

CBF FAQ

FAQ's to support Line Managers

Q. When do I need to have completed the closing conversation?

A. We need everyone to complete their closing conversation with their line manager and update SOP by **28 February**. This will allow us to evaluate the trial year in order to make any necessary changes before CBF is linked to pay.

Q. Will I be prompted to close the CBF record in SOP?

A. No, there is no prompt to update SOP to record the outcome of the closing conversations.

Q. How do I close the 2021/2022 CBF trial year record on SOP?

A. Guidance on how to close the CBF SOP record can be found [HERE](#). Pay progression for April 2022 will remain automatic, the first point at which pay progression will take place with reference to the CBF is 1 April 2023 for all Probation Service staff.

Q. Why do we need to complete a SOP closing record if the CBF is not linked to pay progression for April 2022?

This will allow us to evaluate the trial year in order to make any required necessary changes before CBF is linked to pay.

Q. For former CRC members of staff is there a different deadline for completing the closing conversation?

A. No, some staff will have started the process after unification in June. Whether staff are approaching the end of the trial year, or if they have six months left, we need everyone to complete their closing conversation with their line manager and update SOP by **28 February**. This will allow us to evaluate the trail year in order to make any required improvements/changes before the CBF is linked to pay.

Q. Do I need to record anything on SOP if a member of my team is at the top of the pay band and hasn't participated in the CBF process?

A. No, if a member of staff who is at the top of the pay band and does not wish to engage with the CBF there is nothing that needs to be recorded on SOP.

Q. I have a member of staff at the top of the pay band that has engaged with the CBF how do I record their closing conversation on SOP?

A. When a member of staff has engaged with CBF and are at the top of their pay band, you should enter a summary of the activity that demonstrates each of the 5-competence area within the evidence fields.

When completing the Pay Progression field in SOP enter No, and in the Reason field enter *'At the top of the pay band'*

Q. I have a member of staff who has just returned to work following a period of sick absence, do they need to engage in the CBF process?

A. Yes, during the trial year we encourage everyone on Probation Service terms and conditions who has the opportunity to do so to engage with the CBF ahead of the link to pay progression in April 2023.

Line managers have told us that the opening conversation can be a quick and useful part of a return to work or induction conversation, discussing examples of ways staff have or could demonstrate the competence areas through their tasks and activities. As your member of staff may have just returned from a period of sick absence, they will not be disadvantaged by the CBF. They will be able to use competence examples while they are at work, and by using their past competence as an indicator of their current competence. The same would apply for staff returning from maternity leave, paternity leave or another supported absence.

Q. A member of staff is currently on maternity leave, what should I do with their CBF record?

A. If the member of staff had the opportunity to engage with the CBF process before they took maternity leave, you will be able to use their past competence as an indicator of current competence and complete the CBF record on SOP. If the member of staff has not been able to engage with the process at all due to maternity leave, you will not need to open a record for them. Outside of the trial, those on maternity leave will not be disadvantaged for CBF-based progression and if they are unable to provide examples due to their absence, they will still be pay progressed.

Q. I have a member of staff who is on a fixed term contract, do they need to engage with the CBF?

A. A member of staff on a fixed term contract will be subject to Probation Service terms and conditions, and therefore will need to engage with the CBF process. The eligibility for pay progression would be dependent upon if they have been in post for 6 months of the competence year (on or before 01 October).

Q. I have recently had a member of staff join my team, who is responsible for completing the closing conversation?

A. The current line manager will be responsible for completing the closing conversation and agreeing any competency examples that have been completed during the time in your team. Any competency examples completed before joining your team would need to be agreed by the previous line manager.

Q. I have recorded that a member of staff should pay progress, but I have realised they are at the top of the band what should I do?

A. Line managers do not need to worry about impacting pay outcomes when closing CBF records for their staff as the process on SOP will not be linked to pay until the March 2023 outcome.

Once the CBF process is linked to pay, SSCL will check that the eligibility criteria have been met before processing the pay award.

Q. Is there a target for the amount of people that will progress using the CBF each year?

A. No. Progression under CBF is not governed by a quota of people that will or won't progress. The CBF is not designed to prevent people from progressing, and we expect the majority of staff to progress each year under the CBF. The CBF is not a performance management system, there are no objectives to set and the focus is on everyday tasks and activities at an existing level of competence.

FAQ's to support staff

Q. Why is the CBF being introduced?

A. The 2018 Pay Modernisation Agreement committed to introducing the CBF to replace automatic progression since automatic pay progression is no longer used across the civil service. The CBF is the mechanism that you'll use to move through the pay points in your pay band.

We expect the majority of staff to continue to progress up their pay bands each year, you'll need to demonstrate your competence in all five competence areas (or six areas if they have management responsibilities), through your day-to-day activities in order to progress.

Q. How does the CBF align with the appraisal process?

A. The CBF is a mechanism to move through your pay band and is a separate process and will run alongside any future replacement for the SPDR process. As part of the CBF there are no objectives to set, and the focus is on everyday tasks and activities at an existing level of competence.

However, to save time, we recommend that you use the one-to-one conversations you're already having with your line manager to 'check-in' on your demonstration of competence throughout the year and maintain your CBF record accordingly.

Q. What if I change roles during the year either on a temporary or permanent position?

A. If you change roles during the year, your CBF examples should mostly reflect the role that you have held for the majority of the year, but you can use examples from both roles. You will need to have the relevant line manager's agreement for the examples provided. If you are promoted during the competence year, you will be eligible for competence-based pay progression within your promoted pay band only if you are in your promoted grade for more than six months of the competence year. If you are in the promoted grade for less than six months of the competence year, you

will not be eligible for progression at the end of that year, as is currently the case due to you being on a new and higher grade.

Q. Do PQiP's need to engage with the CBF?

A. Yes PQiP's will need to engage with the CBF. PQiP's train for either 15 months or 21 months and will experience annual pay progression in their PQiP pay banding during this time. PQiP Learners will therefore be required use the CBF in order to progress one point in their pay band ahead of completing their training and moving up a band as a result.

A CBF guide for PQiP's can be found [HERE](#)

Q. How many competency examples do I need to provide?

A. You will only need to record a maximum of 6 examples in total and two or three complex examples might demonstrate competence across multiple areas. Examples of competence prior to reunification can also be used so long as the example reflects current practice.

Q. I am a Band 1 member of staff on a spot rate, do I need to engage with the CBF?

A. The CBF is a process to move you through your pay band, as pay band 1 is a spot rate there is no progression through the pay band. However, we do recommend that if you are at pay band 1 that you familiarise yourself with the process during this trial year, and continue to engage with the CBF going forward, in case there is a change in roles, and you are required to use the CBF in the future.

If you are a pay band 1 member of staff who is on a temporary probation to a higher pay band, the CBF process is based on the role you have held for the most time in the competence year. Therefore, you will need to take part in CBF based on your temporarily promoted role where you have been in that role for more than six months of the competence year.

Q. Who updates SOP with the closing CBF examples?

A. Your line manager will update SOP and summarise the evidence that you have provided on your CBF record.

Following your closing conversation your manager will update SOP with the outcome of pay progression and justification.

Q. Do I have the right to appeal if I do not agree with my Line Managers decision on pay progression?

A. Yes you have the right to appeal if you don't agree with your Line Manager's competence decision at the end of the year, although we ask that you attempt to resolve disagreements informally first. Please refer to the guidance on [appealing a competence decision](#) for more information.

Q. With high workloads how are we expected to engage with the CBF?

A. We have designed the CBF collaboratively with trade union representatives, to make sure it is simple to use and draws from your existing line management and supervision conversations. You'll only be expected to provide competence examples of work you're already carrying out and to maintain and update your CBF records throughout the year to support your CBF pay progression.

Q. My Line Manager has not had an opening conversation with me yet, where can I find more information about the CBF process?

A. There's still time for you to engage with the CBF if you haven't already done so and there's plenty of information on My Hub about how you'll start these conversations. You can find more guidance on the CBF [MyHub](#) pages. However, if you have not been able to have an opening conversation by 28 February 2022, then your next opportunity to do so will be from 1 April 2022.

Q. Can I agree competency examples with my Line Manager throughout the year or do I have to submit them all during the closing conversation?

A. You can complete your CBF record demonstrating your competence areas throughout the year and discuss in your regular meetings with your line manager.

Q. I have been having ongoing CBF conversations with my line manager in supervision throughout the year– what is the difference between those conversations and the closing conversation?

A. The purpose of the closing conversation is to show that you've demonstrated all the competence areas during the year, and to confirm whether you're eligible for pay progression. Ideally, this will be a straightforward discussion, as you'll have already discussed your examples with your line manager during the year and received any additional support you needed. However, if there are any gaps in your examples, the closing conversation will allow you the opportunity to discuss activities that demonstrate any of the outstanding competence areas.

Q. I am not sure of how my examples should be recorded on the CBF record?

A. Examples of completed CBF records can be found [HERE](#).

Q. How can I find out more information about each stage of the CBF?

A. You can find more guidance on the CBF on MyHub using the link [HERE](#).

You will also find short videos outlining each stage of the CBF process [HERE](#).

Q. My salary is pay protected, do I need to engage with the CBF?

A. If you have a protected allowance but the pay element of your salary is below the top of the payband, you will need to engage with CBF. If your pay protection only relates to the pay element of your salary and you are at the top of the payband you are not required to complete the CBF, but as with all staff at the top of their payband,

you are encouraged to take the opportunity of the trial period to engage with the CBF process. You can check the current pay scale [HERE](#).

Q. How has unconscious bias been addressed to ensure consistency and fairness throughout the CBF process?

A. The CBF guidance includes content to support line managers in ensuring that the progression decision is made fairly. Staff will also have the right to appeal if they believe the progression decision is unfair.

FAQ's to support staff at the top of the pay band

Q. I am at the top of my pay band, do I still need to engage with the CBF?

A. If you are already at the top of your pay band, you will not be required to use the CBF. Despite this, we would encourage you to engage with the CBF process so that you understand the PS competence areas and you know what to do in the event you move to a new pay band, for example on promotion, and resume using the CBF.

Q. I am at the top of my pay band, and I would like to engage with the CBF, what do I need to do?

A. If you are at the top of the pay band and would like to engage with the CBF, confirm this with your line manager so they can arrange an opening conversation. You will then need to follow the CBF process by identifying a competency level and updating the CBF record and speaking to you line managers throughout the year about the types of work and activities that demonstrate the relevant competence areas.