

## Performance Management Good Practice Guide for Managers

All line managers should read and familiarise themselves with this guidance and section E11 Performance Management Policy and Procedure

The application of the Performance Management policy and procedure will be underpinned by the principles of fairness and consistency

All employees will be expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public and perform their duties to the best of their ability.

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Subject: Employee Performance Management	
Policy Commitment	Action Required
Principles of Performance Management Policy and Procedure	<p>Managers must consider the following as they address performance issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- any action taken is fair, consistent and proportionate</li> <li>- undertake an evaluation of the impact on any health issues or disabilities</li> <li>- need to outline expectations of the post holder's job performance – is it realistic, reasonable and fair?</li> <li>- assess the impact of any personal circumstances that could affect employees' performance at work</li> <li>- to retain employees in employment wherever possible and to give them every opportunity to improve with encouragement and support within set timescales</li> <li>- to consider re-training or further training where this is reasonable and practicable</li> <li>- to record and keep details of all discussions/interviews with the employee as well as evidence relating to the monitoring work targets. These will be needed if the employee is taken into the hearing process</li> <li>- to ensure that the employee is aware that such records are being kept and has had the opportunity to comment on them, although this does not require their agreement. The process of monitoring should be open and supportive</li> <li>- to develop standards of performance which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely (SMART) in respect of quality, quantity, time and cost.</li> <li>- to ensure that shortfalls in performance cannot be attributed to lack of clarity of purpose or explanation, training and support on behalf of management and/or that expectations of management are not unreasonable.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to these principles, managers will have to consider any professional elements of the role that form part of a statutory requirement and which place a responsibility on the employer to refer to an external body where performance has fallen below the required level.</p> <p><b>While ever effort will be made to help an employee improve their performance and retain them in post, the County Council cannot guarantee to maintain employment indefinitely if satisfactory performance is not achieved and maintained.</b></p>
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<p>A structured and proactive approach to performance management to support and enable employees to perform their duties to the required standard</p>	<p><b>Managers - All managers required to take active steps to identify and manage poor performance in a fair and consistent way</b></p> <p>Must provide positive, constructive feedback to encourage good performance and address issues at the earliest opportunity to provide employees with the time, training and support to make the required improvement.</p> <p>Determine whether performance shortfall is a temporary dip or whether there are longer term capability issues which require a different management approach.</p> <p>Use the competency framework to identify core skills and behaviours; job purpose; aims and objectives of individual, team and the County Council and the EPDR process to make an informed assessment on an individual employee's performance. Key elements to support effective performance management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- having a clear job description and employee specification which describes the role purpose and the tasks to be undertaken</li> <li>- ensure recruitment tools match the level of job on offer and test the required skills and knowledge</li> <li>- undertake an effective induction programme to ensure new recruits understand the role, the operating context and expectations placed on them</li> <li>- provide regular and effective supervision and in addition, for those new into post, manage the probation period rigorously</li> <li>- provide the opportunity for regular discussion about overall job performance in supervision and team meetings to develop a circular feedback culture involving job holder; supervisors and peer colleagues</li> <li>- use the competency framework and EPDR process to highlight positive aspects of performance as well as areas requiring development</li> <li>- provide access to relevant L&amp;D opportunities to enable employees to close any gaps in their performance</li> <li>- develop an ability to tackle issues as and when they arise to prevent them escalating into more significant problems</li> <li>- maintain clear, concise records of conversations and actions taken to address a performance shortfall, to measure progress or as evidence if the procedure has to be invoked.</li> </ul>
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Understand what is effective performance management	<p><b>Managers understand the importance of and are able to set and communicate fair and consistent standards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– employee capability includes skills, ability, aptitude, behaviours, and the application of required knowledge in relation to the job they are employed to do</li> <li>– lack of capability can lead to unsatisfactory job performance</li> <li>– requires the manager to provide appropriate support and encouragement to enable improvement to be made to the required standard</li> <li>– issues addressed early prevent matters from escalating to the point where formal action may be required</li> <li>– managers are required to exercise judgement and discretion to determine what is and is not acceptable performance.</li> </ul>
What to look at when considering applying the performance management policy and procedure	<p><b>This guide cannot cover every eventuality but managers will need to consider the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the role of the job holder</li> <li>– the level of performance</li> <li>– the cause and nature of any performance difficulties</li> <li>– the steps required to close the performance gap</li> <li>– the degree of risk to service users; colleagues; the reputation of the County Council posed by the continued performance shortfall</li> <li>– any relevant individual circumstances of the employee</li> <li>– the previous employment history</li> </ul>
How will concerns be raised?	Performance shortcomings may become apparent to the line manager; be raised by the employee themselves; result from customer/service user complaints; peer review or management observation
Performance Management Tools	<p>For new entrants – closely managed induction and probationary period</p> <p>For existing employees – regular discussion about performance in supervision; the EPDR process; day to day management observation and feedback both positive and developmental, frequent reference to the competency framework. If any of these are to be used, they must be properly recorded and communicated to the employee.</p>
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<p>Health Issues will be sensitively managed (See <a href="#">Supporting Employees with Disabilities</a>)</p>	<p>In cases where performance may be related to the health of the employee, the manager will seek medical advice through a referral to the Occupational Health Team about any support which may be necessary or advisable to enable the employee to undertake their role successfully.</p> <p>Separate guidance is available on managing employees who may fall within the protection of the Equality Act 2010 on the grounds of their disability. Please see <a href="#">Supporting Employees with Disabilities</a>.</p> <p>Employees may become ill whilst their performance is being monitored – this will not remove the need for monitoring but managers will need to consider the needs of the individual with those of the business and on service delivery. The employee is less likely to become stressed about the process if they are clear about the level of concern about their performance and what the specific concerns are; understand what development requirements have been identified and how they will be supported with a clear timescale in which to achieve the required improvement</p> <p>If an employee under performance monitoring becomes unwell and the absence extends beyond 2 weeks, consideration will need to be given to the timescales given in which to make the required improvement. If the absence extends, consideration will need to be given as to whether action should be taken under the County Council's Attendance Management policy.</p>

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The grievance process cannot be used to frustrate the performance management process	<p>Managers will address the performance shortfall and focus on the development area, not the individual employee.</p> <p>Commenting on individual performance and addressing issues around performance can be difficult to manage sensitively and this can feel uncomfortable for the employee and the manager. The employee may feel personally attacked and aggrieved at the level of challenge. In some cases, entirely appropriate management intervention can be viewed as bullying or harassment by the employee. This is why it is important to have open dialogue about performance standards at regular intervals and to record such discussions as and when they take place as a means of evidencing the issues previously raised and the steps taken to address them.</p> <p>The grievance and harassment procedure cannot be used to frustrate the performance management process and where a grievance is raised as a result of the performance management process being applied, it will normally be considered as part of the process but the employee will receive a separate adjudication on the points of their grievance as well as the written outcome to the performance management hearing.</p> <p>There will be some occasions where it is not appropriate to hear the grievance as part of the performance management hearing and this should be discussed by the nominated panel chair with the HR adviser.</p>

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Employees capability to do their jobs will be considered under the performance management policy. Conduct matters will be considered under E3 Disciplinary Procedure	A key decision for the manager is whether action over and above the normal day to day intervention is required, and if so, whether the issue falls within the performance management or disciplinary procedure. Where an employee's performance does not meet the required standards, apparently out of choice, this will normally be regarded as potential misconduct and should be addressed under the Disciplinary Procedure. In circumstances where the employee has been given every support and assistance to enable them to perform their duties to the required level but they remain unable to do so, this will fall within the Performance Management Procedure outlined in E11 of the Personnel Handbook. In cases requiring remedial performance management action, the manager will ensure that they are measuring performance against the agreed standards rather than substituting personal opinion for clear evidence of the standard of performance. Managers will also have to demonstrate that they are applying performance standards fairly and consistently across their teams. It is in the area of service risk that the blurring of boundaries between applying the discipline or performance management procedures becomes less clear. Where a risk to service users, colleagues or the employee themselves is created, whether through action or inaction, it is more likely to fall within the discipline spectrum as negligence rather than as an issue to be addressed under the performance management procedure. Ultimately this is a judgement for the manager but HR colleagues will be able to assist by providing advice and service precedents from previous casework which will enable the manager to reach their decision.
Managers will ensure that employees are aware of the standard of work expected of them and the range of duties to be undertaken	Performance standards will be discussed at the highest level and filter through the organisation through divisional leadership teams, team meetings and at the EPDR discussion. These duties and standards are drawn from a range of sources including job descriptions, employee specifications, the Competency Framework, departmental/sectional business or service plans and the EPDR process. Managers may also refer to any national or professional standards of competence where they are available and relevant. The aim of effective performance management is to encourage the employee to achieve the standard of required performance within a reasonable timeframe. The timeframe for improvement will be determined by the level of responsibility attached to the post, the complexity of the tasks to be undertaken and the level of support available to newly appointed staff.

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The Performance Management Policy assumes that staff come to work to perform their duties to the best of their ability and all management action should be to support and encourage employees to do so	Managers should investigate possible causes of poor performance. The following list of possible causes is not exhaustive: Poor recruitment process and induction; inadequate, irrelevant or insufficient training; inadequate explanation of the standards laid down in the Competency Framework; inability to cope with new technology or new systems of work; ill health; personal issues including bereavement, caring responsibilities, domestic violence; poor systems of work, out of date policies or inadequate procedures; poor tools or equipment; poor quality or inadequate support/supervision; lack of clearly defined role; being the subject of bullying/harassing behaviour; wilful negligence.
If a manager has exhausted the supportive mechanisms for assisting an employee to raise their performance, they are obliged to proceed to the hearing process	The hearing process is in a minimum of 2 stages and these are outlined in section E11 Performance Management Policy and Procedure of the Personnel Handbook. Managers will be expected to demonstrate the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– that the employee has received information clearly and fairly which describes how their performance is failing to meet the required standard</li> <li>– the manager must have reinforced the standards required for the job</li> <li>– evidence will be required of how the possible causes for poor performance have been explored and what support and monitoring has been put in place to enable the employee to reach the required standard</li> <li>– the employee must have had the opportunity to put forward any facts or evidence they consider relevant</li> <li>– the support methods should have considered the following: extra support/supervision/coaching from the line manager; buddying with a more experienced colleague or more formal mentoring arrangement; setting or reviewing work targets; further training or re-training where this is practical and reasonable; having an agreed review period so that the employee is clear about timescales</li> <li>– the manager must have advised the employee of the possible consequences of continued poor performance on their continued employment.</li> </ul>