

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

A QUICK GUIDE FOR MEMBERS



Prospect members in the civil service are facing a new performance management process, with line managers under pressure to deliver a forced distribution of performance markings. If not closely monitored and challenged, the process may be used to force managed exits and drive down pay. Prospect is challenging this approach. This card contains some tips on how to deal with performance management.

Above all, be proactive and if you think a rating is unjustified, challenge it at once. Act early and get advice from Prospect to increase your chances of getting the rating changed or preventing a repetition.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – KEY GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS

Be proactive and prepared

Be proactive and always prepare thoroughly for any performance discussion.

- Always keep a record of all performance discussions and any requests that you make.
- Always refer back to the objectives set at the start of the year.
- Use examples of good work to illustrate your performance. Don't wait for your formal performance review to gain

feedback.

- Challenge the unexpected: your mark should not come as a surprise.
- Challenge any 'must improve' mark that you think is unjustified. Don't let things drift.
- Probe alleged weaknesses and ask for examples, facts and figures. Make sure your manager provides evidence-based justification for your mark.
- Ensure that you are provided with appropriate support to achieve the required standards.
- If you are told your mark was changed at validation, ask for

disclosure of this record and supporting evidence.

Don't be afraid to appeal

Prospect's strong advice is that you should appeal against any appraisal outcome or performance mark that falls short of your realistic expectations. Remember to contact your Prospect rep for advice and support.

Back your arguments with points from Civil Service Employee Policy's guidance – see <http://library.prospect.org.uk/id/2014/00056>

There should be a minimum of three performance discussions a year to cover: objective setting, a mid-year review and end-of-year review. These should be open, unbiased and factual.

Your line manager is responsible for ensuring that objectives are relevant to the role and are 'specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed' (SMART). Your manager is also required to check that you are aware of the level of performance required.

Performance ratings should be awarded on the basis of fact, not opinion, with each decision justified by evidence in a performance management report.

Managers are expected to "provide all reasonable help, support and encouragement to assist employees to reach and maintain the required standard of performance".

You should not be marked down just because you are new





to a job. Staff absent due to maternity, adoption or pregnancy-related reasons should be marked as having 'met' their objectives.

More advice: www.prospect.org.uk/CSperformance

- For further guidance visit **www.prospect.org.uk/CSperformance**
- Prospect 'Members' Guide to One to One Interviews' – http://bit.ly/prospguide_onetoone
- Prospect 'Members' Guide to Appealing against Performance Appraisal' – http://bit.ly/perform_appraisal
- Prospect RSS Equality Briefing 'Disability Discrimination and Appraisal & Performance Systems' – http://bit.ly/DD_appraisal
- Speak to your local Prospect rep or contact Prospect by emailing performancemanagement@prospect.org.uk