

## Reflective coaching questions to help managers prepare for performance conversations

This guide helps managers approach under-performance in a way that is supportive, fair, consistent with the policy, and grounded in the Values and Behaviours. Each section includes:

- Purpose
- Manager coaching prompts

### 1. Preparing for the Conversation

#### Purpose

Ensure the manager enters the discussion calmly, with evidence, clarity, and a mindset of partnership.

#### Coaching Prompts

- What specific, factual examples from the recent period will you use?
- How will you communicate these clearly and without judgement?
- What outcome do you want from this conversation?
- How will you create a safe, private, respectful environment?

### 2. Opening the Conversation

#### Purpose

Set a constructive tone, balancing clarity with compassion.

#### Coaching Prompts

- How will you communicate your intent to support as well as clarify concerns?
- How will you avoid overwhelming or surprising the individual?

### 3. Presenting the Evidence

#### Purpose

Ensure the discussion is grounded in facts, not interpretations or assumptions.

#### Coaching Prompts

- What evidence do you have?
- How will you explain the impact on people, systems, or timelines?
- How will you avoid generalisations?

#### **4. Inviting the Employee's Perspective**

Purpose

Understand root causes before taking any next steps.

Coaching Prompts

- What open questions will you ask?
- How will you ensure you listen actively, without interrupting?
- How will you manage silence?

#### **5. Managing Emotions Constructively**

Purpose

Respond compassionately without losing focus on performance.

Coaching Prompts

- How will you acknowledge emotion while maintaining boundaries?
- What phrases will help you remain supportive but clear?
- How will you provide time and space if needed?

#### **6. Joint Problem-Solving**

Purpose

Collaborate to identify what might help performance improve.

Coaching Prompts

- What options spanning 70:20:10 can you explore?
- What strengths or successes can be built on?
- How can you co-create solutions rather than prescribe them?

#### **7. Creating a Clear Improvement Plan**

Purpose

Translate the conversation into measurable commitments.

Coaching Prompts

- What specific expectations will you set?



- What will success look like?
- How will you schedule regular reviews?
- How will you ensure the employee understands and agrees?

## **8. Closing the Conversation**

Purpose

End with clarity, reassurance, and shared commitment.

Coaching Prompts

- How will you summarise key points and next steps?
- How will you affirm your support?

## **9. Follow-Up and Ongoing Coaching**

Purpose

Sustain momentum and support consistent improvement.

Coaching Prompts

- How will you recognise progress?
- How will you address slippage early?
- How will you prepare for review discussions?

