

# GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 It is our policy to ensure that all employees have access to a procedure to help deal with any grievances relating to their employment fairly and without unreasonable delay. We aim to investigate any formal grievance you raise, hold a meeting to discuss it with you, inform you in writing of the outcome, and give you a right of appeal if you are not satisfied.
- 1.2 Issues that may cause grievances include:
- (a) terms and conditions of employment;
  - (b) health and safety;
  - (c) work relationships;
  - (d) bullying and harassment;
  - (e) new working practices;
  - (f) working environment;
  - (g) organisational change; and
  - (h) discrimination.
- 1.3 This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. We may also vary any parts of this procedure, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

## 2. WHO IS COVERED BY THE PROCEDURE?

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

## 3. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PUTTING THIS PROCEDURE INTO PRACTICE?

- 3.1 While we ask all managers to take responsibility for making sure this procedure is complied with, its successful operation also depends on you. Please take the time to read and understand it and to go back to your manager with any questions you may have. References to Directors in this procedure mean the most senior people within our organisation.

## 4. USING THIS PROCEDURE

- 4.1 If you have difficulty at any stage of the Grievance Procedure because of a disability or other health condition or because English is not your first language, you should discuss the situation with your manager as soon as possible.

- 4.2 This Grievance Procedure should not be used to complain about dismissal or disciplinary action. If you are dissatisfied with any disciplinary action, you should submit an appeal under the appropriate procedure. We have a separate Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy that may be useful if you have been the victim of bullying or harassment or wish to report an incident of bullying or harassment involving other people.
- 4.3 We operate a separate Whistleblowing Policy to enable employees to report illegal activities, wrongdoing or malpractice. However, where you are directly affected by the matter in question, or where you feel you have been victimised for an act of whistleblowing, you may raise the matter under this Grievance Procedure.
- 4.4 Written grievances will be placed in your employee records along with a record of any decisions taken and any notes or other documents compiled during the grievance process.

## **5. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 5.1 Our aim is to deal with grievances sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with an investigation or grievance.
- 5.2 You, and anyone accompanying you (including witnesses), must not make electronic recordings of any meetings conducted under this procedure, without the express prior permission of all parties present at the time. If, after agreement, electronic recordings are made then copies should be supplied to all present at the meeting.

## **6. RAISING GRIEVANCES INFORMALLY**

- 6.1 Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with your manager. If you feel unable to speak to your manager, for example, because the complaint concerns them, then you should speak informally to a more senior manager. If this does not resolve the issue, you should follow the formal procedure below.

## **7. FORMAL WRITTEN GRIEVANCES**

- 7.1 If your grievance cannot be resolved informally you should put it in writing and submit it to your manager, indicating that it is a formal grievance. If the grievance concerns your manager, you may submit it to a more senior manager instead.
- 7.2 The written grievance should contain a brief description of the nature of your complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved. In some situations we may need to ask you to provide further information.

## **8. INVESTIGATIONS**

- 8.1 In some cases it may be necessary for us to carry out an investigation into your grievance. The amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from you and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. The investigation may be carried out by your manager or someone else appointed by us.

- 8.2 You must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing us of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to us and attending interviews, as part of our investigation.
- 8.3 We may initiate an investigation before holding a grievance meeting where we consider this appropriate. In other cases we may hold a grievance meeting before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. In those cases we will hold a further grievance meeting with you after our investigation and before we reach a decision.

## **9. RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED**

- 9.1 You may bring a companion to any grievance meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. The companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague. You must tell the person holding the grievance meeting who your chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting.
- 9.2 At the meeting, your companion may make representations to us and ask questions but should not answer questions on your behalf. You may talk privately with them at any time during the meeting.
- 9.3 A companion is allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay but no-one is obliged to act as a companion if they do not wish to do so.
- 9.4 If your companion is unavailable at the time a meeting is scheduled and will not be available for more than five working days afterwards, we may ask you to choose someone else.
- 9.5 We may, at our discretion, allow you to bring a companion who is not a colleague or union representative (for example, a member of your family) if this will help overcome a disability or other health condition, or if you have difficulty understanding English.

## **10. GRIEVANCE MEETINGS**

- 10.1 We will arrange a grievance meeting, normally within one week of receiving your written grievance.
- 10.2 You and your companion (if any) should make every effort to attend grievance meetings. If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified, you should inform us immediately and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.
- 10.3 The purpose of a grievance meeting is to enable you to explain your grievance and how you think it should be resolved, and to assist us to reach a decision based on the available evidence and the representations you have made.
- 10.4 After an initial grievance meeting, we may carry out further investigations and hold further grievance meetings as we consider appropriate. Such meetings will be arranged without unreasonable delay.
- 10.5 We will write to you, usually within one week of the final grievance meeting, to inform you of the outcome of your grievance and any further action that we intend to take to resolve the grievance. We will also remind you of your right of appeal. Where appropriate we may hold a meeting to give you this information in person.

## **11. APPEALS**

- 11.1 If the grievance has not been resolved to your satisfaction you may appeal in writing to the person named in the outcome letter, stating your full grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.
- 11.2 We will hold an appeal meeting, normally within one week of receiving your written appeal.
- 11.3 Where possible, the appeal meeting will be conducted impartially by a more senior manager who has not been previously involved in the case, however in a small organisation such as ours this will not always be possible. In any event the appeal will be conducted as impartially as possible. Another member of staff may also be present to take notes. You may bring a companion with you to the appeal meeting (see paragraph 9).
- 11.4 We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal meeting. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further right to appeal.