

## Model appraisal procedure

Appraisal meetings are the yearly review of an employee’s work progress, achievements and performance. They are also sometimes called ‘performance and development review’ meetings or similar. Their aim should be to consider what the employee has achieved over the year, reflect on their past performance and also to set agreed objectives and training and development needs for the next 12 months.

Whilst some employers may want to link the appraisal procedure to their pay review process, this is to be avoided if possible. The focus of the appraisal should not be pay, rather the performance and potential development of the worker. Pay reviews should ideally be kept separate.

Appraisal procedures should be one part of the employer’s performance management scheme, which should include the following steps:

* communicating to all staff the employer’s values, needs and expectations
* providing clear and unambiguous job descriptions and policies and procedures
* setting targets and workplans
* providing day-to-day contact on work issues
* supervision meetings
* appraisal interviews
* learning and development plans.

Reps and branches should stress to employers that the best way for the organisation to be successful is to get the full potential from its staff. If all staff are encouraged to develop and learn, their performance can continually improve.

Therefore, supervision and appraisal meetings should ideally be considered as learning opportunities, where staff are encouraged to think about how they want to develop and what they need to do to achieve this.

In practice, the nature of the appraisal meeting should be that the employee being appraised does most of the talking. Nothing which is said in the appraisal should come as a surprise to the employee.

Often staff members are asked to complete a self-appraisal form to consider alongside their job description and agreed goals from the previous appraisal as preparation for the meeting. Line managers may similarly complete a pre-appraisal form and prepare for the meeting by looking over supervision records, notes from the last appraisal and the job description, as well as considering what the employee is expected to achieve in the next year.

It is essential for there to be time to prepare for supervision and appraisal meetings, so that both parties can look back over the last notes and over the work they have done since the last meeting.

As with all HR records, all staff must be aware of and ensure that principles of data protection are observed when completing and keeping confidential records of supervision, appraisal and learning and development needs. This means that any information must be kept no longer than necessary in accordance with the data protection principles set out in data protection legislation.

**Key issues to help ensure a fair appraisal procedure:**

* Allowing sufficient time for preparation. Appraisers should give the preparation proper consideration and be prepared to give examples of good or poor performance in the meeting.
* Appraisers need to prevent interruptions during the meeting and communicate that the appraisal procedure is important. Sufficient time needs to be scheduled for the meeting.
* Appraisers need to provide constructive feedback rather than negative criticism. Active listening is essential from the line-manager.
* Both the appraiser and appraisee need to recognise the value of the meeting in providing an opportunity to reflect on past performance as a basis for making development and improvement plans.

The following model procedure can be used in the workplace as the basis for negotiations over the development of an appraisal procedure.

Please note that the text in square brackets ***[…]*** indicates where you need to complete information specific to your workplace, or elseare notes for you to consider in relation to your negotiations.

For help in drafting and negotiating an appraisal procedure, contact your [regional organiser](https://www.unison.org.uk/regions/).

# Policy Statement

Both ***[name of employer]*** and ***[UNISON branch]*** recognise that staff should be treated fairly and this procedure aims to provide consistency in the treatment of all staff.

This procedure is a framework for the clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of staff, and for supporting and developing staff to enable them to deliver the best possible service.

The purpose of the appraisal meeting is therefore to clarify objectives, identify changes in the nature of the work done and possible new directions, help staff to make the most of themselves by reviewing their strengths and weaknesses with a view to planning action to assist development, and at the same time increase the effectiveness of ***[name of employer]***. This might include changes in work practice, identification of training needs, and consideration of long-term plans.

Appraisals should also reinforce equality and diversity policies, and staff responsibilities.

***[Name of employer]*** recognises that

* if staff know what is expected of them
* have the right skills, knowledge and ability to be able to do their work
* if they feel supported
* are given constructive feedback
* are able to share and discuss ideas about making ***[name of employer]*** successful

effectiveness across ***[name of employer]*** will be improved, along with staff motivation.

The appraisal procedure must not be confused with other procedures, in particular:

* for dealing with disciplinary or grievance matters. There are separate and agreed procedures to deal with these ***[provide a link]***. If a disciplinary matter is outstanding, it must be dealt with first and separately before the annual appraisal interview takes place.
* for dealing with matters concerning salaries and general conditions of employment. It may be that evidence from an appraisal will be relevant to a particular grading claim for example, but there are separate procedures for dealing with these matters ***[provide links]***.

### Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all staff who are employed at ***[name of employer]*** including part-time and temporary workers, regardless of hours worked or length of service.

***[Ideally, the appraisal procedure should be used for all members of staff.]***

All new members of staff will be made aware of this procedure, and how it operates as part of their induction.

### General Principles

* **Fairness** – This procedure sets out to treat all staff fairly, consistently, impartially, promptly and reasonably.
* **Equality and diversity** – This procedure will be applied without discrimination.

If someone has an existing mental or physical health impairment which they have previously disclosed, ***[name of employer]*** will make reasonable adjustments to the process as necessary. Therefore, it is important that disabled workers inform ***[name of employer]*** of any mental or physical health impairment***.***

* **Confidentiality** – All documentation and records relating to this procedure including notes of meetings will be treated as confidential, stored securely and only accessed by those individuals involved in the procedure. They will be kept no longer than necessary in accordance with ***[name of employer]***’s data protection policy which can be found ***[provide link].*** Any breach of confidence may be treated as a disciplinary case of misconduct.
* **Constructive feedback** – This procedure should be used to emphasis what has been done well, offering constructive feedback to individuals on their performance and progress, and on what is required for them to improve and perform well in the future.
* **Open exchange of views** – The appraisal meeting should provide an opportunity for an open dialogue about the past year’s progress and areas for improvement, as well as an opportunity to request support needed from ***[name of employer]*** to improve performance. The underlying attitudes of the meeting should be of respect, empathy and honesty.
* **Agreement** – The appraisal review, objective setting and report are all to be jointly agreed between the appraiser and appraisee.

# Responsibilities of managers

Line managers should ensure that all workers are aware of this procedure and understand their own and ***[name of employer]***’s responsibilities.

As well as a performance appraisal, line managers should ensure that lines of communication are always open, and that staff have regular one-to-ones/supervision meetings ***[amend as appropriate].***

Line managers are responsible for the prompt implementation of reasonable adjustments for disabled workers to remove or reduce barriers to achievement.

All line managers will be trained in performance management to help ensure that the procedure operates fairly and consistently and in line with all its general principles across the whole organisation.

# Responsibilities of workers

All staff should familiarise themselves with the performance management procedures, and to co-operate with their line managers and supervisors to ensure that they fulfil them. Full details can be found in the staff handbook and on the staff intranet ***[amend as appropriate for your organisation.]***

# Trade union involvement

Consultation will take place with the recognised trade union on the implementation, development, monitoring and review of this procedure.

Union reps will be given training equal to that of managers and supervisors and sufficient time to carry out their duties.

# Review and monitoring

***[Name of employer]*** will ensure that all new workers, supervisors and managers will receive induction on the procedure.

Adequate resources will be made available to fulfil the aims of this procedure, including for training and development needs. The procedure will be widely promoted, and copies will be freely available and displayed in ***[name of employer]***’soffices and through the staff intranet ***[amend as appropriate to your workplace].***

This procedure will be reviewed jointly by unions and management, on a regular basis. The review will include the consideration of

* the operation of the appraisal procedure
* the effectiveness of the appraisal procedure
* staff training and development needs
* any proposed changes to the appraisal procedure.

# The Procedure

The performance of all staff must be reviewed on an annual basis.

Staff members will be reviewed by their line-manager/supervisor.

In the case of a staff member having two line-managers, only one interview will take place. Both managers should complete pre-appraisal forms and agree which one of them will conduct the appraisal meeting. The other, who will not be present, is entitled to feed in points they wish to be made during the meeting.

If a line-manager does not work closely with the member of staff and therefore does not have the necessary insight into their performance or strengths and weaknesses, it will be vital for the line-manager to talk to the worker's immediate supervisor to gain the necessary factual feedback on performance.

The appraisal meeting should be planned in advance and the line-manager will give at least 10 days’ notice of an appraisal meeting to enable the member of staff sufficient time to prepare.

The meeting should take place in a confidential and quiet location which is free from interruptions or disturbance.

At least one hour should be set aside for the meeting. All appraisals will take place within the worker’s working hours. Those workers who are on family leave (maternity, adoption, paternity or shared parental leave) will not be required to use Keeping in Touch (KIT) days for the appraisal process.

### Preparation

The line manager (the appraiser) should prepare by reviewing the worker’s:

* job description / person specification
* any objectives and performance standards that were set at last year’s appraisal
* a copy of the previous appraisal document
* a record of any training over the last 12 months.

The worker (the appraisee) should prepare for the meeting by reviewing the objectives set at last year’s appraisal, as the well as the previous appraisal document, and considering what evidence is available to demonstrate progress.

***[In some workplaces, forms are used as prompts for the preparation and the details can be shared before the appraisal meeting to further inform the discussion. In which case you could use the alternative wording:***

***“The worker should complete a self-appraisal form before the meeting and pass a copy to their line manager ideally three days before the meeting date so that the points they contain can be considered.***

***Similarly, line managers should complete a pre-appraisal form the meeting and pass a copy to the worker ideally three days before the meeting date so that the points they contain can be considered.***

***This exchange of forms must take place at the same time.***

***Line managers should also prepare by looking over supervision records, notes from the last appraisal and the job description, as well as considering what they would like the worker to achieve in the next year.***

***The worker should also prepare by looking over supervision records, notes from the last appraisal and the job description.”***

***The self-appraisal form (adapted for the line-manager) could include the following prompts:***

* ***What were your main duties and responsibilities over the last year?***
* ***What skills and abilities do you use in your work?***
* ***Are there aspects of your work where you feel you need more experience or support?***
* ***What do you enjoy most about your work?***
* ***What have been your successes in the last year?***
* ***What do you enjoy least about your work?***
* ***What problems have you had in the last year?***
* ***What would help improve your performance at work and your job satisfaction?***
* ***What do you hope to achieve over the next year?***
* ***What training do you think you need over the next year?***
* ***Are there any other comments you want to make about your work?***

***It is important that each member of staff has a clearly written job description before an appraisal can be attempted. If the job description is amended as a result of the appraisal interview this should be subsequently addressed through the job evaluation process.***

***However, it is important that the appraisal should never be used as a basis for downgrading a post.]***

### The appraisal meeting

The worker’s objectives should be the main focus for the appraisal meeting, as well as the worker’s overall performance over the past year.

The objectives set for individual workers will be rigorous, challenging, achievable, time-bound, fair and equitable in relation to staff with similar role / responsibilities and experience.

It is recognised that the objectives may not cover the full range of an employee’s role or responsibilities but should focus on the priorities for the worker for the agreed period.

Staff will not necessarily all have the same number of objectives but usually there will be no more than three objectives.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010[[1]](#footnote-1) ***[name of employer]*** will not discriminate against disabled workers in the consideration of objective setting, but will consider and accommodate all reasonable adjustment needs within a reasonable timeframe.

***[Name of employer]*** believes that accessibility passports offer a way of ensuring that staff can maintain their adjustments when their manager changes or when they move roles within the organisation or change their work-base, reducing time spent on re-negotiating already agreed adjustments. ***[Delete or amend as appropriate for your workplace.]***

The Reasonable Adjustments Policy ***[or equivalent]*** provides further information about accessibility passports and reasonable adjustments, and is available at ***[include a link to where the policy can be viewed.]***

***[Name of employer]*** will not discriminate against pregnant workers or those on maternity, adoption, paternity (maternity support) and shared parental leave in the consideration of objective setting. The Family Leave Policy ***[or equivalent]*** provides further information and is available at ***[include a link to where the policy can be viewed.]***

***[It would be good practice to have a set agenda for all appraisal meetings so that both parties are fully prepared for the focus of the meeting. An example is included below.]***

The agenda for all appraisal meetings is:

1. Line manager explains the course of the meeting
2. Discussion of progress made towards achievement of agreed objectives and performance standards including
* highlighting items of work success
* discussion of other areas of the job that the staff member enjoys
* discussion of areas where the employee is less confident or able.
1. Were there any problems or barriers to achievement?
2. How might these be overcome (including consideration of reasonable adjustments if applicable)?
3. Are there any changes to duties or responsibilities since the last appraisal?
* Does the job description need to be updated?
1. Agree objectives and goals for the next year
* Are there any potential problems or barriers to achievement?
* How might these be overcome, (including consideration of reasonable adjustments if applicable)?
1. Review of the staff member’s learning and development plan
2. Discussion of any other issues that the staff member wants to raise
3. Line manager summarises their view of the staff member’s overall performance, the points covered and the agreed action.

### Appraisal report

As soon as possible following the appraisal the line-manager should produce a written appraisal report, which will have been drawn up during the discussion between reviewer and reviewee. The appraisal report will include:

* Details of the objectives which were agreed for the year ahead
* An assessment of the worker’s performance against their last objectives
* An assessment of an worker’s professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to meet them.

***[Many workplaces use a set appraisal report form. Below are examples of the headings within such a form:***

* ***Name of worker***
* ***Job title***
* ***Name of line manager***
* ***Date of appraisal***
* ***Review of current performance***
* ***Assessment of constraints to meeting previously agreed objectives***
* ***Objectives and goals for the coming year***
* ***Learning and development review and plans***
* ***Courses and learning opportunities experienced during the year and their contribution to performance***
* ***Learning needs for the coming year and plans for meeting them***
* ***Has the job description changed?***
* ***Implications for the organisation’s management***
* ***Worker’s comments***
* ***Signatures of worker and line-manager with date]***

The staff member should be asked to confirm the accuracy of the report and add any additional comments.

The report should be signed and dated by both parties no later than 10 days after the appraisal meeting.

If the appraisee wishes to query anything recorded on the report, they have the right to request a second meeting to discuss it with the appraiser, and seek to resolve any concerns.

If there is a second meeting, a new report should be written after the second meeting and again should reflect the discussions of both participants and be agreed as above.

In the event of failure to agree or dissatisfaction with the appraisal meeting, the usual grievance procedures should be followed ***[provide a link].***

Appraisal records will be treated as confidential and kept no longer than necessary in line with ***[name of employer]***’s data protection policy which can be found ***[provide link]*** and in accordance with the data protection principles set out in data protection legislation.

Both line-manager and worker can review how the goals and objectives are followed up at the regular supervision meeting, including following up learning and development needs.

# Signatories

This agreement is made between ***[name of the employer]*** and UNISON, a registered trade union.

This agreement comes into force on:

Date:………………………………..

This agreement will be reviewed on:

Date:………………………………..

SIGNED ……………………………. for ***[name of the employer]***

Date ………………………………..

SIGNED …………………………….. for UNISON

Date ………………………………..

1. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and subsequent amendments and supplementary laws in Northern Ireland. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)