

CASE STUDY | GOVERNANCE & PEOPLE RISK

When a people problem became a board-level risk

How independent HR, governance support and firm process control helped a values-led organisation regain grip.

The organisation didn't need another policy. It needed somebody independent to establish what was happening, what was urgent and what could safely wait.

AT A GLANCE

THE CHALLENGE

Sensitive concerns were multiplying faster than the organisation could safely resolve them.

OUR RESPONSE

Independent triage, evidence control, investigation and board-level governance support.

THE OUTCOME

Clear ownership, fair decisions and a defensible route from immediate risk to lasting repair.

The situation

A series of apparently separate employee concerns had begun to overlap. Some were conduct matters, others raised capability, health, confidentiality, safeguarding or whistleblowing questions, and several exposed weaknesses in the organisation's wider controls. Managers were working hard, but too many people were too close to the history to provide a genuinely independent view.

The governing body was receiving information in fragments. Policies existed, but they hadn't always been followed consistently and decision-making authority wasn't clear. The immediate temptation was to deal with each individual problem quickly. The real need was to stabilise the whole position before another decision created a fresh legal, procedural or governance risk.

What made it difficult

- Different concerns were being handled under different policies, with overlapping roles and responsibilities.
- Allegations, established facts and wider governance concerns had become blurred together.
- Safeguarding, confidentiality, sickness, disability and data-handling issues cut across ordinary employee-relations processes.
- Immediate controls were needed without prejudging anybody or turning a neutral precaution into a punishment.

What HR Support Group did

Stabilised the position

We introduced a clear evidence-preservation process, confirmed points of contact, defined the immediate scope and recommended proportionate neutral controls. Welfare, confidentiality and reasonable-adjustment requirements were built in from the start.

Separated the decisions

We mapped which matters belonged in investigation, disciplinary, grievance, capability, safeguarding, appeal or governance channels. We then set out who could investigate, who could decide and who needed to remain independent for any appeal.

Investigated independently

We built chronologies and evidence schedules, conducted structured interviews, tested conflicting accounts and produced clear findings. Hearing packs, chairing support and appeal arrangements were designed so each decision could stand on its own evidence.

Put the governing body back in control

We converted a confusing volume of detail into a RAG-rated risk brief, with decision points, delegated authority, cost controls and staged actions. This allowed leaders to see the employment, safeguarding, data and governance position together.

Rebuilt the foundations

The assignment moved beyond individual cases into policy repair, clearer reporting, manager and trustee briefings, practical templates and ongoing fractional HR leadership.

The difference

The organisation moved from reactive case handling to a controlled programme of fair, evidence-led decisions.

- Leaders knew what needed deciding, when it needed deciding and who was authorised to decide it.
- Evidence was preserved and converted into a coherent, usable record.
- Fact-finding, decision-making and appeal responsibilities were properly separated.
- Safeguarding, welfare and reasonable adjustments were addressed without predetermining employment outcomes.
- Governance risks were visible, prioritised and tracked rather than buried inside individual cases.
- The organisation had a practical remediation plan, not simply another report for the shelf.

Services brought together

Crisis & leadership	Crisis containment; senior leadership support; fractional HR Director input; action planning
Independent process	Investigations; disciplinary, grievance and capability; hearing and appeal chairing
Fairness & protection	Safeguarding; whistleblowing; equality; reasonable adjustments; evidence preservation
Governance & repair	Board and trustee support; policy audit; delegations; reporting; manager briefings

When it feels bigger than HR, it probably is.

We bring the people, process, governance and operational risks into one clear plan - then help you deliver it.

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Confidentiality note: This case study is based on real HRSG assignment themes. Identifying details, sequence and certain non-material features have been changed or combined to protect confidentiality.