



SP-UK

SUICIDE PREVENTION UK

Suicide Prevention UK

Performance Management and Capability Policy

2024

Introduction

Suicide Prevention UK (SPUK) recognises the importance of dealing with performance and capability issues without undue delay.

This document sets out the policy and procedure operated by SPUK to address:

- Poor performance or incapability - lack of skill and aptitude in undertaking a job role.
- Genuine persistent, intermittent short-term absence.
- Long-term ill-health absence.

Within this document, we intend to provide a framework for dealing with matters in a fair, supportive, and consistent manner.

Scope

This policy applies to employees of SPUK and, in some cases, to volunteers and self-employed team members (where it applies to these team members, it will be clearly stated).

Please note that this policy and procedure do not apply to the management of misconduct, which must be managed via our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Definitions

Capability relates to the ability of an individual to carry out a job or role to the required standard and encompasses a range of factors, including skills, knowledge, experience, and competence.

Incapability (sometimes referred to as underperformance), therefore, relates to the inability to meet the required standard because the individual can't.

Note: Capability differs from conduct, which relates to an individual's behaviour rather than their ability/inability. Misconduct occurs not because an individual lacks knowledge or skills but because they choose not to take the appropriate steps to comply (they don't).

Policy

Annual Appraisals

Appraisals are conducted annually to provide a comprehensive review of the team member's overall performance and contribution to the Charity.

Both the team member and the supervisor should prepare for the appraisal by reflecting on the past year's achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement.

The annual appraisal will focus on:

- What has gone well – areas where standards are being met/no improvement is required.
- What has not gone so well – areas where standards are not being met/improvement is required.
- Review of training undertaken.
- Identification of training and development opportunities (if required to support improvement).
- Discussion of career aspirations and potential progression opportunities.
- Identification of any support or resources needed to achieve the necessary standard.

A detailed record of the appraisal meeting will be completed, including comments and agreed-upon objectives and actions for the next period. This record should be signed by both the team member and the supervisor.

Supervision Sessions (1:1s)

1:1s will be held regularly and may also be undertaken on an ad hoc basis where issues arise.

These sessions are designed to provide dedicated time for team members to discuss progress, challenges, and development needs with their supervisor.

The 1:1s will cover:

- Review of work performance and objectives from an appraisal or 1:1.
- Discussion of any challenges and how these can be addressed.
- Feedback from both the team member and supervisor.

A record of each 1:1 session will be kept, documenting key points discussed, actions agreed upon, and any follow-up required.

Understanding Underperformance

Underperformance can occur for many reasons, which may relate to the colleague's work, personal life or a mixture. Common reasons include:

- Poor job/role fit (which may have changed over time).
- Lack of training and/or resources.
- Overwork and excess pressure.
- Health issues and disabilities (including mental health issues).
- Personal issues (family life, bereavement, etc).

Supporting Improvement

We believe that our team members are our greatest asset and are committed to supporting every individual to fulfil their full potential. Therefore, we will, at all times, focus on the cause of underperformance in order to identify how to best provide support to those who are not meeting the required standards.

However, in return, we expect that our team members (including volunteers) commit themselves to the role and help SPUK to operate effectively by being punctual, arriving in a fit state to work, committing to excellence and at all times, and being open to receiving support where it is required.

Setting Goals

When setting goals in a performance improvement plan (Appendix A), it is useful to use the **SMART** model, as it provides a clear, structured, and effective framework for addressing and improving performance. These goals should be:

- **Specific** – do these relate directly to the individual's role within the business?
- **Measurable** – will you be able to show whether or not the individual has achieved the targets set?
- **Achievable** – are the targets fair and not out with the individual's grasp?
- **Realistic** – is the individual able to meet the targets with the support available to them?
- **Timely** – are the targets achievable in the timeframe you have given the individual?

Investigations

Where required, any investigation will be conducted by an impartial and competent individual who is impartial and has the time to complete a thorough investigation.

Invitation to Capability Meeting

When meeting at any stage of the formal procedure, you will receive a written invitation to a meeting from SPUK.

This letter or notice will:

- Set out the nature of the issues to be discussed at the meeting in enough detail to enable you to prepare and respond appropriately.
- Advise you of the possible consequences.
- Set out the date, time and place of the meeting.
- Advise of your right to be accompanied at the meeting.
- Provide copies of relevant documents, for example, your appraisal or absence record, any medical report and any relevant policies.

Timescales

The timescales of both investigations and the various stages of the performance and capability procedures will vary in accordance with the seriousness of the underperformance or incapability and the nature of the role.

Therefore, whilst our procedure sets out review periods, these periods may be reduced or increased accordingly.

The Right to be Accompanied

Employees and workers have the right to be accompanied by a companion at any formal meeting (including an appeal). However, this right does not extend to informal meetings, which are intended to be restorative.

A companion may be a colleague, trade union representative, or an official employed by a trade union.

The companion can:

- Speak to and consult with the employee during the meeting.
- Present and/or sum up the employee's case.
- Speak on the employee's behalf if they wish.

However, the companion cannot answer questions on the employee's behalf, address the hearing if they do not wish it, or prevent us from explaining our views and presenting our evidence.

It is the responsibility of the employee or worker to secure a companion. If the chosen companion is not available at the time proposed for the meeting, the employee may delay the meeting if they propose a mutually suitable alternative time, which must fall within 5 working days of the date of the original meeting.

Reasonable Adjustments at Meetings

Should any colleague, witness or companion require support to attend meetings, they should inform the Trustees, who will make reasonable adjustments wherever possible.

Record Keeping

A record of capability investigations and actions will be retained for auditing purposes and to ensure that every effective step has been taken to resolve the matter and monitor the capability procedure's effectiveness.

Records may include:

- the capability issues as they have been identified
- the colleague's response
- findings made and actions taken
- the reason for actions taken
- whether an appeal was lodged
- the outcome of the appeal
- any grievances raised during the capability procedure
- any related disciplinary actions related to the underperformance
- subsequent developments
- notes of any formal hearings

Note: A note-taker may also be present at formal hearings, and a copy of the notes will be made available to the colleague following the meeting.

Procedures

Please note that when referring to 'managers', we refer to the supervisor of the team member. Therefore, a manager may be a manager of a team or a Trustee (who may or may not also be a team manager).

Capability/Underperformance

Informal Procedure

It is preferred that most performance and capability issues be resolved informally wherever possible.

This informal stage provides an opportunity for open discussion where reasons for any underperformance can be identified, which will hopefully lead to effective solutions being identified.

Where a manager identifies a performance issue, they should informally meet with the team member to:

- establish the current level of performance and clearly explain the shortfall between the individual's performance and the required standards
- establish the cause of the performance issue
- identify any actions which can be taken to help improve the situation (e.g., additional training and/or resources, supervision and additional 1:1 feedback and coaching sessions, reasonable adjustments due to a disability, etc.)
- establish a reasonable timescale for performance to improve (usually 6-12 weeks)
- set a date(s) for a supervision review meeting to ensure that progress is being made.

A performance improvement plan (Appendix A) should be used to record the area(s) of concern, actions by all parties to address the concern, required improvement(s) and timescales for review and must be agreed with the team member.

Informal Review Meeting

At the end of the monitoring period, the manager will determine whether they are satisfied that the team member's performance has improved to an acceptable level.

Should the outcome be that they are **satisfied** that their performance has improved to an acceptable level, they should meet with them to inform them that they are satisfied with their performance and that no further action will be taken. However, in such cases, ongoing monitoring may still be appropriate.

Should the outcome be that their performance has **failed to improve**, they should meet with them to discuss any ongoing issues, giving them the opportunity to ask questions for clarification and to respond to the decision.

At the end of the meeting, the manager will decide whether to extend the review period or progress to stage 1.

Formal Capability Hearings

There may be up to three formal capability hearings, which will follow in order.

The team member will be invited to attend each formal hearing and given the opportunity to discuss the matter, present their case and outline any mitigating factors as to why they are underperforming.

The hearings may be adjourned if it is felt that further investigations are necessary or more time is needed to consider the matter.

Stages of Capability Hearing and Possible Outcomes

- **Stage 1** – where a First Written Warning may be issued along with a performance improvement plan should the team member have failed to improve their performance.
- **Stage 2** – where a Final Written Warning may be issued along with an amended performance improvement plan should the team member have failed to improve their performance.
- **Stage 3** – where dismissal or termination of volunteering/working agreement will likely occur should the team member have failed to improve their performance. (More than one Trustee will normally hear this final stage.)

Post Hearing

Post-hearing, the manager (or panel of managers/Trustees) will decide on what action, if any, to take.

Whether or not verbally communicated at the end of the hearing, we will provide the following information in writing, normally within 5 working days of the hearing:

- The required improvements and the timescale for making them.
- Any support that will be provided to the team member to make the required improvements.
- An explanation of the consequence of any failure to improve and meet the required standards.
- An explanation as to why a formal sanction has been applied. In the case of dismissal or other termination, the date this will come into effect will also be outlined.

Ill-Health Capability

This procedure is split into 2 categories:

1. Persistent short-term sickness absence.
2. Long-term sickness absence.

Persistent Short-Term Sickness Absence

If a team member's performance deteriorates due to ill health, they will be invited to attend a Formal Ill-Health Capability Meeting.

For **employees**, this will usually mean that they have reached an unacceptable level of short-term sickness absence.

In the case of **volunteers**, this will usually relate to their inability to attend when agreeing to be scheduled to volunteer and/or their inability to carry out their role.

At the meeting, the manager will:

- Enter discussions with the team member to find out the underlying cause of the ill health capability issues. For example, determine if it is due to an ongoing health condition, disability, etc.
- Consider what steps may be taken to support the team member to make the necessary improvements. For example, putting reasonable adjustments in place, agreeing on time off to rest and recuperate with the team member, adjusting the team member's role or responsibilities, or agreeing on practical arrangements to support the team member at work.

Add about review period

- Review the outcomes of any action plans that have been undertaken or adjustments to your role to make necessary improvements in performance and support your health issues;
- review previous discussions from the review meetings;

After the meeting, the manager will consider all the relevant information and make a decision as to how best to proceed with the situation, and will normally opt for one of the following options:

No further action

A further action plan is to be issued along with a reasonable time frame (usually a minimum of four weeks) and a further review meeting to monitor your progress.

A request for further medical evidence

Recommend redeployment to another post that would be appropriate to your skills and capabilities.

Recommend ill health retirement (if applicable)

For serious cases, the Senior Manager may decide to terminate your employment on the grounds of capability, where redeployment is not a realistic option and medical reports support this decision.

2) Long term absence

Where it is unlikely that you will be able to return to work within a time period that is reasonable in all the circumstances, and it is not possible to make any adjustments to your current role or to redeploy you, then you will be invited to attend a Formal Ill Health Capability Meeting and follow the process as per 1) persistent underperformance.

Final decisions, in particular where your employment may be terminated on the grounds of ill health, will be made in connection with the following:

- Reviewing the medical evidence available (from your GP/Consultant, Occupational Health Specialist)
- Writing to you to advise of these potential courses of action and
- Consulting personally with you regarding medical evidence, any reasonable adjustments that should be considered, and any representations you wish to make.

The Company will fully consider all facts available prior to making a final decision to terminate employment on the grounds of ill health. In the event of a dismissal, contractual rights, including payment in lieu of notice, will apply.

Appeal

A team member may appeal against the outcome of the formal capability (or ill-health capability) sanction by writing to the Trustees to outline the reason for the appeal within 5 working days of receipt of the outcome (decision) letter.

Appeals should not simply state that the team member is unhappy with the original decision and should only be submitted if it is felt that the original procedure was not managed appropriately and/or the decision was not appropriate or fair, given the circumstances.

The appeal chair or panel will then gather all relevant documents collated during the original formal process and conduct a thorough review before inviting the team member to an appeal hearing (usually within five working days).

If the appeal chair or panel needs more information before making a decision, they may adjourn the hearing while a further investigation is completed.

The appeal chair will inform the employee of their decision in writing within five working days.

The appeal decision is final.

Colleague Support

Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Human Resources team.

Non-Compliance

Any breach of this policy, for example, not maintaining confidentiality, may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal (employees only). For volunteers, student placements and third parties engaged with us, this may result in the withdrawal of working for Apex Scotland.

Monitoring and Reviewing

This policy should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains compliant with current legislation, meets best practices, and is not discriminatory.

Suicide Prevention UK will monitor the number of complaints and the type of complaints received.

The results of monitoring will be reviewed by the senior management at regular meetings.

Where evidence or trends indicate that our culture, policy, procedures, or workforce require intervention, an action plan will be initiated.

Policy Date: April 2024

Review Date: April 2025

Dated and Signed by the Chair and Founder of Suicide Prevention UK:

Appendix A: Performance Improvement Plan

Name of Colleague:

Name of Trustee:

Department/Team:

Date of Discussion:

Area of Concern	Action Required and Responsibilities of Parties.	Improvement Required (detail of standard and means of evaluation)	Timescale

Date of Interim Review:

Date of Final Review:

Signed Colleague:

Signed Trustee: