

# 2022

## Agenda for Change Appraisal Best Practice Guide



This guide provides best practice advice in the conduct of appraisal discussions and updates the reader on the latest changes to the appraisal content which is new for the 2022 appraisal season.



This document provides a 30 second summary of everything you need to know, as well as more detailed advice on key topics relating to appraisal. This guide should be read in conjunction with the [Appraisal FAQs](#) and [Agenda for Change Appraisal Policy](#).

## Appraisal 30 second summary

### Support

If you have never conducted an appraisal, are out of practice, fancy a refresh or have never received any appraisal training then you can:

- Attend one of the Effective Appraisals live training webinar sessions with a Q&A opportunity. Contact [leedsth-tr.olcoursebookings@nhs.net](mailto:leedsth-tr.olcoursebookings@nhs.net) for details.
- Watch the help videos on the Training Interface appraisal system - one for each section of the appraisal.
- Submit a support ticket through the Training Interface.
- Call Organisational Learning on 67253 to ask for support.
- Email questions to [leedsth-tr.mandatorytraining@nhs.net](mailto:leedsth-tr.mandatorytraining@nhs.net)
- A range of complimentary training opportunities are offered to support good management practice including coaching and communication skills. Contact [leedsth-tr.OLCourseBookings@nhs.net](mailto:leedsth-tr.OLCourseBookings@nhs.net) for more details.

### Guidance

- An appraisal focuses on the last 12 months and should contain positive and developmental feedback for all staff.
- Feedback and priority assessment should be considered before the appraisal meeting by both the appraiser and the staff member so both parties attend the meeting prepared for a valuable and constructive conversation.
- Thank staff for their work and contribution over the past 12 months and celebrate their successes and efforts.
- Agreeing new priorities is a shared activity between manager and appraisee - each party should contribute to the development of priorities to focus on going forwards.
- Appraisals should be used as a way to improve the engagement and performance of every staff member.
- Ensure the personal development discussion is a part of the appraisal conversation, even if no formal development is wanted by the appraisee. You may wish to discuss strengths, experiences or skills that you or your staff members wish to develop through informal ways.
- Mandatory training is not considered personal development.
- Appraisal derives its value from being underpinned by good, on-going people management practices through regular one-to-one conversations and discussions about development and wellbeing.

### Rules

- Always conduct an Appraisal in a quiet private location.
- Treat appraisal discussions confidentially.
- All staff should be appraised, including staff members that are under training or apprenticeships, going on maternity leave, long term planned sickness etc.

# All about appraisals

## Why do we do appraisals?

The appraisal is a vital opportunity to thank staff for their dedication and effort, celebrate successes and create the space for a discussion about constructive feedback and development, in line with our Leeds Way Values. An appraisal must provide an opportunity to discuss career aspirations and personal development for staff members and set and agree developmental priorities which are aligned to organisational and departmental goals. Formal appraisal recording takes place once annually but on-going discussions around progress towards priorities, the Leeds Way values and the respectful behaviours should continue regularly throughout the year.

Appraisal underpins the Trust's positive culture by creating a framework for on-going discussion around performance, development and behaviour. A high-quality appraisal experience for every staff member is the aim. Appraisal and on-going management are enabling activities for good staff engagement and, consequently, excellent patient care.

## Whose responsibility is it to undertake appraisal?

Every staff member is responsible for their own appraisal in partnership with their line manager. There must be equal responsibility on both sides of the relationship to ensure the appraisal occurs and that it is a valuable conversation. Staff must play an active part in contributing to their assessment and reflection on their application of the Leeds Way values and respectful behaviours. Managers must create the opportunity for a valuable conversation to take place in order to meet the [NHS Constitution](#) commitments (that NHS organisations must provide staff with 'clear roles and responsibilities', 'personal development' and 'line management support to succeed').

## When should we complete appraisals?

All Trust staff working under AfC terms and conditions at The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust are expected to have an appraisal during the appraisal season ('the season': 1st April - 30th June). If a staff member is absent due to maternity, unexpected or unplanned leave, the appraisal should occur as soon as practicable on their return.

Where leave is planned an appraisal should be conducted within the season prior to the individual going on leave or on their return. It is accepted that in these circumstances the appraisal process may need to be adapted if an individual has returned from a significant period of time out from the Trust (the previous priorities will likely not have been achieved and mitigating factors will likely apply). Similarly, where the appraisal is completed before a staff member goes on extended leave, new priorities should be set with consideration that the staff member will not be in work for a significant period of time.

## How long should an appraisal last?

This will differ significantly depending on an individual's role, their aspirations and aims for the next 12 months. In order to cover priorities, behaviours, feedback and personal development it is unlikely that an appraisal shorter than 30 minutes could involve a high-quality conversation.

## What is a good appraisal?

A good appraisal is a two-way discussion; when carried out well it actively involves individuals, helping them to understand what is expected of them and ensuring they feel supported. Staff should not fear appraisal but rather embrace the opportunity. By setting agreed priorities and regularly reviewing progress, individuals become more engaged with and responsible for their own performance. The process should be used to enable positive engagement between an individual and their manager, to improve performance and provide appropriate support. It includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Recognising achievements
- Agreeing development needs
- Monitoring and reviewing performance
- Celebrating success
- Agreeing new priorities
- Reflecting on expected behaviours aligned to Trust values
- Discussion on health and wellbeing.

Line managers must meet with staff on a regular basis to provide one-to-one support, ensuring that they are making good progress towards the agreed priorities. The following benefits can be realised from a year-round performance support approach:

- Staff should feel valued by taking time to have this supportive conversation and, if there are any challenges, the manager and staff member can collaborate to find a solution to remedy the issue.
- Open dialogue between manager and colleague which will enhance working relationships and collaborative working.
- All staff should have a greater understanding of how their priorities underpin the operational success of the team or department and the strategic goals of the Trust.
- Colleagues seeking career progression within the Trust can discuss with their line manager appropriate development opportunities to support their career path, enabling a diverse range of skills to be retained and enhanced.
- Enabling a discussion with open feedback (both positive and developmental) with a firm and clear aim to improve performance when it is relevant and appropriate rather than waiting until the appraisal season discussion. This will mitigate any surprises when the appraisal occurs.
- Increased engagement driving higher performance and better patient outcomes.
- An opportunity to celebrate successes and learn through reflection on the challenges faced.
- An inclusive conversation that recognises and values the diversity of our staff.

A good appraisal should be based on a quality conversation which affords the appraisee significant opportunity to talk.

## What should my appraisal not include?

Appraisals are a formal recording of the review of the previous 12 months. As such, the content of the discussion should be well known by both parties and should include no surprises. This means that appraisal should not be used to:

- Raise a new concern or issue with a staff member's performance or behaviour when it hasn't previously been raised.
- Act as a tick-box exercise.
- Focus solely on negative feedback.
- A situation where a manager assigns priorities or personal development plans without discussion or engagement with a staff member.

If a manager thinks a member of staff is not performing at a satisfactory level, they should inform them of this as part of day-to-day management and supervision, and well before their appraisal. Steps must be put in place to support improvement, accessing the Supporting Performance Policy as appropriate.

## All about priorities

### How are priorities assessed?

Use the following guide when assessing priorities set at the last appraisal/local induction

New Assessment wording	Use when	Notes
<b>Not Achieved no mitigation</b>	Despite appropriate on-going support and opportunity being provided the appraisee has not met this priority	Should only be used when the individual's performance is subject to the formal stages of the supporting performance policy and only when this is done in advance of the appraisal taking place
<b>Not Achieved with mitigation</b>	The priority has not been completed however there is a justifiable reason for why it was not achieved	The definition of this assessment is that the priority has not been met but mitigating factors outside of the appraisees control have had an impact on their ability to complete the task
<b>On-going</b>	The priority is not complete but Remains relevant and open. Some work has been carried out towards completion	The priority should, if still relevant, be re-entered into the 'Agree Priorities' tab for the coming year
<b>Fully achieved</b>	The priority has been achieved in accordance with the criteria agreed at the last appraisal	

### What do I need to know about agreeing priorities?

New or continuing priorities aligned to departmental goals should be set in the appraisal and regularly reviewed over the following 12 months. The appraisal form provides a framework that can be used to shape meaningful priorities.

Previously, the SMART objective setting methodology was advocated but there are a number of challenges associated with this approach and these are particularly acute in roles which are either very routine or very dynamic in nature. In these situations, SMART objectives can be redundant because the demands of the role are such that the same task is often repeated or because the context of the work changes making a SMART objective incongruous with current work demands.

As an alternative approach, all staff are encouraged to think about their priorities for the coming 12 months and use the appraisal form to describe these priorities. Work priorities should be agreed between appraiser and appraisee and should focus on addressing challenges to be overcome within the individual's work remit.

Priorities should be written in such a way that it is clear how the appraisee can make the difference in achieving a successful outcome. A certain degree of pragmatism is encouraged when crafting priorities. Managers should take care not to rely on overly quantified measures as this may be at the expense of quality, compassionate care or good leadership in other, more subjectively assessed, activities.

### **Can I re-use priorities for multiple staff members?**

Where a manager looks after a number of staff performing the same role it is tempting to agree the same priorities for each colleague. Where this is the case the manager should outline the priorities and how they link to departmental goals, offering a chance for discussion and input from the staff member. There may be scope to adjust priorities with the agreement of the appraisee to assist their development; these should be tailored to individual requirements.

### **Are there any standard priorities which should be included in the appraisal?**

All staff with 'Priority' Training allocated to their role must have the following priority set on their appraisal:

- Complete assigned Priority Training and remain in-date for that training so far as possible throughout the year.
  - This priority is required by the Trust Appraisal Policy.

Additionally, for staff with line management responsibility their appraisal priorities must also include:

- Conduct appraisals for assigned staff members within the appraisal season ensuring the appraisal experience of appraisees is of a high quality, following best practice guidance issued by the Trust. Appraisees must be given the opportunity to discuss issues of importance to them in their own appraisal.
  - This priority should be set if appropriate to do so.

*I feel I've done my job properly when I give everyone the attention they need.*



## Leeds Improvement Method and behavioural assessment in appraisal

### What is the Leeds Improvement Method box on the priorities section for?

As a result of the national staff survey, the Trust became aware that staff desired the opportunity to formally make recommendations about how to improve their work. The Leeds Improvement Method box affords the appraisee the opportunity to make these suggestions and to have a discussion with the appraising manager about the suggestion.

Completion of the statement is not currently a mandatory part of the appraisal and, if left incomplete, will not prevent the appraisal from being signed.

All staff are strongly encouraged to complete the Understanding Value and Waste course as an introduction to the Leeds Improvement Method. Staff with line management responsibility may also be interested in Lean for Leaders. Please contact the Kaizen Promotion Office (KPO) for further details by emailing [leedsth-tr.KPOleeds@nhs.net](mailto:leedsth-tr.KPOleeds@nhs.net).

### What is the new approach to assessing Trust values and respectful behaviours?

As of 2020, the AfC appraisal was modified to align with the Leeds Improvement Methodology. Staff are empowered to conduct their own reflection in this area.

In advance of the appraisal meeting, the appraisee should access their appraisal record on the Training Interface and complete the behaviours section. This section can only be completed by the appraisee. The appraisee must reflect on their application of the behaviours which are aligned to the Trust values. Two respectful behaviours should be identified to demonstrate where the appraisee has performed well and two behaviours should be identified for improvement. A statement must be completed to identify how the improvement in those behaviours can be made.

There is no right or wrong answer to this section. As long as the manager and appraisee are taking time in the appraisal meeting to discuss the reflection and recognise that improvements can always be made, no matter how well an individual is performing, then this will add to the quality of the appraisal discussion. Managers are encouraged to constructively challenge the appraisee's selections and offer coaching to aid the reflection before the appraisal is finalised. Appraisees should also recognise that colleagues can observe different behaviours from those perceived to be presented by the appraisee themselves, and are encouraged to be open-minded about the reflective discussion.



## Training and mitigation

### How does the appraisal hold an appraisee to account for completing their mandatory training?

- An individual's mandatory training should be fully up to date. Where mandatory training is not up to date then use the dropdown list on appraisals form to provide a reason for why the training has not been completed.
- Incorporation of a priority to complete priority training is required by the Trust appraisal policy to ensure that all staff are encouraged to maintain compliance in all their assigned training requirements; mandatory and priority training are of equal importance in terms of patient safety and professional responsibility towards our colleagues.
- Priority training information is not displayed on the appraisal but can be viewed by a manager using the Training Interface. Compliance with Priority training should be managed through the use of work priorities as detailed above.

### What do I need to know about mitigation for mandatory training?

- Mitigating factors statements must be made for each topic that is out-of-date by selecting the appropriate reason through the dropdown list.
- Where there is no mitigation for incomplete mandatory training the staff member will be deemed as not achieving their contractual obligations.

As managers receive monthly performance reports on training compliance the expectation is that a staff member's continued failure to address mandatory training compliance could mean that the member of staff is managed under the Conduct and Discipline policy.



## About the Training Interface appraisal recording system

### What are the different 'manager roles' I can assign on the Training Interface?

#### Appraisal manager

The Appraisal Manager is by definition the manager that carries out the appraisal. An appraisee can only have one Appraisal Manager at any given time. An Appraisal Manager must be at least Band 3 and equal to or a higher Band than the appraisee.

#### Monitoring manager

A Monitoring Manager is typically a person that oversees a group of employees who, whilst not acting as their Appraisal/Senior Manager, requires access to view the appraisals of the employees under their supervision. A Monitoring Manager must be at least band 3 and their band must be equal to or higher than the appraisees assigned to them. There is no restriction on the number of Monitoring Managers an appraisee can have, but in practice this should be zero or one in the vast majority of cases. A monitoring Manager is restricted to just adding comments to an appraisal and using the appraisee chat service.

### What are the appraisees responsibilities for authorising their manager relationship on the Training Interface?

Appraisees are required to approve the appointment of all three manager types. It is therefore the responsibility of the appraisee to determine if the manager request is appropriate or not. This check has been put in place to ensure that the appraisal information is viewable only by appropriate staff members.

If a staff member is unsure about a request to allocate an appraisal manager, they should resolve this with their line manager in the first instance.



## What else?

If you have a query which is not addressed by this guide, please check the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) list before emailing [leedsth-tr.mandatorytraining@nhs.net](mailto:leedsth-tr.mandatorytraining@nhs.net)

## Useful Links and Resources

[The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust \(2019\): Agenda for Change \(AfC\) - Appraisal Policy version 1.3](#)

This document is the official policy for AfC appraisal at The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. The appraisal policy is the definitive guidance for appraisal and supersedes other guidance on appraisal where conflicts may have arisen.

[ACAS – Guidance \(2016\): Managing People](#)

This document provides guidance to help managers understand their key responsibilities with regards to the staff they manage.

[NHS Employers & Skills for Care \(2019\): People Performance Management - A Toolkit](#)

This document provides general guidance to line managers in health and social care and aims to encourage and enable good people performance management in practice.

[The NHS Staff Council Working in Partnership \(2010\): Appraisals and KSF Made Simple - A Practical Guide](#)

This guide is designed to improve the coverage and application of performance appraisal throughout the NHS, setting out a framework approach rather than detailed rules and procedures.

[Performance Management eLearning available on ESR](#)

This eLearning can be found by accessing the 'My Learning' section of ESR and searching for '000 Performance Management'. The course introduces the concept of Performance Management as a way of effectively managing and supporting the individuals within your team so effectively increasing your overall team performance and contribution to the organisation.

## Contact & version information

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