Guidance on Completing Leaver Discussions for Managers (Previously known as Exit Interviews)

It is recommended that leaver discussions take place prior to a member of staff leaving the organisation. Managers should aim to arrange this as soon as possible after a member of their team resigns and leavers should be actively encouraged to participate in the process. These discussions can provide a valuable insight to a member of staff's experience in their department and / or the organisation as a whole.

The aim is to gather feedback which will help identify ways to reduce employee turnover, to enhance staff experience and productivity ultimately resulting in a positive experience for patients.

1. What is the purpose of a leaver discussion?

Leaver discussions are intended for managers to fully understand the reason(s) why a member of staff has resigned and use that feedback, along with any suggestions for change, to help improve the service. The discussion also offers the individual an opportunity to share their positive experiences of working in the department / organisation. This information should be shared back to specific areas / services to recognise and re- enforce good practice.

2. How is this different to the Trust's online exit questionnaire?

All staff are sent a link to an exit questionnaire from HR when you submit a termination form. The questionnaire includes set questions which are asked of all leavers. Data generated from exit questionnaires is shared with directorates and used for workforce tracking and planning.
A leaver's discussion allows you to probe answers in an open dialogue to fully understand the member of staff's points of view and explores their individual work experience. The data generated is qualitative and heard directly by the person undertaking the discussion allowing them to consider an appropriate local response. Key themes from discussions should be fed back to the Workforce team to inform departmental/organisational actions and ongoing retention work.

3. When should the discussion take place?

It is recommended that the discussion is completed as soon as possible after the member of staff hands in their resignation notice, whilst their reason for leaving is still fresh in their minds.

4. Who should conduct the discussion?

If you are the leaver's line manager, you are responsible for ensuring they are aware that they are entitled to a leaver discussion. They must be actively encouraged to participate in a leaving discussion.
Ideally this discussion should take place between the leaver and their line manager. However if this is not possible, e.g. manager leave of sickness, or if the relationship between the leaver and line manager prevents a frank and honest discussion, the discussion can be completed with another managerial member of staff from the department / directorate who has experience in this activity. To this end, it is recommended that directorates should have a list of designated managers within the department who are experienced or appropriate to hold a leaver's discussion. If it is

felt that a leaver discussion is best undertaken by an independent party external to the department, advice regarding this can be sought from your HR Business Partner.

5. I know their reason for leaving isn't job related, do I still need to conduct a leaver discussion?

Even if your member of staff is leaving for reasons unrelated to the job i.e. they are leaving for caring responsibilities or are retiring, they will still have comments on their experience of working within the service and organisation, which will be valuable feedback you can use to reinforce or improve staff experience.

6. What should I be trying to find out?

Ultimately you are trying to find out why your staff member is leaving and if there was anything you could have done to prevent their resignation. You should try to find out their experiences of the department, the service, and the job itself.
The 'Leaver Discussion' template (*Appendix 1*) outlines questions to guide your discussion and draw out key points and themes, there are also suggested additional areas you may wish to explore further.
The discussion should take the form of an open dialogue rather than an interview.

7. How should I respond to what they tell me?

Although encouraging and receptive, you should remain objective and impartial throughout the discussion. Use both open and probing questions to gain a deep and clear understanding of how the leaver feels and the information they are trying to convey.
You may find that some issues are important to the leaver and they will focus on one particular point. You should make sure you listen and probe questions around this point to ensure you have a full understanding of their experiences. Ensure you clarify any points of uncertainty with them during the discussion.

8. What happens if they raise a complaint?

You are advised to ask the individual how they wish to resolve the matter as grievances should be raised within three months of the act complained of. Typically an informal resolution would be explored but if they wish to raise it formally, then they can. A modified approach will be adopted which means that an investigation will be conducted but they will not have any right of appeal as they are about to leave the Trust.

9. Using the 'Leaver Discussion' template (*Appendix 1*)?

Introduction	• Explain the purpose of the discussion is to understand their reason(s) for leaving and their experience(s) within the service and organisation to use this feedback for improvement. • Explain that what they discuss will remain confidential and will only be shared with permission (i.e. themes for feedback) or where there are concerns of conduct, safeguarding concerns or criminal activity. You should also explain the information they give would not be disclosed in any future reference requests. • Explain that feedback for analysis is anonymous; however leavers are invited to supply their details if they would like to keep in touch with the organisation in the future- this is purely voluntary

During the discussion	• Use the questions and additional points on the 'Leaver Discussion' template to guide the dialogue • Be prepared to probe their answer to ensure you have a full understanding of their experiences. • If they are not going to another role, ask them of their experiences in their department and the organisation – positive and negative, what could be improved? What needs to be continued? • If they are moving to another role, establish where they are moving on to and what attracted them. What could the new role or organisation offer that their current role or the department could not? You may wish to ask them hypothetically, what would have made them stay?
On conclusion of the discussion	• Complete the reporting page of the 'Leaver Discussion' template with the employee; mutually identifying 3 themes for improvement / action plus any particular positive feedback. • Thank the employee for their time, co-operation and input. • Explain that feedback for analysis is anonymous; however leavers are invited to supply their details if they would like to keep in touch with the organisation in the future- this is purely voluntary • Explain that they will also receive an exit questionnaire from HR and encourage them to complete this as the questions and purpose differ.