



*The communications union*

# BT PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND APPRAISAL

**GUIDANCE**



## INTRODUCTION

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The CWU is concerned that BT has started to introduce a number of changes to Performance Management and Appraisal. These changes do not have CWU agreement. It has been introduced with effect from 1st April 2008 only in Operate, parts of Wholesale and parts of Group, excluding Fleet and Procurement and Supply Chain and will move through the company until everyone is covered by April 2009.

***Members should also contact your Branch for further advice and information.***

## ABBREVIATIONS & TERMINOLOGY

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As with all things BT, there is a lot of jargon being used. The main terms and their meanings are as follows:

- Informal PIP:** An informal Performance Improvement Plan that is not part of the formal poor performance procedures and can not therefore lead directly to impacts on increments, downgrading or dismissal. They are widely used at present but CWU reps manage to stop the vast majority turning into formal PIPs
- Formal PIP:** Formal Performance Improvement Plan with a number of steps that managers have to go through before awarding – and clear negative consequences if the objectives are not met by the employee
- APR:** Annual Performance review
- QPR:** Quarterly Performance review
- GS:** Generally Satisfactory – a rating used in the APR process
- Scores:** The mark or grade awarded to employees in response to various criteria that their performance is measured against
- Levelling:** The mark agreed or discussed between you and your manager is changed to fit into some artificial or forced distribution of scores

## OUR MAIN CONCERNS ARE:

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- Removal of informal PIPs – because we believe this will lead to many more formal Performance Improvement Plans, which is the first step on a process that may end in dismissal.
- If you are regarded as “Generally Satisfactory” you will be placed on a formal PIP. We think this a ridiculous and worrying contradiction. Formal PIPs used to be awarded only for scores in the bottom two categories on a six-category scale (namely Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory). This is therefore a clear departure from previous practice
- Introduction of Quarterly Performance reviews – where the only thing your manager has to do is enter a score in the right box without meeting or talking to you to explain why.
- Levelling of appraisal scores – so what your manager thinks, or agrees with you, may be over-ridden – and you may well not be informed. Indeed your score could have been decided in advance of any discussion.
- New ways of managing disagreements you have with your manager over appraisal scores, that we think are unfair
- In some parts of Operate, QPRs have started to take place. They have not been conducted in accordance with the mandatory guidance to managers

***Negotiations continue, but in the meantime, we offer all BT members who are asked to attend a meeting to discuss performance or appraisal the following advice:***

# DO



- Make sure all meetings you have on your performance and appraisal are documented, i.e. there is a written record
- State in writing if you disagree with what is being said about you and why
- Keep a copy of everything you write/send
- Record disagreements in writing
- Tell your manager if there is anything you disagree with, record it in writing and contact your branch immediately
- Ask what coaching, support and development your manager is going to offer you and by when
- Ask if the mark has been levelled, and record the response

# DON'T



- Participate in an unprofessional APR/QPR meeting that is not carried out in private, without interruption and in accordance with the mandatory guidance issued to BT managers
- Accept a score that is awarded without the offer of a meeting to discuss it
- Accept a score without a rationale

## WHAT TO WATCH FOR:

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### **Scores being allocated with no opportunity to meet the manager to discuss**

**Why:** Because BT's own policies refer to the need for development plans, coaching and support.

### **Scoring being on a 5 not 6 point scale**

**Why:** Because this is unagreed and, as PIPs are proposed to be awarded in response to scores in the bottom three categories (Generally Satisfactory, Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory), it is more likely to lead to a PIP.

### **Uninvited and/or anonymous comments on your appraisal**

**Why:** Such third party comments may be unfair or detrimental and the process has not been agreed, but it is normal practice for managers for whom you have worked to be asked to contribute to reviews.

### **Any negative change in score after dialogue with your manager**

**Why:** This is evidence of possible levelling which means your performance has not been fairly recorded.

### **Any refusal to consider a change in score on the basis that there's nothing the manager can do about it.**

**Why:** This is evidence of possible levelling which means your performance has not been fairly recorded.

### **Allocation of any score that is not justified by a competent rationale**

**Why:** This is evidence of possible levelling which means your performance has not been fairly recorded.

### **Any score of GS or worse that is not accompanied by a development plan with specific supportive measures**

**Why:** Under BT's own policies on under performance, individuals must be given the opportunity to remedy identified problems.

### **Any attempt to restrict you to raising a formal grievance with a manager who has already stated that they cannot/ will not address your concerns**

**Why:** This is contrary to the company's Grievance Procedure.

**The following items are mandatory for managers in considering implementing a PIP. This checklist will help you record whether or not they have complied:**

ISSUE	CARRIED OUT BY MANAGER	NOT DONE/OFFERED
A discussion to inform you that there is a shortfall in your performance against the requirements of the job/role		
Documentation of the actions required by both the manager and yourself (through training, development and support) to bring your performance back up to the required standard		
A review and discussion with you to assess your progress against the documented actions		
Consideration of whether you are new to the job/role or if your job/role has changed significantly		
Discussion with you as to what improvement is needed, and by when, to bring your performance back up to the required standard		
Informing you of the potential consequences (e.g. Formal Managing under Performance Procedure and potential downgrade/dismissal) if your performance does not improve		
Considering any other factors that need to be taken into account before progressing to the Initial Formal Warning stage		

*BT's own advice to managers dealing with perceived under performance is as follows:*

## **ACTING EARLY ON**

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It is vital that people understand how they are performing against agreed objectives, standards and behaviours. Performance should be discussed at every one-two-one meeting which should take place at least quarterly, though more regularly where there are performance concerns. Performance concerns must be raised and managed as they happen. Individuals whose performance is not meeting agreed expectations should have clear and documented actions in place that detail what the individual needs to achieve, and by when, to bring their level of performance back up the required standard. This will normally be recorded on ePerformance using Performance Notes.

If you notice that someone is not doing their job well enough, speak to them straight away. There could be reasons why this is happening. Perhaps they are not clear on their role or don't have the right skills. They might need some coaching or training, their workload could be too much, or they may have health problems. There may be things outside of work which are affecting how they do their job. Find out the reasons why and talk to them about what they, and you, can do to help them get back on track.

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Has your manager done this?</b>		

# **GUIDANCE ON DEALING WITH UNDER-PERFORMANCE**

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## **THINGS TO CONSIDER FIRST:**

- Have I clearly communicated standards, goals and measures?
- Have they got an up-to-date job description and measures?
- Has the person been properly trained or inducted for their role?  
What support has already been provided to enable the individual to reach 'good' performance?
- Do they have the right tools for the job and do these work?
- Is their workload manageable/achievable?
- Are there other factors that could be affecting their performance such as illness or something outside of work?
- What is the evidence that they are not reaching required standards?
- What will the person need to show to demonstrate that they have met the standard?
- What do I need to do to help this person perform better?
- Has this performance issue resulted in a formal warning in the past 12 months?  
If so it may be appropriate to consider resuming discussions at the relevant stage hearing of the Managing under Performance Procedure.

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Can your manager demonstrate that they have complied with this?		

## HOW TO CONDUCT THE ONE-TO-ONE DISCUSSION

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- Make sure you prepare well and plan how you will handle the discussion. The discussion must be supported with evidence to demonstrate where the individual is not reaching the required standard.
- Make sure the person knows why you have called the meeting
- Hold the meeting in private, without interruptions and allow adequate time
- Find out what maybe the underlying reasons for the performance issue that has been identified
- Involve the person in developing the solution
- Keep an open mind and be flexible and innovative in finding solutions
- Agree actions with clear measures, appropriate timescales and reviewing mechanisms, that address both tasks and style of working
- Agree how you will support the person going forward. Actions must be recorded and shared with the individual. This will normally be recorded on ePerformance using Performance Notes.
- Be positive and sensitive throughout the meeting and make it clear that you want them to succeed and develop in their role
- Balance the discussion with clearly stating the improvements required and give recognition for where things are done well – be ready for the possibility of an emotional discussion and consider taking a break during the meeting if necessary.
- Understand whether this is a capability issue e.g. 'can't do' or a conduct issue eg, 'won't do'. If the individual has the capability to do the role but is refusing to carry out instruction or do what is required then this may be a discipline issue.

	YES	NO
Can your manager demonstrate that they have complied with this?		

## HOW TO CONDUCT THE ONE-TO-ONE DISCUSSION

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- You must record the outcomes of the discussion. This will normally be recorded on ePerformance using Performance Notes particularly the actions required and the review mechanism
- Reinforce the message that you are there to support them to improve
- Diary the follow-up review meetings and make sure they take place
- Update the Performance Notes each review meeting
- Give regular coaching and feedback and recognise where they are showing improvements
- If they do improve sufficiently confirm to the individual and record this in Performance Notes but continue to support them to maintain their 'good' performance.
- The individual must have been made aware at an appropriate point during discussions that failure to improve their performance to the required standard could result in a formal warning and possibly dismissal

	YES	NO
Can your manager demonstrate that they have complied with this?		

If your manager fails to do any of these things, they are acting outside of BT's instructions.

You should tell your manager you believe this to be the case and that you will be contacting your Branch for advice.

If you find yourself in this position, please:

**CONTACT YOUR BRANCH IMMEDIATELY.**

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