Performance Management Process – Manager Guide

Introduction

This guide is a tool for managers. It includes information on your responsibilities as a manager, factors to consider when performance declines and the process for supporting employees to improve. This guide should be read alongside the Improving Performance Policy. There is also an Action Card with a flowchart setting out the process.

Poor performance is the gap between the Trust's expectations of an employee in their role and their actual performance. Whilst very few employees choose to perform badly, make mistakes or fail to complete tasks it sometimes still happens. It is important to give employees the opportunity to address the concerns and improve their performance using a clear, fair and supportive process.

Your responsibilities

As a manager you are responsible for ensuring that:

- all your employees who are new to the Trust complete corporate induction
- all employees who join your team are given a local induction programme
- the required standards and expectation of their role are explained to and understood by your team
- your team complete their mandatory training and receive any appropriate training required for their roles
- employees have regular appraisals and 1:1 meetings
- you recognise and address poor performance in a timely, fair, consistent and confidential way.

First steps

When an employee's performance declines you need to consider what the reasons for this may be before deciding to use the performance management process.

Potential reasons for poor performance include:

- work overload
- unrealistic deadlines
- organisational change
- lack of supervision / level of supervision needed
- equipment and resources available
- inadequate or insufficient training / induction
- lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities
- process or procedure not clearly defined, communicated to staff or not in place
- personal issues

Where poor performance is due to health issues it should first be dealt with in accordance Supporting Attendance Policy. Where poor performance is caused by carelessness, negligence, wilfulness or attitude it may be more appropriate to use the Disciplinary Policy. In other cases the improving performance process should be used. If you are unsure which approach to take always seek advice from your HR manager.

There are 4 stages of the improving performance process:

- Informal
- Formal stage 1
- Formal stage 2
- Capability hearing

It is important to address any performance issues as early as possible to avoid the matter getting worse, ideally when they can be addressed informally.

Preparing for performance meetings
Gather relevant information – before the meeting get together all the information you think you might need, e.g. specific examples of the concerns including dates, evidence or records and any details of any negative consequences, print any documents you want to give to the employee.

Identify the specific areas of concern – establish the specific areas of the employee's performance you are most concerned about and use these to develop the expected outcomes and support.

Draft the performance plan – have a draft performance plan ready to discuss at the meeting as this will help provide structure and discussion points. Be prepared to adjust the plan based on what the employee says during the discussion.

Arrange an appropriate date, time and venue – meet with the employee as soon as possible, ensuring the location allows for privacy and not being interrupted. If it is a formal stage make sure you invite the employee and give them at least 7 calendar days' notice.

Right to be accompanied – if it is a formal meeting the employee has the right to be accompanied by a union representative or a colleague who is employed by GHC. If the employee's representative cannot attend the proposed meeting date, you should offer one alternative date usually within 7 calendar days of the original date. You will be expected to make a reasonable effort to accommodate their availability if possible.

Drafting a performance plan
There is an improving performance plan template which you should use to structure and document the plan:

Area identified for improvement	Here you should summarise the key objective for each area improvement in a few words, e.g. improved communication, improved recordkeeping, following processes
Expected outcomes / actions	Here you should set out the expected outcomes linked to the objective and how you will measure / evidence if the outcome has been achieved, e.g. Rio / Systm1 entries, supervision notes, reflective work
Support required to meet expected outcome	Here you should detail what support will be provided or offered and by whom to ensure the employee is supported to achieve the objective
Date to be achieved by	Here you should set the date you expect each objective to be achieved by, making sure it is realistic, achievable and takes things such as timing of training into account. If an extension is agreed, ensure this is recorded appropriately, with the reasons

Date completed / evidenced	Here you should record when objective was achieved.

Here is an example:

Area for improvement 1	
Professional and respectful communication	
Expected outcomes	**Support required to meet expected outcome**
Demonstrate use of professional language at all times, which should include refraining from swearing *Evidenced by: observation, supervision and feedback*	Applies to all expected outcomes in area: • Remind yourself of the Trust values and behaviours, these available on the intranet • Read Civility and Dignity at Work Policy • Read your profession's code of practice
Remain professional in the workplace, being discreet and sensitive to your surroundings when discussing any personal information including your own *Evidenced by: observation and supervision and feedback*	
Area for improvement 2	
Recordkeeping	
Expected outcomes	**Support required to meet expected outcome**
Meet the Trust standards for record keeping as defined in the Health Records and Clinical Record Keeping policy. This includes keeping caseload and diary up to date *Evidenced by: review of clinical notes*	Read the Health Records & Clinical Recordkeeping policy and, through supervision, reflect where previously they have not met the standards in their recordkeeping
Ensure the plan for intervention is constantly evaluated to ensure it is effective and relevant to the service user's changing circumstances and health status criteria. At each treatment session there is a review of: the treatment plan; subjective markers; objective markers; results of relevant investigations. *Evidenced by: review of clinical notes*	Regular supervision, which must take place fortnightly for the first 6 weeks of the plan and then on monthly basis Notes will be reviewed regularly as part of supervision and feedback given by clinical supervisor

Carrying out a performance meeting

Introductions	• Make any introductions, if needed. • If it is a formal meeting and they attend unaccompanied check the employee is happy to continue
Purpose	• Explain the purpose of the meeting. • Inform the employee the meeting is being held in accordance with the Trust's Improving Performance Policy.
Cover the following as appropriate	• Clearly explain the areas or the issues of concern and the consequences of these continuing. Use clear examples of where performance has not met the required standards. • Reassure the employee the purpose of the process is to be supportive – you are using it to give them the opportunity to improve their performance with appropriate support in place, not penalise them. • Give the employee the opportunity to comment and respond on their performance and to provide an explanation. • Ask questions to make sure concerns are not mainly or wholly due to:

	○ any underlying health issues that have not already been considered. ○ Trust systems, processes or equipment, or the lack of it. • Discuss the draft performance plan, giving the employee the chance to say what support they feel they need, if any, to improve their performance. • Set or agree a reasonable timescale for reaching the required improvement, with a date the plan will be in place until. A reasonable timescale for improvement will vary depending on circumstances. • Check the employee understands all elements of the plan and what is required of them. • If it is appropriate for the employee to continue to undertake work on the staff bank for the duration of the Improving Performance Plan. If it is, tell the employee if you need to disclose the performance issues to the bank manager.
Determine actions	• Determine what actions need to be taken following the meeting and/or ongoing support required after the meeting and summarise these.
Outcome	• Inform the employee they are being placed on the informal / first / second formal stage of the improving performance process, in line with the Improving Performance Policy and explain: ○ you will meet again at the end of plan to review their performance against the expected outcomes of the plan ○ the review may be brought forward if their performance is not meeting the standards required or if further concerns emerge ○ if they fail to improve their performance it may result in moving to the next stage of the process and this may eventually result in dismissal on the grounds of capability. ○ in accordance with Agenda for Change terms and conditions, at any formal stage of the process their pay progression will be suspended at this point until their performance has reached a satisfactory level.
Questions	• Ask if there is anything else they want to discuss and/or they have any questions.
Close	• Advise you will confirm the main points discussed in writing, including the final version of the performance plan. • Thank the employee for attending.

After the meeting

Write to the employee to confirm the main points discussed at the meeting – if it was the informal stage this might be by email or in supervision notes, which you must give them a copy of. If it is a formal stage use the template letter the HR manager will provide you with, making sure you do this within 7 calendar days of the meeting taking place. Include a copy

of the final version of the performance plan. Place a copy of the email / notes / letter on the employee's personal file.

Complete any documentation and/or actions as required.

Monitor progress and review dates – keep an eye on both how the employee is and their performance. Make sure all the support measures agreed are put in place and you meet with them as agreed during the plan to provide regular feedback.

Set a date for the end of plan review meeting – if it is a formal stage, giving at least 7 calendar days' notice of the meeting. There is a template invite letter available for you to use.

Conducting an end of stage review meeting

Introductions	• Make any introductions if they are needed. • Explain the purpose of the meeting. • Inform the employee the meeting is being held in accordance with the Trust's Improving Performance Policy.
Cover the following as appropriate	• If it is a formal meeting and they attend unaccompanied check the employee is happy to continue • Review the employee's progress and performance against the expected outcomes of the plan • Give the employee the opportunity to comment and respond on their performance and to provide any explanation • Confirm if each area identified for improvement has been achieved • Consider if you need to adjourn before deciding on outcome of meeting.
Inform employee of outcome	There are 3 potential outcomes: • **Satisfactory level of performance has been achieved** – if this is the case inform the employee: o they have achieved all elements of the plan o no further action needs to be taken o they will be removed from the performance process o if their performance falls below the required standards again within 12 months consideration will be given as to whether this stage of the process will be re-instigated or the matter progressed to next stage of the process. • **There has been some improvement but not all elements of the plan have been achieved** therefore the time the plan is in place at this stage is being extended. If this is the case: o inform the employee o confirm which elements of the performance plan remain in place during the extension o identify if any additional support or training required o set a timescale for the extension o advise if they fail to improve their performance it may result in moving to the next stage of the process and the review may be brought forward if their performance is not meeting the standards required or if further concerns emerge.

	• **Satisfactory level of performance has not been achieved** – if this is the case:
	  ○ inform the employee
	  ○ continue the meeting in accordance with the next stage of the performance process, including a review of the existing performance plan and support and setting new timescales.

Check is there is anything to discuss	• Ask employee if there is anything else they want to discuss and/or they have any questions.
End meeting	• Thank employee for attending. • Advise you will confirm the main points discussed in a letter.

After the meeting
Write to the employee to confirm the main points discussed at the meeting – if it is the informal stage this might be by email or in supervision notes, which you will need to give the employee a copy of. If it is a formal stage use the template letter the HR manager will provide you with, making sure you do this within 7 calendar days of the meeting taking place. If appropriate, include a copy of the amended version of the performance plan. Place a copy of the email / notes / letter on the employee's personal file.

If the performance plan has been extended or progressed to the next stage:
- complete any documentation and/or actions as required
- Monitor progress and review dates
- set a date for the end of plan review meeting.

Stage 3 capability hearing
Stage 3 is a capability hearing, where the case will be considered by an independent panel of 3 people, one of whom will be a HR representative.

Before the hearing you will need to write the management case report, setting out:
- the process you followed to support the individual to address the performance concerns
- support given throughout the process
- the expectation and standards of the role
- the consequences / risks posed by the performance concerns

Your HR manager will help you with the report.

The report will need to be written promptly as it needs to be shared with the chair and the employee ahead of the meeting.

At the hearing meeting:
- you will have to present a summary of the management case and answer questions about it
- the employee will present their case and answer questions about it
- you will be supported by your HR manager
- the employee has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union representative or colleague who is an employee of the Trust if they wish
- the chair will make a decision.

Possible outcomes of the hearing include:

- giving the employee further time for improvement and/or provide new objectives. A further review meeting to consider their performance will be arranged to consider if further action is necessary
- redeployment due to capability, if an alternative post is available that is within the employee's skill set
- dismissal on the grounds of capability.

After the meeting the chair will write to the employee to confirm their decision and the outcome of the hearing. This must be done within 7 calendar days of the meeting taking place.

Tips
Be mindful of timescales throughout the whole process as failing to follow timescales set out in the policy could lead to the process being challenged. Make sure:

- all meetings take place when they are due to
- you give 7 calendar days' notice of meetings
- you send the outcome letter within 7 days of meetings.

At meetings ensure the discussion is open, giving the employee plenty of opportunity to discuss any causes, issues or concerns that may be affecting their performance. Although you are following a process, for the employee it will feel personal and they may feel defensive or struggle to be open about any issues they have.

Make sure any agreed support measures are put in place in a timely fashion.

Make sure you manage all your team's performance consistently.

Seek HR advice if you need it. Remember that your HR manager is happy to review letters before they are sent.