

Supportive Offboarding

FACILITATORS' GUIDE

This document provides a brief guide to the Supportive Offboarding process aimed at the facilitator – someone not directly involved in the show, but able to lead this one-to-one conversation (eg. someone from the Talent team). To learn more about the background and approach see appendix A.

VERSION 3.0



Introduction

We want everyone who works in television production – both freelancers and staff – to feel they have been looked after by the company they work for, treated respectfully and properly supported throughout their contract. This aspect of work culture is vital, both for us and for the wider industry we share our workforce with.

As freelancers come to the end of their contract, we want their offboarding process to include a supportive conversation about their experience of working with us. We want to reinforce a supportive environment where freelancers feel valued, respected, and empowered. As they come to the end of their contract with us, we want them to leave us feeling motivated and with their morale high. We want them to know that we appreciate their efforts and recognise the work that they've done for us.

We want to learn from them about things we do well, things that we could do better, and we want to promote the colleague's own growth and development, and in doing so, to strengthen the possibility of a positive future relationship with them.



Invitation

How these career-focused conversations are offered is crucial to how they are received and the uptake that follows. The more personal the invitation, the better. Early experience suggests that an impersonal forms-based invitation (such as the approach shown in **appendix E**) is likely to result in low take-up. A direct approach will have the best take-up.

Similarly, explaining the offer early in the process – even as early as the onboarding meeting – also helps. People are often at their busiest towards the end of their contract. It is best to give plenty of notice and then book the conversation well beforehand.



Once a meeting has been set up, ask the colleague if they would like you to request feedback from the team (you may want them to suggest a particular person). This is optional and not everyone will want feedback. Neither should it be assumed that this is all the feedback they will get. The point is to ensure that everyone is offered some and to encourage as much reflection as possible. Suggested text for requesting feedback for a colleague can be found in **appendix F**.

When confirming details of the conversation (meeting arrangements etc), send them the self-assessment exercise (**appendix C**). This contains a series of 10 questions for them to think about before the meeting. They may or may not choose to share these thoughts with you, but what matters is that they have the opportunity to reflect on these areas before the conversation.



The meeting

It is vital to create a supportive atmosphere where the colleague feels comfortable to share their thoughts and ideas. Encourage dialogue and practice active listening paying attention to the colleague's responses, concerns, or questions.

The facilitators' prompt sheet (**appendix B**) provides 12 prompts to guide the conversation (see video **appendix G**). Use this as your structure but be adaptable as appropriate. Read this through well before the meeting to anticipate the direction of travel. The colleague has been asked to spend some time reflecting on their own contribution to the team and their own career goals and may have things they have come prepared to say. As you talk, look for ways you can support and encourage them. Make notes to follow up any concerns raised or actions to be taken.



Afterwards

After your meeting, be sure to follow up any offer of ongoing support, information or resources to help them achieve their goals. Show your commitment to their success and wellbeing. If there are any matters arising from the feedback they gave you, then action as appropriate (ensuring confidentiality is respected). Pass on any thanks or commendations that were requested.

When colleagues have declined your invitation to have a conversation, but you would still like to request feedback from them about their experience, there is a set of questions that can be used within **appendix E**. Only use the questionnaire when you have a clear plan and process for responding to it.



See appendix D

Appendices

- A** What it is and how it works
- B** Facilitator's prompt sheet
- C** Self-assessment exercise
- D** Flow diagram of administrative process
- E** Template 1 (Forms)
- F** Template 2 (Email requesting feedback)
- G** Video of the 12-prompt process (set out in B)



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What it is

AND HOW IT WORKS



SUPPORTIVE OFFBOARDING

Research has shown that people working as freelancers in the TV sector frequently refer to feeling 'alone' and 'unsupported'. This has been particularly acute when it comes to the individual's personal and professional development. For various reasons, there has often been an absence of feedback (in both directions) at the point at which contracts come to an end – sometimes without so much as a 'thank you'.

Supportive Offboarding was developed at Bournemouth University (initially in

collaboration with the company, Fremantle) supported by The British Academy. It was devised as a simple, practical and modest intervention intended to help freelancers feel more supported. It is a one-to-one conversation with a freelancer at the point at which their contract is coming towards its end. The process is optional, confidential, facilitated and conducted by someone at arms-length from the show, and includes the opportunity for feedback, some career reflection and the expression of thanks.

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FOUR ELEMENTS

1 GRATITUDE
Our gratitude as a company to the departing colleague.

2 FEEDBACK FROM US
The option of some feedback (or feedforward) to the colleague.

3 FEEDBACK FOR US
A chance for us to learn from the departing colleague before they go.

4 CAREER CONVERSATION
Connecting, signposting and supporting for the next step.



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POSITIVE & APPRECIATIVE

A SUPPORTIVE OFFBOARDING

conversation takes, as its starting point, the principles of strength-based management (SBM) in preference to the more traditional problem-solving approach to appraisal. It aims to promote positive feedback (in both directions) and gratitude, prioritising affirmation over criticism, and highlighting success – ie. focusing on what people do best. It encourages a mindset focused on building strengths rather than fixing weaknesses and when weaknesses need to be addressed, focusing on finding ways to manage them rather than attempting to eliminate them. Research suggests that this positive approach promotes higher

levels of engagement resulting in more motivated and productive workers.

By the same token, promoting gratitude practices in a corporate environment fosters a culture where workers feel valued, appreciated, and motivated. A culture of expressing gratitude boosts morale, improves job satisfaction, and promotes retention. Gratitude strengthens workplace relationships, builds trust, and cultivates a positive organizational culture characterized by respect and collaboration. Integrating gratitude into the culture contributes to worker well-being both within and beyond the workplace.

PILOT PROJECT

This modest, specific, and practical intervention was designed, developed and tested with Fremantle in 2024-25 and funded by The British Academy. It is not intended to be a silver bullet but to make a contribution to the well-being of freelancers. For further information about this

initiative, you can download the project report ***Supportive Offboarding: Report on the design, development and testing of an intervention to improve the way the TV industry supports its freelancers*** by Dr. Richard Wallis of Bournemouth University – <https://doi.org/10.18746/shkc-1383>

Feedback from team

As production clear-up periods have become squeezed it is easy for freelancers to find themselves leaving without the opportunity for any feedback about their work. This can make it difficult for an individual to navigate their own learning and development, which is so essential to managing a freelance career. Supportive Offboarding is a way of ensuring that some (optional) feedback is offered. The facilitator communicates this as a third-party to allow for some distance and objectivity in the process.

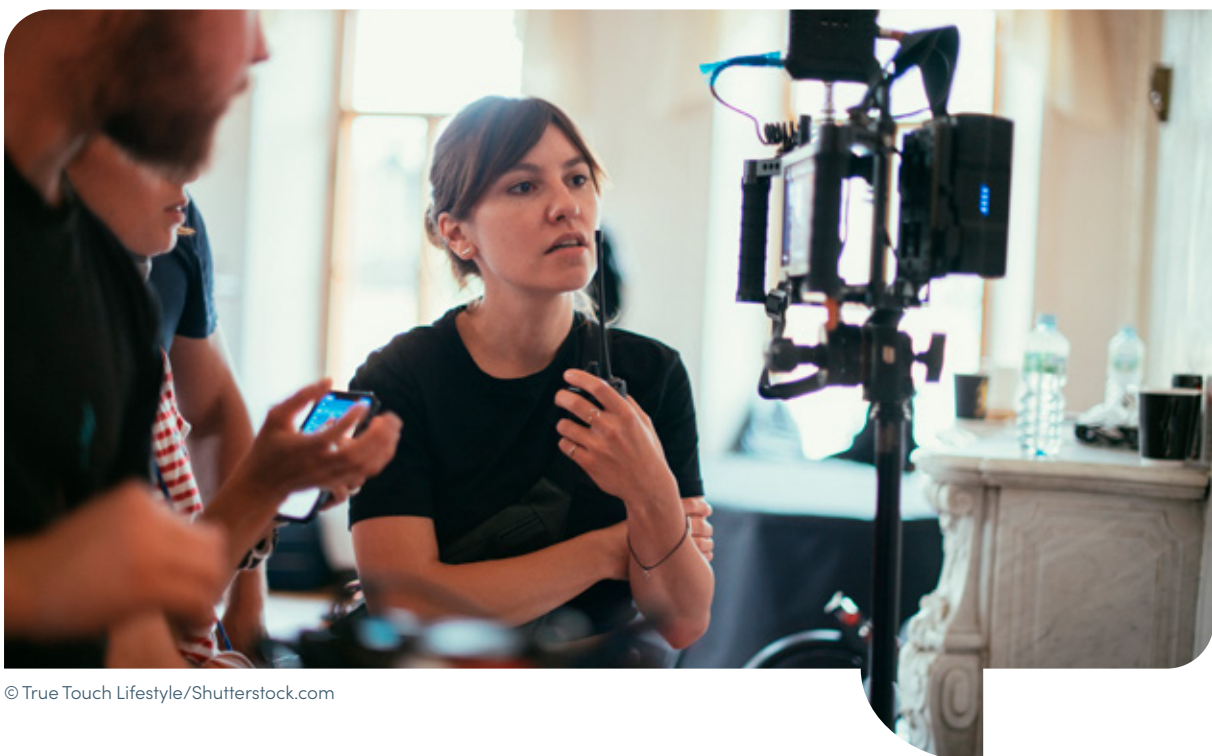
Feedback for company

The Supportive Offboarding process allows the opportunity for departing colleagues to share with the company any thoughts based on their experience with us. As with other aspects of this conversation, it is important that such feedback is treated in strictest confidence (unless the colleague requests otherwise). As with feedback in the other direction, the facilitator being

arms-length is intended to encourage openness and honesty. This may be entirely positive, or it may provide the moment for a colleague to get 'something off their chest'. Unless 'red flag' issues are raised, feedback should simply be noted and communicated via the appropriate channel in a general and anonymous format, framed (as far as possible) as positive suggestions.

Career conversation

Freelancers seldom get the opportunity to talk about their own career aspirations. Supportive Offboarding is not a career counselling session but simply a chance for a short conversation focused on the freelancer rather than the project. The colleague will have been invited to spend some time reflecting on their own contribution to the team and their own career goals before the meeting. This might prompt the facilitator to make a connection, signpost to some training or provide some guidance based on their own knowledge or experience.



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Let's talk

FACILITATORS' PROMPT SHEET



The following 12 prompts should help you to structure your conversation:



PRELIMINARIES

"Before we begin..."

Open the conversation by explaining this new process, thanking them for being willing to be part of it at its testing phase, and emphasizing that its purpose is mutual learning and development.



CONFIDENTIALITY

"This conversation will be as private as you want it to be.

I will take some general notes, but nothing attributable to you unless you ask for it to be."

Use this prompt to allay any worries about confidentiality. You may record general points anonymously but will feed back specifics only with the colleague's permission.



THANK YOU

"Let me start by saying to you formally on behalf of [the company], a huge thank you for all your work on [the show]..."

A culture of positivity and appreciation is fundamental to the Supportive Offboarding philosophy. The conversation therefore begins with a thank you on behalf of the company. Personalise this as feels comfortable.



OPENER

"How have you found the experience of working on [the show]?"

Engage the colleague with a general open question, inviting them to share at whatever level they feel they wish to.



5

COMMUNICATING FEEDBACK



“Do you think that’s a useful assessment of your contribution to the programme?”

If you have feedback to pass on to the colleague, do so and reflect on this with them, focussing particularly on strengths that have been identified, ensuring that the conversation remains as affirming and positive as possible.

6

CAREER ASPIRATIONS



*“What work opportunities are you looking for?
Where does this fit in terms of your longer-term career aspirations?”*

Use this prompt question to get a sense of where this fits into their longer-term career aspirations if the colleague is happy to discuss this with you. Make a note of anything you could usefully feed back to the (rest of the) Talent team.

7

DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING



“Are there areas you feel you need to focus on for development or training?”

Use this prompt question to explore whether the colleague feels that there are any specific areas they need to focus on for development. For example, you might point them to Screenskills courses, BAFTA networking sessions, and various talent schemes (eg. Edinburgh TV Festival’s initiatives) and mentoring opportunities (eg. Screenskills, Women in Film & TV etc). This is also a good moment to remind them of the services offered by the Film & TV Charity. If appropriate, help them to articulate this in terms of actionable goals aligned with career aspirations.

8

GENERAL FEEDBACK FOR THE COMPANY



“Obviously, this conversation is confidential, but it’s always useful for the company to have feedback about how we do things – positive or negative? Is there anything you’d like me to feedback on your behalf?”

Use this prompt question to ask for feedback for the company. Try to keep the conversation constructive, even if there are implied or direct criticisms of aspects of the work or the project they have worked on. Make a note of any points raised that could be addressed to improve the processes or culture of the company.

9

CONNECTING AND SIGNPOSTING

"Given what you've told me about your aspirations, would you like me to introduce you to...?"

Given the extent to which personal contacts and networks matter in a freelancing context, there may be an introduction you could facilitate. Use this moment to consider whether there is any other kind of support that the company could easily facilitate at this point in the colleague's career.



10

APPRECIATION

"Is there anyone who you've worked with who you would like me to commend or express particular appreciation to?"

A culture of positivity and appreciation is fundamental to the Supportive Offboarding philosophy. Use this prompt question to pick-up any commendations that could be passed back to the production team.



11

ANYTHING ELSE

"Before we finish, is there anything else that you'd like to raise?"

Use this prompt question to check whether there is anything else that the colleague wishes to raise about their experience of working on this project, or their own career development to ensure that they have felt heard.



12

CLARIFICATION

"So let me summarise what I've noted down..."

Clarify any points of action that have been noted during this conversation:

- Points noted privately (ie that will remain anonymous)
- Points you have agreed you will feed back to the production team
- Actions you have undertaken to do (eg. an introductory email, or forwarding of details of a ScreenSkills course, etc.)



Take a moment

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

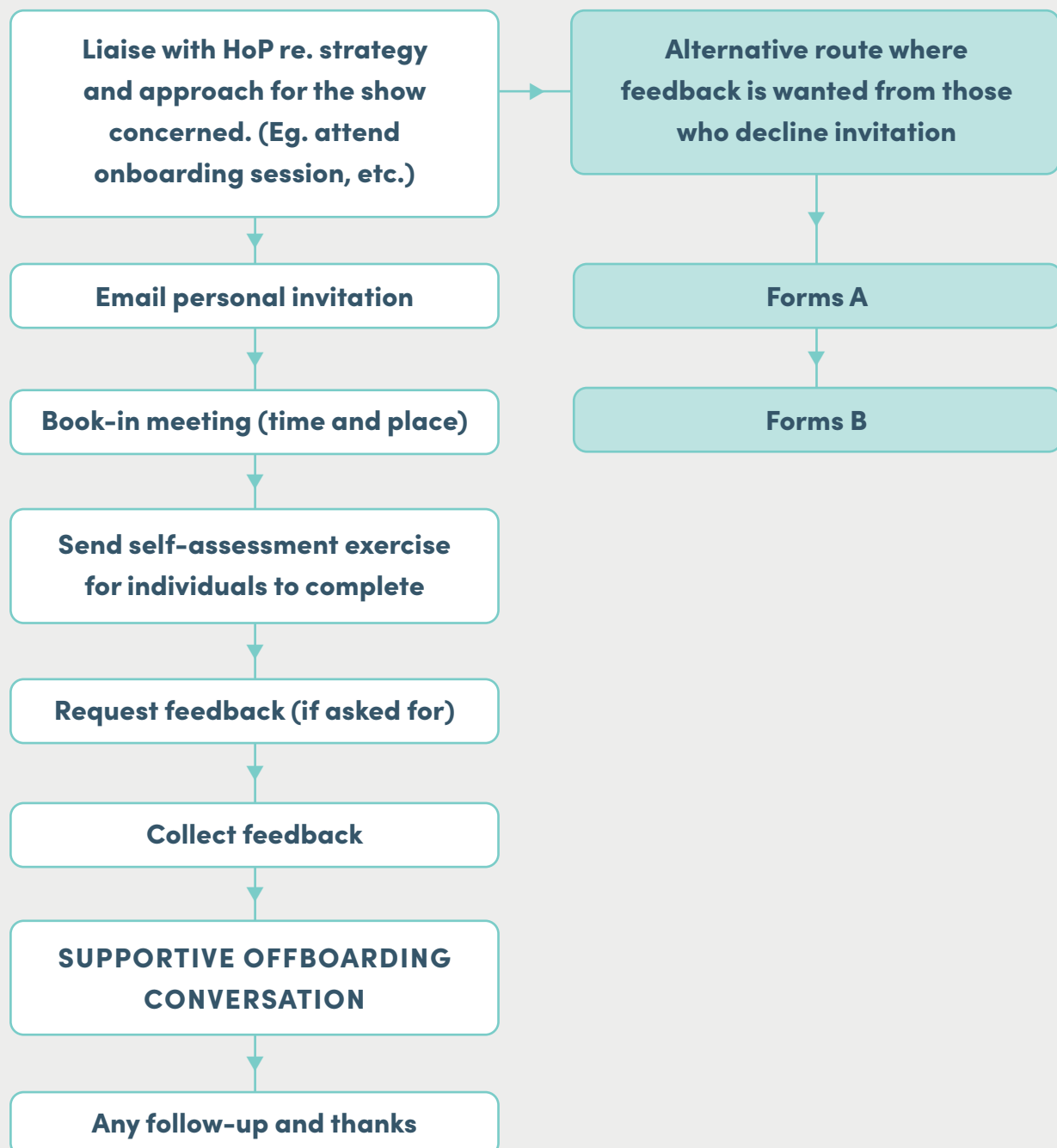
- 1** Identify one positive thing that you learned from your involvement in this project. How might you apply that learning in a future work situation?
- 2** What do you think others might say has been your most valuable contribution to the team, and why?
- 3** What are you most proud of about your role in this project, and why?
- 4** What was the biggest challenge of the project for you, and why? Will this impact on your approach to your next job? How positive an impact is that?
- 5** Was there any point during this project when you felt you needed to develop new skills in a particular area (perhaps by undertaking a short course, or some individual mentoring)?
- 6** Would you like the facilitator to ask the team you worked with for some specific feedback or feedforward related to your contribution to the project? If you have not already done so, make sure you communicate this as soon as possible. (We can't guarantee we can get this for you, but we will try.)
- 7** In terms of your own career development, what would the ideal next contract look like and why?
- 8** Is there anything within your control preventing you from moving positively in that direction?
- 9** Is there anyone who you think might be able to help you to get there? If so, who and in what way might they be able to help?
- 10** Is there anyone you have worked with as part of this project who you would particularly like to thank, commend or recommend to others?

PREPARATION

Please make some time to consider these 10 questions in relation to your recent experience.

The purpose of this exercise is to prepare for the Supportive Offboarding conversation you have booked, by reflecting on your experience of working on this project. You may or may not choose to share all of this as part of the conversation. What matters is that you have made some time to reflect on it yourself.

Flow diagram of Supportive Offboarding administrative process



Template 1

SUGGESTIONS FOR FORMS



Forms Template:

At [NAME OF COMPANY], we know the challenges of working in a freelance-based industry. It's common for people to move between contracts quickly, often without the chance to receive feedback, career support or just saying goodbye to the company. This also means we miss out on valuable insights from our production teams to help us to learn to do things better.

Supportive Offboarding [or the company's own name for this initiative] is a confidential one-to-one chat designed to offer support as you transition to your next contract, whether it's with us or elsewhere. It's also a chance for us to learn from your experiences to improve as a company.

Would you like to take up the offer of a supportive end of contract chat? *

☐

Yes

☐

No

Submit

*Required

Yes ...

Your name *

Enter your answer

Your job role / title *

Enter your answer

Your work email address
or can be personal if
that's best for you *

Enter your answer

Name of show or
programme *

Enter your answer

Production Company
[if this is not obvious] *

Enter your answer

THE PROCESS OF SETTING UP A MEETING IS BEGUN

No ...

END OF CONTRACT FEEDBACK

We appreciate that not everybody wants to have a one-to-one conversation to talk about themselves. However, we would still love to get some feedback from you.

Please spare 5 minutes just to answer the following online questions anonymously.

Before starting the survey, we wanted to give you some reassurance about what happens with your answers. This survey and data handling is being conducted by [name], using [software, eg. Microsoft software within the company]. Responses are collected in an anonymised form and will be aggregated to analyse the findings, all individual response level data is deleted and never used for profiling purposes.

*Required

Only use a questionnaire like this if you know the data is going to be properly analysed, interpreted and acted upon by the company. If not, don't waste everyone's time. It is likely to produce cynicism.

Name of show or programme *

Enter your answer

Production Company [if appropriate] *

Enter your answer

What length is your current contract? *

- ☐ Less than 3 months
- ☐ 3-6 months
- ☐ 6-12 months
- ☐ More than a year

How did you find us as an employer? *

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Tell us why?

Enter your answer

Have you enjoyed working on this show? *

- ☐ Really enjoyed
- ☐ Enjoyed
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Didn't enjoy
- ☐ Really didn't enjoy

Tell us why?

Enter your answer

How manageable have you
felt your workload to be? *

- ☐ Very manageable
- ☐ Manageable
- ☐ OK
- ☐ Unmanageable
- ☐ Very unmanageable

Tell us why?

Enter your answer

How effectively do you feel your
skills have been used? *

- ☐ Very effectively
- ☐ Moderately effectively
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Less effectively
- ☐ Not effectively

Tell us why?

Enter your answer

Have you felt clear about the expectations of your role? *

- ☐ Very clear
- ☐ Fairly clear
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat unclear
- ☐ Not clear

Tell us why?

Enter your answer

Do you feel your skills have developed in your time on this production? *

- ☐ Very much
- ☐ Moderately
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly
- ☐ Not at all

Tell us why?

Enter your answer

Have you felt supported?

- ☐ Very supported
- ☐ Supported
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly supported
- ☐ Not supported

Tell us why?

Enter your answer

How effective has communication been on this production? *

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

Tell us why?

Enter your answer

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Enter your answer

You can print a copy of your answer after you submit

Template 2

SUGGESTIONS FOR FORMS



Email Template: Request For Colleague Feedback

From: sender@example.ac.uk

Subject: Request For Colleague Feedback

[Joan Smith] is meeting me for a [Supportive Offboarding] conversation and has asked for some feedback about their role and contribution to this recent project and named you as someone who might be willing to provide this.

If so, in providing feedback on the person's contribution to the project, please focus particularly on strengths and qualities. It doesn't have to be lengthy – it is primarily an opportunity to formally thank them for their contribution.

You might consider one or more of the following aspects of their contribution:

- **Communication:** The person's willingness to listen to others and the extent to which they seem able to convey information clearly.
- **Collaboration and teamwork:** The way in which the person works collaboratively with colleagues and contributes positively to the team.
- **Work focus:** How the individual understood and responded positively to the demands of the role.
- **Professionalism:** The person's willingness to be respectful and ethical and to adhere to the company's procedures and standards of behaviour.
- **Decision-making:** The ability to analyse problems and come up with sensible solutions or sound judgment in the mitigation of risks and obstacles.
- **Adaptability:** The person's willingness to adapt to change and uncertainty or respond to pressure or setbacks.
- **Leadership ability or potential:** If appropriate, the person's ability to inspire, encourage and motivate others.

Any detail in your appreciation, citing examples of where they have excelled, would be particularly useful.

Many thanks.
