

Grievance Procedure

It is possible that at some time, you may have issues or concerns about your work, working conditions or relationships with colleagues that you wish to talk about with your employer. You will want the matter to be addressed, and if possible, resolved. It is also clearly in your employer's interests to resolve problems before they might develop into major difficulties for all concerned.

All grievances will be dealt with fairly and objectively.

In circumstances where your employer is unable to communicate or manage the grievance process themselves, your employer's nominated representative will do so on their behalf.

1. Dealing with grievances informally

You should aim to settle most grievances informally with your employer. Many problems can be raised and settled during the course of everyday working relationships. This also allows for problems to be settled quickly.

2. Formal grievances

If the matter is serious and/or you wish to raise the matter formally you should set out the grievance in writing to your employer. You should stick to the facts and avoid language that is insulting or abusive.

- ❖ Your employer will arrange a meeting, normally within seven days, in private where there will not be interruptions
- ❖ Your employer will consider arranging for someone who is not involved in the case to take notes at the meetings and to act as a witness to what is said.

- ❖ You have the right to be accompanied at the grievance hearing by a colleague or trade union representative, or if neither of these is appropriate, then someone who is mutually agreeable, providing their presence would not prejudice the hearing or create a conflict of interest.
- ❖ You must make a reasonable request to your employer in advance of the meeting that you wish to be accompanied.

Grievance hearing

Your employer recognises that a grievance hearing is not the same as a disciplinary hearing, and is an occasion when discussion and dialogues may lead to an amicable solution.

It is recognised that a grievance situation can be stressful time and it is important that the meeting is conducted in a calm, fair and as non-confrontational a manner as possible.

- ❖ You will be invited to re-state your grievance and how you would like to see it resolved.
- ❖ Depending upon the circumstances, if necessary, your employer may consider adjourning the meeting to investigate any new facts which may arise.
- ❖ At the end of the meeting, your employer will sum up the main points.
- ❖ If a response or decision cannot be made at the time, your employer will tell you when you might reasonably expect a response (this will usually be within seven days).
- ❖ Your employer will confirm their decision in writing, normally within seven days of having made their decision and informing you of your right to appeal.

Appeal

If you are unhappy with your employer's decision and you wish to appeal, you should let your employer know.

- ❖ You will be invited to an appeal meeting, normally within seven days of your request.
- ❖ You have the right to be accompanied at the appeal meeting by a colleague or trade union representative, or if neither of these is appropriate, then someone who is mutually agreeable, providing their presence would not prejudice the hearing or create a conflict of interest.
- ❖ You must make a reasonable request to your employer in advance of the appeal meeting that you wish to be accompanied.
- ❖ After the meeting your employer will give you a decision, normally within seven days. Your employer's decision is final.

Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure

1. Purpose and scope

This procedure is designed to help and encourage you to achieve and maintain standards of conduct, attendance and job performance. This aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all staff employed.

2. Principles

- a) In circumstances where your employer is unable to conduct investigations, communicate or manage the process themselves, your employer's nominated representative will do so on their behalf.

- b) Informal action will be considered, where appropriate, to resolve problems.
- c) No disciplinary action will be taken against you until the case has been properly assessed or investigated.
- d) For formal action, you will be advised of the nature of the complaint and will be given the opportunity to state your case before any decision is made at a disciplinary meeting.
- e) You will be provided, where appropriate, with written copies of evidence and relevant witness statements in advance of a disciplinary meeting.
- f) At all stages of the procedure you will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative, or work colleague, or if neither of these is appropriate, by someone who is mutually agreeable, providing their presence would not prejudice the hearing or create a conflict of interest.
- g) No employee will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct, when the penalty will be dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.
- h) You will have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action.
- i) The procedure may be implemented at any stage if your alleged misconduct warrants this.

3. Informal action

Instances considered by your employer to be of minor misconduct or unsatisfactory performance can be dealt with informally. If informal action does not bring about a improvement, or the misconduct or unsatisfactory performance is considered too serious to be classed as minor, formal action will be taken.

4. Formal Action

Investigation

Some situation will require your employer to carry out an investigation to establish the facts of the case. Your employer may also need to hold one or more meetings and, if applicable, obtain witness statements. You may also be asked to attend a meeting as part of the investigation process and, if required to do so, you will be given the right to be accompanied by someone who meets the criteria as set out in the Principles.

Depending on the circumstance (for example, involving gross misconduct), you may be suspended from attending work on full pay during the investigation period.

Informing you

If it is decided that there is disciplinary case to answer, you will be notified of this in writing. This notification will contain sufficient information about the alleged misconduct or poor performance and its possible consequences, to enable you to prepare to answer the case at a disciplinary meeting.