Performance Improvement Policy

During your employment, there may be times when we think that your performance does not meet the standards we expect. If this happens, we will use this Policy to guide us in understanding why you might be experiencing performance issues and work with you to improve matters. Our aim is to make sure that you perform well in your role, maximise your own performance and, in doing so, drive our organisation forward.

This policy applies to all staff in the business.

We will use this Policy flexibly alongside other policies which might also be relevant to the issues you are having. For example, we may consider that an issue raised as one of poor performance is actually misconduct. If so, we will handle this under our Disciplinary Policy. Likewise, performance issues are sometimes connected to problems with attendance.

Our expected standards

The standards of performance which we expect you to achieve are communicated to you in several ways:

- In your job description. This sets out the basic requirements of the role which you are doing for us.
- Through our appraisal process. You will work with your manager to set clear performance objectives which will be reviewed regularly.
- Through day-to-day feedback you will receive from those you work with. Our managers are proactive in their approach. We encourage them to praise good performance and provide regular feedback on any performance issues they may observe.

Initial steps – informal performance improvement

When a performance issue is raised, we will usually approach you informally first to discuss it. Your manager will usually lead this discussion. We will:

- Explain the issues that have arisen and discuss them with you to get your view on them.
- Discuss any underlying issues which may have contributed to the performance issues. For example, any medical issues, any additional management support or training you feel you need or any interpersonal issues.
- Discuss any support we can provide to help resolve the performance issues, including additional training, additional support, reallocation of work and other measures. If a medical issue is underpinning a performance one, then we may ask for your consent to obtain a medical report from your doctor/occupational health/an appropriate specialist.
- Set out a plan for improvement, including a clear timescale which takes account of any additional supportive measures which may take time to put in place. We will put this plan in writing, give you a copy and retain a copy.

We will usually agree a time to meet to review the success of the measures we have agreed at this informal meeting. This will allow a reasonable amount of time for any supportive changes to take effect.

If, when we meet, your performance has not improved sufficiently, then we will either extend the informal process or move. to the formal performance improvement process set out below.

Performance improvement plans (PIPs)

A PIP is a document which we will put together with you to guide us through the formal performance improvement process. It is a document which sets out:

- The areas where improved performance is required
- Clear performance objectives which you will need to meet
- The evidence we will look at to check whether those objectives have been met
- The timescale for meeting those objectives
- Any supportive measures we will put in place to help you meet those objectives

It is a document which will help both you and us to focus on the improvement required and to assess improvement.

We usually use PIPs throughout the performance improvement process.

The formal performance improvement process

If we have not seen an adequate improvement following the informal process set out above, or if we decide that the issues are sufficiently serious that they need to be placed on a formal footing at an early stage, then we will begin to follow our formal performance improvement process:

Stage 1 meeting – At this meeting, we will aim to agree a PIP with you. This will highlight all performance concerns, the standard expected and how we will work together to achieve that standard.

We will agree a timetable for improvement with you. This will depend on the issues but will generally be at least four weeks in duration. If a PIP cannot be agreed between us, then we will set it without your agreement, but only after we have tried to understand why you think the standards we expect of you are not reasonable or attainable.

Stage 1 review meeting – At the end of the review period, we will hold a Stage 1 review meeting at which your progress will be discussed. If your performance has not improved sufficiently, then we may issue a first written warning for performance and move to Stage 2 of the process. We will put a further review period in place (usually at least 4 weeks in duration). Changes to the PIP and additional support will also be discussed.

Stage 2 review meeting – Following the Stage 2 review period, we will hold a meeting where your progress will be discussed. Again, if your performance has not improved, then we may

issue a final written warning for performance and move to Stage 3 of the process. We will put a further review period in place (usually at least 4 weeks in duration). Changes to the PIP and additional support will also be discussed.

Stage 3 review meeting – Following the Stage 3 review period, we will hold a meeting where your progress will be discussed. At this meeting, if your performance has not improved sufficiently, you may be dismissed from our employment with notice for capability.

At each stage of the formal process the outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to you in writing, including (if relevant) details of the possible consequences of failing to improve during the relevant timescale or of additional poor performance in other areas.

Other options at each stage of the formal process include taking no further action or extending the review period.

Sometimes, we may omit Stage 2 and move straight from Stage 1 to Stage 3 (meaning you get two rather than three periods in which to demonstrate your improvement). It is up to us whether this happens or not.

Performance improvement meetings

It is your responsibility to attend meetings under this Policy, but if you cannot, we will normally reschedule them, provided we are satisfied with your reason for not attending. We will normally only reschedule the meeting once unless there is a very good reason to justify a second rescheduling. If you fail to attend a rescheduled meeting, we may have to make decisions in your absence.

Please do not record performance improvement meetings without our consent, as this suggests that you do not trust our process or the Managers who are conducting the meeting. We may decide to deal with any covert recording under our Disciplinary Policy.

If you have misgivings about either the process or the managers leading it, you should tell us openly so that we can address your concerns. In turn, we will not record the meeting without your knowledge. Or We may record the meeting, but we will not do so without telling you. You are welcome to record the meeting if you wish, but please tell us beforehand, as we think it is discourteous to the managers involved for you to make a covert recording. You will also get a better quality recording if you do so openly rather than covertly.

You will be given a copy of any evidence to be relied upon before the meeting and a copy of the notes after the meeting.

We will go through all the details at the meeting so that you fully understand our concerns with your performance and the standards of performance we need you to meet.

We would like to understand any reasons for your poor performance. If you consider that a medical condition or personal issues are affecting your performance, please tell us so that we can take medical advice where necessary and consider any reasonable adjustments.

We will give you the time you need to respond to the concerns raised and put your own case. We will also give you the chance to question us, present your own evidence, call your own witnesses, and respond to evidence that any of our witnesses put forward. If there are any questions you want us to ask anybody else, please tell us and (unless there is a good reason not to) we will make sure they are asked.
We will discuss with you the targets for improvement that we need you to meet and the timescale for that improvement. We will also let you know of any support we will provide (such as training or supervision) to help you.

If we decide at any point during the process to take no further action, we will tell you.

The right to be accompanied

You are entitled to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at any meeting called under this Policy where you face a formal warning, or dismissal, as a result of that meeting. This right does not extend to any investigation or informal meetings that lead up to a formal performance improvement meeting.

If you want to exercise this right, you should tell us as soon as possible who you want to accompany you.

It is your responsibility to arrange for them to attend. If you choose a work colleague, we will not prevent them from attending but we may rearrange the meeting if their absence from work would cause operational problems.

Your colleague or union representative can, if you'd like them to, explain the key points of your case to the meeting and can respond on your behalf. You can also confer with them during the meeting. However, they must not answer questions put directly to you or try to prevent us from asking questions or outlining our points.

Right of appeal

At each stage of the formal process, you have the right to appeal any warning given. In the case of dismissal, you have the right to appeal the dismissal. Please send your appeal in writing to the COO.

If you lodge a grievance during the performance improvement process, which we think arises from the performance improvement process, we will normally treat it as an appeal under this process rather than a free-standing grievance.

We may choose to continue with the performance improvement process while your appeal is being considered. This is to prevent the process from being derailed, or delayed, by one or more appeals being inserted into the timeframe.