

# Personal Development Record.

## An ICO guide.

How am I doing?  
What can we do to improve?  
What more can I do to develop?

## **Introduction**

The performance of every member of staff contributes to the overall success of the ICO, so it is important that everyone is encouraged to work to the highest standards and perform to the best of their ability. If we are clear about required behaviours, our role and our objectives we will perform better.

Personal development records (PDRs) are an effective way of motivating us by recognising and praising achievements, setting our role in the context of ICO's business plan, planning for the future and by addressing problems which prevent us performing to the best of our ability.

### **Performance discussions aim to:**

- review performance so that staff who have completed their probation period are clear about how they are doing and their contribution to the organisation;
- ensure that staff are clear about what they are being asked to do, and how they will go about delivering those tasks or activities in line with the ICO values framework ;
- give staff an understanding of how their work fits into the objectives of their team and the work of the ICO as a whole;
- provide an opportunity to recognise achievements, discuss areas of concern and identify solutions or make suggestions for improving how to go about our work;
- give staff a chance to raise additional issues and/or ask for support; and
- encourage staff to take responsibility for their own short and longer term development.

## **A revised PDR process from October 2014**

Using the feedback provided during the employee voice workshops we have changed the way we carry out the PDR process.

There will still be a focus on what we are asked to do (objectives) and how we have gone about doing that (values). There will also be an opportunity to talk about how things can be improved, and to identify how and where we can develop.

This new approach to the PDR process should be:

**Easier to administer**

**More forward looking**

**Fairer for all**

## The PDR Package

In order to get the full benefit of the PDR process everyone should know what their job entails, how their role fits into business plans, what they are being asked to do to contribute and the way in which they are expected to go about their duties at the ICO.

It is for that reason that managers and their members of staff should have the following supporting documents available as part of the overall PDR package

- the job description for the role
- the team or departmental business plan
- the member of staff's specific objectives
- the ICO values, including the description and definitions.

### Setting objectives

Objectives should be recorded on the PDR form and can be added to, amended or completed as and when appropriate.

Both manager and member of staff should be involved in the setting of objectives, with the manager ensuring that objectives are measurable, achievable, challenging and not too limiting.

Best practice is to make the objective SMART. This means:

**Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, Timed.**

**Objective:** Agreement of the task (agreed between manager and employee)

**Measure: (examples)**

- Standards/quality of the work (specific, measurable, realistic).
- Volumes required (specific, measurable, realistic).
- Scale of the task (specific, measurable, realistic).
- Involvement/ expectation of others (specific, measurable, realistic).
- Timescales of completion (realistic, timed).

### What does success look like?

If the objective and measure are clear then both manager and member of staff should be able to jointly describe what success looks like, and should do so when setting objectives to avoid any misunderstandings.

## **Performance review meetings**

Managers should be considering the performance of their members of staff on an ongoing basis. However, face to face meetings between a member of staff and their line manager **must be held at least three times a year.**

There will be some flexibility in deciding when and how often one to one meetings take place. For example, a member of the team that is new and needs support and assistance should expect to meet their manager more often than someone who is performing well and is experienced in the role. Managers may also find it helpful to hold more frequent performance review meetings to tie in with quarterly business reporting requirements.

Managers should use these meetings as part of their regular feedback to their member of staff and for future planning. Staff should also be encouraged to request meetings as appropriate to their needs.

After these meetings the PDR form should be updated as necessary.

### **Reviewing performance with your manager**

There are three main questions to consider as part of the review meeting. They are designed to allow you to explore your own performance, whether there is anything that can be done to make you or your team more effective, and if there is anything else required to help you develop in your role or that will benefit the ICO in the longer term.

#### **Q1. How am I doing?**

The discussion and written evidence should relate to current performance. To consider this the member of staff needs to understand and be clear about what their job is, what they are being asked to do this year and their contribution to the performance of the organisation.

The discussion should also include areas of the role which have not been delivered. The manager may also discuss areas which fall within the role which may not have recognised.

It is important for members of staff to consider this question to document to the manager what has been achieved. However this does not require a list of everything that the member of staff has been involved in or a detailed description of how they have behaved

during the year. As a guide, a member of staff should aim for around four lines to describe how they are effective in their current role.

As a prompt it may be appropriate for the PDR form to begin,

*"I am aware of what my job entails, what I am being asked to do this year and the values of the organisation. I continue to be effective in my job because..."*

Evidence and updates against this question or statement can be added to over the course of the year or during the performance review meetings, or both.

The manager will have an additional opportunity to add comments separately, either agreeing with the statement the member of staff provided, endorsing with their own observations or adding comment as they see fit.

During the meeting, the manager should discuss their assessment of their member of staff's performance against the role, objectives and the values.

The manager should make notes during the meeting, summarise them back to their member of staff at the end of the meeting, and update the PDR form.

The manager comments should be an accurate record of the discussion during the meeting and should be detailed enough to support the overall rating at the end of the review year.

## **Q2. What can we do to improve?**

This discussion should focus on what the member of staff is expected to do in the months ahead and in the current role. It is also a prompt to consider the development needs that may be required. However the discussion can lead to suggestions for improvement to working practices based on the individual's experience in the job. The discussion should be future-orientated and aimed at identifying ways to be more or most effective.

This is an important opportunity for the member of staff to be able to consider whether they understand what their role is going forward and for the manager to provide input if not. As part of this, the member of staff should consider matters which they have found

challenging and what help they need to address these (or upcoming challenges, tasks or expectations).

The sort of things that need to be considered in this part of the PDR discussion might be, whether there is some training you need to do your job better, whether there are any obstacles that we can identify that stop us being more effective, or how we go about making it easier to deliver against our objectives?

This part of the discussion may result in actions that will be explored and taken forward either as an individual or collectively with the help of the team.

### **Q3. What more can I do to develop?**

Again, this question is future-orientated but slightly broader in context.

The main purpose of this section is to consider a member of staff's personal motivation and think about what they could do to stretch or develop themselves in relation to the questions: "How can I go about achieving any personal goals? Is there anything else I should be doing that would enhance the effectiveness of the ICO, and is there anything else I can and would like to contribute?"

Use this part of the meeting to agree development needs identified as a result of your discussion. The manager or member of staff may have identified some development needs when discussing performance or may have recognised that in order to achieve an objective some development may be needed.

Remember that training courses are only one way of meeting a development need. There may be other, more effective, methods in different situations such as job shadowing, project work, mentoring or coaching. Managers need to ensure that development needs are realistic and manage their member of staff's expectations.

## Levels of Performance

The two levels of performance are **Effective** and **Not Effective**

### What to consider?

- How has the employee performed against their personal objectives?
- How has the employee demonstrated the ICO values framework as a whole?
- Would the employee have been able to do something differently in order to achieve their objectives or values if they have not?
- How proactive has the employee been in removing barriers, highlighting the need for support and completing development activities?
- Any other factors that have affected performance.
- How challenging has the year been?
- What has this person contributed to the delivery of the business plan?
- What could have gone better, what should be celebrated?

### Effective

Their work is of a good standard and demonstrates capability required of the job. They have achieved their objectives making a worthwhile contribution to the business. They demonstrate the organisational values to a good standard showing a positive attitude to work and colleagues and are effective performers that can be relied upon to get the job done.

### Not Effective

Their work towards objectives or their demonstration of the organisational values is not effective. They have rarely demonstrated capability required of the job. Their contribution to the business has been significantly below what's expected. They stand out as giving a performance that is noticeably not effective compared to the team or equivalent role.

If a not effective rating is being awarded a management plan looking for performance improvement **must** be in place.



## **The role of the Countersigning Manager**

The countersigning manager is the reviewing manager's manager. They are not required to add any comments as a matter of routine, but if anyone wishes to meet with their countersigning manager at any point throughout the year they can do so.

## **Moderation / validation**

### **Notes on Moderation Panel process**

The Moderation Panel will be made up from members of the Executive Team.

The moderation process will only be applied to those marked as Not Effective. The meeting should be facilitated by a leadership group/ET member along with the Head of HR, and should involve the managers who awarded the 'NE' ratings discussing their reasons for doing so to gauge consistency between teams and departments. Once the moderation has taken place by the Panel, the ratings can then be confirmed or otherwise.

The statistics will be reviewed by the Panel and any anomalies in terms of equality or the spread of ratings will be discussed. Following this review the Moderation Panel may ask countersigning managers to investigate any anomalies they encounter during the review.

## **Appeals against a performance rating**

If any member of staff disagrees with the outcome of their end of year review meeting or performance rating, they can invoke the appeals process if the matter cannot be resolved informally.

If a member of staff does want to appeal, it is their responsibility to contact the Head of Organisational Development within 10 working days of receiving confirmation of their rating.

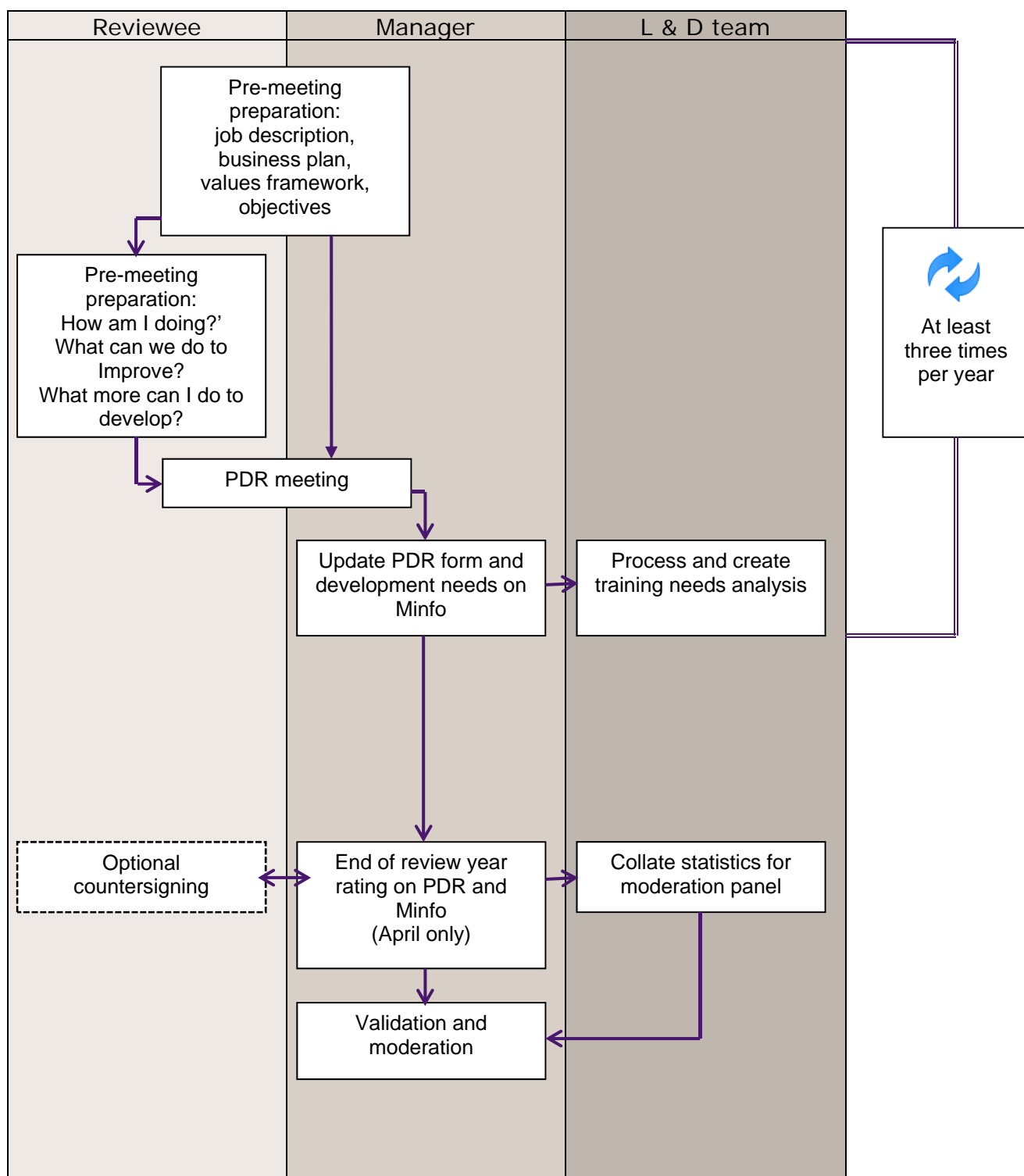
Appeals will be considered by two members of the Leadership Group outside of the staff member's department.

Staff will have an opportunity to state their reasons for disagreement with the review outcome. The manager and/or the countersigning manager will also have an opportunity to provide their views for consideration by the panel.

The staff member may be accompanied at the appeals meeting by their trade union representative or an ICO work colleague.

The decision of the appeals panel will be final.

### Flow chart



## Personal Development Record

Name of reviewee	
Job title	
Line manager	
Review Period	

### Objectives: (can be added or amended as appropriate)

1	

### How am I doing?

I continue to be effective because...

### What can we do to improve?

We can do the following to improve how I/we do our jobs...

### What more can I do to develop?

I think we should consider this to add additional value to me or my role...

### Manager's comments (complete development needs on Minfo if required)

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### End of review year rating:

Overall performance rating  
(Effective or Not effective)

Employee	Date
Manager	Date
Countersigning Manager comments (optional):	

Please return to Learning and Development after full year sign off

## Personal Development Record – example of completed PDR

Name of reviewee	Joe Bloggs
Job title	Case Officer
Line manager	AN Other
Review Period	April 2014 – March 2015

<b>Objectives:</b> (can be added or amended as appropriate)	
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Outcomes and regulatory work</b></p> <p>You will use intelligence gained from casework to improve information rights practices for your sector group. To do this you will need to consider previous cases, PA policies and procedures and any other office wide involvement with the PA.</p> <p>(1 April 2014)</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Progressing and prioritising cases</b></p> <p>All new cases sent to sector team work queues will be allocated to individual team members in line with our service standards. You will have a regular allocation of cases and a high caseload.</p> <p>For 'prepare cases' assigned to you, you will be expected to progress the case from start to finish. You will have 10 working days to prepare and progress the work from the date it reaches your work queue.</p> <p>(1 April 2014)</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Closures</b></p> <p>You should ensure that 90% of your cases are closed within six months of the date of receipt in line with our service standards.</p> <p>You will not have any open cases over 12 months old of the date of receipt.</p> <p>You will need to deal with secondary correspondence within 10 working days of receipt.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Quality</b></p> <p>You will complete good quality casework, in accordance with the</p>

	<p>relevant casework processes and guidance, and with an appropriate standard of customer service.</p> <p>You will ensure that you adhere to the procedures outlined in the ICO's service guide and information governance policies.</p> <p>(1 April 2014)</p>
	<p><b>5 – Project Eagle feedback - interim objective from April 2014 until October 2014</b></p> <p>You will liaise with FOI case officers and provide feedback to your Group Manager about the impact of Project Eagle on FOI casework by outlining any shortfalls in the service guide, standard paragraphs, allocation, liaising with other teams, intelligence hub information sharing. You will suggest ways in which these shortfalls can be remedied.</p> <p>(1 April 2014)</p>

## How am I doing?

### 1 October 2014:

I continue to be effective because since my last PDR meeting I have consistently closed a high number of cases and done so within the timescales required by the department.

My work has been of a high quality and many of my cases have been complex. I have received positive feedback from signatories on the quality of my work. Some key examples of this include xxx. I have contributed a great deal to the positive casework stats of the department and have enjoyed working with a high caseload and the pressure this entails.

I have also achieved a great deal in improving the practice of various public authorities through the advice I have provided, action plans produced and liaison with colleagues across the ICO. Key examples include xxx.

### 7 January 2015:

As above, but I also wish to point to the training and mentoring I have provided over the past couple of months which has really benefitted two members of staff and increased the performance of the team overall. I also wish to point to increased efficiencies in my approach to certain

cases where informal resolution has not proved possible, e.g. xxx.

### **What can we do to improve?**

We can do the following to improve how I/we do our jobs...

#### **1 October 2014:**

Given my level of knowledge of the FOIA and of our processes and procedures, I feel I can contribute more widely in my role by mentoring and training new members of staff, and I would like to explore how I might go about doing this.

I feel I sometimes spend too long trying to informally resolve a case and need to gain the confidence to move to a decision notice more swiftly. I would welcome a discussion about which case officers are adept at this so that I may gain some techniques from them.

#### **7 January 2015:**

It would be useful if my manager put the departmental stats into greater context when discussing them with the team so that I am clearer about the scale of the challenge we face and then be able to identify how we may achieve our aims.

I have handled a few cases in the past few months which have highlighted a deficiency in my knowledge of section 33. I would appreciate a discussion as to how to address this.

### **What more can I do to develop?**

I think we should consider this to add additional value to me or my role...

#### **1 October 2014:**

Given my knowledge of the FOIA, I would like to do contribute more to external meetings and policy guidance, and would like to explore any opportunities for this.

In order to develop my knowledge of the DPA - to which I would like to become fully conversant – and to be able to contribute more widely to the team, I would like to have one or two RFA cases on the go at any one time.

#### **7 January 2015:**

I now have additional tasks in relation to the above, and for the time being I would like to concentrate on my contributions to those before deciding whether there is anything more I can do to develop.

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<p><b>Manager's comments</b></p> <p><b>20 October 2014:</b></p> <p>Joe has made a very good contribution to the team and department over the past few months and I echo the comments made above.</p> <p>I agree with the suggestions made regarding how to improve and develop further and will work closely with Joe over the next few weeks to assist in delivering on these.</p> <p>I explained to Joe that he would benefit from contributing more in team meetings (and with his colleagues more generally) because he has some interesting ideas which the team would benefit from considering. He agreed with me on this and advised that he would seek to be more open from here on.</p>
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<b>End of review year rating:</b>	
Overall performance rating (Effective or Not effective)	

<b>Full Year Sign Off</b>	
Employee	Date
Manager	Date
Countersigning Manager comments (optional):	

Please return to Learning and Development after full year sign off