



EMPLOYMENT ZONE Policy Statement – Individual Grievance Procedures

1. Introduction

We give employees the opportunity to tell us if they have concerns or complaints about their employment so that we can then work with them to resolve these.

We expect to resolve most routine concerns and complaints as quickly and informally as possible through discussions between employees and managers. Where this isn't possible, we have formal grievance procedures which employees can use. Our procedures:

- Provide employees who have concerns or complaints at work with a process for raising and having their concerns dealt with fairly.
- Allow us to deal with those concerns or complaints without unnecessary delays.

2. Applying the procedures

These procedures make sure that we:

- Treat our employees fairly and equally.
- Train employees who need to manage grievances how to do it.
- Try to resolve issues as informally as possible.
- Deal with issues quickly.
- Follow clear stages and timescales.
- Investigate and consider all grievances thoroughly.
- Give employees the outcome of their grievance hearing in writing.
- Keep details of the grievance and any investigation confidential.

They also:

- Show everyone's roles and responsibilities in an easy to understand way.
- Apply to all employees except teachers who have separate procedures.
- Meet our requirements with employment law.
- Ensure openness and transparency.

They confirm to employees that:

- They must submit all formal grievances in writing.
- They have the right to be represented at hearings by a trade union representative/official or an employee of their choice.
- Their representative can help them to complete the paperwork.

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3. Why would employees raise a grievance

Grievances can include issues about:

- Pay, terms and conditions of employment.
- Health and safety.
- New working practices.
- Working environment.
- Organisational change.
- Equal opportunities (including discrimination issues).

They may also include other issues. We have separate procedures for dealing with collective grievances and for complaints relating to:

- Bullying and harassment;
- Discipline and appeals procedure; and
- Whistle blowing policy.

4. Right to representation

Employees have the right, at any stage of the procedure, to be represented by a trade union representative/official or an employee of their choice. Sometimes it may not be appropriate for an employee to be represented by a specific employee for example if by attending the employee would prejudice the hearing.

If their representative is a council employee, that person will be given adequate time off, with pay.

5. Informal discussions (not part of the formal procedure)

If an employee wants to raise a grievance about their employment they should, if it's possible discuss the issue informally with their line manager. The employee and their line manager should try to find a solution that both of them can agree to. This should avoid the need to use the formal procedures.

If a suitable solution isn't found the employee can choose to progress to the formal procedure.

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6. Formal procedure

Stage one:

The employee should complete the stage one grievance request form and return it to their line manager. They will then:

- Arrange a meeting to discuss the issues. This is normally within three working days.
- Advise the employee of their right of representation at the meeting.
- Adjourn the meeting for any investigation (if appropriate).
- Advise the employee of the outcome within three working days of completing the investigation. If there's a need for more than one meeting, these meetings should where possible take place over a period of no more than ten working days.
- Send Service HR a copy of the grievance request form for information and monitoring purposes.

Stage two:

If the employee feels that the issues aren't resolved to their satisfaction at stage one they can request a stage two hearing. To do this they should complete the stage two grievance request form. They need to do this within seven working days of receiving written confirmation of the outcome of the stage one hearing. Their Head of Service will

then:

- Arrange a meeting normally within ten working days.
- Adjourn the meeting for any investigation (if appropriate).
- Provide them with an outcome within three working days of completing the investigation. If there's a need for more than one meeting these meetings should take place if possible over a period of no more than ten working days.

Service HR will attend stage two meeting(s) to provide advice.

Stage three:

If the employee remains dissatisfied with the outcome at stage two they can request a stage three hearing. To do this they should complete the stage three grievance request form. They need to do this within ten working days of receiving written confirmation of the outcome of the stage two hearing. The Chief Executive will arrange a stage three hearing heard by the Personnel Appeals Committee. They will:

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- Meet normally within 15 working days of receipt of the stage three request.
- Receive advice from a corporate HR officer.
- Act on behalf of the council and reach a decision on the grievance.
- Notify the employee of the outcome in writing within three working days of the hearing.

The decision of this committee completes the grievance procedure.

7. Heads of service or executive directors

If a head of service or executive director raises a grievance a two stage process will apply. The Chief Executive will hear stage one and the Personnel Appeals Committee will hear stage two.

8. Status quo

If differences aren't resolved immediately the practice, agreement, or working conditions in place before the employee raised the grievance should continue. These will continue until a settlement is reached or the procedure completed.

The status quo clause places obligations on both the employee and management to take no action while we consider the issues.

9. Timescales

We understand that it's better to deal with grievances as quickly as possible. We will follow the timescales within this procedure unless exceptional circumstances stop this from happening.

10. Keeping records

We will keep and share written records during the grievance process. These include:

- nature of the grievance raised;
- copy of the written grievance;
- the response given;
- action taken along with reasons for it; and
- whether the grievance progressed through the procedure.



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11. When a grievance is raised during a disciplinary case

During the disciplinary process, an employee may raise a grievance that relates to the case.

If this happens, management will consider suspending the disciplinary procedures for a short period to allow the grievance hearing to proceed. Depending on the nature of the grievance, we will consider bringing in another manager to deal with the disciplinary process.

12. Modified procedure for ex-employees

If possible, employees should raise a grievance before they leave our employment. If an employee has left our employment before the grievance procedure starts or is finished a two stage modified procedure will apply.

Step 1: Statement of Grievance.

The employee should, if they haven't already, put in writing to their Head of Service with a copy to Corporate HR details of:

- i) the grievance; and
- ii) the basis for it

They should do this as soon as possible after leaving employment.

Step 2: Response

The Head of Service will provide the former employee with a response in writing with a copy to Corporate HR.

13. Monitoring

We collate information on grievances on a quarterly basis. This information includes how many grievances we have received.

On an annual basis we send this information to the appropriate committee.



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14. Review

We will review this policy in twelve months from the date of implementation. This review will look at the fairness and effectiveness of the policy. We will consult with trade unions.

The term 'working days' used within this procedure covers the period Monday to Friday.

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