

Why engage?

As a good KCC manager, engaging with and supporting your teams is an important part of your role.

Each year in our staff survey our people tell us that they value **regular conversations** and support from their managers, trusting the information, advice and guidance that they give over and above any other sources.

We know that maintaining regular and **supportive conversations** is central to managing performance and engaging staff.

Good quality, regular conversations are time well spent and mean we can:

Keep a check on how people are professionally and personally.

Find out what's working well and what could be even better.

Cover every aspect of working for KCC, whether that's performance, development or making the most of the employment deal for both employee and employer.

What is engagement?

Engagement is something that good managers already do all the time. It is not an additional task on top of the day job.

It's about the way you interact with your teams. It's what happens as a result of regular, good quality conversations. Engagement is what leads to trust in the organisation, pride in what we do and a readiness to deal with the challenges ahead.

In practice, engagement is taking the time to have regular conversations. They don't always need to be formal or structured. Taking five minutes out of a busy day to ask how someone is, is just as valuable.

The main aim is regular conversation with a genuine intent to listen, solve problems and provide opportunities.

How do I engage?

The way you engage will depend on how you work, the size of your team and where you are based, but good practice is:

Regular team meetings.

Regular one-to-one meetings with a clear record of agreed actions and decisions.

Share information openly and be honest if there's something you can't share right now!

Ensure feedback is a two-way process.

Be clear on whether they want you to:

Hear this (no action required)

Do something about this

Understand how it is on the ground

Respond and take action to address issues.

Encourage individuals and teams to take responsibility and find solutions. Pass on ideas for wider service development and update them on decisions/progress.

Consider how available technology can help you to engage with your teams.

Everyone responds differently to conversation and we don't always know the reasons why.

Listen without making assumptions and check your understanding.



This is a guide to help you have well-rounded discussions about what's going well, what could be better and what's needed to make the most of any opportunities. It's not the intention that every point will be covered every time, but the four areas should be covered across the course of regular conversations.

At the top of the boxes are prompter questions that you may want to use in your conversations. At the bottom are suggested resources and areas for managers to consider.



How's the job?

What is working well?

Any particular achievements or learning to share more widely?

What are the pressure points and challenges?

What can we do about it?

How are you using the available technology to support you?

Any training needs?

What ideas do you have for developing your role and our service?

What can help to progress those ideas?

Any areas for improvement or performance and capability issues to address?

Record any agreed actions and decisions for the next conversation

Any wider team feedback or issues to discuss?

Reward and recognise:

Sometimes thank you is enough!

Cash and non-cash awards

Recognise wider contribution

How are you?

What's important for you at the moment? Personally as well as professionally?

Is there anything affecting you (in or out of the workplace) that is impacting on your work?

Do you need support with any health or wellbeing issues?

Do you have any concerns about your personal opportunities to develop?

What are the challenges and what can we do?

Flexible working options

Kent Rewards

Benefits and financial support e.g. childcare vouchers, pension top ups or KCC Help Fund

Health and wellbeing tools

Employee support e.g. support line, stress management, increased supervision

Attendance and sickness - what support is needed?

What do you need to deliver and develop?

Do you understand your role in delivering our team, service and directorate objectives?

How do you think your role does or should contribute to our business plan and KCC's strategic outcomes?

What do you think our team purpose is?

What do you need to be successful?

Are there any barriers?

What are the challenges and what can we do?

Objective setting and regular review – important for assessment process

Personal Development Plan

Training and development needs; including mandatory training.

Consider all development options e.g. coaching or shadowing

Delegate and trust to take ownership

Give objective, two-way feedback - how are you performing as a manager?

Spot the talent and give opportunities

Consider the impact of any working patterns on development opportunities

Enable new ideas

Make time for proper inductions

What's expected of you?

What are the best things about your role and how you do it?

What do you think is expected of you and how are you delivering that?

Any barriers for you in completing your objectives?

How do you approach risk?

Are there barriers to trying new things?

Are you doing anything differently? (because of change programmes) How are you getting on with that?

How do you think the way you work can help you get even better results?

What opportunities do you have to share knowledge, collaborate, take personal responsibility, challenge and be challenged?

Policies and the KCC way

Knowledge sharing through networks and colleagues

Values and behaviours

Our way of working