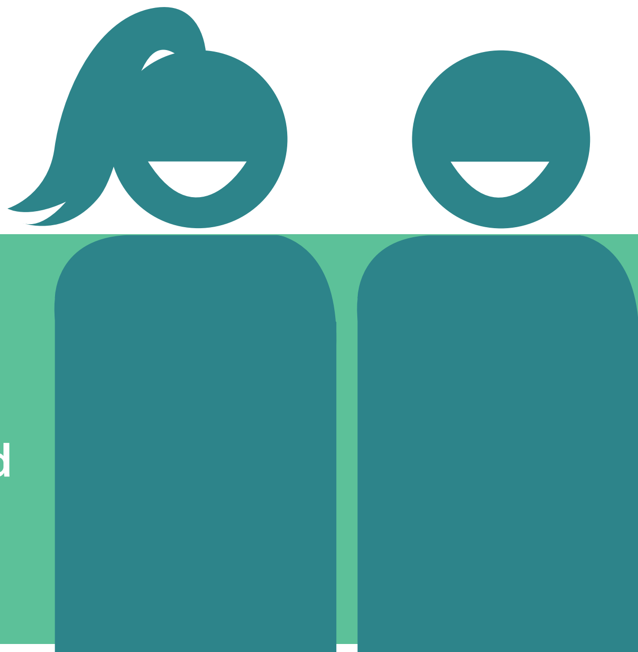
Essential line management

A step-by-step guide to line management



The United Reformed Church

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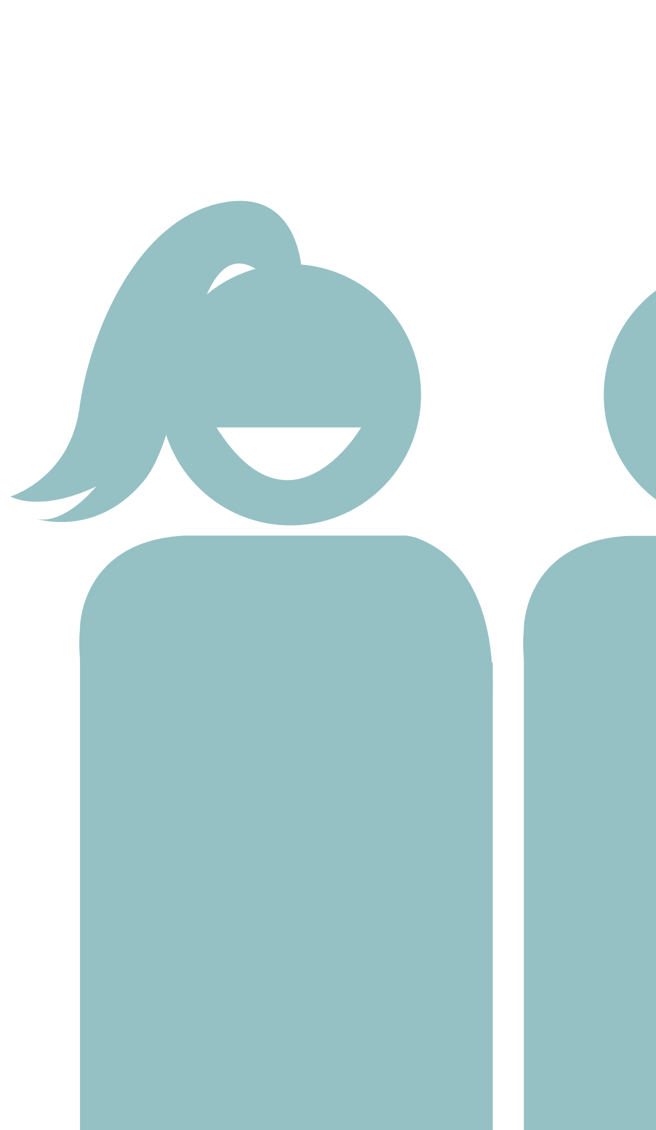


Why manage? It's a good question …

Definition

A manager is the person responsible for planning and directing the work of a group of individuals, monitoring their work, and taking corrective action when necessary. Managers may direct workers directly or they may direct several other managers and/or supervisors who direct the workers. The manager must be familiar with the work of all the staff member groups s/he supervises but does not need to be an expert in any or all of the areas.

> 'It is more important for the manager to know how to manage the workers than to know how to do their work well.'
> **www.healthknowledge.org.uk**

Why do organisations appoint managers?

Essentially to:

- control output
- cascade information
- delegate responsibility
- manage budgets
- control quality
- ensure everyone's heading in the same direction
- manage legal requirements
- manage identity/reputation
- manage relationships – internal and external.

Managing is rewarding and, whether you manage one or a number of people, in doing so you will encourage and support others, see staff develop, help others solve problems and, as part of a team perhaps, work towards a common goal, improving process and seeing objectives achieved.

Managing can, however, bring challenges – inlcuding dealing with conflict, giving difficult messages, dealing with difficult behaviour, not knowing what you can and can't do, feeling you have not got enough experience nor the time needed to manage effectively.

> Think of an individual in your experience who many have managed you in the past – were they good at the job and if so what was it that made you experience their management in a positive way?

Some of the characteristics of being a good manager:

Fair	Consistent
Calm	Accessible
Has time	Courteous
Organised	Listens
Honest	Integrity
Confidentiality	Clear
Considerate	Communicates effectively
Self-aware	Decisive.
Supportive	

There are many facets to managing staff. Some of the tasks involved are one-to-one meetings appraisals or personal development reviews (planning, notes etc), following up on actions, being available, answering queries, giving direction and checking how people are – this all takes time.

Time is the biggest and probably the most important factor in line managing staff – but it is time well invested!

Some of the tools used to manage staff are induction and probation periods, one-to-one and team meetings, objectives, appraisals/personal development reviews and coaching/mentoring.

The 'legal bit'

All employers have legal responsibilities when employing people and line managers share these responsibilities. There are legal requirements around:

- health and safety – such as carrying out risk assessment and ensuring a safe working environment

- the Working Time Directive – rules regarding rest periods and holidays
- the National Living Wage – ensuring staff are paid according to the law
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) – maintain confidentiality and the right to privacy;
- the Equalities Act – ensuring equality, diversity and being aware of discrimination.

> The General Assembly of the URC in 2008 agreed to encourage churches to pay according to the Living Wage Foundation (LWF).

Relevant documents

As an employer there are various relevant documents that should be in place when employing staff:

1. Contract of employment
2. Job descriptions
3. Expected standards
4. A staff handbook
5. Policies and procedures.

1. Contract of employment

A contract of employment is a legal requirement under the Employment Rights Act 1996 consisting of 'implicit' terms, i.e. Duty of Mutual trust and confidence and 'explicit' terms, i.e. hours of work, location, holidays etc. As legally binding documents, any variation of terms to contracts of employment should follow a formal process and must be mutually agreed.

2. Job description

A job description should provide an overview of the job listing the main duties and responsibilities but should not be comprehensive. Job descriptions are living documents, evolving over time and therefore are always out of date! A job description should also define the 'how' as well as the 'what' of a job and a framework of what is expected helps with this.

3. Expected standards

It is worth giving some thought to the expected standards that you, your church or organisation would expect of an employee. By setting out standards around customer service for example, you as a manager immediately have a tool to help you manage poor performance as and when necessary.

The framework could identify 'how' staff do their jobs and may contain these elements:

- communication
- equality and diversity
- health, safety and security
- customer service
- personal and people development
- data protection.

You may wish to have two levels for each standard depending on the nature of the job, not just seniority.

> If you need a copy of the Expected Standards, please contact the Human Resources Office.

4. Staff handbooks

Handbooks vary from organisation – but typically include:

- codes of conduct e.g. dress code
- statements about the organisation's approach to employment
- policy summaries
- information on where to go for help
- administrative issues
- sickness reporting procedures
- 'house style', communications protocols etc.

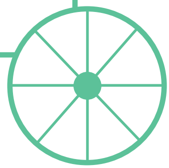
5. Policies and procedures

Policies are the tools the employer uses to set out rules and processes for dealing with any aspect of employment; some of which will contain legal obligations:

- capability – what to do if an employee is unable to do his/her job
- disciplinary – what to do if an employee's behaviour does not meet the required standard

- sickness – reporting procedures and how to manage sickness absence
- IT – defines standards required when using IT, email, social media etc.
- flexible working – how to deal with a request for flexible working.

Don’t reinvent the wheel!
HR at Church House have template policies to help you.



As a manager you need confidence – you should acknowledge the authority that is inherent in your role and recognise that you are empowered to give direction and instructions to your staff/team.

You should set the standards for your department/team/direct report(s) and get to know your staff. Confidence comes with practice and experience, but …

Be prepared to admit to mistakes – and learn from them!

Summary:

- plan your time
- be aware of legal responsibilities
- familiarise yourself with specific terms and conditions e.g. hours of work
- keep job descriptions relevant
- familiarise yourself with relevant policies
- seek help when you need it.

Get it right from the start!
Processes to help …

1 Induction

Why?

The purpose of the induction process is to ensure effective integration of the employee into their role and the organisation; research demonstrates effective inductions have benefits for both employers and employees, specifically with regard to retaining individuals.

Who needs one?

All individuals in new roles – either a new employee or an existing employee in a new role. The actual programme and length can vary depending on the needs of the employee.

Without an effective induction there can be lack of engagement with the organisation, poor relationships with both line manager and colleagues, reduced productivity, poor quality of work and low morale – and eventually the new employee leaves (resignation or dismissal).

What should be included?

What to include very much depends on the situation/role, but could include:

- orientation (physical) – describing where facilities are; meeting staff within team/department
- orientation (organisational) – explaining how the employee fits into the wider team/department
- health and safety information – a legal requirement
- IT information – login details etc
- tour of building – introductions to staff etc
- clear outline of job requirements and setting objectives
- explanation of key policies and procedures

- meeting with key staff and customers/clients
- support from buddy and/or mentor (coaching)
- details of organisation’s history, culture and values.

For example:
Line manager: orientation, job role and setting objectives, key policies and procedures, meeting staff and customers
HR: paperwork returned (i.e. P45/6) training courses (if required)
Facilities: health and safety information; work place assessments
IT: PC requirements, login details etc.
Education and learning: ‘welcome to URC’ course.

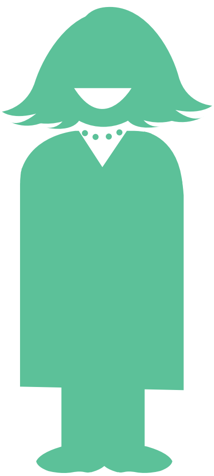
It is helpful right from the outset to think about what your new employee/ team member needs to learn and focus on – and setting objectives will help to identify this.

That well know acronym: SMART

S specific
M measurable
A achievable
R realistic
T timebound

Tips

- The induction process begins at the recruitment stage and continues into employment
- it can take anywere between a few weeks and a few months (depending on the role)
- people can only take in so much information at any given time and should not be overloaded
- planning is very important – see ‘Induction Guidelines’, available from the Human Resources Office.



Agnes, a new PA in the team is given an objective: ‘Improve the procedures of the office’

Is this a SMART objective?

How do I manage performance?

2 Probation

The probationary period is a period of time at the beginning of employment or a new role that has a dual purpose:

- to allow the employer to assess the suitability of the employee in their role
- to allow the employee to assess if the job is right for them.

Typical duration is three or six months which may depend on the role and could be as much as 12 months if the role requires a full cycle of work e.g. an academic year, a full financial/tax year.

A structured form is usually used to record objectives, details of learning achieved, any improvements that are required and if further training has been identified.

Hold an initial meeting (during first week) and set dates for the first review meeting at three months and final review meeting at six months (or other appropriate timescales).

If you need a copy of a probationary form, please contact the Human Resources Office.

What do I need to do?

During the probationary period, the line manager should:

- conduct regular one-to-ones with the employee
- keep a record of the meetings
- ensure feedback is given regularly
- ensure ongoing support (and training if necessary) is provided
- conduct formal reviews (normally carried out at the beginning, half way through and at the end of the identified period).

The meeting

The outcome of probation should not be a surprise. Prepare.
If you are unsure whether someone is making the grade, seek advice before the meeting takes place.

The meeting provides an opportunity to discuss the steps to be taken if the employee is likely to need an extension of the probationary period, or if they have not reached the required standard.

What information should be covered?

- review objectives set and whether they have been met
- if any areas of performance, conduct or attendance require improvement
- relationships with line manager, colleagues and customers
- training and development needs
- if the employee has passed their probationary period and whether it needs to be extended (final review only).

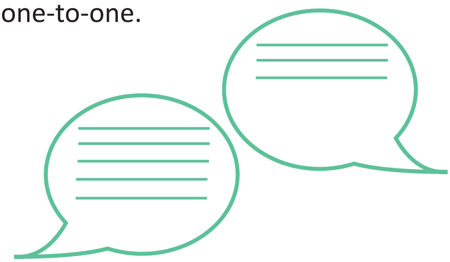
3 One-to-one meetings

Open lines of communication are key to a successful and effective line management relationship. Meeting regularly with staff is one of the tools by which we manage. It:

- helps in building a relationship
- fosters effective communication
- is a two-way process.

Meetings are to be held regularly, every two weeks for a new employee and at least once a month for others. Make sure:

- they are time bound – set a limit
- take notes – use a template for ease
- don't forget – schedule a date for the next one-to-one.



4 Personal development reviews

What is your immediate reaction to a staff appraisal?

Personal development reviews (PDRs) are a more formal part of the ongoing day-to-day management of an employee’s performance.

They provide benefits not only for the employee but also for the manager and the organisation as a whole.

Employee: by providing an opportunity of quality focussed time with their line manager, allowing space to express opinion, ask questions, clarify job role, gain a better understanding of how their role fits into the organisation, to discuss future plans and development, identify training needs and to offer thanks/praise and receive formal recognition.
Managers: benefit from the process by allowing time with individuals to give thanks and praise, communicate departmental objectives/changes, discuss needs and aspirations, identify/review training needs, hear suggestions for improvement and take feedback about their own performance. They are also a tool in managing change.
Organisation: by providing a formal record of performance and an opportunity to communicate plans and expectations, understand the skills and aspirations of the workforce, help identify trends, opportunities for improvement, training needs and to improve morale.

Why do managers not relish appraisals?

Because:

- they're time consuming … 'I'm too busy'
- they are not prepared
- they haven't got the facts they need
- they're not sure how the employee will react
- they have a difficult message to give
- they lack confidence.

Process

Planning for a PDR meeting is essential – it should be held in a private space, ensuring no interruptions, and sufficient time must be allowed.

- make sure you know what the employee's job description says
- review objectives and achievement
- gather examples of their work (good and bad)
- plan what you want to say and how you will say it
- consider the objectives you think might be appropriate for the coming reporting year
- manage the meeting to keep it relevant.

> It's a two way conversation but …
> employee speaks 60%
> manager speaks 40%!

Giving and receiving feedback

Feedback is a key tool in managing people – here are some tips:

- use open questions
- be specific
- if necessary, criticise behaviour not the person
- listen actively
- seek clarity – 'you are saying that...'
- receive feedback calmly – seek examples.

Be aware of:

- jumping to conclusions
- talking too much
- discrimination – direct or indirect
- horns or halo effect
- not listening
- unconscious bias.

After the meeting

Write up additional notes that have been added in the meeting and complete the forms with signatures from both the employee and the manager. Ensure any follow up happens and address any training needs that have been identified. Review the set objectives on an ongoing basis in one-to-ones.

Put dates in a diary! Make sure that you have the next review meeting scheduled.

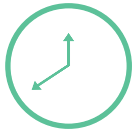
Golden rules:

- preparation, preparation, preparation
- no surprises
- be specific ... listen
- manage the meeting.

Working hours

A manager needs to be clear about the exact contractual hours of team members, which may vary between individuals, and should be aware of what hours they are actually working in order to manage attendance effectively.

The team need to understand any ‘rules’ about breaks, working overtime etc. It is advisable to keep records – this helps in monitoring attendance and to challenge behaviour where necessary.



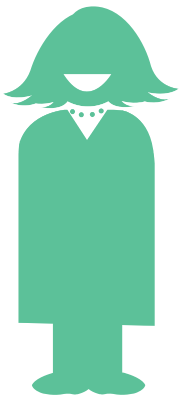
Flexible working

Flexible working is not flexi time*, which is a common misconception! A flexible working policy sets out a procedure whereby employees can request changes to their contractual terms and conditions around working patterns and is a statutory right.

This may include part-time work, compressed hours, home working or job sharing.

Any employee who has worked continuously for at least 26 weeks and has not made a successful application in preceding 12 months is eligible to submit a flexible working request (FWR).

There are explicit timescales for dealing with FWR’s and specific grounds on which the employer can refuse a request.



Agnes wants to work fewer hours on two days a week – what should she do?

*Flexi time is where ‘core hours’ of working are set and staff can come and go at any time of any working day, and can accrue flexi time off work.

An employee seeking to request flexible working should put the request in writing, explaining the reason for the request and detailing the proposed changes, start date etc. The request should also include an explanation of the possible effects on business and how it can be dealt with.

What do you do?

As a manager you should give proper consideration to the request and arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss within 28 days of the request. You should follow this with a notification of the decision in writing within 14 days of the meeting.

It is advisable to build in a trial period and ensure that a review takes place within three to six months of the start of the new working arrangement.

Can you refuse a request?

Only on the grounds of:

- additional costs
- detrimental effect to service provision e.g. location
- inability to reorganise work
- mismatch between work and periods of work proposed
- planned structural changes.

The employee has the right to appeal against a refusal to work flexibly, which has to be in writing within 14 days of the decision. An appeal hearing should be heard within 14 days of receipt of appeal and the appeal decision notified within 14 days of appeal meeting.

Managing absence

Holidays

What rules do you have in your department/office/team? What rules would it be helpful to have?

Paid time off from work is a statutory requirement for any employee, (currently at 28 days), which can include public bank holidays but can also be given in addition.

Employees who work part time should have their entitlement calculated in hours on a pro rata basis.

The GOV website includes a useful holiday calculator:
www.gov.uk

A manager has responsibility to have an office/department adequately staffed at all times and should also ensure that staff take their holidays. If you need special rules for your department, make them and make sure that everyone knows them!

Don’t be afraid to say ‘no’ to any request.

Time off in lieu or TOIL

Be clear about how and when TOIL can be accrued and when TOIL must be taken and do not allow TOIL to build up.

Tip:
Keep a record by including it on a holiday sheet/card
Recording TOIL is essential as it needs managing!

Sickness

Employee absence through sickness is mostly unavoidable absence. Monitoring and recording of sickness absence helps managers to manage these absences, identify patterns of behaviour and fulfil statutory requirements through payroll.

As an employer you should have a sickness policy in place – and at the very least detail your sickness requirements in a contract of employment.

It is good practice to have a procedure in place so staff know what to do and what the requirements are when they are sick. As a manager you need to understand the nature of any illness, what the immediate/long term effect on the employee is, the likelihood and/or timing of return to full fitness and to seek any medical reports.

> Does the illness amount to a disability? Consider adjustments to the job, e.g. flexible working/phased return to work.

You may also have to think about other related policies, such as Capability, Disciplinary, Equalities, Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is not paid for the first three days and then paid for 28 weeks at the statutory rate – the costs of SSP are borne by the employer/organisation.

> N.B. The SSP rate changes each year! The current rates can be found on the GOV website **www.gov.uk**

You can decide to offer more than just SSP, and Occupational Sick Pay (OSP) pays three months full pay after six months service. This is inclusive of SSP, and is discretionary, providing the employee has followed correct reporting and certification procedures.

A good practice guide for sickness absence procedures

Employees

Phone to speak with your line manager as soon as possible (e.g. before shift starts/9.30am etc):

- give reason for absence
- indicate when they expect to return
- agree further contact
- discuss any urgent/outstanding work (only if appropriate)
- complete a self-certifying notification or sickness absence form (SAF) on return to work.

Managers

Record the absence:

- maintain contact throughout absence, as agreed with employee
- conduct a return to work meeting
- complete SAF (if applicable)
- forward SAF to payroll, with accompanying medical statement (fit note) where necessary.

The SAF is completed for any period of absence between one and seven calendar days (including weekends).

Return to work meeting

Welcome back the employee:

- ensure fitness to return to work
- agree any actions necessary to facilitate a return to full productivity
- discuss any issues that may be affecting the employee's health/attendance
- ensure certificates completed for entire period of absence (SAF1 and/or fit note)
- provide any department/organisational updates.

Summary

An effective manager should:

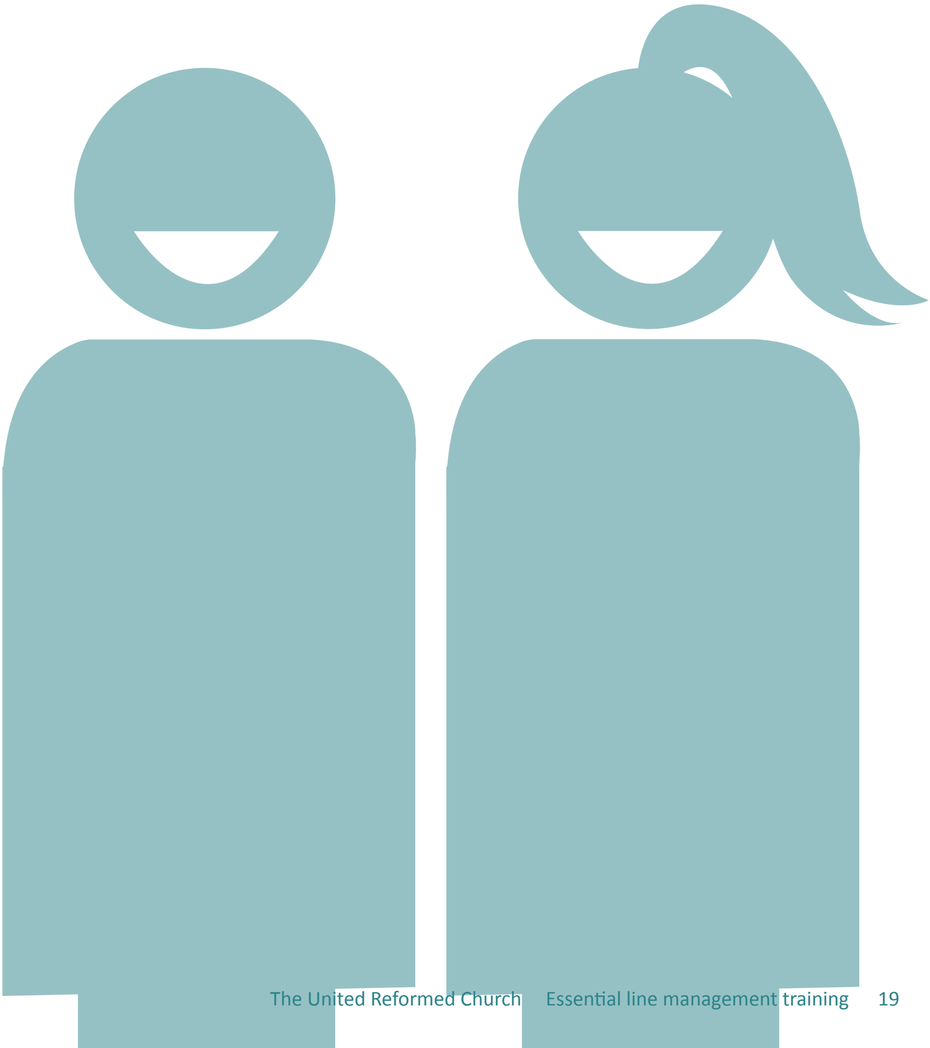
- establish objectives/standards of performance consistent with requirements of position and in line with job description
- ensure employee is inducted effectively
- monitor, review, feedback during probation
- provide training and guidance as necessary
- hold regular one-to-one meetings
- arrange and conduct formal review meetings – probation and personal development review
- manage absence appropriately.

And most importantly – commit to ongoing dialogue with and development of all direct report employees.

Useful websites

For further help or guidance, please contact the HR office at Church House:
Phone: **020 7691 9871/74**
Email: **recruitment@urc.org.uk**

For more information, visit:
www.urc.org.uk
www.gov.uk
www.acas.org.uk



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