



SFRS PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL POLICY (ALL STAFF)

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Safety. Teamwork. Respect. Innovation.

VERSION HISTORY

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is committed to developing all employees to their full potential and to improving service delivery. The SFRS Performance Appraisal Policy will be used by individuals and reviewing managers to help improve performance and service delivery by focusing on both the achievement of objectives ('what' is done) as well as an appraisal of skills, knowledge, behaviours and competencies ('how' it is done). Individual performance should support and promote achievement of local plans, directorate objectives and SFRS priorities. A fundamental aim of the policy is to ensure that each employee understands how their individual objectives relate to the achievement of the SFRS strategic aims.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This policy applies to all SFRS employees.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 The overall aim is for all employees to be competent in the roles they carry out, to take responsibility for their own performance, skills and behaviour and ensure these align to promote the SFRS Values of **SAFETY – TEAMWORK – RESPECT – INNOVATION**. The policy also aims to enable the provision of feedback for employees on their performance on a regular basis and to recognise the individual efforts, areas for improvement and contribution of all employees working within the SFRS. This policy serves to encourage an inclusive environment where staff can be supported in a way which is fair and transparent and provides opportunities for development.

3.2 The performance appraisal process is a joint review and discussion between an individual and their Reviewing manager to review performance over the last 12 months and set development opportunities and objectives for the forthcoming year. It is intended to highlight a shared sense of purpose and ensure meaningful contribution to the overall SFRS strategic goals, values

and vision. It provides a standardised framework across the SFRS to plan and review individual performance and considers development opportunities.

- 3.3 SFRS Reviewing managers must ensure that all processes relating to the performance appraisal process are applied fairly, equitably and confidentially for all employees and that these are applied in line with the SFRS's [Dignity and Respect Policy](#) and the [Code of Conduct](#).
- 3.4 Reviewing managers are normally the employee's direct line manager and responsible for the day to day management of an employee's work. They are, therefore, responsible for undertaking their employee's performance appraisal meetings in accordance with the procedures and timescales set out within this policy. For uniformed staff, this will involve the role of Crew manager and above carrying out appraisals; whilst, for Support Staff, this may involve those in a supervisory role. For Support Staff, local management discretion may be applied in determining the appropriate level of supervisor/manager to carry out employee performance appraisal meetings, taking account of the departmental or functional structure.

4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The overall principle of the Performance Appraisal Policy is to ensure that Reviewing managers and employees have an opportunity to review performance (linked to objectives) and how employees' approach these (behaviours), on a **formal** basis throughout the year. However, it is good practice for Reviewing managers not to solely rely on the performance appraisal process and supplement performance management by offering **continuous** support throughout the year to enable employees to realise their full potential. Regular 1-2-1 meetings, team meetings and regular discussions are essential to this. This demonstrates a holistic approach to managing performance and enables any performance needs or special recognitions to be identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.

The policy aims to ensure that all employees:

- Have an annual and at least one interim performance appraisal meeting in accordance with the performance appraisal timescales set;
- Actively contribute to performance appraisal meetings by preparing to discuss how they feel they have performed, in terms of the objectives they have delivered / contributed to, progress against development plans, etc.;
- Know what is expected of them in terms of their performance, what is required of them in order to do their job effectively and identify areas where improvement is needed;
- Receive feedback on a regular basis which aims to improve/develop performance and offers recognition for achievements;
- Identify with their Reviewing manager their learning and development needs and plan appropriate development activities; and
- To enable decisions to be made on the award of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) or incremental pay awards for support staff.

5. PROCEDURE

- 5.1 The annual review meeting should be used to sign off the previous year's objectives, award annual increment / CPD payments (if eligible) and set objectives and development required for the next yearly review cycle. There is no limit as to how many review meetings are required over and above the annual review in order to monitor progress against agreed objectives; however, **one interim review is mandatory** and this review should ideally take place six months from the date of the initial objective setting meeting.
- 5.2 A [Self-Appraisal Questionnaire](#) has been developed (see [Appendix A](#)) in order to encourage employees to prepare in advance for their review meeting by considering their own performance (strengths and weaknesses) over the past year. Employees should be actively encouraged by line managers to complete this form as a useful tool to ensure employees actively reflect on their performance. This is included in the **Performance Appraisal Proforma and PDP Workbook**.

- 5.3 A single document – the **Performance Appraisal Proforma and PDP Workbook** (see attached documents) – should be used to record and monitor performance throughout the annual review cycle.
- 5.4 Should an employee's performance fall below the required standards, this should be identified on the proforma and on the performance development plan to support the employee and address any development needs. The appraisal process should be aligned to continuous support and feedback from the manager throughout the year. An appraisal meeting should not, therefore, be the first time an employee is made aware of any performance related issues. Changes to development needs which require support from Training should be requested using the Adhoc Learning Request and Approval Form contained on the Training iHub pages and available via this link ([Adhoc Learning Request and Approval Form](#)). Where necessary, employees and managers should refer to the [SFRS Managing Employee Performance Policy](#).

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Employees

Employees should play an active part throughout the appraisal process by:

- Preparing in advance of their performance appraisal meetings in order to engage in meaningful discussion. This includes completing the performance appraisal self-questionnaire in advance of the review meeting. This can then be used as a basis for discussion. Keeping a note of work achievements and progress of development plans throughout the year can assist employees with this process and help them reflect honestly on performance and progress against training and development plans. Employees may wish to consider milestones achieved, challenges experienced, things which have gone well, things which have not gone so well, reasons for these and actions required to make improvements;

- Consider what work objectives for the year ahead are likely to be, how they can contribute to these and the support they may require to achieve them;
- Be prepared to discuss career aspirations and personal efforts to achieve this;
- Consider how their role fits into wider Service/Functional plan;
- Priorities may change and the appraisal paperwork is reviewed and updated accordingly to reflect this. The performance appraisal process is an ongoing process and the associated appraisal paperwork should therefore be revisited. Where this is the case, reasons for doing so should be outlined.

6.2 Reviewing Manager

Reviewing managers are responsible for carrying out performance appraisal meetings and are required to:

- Ensure their skills relating to undertaking performance appraisals are developed and maintained. This includes familiarisation of the SFRS Performance Appraisal Policy and [Tips for Managers](#). Training for managers on effective delivery of appraisal forms part of the Leadership Development Framework;
- Plan and prepare in advance by:
 - Ensuring the appraisals are conducted in accordance with the timescales set;
 - Providing at least one week's notice to employees of their appraisal discussion;
 - Organising a suitable room and allocating enough time to complete the appraisal discussion;
 - Collecting evidence and information which will demonstrate performance against objectives, any challenges that have been addressed, and evidence of self-development over the year;
- Ensure the employee understands the process, has prepared in advance and encourage employee to complete the appraisal self-questionnaire;
- Conduct the appraisal meeting(s):

- Agree areas for discussion based on both you and the employee's agendas;
- Discuss with the employee how they have performed over the specific period and review each specific objective. Consider factors which may have affected progress, i.e. changing priorities, resources, access to training, unpreventable delays. It is important that reasons for objectives not being met are considered and documented;
- Ensure the employee understands how their role and objectives fit into wider Service / Functional plans;
- Agree specific work objectives for the forthcoming year;
- Identify the employee's training and development needs aligned with the role and objectives for the forthcoming year.

6.3 Countersigning Manager

Countersigning managers will have responsibility for a department / function / service delivery area. They are, therefore, responsible for:

- Reviewing (and/or assigning responsibility for the review of) performance appraisal paperwork (e.g. to a Local Senior Officer / Deputy if appropriate) where an employee raises a concern regarding their appraisal ratings or non-award of a CPD payment / salary increment;
- Carrying out annual quality assurance checks (e.g. random sample 10% minimum of completed appraisal forms) within their department to ensure consistency, including, but not exhaustive of:
 - Have all sections of appraisal forms been completed;
 - Have appraisals been undertaken in line with appraisal timescales;
 - Monitors any concerns arising from the appraisal process (refer to [section 9](#)).

7. GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWING MANAGERS

This section outlines the planning and preparation that reviewing managers should undertake to ensure that the appraisal process runs smoothly. The initial objective setting meeting is typically conducted February-April each year. This is followed by the interim appraisal meeting six months later. The end of year assessment takes place 12 months after the initial review meeting. This typically takes place at the same time as the objective setting meeting for the forthcoming year. The purpose of the annual appraisal meeting is to discuss and agree objectives for the next year, discuss career aspirations and agree a development plan to meet objectives set.

7.1 Objective Setting

- Work objectives for the coming year should take account of the SFRS strategic aims and objectives. These should be clearly aligned with team, Directorate and the SFRS strategic plan and be discussed with employees at the objective setting meeting;
- Objectives should be clear, specific and have measurable outcomes which can be expressed in terms of clear targets. The number of objectives should be limited (a maximum of three is recommended) so as not to be unachievable; see [SMART Objectives](#);
- Work objectives should take account of individuals' skills and aspirations and these should be discussed to inform and shape objectives which are set and agreed on;
- Where appropriate, objectives may be set on a **team** basis; however, the subsequent appraisal of performance must be carried out on an **individual** basis. Once agreed, the employee and Reviewing manager should sign and date the relevant section.

7.2 Personal Development Plan

- Consideration should be given to the objectives set;
- Development activities must be realistically set and accessible through existing SFRS arrangements and resources;
- Development activities should be recorded in the Personal Development Plan, along with actions to be taken and target dates for completion;
- The Personal Development Plan is continuous and can be updated to reflect recent activities / discussions at any point of the appraisal cycle;
- Support and advice can be accessed from representatives of the Training function (TSA Directorate) and the Talent Development Team, with information available on policies and processes available on their iHub page or from the following link: <https://ihub.firescotland.gov.uk/learning-and-development-review-analysis-and-implementation>

7.3 Interim Appraisal

The purpose of the interim appraisal meeting is to discuss and reflect on progress made to date. Each objective set at the annual objective setting meeting will be discussed at the interim appraisal meeting – normally after a period of 6 months. The appraisal process should be supported with continuous support and feedback throughout the year. Employees should be aware of any performance related matters, through the ongoing support and feedback provided by their manager.

- Before meeting with the reviewing manager, the employee should consider the progress made to date against each objective, e.g. milestones achieved, challenges experienced, things which have gone well, things which have not gone so well and actions you could consider taking to make improvements;
- Where an employee has not met objectives, consideration should be given to any factors which may have affected progress, i.e. resources, access to training, unpreventable delays and so on – it is important that reasons for objectives not being met are documented;

- Information discussed and recorded at the interim appraisal meeting will inform the assessment of awards for salary increments or CPD payments. It is therefore important that the Reviewing manager considers any performance related matters, such as attendance or discipline related matters which may be ongoing, and that this forms part of the discussion with the employee at the interim appraisal meeting(s);
- The employee and reviewing manager should also review the mandatory behaviours section, detailed in the [SFRS Values Framework](#) (see [Appendix B – Appraisal Proforma](#)) and discuss how the employee has performed against these at this point of the year.

7.4 Annual Appraisal (End of Year Meeting)

The purpose of the end of cycle appraisal meeting is to discuss and reflect on progress made over the last twelve months.

- Before meeting with the Reviewing manager, the employee should consider progress against each objective, e.g. milestones achieved, and challenges ([Appendix A](#)). The employee and the Reviewing manager should then consider performance against each objective, with a brief explanation recorded against each. Once agreed, the employee and Reviewing manager should sign and date the relevant section;
- Discussion on unmet objectives should also take place and, importantly, how these will be taken forward. Consideration may need to be given to any support the employee needs in order to make improvements/support the delivery of objectives and to any factors which may have affected progress, i.e. resources, access to training, unpreventable delays and so on;
- The employee and reviewing manager should also discuss each of the mandatory behaviours performance competencies, detailed in the [SFRS Values Framework](#) and evaluate how the Employee has performed against these overall.

8. ASSESSMENT OF ANNUAL INCREMENTS AND CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) AWARDS

- 8.1 Annual incremental payments for support staff will take effect from 1 April each year. Annual incremental payments for Deputy Assistant Chief Officers will take effect from 1 July each year.

CPD payments for uniformed staff will take effect from 1 July each year and will be paid monthly. Please refer to the [CPD Payments Policy](#).

It is, therefore, essential that review meetings are concluded in time for payments to be processed (e.g. February completion required for increments due in April; May completion required for uniformed CPD payments or increments due in July).

- 8.2 Annual increments and CPD payments are awarded after the reviewing manager has considered performance in the previous year as being satisfactory, considering identified conduct or capability issues, attendance at work and appraisal outcomes. Annual increments or CPD payments may not be awarded where issues are identified.
- 8.3 Where an annual increment for support staff is not awarded, an exception form (available from People services) must be completed and returned to the Payroll team at SFRS.PayrollCore@firescotland.gov.uk.

Where a CPD payment is not awarded for uniformed staff, the [Decision Not To Award Continual Professional Development Form](#) should be completed and returned to SFRS.PODAdmin@firescotland.gov.uk.

Both forms should be completed in accordance with the timescales noted in [paragraph 8.1](#) of this policy.

- 8.4 Where an annual increment or CPD payment is not awarded and the employee disputes the decision for non-payment, completed appraisal

documents will be passed to a countersigning manager by the Reviewing manager. Countersigning managers should review the appraisal documents and determine whether or not they support the assessment decision made by the Reviewing manager, then sign the relevant section of the forms detailed in [paragraph 8.3](#) above.

- 8.5 It may not be appropriate to follow the standard appraisal procedures for employees who have been absent for a significant proportion of the appraisal year (e.g. maternity, sickness, secondment, career break). When the employee returns to work, the Reviewing manager should hold a meeting with him/her to discuss what support is needed to reintroduce them to the workplace and to agree on objectives. Previous objectives should also be considered in the context of what was reasonable for the employee to have achieved whilst they were at work. A formal appraisal will then be held as usual in the appraisal cycle. Where an employee's attendance at work impacts on their ability to achieve their performance objectives, consideration will be given (in consultation with HR) to the non-payment of an annual increment or CPD payment.
- 8.6 Where an employee starts work with the SFRS part of the way through a review year, objectives should be set upon joining and performance monitored in line with the standard appraisal procedure. In order to qualify for incremental awards, support staff who commence midway through the twelve-month review cycle must both meet all of their performance objectives and have a minimum of six months in the post (before April). For uniformed staff, CPD payments should be awarded subject to minimum requirements specified within the NJC circular 15/07 and the Sixth Edition of the Grey Book. Notification of all newly competent staff (since the last CPD payment cycle) must be submitted by the June payroll deadline to SFRS.PODAdmin@firescotland.gov.uk.

9. CONCERNS ARISING FROM THE APPRAISAL PROCEDURE

- 9.1 If an employee feels that feedback from the Reviewing manager is unfair, the process has not been followed or disputes the decision for non-payment of an annual increment or CPD payment, concerns should be discussed in the first instance with the Reviewing manager to determine the reason for feedback. The employee should provide evidence to support why they disagree.
- 9.2 If the employee is unable to resolve their concerns in this way, they should submit their concerns to the countersigning manager. The [SFRS Grievance Procedure](#) will apply in these circumstances.

10. TRAINING FOR REVIEWING MANAGERS ON APPRAISAL

- 10.1 Managers who are involved in the appraisal process as reviewing managers and/or Countersigning Managers should feel confident in undertaking appraisals within their own teams. There are a range of ways in which managers may broaden their knowledge and skills relating to conducting an effective appraisal:
- Familiarise themselves with the SFRS Appraisal Policy and process – Tips for reviewing managers are available [here](#);
 - Undertake Appraisal training as part of the Leadership Development Framework;
 - Highlight gaps in their own personal development plan to ensure support in relation to the delivery of appraisals is considered and provided;
 - Speak to their HRA Business Partner where they feel they require more general support or help with specific cases.

11. CONSULTATION

11.1 This policy has been developed in consultation with the SFRS's recognised representative bodies and internal business partners.

12. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

12.1 The Appraisal Policy and associated guidance seek to ensure a fair and equitable process in line with the SFRS [Code of Conduct](#) and [Dignity and Respect Policy](#) and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- ensuring equality of opportunity for all employees;
- fostering good relations.

13. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS / REFERENCES

[Appraisal FAQs](#)

[Appraisal Proforma](#)

[Appraisal Process – Guidance for Employees](#)

[Appraisal Process – Guidance for Managers](#)

[Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment – Performance Appraisal Policy](#)

[Performance Appraisal Privacy Notice](#)

[Adhoc Learning Request and Approval Form](#)

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Continual Professional Development \(CPD\) Payments Policy](#)

[Decision Not To Award Continual Professional Development Form](#)

[Dignity and Respect Policy](#)

[Grievance Policy and Procedure](#)

[Learning and Development Review, Analysis and Implementation iHub pages](#)

[Managing Employee Performance Policy](#)

[Our Appraisal Process iHub pages](#)

[Our Values Framework](#)

[Self-Appraisal Questionnaire for Employees](#)

[SMART Objective Setting Guidance](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)





APPENDIX A – SELF APPRAISAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYEES

Performance Appraisal – Self-Appraisal Questionnaire for Employees

To help you to prepare for your Performance Appraisal meeting, you can complete this form as it encourages you to carefully consider how you feel you have performed within your role over the past 12 months. You do not need to submit this to your Manager and may use this for your own guidance and not show it to anyone. However, if you do decide to submit to your Line Manager, then you should do so in advance of your Performance Appraisal meeting, as it will give them time to consider any issues or suggestions you raise.

Tick appropriate answers and provide any additional comments in the space provided against each question to help you build up areas that you'd like to explore and develop further:

EMPLOYEE NAME		PERSONAL REF	
Role		Annual Review	
Date		Interim Review	

YOUR ROLE	YES	NO
Do you know and understand all the requirements of your job? If No, what can you do to change this and whose support do you need?		
Do you have regular opportunities to discuss your work and your ability to undertake it with your line Manager? If No, what can you do to change this and whose support do you need?		
In your opinion, have you been able to achieve the objectives of your role, as agreed and set with your Manager at your last meeting? If No, please use this space to note impacts / obstacles / delays, etc. against each objective:		
Are you aware of the Core Values that the SFRS have adopted? If No, where can you go to get this information to ensure that you are aware of the values and working with them daily?    		

In terms of reliability, such as attendance, punctuality, meeting deadlines, assisting team members how would you rate yourself?

Highly effective

Satisfactory

Need for development

Displays integrity and fairness to all colleagues

Highly effective

Satisfactory

Need for development

How would you rate yourself in relation to understanding and working with the SFRS Values?

Highly effective

Satisfactory

Need for development

List any difficulties you have in carrying out your work. Are there any obstacles outside of your own control which prevents you from performing as effectively as you would like to?

What parts of your job, do you:

(a) *Do best and enjoy the most?*

(b) *Do less well and enjoy the least?*

Have you any skills, aptitudes or knowledge not fully utilised in your job? If so, what are they and how could they be used?

Can you suggest training which would help to improve your performance or development?

Additional Remarks, Notes, Questions or Suggestions