

## **Enhancing employee performance policy**

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## Policy statement

This policy explains how Police supports employees when their performance requires improvement and the approach to be taken if the support provided does not result in performance improving to the level required. This differs from Performance Management which is about our employees' development and progress to deliver what is required from their role and to contribute to Our Business. Performance Management is covered by the Police High Performance Framework (PHPF).

## Principles

The principles governing this policy are:

- **Resolving any barriers** in the organisation that prevents an employee's ability to perform their role to the prescribed standards.
- **Acknowledging good work** that people generally do and the purpose of this policy and guideline is to support employees to achieve the expectations of the role, provide support and develop them into the role
- **Informal people focussed conversations** will generally resolve most issues
- **Integrity is important**, ensure that an employee's mana is left intact at the end of any conversation or meeting in relation to performance and achieving goals.
- **Expected performance standards** are managed through regular, open and honest conversations between the manager and the employee and the necessary skills are specified in position descriptions
- **Alignment with Police's Code of Conduct** which is our guiding document on work standards and behaviours in our roles
- **Proactive management** is essential for the benefit of the employee and to minimise risk of negative impacts on productivity of the team and wider organisation
- **Early interventions** by management action, rather than disciplinary action is needed to fix most performance issues through more information, better leadership, extra training and coaching.

## What

This policy and guidelines (set out below) are designed to support manager / employee conversations and follow-up actions when performance has not sufficiently and consistently improved when identified during regular PHPF conversations.

Performance improvement involves an employee's ability to do work that meets agreed standards of quality, accuracy and timeliness.

Sets out an informal approach to addressing performance concerns - namely through targeted performance conversations.

It also sets out a formal approach to addressing performance concerns; extended difficulties in achieving the required performance standards through introducing the formal process of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).

Where an employee fails to meet the requirements specified in the PIP it could impact their employment with Police.

## Why

Where performance is considered as requiring improvement, we engage in regular conversations and communication to ensure clear performance expectations and that the employee is enabled and supported to deliver on their purpose in Police, be the best they can be in their role, to continue to contribute to both the organisation and the communities served.

## How

Managers and employees engage in regular performance and development conversations as outlined by PHPF Framework 5. By doing so we are able to review performance, identify any barriers to success, identify opportunities, acknowledge areas of achievement and success, and raise areas for improvement.

If any opportunities, support, areas for improvement or actions are identified, these should be discussed and where appropriate recorded in order to develop our employees to improve their performance. Where applicable, if recorded, this may be shared with the employee.

Where identified and discussed areas for improvement do not improve after conversations, removal of any barriers and reasonable support, then managers need to address performance shortfalls with their employees in a timely, clear and respectful manner.

Where there are ongoing difficulties in achieving the expected performance standards these may be addressed by introducing the formal process of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). It is desirable that HR advisory are consulted to guide on the process and are involved as necessary. Where an employee fails to meet the requirements specified in the PIP it may result in an impact on their employment with Police.

## Further information

For more information on performance management please see:

This document was current at 6 December 2023. Police policies are regularly reviewed and updated.  
The most current version of Police policies are available from [www.police.govt.nz](http://www.police.govt.nz)

- PHPF
- Our Values
- Development policies
- Career progression framework
- Code of Conduct
- <https://www.employment.govt.nz/workplace-policies/employee-performance/managing-performance-issues/how-to-manage-performance-issues/formal-intervention/>

# Performance Improvement Guidelines

## Performance Outcomes and Standards

Our Strategic Performance Templates (SPTs) are agreements on the outcomes required from each position in the organisation. Our SPT and Level Purpose Statement (LPS,) along with Our Values and Code of Conduct, outline the standards our individual performance needs to meet, together with the position competencies and technical capability.

The Police High Performance Framework (PHPF) Framework 5 Development Plan enables us to identify any barriers or areas we each need to work on to deliver the required outcomes. Using this plan ensures we are focused on developing the areas most relevant to us individually, to be successful in our positions. Framework 3 supports our Leadership and provides information on strategy, standards, capability and culture; all of which contribute to performance conversations.

The regular nature of performance management conversations supported by the PHPF encourages us to monitor our performance, progress and development, and that of any people we lead. Having these conversations regularly allows us to identify any issues early, and to prevent any risk of 'surprises' in Annual Performance Reviews.

## Potential things that may impact on performance standards

The possible factors set out below may impact on performance and should be considered on a case-by-case basis. This is not an exhaustive list.

- There is an evidenced mismatch between the employee's capabilities and the requirements of the position.
- The employee has not received clear guidance, the appropriate delegated authority or approvals, or sufficient resources to deliver the required results.
- Tools and processes provided to the employee need to be improved.
- The employee has received insufficient, regular constructive feedback on their performance, e.g. this could be due to a number of changes in manager.
- Interpersonal differences or conflicts within the team has lowered the employee's morale.
- There is a significant change occurring in the workplace that has negatively impacted the employee.
- The employee has difficult problems outside the workplace or is affected by health issues.
- The performance standards are unreasonable in the circumstances.

## Putting our staff first - Performance Conversations

If an employee is not performing to the required standard, they may need to engage in additional performance conversations outside of their regular PHPF schedule.

These discussions are two-way conversations in which managers define and discuss the employee's areas for performance improvement.

These conversations should be aimed at, clarifying the issue or concern, identifying any barriers to performance, and ways to support the employee to improve to reach the required standard. Managers should use specific practical examples, provide constructive feedback, ensure sufficient time is allowed for the employee to respond and listen carefully to what employees have to say.

Managers are encouraged to consult with HR advisory as needed.

The goal is to agree upon what the employee will do to improve their performance, how their manager can support them to achieve this and enable any other support that may be required. All the factors that could be contributing to performance falling below the required standards should be considered. The Safer People team can provide assistance if appropriate.

It is important to keep a written record of these conversations that both manager and employee can refer to going forward. These conversations should be as regular as necessary to support the employee to improve their performance without a formal improvement plan.

Consider updating the F5 development plans as required.

So that the employee and their manager are clear as to performance expectations and agreed outcomes, these will be documented

and shared between the two as may be necessary to ensure transparency and avoid confusion.

## **Formal Intervention: Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)**

If Police is of the view that formal intervention is required, we recommend that the Director/District Commander's is informed of this situation prior to proceeding.

If the performance standard is still not reached within a fair, reasonable, agreed period of time, and despite support by the manager, to improve the employee's performance through regular performance conversations and other interventions such as: coaching, mentoring or additional training and supports (as may be needed), it may be necessary to propose a formal Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). Do not hesitate to seek advice from HR if you need to test your thinking before proceeding to formal intervention.

A PIP provides managers and employees with a structured plan of actions over an agreed timeframe, aimed at recording and improving the employee's performance.

### **Step 1 Initiate a PIP**

Managers set a time for a formal conversation with the employee about their performance. The PIP meeting should be initiated first through a conversation with the employee, followed by an appropriate written communication including the below points:

- Identifies areas for improvement, sets out the performance concerns and performance deficiencies
- Propose the implementation of a PIP
- Invites the employee to bring a support person, allowing time for the employee to arrange for a support person to be present if they elect this option.

Your HR Advisor can provide you with a template and guidance for developing a PIP. At the end of this step, it is expected that you have completed the above steps ready to formulate a PIP with the employee at the meeting to occur as part of step 2.

### **Step 2 Meet with the Employee to formulate a PIP for future implementation**

- Define the performance issues and provide examples of where the employee isn't meeting agreed standards
- Provide background by explaining how long the performance deficiencies have existed and the steps that have been taken to address them
- Allow the employee an opportunity to provide an explanation for their performance not meeting the required standard
- Let the employee know that the PIP purpose is to achieve performance improvement and ask for their feedback on the PIP
- Indicate possible consequences if performance does not improve as a result of the PIP
- Identify any resources or support that Police may provide to the employee, including what will be provided and when, e.g. training, physical resources, access to EAP etc Discuss potential time frames for each step and potential completion of the PIP
- Confirm next steps with the employee
- Record meeting outcomes

After hearing from the employee, you may determine that a formal PIP is not necessary at this stage. This should be confirmed in appropriate written communication outlining the points covered in the meeting, reasons and any actions that may need to be taken, by who and in what timeframe.

### **Step 3 Finalise the PIP**

After the initial meeting, consider the employee's response and determine whether it is appropriate to implement a PIP. After the meeting (above step), if you determine that a formal PIP is not needed follow the above process to advise the employee. If yes, set a time to finalise the PIP by:

- Defining what success looks like - Agreeing the measurable actions that link to the employee's role and position description and make clear what the employee needs to do to be at the level required.
- Specifying improvement actions that are clear, relevant and timely. This should include documenting when the actions take place, who will support them, what the desired outcomes are and timeframes of when performance expectations need to be met. These may need to be broken down into stages or steps. Determining the duration of the PIP - Allowing sufficient time and opportunity for the employee to improve their performance.
- Stating when progress will be reviewed and by whom.
- Advising the employee that if their performance does not meet the standard discussed, despite reasonable time for

improvement, and support being given, it may impact their employment with Police.

- Keeping a copy of the PIP and providing the employee with a copy.

It is good practice for managers to contact your HR Advisor as soon as you begin to engage in additional performance conversations as they can support you in the process and provide a template to help you develop the plan. They will ask you to provide evidence of the actions you have engaged in to support the employee's performance improvement so far.

During a PIP if an employee decides to resign, please seek guidance from your HR Advisor prior to following the resignation process.

## PIP Responsibilities over the review period

Employee Responsibilities	Manager responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Actively engage in the performance improvement process.</li> <li>- Identify any workplace or personal factors that you think have become barriers to improving your performance and where you may need assistance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide clarity as to required performance results, performance standards expected, and timeframes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work to improve your performance within the agreed timeframe and apply what you have learnt from any training, development and coaching support.</li> <li>- Seek additional support or clarity from your manager, or the assessor if you need it. Provide feedback as necessary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enable the employee to action the required activities, by providing training, organising a buddy, support from subject matter experts and other assistance as appropriate in the circumstances.</li> <li>- Specify who will be assessing the employee's work as reaching the standard required.</li> <li>- Check in regularly on the employee's progress against the PIP. Ongoing feedback is essential for success.</li> <li>- If there is improvement, actions can be checked off but no new issues can be raised.</li> <li>- Reinforce improvements by continued, conversations, guidance and support.</li> <li>- Acknowledge when goals are achieved.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage in regular performance conversations in line with the PIP schedule.</li> <li>- Maintain a record of your development achievements and results to discuss with your manager.</li> </ul>	

## Step 4 First Formal Review Meeting

On completion of the review period you will have measured the employee's performance against the PIP objectives and formed a preliminary view on whether the employee has reached the standards or if the PIP should be continued. However, continuous conversations should mean there are no surprises.

- Send the PIP assessment to the employee with a covering letter which requests a meeting to hear the employees feedback (2-3 working days is reasonable notice).
- Remind them they can bring a support person.
- Both parties have an opportunity to discuss issues of concern. Ensure that the employee understands what is required of them, what support will be provided and next steps.
- The manager concludes the meeting to consider all the information and decide on future action.

## Step 5 Confirmation of Outcome

Once the PIP has been completed as per the agreed time frame it should be recorded in an appropriate written communication to the employee. The outcome will usually reflect one of the following:

- **The PIP has resulted in the required improvements being achieved:** Continued guidance and supporting conversations may still be required with PHPF F5 providing the foundation. The employee will transfer back to their F5 development plan if the agreed performance expectations are met.



- **Some improvements achieved, but the required standard not reached:** The manager, having taken the employee feedback and explanations into account may reach the view that the PIP is best continued and/or amended for a further period. The communication will identify the ongoing issues for improvement, further support to be provided, amended timeframes and include the finalised PIP. There may be circumstances where there has been sufficient improvement to justify no further action being needed at this point, we recommend if that might apply, the manager discuss with HR.
- **No or insufficient improvements:** If, based on all the evidence, you reach the decision that the performance gap cannot be improved due to employee circumstances such as ill health, or factors external to work, seek assistance from your HR Advisor.

If, all the evidence indicates the employee could improve but behavioural or attitudinal issues will inhibit progress, this may trigger disciplinary procedures which may determine continued employment in their position with Police. The decision letter (which will become the first formal warning) should advise the employee that continued unsatisfactory performance may result in a final warning and continue the PIP for a further period. Contact your HR Advisor for guidance and for support in following the disciplinary process.

If an employee claims that the management of their performance issues are unreasonable or that the process itself is bullying, harassment or causing stress, seek assistance from your HR Advisor and offer EAP support or assistance but do not cease or discontinue the process of managing the performance issue.

## Step 6 Additional steps and final PIPs

If your management assessment is that the PIP requirements have not been met but continuation of the PIP with no disciplinary action is the most appropriate outcome, then the PIP process may be repeated (Steps 1-3). In this case you should review the PIP for relevancy, consider how much progress the employee has made, and any additional support required. The number of PIPs will likely be influenced by the level of improvement achieved within the time being monitored and the frequency of the tasks performed.

Your local HR Advisor can provide you with further advice on this stage and with the preparation of any additional communication that may be required.

All applicable circumstances must be taken into account when considering whether to proceed to a final PIP, including whether to consider another role in Police as being a possible option (upon going through a merit-based process).

The decision letter, which may be a written warning letter, or final written warning letter, or such other disciplinary consequence, needs to be provided to the employee at this stage. It states what the ongoing issues are that still need to improve and that continued failure to perform at the required standard may result in an assessment as to whether the employee can continue in their role in Police. In drawing the process to a conclusion the focus continues to be on performance improvement.

The employee is entitled to support and/or representation throughout the process.

### Continued poor performance

In cases of continued poor performance where no improvement is evidenced within the time frame of the final PIP, contact your HR Advisor for additional advice. Your HR Advisor may also liaise with Employment Relations to provide further assistance. Be prepared to provide your HR Advisor and Employment Relations with all the evidence of the employee's performance problems, contributing factors, the support provided and any alternatives to the termination of employment. Decisions at this stage will be made on a case-by-case basis based on specialist advice. The decision to advance matters to a disciplinary process will be taken carefully. Any decision to advance to a disciplinary process would need to be conveyed to the employee, allowing them an opportunity to respond prior to any finalised decision to start a disciplinary process.