

# Grievance policy & procedure

Version 1 | December 2022

## About this policy

A grievance is a concern or complaint that a colleague may have about their work or working environment.

This policy and procedure sets out the steps we will follow if someone raises a formal grievance. We will deal with all grievances fairly and as quickly as is reasonably possible.

It may be useful to refer to our [code of conduct](#) when reading this policy.

If you want to raise a grievance and your complaint is about bullying or harassment, read our [harassment and bullying policy](#).

This policy is not part of the employment contract and may be amended at any time in line with legislation or to reflect best practice.

### Who this policy applies to

This policy and procedure applies to all permanent and fixed-term colleagues of the organisation. It also applies to anyone who has left the organisation and is within three months of their leave date.

It does not cover consultants, agency staff or volunteers.

If someone from an agency wants to raise a complaint, they must do this directly with their employer.

## Resolving issues informally

Many grievances can be resolved by having an open and honest discussion.

Anyone with a concern or complaint about their work or working environment is encouraged to have a conversation with their line manager in the first instance. If preferred, they can discuss their concerns with their line manager's manager or another manager.

If they do not want to raise their concern(s) with a manager, or are not satisfied with the action taken after raising a concern, they can raise a formal grievance.

## Formal grievance procedure

The following process applies if a colleague decides to raise a formal grievance.

### The grievance letter

The grievance should be put in writing to start the formal procedure. The letter should state the nature of the complaint(s), any action already taken and what resolution is being sought. It should be sent to one of the following (who will be the grievance manager), copying in the [HR Shared Services](#) mailbox:

- if the complaint is about an aspect of work or the working environment, send it to your line manager
- if the complaint is about a colleague or group of colleagues, send it to the line manager of the colleague(s) the complaint is about
- if the complaint is about your line manager, send it to your line manager's manager
- if the complaint is about your line manager's manager, send to their manager (refer to the org chart in MyHR if necessary).

### Investigation and gathering evidence

If the grievance manager decides an investigation needs to take place, they should speak to the People & Talent team to identify an independent manager to carry this out.

The investigating manager will carry out their investigation promptly and thoroughly. They will interview all relevant parties, including the person who raised the grievance, and take notes.

An investigation is not a grievance meeting. It has three purposes:

- to gather all available evidence, which may include identifying any witnesses
- to determine whether there is a grievance to answer
- to help management determine the next steps.

The colleague may bring a companion to the investigatory meeting (a work colleague or recognised trade union representative).

Witnesses should be told that any information they provide may be shared with the person raising the grievance. They should be given a copy of the meeting notes to confirm they are accurate or to amend if required.

The investigating manager may also need to examine any relevant written documentation.

After reviewing the evidence, the investigating manager must make a recommendation to the grievance manager on next steps:

- either the evidence gathered has shown that the matter should be able to be resolved informally, or
- the matter should proceed to a grievance meeting.

### The grievance meeting

If needed, a formal meeting will be arranged, usually within ten working days of the grievance letter being submitted. A meeting invite will be sent in writing, with a minimum of five days' notice, where possible.

The grievance manager will chair the meeting. A note taker will be present, and a member of the People & Talent team may attend to support. The person who raised the grievance has the right to bring a companion with them (a work colleague or recognised trade union representative).

If there is any evidence to support the complaint, or any named witnesses, the person who raised the grievance should let the grievance manager know before the meeting.

At the meeting, the nature of the grievance and the resolution being sought will be discussed. The grievance manager will ask questions to make sure they understand the complaint(s), and they may adjourn the meeting for a short time to seek advice from the People & Talent team.

### Role of the companion

During the grievance meeting, the companion:

- can put forward the case, respond on the colleague's behalf to any view expressed during the meeting and sum up the case at the end of the meeting
- can confer with the person who raised the grievance and take notes
- cannot answer questions that are not directed to them

- cannot address the meeting if the person who raised the grievance does not want them to.

### Grievance meeting outcome

The grievance manager will review the information and evidence. The outcome will be based on the findings from the grievance meeting and investigation (where applicable).

There are three possible outcomes:

- grievance is upheld in full
- grievance is partly upheld
- grievance is dismissed.

The decision will be confirmed in writing, normally within five working days of the meeting. If this is not possible, the manager will keep in touch until the outcome is ready.

The outcome letter will state the decision, the reason(s) for the decision and any further actions that may need to be taken as a result of the grievance.

### Appeals

Not everyone will be happy with the outcome or how their grievance has been dealt with. They have the right to appeal on the following grounds:

- they believe that the outcome is wrong
- they believe that the process was wrong or unfair at any stage
- there is new evidence to consider.

The appeal should be put in writing, clearly setting out the grounds of appeal. It should be sent to the [HR Shared Services](#) mailbox within five working days of receiving the outcome letter.

The person who appealed will be invited, in writing, to attend an appeal meeting with a minimum of five days' notice where possible. They have the right to bring a companion with them (a work colleague or recognised trade union representative).

A more senior manager than the grievance manager will chair the meeting. A note taker will keep a record of the meeting and a People & Talent team representative will also attend.

Any additional evidence to support the appeal should be given to the appeal manager before the meeting.

The appeal manager will hear the appeal, ask for another investigation to be carried out if necessary and determine whether an alternative outcome is appropriate.

The outcome will be confirmed in writing within five working days of the meeting. If this is not possible, the appeal manager will keep the colleague informed and let them know the outcome as soon as possible.

The outcome letter will state the decision, the reason(s) for the decision and any further actions that need to be taken as a result of the appeal.

The decision will be final and there is no further right of appeal.

## Policy information

**Author:** Melanie Gilbert

**Related policies and guidance:**

- [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#)
- [Harassment & Bullying Policy](#)
- [Freedom To Speak Up \(Whistleblowing\) Policy](#)
- [Dignity at Work Network](#)
- [ED&I Hub](#)
- [Wellbeing Hub](#)

## Version control

Date	Version	Content/changes made	Owner of changes	Agreed by
Dec '22	1		People & Talent	