

Colleague Performance Policy

1. Policy Scope

This policy sets out what is expected from line managers and colleagues relating to performance management.

This policy provides a fair and consistent approach to managing performance concerns where improvement has not been achieved through informal feedback, or where the matter is sufficiently serious. Its purpose is to support individuals in achieving the required performance standards.

2. Policy Standards

We recognise the value of our colleagues and are committed to their ongoing growth and development. Colleagues should have clear expectations of their performance and have regular performance conversations with their line manager to support their development and to achieve both business and personal goals.

Performance management encourages continuous improvement by providing regular feedback and identifying areas for development. Supporting high-performing teams and talent development is a key part of our organisational success.

We expect a high level of performance from our colleagues. Appropriate training and support will be provided to help colleagues acquire the skills and knowledge to carry out their accountabilities.

Colleagues will be given regular feedback on how they are doing and what areas, if any, they need to improve. Line managers will do this as part of day-to-day management, regular 1:1 check in conversations and more formally during performance reviews. We also expect colleagues to keep their line manager informed of any difficulties they are having with performing their role so that we can assist where necessary.

If colleagues are not achieving the standards we expect, this policy sets out how we will approach obtaining an improvement in performance.

3. General Principles

We are committed to encouraging and supporting colleagues to work to the best of their abilities and to establishing regular, open, and constructive discussions between colleagues and their managers as part of this policy.

All colleagues who have completed their probation period will have an annual performance review with their line manager and the completed review form held on the HR/Perform system. As part of this annual review meeting, the following will be discussed:

- Performance - The colleague's performance over the past 12 months including what has gone well and any areas for improvement
- Values and behaviours - How the colleague has demonstrated the positive behaviours of our values in line with 'The Bernicia Way' expected behaviours framework and any areas of concern or for development. Managers should discuss compliments, complaints and any feedback received.
- Learning and development requirements – This will be reviewed to ensure colleagues maintain and can demonstrate the appropriate and up to date skills, knowledge and experience required for their role. This will also include any overdue training to be completed and personal and professional development goals.
- A review of the achievement of objectives set at the previous review meeting
- Setting SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound) objectives and progress against these will be monitored throughout the year.

The line manager is responsible for documenting the review discussion, including agreed development and improvement actions, and ensuring appropriate follow-up.

In addition, all colleagues who have completed their probation period will also have a minimum of 3 check-in conversations (1:1s) in a 12 month period with their line manager between each annual review. As part of this, performance and behaviours will be reviewed, general role accountabilities and business as usual activities discussed as well as progression of objectives and development/improvement plans, if appropriate.

There will be times when a colleague's performance falls below the standards we expect. A colleague will be made aware at the earliest opportunity of any performance issues and supported to attain an acceptable level of performance.

Wherever we can, we will aim to resolve performance issues informally. Most performance issues can be resolved through early informal discussion, regular 1:1s, feedback and the line manager's support.

We may deem it appropriate to move to the formal performance improvement process. Some examples of when we might do this are:

- where the underperformance is particularly serious or has particularly serious consequences; or
- where we have come to the reasonable opinion that we have exhausted appropriate ways to assist a colleague to improve
- there continues to be unsatisfactory performance following the completion of the informal performance review approach.

If there has been insufficient improvement in performance at the final stage of the formal performance improvement process, a decision may be taken to dismiss the colleague.

Where poor performance is believed to be the result of unacceptable behaviours, or where serious errors have been made to the detriment of the Bernicia Group, we may decide to use our Disciplinary Framework instead.

4. Definitions

Word/Phrase	Definition
Performance management	Supporting colleagues to achieve and sustain high performance by providing regular feedback and identifying areas for development.
Informal Performance Improvement	Where a line manager considers that a colleague's performance is not at the required standard, an informal review meeting will be arranged. At this meeting, the areas in which the individual's performance is below expectations will be discussed to give them an opportunity to explain the under-performance and to raise any concerns they may have. The aim of this approach is to identify any problems or reasons for the under-performance, and how this can be resolved.
Formal Performance Improvement	The formal performance improvement process will be used if there is continued unsatisfactory performance following the completion of the informal performance review period or where a first instance of unsatisfactory performance is sufficiently serious to warrant formal action.

Version Number: V1.2

Effective From: September 2026

Applicable To: This policy and process applies to all colleagues of Bernicia Group once they have completed their probationary period, including Directors and colleagues whether full-time, part-time, fixed-term, casual employees, and volunteers of Bernicia, and subsidiaries of the group.

Associated Documents: The following resources support the Colleague Performance Policy and Bernicia colleagues to deliver performance management. These can be found in the policies section of Workvivo:

- Colleague Performance Process
- Performance Improvement Plan Template
- Personal Development Plan Form
- Values and Behaviours Framework
- Personal Development Plan
- Disciplinary Framework
- Attendance Framework
- Probationary Policy

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: An ED&I Assessment was completed in August 2026. Please contact the Governance team if you require a copy.

Approved By: People Services Director

Policy Author: People Services Manager

Policy Owner: People Services Director

Next Review: August 2029

Reference Number: FRW-0023

Version Control

Version Number	Effective Date	Amendment made by	Version approved by	Description of changes
V1.1	25/03/2025	People Services Manager	Director of People Services	Performance Improvement Policy and Performance Management Policy removed, and relevant sections retained to create the new Colleague Performance Framework. Minor improvements identified.
V1.2	September 2026	People Services Manager	Director of People Services	More detail is provided in section 3 around expectations of what will be discussed as part of annual review meetings. Added expectation that in addition to the annual performance review, it is expected that a colleague and their line manager will have a minimum of 3 check in conversations (1:1s) in a 12 month period.