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Health Education and
Improvement Wales (HEIW)

NHS Wales Talent Management conversational resource

Guidance notes



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This document focuses on the importance of hosting career conversations within the organisation, specifically around talent. The intent of the conversation will be purely focused on talent.

This document will ensure that people across the organisations are having career conversations and that employees are feeling noticed and valued within their roles and have an open dialogue about their development and career path within NHS Wales.

The aim is to have an engaged workforce with clear, defined career goals and the right people in the right roles at the right time.



What is a career conversation?

The review and career conversation provides a structure for individuals and their reviewer to have an open conversation about the individuals' aspirations and development.

It is intended to combine appraisal, career conversations, and personal development planning into a series of regular and joined-up conversations.

The conversation is based upon the following principles.

- ✧ Its focus is individualised, humanistic and based on the person, their role and their career aspirations and development.
- ✧ It happens frequently and is complimented through regular one-to-ones.
- ✧ It assumes the person's life, career, motivations, and performance is subject to change.
- ✧ It promotes a respectful and open relationship between the individual and their employer.

Why are career conversations important?

A career conversation, when understood and conducted properly by both parties, allows the employee a chance to ensure their career goals and ambitions align with the organisation's objectives and vice versa.

Research from Right Management found that two-thirds of managers are failing to support their employees' career development.

As we think about developing the people of our workforce, career conversations today are crucial.

There are a variety of benefits to having regular career conversations.

Firstly, they help enable a learning culture and there is a direct correlation between employee engagement and productivity.

Career conversations enable employees to see the managers investment into them as an individual and promotes growth and opportunity.

Managers play a vital role in the engagement and longevity of the employees' career.

A career conversation on a regular basis promotes higher productivity, engaged employees and workers thinking about becoming better versions of themselves and creating opportunities for their career.

When employees think about their career aspirations there is also a high correlation to the retention of the employee.

Talent placement

The talent placement guide below offers you the opportunity to discuss where you feel you fit within the grid and where you would like to be, this might aid your individual path to help you agree some steps that will help with individual development plan.

It's important to note that individually your plan might not be the desire to move into a management or alternative role. It might be to excel in the sector/role of your current employment.

Career expectations and behaviours	Career readiness		
	Potential talent Shows capability to move in 2+ years	Developing talent With development ready to move 6-12 months	Ready Now Could step into role immediately
Exceeding career goals	Professional in field Expert knowledge, role model in behaviours, lives the org's values, consistent, wider contextual knowledge.	Key employee Role model of values and behaviours, strong results, possibly happy to remain in current role, likely to show high potential in the future.	Top tier Displaying role model behaviour, example of values and behaviours, excellence in their field, organisational asset, priority to the organisation.
Meeting career goals	Potential professional in field Showing potential, reliable and professional, possible willingness to remain in the same role.	Relied upon employee All-rounder, meets expectations, works widely, meets expectations.	Emerging potential Shows consistency and ambition, all-rounder, professional, could potentially move to a higher level with ambition.
Working towards career goals	Developing individual in field Needs further support, may feel a lateral move will benefit upskilling, might require further training.	Developing employee Can demonstrate that with development can excel, needs training, needs to work with more breadth and possible work in alternative roles to strengthen.	In-transition New to role, can be assessed on the grid at a later date. Yet to demonstrate role.

The career conversation

This guide will help you to set your expectations and advise you what to expect when attending your career conversation with your manager.

It's advisable to take some time to prepare for your conversation regarding topics you want to discuss. You may also want to prepare anything demonstrable to take with you to review during your career conversation.

1. Manager or Employee Schedules the conversation.

Prepare for the meeting

Take any documentation you wish to demonstrate or discuss.

2. The conversation

The conversation should be informative and light with preparation.

Questions will be asked such as, why did you choose this sector?
What's your ideal role?
What motivates you?
What do you see as your strengths?
What would help you develop?

3. The manager and Employee should review the conversation and agree follow-up actions and schedule follow-up meeting

Agree development opportunities

Schedule timelines, keep the conversation and actions active.

Career conversation question examples

Section 1

Where have they been?

- ↳ What would you describe as your professional strengths?
- ↳ What would you consider your largest area of growth?
- ↳ What have you completed that has made you feel successful?
- ↳ What have you professionally found your biggest challenge?

Section 2

Where are they now?

- ↳ How do you feel about your current role?
- ↳ What made you choose the role?
- ↳ What's your favourite part of your role?
- ↳ What's the most challenging part of your role?
- ↳ What would help you improve in your current role?
- ↳ What skills would you like to develop?
- ↳ What could your manager do to elevate your success?
- ↳ What if any are the barriers to your aspirations?

Section 3

Where are they heading?

- ↳ What does success look like for you in the next 6-12 months?
- ↳ What does success look like for you in the next 2+ years?
- ↳ What tasks or projects would like to me more involved in?
- ↳ How can I best help you achieve your career goals?
- ↳ Is there a colleague you feel you would benefit from engaging with or shadowing?
- ↳ What appeals to you more, a management role? Or developing your expertise in your chosen field?

The list of questions is not prescriptive as the conversation will naturally evolve throughout the session. It's important to take notes during the meeting and keep a record of any commitments made.

It's also important for the manager and the employee to take full responsibility to follow up on the commitments and actions to advance the employee's career.

After the conversation

After the conversation is over, it's crucial that you keep any commitments you made and do so promptly. This will ensure that you are building trust.

A single career conversation won't be the only step to career progression but it's an important part of engaging the employer into discussing career progression and development.

Keeping the dialogue open is key to success, aim to follow up within 3-6 months. Genuine development happens a little bit every day and over time.

It's all about the quality of the conversation and how you frame your employee's development.



Coaching

What is coaching?

Coaching aims to produce optimal performance and improvement, helping to unlock an individual's maximum potential. Its focus is on specific skills and goals and can also have an impact on an individual's personal attributes such as, social interaction or confidence. The process typically lasts for a defined period of time or forms the basis of an on-going management style. coaching takes place between a coach and a coachee, with the guidance process aiding the coachee to unlock their ability to develop plans to achieve specific goals and objectives.

Coaching models

Coaching is a guided conversation. In order to have the most effective coaching conversations it is highly recommended within the U.K. coaching industry to follow approved coaching models. The two most popular being **GROW** and **OSCAR**. These models will help you facilitate career conversations and support the colleague through the process of goal setting. The aim is to guide the thought process and conversation to enable them to self-identify their career goals and how they can realistically plan to achieve them.

GROW

Grow	What do you want?
Reality	Where are you now?
Options	What could you do?
Will	What will you do?

The GROW model is one of the most popular coaching approaches used throughout the coaching industry.

It follows a simplistic 4-step process to support the whole coaching approach. GROW is an exceptional model to begin your coaching journey with.

OSCAR

Outcome	Determining the outcome and the goals of the session
Situation	Clarify the team member's current situation and feelings
Choices	Generate choices and consider the consequences of each
Actions	Define the next immediate steps in their chosen process
Review	Develop a plan for returning and reviewing the process

The OSCAR model builds upon and enhances GROW. Like its counterpart it is an industry recognised effective model. It follows a slightly more advanced approach by breaking down the process into more detailed steps. OSCAR can be used to begin your coaching journey with or utilised as the next step after GROW.

Coaching questions

In addition to the adoption of a coaching model, coaching questions are a useful tool to support career conversations.

These open questions allow the conversation lead to prompt the colleague in exploring their thought process and identifying actions and solutions.

It's important to note you do not need to use an extensive list, it is more so recommended you have a selection ready to use if required.

Examples below:

- 🔗 What's stopping you from acting or standing in your way?
- 🔗 What tools do you need to help you?
- 🔗 What would you like to achieve by the end of this day/week/session?
- 🔗 What obstacles do you expect to face? How do you plan to approach them?
- 🔗 How will you specifically know when you've completed your action/task/step/goal?
- 🔗 What do you want? Where to do you want to be?
- 🔗 What are you doing to NOT achieve your goal?
- 🔗 What is the first and easiest step you could take right now?
- 🔗 What are some of the strategies you can think of to help you overcome new challenges?
- 🔗 What resources do you have access to?
- 🔗 How do you think your peers/leaders/I can help you with this obstacle?
- 🔗 What are some of the steps you think you want to take next?