

CAAT Staff Support and Performance Improvement Procedure

May 2019

1. Introduction

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure CAAT staff are properly supported so they can fulfil their job descriptions and work effectively and efficiently together. It also serves to provide a clear and fair procedure for resolving issues regarding unsatisfactory levels of performance.

2. What is not covered by this policy

This policy aims to support staff in all matters related to their skills, aptitudes or competence and their application of those. If a member of staff fails to maintain adequate standards of behaviour, conduct or reliability rather than a lack of skills or application, the situation should be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure as set out in the CAAT Handbook.

Where a member of staff has an underlying health condition or is disabled, CAAT has an obligation to consider making adjustments to their role or working conditions to allow them to work as effectively as possible. If you have an underlying health condition or you consider yourself to be disabled, please talk to your static reviewer who will consider with you whether there are any adjustments that we can make to your role or working conditions to better support you at work.

3. How staff responsibilities and standards of work are agreed

- **Job descriptions**

Each member of staff has a job description that outlines the roles and responsibilities for their post. These are reviewed, usually once a year, to ensure they remain up to date and relevant.

- **Peer review (PR) sessions**

Peer review is used to support staff and help them to identify areas of strength and development opportunities, and to highlight any issues that need to be resolved. PR sessions are also used to agree personal objectives for the next six months. (See the Staff Review Procedure in the CAAT Handbook).

- **Planning meetings**

At planning meetings throughout the year further temporary responsibilities, specific to a project, might be agreed between staff. The minutes/notes of these meetings outlining any agreed additional responsibilities should be saved in a logical place in the shared work area.

4. The Static Reviewer

Each member of staff is allocated a Static Reviewer. This is a colleague who attends all of the staff member's PR meetings and is there to support them between those sessions. The role of the Static Reviewer is to:

- Check in with the reviewee (member of staff you are the Static Reviewer for) between PRs to check that:
 - they are on track to meet their agreed objectives
 - they are happy that their workload is manageable

- there is no additional support, training or mentoring required
- Pass on any feedback from other staff regarding their reviewee between PR meetings.
- Guide and monitor any enhanced programme of support for their reviewee, if necessary.
- Ensure the method the reviewee prefers to receive constructive feedback is noted in the PR folder in the work area and followed.
- Make sure a discussion happens about an issue anyone (staff, volunteer, supporter, SC member or other) has regarding the reviewee, and bring to PR or any other relevant forum to find a resolution.
- Support their reviewee during certain staffing procedures as specified in the policy documents in the CAAT handbook.

During the PR meeting to:

- Look at the last few PR notes before meetings to see if there are any recurring issues that haven't been resolved yet and may need further discussion.
- Collect feedback from other staff regarding how the reviewee has achieved their objectives and planned their future work, and gather comments on how the reviewee manages relationships and behaviours. Then pass this feedback on at the PR meeting and discuss any changes, support or training required.
- Take notes at their PR of any issues that need taking forward and any discussions/agreements reached.

Selection of Static Reviewers is made by the Office Manager and where possible takes the preferences of the individual into account.

5. The Staff Support Group

The Staff Support Group (SSG) are four members of non-staff Steering Committee members and exists to provide support from individuals outside the staff team. Members of staff should feel free to speak to the SSG about any issues they are having at CAAT. Staff can contact individual SSG members at any time and should regard SSG members as listening ears who will respect confidentiality whether the member of staff is having an issue themselves with their work, with a colleague or other issue. More details regarding the role and remit of this group can be found in the CAAT handbook.

6. Performance improvement procedure: extra support

If it is decided during a PR session (or any other support meeting between a staff member and their static reviewer) that a member of staff is consistently not meeting their agreed objectives, or if their standard of performance is otherwise considered by other staff to be below the levels expected of them, the individual will be offered extra support. The aim of this support is to ensure that the individual is able to work at the standard expected of them and to identify and remove any barriers to them doing so.

Any staff member can specifically say they think an enhanced support programme should be developed for a colleague to that person's static reviewer at any time. If the static reviewer needs help in understanding the technical aspects of a staff members job, they should approach another staff member or steering committee member who may be able to help with this, or if needed pay for outside expertise to help assess technical abilities. Then enhanced programme of support will be put together by their static and latest rotating reviewer.

Ideally, the decision to offer a programme of enhanced support will be agreed between the individual and their reviewers. However, this decision may otherwise be made by the static and the latest rotating reviewer if they consider it necessary. Any agreed programme will include:

- New objectives for the next period (up to three months)
- Short regular meetings between Static Reviewer and staff member to assess progress
- Review/discussion of working practices or arrangements
- Consideration of any training, mentoring, counselling or mediation that may be beneficial

The Static Reviewer will keep notes of all the meetings. At the end of the agreed period of the programme the Static and Rotating Reviewer will meet with the individual to discuss progress against the agreed objectives. If it is agreed by the static and rotating reviewer that sufficient progress has been made, the individual support programme will come to an end, but with support measures continuing for an agreed period, if considered necessary. If, however, the Static and Rotating Reviewer believe there has not been sufficient progress in the individual's performance, the member of staff will be informed that the process will move to CAAT's formal 'Performance improvement procedure: involving the Staff Support Group'.

7. Performance improvement procedure: involving the Staff Support Group (SSG)

If, in the opinion of the static and rotating reviewer, there has been unsatisfactory progress following the enhanced support programme, the static reviewer and rotating reviewer will inform the Office Manager that they would like a performance improvement procedure to begin. The Office Manager will then meet with the staff member to explain the formal process and the potential consequences of continued under performance.

The Office Manager will contact the Staff Support Group (SSG) who will nominate a member to be involved in the process. (If the Office Manager is already involved in the process, another member of the HR working group will fulfil their role).

The meeting

The Office Manager will arrange a meeting with the staff member, their Static reviewer and the nominated SSG member. The staff member is advised to be accompanied to this meeting by a colleague, friend or trade union representative if they would like.

The Static Reviewer will summarise the work issues and send these to the staff member, the Office Manager and SSG member at least a week before the meeting. These will be based on the records from support meetings, peer reviews, catch-ups and any relevant additional information.

If the individual wishes, having received the initial summary, they can write a response to this, and share with all the attendees at least two days before the meeting.

At the meeting the Static Reviewer will verbally summarise agreed objectives, support offered, and which objectives have still not been met and the staff member will be asked to explain anything they disagree with or any other factors which should be taken into consideration. The SSG member and Office Manager will then be able to ask questions of both the Static Reviewer and staff member in order to identify:

- What the agreed objectives for the staff member have been, whether they have been met and if not all the factors which might have had an effect on the member of staff's performance, including the volume of work, the available resources, training, personal matters, ill health and changes in working practices;

- Any need for changes in working arrangements and practices designed to support the achievement of the required standards of performance;
- Any further training or personal development measures that could be undertaken, including counselling or advice from an external source.

A performance improvement programme will be developed and agreed at the meeting, with the final recommendation coming from the Static Reviewer, SSG member and Office Manager. This will include specific, measurable, time-bound goals, as well as additional support such as training, mentoring, counselling or mediation if considered helpful. A timescale will also be agreed for improvements to be made. The length will depend on the specific role and the length of time that the Office Manager, SSG member and Static Reviewer expect it will take to see an improvement in performance; it will usually be up to 8 weeks depending on the circumstances, but could be shorter or longer.

The first formal review meeting

At the end of the agreed period there will be a review meeting to discuss and review progress towards the agreed objectives. The individual is advised to be accompanied to this meeting by a colleague, friend or trade union representative as well if they wish. The individual will be given every opportunity to give their point of view and if necessary to explain any reasons for their failure to meet the agreed objectives. The SSG member and Office Manager will decide whether:

- a) The individual has met, or largely met, their agreed objectives and is now performing at the level expected of them. If so, this will be communicated to the staff member and Static Reviewer in writing immediately. The written communication should explain that there will continue to be additional review sessions for at least a further 2 or 3 months to ensure goals and objectives continue to be met. The staff member, Static Reviewer, Office Manager and SSG member should discuss and implement the continuation of any parts of the enhanced support programme which were useful for the staff member to help meet their goals. Or,
- b) The individual has not met the agreed objectives and continues to perform at a level below that which is expected of them. The Office Manager and SSG member will confirm this in writing to the individual involved, explaining where they are falling short of expectations, the steps they need to take in order to improve, and the date agreed for the next review meeting (usually in eight weeks time, but could be shorter or longer depending on the circumstances). The letter will also explain that the staff member is being issued with a written warning and set out the consequences for continued failure to improve.

The second formal review meeting

If, at the end of the agreed further period performance had still not improved another review meeting will be held. This will follow the same format as the first formal review meeting. At the end of this meeting, there will be the same two potential outcomes, except that if there has not been sufficient improvement in performance the staff member will receive a final written warning.

The final performance improvement review meeting

If, at the end of the final agreed period following a final written warning the member of staff is still under performing, they will be invited to a final performance improvement review meeting with a panel

comprising two different members of the SSG. The invite letter will explain that the outcome of the meeting might be dismissal. The staff member is advised to be accompanied to this meeting by a colleague, friend or trade union representative as well if they wish. The static reviewer, Office Manager and original SSG member involved will also attend this final performance improvement review meeting.

At the meeting the employee's performance will be discussed, including the steps that have been taken to secure improvements, any improvement that has been made, and, where appropriate, any areas where the staff member's performance is still falling short of expected standards.

The panel will review all written documentation from previous PR and performance review meetings and ask for any additional information that they deem necessary. They will also consider whether illness or disability may have had any impact on the employee's standard of performance and review whether appropriate workplace adjustments have been made. Where appropriate, the panel may offer the member of staff, the Static Reviewer, the Office Manager and the SSG member the opportunity to call witnesses and to ask questions of them.

If they deem it would be helpful, the Panel can choose to have the staff member and friend/trade union representative in one room, and the Static Reviewer, Office Manager and SSG member in another room, and move between the two rooms during the meeting to avoid confrontation.

At the end of the meeting, and following a period of deliberation, the panel may decide to:

- a) take no further action,
- b) implement some agreed adjustments to the employee's role or working conditions, or
- c) dismiss the employee

Written Confirmation of the Decision of the Panel

The Panel will inform the member of staff of their decision in writing within five working days of the hearing. The letter will explain the reasons for the decision and the procedure the employee should follow should they wish to appeal.

All records of the formal performance improvement procedure will be held by the Office Manager. If no further action is decided then documentation of the process will remain on the member of staff's file for two years before being permanently deleted.

8. Appealing a decision

A member of staff may appeal a decision at any stage of the formal performance improvement procedure. They should write to the Office Manager explaining their reason for appealing within five working days of receiving their outcome letter.

The Office Manager will appoint an Appeals Committee of three non-staff members of Steering Committee who, ideally, have not been involved in the case so far. If necessary, for example due to a conflict of interest, an individual who is not on Steering Committee may be brought on to the Appeals Committee provided they are approved by the other members of the Committee. The staff member will be given prior notice of the members of the Appeals Committee so that they may report any conflict of interest if necessary.

An appeal meeting will be held within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal, unless otherwise agreed in writing between the parties. Any performance improvement programme taking place should not be

interrupted to carry out an appeal process. The staff member is strongly advised to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend or trade union representative should they wish. The staff member will be informed in writing within five working days of the appeal hearing of the decision of the Appeals Committee. This decision will be final.

9. Confidentiality

CAAT will attempt to keep the fact of any ongoing processes under this policy confidential, but this might not always be possible. Where information does need to be shared with other members of the staff team (to check facts for example) the bare minimum of information will be disclosed to allow the process to be completed effectively.

If the staff member who is part of a performance improvement procedure wants to tell anyone else about any of these processes it is their right to do so. However, if they want to tell anyone CAAT works with (eg, Steering Committee member, local group member or member of an organisational ally) they should agree with their Static Reviewer or the Office Manager how the information is shared so that the person they are telling is given a full picture of the situation. This obviously doesn't apply to discussing the process with a friend or trade union representative who will be accompanying the member of staff at any of the process meetings.

10. Grievance

If at any point during the application of this policy the staff member involved has any concerns about how it is being implemented they should raise this at one of their review meetings. If they are still unhappy, or if they don't feel able to do this, they can use the Grievance Procedure as set out in the CAAT Handbook.

Appendix

Since CAAT has a non-hierarchical management structure there are some additional measures that need to be considered when this procedure is used.

- The static reviewer, rotating reviewer and Office Manager have an important role to play in this procedure and will almost certainly require support from their static reviewers during the process. They're working objectives will also need revising.
- Since CAAT is a relatively small organisation it will be difficult to keep any performance improvement process completely confidential, but all effort should be made to ensure that any information is shared between staff and Steering Committee on a need to know basis.