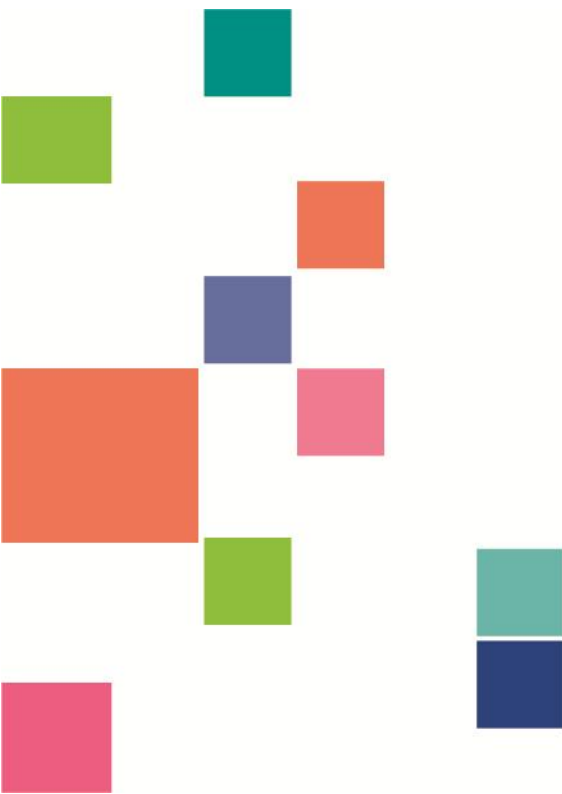




# Development Discussion

## Guidance note

October 2017



## Introduction

The Development Discussion encourages colleagues to have genuine, open, future-focused conversations about development and becoming better at what we do. Your manager is your coach and enabler – there are no scores, no complex competency framework and no link to pay. You and your manager are free to fully explore the past to inform the future in a truly developmental and constructive way. We have created a form to help prompt the discussion but you can agree with your manager about how to complete it and how much or how little detail you need to include. It is your development so you own it.

You will have the opportunity to have a Development Discussion with your manager, using this format, twice a year but your development should be an ongoing discussion with your manager throughout the year. Your regular supervision meetings will continue between Development Discussions and you and your manager should bring relevant topics from your supervision to include in these discussions.

## Using the document to structure your discussion

### **Section 1: Summary of key highlights and successes from the period under review (what was delivered and how)**

In this section you are considering the learning from the review period; that includes things that have gone well and not so well. You need to capture the learning from mistakes so you don't repeat them and the learning from successes so you can repeat them. You should complete this section 10 days before the meeting and send it to them.

Because how we deliver our work is as important as what we deliver, you should also provide a summary of your progress in meeting your objectives. You should consider:

- your contribution at team, business group, organisational and stakeholder level
- how the work you have done links to the strategic plan
- how you are demonstrating our SSSC Values
- how you are demonstrating the SSSC leadership competencies.

Using the past to inform the future can be very helpful in assessing what went well, what proved harder than expected and why this was the case, but be careful it doesn't take over the discussion. The important thing is to capture what you have learned.

## **Section 2: Leadership competencies - knowledge, skill and behaviours we need to focus on to successfully deliver on goals**

Building on the previous section, discuss the development and support needed to deliver your planned work for the next period successfully. Use the Leadership and Management Competency Framework to identify one area you think you are delivering competently and another you think you can develop and how you can do this. What do I want to be doing in the future? What can I help people with?

## **Section 3: How you demonstrate the SSSC Values**

This section gives you the opportunity to think about our organisational values and how you embed these in your day to day work, approaches to work and your interactions. You will build on this and work through the values so you can develop your understanding and how you apply them. In this section you should provide information on specific examples of when you have demonstrated the SSSC values in your work.

## **Section 4: Learning and development journey**

This is an opportunity for you to reflect on your learning and development in the last six months, whether formal or informal, what you have taken from this and how you plan to, or have, put this into practice.

## **Section 5: Career discussion**

This is your opportunity to discuss your role and future career progression and how you can develop these. Maybe you are happy doing your current role and want to continue to improve and be the best you can. Or perhaps you are interested in doing new things or progression. Perhaps you are not sure. However it is helpful to regularly ask yourself this question. In this section you consider what long term development you need to help your current career ambitions.

Also think about what skills, knowledge and experience you have that other people might find beneficial.

## **Section 6: Your skills and talent**

As a learning organisation, the SSSC needs to understand the knowledge, skill and experience of its staff. This section provides you with an opportunity to highlight your skills and knowledge with the potential to share this with colleagues and support them in their learning.

## **Thinking about the next six months**

Reviewing the previous sections, where you have identified your successes and development areas, you can summarise your actions here. Discuss with your manager how you will achieve this and what support you might need to be successful.

## Development Discussion Dos

### **It's a dialogue not a monologue**

Both people are full participants in the conversation – equals engaging in a collaborative dialogue. Both come suitably prepared to listen and speak, having taken time to reflect beforehand. Appendix 1 suggests some self-reflection questions you can use to help you think about your development needs.

### **Keep it positive in nature and optimistic in tone**

Identify some of your key successes and achievements during the recent past and use this as a springboard for visualising the future and finding ways to achieve your goals. Even areas where you believe you could have done better, view them as lessons that will help you improve your performance.

### **Focus on how the right conditions can be created for good performance**

If you have valuable information about issues you're experiencing that make delivery harder than it should be, use it to have a discussion on how to solve problems, remove obstacles and agree the important things that need to be delivered.

### **Create an environment and tone in which both of you can give and receive feedback using honest self-assessment and candour**

You can never change what you don't acknowledge.

### **Be eager to work collaboratively**

It's a shared responsibility to succeed and both you and your manager should look at issues that can be addressed at individual, team, business group, organisational and client/stakeholder level to aid better outcomes.

## Development Discussion Don'ts

### **Negative feedback, clumsily delivered**

This can cause defensiveness or generate a rebuttal. It derails the primary aim of inspiring the person hearing the feedback and becomes all consuming. Be careful about the volume and tone of this type of feedback.

### **A heavy focus on the past**

This can feel like a report-card of prior performance and behaviour, causing anxiety and preventing an open, productive discussion taking place.

### **Any attempt at scoring, rating performance or evaluation**

The brief review of the past should simply be to identify learning points, recognise successes and use the learning to inform future plans and development.

## Frequently asked questions

### **When can a development discussion take place and who can call it?**

A development meeting should take place six monthly, if you are new to the organisation this will not be arranged until your induction is complete; so around six months after you start.

### **Where do I send the completed form?**

You should send forms should to HR: [HR@sssc.uk.com](mailto:HR@sssc.uk.com) This is your development and your form so you should make sure you have the document saved and accessible to you. The HR team will use the forms to pick up information on training and development and to support talent management.

### **How is poor performance managed?**

The process is designed for the vast majority of people working across the organisation who do a good job, are conscientious and work hard. So it does not include dealing with poor performance.

Although Development Discussions do not advocate ignoring performance problems, using it to tackle poor performance doesn't work in practice. Word gets out that this isn't an open forum to discuss personal vulnerabilities, disappointments or why work seems hard to deliver. People start worrying about the meetings, become anxious, guarded and may become reluctant to openly discuss areas for improvement.

We use a different process for more serious underperformance – that is, when performance spirals down. If you are a manager and have concerns about an individual's performance, speak with them as soon as possible. Don't wait until it is an issue, have a conversation to see if they need any additional support or training. If there is no improvement, a manager can speak to HR about the options and support available.

### **Is there any training available to get the best from Development Discussions?**

We'll be organising coaching sessions later in the year where you can come along and ask questions about how to get the best out of your discussions.

## **Other resources are available to you**

Use these links to learn more about how it can make a real difference and how to do it well:

[Coaching Channel video clips](#)

[SSSC Coaching Learning Resource](#)

[SSSC Mentoring guidance](#)

[SSSC Leadership and Management Competency Framework](#)

[SSSC Values](#)

## **Appendix 1: Self-reflection questions**

### **Summary of key highlights and successes**

- What has gone well?
- What has been difficult for me? Why do I think it has been difficult?
- What could I have done better? Or differently?
- What have I been learning? How have I been applying my learning?
- How well have I been collaborating with the team and the organisation
- How do I demonstrate the SSSC Values in my daily work?

### **Bullet list of what we've agreed needs doing for the next period**

- Do new objectives need to be set or existing ones amended?

### **Knowledge, skill and behaviours we need to focus on to successfully deliver on the agreed list**

- What development or support do I need to help me achieve my objectives?
- What do I expect to be most challenging about my goals for this review period?

### **What do I want to do in the future?**

- If I could have more time in the work day for one thing of my choice, what would it be?
- If I could lead or get involved in one project (either present or future), what would it be and why?
- What situations make me feel most creative and engaged?
- What sorts of development or learning opportunities don't I have but wish I did?

### **Whose feedback would I like?**

- Whose feedback would help me to improve my performance?
- How often would I like to receive feedback?
- What do I do well that I don't know about?
- How can I be a better team member/colleague for you?

### **Additional questions**

- What about our team's environment makes it more easy/difficult for me to do my job?
- How could our team improve the way we work?