**Grievance Policy**

We foster a culture in which you can raise any workplace problems, complaints, or concerns in a supportive framework, and we will ensure that all genuine grievances are dealt with quickly and fairly.

Most grievances can be resolved informally. However, if an informal approach does not resolve matters or is not appropriate, you may choose to raise a formal grievance.

This policy outlines the grievance process, the roles of those involved and the support available.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

**Introduction**

This policy applies to employees. It does not apply to contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the organisation.

If you have a grievance related to ongoing disciplinary proceedings against you, you should raise this during the disciplinary procedure (for example, during the disciplinary meeting or appeal stage).

If you raise a grievance during disciplinary proceedings unrelated to those proceedings, the disciplinary proceedings and grievance procedure will normally run independently in parallel.

**Mediation**

Depending on the nature of your grievance, we may suggest mediation as a means of trying to resolve it. This involves the appointment of a third-party mediator, who will discuss your grievance with all those involved and seek to facilitate a resolution. We will use mediation only where you and the other parties involved in your grievance agree to do so.

**Fairness and respect**

We recognise that a grievance procedure can be stressful and upsetting. Everyone involved in the process is entitled to be treated calmly and respectfully.

We will not tolerate abusive or insulting behaviour from anyone participating in a grievance procedure and will treat any such behaviour as misconduct under our disciplinary procedure.

***Remote proceedings***

We will conduct the process remotely, where it is impossible to hold a face-to-face meeting under this procedure. We will ensure that all those participating have access to the necessary technology. Your rights will not be affected, and we will ensure that the procedure remains fair and reasonable.

***Adjustments to proceedings***

If any aspect of the grievance procedure causes you difficulty because of a disability, or if you need assistance because English is not your first language, you should raise this with [name of individual/HR contact], who will make appropriate arrangements for you.

***Recording of meetings***

A written record of all meetings conducted under this procedure will be made, either by the person holding the meeting or by an additional person arranged by us to take notes.

You, or any person acting with you or on your behalf, are generally not permitted to electronically record any meeting we hold under the grievance procedure. This is to encourage openness and full participation. Any breach of this provision may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

In certain limited circumstances, we may permit a meeting to be recorded electronically, for example, where it is a reasonable adjustment for an employee with a disability. Where we allow a meeting to be recorded electronically, we will take responsibility for making the recording.

Where we intend to record meetings held remotely, we will comply with our data protection obligations and obtain prior consent from all attendees.

**Raising an informal grievance**

First, you should raise any grievance that you may have informally with your line manager. If your grievance concerns your line manager, you should discuss this with a more senior manager. The relevant manager will meet with you to allow you to explain your grievance and seek to identify whether the issue can be resolved informally. Many concerns can be resolved informally.

However, while we encourage the informal resolution of complaints, we recognise that this is only sometimes possible or appropriate, for example, if your grievance relates to a serious issue such as discrimination. Therefore, if the informal process does not resolve matters or is inappropriate, you should raise a formal grievance under this procedure.

**Raising a formal grievance**

Where your grievance has not been able to be resolved informally, or if your grievance is serious in nature, you should raise the matter formally in writing.

You must clearly state the nature of your grievance and indicate the outcome you seek. If your grievance is unclear, we may ask you to clarify your complaint before we hold a grievance meeting.

Your complaint should be headed "Formal grievance" and sent to your line manager. If your complaint concerns your line manager, you should send your written grievance to a more senior manager instead.

**Stage 1 - Investigation**

Your grievance will be kept confidential as far as possible. However, before proceeding to a grievance meeting, we may have to carry out an investigation. This will usually be conducted by the same manager who will hear your grievance. The relevant manager will write to you confirming that they are leading the investigation and the timescale for completion.

The level of investigation and time this will take will vary depending on the nature of your grievance.

You will be given a copy of any evidence collated during the investigation in advance of the grievance meeting. However, in some cases, the evidence individuals present may have to remain confidential. Where confidentiality is necessary, we will provide you with an appropriate summary of the evidence.

**Stage 2 - Hearing your grievance**

***The grievance meeting***

After receiving your written complaint, the grievance meeting will be held as soon as possible. However, if this is not possible, you will be informed of the reason for any delay. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official.

Your line manager will conduct the grievance meeting unless it relates to your line manager, in which case a more senior manager will conduct it. Where appropriate, a member of HR may also be present.

The purpose of the meeting is for you to explain the nature of your complaint and what action you feel should be taken to resolve the matter. If more information comes to light, it may be necessary to adjourn the grievance meeting to conduct a further investigation and reconvene the meeting when this has been done.

If you cannot attend the grievance meeting because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform the manager conducting the meeting as soon as possible. If you fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that you have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the grievance meeting may take place in your absence based on your written grievance statement and any other documentation available.

***The outcome***

Following the meeting, the relevant manager will inform you, in writing, of the outcome and any action that will be taken due to your complaint.

**Stage 3 - Appeal**

***Appealing against the outcome***

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your grievance, you may submit a formal appeal.

You should appeal in writing. Your letter should clearly state the grounds of your appeal, i.e. the basis on which you consider that your grievance needs to be satisfactorily resolved.

***Appeal meeting***

We will then arrange an appeal meeting as soon as possible to consider the matter. However, if this is not possible, you will be informed of the reason for any delay. You are entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official.

The appeal meeting will be conducted by a more senior manager than the manager who conducted the initial grievance meeting, who will consider your grounds for appeal and review the conclusion reached in the initial grievance meeting. Where appropriate, a member of HR may also be present.

If you cannot attend the appeal meeting because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform the manager conducting the meeting as soon as possible. If you fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that you have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the meeting may take place in your absence based on your written grievance statement and any other supporting documentation available.

***Outcome of appeal***

After the appeal meeting, the relevant manager will inform you of the outcome in writing. The outcome of the appeal is final.

**Collective grievances**

If you and another employee (or more than two of you) have identical grievances, and you all wish to address them in one grievance process, you can raise a collective grievance. If you are raising a collective grievance, the requirements set out in this policy are varied as follows.

***Raising a formal grievance***

Your written complaint should be headed "Formal collective grievance". Your complaint must be submitted in one document and must identify and signed by each employee raising the collective grievance. You and your colleagues will need to nominate one of you to act on behalf of all of you throughout the grievance process. Your grievance letter must identify whom you have appointed to be the designated representative.

If you and your colleagues are all members of the same trade union, your trade union representative may raise the collective grievance on your behalf.

***Stage 2 - Hearing your grievance***

You will be invited to attend one collective grievance meeting if appointed as the designated representative. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official. Following the meeting, there will be one identical outcome. Your designated representative will be notified of the outcome in writing and any action taken due to your collective complaint.

***Stage 3 - Appeal***

If you or any of your colleagues are not satisfied with the outcome of your collective grievance, you may submit a formal appeal. You should appeal in writing.

Your appeal should be headed "Formal collective appeal". Your appeal must be submitted in one document and identify those withdrawing from the process and signed by those wishing to appeal. Your appeal letter must also identify whom you have appointed as the designated representative throughout the appeal stage.

You will be invited to attend one collective grievance appeal meeting if appointed as the designated representative. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official. Following the appeal meeting, there will be one identical outcome. Your designated representative will be notified of the outcome in writing. The outcome of the collective appeal is final. If only one employee wishes to appeal, the standard grievance procedure will apply to the appeal.

***Dealing with your grievances individually***

We reserve the right to hear your grievances individually if you do not all voluntarily agree to the collective grievance process if your grievances are different or there are exceptional circumstances.

**Data protection**

We process personal data collected during informal complaints and the formal grievance procedure in accordance with our data protection policy. In particular, data collected as part of informal complaints and the grievance procedure is held securely and accessed by and disclosed to individuals only to respond to the complaints or conduct the grievance procedure. You should immediately report any inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data in accordance with our data protection policy, as this constitutes a data protection breach. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which we will deal with under our disciplinary procedure.