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QUICKGUIDE
Performance Ratings Appeals



Your annual performance rating is an important indicator of how your contribution at work is perceived and determines your pay review. If you are unhappy with your rating you are entitled to use the Appeals Procedure. We've produced this quick guide to help members prepare for an appeal.

YOUR PERFORMANCE RATING IS IMPORTANT

Your annual rating determines your pay review and your bonus if you participate in the Group Bonus Scheme. It is also an important factor in selection procedures for promotion and can even feature in the selection criteria for redundancy. If you believe that your annual rating is not a fair reflection of your performance you should use the Appeals Procedure – it's too important to ignore.

Determining your performance rating

Your annual rating should reflect your whole performance over the 12 month review period. In determining your rating your manager should consider *what* you did in terms of personal objectives and also *how* you did them. They should do this by comparing your performance against your performance plan and then match this against the descriptor of the five performance ratings. You should have regular discussions with your manager throughout the year



Source: Nationwide's Performance Management Intranet site

and this means that your annual rating should not come as a surprise.

Your rating should reflect your individual performance and not be subject to any discrimination or bias. A part-time employee in Level One is entitled to be rated as Exceptional just as much as full-time employee in Level Three – it's about what you did; how you did it; within the boundaries of your job role; while you were at work.

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What happens at calibration?

Calibration is a process that is intended to ensure managers in a business area are rating performance in a consistent and fair way. Line managers will give their team members an 'indicative rating' and then come together with other managers and their senior team to discuss and compare the ratings. The indicative ratings can be adjusted to ensure performance is being fairly managed across peer groups. The senior management team in the area will sign off the final ratings.

What are the grounds for appeal?

There may be a number of reasons that might give grounds for an appeal:

- There may be aspects of your performance that haven't been taken into account.
- Your rating is only based on your most recent performance rather than looking back over 12 months.
- The rating focuses on just one element of your performance plan rather than being an assessment of your whole of role performance, for example, in the branch network, your success against referrals, norms or APE objectives.
- You're told that the number of higher ratings that can be given are limited to fit in within a desired distribution of ratings.

These are examples and not an exhaustive list of reasons. You have the right to appeal if you feel your rating is unfair in any way.

There are some myths about the appeals procedure

There are some popular myths about the process that discourage employees from appealing:



You have the right to appeal if you feel your rating is unfair in any way.

- Ratings cannot be changed once set at Calibration.
- The outcome of the appeal could be that your rating is reduced.

These are NOT TRUE – ratings can be changed even after calibration and your rating can only stay the same or go up.

Other reasons employees give for not appealing are:

- They think it will be seen a negative behaviour and so be career limiting.
- That nothing will change and so it's not worth the hassle.
- They think it will reflect badly on their manager.

These are understandable concerns but everyone should have confidence in raising an appeal. It is an official Nationwide process and fits with the Society's values of fairness and transparency. Your rating has a direct impact on your pay and so it is right that you should have the opportunity to challenge it if you think it's unfair.

THE APPEALS PROCEDURE

The Appeals Procedure is now a 'stand alone' process and not part of the Grievance Procedure.

Your annual performance meeting

You should meet with your manager to discuss your annual rating. They should explain why they believe this is an appropriate assessment of your performance for the year.

Informal appeal

If you are unhappy with the rating you've been given you should tell your manager, normally within five working days of being given the rating. Your manager will arrange a further

meeting to discuss your concerns and if they feel there are good reasons to re-consider the rating will discuss this with the senior management team. Your manager will either confirm that your rating will stay the same or be changed to a higher rating.

Formal appeal – Stage one

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the informal appeal you can submit a formal appeal request. You must complete the Appeal Form and send this, together with supporting documentation, to the Case Management Team in HR. You must do this, normally within ten working days of the outcome of your informal appeal.

The Case Management team will consider your views when determining who will chair your appeal. You may prefer to have someone outside of your immediate management line hear the appeal, because they won't have been directly involved in the calibration of your rating. But you may feel someone from your line will have a better understanding of what you've achieved. The person hearing your appeal will be more senior than your manager.

You'll be invited to a meeting and given the opportunity to explain why your rating should be changed. You have the right to be represented at the meeting by the Union or to be accompanied by a work colleague. The manager hearing your appeal will confirm their decision on the Appeal Form.

Formal appeal – Stage two

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome of your appeal you can



If you are unhappy with the outcome of the informal appeal you can submit a formal appeal request.

request a further meeting with a more senior manager. You must return your Appeal Form to the Case Management team, normally within ten days of receiving the decision from Stage One.

You will be invited to attend another meeting and can be represented at this meeting by the Union or be accompanied by a work colleague. The manager hearing your appeal will confirm their decision and reasoning on the Appeal Form. This is the final stage of the procedure.

MAKING YOUR CASE

The key to a successful appeal is to prepare well. Here are a few tips:

Read the Performance Management guidance

There is a wealth of information on the Performance Management intranet site. It's worth reading this so you know how the Society expects performance management to be conducted. This will help you challenge any local procedures that are out of line.

Read the rating descriptors

It is important to read the rating descriptors so that you understand what is required for each. This will help you construct your appeal case in a way that demonstrates why your performance meets the descriptor you think you deserve.

Think about each element of your performance plan

Go through your performance plan and write how you think you've performed against the objectives. Remember to cross reference this with the rating descriptor. For example, the descriptor for a 'Met Objectives' rating says:

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“You’ve *usually* done everything you’re supposed to in your role”.

If you’ve just missed an objective that doesn’t mean you haven’t met the standard – the requirement is to “usually” do what’s expected.

Summarise the full 12 month’s performance

Go back over the whole year and jot down some bullet points that explain how you performed for each month. Make a note of any particular highlights, for example, if you took on additional tasks or responsibilities describe how they helped you raise the bar on the expected standards. Remember, your rating should reflect ‘what’ you did and ‘how’ you did it – so make a note of your achievements and the behaviours you’ve shown throughout the year. It’s also important to note any challenges you had to cope with, such as resourcing issues; changes to your business objectives; local market factors or things happening in your personal life that may have had an impact on your performance.

Talk about your challenges but be positive

If you have faced challenges during the year it’s important to note them but be positive and explain how you’ve succeeded despite any difficulties. Your rating is unlikely to be increased simply because you didn’t have regular 1to1’s with your manager or only got a performance plan part way through the year. It’s important to show how you’ve overcome such barriers.

Evidence is the key

Collect as much evidence as you can, such as your 1to1 notes, feedback from

colleagues and relevant facts and figures. Use the evidence to support the points you’ve noted down. Once you’ve got everything together, select the most compelling evidence to send with the Appeal Form. Don’t swamp the chair with a mountain of paper. You can always take additional evidence to the appeal meeting.

Be realistic in the assessment your performance

Once you’ve put your case together ask yourself if the evidence really matches the descriptor of the rating you want. If you’re making the case for an ‘Exceeded’ or ‘Exceptional’ rating – can you really show that you achieved above the expected standards or did you do what would normally be required in the role? Just because you were rated as ‘Exceeded’ last year, it doesn’t mean you should be rated the same this year – you need to prove why you deserve it. It’s a good idea to put yourself in the position of the Chair – what would you want to see and hear to convince you to increase the rating? If necessary collect more evidence to reinforce your case.

Prepare for the meeting

The appeal meeting is your chance to impress the Chair and make a compelling case. Make sure you’re organised and take all the relevant documentation. Be confident and positive in your approach.

Ask for NGSU representation

You are entitled to be represented at the meeting. We can’t guarantee that we can get your rating increased but we’ll help you make your case to the best effect. It’s good to have some moral support and we’ll make sure you’ve said everything you think is important.



If you’d like to talk to someone about the appeals process you can call the Union for a confidential chat. If you decide to go ahead with an appeal we’ll arrange for a Union Officer or trained Representative to support you. E-mail us at ngsu@ngsu.org.uk or call us on 01295 710767.