

Blackpool Teaching Hospital – 4 W's Employee Relations Process

What
Who
Why
Way Ahead

A Just Culture looks first at **what** was responsible for an issue or situation before looking at **who** was responsible. The actions of individuals need to be placed into context early, not at the end which often happens.

The purpose of any disciplinary process is to correct behaviour; to prevent that behaviour from reoccurring. However we often only begin rebuilding or repairing relationships and situations at the end of the investigation from recommendations or the imposition of a sanction. By adopting a Just Culture approach to employee relations matters we will make our investigation process **constructive** rather than *destructive*.

Whilst all investigations will ultimately ask the question why, it is essential that early intervention looks at what happened, who was hurt or harmed, why did this happen and what is the immediate way ahead to begin repairing and ensuring it doesn't happen again.

Line Managers are crucial in this role, along with HR and Staff Side partners supporting the process. Employees need to take responsibility and be accountable for their actions, however so does the organisation. To do this, individuals and their actions need to be placed **into** context via **immediate** fact finding **before** any **formal investigation** is considered.

Line Managers need to establish:

What has happened?
Who was hurt or harmed?
Why did it happen?
What is the immediate **Way Ahead**?

Fact Finding:

What has happened and **Who** (or what) was hurt or harmed

Summary of what happened
Statement from the member/s of staff involved
Statement from witnesses

Why did it happen?

Has there been a **System** failure – was the policy or procedure not adequate or not followed – if not why not?

Is there a lack of **resources** – was equipment or staffing correct and available?

Do the individuals involved have the **Knowledge, skills** or **awareness** – did they know what to do, are there training issues?

Mitigation – are there any personal factors that have contributed?

What is the **Way Ahead**

Is there any immediate action or intervention that could be done to stop a repeat or to repair a relationship quickly?

Is an immediate referral for support required, for example to Occupational Health?

Should a restriction be put in place immediately so that training or a repair could be completed?

Fact finding is not part of the formal process and will simply be a conversation between the line manager and the employees involved as soon as possible. The employee can either submit a summary to support what is being said or the manager will make a brief note of the discussion which will be signed and dated by the employee.

Once fact finding is complete and immediate action taken the line manager may determine no further action is required. In that case the line manager will summarise the events and the outcome in a letter to the employee, placing a copy, along with the fact finding documentation, on the personal file.

If the line manager believes that matter requires further action, or is unsure, then contact should be made with the Workforce Advisory Service requesting support and guidance. Copies of all fact finding documentation should be provided and an appropriate member of the Workforce Advisory Service will make early contact with the line manager to discuss and agree the following:

Is a formal investigation required?

Who has approved this?

Who will investigate?

Could fast track be an option?

Where it is determined that a formal investigation is necessary this will commence as soon as possible, with the appointing manager confirming that the investigation manager has the necessary time and ability to fulfil this role. Investigations should be commenced and completed within the minimum timeframes possible. HR and Staff Side will be as flexible in supporting efficient investigations thereby further minimising the impact of the individuals involved.

Where a suspension is considered appropriate this can only be authorised by 2 people, one of them whom will be an Executive Director or their nominated Deputy. Where an employee is suspended this will always be for the minimum period necessary.