

## **What is the evidence on performance reviews?**

Our evidence review *Could do better? What works in performance management* summarises the best research, some of which confirms current thinking. For example, there's good evidence that it helps to give frequent and immediate feedback, and focus on strengths and development.

However, the research also uncovered aspects of performance reviews that are often overlooked. For example, the two uses of performance reviews – for learning and development purposes, and for administrative purposes of informing decisions on pay and promotion – involve different cognitive processes, so it seems best to separate these as far as possible by focusing on them separately. Further, as the purpose of performance reviews cannot be taken for granted, the purpose should always be made clear.

Additionally, there's strong evidence that it's employees' reactions to feedback, rather than the feedback itself, that influences future performance. So it's crucial that employees see performance reviews as fair as well as useful and worthwhile checking in with employees afterwards to see if this is the case.

Our research shows that interventions promoting strengths-based performance conversations can have a measurable impact on what conversations take place between managers and their staff, and on the usefulness of one-to-one meetings for employees' learning and development and performance. Specifically, we show that a one-off half-day training workshop for line managers has an impact on employee performance; and an impact on employee learning and development seems to require a more extensive, holistic intervention that includes further training, communication and practical guidance and a change in policy on performance management.

<https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/people/performance/strengths-based-conversations>