

MANAGEMENT BOARD

Performance and Development Management, Bands A to E.

Paper by Director of HR Services

Purpose

1. At the March Management Board it was asked whether it would be possible that promotion boards could see staff appraisals reports for non-SCS staff.

Action for the Board

2. To note the paper and:
 - agree that the detrimental impact on the integrity of the Performance and Development Management system for non-SCS staff, if it were to be used for promotion purposes, is sufficient justification for its continued separation from promotion procedures
 - the new line management reference form used to inform the promotion system for applicants from A - E should be requested before the short-listing stage, and not at the interview stage.

Background

3. The current Performance and Development Management system, introduced in April 2009, was approved after discussion at Management Board in January 2009 (see paper MB2009.P.7 attached at Annex).
4. The Board recognised that a good performance management system should be aligned to one of three broad categories: reward, potential, or performance, and that for the House of Commons the greatest organisational advantage would be gained through focusing on performance, including management by setting and monitoring achievement of objectives, discussion on improving performance, and identifying training needs.
5. The basic principles of the system are:
 - a PDM is an ongoing, "live" planning and objective setting system which takes place throughout the year
 - it is intended to encourage honest dialogue between jobholder and manager about expectations of behaviour and performance
 - it is not linked to pay so it should lead to open discussion and cooperation in suggestions from both sides in addressing any areas of concern
 - the full and frank nature of this dialogue should enable both parties to identify any development needs and agree how best to meet them.

Overview of the PDM system

6. SMART objectives are set and updated as required during the year. The number and type of objectives vary according to the nature of the post and the individual.
7. The key measure is how well the job holder does their job, meets their objectives and performs against expected standards of behaviour.
8. There is no set number or required timetable of meetings between a manager and the member of staff to be held during the year. Again, this will depend on the nature of the work and the performance of the individual as well as any development needs. It is suggested, however, that at least 3 meetings per year take place.
9. The PDM form is a working document which should be updated regularly and includes a record of discussions held.
10. There is no House-wide benchmark against which to assess performance. Better staff may indeed have more developmental objectives than less able staff as they, together with their line managers, strive to improve, whereas less able staff are content to maintain their performance. This means that the PDM form for a more able member of staff may appear more critical than that of a less able member of staff. It also concentrates on the performance in the jobholders current post. As such it is not an indicator of ability to fulfil the requirement of another post.
11. For these reasons it was not felt that the PDM system should be used in the recruitment process. However it was recognised that this left promotion boards with less information available to them and therefore the recruitment process now includes the requirement for the line manager of an applicant to submit a reference in support of the application for that post. This form asks line managers to assess the current performance of the applicant against the essential criteria for the new role. This enables the interview board to have information about the individual's skills measured against the post for which they are applying and provides a more relevant, fit-for-purpose assessment.
12. ASRs for promotions within the SCS are available to boards because of the different nature of the system.

Issues

13. To reduce the burden on line managers it was agreed that these reference forms should only be submitted after the short-listing stage.
14. However if boards feel that they are experiencing problems in short-listing without some input from current line managers, the Management Board are invited to consider whether the additional

burden on line managers of filling out these reference forms when applicants apply for posts is justified.

Next Steps

15. PDM reports should be submitted by the end of May. Last year the return rate in some areas was poor (however this may have, in part, been because of work pressures because of the general election).
16. Because forms no longer contain box marks, or relate to pay some line managers fail to see why they should fill out PDM reports at the end of the year. This misses continuous motivational and management impact of the PDM system throughout the year.
17. A Staff Notice will be issued shortly reminding managers of their responsibilities at this time, and asking for all reports to be submitted to HR by end May. The Management Board is asked to remind their senior managers of this deadline and ensure that sufficient effort is made within their departments to meet this deadline. Return rates will be monitored and Management Board provided with analysis at their June meeting.

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