Factsheet

How to give meaningful feedback

You have been asked to provide feedback to a colleague or your line manager via the on-line 360 degree feedback tool. Here's how to do it effectively.

These guidelines will enable you to give feedback that will provide great value and benefit to the person who has asked you. It also tells you about the process steps you will need to take.

CFRS are investing in this process as part of a long term training and development initiative to make the organisation better, so this feedback is important. It will help the participant build a development plan and it be may also linked to a leadership/management development course that is being provided by the organisation.

Confidentiality

You can be assured of complete confidentiality. We have taken a number of steps to ensure this:

- The on-line 360° feedback tool is managed by an external third party provider. Nobody within your organisation will have access to your individual response.

- Scores and answers are only identified by respondent groups e.g. "direct reports" or "colleagues" and the report does not attribute anything to individuals. The only exception to this rule is the line manager's feedback.

Responding to a request for feedback – the process.

Your request for feedback will come in the form of an automated email containing a link to the online questionnaire. The link is securely coded so that only you can access the questionnaire. Read the email carefully and click the <questionnaire link> to access the online questionnaire. You do not need to login to the system to complete a respondent feedback questionnaire.

You must answer every question, including the narrative text questions. The system will not accept your input as complete if any questions are left blank. We recommend that you fill in the questionnaire fairly quickly without dwelling on each question too much, as your initial response is normally the right one.

You can save your work at any time but you must keep the email or you will not be able to access it again. If you lose it, then you can ask for it to be resent.

Once the 360 report is completed it will be locked and you cannot access it again. However, in the event of a serious mistake you should contact a Leadership Development Advisor who can arrange for it to be unlocked.

Completing the feedback questionnaire

When completing the questionnaire please consider the following best practice points:

1. Give yourself adequate time.
This is an important task so please allow time to complete the feedback in a thoughtful way. Try to find a quiet place away from distractions and remember to complete it in the requested time – poring

too long over each question only confuses matters and reduces the quality of your feedback.

2. Be open and honest.
Feedback is only as useful as it is honest. The 360 feedback process is a development tool and the person seeking your feedback wants to develop their skills and competencies. Please be candid and constructive. If you have feedback that may be seen as negative you should be open and honest whilst remaining sensitive as to how the message will be received. Give thought to how you phrase your comments.

3. Be specific
At the end of the questionnaire you will be asked to describe what you would like to see the person do more of and less of - strengths and development needs. This section is often the most valuable so spend time here and give as much information as you can.

Avoid giving one or two word answers as this does not give enough detail to be useful to the participant. Be as specific as possible.

Examples:

"Better delegation" is of very limited usefulness.

"Follow up more regularly when delegating tasks" is far more specific and informative and hence useful.

"Teamwork" is not helpful feedback as it conveys no useful information.

"Share more of your technical expertise with colleagues" is specific and helpful.

4. Think about long term trends
Avoid giving feedback that relates just to the last time you had any dealings with the individual or to one-off incidents as it may be very biased, particularly if it relates to an especially good or bad interaction.

Think more generally and over the past 6 – 12 months when making your assessment. However, don't give feedback that relates to longer than 12 months ago – it's likely to be out of date.

5. Use the available scores.
Use the appropriate scores from the scale for each question. Giving someone the mid-score or the highest score all the way down the questionnaire provides no useful information at all. If you do not feel qualified to answer a particular question you have the option to tick "Don't Know" and that particular response will be discounted in the feedback report.