

Work support policy

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Policy groundings

This is an alternative to what some organisations might call a ‘Performance management’ policy: an organisational response to a worker consistently not managing to do their job effectively. This could mean *regularly* missing deadlines, not completing key responsibilities, non-communication of absences, or doing work that doesn’t feel like it meets collectively agreed standards.

This policy starts from the assumption that when a worker hasn’t been able to do some or all of their role, it is because they have not been supported to do it (not because they are incapable of doing it, or that they are doing so for malicious reasons). The first step should always be to check in with the worker about their current workload and existing support, to see if any responsibilities can be reduced or shifted to support them more effectively. This is a recognition that inadequate organisational work planning is often a fundamental reason for work not getting done, so we want to avoid the responsibility for that being shifted to individual workers. (We say more about this in our [Ways of Working policy](#).)

This policy also recognises that the kinds of support a workplace can provide cannot always counter all the factors in a person’s life that might be getting in the way of their work (physical health, mental health, caring responsibilities, economic uncertainties, systems of oppression and discrimination, etc.), so there will need to be organisational limits around the support that is offered. These limits should always err on the side of generosity and a belief that, as a workplace, we *can* support someone to effectively do the job they were hired for.

A traditional performance management process is imposed on a worker at a point where their work has come into question: via complaints by colleagues, partner organisations, or management, etc. We would like this policy to be seen primarily as something a worker can proactively ask for, as a way of accessing additional layers of support if they feel they are struggling with any aspect of their role. It will still be available if complaints are made about a workers’ work, but ideally, these will be less frequent as we want to encourage a culture where workers who are having a harder time, can ask for the support they need, and believe, as far as is possible, that it will be provided.

Accountability is an important theme of this policy, but it is not about punishment. It’s about creating the conditions for someone to live up to their (and others’) agreed expectations.

Scope & context

The policy will apply to RadHR core team members.

Costs related to this policy will be covered by the *Materials & Training* budget line. These costs will be capped at £1200/worker/year (current Materials & Training budget + £500), except in exceptional circumstances.

Responsibilities for holding the process

An individual named **Work Support Lead**, who should take the role seriously, will hold the process, researching, making suggestions and finding appropriate external support for the worker who needs it.

If they do not have capacity OR feel too involved in the work issues raised OR are in need of support themselves, they will take responsibility for seeking out an alternative **External Work Support Lead** (which could be a colleague from a trusted organisation, or a professional work coach or similar). The specifics of the external role should be worked out.

Liam will take on this role initially.

When there is a concurrent conflict process

If the RadHR [Conflict, Grievance and Accountability policy](#) has triggered the use of the Work Support policy (i.e. someone not doing their job effectively has had a significant negative impact on a colleague or the organisation), the first preference is to attempt this work support process, followed (if still necessary) by the implementation of the *Conflict, Grievance and Accountability* policy.

That said, the *Conflict, Grievance and Accountability* policy may need to be implemented first, if the impacts of the conflict or work issues have been significant enough on colleagues to require resolution more immediately. This is to be avoided though, if work support is deemed to be a significant factor in the grievance raised.

Trying to do both processes at once is strongly discouraged, due to the contradictory nature of the processes, especially if they are both being held in a small team.

Support process steps

What would trigger a Work Support process?

The process could be triggered by any of the following:

- A worker raising concerns about their own work to a colleague, if they feel they would benefit from additional support;

- A worker raising concerns about a colleague's work with a third colleague, based on any of the below concerns:
 - A worker missing significant deadlines consistently (3+ times in 6 months);
 - A worker being consistently absent from internal meetings, without notice (three or more times in three months);
 - A worker missing 2+ external meetings in six months, without notice;
 - One or more areas of work that a worker is regularly (more than once in three month period) struggling to deliver to an agreed standard;
 - Some combination of the above issues happening concurrently.
- A partner organisation raising concerns about a workers' work, and it is either a serious concern and/or has happened more than once;
- A process is launched through the [Conflict, Grievance and Accountability policy](#), which highlights the need for workplace support as a key underlying reason why a worker has negatively impacted colleagues and/or the organisation.

What should happen next?

Once a Work Support concern has been raised, via any of the channels above, the **Work Support Lead** will meet with the worker. The worker is welcome to bring a friend or colleague with them for support at this initial meeting and all subsequent meetings in the process. If there is a conflict between workers that relates to this process, workers will be asked to limit contact with one another, while these initial steps are taken, as much as possible.

The aim of the initial meeting will be to:

- Agree the issues that have been raised;
- See if the worker has ideas for how they might be addressed;
- Share any information that might help the **Work Support Lead** to make suggestions, initiate organisational changes, or do further research;
- Plan to meet again, ideally within a few weeks to agree a Work Support Plan.

After this initial meeting, the **Work Support Lead** will a) begin to draft a Work Support Plan for their colleague, including next steps, timelines and shared agreements (see: *Appendix: Template Work Support Plan*) and share it with the worker at least a few days before their next meeting, or b) do further research to offer options and check with the colleague, before a Work Support Plan is developed.

If further research is needed, the **Work Support Lead** will use the next meeting with the worker to agree a direction or particular offers of support and agree another meeting date within 1-2 weeks to agree a more detailed plan. The **Work Support Lead** will then take away those agreements and draft a Work Support Plan to share with the worker at least a few days before the next meeting.

Once the Work Support Plan has been prepared, the next meeting will aim to get agreement on the aims, steps and timelines. It should include clear check-in dates and contingency plans for if initial steps don't seem to be working for anyone involved.

In the unlikely event that a worker refuses to engage with a work support process, it will need to be handled as an issue for the [Conflict, Grievance and Accountability policy](#).

Support options to be made available

Once a process has begun, the following types of support may be put into a **Work Support Plan**, which should last 3–12 months, depending on the nature of the support options (i.e. some may be one-off supports, others permanent changes to a job role).

Offer	When to offer	Example	Costs/limits
Time-bound interventions (0–6 months)			
Coaching / mentoring	When personal habits need to shift OR when specialist knowledge of a worker's condition is needed to support them to find ways of working that work for them.	An external ADHD work coach may be found and made available for x sessions.	Assume costs from Materials & Training budget - if likely to exceed the allotted budget, make a collective decision on reasonable additional budget.
Training	When there is a specific skills gap that is impeding a key aspect of the role.	Bookkeeping training to support engagement in the collective budgeting process.	See above
Time off	If a worker is chronically ill, under immense stress or otherwise overwhelmed, time off may be offered, with a clear route back into their role (or a similar role).	Potential cover role, if budget is there and someone appropriate is available to do the role.	Detailed in our sick leave policy (work in progress). This policy includes: 3 months at 100% pay; additional 3 months at 75% pay; additional phased return options and one possible 3 month extension. After this, statutory sick pay would apply. These times can be flexible based on specific situations and needs.
Long-term adjustments (Permanent changes)			
Physical equipment/	If a worker's physical work set up is	Buying a standing desk to reduce back	Assume costs from Materials & Training

workplace adjustments	impeding their ability to work (may or may not be related to disability)	problems.	budget, if likely to exceed the allotted budget, make a collective decision on reasonable budget.
Flexible hours	If a worker is not finding it possible to work full days, due to (for example) health or caring responsibilities.	Spacing a 3 day work week over 5 days, to reduce fatigue or enable school runs.	N/A
Role adjustments	If particular aspects of a worker's role are not possible, or are worsening a worker's health or mental health.	Shifting responsibilities between colleagues to avoid travel or nights away; Taking on more in-person work to help maintain focus.	N/A
Other forms of support we haven't considered	If a worker's needs don't easily fit into the offers listed here.	TBD	TBD

When disability is a factor

The above list of potential supports and adjustments is applicable to both disabled and non-disabled workers, while recognising that workers with disabilities may need additional reasonable adjustments. This may, for example, lead to approving additional organisational budget, beyond what is allocated in the 'Costs/limits' column.

If a Work Support process has been triggered regarding a worker who has declared a disability that may be affecting the work support issues raised, the Work Support Lead will review their work plan and assess any reasonable adjustments in the first instance, regardless of how the process has been raised (e.g. if it emerged from a complaint from a colleague or partner organisation, or via self-referral).

Assessing how it is going

Each Work Support Plan will be unique, so the ways of assessing it will align with the specific time-bound and long-term adjustments that are being offered, and aims that are defined by the **Work Support Lead** (in consultation with the worker affected, and other colleagues with relevant knowledge, if needed).

Examples are listed in **Appendix: Template Work Support Plan**.

Extending a Work Support Plan

There are two ways in which a Work Support Plan may be extended; via a **Change Extension (up to three months)** or a **Review Extension (up to three months)**. Either can be exercised in either order, at the recommendation of the **Work Support Lead**, with agreement from the rest of the Core Team (minus the worker involved in the plan), but both can only be used once (with a total extension of 6 months beyond the term of the initial Work Support Plan).

Either could be used if the worker has shown significant progress during the Work Support Plan period, but there is still doubt about their ability to achieve agreed standards. The differences between a Change Extension and a Review Extension are outlined as follows:

Change Extension	Review Extension
It is a proactive review and suggests doing something <i>new or different</i> than what was outlined in the original Work Support Plan. It indicates that further interventions are likely to help the worker to achieve their work aims. This could be the escalation of an initial Work Support Plan intervention (e.g. moving from seeing an ADHD coach monthly, to weekly, for a fixed period of time), or could be an entirely new intervention that had not been part of the Work Support Plan, but which the Work Support Lead and the worker involved feel offer a new approach to supporting the worker's needs.	It involves either <i>continuing with the interventions agreed</i> in the Work Support Plan (if ongoing), or <i>stopping these interventions</i> (if time-bound) to assess their impacts. It indicates that there has not been enough time to assess the effectiveness of the Work Support Plan. Therefore, in order to make a fair decision, more time is needed. This could be because the intervention took several months to complete (e.g. a training course or a period of mentoring), OR because there have been few or no opportunities to assess the impacts of the interventions, since they were completed (e.g. an annual budgeting process has not been carried out, in which the impacts of a bookkeeping course would be most-likely to show up).

It would need to be made clear to the worker that if all aims were still not met at the end of the extension/s (via a final Work Support Plan evaluation meeting), that an End of Employment meeting would be scheduled. This meeting would formally give notice to end the worker's employment with RadHR, remove them from collective decisions and agree a two months' paid notice period.

What happens at the end of a Work Support Plan?

Following the initially agreed Work Support Plan (e.g. 3-6 months from the initial work support meeting), the Work Support Lead, in consultation with relevant colleagues, can decide to: 1) Conclude the process, 2) Extend the process, or 3) End the worker's employment with RadHR (in exceptional circumstances).

Below are the kinds of circumstances in which each of these outcomes could occur, and in what order:

- 1) If the worker's performance has improved to the point where the issues that led to the Work Support Plan have not been a problem throughout the Work Support Plan implementation (e.g. following the completion of a training course or a change in physical workplace set up) The **Work Support Lead** (in consultation with relevant colleagues) can conclude the process and the worker will continue to do their job, with any long-term supports or adjustments that have been made or agreed during the process.
- 2) If the worker's performance has NOT improved to the point where the issues that led to the Work Support Plan have not been a problem throughout the Work Support Plan implementation AND there is no indication that more time or alternative support plans would shift this, an End of Employment meeting would be held between the **Work Support Lead** and the worker (Details in [Ending a worker's employment with RadHR](#)).
- 3) If the worker's performance has improved during the Work Support Plan, but 1) there has not been *sufficient time* for the impacts of supports or adjustments to be assessed (e.g. they only completed bookkeeping training after three months, so haven't yet participated in a budgeting process) OR 2) the Work Support Lead believes that *different intervention(s)* may have better results the **Work Support Lead** can initiate an **extension period** (either *Change* or *Review*, see '[Extending a Work Support Plan](#)' above)
 - a) Following a first extension period:
 - i) The **Work Support Lead** (in consultation with relevant colleagues) can conclude the process and the worker will continue to do their job, with any long-term supports or adjustments that have been made or agreed during the process OR
 - ii) The **Work Support Lead** (in consultation with relevant colleagues) can, if the other type of extension is relevant, implement a final extension period (see details in '[Extending a Work Support Plan](#)') OR
 - iii) An End of Employment meeting would be held between the **Work Support Lead** and the worker (Details in [Ending a worker's employment with RadHR](#)).
 - b) Following a final extension period:
 - i) The **Work Support Lead** (in consultation with relevant colleagues) can conclude the process and the worker will continue to do their job, with any long-term supports or adjustments that have been made or agreed during the process. OR

- ii) An **End of Employment meeting** would be held between the **Work Support Lead** and the worker (Details in [Ending a worker's employment with RadHR](#)).

Ending a worker's employment with RadHR

While we will always do our best to avoid this outcome, it is important for organisational accountability to those we work with, to be able to end an employment relationship with a worker that is unable to carry out the work that they were hired for, to an agreed standard. This will only happen if we have exhausted all of the channels above and there has not been sufficient improvement in their work for them to continue to do their role, outside of Work Support Plan provision.

This would happen at the point in which:

- A Work Support Plan (potentially including a three-month *Change* extension period AND a three-month *Review* extension) had been completed; and
- It was decided by the **Work Support Lead** and any core team colleagues, beyond the worker involved, that the worker's performance was still not meeting agreed standards.

At this point, an End of Employment meeting would be held between the **Work Support Lead** and the worker, to remove them from collective decision making and give them two months' paid notice of the end of their employment. As with all other meetings in the process, the worker could be accompanied by a friend, colleague or union representative. It may be that the expectations of the amount of time worked in these final two months is negotiated with the core team, to either support the worker to take time off for rest, or to enable them find other work, before they stop receiving RadHR pay.

Protection from unfair dismissal

We've designed this policy to ensure that all RadHR workers are given every opportunity to be supported to do their work. We have aimed to ensure there is additional support available in situations where disability is a factor in worker performance, and have also aimed to broaden our framing of reasonable adjustments to include a range of ways that different workers are likely to be disadvantaged at work by a range of wider social and economic factors (e.g. caring responsibilities, systems of oppression, changes in government policies, etc).

In the unlikely event that a worker gets to the point of losing their job through this process, they can appeal the decision in the two weeks that follow their End of Employment meeting.

Currently, appeals would be heard and decided by a worker not involved in delivering the Work Support Plan, who will assess the appeal letter and the information provided by the **Work Support Lead** and offer a final decision. We are aware that this may not be sufficient in all situations that arise in a small team, given the likelihood of conflicts of

interest emerging for all workers, so are planning to create an 'Accountability Cluster' as an alternative structure to handle appeals (see: *Future policy development plans*).

Future policy development plans

Accountability Cluster

The 'Accountability Cluster' will be a trio of small, likeminded organisations, who can support one another to make important decisions when everyone in our respective teams has a conflict of interest in a particular decision, such as an appeal of a decision for unfair dismissal. The process of the Accountability Cluster is still being designed and we hope to have it in place in 2027.

The proposed Accountability Cluster is likely to include: Cooperation Town and Kin.coop.

Emergency Fund use

When we review this policy, we will explore whether it is appropriate to encourage workers to apply to the Emergency Fund in the RadHR Pay Policy at their *End of Employment* meeting.

Appendix 1:

Template work support plan

Worker:

Work Support Lead:

Starting date:

Final Work Support Plan meeting:

(e.g. starting date + 3 months or 6 months)

Check in date(s):

Work Support Plan triggered by:

- ☐ Self-referral by worker
- ☐ Referral by colleague
- ☐ Referral via Conflict, Grievance and Accountability policy
- ☐ Referral by external organisation

Reasons for Work Support Plan

(e.g. - regular missed meetings, regular missed deadlines, etc.)

Aims for Work Support Plan

(e.g. - to enable the worker to complete [types of job tasks] to an agreed standard.)

-

Steps for worker to take

(e.g. - *attending book keeping training, proposing amendments to job role, etc.*):

-

Steps for RadHR to take

(e.g. - *agreeing training or mentoring budget, providing new desk, etc.*)

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Additional notes:

Agreed by [name of worker]

and [name of Work Support Lead]
