

# 5.07 Career Development

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Career development can be described as the proactive process of learning and improving your skills and experience to manage your career either within or between organisations. In the NICS, this can be at Branch, Division, Directorate, Agency or Department level and applies to all staff in general service, professional and specialist grades.

1.2 To ensure that we provide the best possible service to the citizens of Northern Ireland, it is critical that every single member of staff is equipped with the tools, knowledge and learning they need to perform well.

1.3 The NICS is committed to career development, acknowledging that skilled and engaged staff are an essential resource in meeting current and future business needs.

1.4 As well as the individual's role in managing their career development, the Department / NICS provides opportunities to enhance the skills, capabilities and performance of staff so that they, in turn, can contribute to achieving corporate objectives. Career development in the NICS is a collaborative process between individual staff members, line managers, and Departments, and takes account of the NICS Competency Framework and the Performance Management System.

## 2.0 Policy Principles for Career Development in the NICS

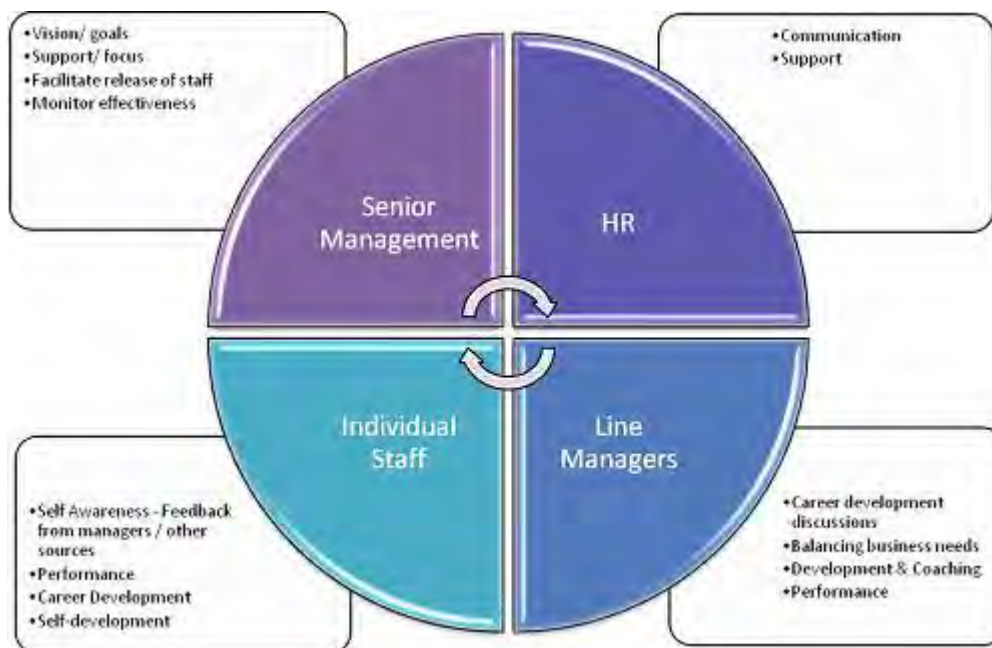
2.1 There are a range of policy principles that can apply within the NICS. These are:

- Career development takes place within the context of business need. The NICS will provide opportunities for staff to develop and grow to meet current and future business demands and needs;
- Planning for career development is primarily managed by the individual with support from the NICS; staff are encouraged to be proactive and take ownership of their own career development;
- Career development is an integral part of the performance management system, including the use of Personal Development Plans; staff are encouraged to identify, with their line manager, their learning and development needs using the NICS Competency Framework;
- The NICS recognises the benefits of a diverse workforce and therefore encourages all staff to actively plan their careers;
- Career development can be achieved in an individual's current post by the individual and the organisation identifying opportunities to engage in work of a corporate value outside the specific confines of the role, as well as maximising the potential within it;
- The NICS is committed to 'active' job rotation as one of many methods of facilitating career development, with a general rule that career development moves should be considered once an individual has been in post 3–5 years;

- Moves will be considered in the context of available funding, existing and anticipated staffing levels, available vacancies, business continuity and wider business needs; and will be compatible with the principles and procedures of the NICS Vacancy Management Policy and the NICS Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy;
- Where job rotation is **solely** for the purposes of career development, this should be a choice for staff and not imposed.

### 3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 As indicated in the diagram below, career development requires a collaborative approach between individual staff members, line management, Senior Management and HR across all Departments. Career development is the joint responsibility of all of these stakeholders; it is an integral part of the Performance Management process and is linked closely to the NICS Competency Framework and the formulation of Personal Development Plans.



3.2 **Individual Staff** are primarily responsible for planning their own career development. The Performance Management System, career development discussion, and use of the NICS Competency Framework provide useful tools for staff to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and to make plans for their career development in a structured manner recorded and agreed in their PDPs.

3.3 **Line Managers** have a responsibility to their staff to support them to develop the competencies and behaviours needed to achieve business objectives and improve overall performance. Line managers, within the Performance Management process, have a role in having honest career development discussions with staff, understanding their development aspirations, identifying opportunities to develop staff in line with the NICS Competency Framework and business need, and taking positive action to facilitate this, for example, delegating work, coaching, rotating staff and facilitating career development transfers where business needs will not be compromised.

3.4 **Senior Management within the Department / NICS**, will actively promote and set the vision and direction for career development, and will provide overall support to its delivery and implementation, including facilitating release of staff as well as monitoring effectiveness.

3.5 **HR** has a role in communicating and promoting career development and facilitating the movement of staff. They also have a key role in maintaining and collecting data on career development for monitoring and evaluation purposes. Where relevant, Heads of Professions will work in partnership with Corporate / Departmental HR to embed professional standards in HR processes and will work with Training Commissioners and CAL for the development of the necessary professional skills.

## 4.0 Career Development Activities

4.1 The NICS has a range of policies and practices that support a broad range of development interventions appropriate to our diverse workforce. In addition to the corporate training provided by CAL and line of business training provided at Departmental level, the following range of interventions may be available to support career development, subject to the availability of resources (note this is illustrative not exhaustive):

- e-Learning
- On the job learning, job rotation, job shadowing
- Seminars / Briefing / Masterclasses
- NICS Assistance to Study Scheme
- Private Study / Career-related Research
- Mentoring, peer learning, 'buddying', networking
- Coaching
- Participation in cross-functional Project Teams
- Team Building events
- Educational Site Visits
- Temporary promotion opportunities
- Elective Transfers, Lateral transfers and Interest circulars
- Interchange and Secondment opportunities (as advertised in the Weekly Opportunities Bulletin)

4.2 As noted in the Volunteering Strategy for NI, many people gain skills through appropriate volunteering opportunities. A number of Departments actively engage in Corporate Responsibility projects and further details about volunteering can also be found on the Volunteer Now website (<http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/>).