Using a personal development plan

A personal development plan helps you manage your own development.

Managing your own development helps you to achieve your goals.

This session will help you prepare and use a personal development plan (PDP). You will find that the work you have done on the two sessions Assessing your own performance and Taking responsibility for your own development will help you complete this session more effectively. The PDP simply asks you to:

- Identify where you are at the moment
- Identify where you want to be
- Identify how you get there

The reason for using a PDP is that it is an action plan - a plan of the actions that you will take to achieve your development goals. You can still take those actions without a plan, but planning means you are more likely to be clear about what your goals are and how best to achieve them. That in turn means you are more likely to achieve them. A briefing on completing your PDP is on page 2 and then the PDP itself is on pages 3 to 5.
Taking responsibility for your own development also asked you to think about your career goals. What kind of development do you want to focus on? Do you want to develop your leadership role to become a manager? Would you like to develop your technical knowledge and skills—the knowledge and skills relevant to what your team do? Or would you like to move into another type of job, or even into a different kind of organisation?

You also need to think about the time scales you are planning for. The most important goals are the long term because they set the direction in which you want to go, over the next few years. The medium term is your goal for the next year or so, during which time you should have made some progress towards your longer term goal. The short term, over the next few months, represents the first steps on this journey and addresses immediate development needs.

Where are you at the moment?

In the session *Taking responsibility for your own development* you were asked to carry out a SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis is an assessment of your current:

- **Strengths**
- **Opportunities**
- **Weaknesses**
- **Threats**

Strengths and Weaknesses are personal. They are your judgement about what things you are good at and what you need to improve. Opportunities and Threats are external, in the environment where you work. They could be opportunities for training and career development, promotion or a new job, or threats of possible redundancies or cuts in training. Review your personal SWOT and copy the results onto the table on page 3.

Where do you want to be?

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How do you get there?

Achieving your goals may need you to think about changing your behaviour and performance at work and what kind of learning and development activities you can engage in. You may not know about all the opportunities available, so your short term goals may include finding out what is available. You also need to think about whose help or support you need to be able to do some of these things.
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My PDP - Where am I at the moment?

My personal strengths - what I'm good at in my role

My weaknesses - what I'm not so good at

Opportunities to develop and progress my career

Threats facing me in developing and progressing my career
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My PDP - Where do I want to be?

In the long term - over the next few years

In the medium term - in the next year or so

In the short term - in the next few months
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do I need to change about my own behaviour or performance?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What training or development do I need to undertake?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What experience of different activities, tasks or roles do I need?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What help or support do I need to do this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How well do you use the skills in this session?

- Review your PDP and check that it truly reflects your development goals.
- Is there anything that you have missed out or that is overly-optimistic?

1. Read the list of skills. Tick the boxes to show your strengths and weaknesses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>strengths &lt;-&gt; weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I'm good at this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I'm quite good at this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I'm not so good at this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I'm quite poor at this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identifying where you are now</td>
<td>☐  ☐  ☐  ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identifying where you want to be</td>
<td>☐  ☐  ☐  ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identifying how you get there</td>
<td>☐  ☐  ☐  ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Do you want to improve any of these skills?

3. How do you plan to improve the skills you listed in question 2? (You might want to discuss this with your line manager or your tutor/mentor/coach.)