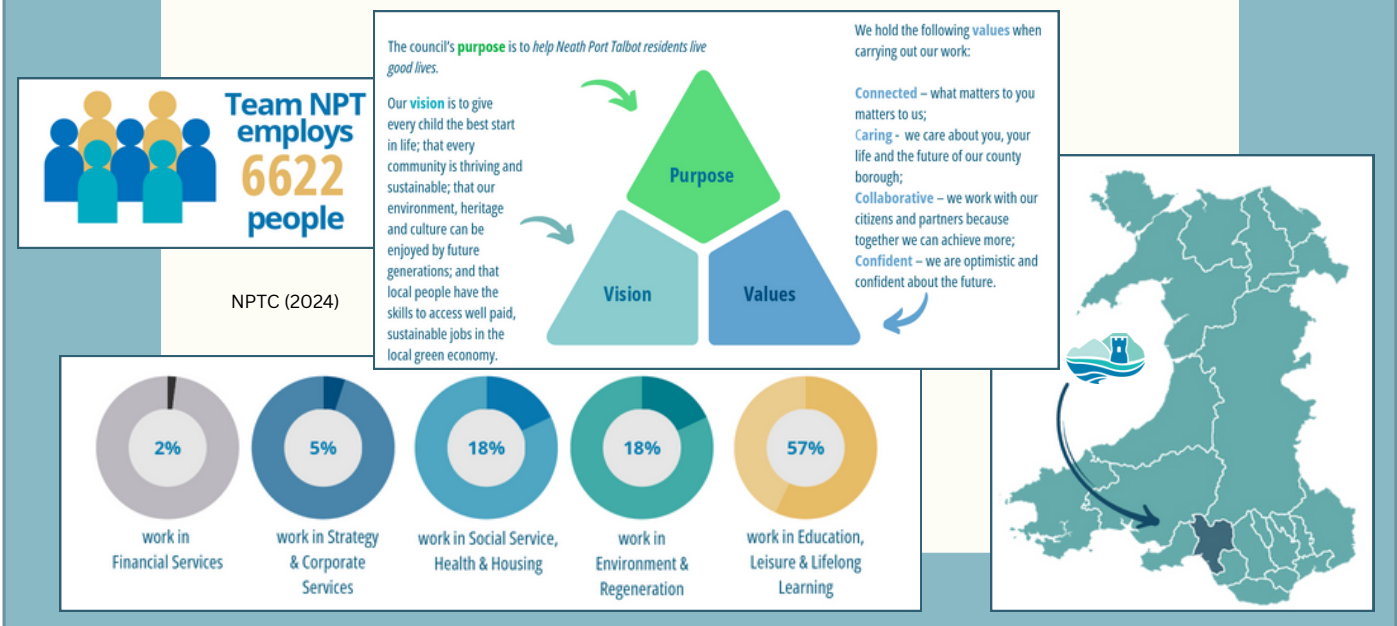
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Questions

This presentation will include....

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Introduction to NPTC



NPTC (2024) is a local government authority located in South West Wales serving just over 140,000 residents.

It has approximately 6,600 employees over 5 directorates with the majority working in Education, Leisure and Lifelong learning.

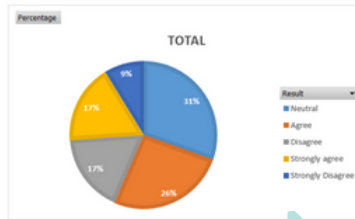
NPTC has strong sense of purpose, vision and values as set out in its corporate strategy 2025-2028. It encourages a culture where employees uphold the following shared values when conducting their roles:

Connected
Caring
Collaborative
Confident

The business case

% distribution of 'They completed regular job appraisals with me'

Result	Percentage
Neutral	30.43%
Agree	26.09%
Disagree	17.39%
Strongly agree	17.39%
Strongly Disagree	8.70%
Grand Total	100.00%



Exit interview 2024/2025 data extract (NPTC, n.d.).

44% agreed that their managers completed regular job appraisals with them

49% of employees agreed that they have regular appraisals

We asked respondents to indicate how they feel about a series of statements linked to Training and Development.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Prefer not to say
There is someone at work who encourages my development (base: 798)	26.5% (209)	35.3% (278)	21.6% (170)	11.0% (87)	5.1% (40)	0.5% (4)
I receive the training I need to effectively carry out my job (base: 798)	26.3% (207)	45.9% (362)	16.0% (126)	6.6% (52)	4.3% (34)	0.4% (3)
Over the last year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow at work (base: 798)	27.0% (213)	41.6% (328)	16.0% (126)	9.4% (74)	5.3% (42)	0.6% (5)
I receive regular appraisals (base: 787)	20.2% (159)	29.1% (229)	21.3% (168)	16.3% (128)	12.3% (97)	0.8% (6)
My appraisals help me in planning for the future (base: 787)	17.6% (138)	23.1% (182)	35.1% (276)	13.6% (107)	9.1% (72)	1.5% (12)

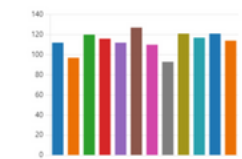
Council Employee Survey 2024-2025 - Report of findings data extract (NPTC, n.d.).

2. From the list below, which of these do you feel are important to the role of manager? (tick all that apply)

It is important to me that a manager...

More Details

- Involves the team in decision making... 112
- Provides opportunities for staff... 97
- Makes sure we have the resources... 120
- Allows a flexible, hybrid way of working... 116
- Encourages creativity, new ideas... 112
- Promotes and encourages staff... 127
- Keeps us informed of what's going on... 110
- Carries out a thorough induction... 93
- Co-ordinates regular 1:1's (and/or...) 121
- Gives helpful advice and constructive feedback... 117
- Supports the team through change... 121
- Gives us time and space to complete our work... 114



NPTC Leading and managing team staff survey report 2024 data extract (NPTC, n.d.).

It has transpired from exit interviews and employee surveys that evidenced that not all line managers were following the performance appraisal policy consistently across the authority.

Exit interview data reports only 44% employees agreed that they have regular appraisals (NPTC, n.d.) and a recent employee survey reported this figure at 49% (NPTC, n.d.).

When asked what employees felt was important in a line manager 121 out of 140 felt managers should co-ordinate regular supervision sessions, which shows a desire from employees to receive feedback on their performance (NPTC, n.d.).



The aim of the research was to undertake a critical evaluation of managerial perspectives and knowledge of performance appraisals within NPTC.

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Objectives



Explore the literature relating to performance appraisals



Conduct primary research through the use of questionnaires to establish managers understanding, use and perspectives on performance appraisals



Analyse the findings from primary and secondary data in relation to advantages and best practice in performance appraisals

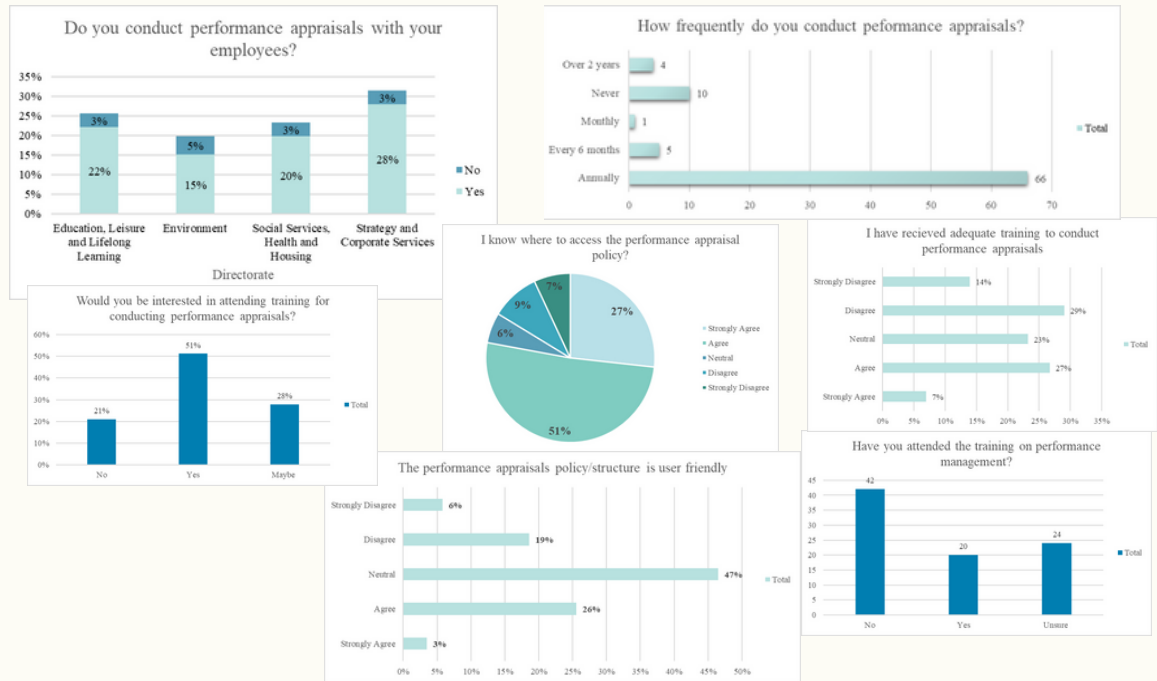


To make recommendations to ensure performance appraisals are consistent across the authority



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Research findings



The research found that:

14% of line managers do not conduct performance appraisals

27% of the line managers who were conducting performance appraisals were NOT doing them annually in line with the policy.

Only 20 out of 86 line managers who responded said they had attended performance management training.

only 34% said they felt they had received adequate training for performance appraisals with 51% saying they would be interested in attending training.

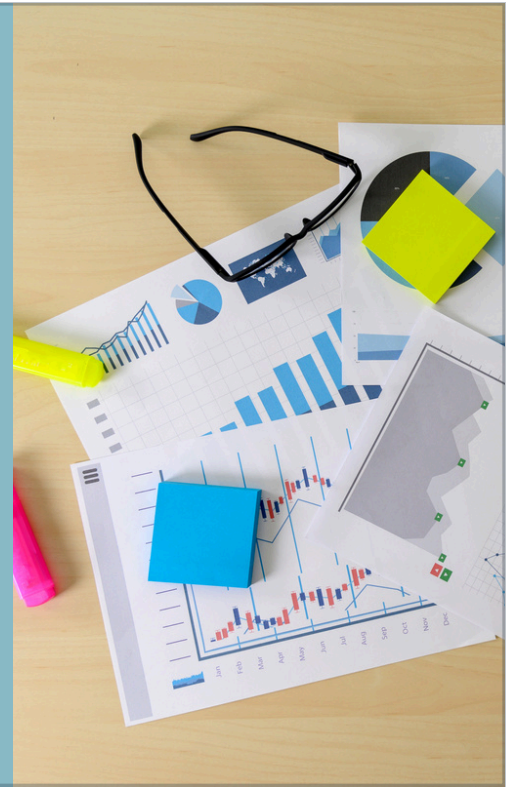
Only 29% felt the policy and structure was user friendly.

Research findings key points

The requirement and request from managers to undertake performance appraisal training.

The need for managers to be able to locate and access organisational policies.

To undertake further research into managers and employees views on the current performance appraisal process.



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Recommendation one

Provide manager performance appraisal training

What? Provide specific performance appraisal training to new and future managers through our manager training program and to current managers via our self-service internal training portal.

Training can be designed by the L&D team and delivered by the Talent Management Team as part NPTC's commitment employee development via a talent management initiative in line with the corporate strategy.

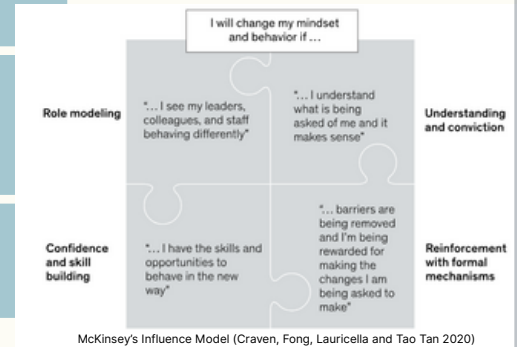
How?

- The Influence Model (McKinsey, 2016)
- The 4 E's Principles of Human Change
Educate Engage Empower Enable

Cost?

Initial Cost to design training: £1,781.76

Annual cost to deliver training: £5,924.48



Bosley and Gifford (2023), for the CIPD, recommend training and ongoing support as key measures in creating effective managers.

By applying the 4 E's according to the Principles of Human Change (Geraghty, 2019) In order to undertake successful change NPTC should....

Educate – Education is essential for managers to understand the reasons for the change - the advantages of conducting performance appraisals and best practice.

Engage – Ongoing HR support to managers throughout the change via two-way discussions

Empower – NPTC has a culture where Managers have high levels of autonomy alongside low accountability. It is important that managers feel empowered whilst also reinforcing the expectations of the organisation.

Enable – removing barriers by providing the necessary knowledge and skills.

McKinsey's Influence Model of 2016 can also be applied...

Role modelling - Change needs to come from top to bottom! Senior management need to be role models and conduct appraisals with line managers. As some respondents in the research highlighted they themselves were not receiving appraisals.

Confidence and skill building along with understanding and conviction will come from managers receiving the training.

And finally the reinforcement with formal mechanisms will come from the provision of HR Support.

Recommendation two

Communication drive on policies and how to access them

What? Develop a communication strategy to ensure that managers and employees understand how to access the organisational policies (and other documents) using the internal employee portal. Alongside the communication should be information on who and how to contact a member of the HR team for support, advice and guidance in relation to the policies.

How?

- Design a communication plan
- Use a communications road map
- Measure the effectiveness in order to plan ahead

Cost?

Total - £1,055.98



It is essential that employees and managers know how to access organisational policies and other important information via the internal employee portal.

The CIPD (2025) state that employees and managers need to be made aware of who to contact to obtain guidance and support to ensure that they understand the policies and the expectations.

When designing the communication plan, SHRM (2024) say it is helpful to start with a communication road map to identify

- Stakeholders
- Key messages
- Communication channels
- A Schedule
- Responsibilities

Paramaguru (2024) emphasises the need for communications to be tailored to suit the organisation.

Employees at NPTC have a range of working styles with some being office based, some working in the community and some working from home etc. Therefore computer access is not always possible and a multi method approach may need to be used.

The Frequency of the communication also needs to be considered along with a process of measuring the effectiveness of the communication. An annual survey could be used to assess

whether the communication plan/road map needs to be repeated and/or re-considered.

The CIPD (2025) also highlight the need to consider the organisational culture and microcultures that exist when tailoring communications.

At such a large organisation with a strong hierarchy a top down approach is generally adopted to reinforce communications from senior managers to line managers and so on.

Recommendation three

Conduct further research

What?

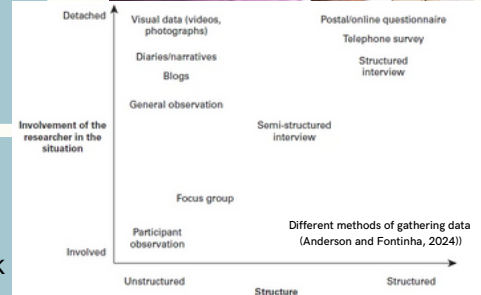
Further research into management and employee views on NPTC's current policy and process for performance appraisals to assess whether it is fit for purpose.

How?

- Employee and manager surveys to collect initial quantitative and qualitative data.
- Employee and manager focus groups to further probe and ask follow up questions and to gather further qualitative data.
- Research and analyse the literature into best practice and comparable organisations policies and procedures.

Cost?

Total cost: £6,667.80



A common theme throughout the research was that line managers found performance appraisals too time consuming. Further comments were made about them being perceived as a 'tick-box exercise' by line managers and employees alike. This raised the question as to whether the process and/or policy needs to change.

Rousseau and Have (2022) highlight that the first phase of change starts with 'getting ready' which includes gathering data, defining the problem and understanding the organisations readiness for change. Therefore, it is essential that further research is undertaken to understand manager and employee views on NPTC's current performance appraisal process and policy.

A mixed method approach is promoted by researchers and people professionals such as Bell, Bryman and Harley (2022) and Cresswell and Cresswell (2018).

An employee survey can be initially used with Anderson and Fontinha (2024) suggesting the use of focus groups as the next point of action, which would provide the opportunity for further probing and follow up questions.

Summary



It is recommended that NPTC:

- Provide managerial training on performance appraisals
- Communicate to all employees how to access organisational policies and HR support
- Conduct further research to consider whether the performance appraisal policy and process requires change

Just to summarise...

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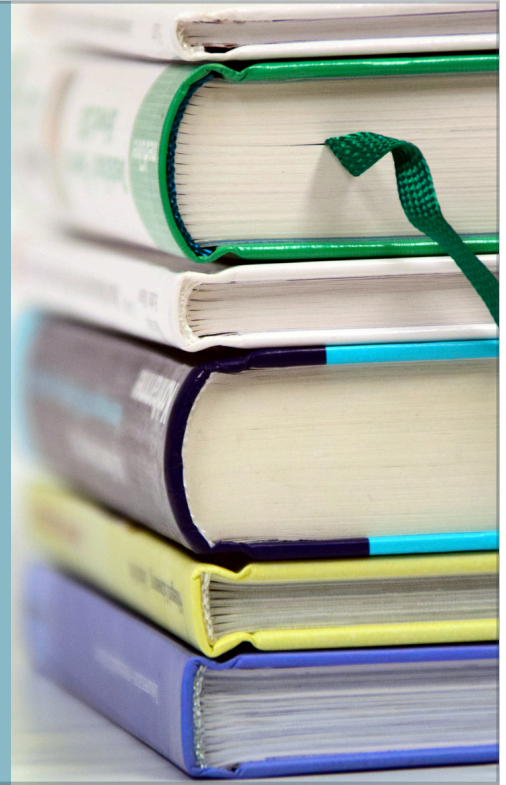
Implementation Plan

Why	Who	Where	How	When	Cost
Recommendation One - Manager performance appraisal training					
To ensure that managers have the knowledge, skills and competencies required to efficiently conduct performance appraisals.	Any managers who have line management duties L&D Manager HR Manager Talent Management Officer	Conducted via microsoft teams	L&D to design performance appraisal training alongside HR Talent Management team to deliver training quarterly.	Design training within 60 days and promote training on NPTCS training hub thingi for booking within 90 days	Initial costs Time for L&D Manager to design performance appraisal training - 72 hours at £20.48 = £1,474.56 Time for HR Manager to provide guidance to L&D Manager - 15 hours x £20.48 = £307.20 Total initial cost: £1,781.76 Annual costs - Based on quarterly 4-hour online sessions Time for Talent Management Officer to deliver training - 16 x £20.48 = £327.68 Time for managers to attend training - 60 (4 x £23.32) = £5,596.80 Total annual cost: £5,924.48 Total cost: £7,706.24
Recommendation Two - Communication drive on policies and how to access them					
To ensure that all employees know where and how to access policies and also where they can get support if required	All employees/Managers Communications manager HR Manager HR Officer	Multi-methods to include in person and electronic means	Via a communication plan with a communication road map	Create and implement communication plan within 30 days Review effectiveness in 12 months	Communication manager time to action communication plan - 4 hours at £19.32 = £77.28 HR manager time to design communication plan - 35 hours at £20.48 = £716.80 HR Officer to conduct effectiveness assessment - 15 hours at £17.46 = £261.90 Total cost: £1,055.98
Recommendation Three - Conduct further research					
To gain a better understanding of employee and managers views on NPTCs current policy and process for performance appraisals to assess whether it is fit for purpose.	All employees/Managers HR Data Manager HR Manager HR Officer	Multi-methods to include in person and electronic means	Mixed-method research: Survey, focus groups and research into best practice	Design and distribute employee survey within 30 days Arrange and undertake focus groups (after survey responses collected) within 90 days Undertake research on best practice and draw up a report within 120 days	Survey costs Time for HR Data Manager to design, distribute email survey and analyse data - 21 hours at £20.48 = £430.08 Time for Managers and employees to complete survey - (based on average salary/10 minutes = £2.96 and a 20% response rate) = £3,907.20 Total survey cost: £4,337.28 Focus Groups - based on x6 1 hour focus groups with 1 facilitator and 10 managers/employees Time for HR Officers to organise and facilitate 6 1-hour online focus groups - 13 x £19.32 = £251.16 Time for HR Data Managers to analyse the data - 14 x £20.48 = £286.72 Time for employees and managers to attend - (10 x £17.76 = £177.6) x 6 = £1,065.60 Total focus group costs: £1,603.48 Best practice Time for HR Manager to research best practice - 14 hours x £20.48 = £286.72 Drawing up a report Time for HR Manager to draw up data and research report - 22.5 hours x £20.48 = £460.80 Total cost: £6,667.80

... a full breakdown of costs for each recommendation can be found in the implementation plan on page 13.

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- SHRM (2024) Managing Organizational Communication. Available at: <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/tools/toolkits/managing-organizational-communication> (Accessed 26 September 2025).



...and all citations included in the presentation can be found on page 14 if you want to do further reading.

A stack of colorful paper squares (orange, white, and teal) with a large black question mark on the top teal square, set against a light blue background.

Thank you

Please feel free to ask any questions.

I'd like to thank you for listening to my presentation

and

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.