

Staff Review Guidelines October 2018

The single most important factor for the successful operation of a house is the quality of the staff. It is also very beneficial if a significant number of staff continue to work at the house for a long time.

House Operators can choose how they manage their staff but SILC provides the attached form for conducting Staff reviews and offers the following guidelines for your consideration.

Staff Reviews are not Performance Appraisals. Performance Appraisals involve judgements on strengths and weaknesses – what the employee has done well and what they could do better. Staff Reviews attempt to better understand what matters to the person to better align the practices of the house with staff members. Unless the employee is a “good fit” they will not do their job well and unlikely that they will remain with the house long term.

So, the questions are about what they like and don't like about working at the house and what things they suggest could be changed to improve things.

Ideally, there will be two people conducting the Review – either two parents or a parent and the House manager or a senior staff member. This provides two sets of eyes and ears to interpret what the staff member has to say and makes the meeting a discussion rather than a “superior” talking to a “subordinate”.

There are no right or wrong answers. We do not want people to say what they think we want to hear. We want them to be comfortable saying what they think and how they feel. The objective is to make things (even) better.

The process should not be a form filling exercise. So, one of the reviewers should ask the question and listen to the answer, recording it to later show the staff member so they can check that their message was correctly understood.

Question (4) asks the staff member to RANK a list of factors that motivate the person. Ask the person to write numbers 1 to 12 to show what he or she considers most motivates them. “1” means “1st” – i.e. is most motivating thing. “12” means “last” or the least important thing for the person. 12 does not mean unimportant, just not as important as the other 11 factors. Invite the person to add additional factors if they are important to them. For example, some people are highly motivated by “control” or “compatibility”.

Use the responses to expand the discussion. Probe is you are unsure what the person is trying to tell you.

Question (5) invites the staff member to propose ways to improve things. The person will do so if he or she feels their ideas are welcome and likely to be adopted if

reasonable. This is one of the most powerful parts of the Staff Review. Employees who observe that their ideas are adopted are likely to be highly motivated and committed.

Question (6) If the House has conducted the Staff Quality Assessment Survey, present the feedback on the person to them. If some respondents have given low scores for some factors, ask the person to interpret the results for you. Without being judgemental, offer possible explanations. Make sure the person understands you are not criticising them but helping them learn so they can improve because this will be better for them and the participants or other staff.

Question (7) should be populated before the meeting so the person can be told to provide any documentation that is missing or out-of-date. Agree on a short timeframe in which the required documentation will be provided.

Question (8) should also be populate in advance. By reviewing what training certificates the house has for the person and when they were obtained, you can establish if the person has completed training but not provided the certificate or identify priorities for training programs for the staff member to do. This should be a balance of what the person needs to do to comply with requirements and what the person would like to do. The process will only be complete when the person has been enrolled in specific programs on specific dates. This may require follow up after the Staff Review.

The final part of the Staff Review is for the Staff member and both Reviewers to add additional comments. All parties should be given the opportunity to read the completed form and have it edited if necessary before signing.

It is best if feedback is given continually throughout the year, not just once a year in a formal meeting. It is good to acknowledge improvements that have occurred because the person or other staff members thought of them or promoted them.

The Reviewers should have a good sense of how likely it is that the person will continue to work for the house for an extended period because he or she wants to.