

Talent Performance: the PDR process supporting HMICFRS 'Outstanding' rating for Thames Valley Police



"Thames Valley Police is outstanding in how well it uses its resources. The force understands the current skills of its workforce and leaders, and what it will need in the future.

The personal development review process is used well and the force maintains one overall database that details the skills of each member of the workforce. The force also conducted an operational skills audit to ensure the workforce has the right skills to operate within the new policing model."

Thames Valley Police PEEL Assessment 2017

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*Alison Sercombe,
People Services
Partner-Leadership,
Thames Valley Police*

Thames Valley Police (TVP) uses Talent Performance® to support its PDR process, linking it to its use of Talent 360®

Challenge: the changing needs of the force and making sure performance is reviewed in line with Winsor Report recommendations

Annual review is a key part of good performance management. It identifies if performance has gone off track and highlights development opportunities. In addition, the Winsor Report recommended that a performance review, or PDR, should take place before any incremental pay review. The challenge facing all police forces is that very few performance software systems enable this unrestricted performance review timetable.

Already highlighted by HMIC for its best practice in talent management, Thames Valley Police sought to get ahead of the game and deploy a system which would meet the Winsor Report recommendation, offer 'anywhere, anytime' access for its people and give it the analytics it needed to inform its talent decisions.

Solution: adoption of Talent Performance, online performance review

It was time for a change. As with many performance management systems, the software TVP had been using was not capable of 'secure access anywhere'. And it could neither create the instant summary reports nor provide the range of analysis and insight the force wanted. The force was already using the configurable Talent 360® for spotting those with the potential to develop as leaders within the organisation and so it chose to deploy Talent Performance®.

Both the 360 and performance modules Thames Valley Police uses are standalone systems within the Talent Cloud® system, but employees access both from the same log-in home page. To Alison Sercombe, People Services Partner – Leadership, at Thames Valley Police, this is crucial.

"It's essential that development planning and performance are linked – and that our people can see the interconnections. When one of our officers or police staff completes a 360, it informs his or her CPD pages in the same software. The requirement for all officers to have a CPD is already firmly embedded within TVP – and we've seen real growth in individual ownership of career planning."



Outcome: improved individual ownership, supported managers and access to strong management information

“An appraisal which doesn’t produce management information is meaningless when looking for change.

We know that Talent Performance® gives our people line of sight of their own performance and signposts their development, and gives the leadership team the information needed to inform decisions.”

Stronger management information – The instant, real-time and accurate reports on offer within Talent Performance® enable Alison and the senior leadership team to drill down into the data to view trends and progress across the organisation. Alison comments, “Users have found the dashboard very useful; individuals can see their own progress and what they are working on, and managers are able to check on team performance and progress. As a leadership team we’re able to see who is falling behind in their objectives.”

Supporting the changing role of the manager – The relationship between managers and their team within Thames Valley Police is changing; managers are beginning to understand that their role is to manage their teams and their performance. Thames Valley Police positions their PDR process as the writing up of this relationship and not a form-filling exercise, and that the performance conversation is an on-going dialogue. Alison observes, “We’ve found that since moving to Talent Performance, the PDR is written more thoughtfully, more concisely and is better structured – and that’s due to the fields available and the structure within the system. One of the great things about Talent Performance is the ability to customise the system for us as HR in terms of process, for the organisation in terms of language and objectives and for the individual him or herself. It’s the seemingly small things such as uploading your own photo and customising your own page that has helped us to get ownership of the system!”

Increased ownership of progression and promotion - A key thread of the investment in 360 degree feedback and a more robust PDR system is the move towards a greater emphasis on individual ownership of career progression and performance. “Introducing Talent Performance® clearly has operational and time savings, but it is also about making the shift towards greater ownership and accountability for one’s own objective achievement and career development. It’s about police officers and police staff now pulling development and opportunities towards them rather than having them pushed in their direction. Our people are beginning to understand that development isn’t about attending a training course it’s about seeking out opportunities for shadowing, being mentored or being seconded to gain experience in other areas. It’s a real cultural change.”

Access anywhere - Being able to access, update and complete the review away from the station means that there is no longer a need for room bookings or additional down time to be scheduled. In the future, as police cars become Wi-Fi hotspots, Alison sees that reviews will be done on-the-job and accessed via a handheld device. Greater secure accessibility also means that partners beyond the TVP internal network can access the system securely to complete reviews.

Improved consensus of ratings - Thames Valley Police rates its people across 3 levels of performance and has a high degree of consensus across the ratings for any individual. “This consensus is brought about not only because of the shared understanding and openness within the organisation about what makes for an ‘achieved’, ‘not achieved’ or ‘exceeded’ performance level, but the software facilitates arriving at the final rating.”

In summary

Going forward, Alison sees the review being used as a CPD record of evidence and, as tablets and smartphones become more widely used off-site, instantly updating, the PDR will become a ‘live’ account of current performance.

Alison sums up, “Annual performance review is key to ensuring that our people are meeting and exceeding the expectations we and the public have – and for spotting our stars alongside commanders’ recommendations. But it isn’t a tick box exercise. The move to online performance review supports the digitisation and professionalization of policing and the change in how learning and performance management is delivered. We are tighter, sharper and more mobile since adopting Talent Performance®.”

Talent Cloud®. Breakthrough software. Raise expectations.

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E: info.request@head-light.co.uk • W: www.head-light.co.uk