

Performance Improvement

1. The Purpose

This policy sets out the Forestry Commission's approach to managing performance that has fallen below the acceptable standards for the role.

The policy applies to Forestry Commission staff employed on permanent or fixed term contracts. It does not apply to short term temporary staff, agency workers or new staff who are completing a probation period.

2. The Principles

The principles of the policy are:

- managers will work with individuals to set clear performance standards and seek to identify and resolve performance problems as they arise;
- training, support and reasonable adjustments will be provided where appropriate to help improve performance;
- the formal procedure will only be used where attempts to address Not Fully Effective (NFE) performance using the FC's Performance Management System (PMS) have been unsuccessful;
- sufficient support and time will be allowed for improvement before any warnings are issued or consideration is given to dismissal or downgrading;
- compliance with the ACAS Code of Practice and all statutory requirements in relation to dismissals for reason of capability; and
- management actions will be objective, non-discriminatory and in line with the FC's commitment to equal opportunities.

3. The Policy

The Forestry Commission encourages managers and staff to address performance problems as soon as they become apparent. Staff will be given time and support to improve their performance. Dismissal or downgrading will only be considered as a last resort, after warnings have been given and every effort has been made to help improve performance.

This policy and the associated procedure have been developed in consultation with the Forestry Commission Trade Unions (FCTU).

3.1 Your responsibilities as an employee

You are expected to:

- understand what is expected of you and make every effort to maintain the required standard of performance;
- be open to constructive feedback and participate fully in all performance review meetings with your managers;
- inform your manager of any underlying issues that might affect your performance;
- contribute to the preparation of a Performance Improvement Plan and commit to its success; and
- familiarise yourself with this policy and the associated procedure and understand the potential consequences of performing below the acceptable standard.

3.2 Your responsibilities as a manager

You are expected to:

- clearly communicate the required performance standards and ensure that expectations are reflected in Forward Job Plans;
- hold regular reviews to provide feedback on performance;
- tackle Not Fully Effective (NFE) performance as soon as it becomes apparent, using PMS and informal support methods as far as possible;
- investigate and address any health, personal or training issue that may be contributing to performance problems;
- explain the consequences of continuing to perform below the acceptable standard;
- keep records relating to the performance improvement process; and
- conduct formal meetings with the employee and issue warning letters as appropriate.

3.3 Human Resources responsibilities

Human Resources have responsibility for:

- providing guidance and support to managers who are dealing with performance that is Not Fully Effective (NFE);
- helping managers to obtain medical advice and implement reasonable adjustments where an employee's health is impacting on their performance;
- attending hearings in an advisory capacity, where appropriate; and
- monitoring and reviewing this policy and the associated procedure, in consultation with the FCTU.