

Exit interview form: a UK template with 15 questions that

An exit interview is the cheapest honest signal in your business: a leaver has little to lose, so their answers about management, workload, pay and culture are worth more than any engagement survey of people still guarding their positions. Exit interviews aren't legally required and the leaver can decline - but run well (by someone other than the line manager, in the final week, with confidentiality promised and kept) they surface the patterns behind your turnover. Copy the form below, ask the questions in order, and treat the answers as data, not gossip.

Why run exit interviews at all?

Because the incentives finally point the right way. Current employees soften the truth - they have reviews, relationships and pay rises to protect. A leaver with a signed offer elsewhere is the closest thing you'll get to a free consultant who knows exactly where the problems are. One caveat, honestly stated: single exit interviews mislead. One person's grievance is an anecdote; the same answer from four leavers in a year is a finding. The form below is designed to be asked the same way every time, so answers accumulate into patterns - which is the whole game.

The form

Copy the sections below into a document or your HR system. Ask the questions in order - they run from easy to personal, which is deliberate - and write down what's actually said, not a sanitised summary.

Logistics header

Name: [name]. Role and team: [role, team]. Start date: [date]. Last day: [date]. Leaving to: [new role / career change / relocation / no role yet / prefer not to say]. Interviewer: [name - not the line manager]. Date of interview: [date]. Confidentiality note, read aloud: "Themes from this conversation will be shared with the leadership team; nothing you say will be attributed to you without your permission, and nothing here affects your reference or final pay."

Role & workload

- 1. What did you enjoy most about the role - and what wore you down?
- 2. Did you have what you needed to do the job well: tools, information, time, authority?
- 3. How manageable was your workload in a typical month? When wasn't it?

Management & support

- 4. How was working with your manager? What should they keep doing - and do differently?
- 5. Did you get honest, useful feedback about your work, often enough to act on?
- 6. When something went wrong for you here, how well were you supported?

Culture & recognition

- 7. How would you describe the culture here to a friend thinking of joining?

- 8. Did you feel recognised for good work? Tell me about a time you did - or a time you should have been.
- 9. Is there anything about how people treat each other here that leadership should know?

Pay & progression

- 10. How fair did pay and benefits feel for the work you did - and against what you could get elsewhere?
- 11. Could you see a next step for yourself here? What would progression have needed to look like?

The decision to leave

- 12. What first got you thinking about leaving - and roughly when was that?
- 13. Was there a moment we could have changed your mind? What would it have taken?

Looking back, looking forward

- 14. Would you consider coming back one day? What would need to be true?
- 15. On a scale of 0-10, how likely are you to recommend working here to a friend - and what's driving that number?

Question 12 is the one that earns the form its keep: resignations are usually decided months before they're announced, and "what first got you thinking" locates the real cause - the reorg, the departed colleague, the review that never happened - rather than the trigger. Question 15 gives you the one number worth tracking across every leaver; it's the same logic as eNPS, pointed at the people who know where the exit is.

Who should run the exit interview?

Not the line manager. The manager is a factor in a large share of resignations, and even when they aren't, their presence caps candour - nobody critiques the person writing their reference to their face. Use someone a step removed: in a 15-person company, the owner or a director the leaver didn't report to; in a larger one, another team's manager or your HR person; failing that, an external HR consultant. It's the same principle as appeals in a disciplinary procedure: distance buys honesty. Whoever runs it should listen far more than they defend - the moment the interviewer starts explaining why a criticism is wrong, the interview is over, whatever happens for the remaining twenty minutes.

When should it happen - and should it be anonymous?

Book it in the final week: late enough that there's nothing left to guard, early enough that it isn't crushed between handover and goodbye drinks. On anonymity, be straight: a live interview can't be anonymous - the interviewer is in the room - so promise confidentiality instead, and keep the promise. True anonymity belongs to a short survey sent around four to six weeks after leaving, when distance has settled some answers. The strongest setup uses both:

- Approach - Candour - Comparability - Best for

- Live interview, final week - Good with the right interviewer; nuance and follow-ups - Moderate - depends on asking the form consistently - The story behind this leaver's decision
- Anonymous survey, 4-6 weeks after - Highest on sensitive topics (manager, pay) - High - same questions, scored answers - Trends across leavers over time
- Both - Each channel catches what the other misses - High - Any company serious about learning from turnover

What do we do with the data?

The form is the easy half. What separates companies that learn from leavers from companies that file them:

- Log answers consistently - same categories, same 0-10 score, every leaver - so this quarter can be compared with last.
- Review quarterly, not per-exit. Patterns are the signal: a manager named three times, workload in one team, pay drifting under market for one role family.
- Act on patterns, not anecdotes - and when serious individual allegations do surface (harassment, safety), take them out of the exit process and into a proper investigation immediately.
- Close the loop visibly. When exit data changes something, say so - "we've rebuilt the on-call rota; this came from exit feedback" - because current employees are watching whether truth-telling costs or pays here. That's the same trust machinery behind anonymous feedback done properly.
- Guard the confidentiality you promised. Themes travel upward; names don't, without permission.

Running exits through CoDash

CoDash's surveys handle the whole pattern: a structured exit interview recorded against the leaver's offboarding, an anonymous follow-up survey sent automatically after their last day, and answers aggregated across leavers so the quarterly pattern-hunt is a chart, not an archaeology dig. See engagement & voice.

A free template from CoDash - codash.co.uk/templates. Edit it to match how your company actually works, and take advice on anything unusual.