

# Performance Management Policy

## **Purpose**

It is important that each member of staff employed by the company is able to contribute effectively in line with their job description to the required standard of competence. This policy sets out the framework by which individual performance will be managed and the responsibilities of those involved in this process.

Performance is assessed by reference to the skill, aptitude and knowledge of the employee in regard to the job they are employed to perform. This procedure is designed to assist where poor performance indicates a lack of ability or skill and to provide an environment in which such issues can be addressed constructively in the interests of all parties.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to the performance of all employees of the company.

Consideration should be given to involving expert or professional advisers where jobs incorporate highly technical aspects or elements which are not familiar to The line manager.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Employees**

All staff have a responsibility to achieve and maintain the standards that have been outlined to them, to co-operate with their managers in identifying development needs and to act on them.

- Employees are expected to act in accordance with the Code of Conduct at all times.
- Employees are responsible for co-operating in the performance procedure and should make every effort to attend any meetings arranged by management.
- Employees are responsible for arranging their own trade union representation or support throughout the performance procedure.

### **Managers**

Line Managers have responsibilities for the careful selection and induction of new members of staff, for ensuring that all employees are aware of the standards required of them in terms of work performance and for ensuring they are adequately trained for the jobs they are employed to perform.

- Performance cases should be dealt with without any undue delay on the part of The line manager.
- The investigating manager must view the case with an open mind and come to a fair and justifiable conclusion after a full investigation.
- Where it is decided that a case is to be referred to a performance hearing The line manager must prepare a thorough management case outlining their investigation for consideration by the hearing panel.

In handling issues of performance under this policy, the informal and formal stages will normally be followed sequentially. However, there may be circumstances where the issue is sufficiently serious to necessitate going straight to the formal stage one performance advisory meeting. When a manager is considering such action they must seek advice from the HR Manager.

### **Hearing Manager/Panel Members**

The hearing manager and panel members must consider the management case and the staff side case fairly during the hearing and come to a fair and justifiable decision as to the outcome of the performance hearing.

- The hearing panel will consist of a manager (senior to the one who carried out the investigation) and a member of the HR team.
- The hearing manager must write to confirm the outcome of the hearing to the employee and investigating team within 5 days of the date of the hearing.
- If the outcome of a grievance is appealed The line manager must provide the appeal panel with a statement of case 7 days in advance of the meeting.

### **Induction**

All new starters in the company should receive an appropriate induction. This will normally consist of the standard Company Induction training course, followed by a robust local induction to their department and their role.

The induction programme should be approved and agreed by both parties, reviewed regularly, and placed on the personal file. When the new starter has completed their induction their manager should meet with them to establish standards of performance, skills and knowledge for their role and specific objectives.

The objectives should be documented and agreed with a copy on file. Managers should try to make standards and objectives as “SMART” (Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic, Time Bound) as possible.

### **Supervision and Appraisal**

Staff should be given regular feedback on their performance and feedback should not be limited to the supervision or appraisal. Line Managers should give their staff regular specific and constructive feedback as soon as possible on both positive and less than satisfactory performance.

### **Initial Performance Management Meeting**

Line Managers should always be monitoring the performance of all their members of staff. Where the performance of an employee is deemed to be inadequate, The line manager should meet with the employee informally and set out in a clear and understandable way where and how the performance falls short of the required standard, and what that standard is.

The Line Manager may also ask the employee for his or her views on a programme of future support or training. This meeting should be held in as positive and supportive an environment as possible. It is not necessary for a member of the HR team or an employee representative to be present at this initial meeting.

The employee should be given every opportunity to ask for clarification of the standards expected and to bring to the Line Manager’s attention any issues which may have affected his or her performance, including work and personal circumstances. The employee may also like to discuss any learning needs. The Line manager should ascertain from the employee’s comments whether he or she accepts that there is a problem and assess the importance of any mitigating circumstances.

Having assessed the situation, the Line manager should discuss and seek the agreement of the employee to an action plan to achieve the improvements in performance that are expected. This would consist of:

- A clear statement of the standards to be achieved
- A realistic time scale for those improvements (usually between four and 12 weeks)
- Details of any support or training
- Provision for regular review meetings
- Details of how performance will be measured.

The action plan may also include support by way of shadowing or buddying with other employees if it is felt that this would be helpful in achieving the objectives set for the employee. Alternatively, the line manager may choose to encourage the employee to receive mentoring from a manager external to the department.

The line manager will agree with the employee the schedule by which they will be meeting with the employee in order to provide support, feedback and review performance during the informal performance management period.

Should improvement not be noted in performance the formal stage will then be commenced. The line manager should indicate to the employee that a failure to meet the required standards within the period set may mean that formal action will need to be taken in the future. The review period set under the initial informal stage may be shortened if serious problems arise during it.

#### **Outcome of Initial Performance Management Meeting**

The meeting and action plan should be confirmed in a performance management letter to the employee within five working days of the meeting.

Following the meeting, it is important that the line manager keeps the employee up to date with his or her progress in line with the programme of regular review meetings in the action plan.

If the employee adequately meets the required standards within the period set, the line manager should meet with the employee to confirm that this is the case and confirm the meeting in writing. No further action will be taken, although the employee's performance will continue to be monitored in the usual way.

The records of the initial performance managing meeting should normally be retained on an employee's file for 12 months once his or her performance has been confirmed as having returned to the required standard. Should the employee's performance fall below the required standard during this 12 month time period then consideration will be made to re-starting the performance management process at the formal stage depending on the severity of the performance issues.

### **Formal Performance Management**

#### **Stage One Meeting**

Where an employee is failing to perform to an acceptable standard in their post after having been given initial performance counselling and support, a meeting will be arranged with the employee by his or her relevant line manager within 21 calendar days.

The employee will be given at least five working days notice of the meeting. The written confirmation of the meeting must include:

- That they have reached the first formal stage of the Managing Poor Performance Policy
- Clear details of the shortfall in performance
- All necessary supporting documentation

- Details of any informal discussion to this point
- The right of the staff member to be accompanied by a Union rep or a colleague.

The employee should take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

The approach at this meeting will be supportive and the purpose of this meeting will be to discuss and agree the:

- areas in which the employee's performance is unsatisfactory
- required performance improvement, and how this will be measured
- action plan for addressing the performance issues with an agreed timescale for improvement
- a suitable review schedule and the arrangements for the provision of feedback and support
- potential consequences of failing to meet the agreed performance level must also be clearly explained to the employee.

The employee should be given every opportunity to ask for clarification of the standards expected and to bring to the line manager's attention any issues which may have affected his or her performance, including work and personal circumstances.

The employee may also like to discuss any training needs. If the employee makes a complaint about the application of the procedure or another related matter, the line manager should consider whether the procedure should be suspended whilst the complaint is investigated.

The line manager may like to discuss any options for redeployment with the employee at this stage.

The line manager should review the original action plan and amend it if necessary. A new time scale for the achievement of the required standards should be set, which allows sufficient time to meet the standard, but it should not be unduly prolonged. This would usually be between four and twelve weeks, depending upon the circumstances.

### **Outcome of the Formal Stage One Meeting**

The meeting and action plan should be confirmed in a formal stage one outcome letter to the employee within five working days of the meeting. An improvement notice may be given to the employee. The employee should be advised that a failure to meet and maintain the required standards within the agreed time scale may mean that the formal stage two of the procedure may be initiated. The decision at the final stage two meeting could include a final written warning or amended duties.

Following the meeting, it is important that the line manager keeps the employee up to date with his or her progress in line with the programme of regular review meetings in the action plan.

If the employee adequately meets the required standards within the period set, The line manager should meet with the employee to confirm that this is the case. They should confirm in writing that provided the standards continue to be met within the next 6 months following the meeting, that no further action will be taken and the employee's performance will continue to be monitored in the usual way.

The records of the formal stage one meeting should normally be retained on an employee's file for 6 months once his or her performance has been confirmed as having returned to the required standard. Should performance fall below the required standard during this 6 month period then the performance management process will recommence at a Formal Stage two meeting.

### **Stage Two Meeting**

Where an employee is failing to perform to an acceptable standard in their post after having been given initial performance counselling and support and a Stage 1 meeting has already been held, a meeting will be arranged with the employee by his or her relevant line manager within 21 calendar days.

The employee will be given at least five working days notice of the meeting. The written confirmation of the meeting must include:

- That they have reached the first formal stage of the Managing Poor Performance Policy
- Clear details of the shortfall in performance
- All necessary supporting documentation
- Details of any informal discussion to this point
- The right of the staff member to be accompanied by a Union rep or a colleague.

The employee should take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

The approach at this meeting will be supportive and the purpose of this meeting will be to discuss and agree the:

- areas in which the employee's performance is unsatisfactory
- required performance improvement, and how this will be measured
- action plan for addressing the performance issues with an agreed timescale for improvement
- a suitable review schedule and the arrangements for the provision of feedback and support
- potential consequences of failing to meet the agreed performance level must also be clearly explained to the employee.

The employee should be given every opportunity to ask for clarification of the standards expected and to bring to the line manager's attention any issues which may have affected his or her performance, including work and personal circumstances.

The employee may also like to discuss any training needs. If the employee makes a complaint about the application of the procedure or another related matter, the line manager should consider whether the procedure should be suspended whilst the complaint is investigated.

The line manager may like to discuss any options for redeployment with the employee at this stage.

The line manager should review the original action plan and amend it if necessary. A new time scale for the achievement of the required standards should be set, which allows sufficient time to meet the standard, but it should not be unduly prolonged. This would usually be between four and twelve weeks, depending upon the circumstances.

### **Outcome of the Formal Stage Two Meeting**

The meeting and action plan should be confirmed in a formal stage two outcome letter to the employee within five working days of the meeting. A final written warning may be given at this stage. The employee should be advised that a failure to meet and maintain the required standards within the agreed time scale may mean that the formal stage three of the procedure may be initiated. The decision at the final stage three meeting could include downgrading to a lower post or dismissal on grounds of capability.

Following the meeting, it is important that the line manager keeps the employee up to date with his or her progress in line with the programme of regular review meetings in the action plan.

If the employee adequately meets the required standards within the period set, The line manager should meet with the employee to confirm that this is the case. They should confirm in writing that provided the standards continue to be met within the next 12 months following the meeting, that no further action will be taken and the employee's performance will continue to be monitored in the usual way.

The records of the formal stage one meeting should normally be retained on an employee's file for twelve months once his or her performance has been confirmed as having returned to the required standard. Should performance fall below the required standard during this 12 month period then the performance management process will recommence at a Formal Stage Two meeting.

### **Final Stage Three Meeting**

If despite all the measures outlined above, it becomes evident to The line manager that the required standards are failing to be met and are unlikely to be met within the time scale set, then it may be necessary to use the final formal stage.

A meeting must be convened, within 21 calendar days, by a manager who is senior to the one who carried out the formal stage one meeting. The employee will be given at least five working days notice of the meeting.

The written confirmation of the meeting must include

- that they have reached the final stage of the Managing Poor Performance Policy
- clear details of the shortfall in performance
- all necessary supporting documentation
- details of any informal discussion to this point
- the right of the staff member to be accompanied by a Union rep or a colleague.

The employee should take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

The meeting will be chaired by a manager who is senior to the one who carried out the formal stage one and two meetings. A member of the HR team will also attend. At this meeting the member of staff's manager will feedback to the chair of the meeting and to the employee and their representative the areas where the employee has failed to achieve the acceptable level of performance as set out in the agreed standards and/or objectives.

The employee and their representative will have the opportunity to ask questions and/or present their own evidence in relation to their performance. If the employee makes a complaint about the application of the procedure or another related matter, the chair of the meeting should consider whether the procedure should be suspended whilst the complaint is investigated.

### **Outcome of Final Stage Three Meeting**

Having heard all of the evidence on the employee's performance, the chair of the meeting with support and advice from the HR team, will decide on whether the employee's performance adequately meets the required standards, or whether the performance is below a minimum acceptable standard.

If the chair concludes that the employee's performance adequately meets the required standard, the chair will confirm to the line manager and the employee that this is the case. The chair should confirm in writing that provided the standards continue to be met within the next year following the meeting, that no further action will be taken and the employee's performance will continue to be monitored by the employee's manager in the usual way. If however there is a reduction in the agreed standards during the next year, the line manager will recommence the managing poor performance process at the formal stage two.

If the chair concludes that employee's performance is below a minimum acceptable standard they will go through the options set out below with the employee and their representative.

#### Down-grading

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to offer the staff member a less senior position within the company. This option should only be considered where there is evidence that the staff member would be able to achieve the required performance standards in the lesser post. In certain circumstances the poor performance may be so severe that down-grading is not an appropriate option.

#### Dismissal

If the employee refuses down-grading, if an appropriate post is not available, or downgrading is not considered a suitable option, the employee's contract will be terminated with appropriate notice on the grounds of capability (performance) following the Stage 2 Performance Meeting.

The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing to the employee within 5 days of the Stage 2 Performance meeting.

#### **Appeals**

The employee has the right to appeal against any decision made during the formal performance management process. An appeal must be made in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the letter stating the outcome of the performance meeting and should clearly state the grounds for the appeal.

The appeal will be heard by an independent manager who has not been involved in the process. An appeal hearing will be arranged at the earliest opportunity and the employee has the right to be accompanied by a Union rep or colleague. The Company may adjourn the appeal hearing if it needs to carry out any further investigations in the light of any new points the employee has raised at the hearing.

An appeal may result in the removal of the performance sanction; the imposition of a lesser sanction; or the confirmation of the original sanction.

Following the appeal meeting, the employee will usually be informed of the outcome within 5 working days in writing. The outcome of this meeting will be final.

#### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years.