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# Investors in People

## Retaining Recognition

### Guidelines and Sample Action Plans for Clients

## Introduction

Recognised organisations are reviewed against The Standard at least every 3 years and many changes can occur during that time. Unfortunately, there are times when an Assessor may find that the organisation they are reviewing no longer meets all the requirements of The Standard.

There is a variety of reasons why the Standard may not be met and Retaining Recognition is a supportive process that allows previously recognised organisations time to address the gaps. As long as there is a genuine commitment to return to the Standard, organisations may apply for a period of time to address the gaps whilst still retaining the benefits of recognition, thus removing the threat of immediate de-recognition.

All Investors in People Centres have a selected group of Employer Representatives who are senior people from recognised organisations that voluntarily give their time to support the maintenance of the integrity and credibility of The Standard in a variety of ways. One of the roles is that of a Recognition Panel Member, awarding first time recognition to organisations and also making decisions about allowing organisations time in Retaining Recognition.

There must be genuine, top-level commitment to return to the Standard and the organisation needs to demonstrate this to both the Assessor and the Recognition Panel. Applications for time in Retaining Recognition are made via the Assessor to the Recognition Panel and in making the application the organisation needs to carry out some key activities;

- Inform the people in the organisation that the Standard is not met and that steps are being taken to return the organisation to Standard
- Submit a firm commitment, in writing, from the highest level to return to the Standard
- Based upon the Assessor's feedback, the organisation must develop an action plan setting out how it intends to address the identified gaps and return to Standard and submit this to the Recognition Panel (via the Assessor)

Once granted time in Retaining Recognition, the organisation must be visited by the Assessor at intervals of **no more than 12 months apart**, until the Standard is fully met once more. Organisations can only remain in the Retaining Recognition process for **a maximum of 2 years** from their 3 year review deadline date, and only with the agreement of the Recognition Panel



## The Retaining Recognition Process

- Assessor's decision of Standard not met is communicated verbally to the client at the earliest opportunity – **usually within 24 hours of the last day of evidence collection**
- Assessor's review report, confirming their decision and providing information on their findings is sent to the client – **within 10 working days of the last day of evidence collection**
- Client informs all staff that Standard is no longer met and that action is being taken to return the organisation to Standard once more – at the earliest opportunity
- Client develops a SMART action plan to address the gaps identified by the Assessor (examples at the end of this document) and submits it to the Assessor along with the letter stating commitment to return to Standard – **within 2 months of the last day of evidence collection**
- As the client's advocate at Panel, the Assessor ensures action plan, if implemented fully, will return the organisation to Standard, suggesting amendments where appropriate
- Final action plan is submitted to Recognition Panel along with letter of commitment and Assessor's report to request time in Retaining Recognition
- Recognition Panel reviews the action plan and report and discusses the application with Assessor. The Panel's decision is communicated along with any Panel feedback to the client – **within 3 months of the last day of evidence collection**. As long as all other timescales are met
- Client implements the action plan and agrees the timing of review visits, to monitor the achievement of the action plan, with the Assessor - **no more than 12 months from previous visit**

## Further Information

The Improvement Planning Meeting that follows the review is crucial in ensuring that the client has full understanding of the gaps against The Standard and the depth of what they need to address. Having provided a written report to the organisation and carried out an Improvement Planning Meeting, the Assessor will maintain contact with the organisation to agree its action plan to return it to the Standard. The Assessor's role is not to devise the action plan (this is advisory work), but to give feedback on whether the action plan, if implemented fully, will return the organisation to the Standard. Whilst there is no set format for the action plan, it should set out clearly what action will be taken to address the assessor's feedback, with 'specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound' milestones.

The Assessor is the client's advocate and presents the case to the Recognition Panel, therefore they are unable to present action plans to the Panel unless they are confident that the actions will return the organisation to Standard. In most review projects, time is built in for annual visits and if the decision at review is to follow the Retaining Recognition process, this time will be utilised to support the client to ensure the action plan is fit for purpose and for the Assessor to have discussions with the Recognition Panel. If this time has not been included in the review project, then an additional charge will be made. Annual visit time will then be included in the price of the subsequent visit.



Time in Retaining Recognition can only be granted by the Recognition Panel and to grant that time, they need to be convinced of the commitment of the organisation to return to Standard. As well as submitting a “fit for purpose” action plan, the head of the organisation should submit a covering letter stating the top level commitment to return to meeting the requirements of the Standard. Additionally, to ensure that the credibility of the Standard is being maintained, the organisation should inform employees that it is not meeting the Standard, and that an action plan has been developed to address the gaps found during the review visit. Whilst this communication with employees should be a feature of the action plan, there is no specific need to communicate the content of the action plan to employees, although it may be good practice to do so.

Investors in People – United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills stipulate that the Recognition Panel must review and if appropriate, approve the organisation’s action plan no more than **3 months after the last day on-site**. To ensure these timescales are met, Inspiring Business Performance Limited (IBP) requires that the action plan is sent to the Assessor for initial approval within **2 months of the last day on-site**. This will then allow time for any necessary amendments to be made and approved by the Assessor if necessary. Following the approval of the action plan by the Recognition Panel, the action plan is implemented. The Recognition Panel Members and the Assessor should agree the timing of review visits to monitor the achievement of the action plan, visits coinciding with the expected achievements of milestones and no longer than **12 months apart**.

However, the requirement for an Assessor visit to take place at least once every 12 months does not imply an automatic entitlement to a 12-month timescale. Assessors and Recognition Panel members will use their judgement to decide whether more frequent visits are needed and may be influenced by the timescales in the action plan.

Review visits by the Assessor to check progress will have a clear purpose and will involve reviewing progress against the action plan by interviewing people to ensure outcomes are being met. Written reports, detailing the organisation’s progress will be provided at the end of every visit.

Applications for these reviews should be submitted in the usual way, via the IBP website. Every review visit will be chargeable and based on the time required to cover planning, evidence collection, report writing, feedback and any further requests to the Recognition Panel for more time in Retaining Recognition. Recognition Panels will discuss these projects with the Assessor before making a decision.

If at the review visit the organisation has returned to the Standard, a report recommending recognition for a further 3 years will be considered, usually by the original Recognition Panel. The Recognition Panel’s decision will be communicated to the client at the earliest opportunity.

If at the review visit the Standard is still not met, then as long as the commitment remains strong and significant progress against the action plan has been made, the organisation may request more time in Retaining Recognition. If this is the case, the action plan must be updated and sent to the Assessor within 2 weeks. This enables the Assessor to enable to re-present it, along with the report, to the Recognition Panel for a decision.

However, if the organisation does not make significant progress against its own action plan, i.e. it fails to meet agreed milestones, such that its commitment is in doubt, the Assessor can make a recommendation to the Recognition Panel that the organisation be de-recognised.

### **Can the gaps in evidence be addressed within a 3-month timescale?**

As most evidence requirements are linked, it is rare that any weighty issues identified at the 3 year review can be addressed within 3 months. However, if the Assessor considers (and the organisation agrees) that the gaps in evidence are relatively small and could be addressed within **3 months** of the last day on-site, then as long as the organisation has not already been granted a temporary extension to their 3 year deadline, the organisation may not have to apply for time in Retaining Recognition. The Assessor will discuss the situation with the Quality Manager at IBP to seek agreement for the review to be extended.

If an extended review is agreed, the Assessor will discuss and clearly identify the gaps, and will return at an agreed date within the 3 month period to ensure that the issues have been addressed.

If at the return visit, the organisation is still unable to satisfy the Assessor that the Standard is met then the Retaining Recognition process needs to be followed and no further extensions are allowed. If this is the case, an action plan and letter of commitment must be presented to the Recognition Panel within **3 weeks** of the last day on-site.

### **Retaining Recognition – Internal Review**

Where an organisation is utilizing formally trained and approved Internal Reviewers, evidence collected by them can be used to monitor progress against the organisation's action plan. The Managing Assessor can then consider this evidence along with evidence they collect themselves, when deciding whether the Standard has once again been met.

### **Retaining Recognition – Additional Evidence Requirements /Recognition**

In order to continue to hold any additional recognition (Bronze, Silver, or Gold) achieved, an organisation must be meeting all the requirements of the Core Standard. If an organisation enters Retaining Recognition, then the additional recognition is not withdrawn but the organisation should not promote their additional recognition status.

Even though an organisation does not meet all the requirements of the Core Standard, it may have been assessed against, and meet, some additional evidence requirements from the wider Investors in People framework. Where an organisation is allowed time in Retaining Recognition, these additional evidence requirements have no bearing on the requirement to return to Standard.

However, in order to maintain any additional evidence requirements met, or any additional recognition previously awarded, the Assessor will need to collect evidence to assure themselves that all additional evidence requirements continue to be met, just as they always need to assure themselves that all Core evidence requirements are met at the point of return to Standard. This is because the 3 year review period starts again at this point.

Clients should bear in mind that there will be greater costs involved in collecting evidence for parts of the wider framework as well as the Core Standard.

### **Retaining Recognition Action Plans**

Examples of what a page of a Retaining Recognition action plan might look like are attached to these guidelines. Please note that these examples are for information only. Whilst there is no set format for an action plan, it should set out clearly what action will be taken to address the gaps identified in the Assessor's feedback, with specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound milestones.

### **Any Questions?**

If you have any queries please contact your Adviser, your Assessor or any of the IBP Team on **0800 612 3098**.



## Example Number One - Investors in People Action Plan for an Organisation

Issue Relating to Maintaining the Core Standard	Action Required	By Whom	By When	Ind	Outputs Expected
While most believe their contribution is recognised some felt there could be more incentive/reward for excellent performance and effort. The performance review process is not fully embedded throughout the organisation. Whilst parts of the organisation make excellent use of the process to provide feedback, agree priorities and produce development plans, others recognise <i>"We are not as good as we should be owing to lack of time."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote culture of recognition for jobs well done. Team Leaders to mention particular individuals at monthly operations meetings, e.g.</li> <li>Ensure all appraisals carried out within established timeframe.</li> <li>Audit cross section of appraisals to ensure quality.</li> </ul>	All Managers All Managers HR	Dec 2010 April 2010 April 2010	3	Improvement in quality and quantity of appraisals. Better "buy in" by staff to appraisals process.
Managers recognise that some people have not had a regular review and that XXX have a more structured training programme than YYY XXXs confirmed they are encouraged to follow the corporate model for professional development as required by their professional body, comprising objectives, essays and mentors while others the approach is more ad hoc. People talked of differing levels of support available for their development and consequently some did question the equality of opportunity in respect of development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all staff are appraised annually - produce annual report on status of appraisals across business.</li> <li>Encourage all OOOO staff to maintain record of Continuing Professional Development.</li> <li>Make training/development opportunities more transparent.</li> <li>Audit cross-section of appraisals to ensure quality, including back-track to identify staff development progress.</li> </ul>	J Smith All Managers B Bloggs HR	April 2010 April 2010 Dec 2010 Dec 2010	4	Better understanding by people of the opportunities for development. Enthusiasm in staff for continued development.
People are unclear about the big picture and future direction. <i>"We are having to reinvent ourselves therefore some people are not sure where we are headed"</i> senior manager. Consequently, people tend to identify with their current project rather than how they might sell and support the work of the whole unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular staff meetings to explain future direction of company.</li> <li>Team Leaders to cascade information from monthly operations meetings and to record this for monitoring purposes.</li> </ul>	John Smith All Managers	Nov 2010 Dec 2010	5	The company strategy for realising our potential is fully understood and appreciated by all staff.
As highlighted in Indicator 5, the management team are aware that people tend to focus on the <i>"here and now"</i> that is completing the project on time, rather than the contribution they are making to the development of a profitable centre of excellence based on technical competence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company mission statement to be broadcast and explained.</li> <li>Managers to explain at appraisals how individuals contribute to company performance.</li> <li>Establish feedback process with initial comments from trainee, subsequent review with Team Leader to record development results.</li> <li>Develop standard feedback form.</li> </ul>	B Bloggs All Managers J Brown J Brown	Sept 2010 April 2010 Dec 2010 Dec 2010	7	All people understand their contribution to company success.

## Example Number Two

Ref	Action Point	By whom	By when	Expected Outcomes	IIP Ind
	<b>Aims and objectives:</b>				
1	ZZZ Business Plan to include Divisional Objectives, consulting more widely during the planning process	Div Heads, Consultation groups, e.g. DST.s	Mar 2010	Improved understanding by all staff of business objectives and how they contribute towards achieving them through regular feedback	5
2	Introduce Divisional and team business plans, which have to be referenced to the ZZZ Business Plan and linked to the training plan	SMT, Group and Unit managers, T&D Manager	Oct 2010	People can describe how their team and individual objectives support the overall business plan Identifies high level and priority corporate training needs	5,6,7
3	Develop a reward and recognition policy	Head of HR and SMT	Jan 2010	Public celebration of achievement and more acknowledgement for work and communications	3
	<b>Developing the management structure:</b>				
4	Senior managers to become more public figures by becoming more visible and more accessible by attending Divisional and team meetings as available and at least quarterly; being resources at Induction and management development programmes and visiting staff at regional offices.	Board and SMT	With immediate effect	Senior managers showing commitment to good practice of people management principles and to staff training and development	1
	<b>Communications:</b>				
5	Develop and implement a communications strategy	Communications Team	Dec 2010	Effective communication that is open, transparent and relevant, both within and outside ZZZ	5
6	In Divisional and team meetings ensure that all members are sufficiently confident and empowered to contribute both to the agenda and the discussion, with opportunities for feedback and sharing of good practice	All managers	Oct 2010	A culture where people feel encouraged to contribute without recrimination  Effective communication about ZZZ, its business and objectives  Sharing of learning and development practice is a regular item on meeting agendas	2,7

### Example Number Three

Planning and Strategy					
Develop draft business plan	SMT	All staff	Written plan to be compiled after company training day	November	1,5
Company training day to be organised to allow vision of company to be presented and also express wider picture and clarify identity of company	AG, MN TJ	All staff	Good turnout for training day. Staff aware of all company objectives and current and future business plans All staff given written summary about discussions from training day	October 2010	1,5
Develop strategy for staff development	SMT	All staff	Strategy to be consistent across the company to include head office induction, appraisals, and use of individual trainers	November 2010 and ongoing	1,6
Develop structured Training Plan for all staff linked to business objectives	SMT	All staff	Questionnaire sent to staff to evaluate opportunity for development – review periodically	February and then ongoing	1,6,11
Training and Development					
Training to be collated and evaluated at Office level from Individual Training Plans developed as part of appraisals	Managers	Development Team	Regular reviews of Training plans by Head Office and Office Managers to assess outstanding issues	October 2010 and then ongoing	1,6,10,11
Training to be collated and evaluated at organisational level	AJ,TJ	SMT	Training to be planned at organisational level to enable top level assessment, evaluation and cost –benefit analysis New training evaluation forms to be developed	October 2010 and then ongoing	6,10,11
New training assessment sheets to be circulated and used for evaluation of training	AJ, DL	All managers	All training assessed by manager and kept in Personal Development Folder (PDF) – reviewed at appraisal. Development Team to collate from all offices, which can then be linked back to Business Plan	November 2010 and then ongoing	9,10