

Grievance meeting overview management guide

Employers should arrange for a formal meeting to be held without unreasonable delay after a grievance is received. Generally the meeting is held within five working days.

In general terms a grievance meeting deals with any grievance raised by an employee who will have the right to be accompanied at any formal meeting by a work place colleague or Trade Union official. In terms of the legal right to be accompanied, a relevant grievance meeting is defined as a meeting where an employer deals with a complaint about any respect of their employment.

In preparation for such a meeting, employers should:

- Arrange a meeting, ideally within five working days, in private where there will be no interruptions
- Consider arranging for someone not involved in the case to take minutes of the meeting and to act as a witness
- Investigate whether similar grievances have been raised before, how they have been resolved and any follow up action that was necessary after those grievances. This is to allow consistency of treatment in dealing with the grievance
- Consider arranging for an interpreter where an employee has difficulty speaking English
- Consider whether reasonable adjustments are necessary for an employee who is disabled.
- Consider whether to offer independent mediation to resolve the grievance

In preparing for the meeting, employers should:

- Always send a letter of invitation in advance of the grievance meeting allowing a minimum of 48 hours notice and advising the employee of their right to be accompanied
- Remember that a grievance hearing is not the same as a disciplinary hearing and that discussion and dialogue may lead to an amicable solution
- Make all the necessary introductions
- Invite the employee to restate their grievance in their own words
- Ask the employee how they would like to see their grievance resolved
- Make allowances for any reasonable expressions of anger if the employee is under stress
- Put care and thought into the recommendation to resolve the grievance
- Consider adjourning the meeting if necessary to investigate any new facts that arise
- Sum up the main points raised by the employee
- Tell the employee when they might reasonably expect to receive a response which is usually within five days
- If an immediate response is not possible always follows the company's grievance procedure
- Always send a letter confirming the outcome of the grievance and allow the right of appeal against a decision made