



Knutsford Town Council

Performance Improvement Policy

November 2019

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Introduction

- 1.1 It is in everybody's interest for employees to perform well at their jobs and the Council aims to ensure that all employees are given the support needed to ensure that they do so. Where there are issues with performance then the employee should receive feedback from their manager setting out any concerns.
- 1.2 Discussions should take place about how that performance can be improved. This procedure is designed to be used when such informal discussions do not lead to the employee's performance improving to an acceptable level.
- 1.3 Where an employee's poor performance is believed to be the result of deliberate neglect, or where serious errors have been made to the detriment of the Council then it may be more appropriate to use the disciplinary procedure. Which procedure to use shall be at the discretion of the Council.
- 1.4 The Council reserves the right not to follow this procedure in full for employees who are within their first two years of employment with the Council.

Stage One

- 2.1 The employee's line manager will inform them of the nature of the concern and confirm this in writing inviting the employee to a meeting to discuss the concerns.



- 2.2 The meeting will be conducted by the employee's line manager and will consider any representations the employee may make about their performance, whether it needs to be improved and if so what steps can be taken to help the employee reach the appropriate level.
- 2.3 Following discussion of the issue, the line manager may choose to take no further action; to refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure or to issue a written warning and Performance Improvement Plan which will remain current for a period of 12 months.

Performance Improvement Plan

- 3.1 A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is a series of measures designed to help improve an employee's performance. Ideally each measure will be agreed with the employee, though the council reserves the right to insist on any aspect of the PIP in the absence of such agreement.
- 3.2 Each PIP will be tailored to the particular situation, but will contain the following elements:
 - a. The overall timescale in which the necessary improvement and the timescale for reaching individual milestones where appropriate
 - b. The particular areas in which improvement is needed and set out how and on what criteria the employee's performance will be assessed. Where appropriate, specific targets will be set which will need to be achieved either by the end of the plan or at identifiable stages within it
 - c. What measures will be taken by the Council to support the employee in improving their performance. Such measures may include training, additional supervision, the reallocation of other duties, or the provision of additional support from colleagues.
- 3.3 As part of the PIP the employee will be given regular feedback from their line manager indicating the extent to which the employee is on track to deliver the improvements set out in the plan.
- 3.4 If at any stage the Council feels that the PIP is not progressing in a satisfactory way, a further meeting may be held with the employee to discuss the issue. As a result of such a meeting the employer may amend or extend any part of the plan.
- 3.5 At the end of the PIP the employee's performance will be reviewed. If satisfactory progress has been made the employee will be notified of this fact in writing.



If the manager feels that progress has been insufficient then they may decide to extend and/or amend the PIP to such extent as seems appropriate or refer the matter to a meeting under stage two of this procedure.

- 3.6 Following the successful completion of a PIP the employee's performance will continue to be monitored. If at any stage during the lifetime of the first written warning the employee's performance again starts to fall short of an acceptable standard, their line manager may decide to instigate stage two of this procedure.

Stage Two

- 4.1 If a PIP has not led to sufficient improvement in the employee's performance, the employee will be invited to attend a formal performance management hearing. The invitation will set out the respects in which the line manager believes that the employee's performance still falls short of an acceptable standard. The hearing will be conducted by the Town Clerk.
- 4.2 At the hearing, the employee will be given an opportunity to respond to any criticism of their performance and to make representations about any aspect of the way in which the process has been managed.
- 4.3 If the hearing concludes that reasonable steps have been taken which should have allowed the employee to perform to an acceptable standard but that these measures have not worked then a formal final warning may be issued.

The warning will explain the nature of the improvement which is required in the employee's performance and state that the improvement must be immediate and sustained. It will also explain that if this improvement does not take place then the employee may be dismissed.

Where it is appropriate, the warning may be accompanied by an extended or revised PIP.

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

Stage Three

- 5.1 If an employee has been issued with a warning under stage two which remains current, and their line manager believes that the employee's performance is still not

acceptable then the matter may be referred to a further performance management hearing.

- 5.2 The employee will be informed in writing of the grounds of which the hearing is being convened and in particular will be told of the respects in which their performance continues to fall below an acceptable standard. The hearing will be conducted by the Town Clerk.
- 5.3 At the meeting the employee will be able to respond to any criticisms made of their performance and make representations about how the situation could be treated.
- 5.4 The Town Clerk may take such action as is judged appropriate up to and including a decision to dismiss the employee.
- 5.5 Any dismissal under this procedure will be with notice or payment in lieu of notice, and the decision to dismiss together with the reasons for dismissal will be set out in writing and sent to the employee.

Redeployment

- 6.1 There may be circumstances in which it becomes clear that an employee would be better suited to a different role within the Council. However, any offer to redeploy the employee will be entirely at the Council's discretion and will only be made when the Council is confident that the employee will be able to perform well in the redeployed role and where there is a suitable available vacancy.
- 6.2 Redeployment may be offered as an alternative to dismissal where the Council is satisfied that the employee should no longer be allowed to continue to work in their current role. While the employee is free to refuse any offer of redeployment, the only alternative available in these circumstances will usually be dismissal.

General

- 7.1 An employee may appeal any decision taken under this policy in accordance with the council's appeals policy. Any PIP that is in force, together with any measures or objectives included within it, will continue in place during the appeal process.
- 7.2 An employee has the right to be accompanied to meetings under this policy as per the council's accompaniment policy.



- 7.3 Any action to be taken against the Town Clerk will be conducted by a sub-committee of the Personnel Committee. Dismissal of the Town Clerk must be ratified by Full Council.



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