

# Grievance policy

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From time to time you may have a query or grievance relating to your employment. Our policy is intended to encourage communication between you and your manager to ensure that questions can be answered, and problems arising can, where possible, be fairly and quickly resolved.

The policy complies with the Acas Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. It applies to all employees of [COMPANY NAME] regardless of length of service. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. We may amend it at any time, and we may depart from it depending on the circumstances of any case.

## Examples of issues that may give rise to a grievance

The following is a list of the types of issues that may give rise to a grievance, although this list is not exhaustive, and other issues may amount to a grievance:

- Terms and conditions of employment;
- Health and safety;
- Relationships at work;
- Working practices;
- Organisational change;
- Discrimination;
- Bullying and harassment;
- Working environment.

This grievance procedure should not be used to complain about dismissal or disciplinary action, or if your performance is being managed through the formal capability procedure. In this event you should submit an appeal under the appropriate procedure. If you feel you have either witnessed or been the victim of bullying or harassment, please refer to our Bullying and Harassment policy for further guidance and information.

## Informal resolution

If you have a grievance arising from your employment it is often best to try to resolve the matter informally by discussing it with your immediate manager. If this is not appropriate, you should speak to a more senior manager or the HR Manager.

If this does not resolve the issue, you should follow the formal procedure detailed below.

## Formal written grievance

If your grievance can not be resolved informally you should set out it out in writing. You should address this letter to your manager, unless your grievance is about your manager, in which case it should be submitted to either the HR Manager or your manager's manager. This document should include:

- An indication that it is a formal grievance;
- A brief description of the nature of your complaint;
- Any relevant facts, dates and names of individuals involved.

On receiving this notice, the Company will acknowledge receipt and give you a realistic timeframe within which a response will be forthcoming.

In some situations we may ask you to provide us with formal information before we can progress the matter.

Written grievances will be placed on your personnel file, along with a record of any decisions taken and any notes or other documentation compiled during the grievance process. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection policy.

## Investigation

It may be necessary for us to carry out an investigation into your grievance. This may involve interviewing and taking statements from you and any witnesses, and/or reviewing any relevant documentation.

You must cooperate fully and promptly in any investigation. We may ask you for names of witnesses for example, or to disclose any documentation to us.

When investigating a matter, the Company will bear in mind any concerns to raise relating to confidentiality, but you should be aware that a full investigation may not be possible without certain disclosures being made, and that, without a full investigation, it may not be possible or appropriate for the Company to reach the decision on your grievance that you wish for.

If any evidence is gathered in the course of the investigation, you will be given a copy in advance of the hearing. However, in exceptional circumstances such evidence given by individuals may have to remain anonymous and/or confidential – in this eventuality you will be given an appropriate summary of the evidence.

We may initiate an investigation before holding a grievance meeting, but on other occasions 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.

## Grievance meeting

We will arrange a grievance meeting, normally within one week of receiving your written grievance or of completing any necessary preliminary investigation.

You will be notified of the date, time and location of the meeting (which should be reasonable for you and the Company). You should make every effort to attend grievance meetings.

If you are unable to attend a meeting at the specified time please let us know immediately, and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

You may bring a companion (either trade union representative or a work colleague) to any grievance meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. Please tell us who your chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting. If your chosen 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. If the Company does not consider your choice of companion to be a reasonable one, we may require you to choose an alternative. Your companion will be allowed reasonable paid time off to act as your companion. He/she is under no obligation to agree to be your companion.

If you have any difficulty with the grievance meeting, or at any other stage of the procedure, because of a disability or because English is not your first language, please let us know so that we can try to help you. We may for example invite you to bring a friend or a member of your family to the meeting, if this may help.

During the meeting your grievance will be discussed, and both parties will have an opportunity to explain their views. A third party may also be present to keep a note of proceedings. You should take the opportunity to explain your grievance, and how you believe it should be resolved. Any evidence will be taken into full consideration. If you choose to be accompanied, your companion may address the meeting and you will be allowed to confer privately with each other, but he/she will not be allowed to answer questions on your behalf.

If in the course of the meeting we feel that further investigation is merited, we will consider adjourning the meeting, and then reconvening it at a later date, once the necessary investigations have been carried out.

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We will write to you, usually within one week of the final grievance meeting, to inform you of the outcome and of any further action that we intend to take to resolve the grievance, if applicable. We will also set out your right of appeal.

## Appeal

If you wish, you may appeal against the Company's decision. You should direct your appeal to the [COMPANY NAME] within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.

When appealing you should set out in writing which aspects of the decision you are challenging and why.

We will hold an appeal meeting, usually within one week of receiving your written appeal, unless you have raised further matters or evidence which require investigation. This will be dealt with impartially, and the appeal meeting will be held, if possible, by a more senior manager who has not previously been involved in the case (although they may ask anyone previously involved to be present). You have the right to be accompanied by a companion, as set out above.

We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing, unless any subsequent investigation has been necessary. Where appropriate we may hold a meeting to give you this information in person. This is the final stage of the grievance procedure, and there is no further right of appeal.

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