**Procedure**

We consider it important to provide employees with a procedure for addressing any problems or concerns they may have at work. The purpose of this procedure is to set out how employees can raise a grievance and how we will investigate and deal with grievances.

We reserve the right to engage external third-party assistance at any stage of the grievance process.

This procedure applies to employees only. It does not constitute contractual terms and conditions. We reserve the right to amend any provision of this procedure after appropriate consultation.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the procedure for disabled employees. Any employee who experiences difficulty with the procedure for any reason should seek assistance.

**Raising grievances informally**

Employees are encouraged to approach their line manager in the first instance to discuss issues and attempt to informally resolve them. If an employee feels unable to speak to their line manager because the complaint concerns them, then they should speak to a senior manager.

If this does not resolve the issue, the employee should follow the formal grievance procedure below.

**Formal procedure**

**Stage one: written grievance**

The employee should raise the grievance in writing with their line manager. This should explain the nature of the complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved so that it can be investigated.

If the employee’s grievance relates to concerns regarding their line manager or they do not feel comfortable raising it with their line manager, the employee may submit it to a senior manager.

This Grievance Procedure should not be used to complain about dismissal or disciplinary action. If the employee is dissatisfied with any disciplinary action, they should submit an appeal under the appropriate procedure.

There is a separate Whistleblowing Policy to enable employees to report illegal activities, wrongdoing, or malpractice. However, where an employee is directly affected by the matter in question, or where they feel they have been victimised for an act of whistleblowing, they may raise the matter under this Grievance Procedure.

It may be necessary to carry out an investigation into the 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 the employee and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents.

**Stage two: meeting**

A meeting will be arranged between the line manager and the employee, normally within one week of receiving a written grievance. A note taker may also be present.

The employee may be accompanied by a fellow colleague or trade union representative. The employee must tell the person holding the grievance meeting who their chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting. If the employee or their companion cannot attend at the time specified, the employee should inform the line manager as soon as possible and they will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

The purpose of the grievance meeting is to enable the employee to explain their grievance and how they think it should be resolved, and to assist the line manager to reach a decision based on the available evidence and representations they have made.

After an initial grievance meeting, the line manager may carry out further investigations and hold further grievance meetings as they consider appropriate.

 The line manager will write to the employee, usually within one week of the last grievance meeting to confirm their decision and notify the employee of any further action that they intend to take to resolve the grievance. They will also advise the employee of their right of appeal.

Minutes of the meeting will be taken, and copies will be made available to the employee. A copy of the minutes will be stored confidentially on file.

**Stage three: appeals**

If the grievance has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the employee, they may appeal in writing to a more senior manager or Director setting out the reasons for their dissatisfaction within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to them.

An appeal hearing will be held normally within two weeks of receiving the appeal. This will be dealt with impartially by a more senior manager or Director who has not been involved in the case. The employee will have a right to bring a companion.

The decision will be confirmed in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. There is no further right of appeal.

**Extending timescales under the procedure**

The timescales outlined in this procedure will be adhered to whenever this is reasonably practicable. There may be extenuating circumstances that are outside of either parties’ control, for example, where a key witness is unavailable, or the grievance requires extensive investigation.

**Mediation**

We reserve the right to seek assistance from external mediators at any stage in the grievance procedure. Where both parties agree to undertake mediation, the grievance process will be suspended whilst this is ongoing.

**Further Guidance**

**www.acas.org.uk/grievance-procedure-step-by-step**