

Performance management

Reviews and appraisals

Performance reviews are a chance to discuss someone's work, including:

- what they are doing well
- any areas for improvement
- whether they need more support or training
- their career and any development objectives

They are sometimes known as 'appraisals'.

Employers should conduct performance reviews on a regular basis for anyone with the [legal status of employee](#). It's a good idea to do them at least once a year.

Someone is not likely to be an employee if they're:

- an agency worker
- a casual worker
- on a zero-hours contract

Employers might choose to conduct performance reviews for those with the [legal status of worker](#). This could help maintain good working relationships and support workers to develop.

How to review performance

How employers review their employees' performance will be different depending on the needs of their organisation.

Performance reviews might be based on a combination of things, like whether an employee is:

- meeting or has met any agreed objectives
- demonstrating the right behaviours in their work
- following an agreed development plan if there is one, for example by doing any ongoing training

They can help resolve any performance issues, by giving employees a chance to ask for support.

It's important to keep a written record of what is discussed. This should be shared with the employee afterwards.

Alongside more formal performance reviews, managers should still talk to employees informally about their performance on a regular basis. For example, through:

- sharing regular feedback
- coaching

- regular check-ins, sometimes known as one-to-ones

Setting objectives

Objectives should be fair and reflect the employee's usual tasks and workload. But they might also stretch them to develop in certain areas.

It's a good idea for objectives to be:

- specific – by being clear about what the employee will actually do
- measurable – so you know whether they've been achieved
- achievable – they should be realistic
- relevant – to the employee's job and responsibilities
- time-bound – with a reasonable time-frame for achieving them

These are also known as 'SMART objectives'.

Example of a SMART objective

An employee sets an objective with their manager to reduce how long they take to respond to customer emails. They agree to:

- reduce the time taken to respond by 48 hours
- do this over the next 3 months

They talk to their manager about how to achieve this. They decide to:

- send automatic responses to confirm they've received the email
- use templates to reduce the time it takes to write a response

The employee discusses the progress of this objective with their manager in regular check-ins. They also agree to review it together at the end of the 3 months.