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INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

REVIEW REPORT

For

RUSSET HOMES

**Prepared By
Graham Bedford
Investors in People Assessor**

Date: 14 March 2006

Contents

1. Introduction to the Organisation	Page 3
2. Summary of Good Practice	Page 4
3. Opportunities to Improve	Page 4
4. Feedback on Client Objectives	Page 6
5. Conclusion	Page 7
6. Indicator Summary At A Glance	Page 7
7. General findings against each indicator of the Standard	Page 8

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1. Introduction to the Organisation

Russet Homes (formerly known as Tonbridge and Malling Housing Association) is a registered social landlord providing housing services for households located mainly in the Tonbridge and Malling area of mid-Kent. It is a non-profit making industrial and provident society and was established by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council in 1990 followed by the formal purchase of the Councils housing stock in January 1991. Most of the staff are employed at the three main offices based at Tonbridge, Larkfield and Borough Green (Basted), which is the headquarters and administrative base. The association also wholly owns Invicta Telecare (formerly called Invicta Lifeline Ltd), which was established as a separate entity in 2001. It provides a telephone based emergency system for households throughout many parts of England (a community alarm scheme) that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The association is justifiably proud of the services it provides for tenants and has been recognised for its excellence to public service on a number of occasions for example when it received the Chartermark Award in 1996, 1999 and again in 2002.

The organisation currently employs 245 people.

This was the third review for the organisation. The assessor would like to thank all of the people involved in the assessment for their input.

Assessment Plan

During an initial discussion with the Chief Executive and Head of Personnel the assessor was able to gather a good understanding of the background to the organisation and how things had progressed since the last review visit. The assessor was provided with an updated staff list. This enabled the selection of a list of people to be interviewed. A sample of 26 people was selected for interview, which was made up of the Chief Executive, Directors, managers, technical, professional and other support staff. The assessor was allocated a room for the interviews. The sample selected was sufficient to satisfy the needs of the assessment process. The majority of the interviews were carried out on a one-to-one basis but four interviews were with a small group (two people).

The total number of days for the assessment was four and a quarter. This is within the IIP UK Practitioner Handbook guidelines.

The assessor was provided with a copy of the organisation's 'Health and Safety Policy Statement' which was last reviewed and revised in November 2005 and endorsed by both the Chief Executive and the Managing Director of Invicta.

During the assessment the assessor may or may not have been made aware of some Health and Safety training that had been and was continuing to be undertaken. However, the assessor is not qualified to give a view or to audit the adequacy of the Health and Safety training undertaken and the organisation should continue to satisfy itself that it meets all necessary mandatory and statutory requirements.

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2. Summary of Good Practice

- Many people believe the company to be a good place to work and reported high levels of job satisfaction – a remarkable achievement. A notably committed and ‘happy’ workforce.
- The organisation has undoubtedly ‘matured’ and improved its people management practices since the last Investors in People review.
- The organisation has taken careful note of the issues identified in the previous review report and implemented a range of actions to achieve improvements.
- The mentoring scheme and performance linked to Enhanced Performance Pay (EPP) for Invicta staff has been well received.
- Arrangements for a new training suite to meet skills needs, along with improvements in the delivery of in-house training through nominated trainers.
- People spoke of the generally supportive style within the organisation, that managers were approachable and that people were prepared to make time and listen.
- The organisation has recognised the value in identifying new ways to enhance support for staff and improve communication through activities like ‘away days’ etc.
- Staff consistently believed that they were valued. This is an area of significant improvement since the last review.
- There were numerous examples of peer group share and learn activities and the whole organisation has a predisposition to share good practice.
- There is an enlightened approach and recognition of the benefits of a diverse workforce e.g. there were many examples of part time, job share and contracted hours working arrangements. The organisation promotes diversity.
- The assessor was impressed by the loyalty, commitment and levels of motivation shown by people that were involved in the discussions.
- The consistency and application of training processes is well embedded in the organisation. The assessor was impressed by the consistency of application of processes like the appraisal, induction and pre/post training etc.
- The assessor found many examples of particularly good people management practices supporting the development of individuals.

3. Opportunities to Improve

- The extent to which people are involved in contributing to the business plan (and managers involve them in this process) may benefit from further development.
- Although people were clear about the five key aims and objectives of the business (which have remained the same or similar for many years) more could be done to stimulate their support and contribution by establishing

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sharper links from personal goals to those of their team and the organisation thereby focusing the performance management of individuals and teams

- For some teams, meeting times recur on the same day at the same time and perhaps they could be better planned to meet the varying needs of shift operatives, part time staff etc
- Although the basic requirements of the last third of the Standard are met, learning and development is seen as an integral part of the organisation's activities and the impact of this investment is not, at present, measured as effectively as it might be.
- The organisation has successfully introduced a management competency framework but it would do well to continue to review the roles and capabilities expected of managers and plan for development activity to achieve them. This should enable the effectiveness of managers to be measured.

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4. Feedback on Client Objectives

This is the third review visit for the organisation and it was agreed that any strengths and areas for further development would be fed back to them. In addition, the Chief Executive specified additional review objectives which were:

- To consider the impact of the rapid growth of Invicta Telecare on the overall culture of the whole organisation, especially in the context of skills and training needs.
- To identify how people at Russet Homes perceive this (disproportionate) growth, from that which was the smaller, to that which is now the larger part of the overall organisation.

Client Objectives Feedback:

The review process did not identify any particularly strong or latent tensions within the organisation. Mixed training activity with Russet and Invicta was cited on a number of occasions as helping to develop an awareness of differences and shared values, particularly, customer focus and service. There were however a range of (sometimes opposed) views:

“You do not get the impression that Invicta is larger than the rest of the association. I don’t think my colleagues even really think about it. They just really see it as another part of the organisation.”

For some people there is undoubted recognition of the benefits that accrue from the existing relationship. People were conscious that other housing associations may be subjected to the threat of merger or acquisition but felt that the growth of Invicta had, if anything strengthened the position of Russet in the ‘market place’.

“They have big expansion plans and I think they will become much bigger. They are taking over more and more of the building but I think everyone thinks that the association is better for it, especially if there is a possible merger or something like that.”

Some staff also appreciated the close working relationship they enjoyed with each other and perceived that some tenants also felt it an advantage.

“The Housing Support Officers lend a friendly ear and are very supportive – they create extra support.”

“Tenants love it – they know they can contact someone at the drop of a hat.”

For some other people the relationship appeared potentially more tense.

“It seemed that when we were likely to merge with West Kent – we had an enemy. In their absence; some people need to replace the enemy – Invicta will do! There are no real issues it is typical office politics”

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"We make a significant contribution to the association and I don't really think we get the appreciation we deserve for that."

5. Conclusion

Having examined the evidence that included an initial extensive meeting with the Chief Executive and Head of Personnel along with the thorough on site discussions with a cross section of staff the review has identified that Russet Homes currently continues to fully meet all of the indicators in the national quality standard, Investors in People.

6. Indicator Summary At A Glance:

Indicator Summary:

1.1	✓	2.1	✓	3.1	✓	4.1	✓	5.1	✓	6.1	✓	7.1	✓	8.1	✓	9.1	✓	10.1	✓
1.2	✓	2.2	✓	3.2	✓	4.2	✓	5.2	✓	6.2	✓	7.2	✓	8.2	✓	9.2	✓	10.2	✓
1.3	✓	2.3	✓	3.3	✓	4.3	✓	5.3	✓	6.3	✓	7.3	✓	8.3	✓	9.3	✓	10.3	✓
1.4	✓	2.4	✓	3.4	✓			5.4	✓							9.4	✓		
1.5	✓			3.5	✓											9.5	✓		
1.6	✓																		

Signed: *Graham Bedford*

Graham Bedford

Investors in People Assessor
14 March 2006

8. General findings against each indicator of the Standard

Developing strategies to improve the performance of the organisation.
An Investor in People develops effective strategies to improve the performance of the organisation through its people

1. A strategy for improving the performance of the organisation is clearly defined and understood.

The association has a clear strategy for improving the performance of the organisation and has over many successful years clearly identified what the organisation does and where it is going. The organisation has a clearly defined philosophy which is *“Our properties but the tenants home.”*

The association has a ‘New Guarantees’ statement 2005/2007 which in effect is a guiding vision/mission statement. There are eight guarantees which are promises to tenants. These are drafted in a SMART format.

The Corporate and Business Plans identify the organisation’s improvement priorities which broadly this year are set out as five key aims and objectives. Each of these objectives states that the association aims to: provide, maintain and improve homes.....provide high quality services.....keep rents and other charges as low as possible.....and to develop and support staff and other agents to help achieve these goals. These aims and objectives are not strictly measurable but were well understood by people during the discussions. The targets in both the plans (and the budget) offer further details in support of these and many other targeted areas. The Invicta operation also has its own business plan with its own aims and objectives. These detailed plans offer evidence of measurable performance objectives, usually in the form of target results; the action needed, often the lead department or person, resources needed (usually budget), time scale, success criteria, monitoring and evaluation. The plans are well considered, voluminous and very detailed.

“It’s about setting a framework so that people understand where the organisation is going and how they fit in. It is a route map. It is comprised from the bottom up and top down. Everybody has a stake in putting it together. The most obvious indication of its success is how the organisation has come together, particularly when we are so geographically diverse.”

The association recognises appropriate trade union/s and also has representative groups within the organisation. There is both a Joint Staff Consultative Committee (JSCC) and an Invicta Staff Consultative Committee. Representatives from both these forums also attend the Investors in People Working Party. The association ensures through a range of activities that consultation occurs with these forums about the business plan and direction of the organisation. This may start with the Chief Executive’s ‘Road Show’ presentations, formal consultation as part of the structured agendas or less formal involvement through the line and department management structure.

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“We involve the JSCC and the Invicta Staff Consultative Committee of whom we have representatives on the Investors in People Working Party in the business planning process. We ask for their views and suggestions are taken on board.”

Managers described how they involve people in planning. This included the appraisal process, regular team and staff meetings, and away days. There are a range of planned meetings from the board, Senior Management Team (SMT) downwards. Other meetings take place on an ‘as need’s basis’.

“We have staff away days. We talk about the business plan and training planning as well. We are encouraged to think about things corporately.”

“We got all the managers together in the board room and had a full day discussing people’s ideas and contributions to shaping our business plan. The day ended with half a dozen pages from the flip chart that were transferred and drafted into the Invicta plan that went to the board.”

The Chief Executive holds regular ‘road show’ meeting events which are about every six months. In addition, there are numerous e mails and the intranet which provides a worthy source of supportive information. People explained the objectives of their team and the organisation at a level that was appropriate to their role, and could describe how they were expected to contribute to developing and achieving them.

“At the last whole staff meeting we were told about the new changes to the staff structure and the imminent retirement of the existing Chief Executive.”

“We have the Audit Commission coming and we are preparing for that. I think that they are trying to make a good organisation better.”

This Indicator is Met.

2. Learning and development is planned to achieve the organisation’s objectives.

The Head of Personnel coordinates the annual training planning process and every head of department is responsible for drawing together their own respective team training needs. A proforma plan has been produced which ensures that managers describe the training need, the links to the business objectives and to a lesser extent how the planned training will be evaluated. Top managers could explain the organisation’s training needs, the plans and resources in place to meet them, how these link to achieving specific objectives and how the impact would be evaluated

“We now have a well established systematic approach to training planning. Performance indicators, performance observation and of course the appraisal process are the key mechanisms used to identify training needs. These are coordinated by the Head of Personnel into the Corporate Training Plan and considered by Senior Management Team (SMT) on a continuum basis, with approval linked to the budget process. The plan is on the intranet for staff to access and is

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reviewed regularly at Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings, particularly when significant corporate training activities have taken place like the 'customer service programme' which everyone in the organisation attended."

Managers explained team learning and development needs and how they planned to meet them. They gather the relevant information from observation of the individual or team performance in the work place or the appraisal process where specific provision is made to consider and record identified training needs. Other opportunities to discuss training were identified during the discussions and these included meetings and away days. More latterly managers have also been encouraged to understand the resource implications of the training identified and to follow through their understanding of how the training will impact on both individuals and their teams.

"We encouraged staff to understand their skills – not their training needs first of all. We did this at one of our away days. What emerged was how people might prefer to learn skills in certain areas – like anti social behaviour. We agreed on what our objectives were but we wanted it to be lead by the staff. ."

People could describe how they are involved in identifying their learning and development needs and the activities planned to meet them. This may be through the appraisal process, team meetings or on a less formal basis. A number of staff referred to the value of away days in this context.

"I can say what training I would like, my manager knows what I want and the organisation has training plans for all of us - like understanding asbestos. You would discuss the training at team meetings and at your appraisal."

Training is often very practical and much of it is delivered through the in-house facility where a judicious mix of external and internal trainers are provided. It has direct and obvious links, particularly to professional, computer, daily operations and process skills. People understood what learning and development should achieve for them and how this impacted on them and the organisation.

"I have just completed an NVQ. It was designed to demonstrate that I understand the requirements of my job and in the long run the association knows that I am suitably skilled to do my job."

This Indicator is Met.

3. Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the organisation's people.

A staff suggestion scheme has existed for a number of years. This has been revamped and its profile heightened recently. Ideas are forwarded to a judging panel where they are fully considered. The panel feedback to those people that have made suggestions and where successful, there is a small reward. A broad range of staff meetings occur regularly and the Chief Executive undertakes regular 'road shows' at which staff also feedback their ideas. These are typical events which demonstrate

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the organisations commitment to listening to people and encouraging them to come forward with ideas. In addition, there are more structured processes like the performance management system that facilitates ideas being put forward. People consistently reported a relaxed and open management style and approach that encouraged people to put forward their views, opinions and ideas.

“The most important thing about involvement is opportunity. You can lead the horse to water but you can’t always make it drink. We seek ideas. It could be the Chief Executive road shows, staff suggestion scheme, away days and the processes like appraisal process and one to one discussions with staff.”

Within the organisations environment there are many different categories of staff and managers recognised these and there were good examples of accounting for different learning styles. The organisation is able to demonstrate that it makes provision to ensure that everyone has equal access to, and the opportunity to be trained and developed to meet the needs of their job. One good example is the whole staff training activities for ‘understanding diversity’ which also included subjects like conflict in the work place.

“I’m sure that everybody gets the training that they need. It wouldn’t matter whether you worked here or at Tonbridge or Larkfield – we all have the same rights to training.”

Managers did recognise the different needs of people and could describe the training activity that is occurring or has taken place in their teams and understood the range of training that is being provided or is available, particularly in-house to meet individual and team needs.

“Some people will come forward quickly having identified their own training needs, others will hold back and not want to discuss or identify their needs as readily.”

“I recognised one individual lacked confidence and was not very vocal. My approach to supporting her was more based therefore on personal support and coaching – she benefited more from that approach than just sending her on a training course.”

People referred to the activities that are planned and occurring and confirmed that everyone is given the same support to access learning and development.

“I can’t fault them. It wouldn’t matter who you were or where you worked. I don’t feel in any way disadvantaged. We all have fair access to training if it is needed.”

People were able to explain how the regular staff/team meetings would provide one of the opportunities for people to put forward ideas on how they could improve their own or other people’s performance. The appraisal discussion also provides this opportunity, but people often gave examples of how they had been encouraged to contribute ideas to improve their own and other people’s performance in a less formal way. This was often as a result of the approachable and open style adopted by the organisation. In addition, a number of people referred to the ‘away days’ and the

staff suggestion scheme, which were clearly identified as further occasions when they were particularly active at bringing forward ideas.

“If she thought that it wasn’t a good idea she would explain why, but she is good at encouraging you to come forward with ideas. We all contribute ideas at meetings or it could be quite spontaneous.”

“They have introduced a staff incentive for ideas. If you come up with a really good idea that will be a benefit to the business or the service you will get £50.”

“My manager really does encourage us. My colleague put forward an idea only last month and she has received £50 for it because it was a good idea and it is now going to be implemented.”

This Indicator is Met.

4. The capabilities managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively are clearly defined and understood.

Job descriptions exist for all management posts and these set out in detail the typical range of tasks required for each post. In addition, person profiles include details of the qualities that the individual is likely to display to be a successful manager in the organisation. Also job adverts for vacant posts now clearly specify the capabilities and behaviours that applicants need to display and the Staff Handbook also includes a range of behaviours and capabilities including; leadership, coaching skills, performance management, team building, motivation etc (and less direct people skills including customer service focus etc). The Senior Management Team (SMT) have recently endorsed a defined management framework called ‘Pathway to Excellence’ and this was being introduced at the time of the review. This competency framework further defines the people management roles of all managers.

“We are now committed to using the ‘Pathway to Excellence’ framework for all our managers. This is a transparent criterion against which our managers are measured. Those virtues lead to a greater understanding about how managers should perform and their staff will understand that to. To sum it up – it is treating others as they would wish to be treated.”

During 2005 a high percentage of senior, middle and junior managers attended a management development activity called ‘Developing Individuals and Teams’ and the activity was designed to draw to managers attention the capabilities and behaviours expected of them. The activity covered: learning and working styles, the manager role in developing people, coaching teams and individuals and evaluation of training and development.

“As part of our continuous improvement we have realised that the performance management system is much enhanced by our management competency framework.”

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It helps us to monitor existing managers and is a useful measure for skills/training gaps as well as a tool for recruitment.”

Managers described the competencies expected of them and explained their relative role in them.

“Lead by example, show leadership, effective performance management and managing situations in the here and now. Treat people fairly, with an open door approach and motivate by being enthusiastic oneself.”

“At recruitment it was clear what skills I had to have. The person specification set out those qualities clearly as did the job description. I have to be an effective leader, understand how the team fit in to the big picture and plan and make sure that people feel valued.”

People understood what a ‘good people manager’ at the organisation looks like and how the effectiveness of that manager (in the context of their people management skills) should be measured.

“She must lead us with a clear understanding of right and wrong.”

“I expect my manager to respect me, to be loyal to staff and the association, honest, polite, approachable and consistent. By that I mean equitable.”

This Indicator is Met.

Taking action to improve the performance of the organisation.

An Investor in People takes effective action to improve the performance of the organisation through its people

5. Managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people.

Managers explained what they were doing to lead, manage and support the development of their people. This included in part some of the detail set out in the new competency framework and of course the implementation of the appraisal process for their people, identification of training needs and support to implement training. There is a clear link here to indicator four and the organisation should be commended for the timely introduction of its new management competency framework. It appears a sound approach and the assessor commends its early full implementation.

Managers gave examples of how they give people constructive feedback on their performance.

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“I often just sit down with an individual and talk through what the issues are. It may be to do with identifying strengths as well as weak areas. It may be to do with providing coaching support.”

“The responsibility for effective communication and feedback rests with me. We use the one to one six weekly meetings, the appraisal process, our extended lunches, team meetings and more latterly the away days.”

For most people the methods described for giving constructive feedback included the appraisal process and function specific team meetings. There were many other examples of how people receive constructive feedback on a less formal basis all of which seemed eminently appropriate.

“I think he is a good manager. There has never been once when I felt that I could not approach him. He is non-judgemental, a good listener and points me in the right direction. We have a whole range of statistics and information about the business and our part in it.”

“Feedback and communication is good. Team meetings are all about sharing information and we have lots of e mails and the intranet.”

This Indicator is Met

6. People’s contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued.

Managers gave examples of how they recognise and value people’s individual contribution to the organisation and these included impromptu thanks, feedback both formal and informal including praise and recognition for good work. In the case of Invicta staff they have an Enhanced Performance Pay (EPP) reward mechanism and this was often referred to during the discussions as helpful. Team leaders gather the information about individuals’ performance and make recommendations to the Head of Invicta Monitoring.

“I think the scheme is good, there is recognition and reward – it makes you think and commits you to trying to maintain quality services.”

“I say thank you and send e mails to people to thank them for what they have done.”

“If I think that someone is doing well I make a point of talking to them and thanking them. Where good survey results come in it is important to make sure that each individual and the team (as applicable) are made fully aware of how their effort has been appreciated

The organisation also has the benefit of a strong ‘peer group’ support culture. Colleagues openly support each other and often gave examples of how one would commend another individual for, say, responding well to a service issue. People

could describe how they contribute to the organisation and did believe they make a positive difference to its performance.

“I like to think that I do make a difference. We are all part of the same tree whether you are the bottom of it or the top.”

“I know I make a difference my job is very satisfying.”

People did feel valued in the work they did. This perception often directly related to, or depended on the style and competencies of the individual's line manager. People who did believe that their contribution was recognised by the organisation were articulate in justifying why and gave examples.

“My manager often says to me that the Director has noticed what I have done and that he thinks it was good – yes she does recognise the good things I do.”

“I had my appraisal form back recently. My manager had written it up showing how pleased she was with me. I was surprised and pleased that my Director added some of his own personal praise and thanks on the form too.”

“Recently the managers looked after the office whilst we all went for lunch together. That is a major level of appreciation - they are very good that way.”

This Indicator is Met

7. People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision-making.

Managers could describe how they promote a sense of ownership and responsibility by encouraging people to be involved in decision-making. Many of the teams operate a matrix management style which encourages individuals to adopt a 'specialist approach' and to take ownership. There are also a number of teams which adopt a project based approach to many tasks e.g. new or improved building schemes etc

“The team and individuals have set projects that they manage. The project is their responsibility and the onus is on them. They would have full control of the project and only seek support if they needed it.”

“We all have special areas of responsibility. Different people in the team specialise in different things and each person takes ownership for their special role.”

People described how they are encouraged to be involved in decision-making and to take ownership and responsibility for decisions that affect the performance of the organisation (individuals, teams and the organisation). It could be through team

meetings the appraisal process or more informally through interaction on a day to day basis.

“My Director said only recently that he wanted me to take more responsibility, he is very pleased with what I am doing. We are encouraged to make decisions. I have lots of things left to my discretion.”

“We make a lot of our own decisions on things like rent arrears, repairs and lots of other things on a day to day basis.”

At a recent new appointment we were involved in the interview process and we were all asked which applicant we preferred.”

“You are certainly encouraged to prioritise your own work load. I feel that I am encouraged to take on more and more as I have become more proficient and able.”

This Indicator is Met

8. People learn and develop effectively.

Managers have supported training activity and understand the links to the needs of the business plan. The organisations approach to encouraging participation in training was consistent and the skills needed were being met

“We use the appraisal process. Once the training is identified and recorded it always gets done. It may be training on new regulations or statutory requirements and we make sure we meet those in particular.”

People confirmed that training objectives would usually be made available proceeding the start of the event (particularly for in-house training) and therefore people understood why they were undertaking development activities and how this would impact on and improve their performance as a result. People did consistently explain how they had applied their learning and development activities in their role.

“Lots of us went on a big conference on anti social behaviour. Ten years ago there was no such thing. Our role has evolved and now I would know about the new laws, preventative measures and how to support our links with the Borough Council (Crime and Reduction Partnership).”

New recruits receive a structured and detailed induction to the organisation. This can be viewed as a two-tier approach; organisation wide for all employees and job specific. New recruits reported having good levels of support. There are different induction processes for both association staff and for Invicta. There is a detailed ‘Staff Information’ booklet which is updated regularly and a range of additional documentation and support. Staff are typically employed on a probationary period basis. The assessor was satisfied that effective induction arrangements exist.

“It started with a three hour detailed induction. We were given a training file which covered the structure of the company and a range of other information. Then the training started and we had the facility to listen in and then be listened to. It was very thorough I can’t see really how it could be improved. I’ve also been allocated a mentor. There are also buddies that you can go to on the shift at that time. I would score it nine out of ten, they try really hard to make sure that you are very comfortable about everything.” (This quotation is provided with the respondent’s permission since it may be attributed.)

This Indicator is Met

Evaluating the impact on the performance of the organisation

An Investor in People can demonstrate the impact of its investment in people on the performance of the organisation.

9. Investment in people improves the performance of the organisation.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) readily demonstrated that they had access to data showing the organisation’s overall investment of time, money and resources in learning and development. External and internal training activities and where necessary cover arrangements were all taken into account. Appropriate resources are allocated to meet learning and development needs.

“We budget annually and agree resources on the basis of needs.”

Top managers did explain, and quantify where appropriate, how learning and development has improved the performance of the organisation. The organisation has made significant improvements in the involvement of all managers in training planning and evaluation since the last review.

“Take the Customer Service activity we had for everyone. The facilitator was invited following the training to feedback his views to Senior Management Team (SMT). The feedback was very positive; staff were very committed and he pinpointed that even with the growth of the organisation we were keeping up with the implications.”

The organisation has a post training form. The Head of Personnel and managers were consistently reported as ensuring that dialogue after any learning and development activity was undertaken. Both managers and people could therefore give examples of how learning and development had improved the performance of the organisation. A further notable achievement in this area was the reports of sharing what had been learned from learning and development activity with colleagues upon returning to the organisation at staff meetings etc.

“We planned to improve the standard training pack. We called a meeting of a number of staff to ask them for their feedback and their views about the efficiency of

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the training. We also do exit interviews to seek opinions about whether they are leaving because they were dissatisfied with any aspect of the training or whether it is because of other issues.”

“We always have to fill in an evaluation form – how was it for you kind of thing. Say if a course is good for us on something like pension credits it would probably be good for Invicta too.”

“It was part of the general conversation when I came back to the office. Whenever anyone goes on training I think we usually try to share what we have learned with other people in the team. You have to complete a form as well.”

This Indicator is Met

10.Improvements are continually made to the way people are managed and developed

There have been a number of improvements to the way that people are managed as part of the feedback from the last Investors in People review. These have included; an improved line management structure, the definition and creation of a management capability framework, improvements to communication through use of the ‘intranet’, engaging staff through ‘away days’, development of everyone’s awareness of their role and accountabilities and improvements in encouraging access to training for everyone through NVQ’s and activities like the National Housing certificate.

“Invicta is a good example, with growth from 12 people to nearly 100 people in just over ten years. We have had to completely rethink and redesign the induction and training requirements. A new matrix management approach has been used, playing to the strengths of the team leaders and the newly created ‘seniors’ role. .”

People consistently reported the improvements that had occurred. They included frequent reference to the consistency of the appraisal (and other) processes, newly frequented and more effective team meetings, improved feedback and communication, timely and appropriate recognition, recently introduced ‘away days’ and in the case of Invicta a much improved induction/early training process.

“We have away days now. It followed on from the customer service course. I mentioned something on the day and it was implemented within a week. The complaints procedure is now down to three steps instead of five. Managers are much more hands on and involving people more – I think it is all the courses they do. They give us ‘quiet time’ as well just so we can catch up with administration.”

This Indicator is Met

Commercial and in Confidence

This report has been carefully prepared by Innovative Quality Management
on behalf of Quality South East