

GRIEVANCE POLICY

1. Grievance Procedure

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. (James 1:19)

- 1.1. From time to time, issues may arise that you are concerned about.
- 1.2. This policy is a mechanism to help us and our employees achieve and maintain good working relationships.
- 1.3. We encourage all who work here to make every effort to resolve issues without recourse to the formal grievance procedure.
- 1.4. The following formal grievance procedure only applies to the employee/employer relationship.
- 1.5. A similar process may be followed for other circumstances, in preference to mediation or any other method of resolving the issue.
- 1.6. Employees who have a concern that cannot be informally resolved, may raise a formal grievance with their Line Manager (or another appropriate person if the grievance concerns the Line Manager).
- 1.7. Normally any issue will be fully investigated before a conclusion is reached.

Formal procedure

- 1.8. Save where the grievance is straightforward to resolve, the first step will normally be a meeting with you to establish facts and gather evidence.
- 1.9. Normally that meeting will be arranged within 4 weeks of receipt of the grievance.
- 1.10. Following that there may be a period of further investigation. That further investigation, leading to a final decision, should take no longer than 4 weeks. You should be kept informed of when the process is expected to end, particularly if it will be longer than 4 weeks.
- 1.11. If you have any concern about the fairness of the process being followed,

you should raise this as soon as possible with your Line Manager. Where possible, those concerns will be considered and addressed as part of the process, in order to avoid unnecessarily protracting it.

- 1.12. Where appropriate, we will take reasonable steps to help you re-integrate into the workplace following any involvement in this process. This could include a briefing session with you, your Line Manager and a nominated colleague.

Arranging a Hearing

- 1.13. You will be informed in good time in advance of the hearing of:

- The issue(s) to be addressed (i.e. what you have grieved about)
- Who will be present at the hearing and making the decision (where possible, this will be someone who is not implicated in the grievance)
- Your right to be accompanied
- Any relevant physical evidence (e.g. documents and statements) and provided with copies.

- 1.14. The more time it will take you to prepare for the hearing, the more notice you will be given. We would not normally expect notice to be less than 48 hours or more than one week.

- 1.15. Employees have a statutory right to be accompanied to this formal hearing by a colleague or a trade union officer/official (subject to certain limitations). If you need additional time to exercise this right, because you or the person accompanying you cannot attend, you may request a postponement of up to 5 working days, provided at the same time you let us have an alternative hearing date within 5 working days of the original hearing date.

- 1.16. Being unfit for work is not the same as being unfit to participate in this process and you may still be reasonably required to participate in order to avoid protracting the process. Where it is difficult to travel, it may be possible to help you by arranging a meeting at another venue or conducting it over the telephone.

- 1.17. If you unreasonably fail to attend the hearing, it may be held in your absence.

- 1.18. Where we want someone to attend the hearing to give evidence, it is our responsibility to arrange this and to let you know in good time before the hearing. Where you want someone to attend the hearing to give evidence, it will normally be your responsibility to arrange this and you must let us know in good time before the hearing.

- 1.19. Where there are additional documents you think may help, you need to let us know and, where possible, provide copies as soon as possible before the hearing.

Procedure at a Hearing

- 1.20. Normally, after clarifying any issues at the outset, you will set out your case.

Questions can then be asked. Where there are witnesses to be questioned, it may be appropriate for questions to be put through the person chairing the meeting.

- 1.21. The hearing may be adjourned briefly for breaks, or for a longer period should the person chairing the meeting consider that additional investigation is appropriate before resuming.
- 1.22. At the end of the hearing the person chairing it will normally summarise their understanding of your grievance, check whether there is anything further you wish to say, and advise when a decision can be expected (which we normally expect to be within two weeks, or four weeks if further investigation is required).
- 1.23. Where you are accompanied by someone, they may confer with you, ask questions on your behalf and make representations on your behalf. They may not answer questions asked of you or prevent others from speaking.

Outcome

- 1.24. The outcome of the grievance process will be confirmed in writing together with how to appeal a decision.
- 1.25. The outcome for each matter addressed in a grievance meeting will normally fall into one of the following categories:
 - The concern is not upheld
 - The concern is upheld but no further action is required
 - The concern is upheld and further action is required to address the issue.

Appeal

- 1.26. Where a grievance is not upheld, there is the right of appeal. Details of how to appeal will be set out in any decision letter. Normally any appeal must be in writing, received within 5 working days of the original decision and must set out the grounds of appeal. Appeals submitted after then may still be considered where there is a reasonable explanation for the failure to appeal in time.
- 1.27. Where you want to present additional evidence as part of an appeal, you must inform the person hearing the appeal as soon as possible before the hearing and provide details.
- 1.28. We will normally try to arrange an appeal hearing within 4 weeks of receiving the appeal.
- 1.29. You will be given as much advance notice of the appeal hearing as practicable.
- 1.30. The right to be accompanied to a grievance hearing (set out above) also applies to appeal hearings.
- 1.31. The appeal will normally be a review of the original decision, i.e. to determine

whether or not the original decision was reasonable, but we may decide that it is more appropriate to have a re-hearing.

- 1.32. Where practicable, the appeal will normally be considered by someone in the organisation who was not previously involved in the decision.
- 1.33. Any appeal is final. There is no further right of appeal.