



## STANDARD SETTING SUPPORT POLICY

**Co-ordinator:**

Director of HR  
and Strategic  
Change

**Reviewer:**

Grampian Area  
Partnership  
Forum

**Approver:**

Grampian Area  
Partnership  
Forum.

**Signature****Signature****Signature****Identifier:**

NHS/POL/42/HR

**Review :**

This policy will  
be reviewed  
biennially by  
Grampian Area  
Partnership  
Forum.

**Implementation  
Date:**

6<sup>th</sup> April, 2009.

UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED

VERSION 1

**APPLICATION:** The provisions of this policy, which was developed by a partnership group on behalf of GAPF, apply to all staff except Medical and Dental staff who have their own arrangements for dealing with such matters.

**NHS GRAMPIAN  
STANDARD SETTING SUPPORT POLICY**

**If you have difficulty understanding the English language, this policy can be made available to you in a language of your choice.**

**This policy can also be made available, on request, in other formats e.g. in large print or on a computer disk.**

**For all requests for copies of this policy in another language, or in an alternative format, please call the Corporate Communications Team on 01224 554400.**

# **NHS GRAMPIAN STANDARD SETTING SUPPORT POLICY**

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# **NHS GRAMPIAN STANDARD SETTING SUPPORT POLICY**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Every employee has a responsibility to achieve and maintain, an acceptable standard of conduct and performance and every manager has a responsibility to give employees the necessary support and encouragement to achieve this.

Standard setting is designed to avoid, where possible, use of the Employee Conduct and Employee Capability policies where an employee fails to reach or maintain an acceptable standard of conduct or performance e.g. timekeeping, attendance, work performance etc. This process is not suitable for Gross Misconduct issues.

The emphasis of the standard setting support process must always be on assisting the employee to achieve the required standard over a mutually agreed period of time and while the agreed period of time can vary, depending on individual circumstances, it should not normally exceed six months. Managers are expected to adopt a proactive and supportive partnership approach in all meetings with employees.

Employees have the right to state their own case and to be represented by a Trade Union or Staff-Side Organisation representative (including full-time Trade Union Officers), or be accompanied by a colleague, friend, or relative not acting in a legal capacity at all stages of the procedure.

Special attention should be paid to communications with employees who have limited experience of working life, employees with learning difficulties, employees with physical disabilities or mental health issues which may impact on their ability to understand or express themselves and employees whose first language is not English.

## **2 INITIAL DISCUSSION OF IDENTIFIED PROBLEM**

It is a responsibility of all managers to make their staff aware of the standards, systems and processes to be observed and the standards of conduct expected of employees.

Where a problem is identified e.g. timekeeping, attendance, work performance issues etc., the following steps should be taken before any disciplinary action is considered:

- The problem should be clearly outlined to the employee as soon as possible and the manager should, therefore, meet with the employee to discuss the areas of concern.

- The emphasis during this meeting should be on a proactive partnership approach to support the employee to achieve the standards required.
- The manager should make every effort to ascertain whether there are any underlying problems or contributory factors which may have led to the employee's failure to maintain the required standard of conduct or performance and the employee should be encouraged to make any mitigating circumstances known.
- The manager should offer any assistance at their disposal which could assist the employee to overcome any problem or difficulty they have.

Once the facts are established there are three possible outcomes to the meeting with the employee:

- (i) it is decided that there is no need to set standards, in which case this should be made clear to the employee and the matter closed
- (ii) it is identified that there is a problem with the employee's conduct or performance, of which they are either unaware or have chosen to ignore, in which case the manager should propose and ideally agree, a course of action with them in order to assist them to attain the required standard
- (iii) it is identified that there is a problem which can best be dealt with under another NHSG policy e.g. the Employee Capability Policy, the Alcohol and Drug Policy etc

### 3 STANDARD SETTING

Where, following a meeting convened in line with the steps outlined in Section 2 above, it is identified that standards need to be set, the manager should provide the employee with a **written** copy of the actions agreed at the meeting in the form of a standard setting letter – see Flow Chart at **APPENDIX 1** and sample letter at **APPENDIX 2**.

The letter should clearly identify:

- the steps agreed to assist the employee to achieve the required standard e.g. setting objectives, agreeing further training and/or development opportunities, secondments, mentoring, coaching etc.
- the overall agreed time-scale for improvement, which should not normally exceed six months and the frequency at which regular review meetings will be held during the period that standard setting will remain in force and
- the likely outcomes if they fail to improve to the standard required, including the possibility of disciplinary action.

The employee will be sent two copies of this letter and will be asked to confirm that they understand the improvements expected of them and the potential consequences if they fail to attain the required standard within the agreed time-scale, by signing and returning one copy to their manager.

#### **4 REVIEW AND FEEDBACK**

The employee should be given constructive feedback at the regular meetings held to review their progress against the standard which has been set.

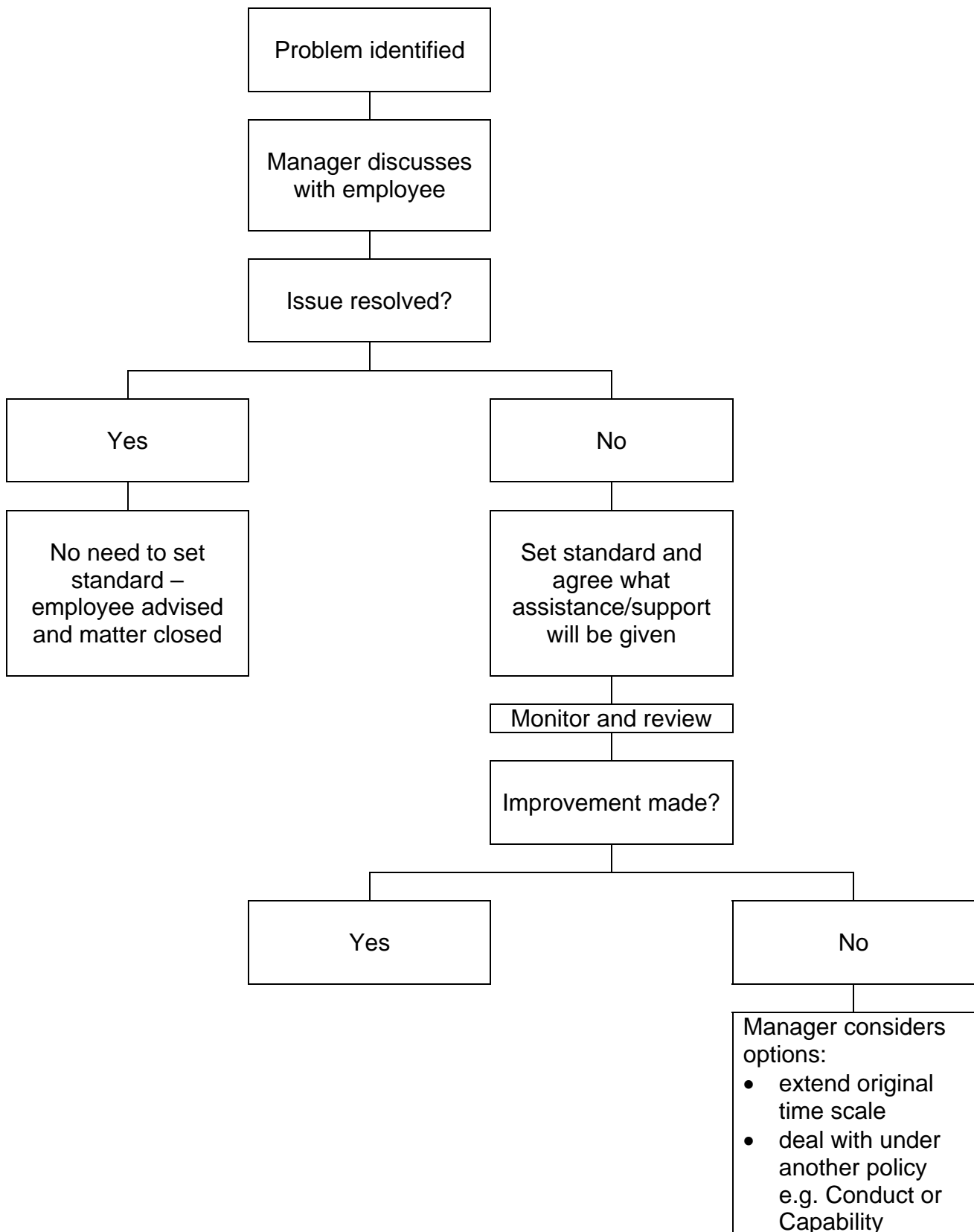
Where the employee attains the required standard within the time-scale set, their manager will write to them advising that the matter is closed and details pertaining to the exercise will be removed from their file.

However, where the employee fails to, or makes no attempt to, attain the required standard, there are two courses of action which can follow:

- (i) the manager recognises that a reasonable level of progress has been achieved and agrees a short extension to the originally agreed time-scale. This and any conditions attaching to the extension, should be confirmed in writing to the employee.
- (ii) the manager recognises that little or no progress has been achieved and decides that the matter will be best dealt with under another NHSG policy e.g. Employee Conduct, Employee Capability etc and the manager should provide the employee with formal advice of this decision.

While standard setting support is not part of the formal disciplinary process, relevant standard setting letters may be referred to if the agreed standard is not achieved and further action is necessary.

FLOW CHART – STANDARD SETTING PROCESS



**SAMPLE STANDARD SETTING LETTER**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

I refer to our meeting on \_\_\_\_\_, at which you were {accompanied by} \_\_\_\_\_ **OR** [given the opportunity to be accompanied at the meeting by a staff-side representative, colleague or friend not acting in a legal capacity and declined this offer] (Delete as appropriate) and would confirm that it was found necessary to set a standard of performance for you in respect of \_\_\_\_\_

It was, therefore, agreed that you are required to meet the following standard of performance by \_\_\_\_\_ {normally 6 months from the date of the letter}.

Your future performance against this standard will be monitored, with review meetings taking place on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

In the meantime and as agreed at our meeting, {expand on any support strategies which have been discussed with the individual e.g. referral to OHS; temporary change of shifts/ duties/ hours; use of other HR policies e.g. Policy on Special and Carer Leave; and confirm any measures agreed in writing}.

You should note that failure to achieve this standard within the agreed period may lead to further action, which could include implementing the provisions of either the Employee Conduct, or the Employee Capability, Policy. Similarly, if it is considered during the agreed period that you are making little or no attempt to achieve this standard, further action, including implementation of disciplinary procedures, may be taken against you.

I would ask you to sign and return one copy of this letter to me as confirmation of receipt and would invite you to contact me in the event that the contents of this letter are unclear, or you have any questions regarding the stand which has been set.

Yours sincerely

Manager

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_