PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT POLICY

Introduction

This policy should be used when performance has been identified as falling below an acceptable level. Its purpose is to provide a framework for resolving poor performance in a fair and supportive manner.

We will use this procedure where improvements in performance are not achieved following informal discussions.

Where poor performance is believed to be the result of deliberate negligence, or where serious errors have been made to the detriment of the organisation, we may decide to use our disciplinary procedure instead.

Where it is not possible to hold a face-to-face meeting under this procedure, we will conduct the process remotely. We will ensure that you and your representatives have access to the necessary technology for participating. Your rights will not be affected, and we will ensure that the procedure remains fair and reasonable.

A written record of all meetings conducted under this procedure will be made, either by the person holding the meeting or by an additional person arranged by us to take notes. We may digitally record any meeting conducted remotely under this procedure, provided that all parties agree. We will ensure that any such recording is made in line with our data protection obligations.

Stage 1 - Informal meeting

Your manager will inform you of the nature of the problem and confirm this in writing. You will be invited to an informal meeting to discuss concerns regarding your performance. The meeting will be conducted by your manager.

Following the informal meeting, your manager may choose to:

- take no further action;
- refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure; or
- issue guidance to you on what you need to do to improve your performance.

Stage 2 - Performance improvement meeting

Where stage 1 does not lead to a satisfactory improvement in your performance, you will be invited to a performance review meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss your performance and decide what measures should be taken to help you to improve your performance to an acceptable level. The meeting will be conducted by your manager. Where it is considered appropriate, a member of the HR department may also be present.

At the meeting, you will be given an opportunity to ask questions, comment on the issues and put forward any explanation you may have for the matters identified by your manager as amounting to poor performance. The outcome of the meeting may be:

- a decision to take no further action;
- a decision to refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure; or
- the implementation of a performance improvement programme (see below).

Performance improvement programme

A performance improvement programme is a series of measures designed to help you to improve your performance. We will seek to agree each measure with you, but reserve the right to insist on any aspect of the performance improvement programme if agreement cannot be reached.

Each programme will be tailored to the particular situation, but will cover the following elements:

Targets
The particular areas in which improved performance is needed and on what criteria your performance will be assessed. Where appropriate, we will set specific targets that will need to be achieved either by the end of the programme or at identifiable stages within it.

Timescale
The overall timescale in which the necessary improvement must be achieved, together with the timescale for reaching individual milestones where appropriate.

Measures
The measures we will take to support you in improving your performance. This may include:

- training;
- additional supervision;
- the reallocation of certain duties; and
- the provision of additional support from your colleagues.

Feedback
You will be given regular feedback from your line manager indicating the extent to which you are on track to deliver the improvements set out in the programme.

If, at any stage during the programme, your manager feels that your performance is not progressing in a satisfactory way, a further meeting may be held with you to discuss this, and where appropriate, your programme may be amended and/or extended.

Review
At the end of the programme, your performance will be reviewed. If satisfactory progress has been made, we will confirm this in writing. If your manager feels that satisfactory progress has not been made, your performance improvement programme may be extended and/or amended. Alternatively, you may be asked to attend a formal hearing under stage 3 of this procedure (see below).

Ongoing review
Following the successful completion of a performance improvement programme, your performance will continue to be monitored. If, at any stage during the following 12 months, your performance again starts to fall short of an acceptable standard, your manager may decide to initiate stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 - Formal hearing
Where stage 2 does not lead to a satisfactory improvement in your performance, you will be invited to a formal performance management hearing.

You will be informed in writing of the grounds on which the hearing is being convened. The letter will set out sufficient information and examples of why your manager believes your performance still falls short of an acceptable standard.

The hearing will be conducted by senior management and a member of the HR department. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official.

At the hearing, you will be given an opportunity to ask questions, comment on the issues and to put forward any explanation you may have for the matters identified by your manager as amounting to poor performance. The outcome of the meeting may be a decision to:

- take no further action;
- refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure;
- institute another performance improvement programme; or
- issue a formal warning.

A formal warning will be issued if it is concluded that reasonable steps have been taken that should have allowed you to perform to an acceptable standard, but that these measures have not worked. The warning will explain the nature of the improvement that is required in your performance and state the timescale for making these improvements. It will also explain that, if the necessary improvement does not take place, you may be dismissed.

The warning will remain current for a period of 12 months, after which it will cease to have effect.

Where you are issued with a formal warning in accordance with this procedure, you will have a right of appeal.

Stage 4 - Dismissal hearing
If you have been issued with a warning under stage 3 that remains live and your manager believes that your performance is still not acceptable, the matter may be referred to a performance dismissal hearing.

You will be informed in writing of the grounds on which the hearing is being convened. The letter will set out sufficient information and examples of why your manager believes your performance still falls short of an acceptable standard.

The hearing will be conducted by a senior manager authorised to make dismissal decisions, accompanied by a member of the HR department. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official.

At the meeting, you will be given an opportunity to ask questions, comment on the issues and to explain any issues around your performance or mitigating circumstances.

The outcome of the meeting may be:

- a decision to take no further action;
- the issuing of another performance management warning;
- an offer to redeploy the employee to alternative work; or
- a decision to dismiss the employee.

Any offer to redeploy you will be entirely at our discretion. Such an offer will be made only where we are confident that you will be able to perform well in the redeployed role. It will normally be offered as an alternative to dismissal only in circumstances in which we are satisfied that you should no longer be allowed to continue to work in your current role. While you are free to refuse any offer of redeployment, the only alternative available will usually be dismissal.

If we believe that there is no alternative role available and suitable for you and that you have not met an acceptable standard of performance, you may be dismissed. A decision to dismiss will only be taken by a manager who has the authority to do so.

The decision to dismiss together with the reasons for dismissal will be set out in writing and sent to you. Any dismissal will be with full statutory notice or a payment in lieu of notice.

Where you are dismissed in accordance with this procedure, you will have a right of appeal.

Appeal
You have a right of appeal against a sanction issued under stages 3 or 4 of this procedure. A request for an appeal should be sent in writing to the HR department within five working days of being informed of the sanction. Your letter should set out the grounds on which you believe that the decision was flawed or unfair.

An appeal hearing will be convened to consider the matter. It will be chaired by a company director together with a senior member of HR. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official.

At the hearing, the decision to impose the sanction will be reviewed and you will be entitled to make representations about the appropriateness of that decision.

The result of the hearing will be either to confirm the sanction, or substitute any outcome that was available to the panel conducting the hearing at which the sanction was imposed on you.

The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed to you in writing, explaining the grounds on which the decision was reached. The outcome of the appeal will be final.

Data protection
We process any personal data collected during the performance improvement procedure in accordance with our data privacy policy. Any data collected is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing the performance improvement procedure. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with our data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

Review
This policy will be reviewed periodically and any changes made communicated to all employees.



Anthony Murphy
Head of HR & Business Management Systems
November 2025