

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Policy

The primary purpose of this grievance procedure is to enable staff to air any concerns that they may have about practices, policies or treatment from other individuals at work or from the Company, and to produce a speedy resolution where genuine problems exist. It is designed to help all employees to take the appropriate action, when they are experiencing difficulties, in an atmosphere of trust and collaboration.

Although it may not be possible to solve all problems to everyone's complete satisfaction, this policy forms an undertaking by the Company that it will deal objectively and constructively with all employee grievances, and that anyone who decides to use the procedure may do so with the confidence that their problem will be dealt with fairly.

This grievance procedure is not a substitute for good day-to-day communication in the Company where we encourage employees to discuss and resolve daily working issues in a supportive atmosphere. Many problems can be solved on an informal footing very satisfactorily if all employees are prepared to keep the channels of communication between themselves open and working well. This procedure is designed to deal with those issues that need to be approached on a more formal basis so that every route to a satisfactory solution can be explored and so that any decisions reached are binding and long lasting.

This grievance procedure is **entirely non-contractual** and does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time. The Company may also vary this grievance procedure as appropriate in any case.

Procedure

If you cannot settle your grievance informally, you should raise it formally. This procedure has been drawn up to establish the appropriate steps to be followed when pursuing and dealing with a formal grievance.

Stage 1

In the event of your having a formal grievance relating to your employment you should, in the first instance, put your grievance in writing and address it to your line manager, making clear that you wish to raise a formal grievance under the terms of this procedure. Where your grievance is against your line manager, your complaint should be addressed to an alternative manager or to the human resources department. This grievance procedure will not be invoked unless you raise your grievance in accordance with these requirements.

A manager (who may not be the manager to whom your grievance was addressed) will then invite you to attend a grievance meeting to discuss your grievance and you have the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union official or representative or a fellow employee of your choice. The meeting will also be attended by someone whose role is to take an attendance note of the meeting. Every effort will be made to convene the grievance meeting at a time which is convenient for you and your companion to attend. If this means that the meeting cannot be held within a reasonable period (usually within five working days of the original date set), we ask that you make arrangements with another companion who is available to attend. Any employee who is chosen to accompany another to a grievance meeting is entitled to take paid time off for this purpose.

Your chosen companion will be permitted both to address the meeting and to confer with you during the

meeting, but they will not be permitted to answer questions on your behalf. They are also not entitled to address the meeting against your wishes or to act in a way that prevents anyone from contributing to the meeting. You must inform the chair of the meeting of the identity of your chosen companion in good time in advance of the meeting. The Company may, at its absolute discretion, allow you to bring a companion who is not a trade union official or representative or a fellow employee where this will help you overcome a particular difficulty caused by a disability or where you have difficulty understanding English. Individuals are not obliged to act as companions if they do not wish to do so.

You must make every effort to attend the grievance meeting. If you or your companion cannot attend, you must inform the chair of the meeting immediately so that an alternative date and time can be scheduled. If you fail to attend the meeting without good reason, or are persistently unable to do so, this could result in the meeting being held in your absence and then the Company may have to take a decision on your grievance based on the available evidence (including any written representations that you may have made).

At the meeting, you will be permitted to explain your grievance and how you think it should be resolved.

Although the Company will endeavour to hold a face-to-face grievance meeting with you in ordinary circumstances, we reserve the right at our absolute discretion to hold the meeting (and any appeal meeting) remotely in exceptional circumstances, for example, in the case of a pandemic virus.

Please note that it is prohibited for you to record (whether covertly or otherwise) the proceedings at the grievance meeting, and at any appeal meeting, without the express permission of the Company. If the Company discovers that you have done this covertly, you could be subject to disciplinary action. Depending on the circumstances, it may amount to gross misconduct and could result in your summary dismissal.

Following the meeting, the Company will endeavour to respond to your grievance as soon as possible and, in any case, within five working days of the grievance meeting. If it is not possible to respond within this time period, you will be given an explanation for the delay and be told when a response can be expected. You will be informed in writing of the Company's decision on the grievance and notified of your right to appeal against that decision if you are not satisfied with it.

Stage 2

In the event that you feel your grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, you may then appeal in writing to a Director of the Company. Appeals must be submitted within five working days starting with the day after the date on which you received the written grievance decision. You should also set out the full grounds for your appeal.

On receipt of your appeal letter, a more senior manager or a Director (who again may not be the person to whom your appeal was addressed), or an independent chairperson appointed by the Company, shall then make arrangements to hear your grievance at an appeal meeting and at this meeting you may again, if you wish, be accompanied by a trade union official or representative or a fellow employee of your choice. The appeal meeting will also be attended by someone whose role is to take an attendance note of the meeting, and the manager who conducted the grievance meeting may additionally be present.

You must make every effort to attend the grievance appeal meeting.

Following the meeting, the senior manager or Director or independent chairperson will endeavour to respond to your grievance as soon as possible and, in any case, within five working days of the appeal meeting. If it is not possible to respond within this time period, you will be given an explanation for the delay and be told when a response can be expected. You will be informed in writing of the Company's decision on your grievance appeal.

This is the final stage of the grievance procedure and the Company's decision shall be final.

Disciplinary issues

If your complaint relates to your dissatisfaction with a disciplinary, performance management, attendance management or dismissal decision, you should not invoke the grievance procedure but should instead appeal against that decision in accordance with the appeal procedure set out in the disciplinary, capability or attendance procedure (as applicable) with which you will have been provided.

In the event that the Company discovers a grievance previously raised by you is malicious, fabricated or falsified it reserves the right to take disciplinary action against you. Please note that this could result in your dismissal for gross misconduct.