

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Understanding the PDP

The following section will give you guidance on the Personal Development Plan, what it is and how you can utilise it in support of your educational aspirations.

3 key questions to ask yourself...

- 1. What is a Personal Development Plan (PDP)?**
- 2. Why should I have one?**
- 3. How can I write one to reflect my own aspirations?**

The answers are straightforward...

1. What is a Personal Development Plan (PDP)?

A PDP is just another name for a plan of action, only this one refers specifically to your aspirations regarding personal development. We make plans every day, but do not always write them down; a PDP allows you to set your own personal targets and find the best way to achieve them.

A more formal definition:

'A structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development.'

2. Why should I have one?

Health Professionals in the UK are expected to have Personal Development Plans or Portfolios. An action plan will help you to concentrate your efforts and keep track of your achievements. To be totally effective, Personal Development Planning must be seen as a process or a journey. You should review your plan at regular intervals to ensure that it is always accurate, relevant and realistic.

3. How can I write one to reflect my own aspirations?

You need to consider the various factors that will affect your future decisions. The simple exercises on the following pages can help you with this process. The questions aim to promote thought and consideration of the direction that you want to go in and the methods that you want to use. They also take account of your own personal circumstances before you decide on a course of action.

SIMPLE STEPS TO WRITING A PDP

Ask yourself a further 3 questions...

1. **Where am I now?**
2. **Where do I want to be?**
3. **How can I get there?**

1. **Where am I now?**

Firstly you will need to decide what your current situation is. You may find it helpful to consider the following questions.

What am I good at?

What do I need to work on?

What could help me along?

What might stop me?

Consider the following example and then repeat the exercise to reflect your own circumstances:

Strengths: What am I good at?	Weaknesses: What do I need to work on?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good interpersonal skills• Fair IT skills• Fair organisational skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of knowledge of UK practice• Lack of knowledge about the health care team in the UK
Opportunities: What could help me along?	Threats: What might stop me?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advanced Life Support course• Local refugee health professional support group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family commitments• Lack of resources (money/time)

2. Where do I want to be?

Only you can answer this question, but be aware that there are many factors to consider when finding the solution. You may find the following questions provoke thought in many areas...

What do I like doing?

In my job, as a hobby...

What is my motive for learning?

Promotion, personal improvement, overcome a learning difficulty....

What qualifications and/or experience do I already have?

Some of these may be transferable.

How easy is it to get to the career(s) I am thinking of?

How competitive is it, and how far away am I from achieving it?

How much time do I have to complete my proposed actions?

Be realistic, development takes time.

What effect will my proposed actions have on my home life?

Consider commitments that you already have.

Are there any imminent changes to my lifestyle?

Marriage, children, promotion...

Will I be eligible for financial support?

Grants, loans...

What is my ultimate goal?

A qualification, personal fulfilment, career development.

How will I measure my success?

Recognised qualifications, personal goals...

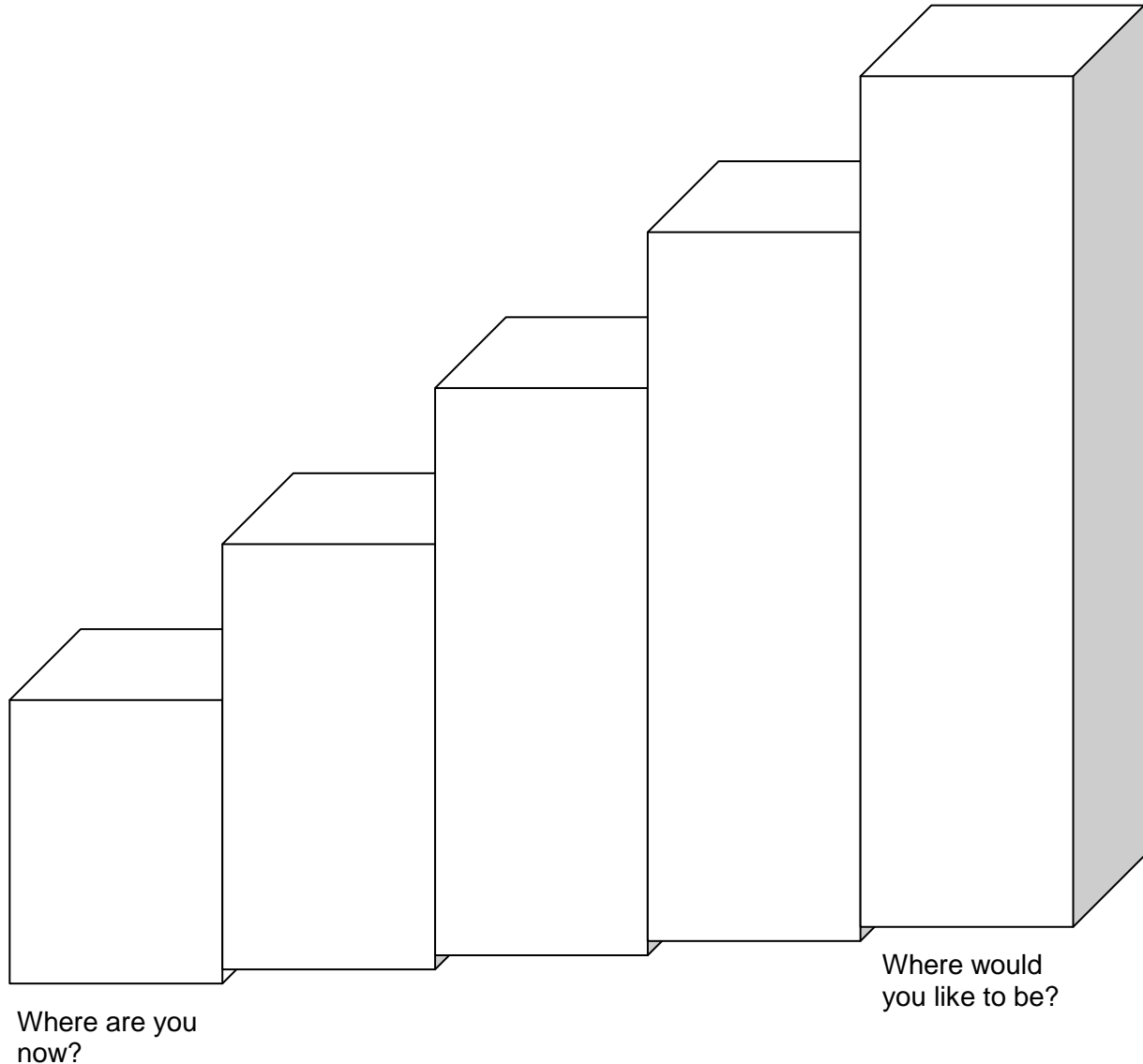
Where can I get help and advice?

Identify sources of support

Once you have considered all of the factors, you will have decided on a future goal. This may be one single goal, or many smaller goals that make up the final solution. Remember that your goals can change.

3. How can I get there?

You have now identified your Learning Gap. The question of "How can I get there?" can be answered by splitting your task into "bite-size pieces". This is a good way to plan effectively without losing sight of your overall aim.



The best way to organise your work into manageable chunks is to set short, medium and long-term objectives. Always remember short, medium and long are all relative terms and will mean different things to different people. Some plans may only last over a 1 year period, others may last up to 6 years, it all depends on you and your own circumstances.

It is also important to remember that these short, medium and long term objectives are fluid and must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are still relevant. If your plan changes, that is OK, just follow the basic principles outlined here, and continually ask yourself the 3 main questions (see diagram above). Your plan will then remain an effective tool to support your personal development.

Now check the summary flow chart before completing your own PDP.

SUMMARY FLOW CHART FOR WRITING YOUR PDP

