



## **Grievance Policy and Procedure**

The company believe that every employee has the right to raise any matter of concern about their employment with the appropriate level of management and for any matter raised to be considered promptly.

The grievance procedure is a formal process and it is hoped that in the majority of cases, any grievances can be dealt with informally to both parties' satisfaction without the need to pursue this procedure. Its purpose is to set out a formal process to enable the employee to air their grievance in a constructive manner in confidence that it is heard fairly, without prejudice and to enable a suitable course of action to be determined, where possible.

This applies to all employees of the company and may be used in conjunction with other company policies and procedures, e.g. Bullying and Harassment.

Wherever possible, time limits for hearings will be honoured, however, there may, in some circumstances, be some delay to the organisation of hearings due to operational restraints. The employee will always be consulted on this.

### **Procedure**

If you have a grievance or difference relating to your employment that cannot be solved by an informal approach, you must put the details of your grievance in writing and give this to your manager. If the grievance is connected with your manager, then this must be presented to a director of the company.

The manager will then invite the employee to attend a formal grievance hearing giving the time and date of the hearing, within 5 working days of receipt of the grievance.

The employee is then entitled to bring with him or her, support counsel which may be a work colleague or a trade union official - who will be required to show their union identification.

A decision may not be given at the hearing as further investigation may be necessary and the employee will be informed of this at the time of the hearing.

Once a decision has been reached, the employee will be informed either verbally or in writing. If the decision is given verbally, it will also be confirmed to the employee in writing. There is the right to appeal against the decision if the employee feels they have not had a fair hearing, there is new evidence or they are not satisfied with the decision.

### **Appeal**

All appeals will be heard by a director of the company. If the employee who has raised a grievance and has not been satisfied with the decision wishes to appeal, he or she should write to a Director (who must be a different person who made the original decision) within 5 working days of receiving the decision letter from the grievance hearing.

If the employee does not wish to appeal, he or she must write to confirm this to the Director within the same time period. The company will then invite the employee to attend an appeal hearing within 5 working days of receipt of the appeal letter from the employee.

The employee is entitled to bring with them support counsel, as before, and any decision made at or following this meeting will be regarded as final with no further right of appeal.

The employee should make every effort to attend both the grievance hearing and appeal hearing, if appropriate. If a date is inconvenient to an employee, they may request a change once only. Whilst this is not a guaranteed right, the company will make every effort to accommodate this request within reasonable business practice. All meetings will be held during normal working hours and if the employee is still unable to attend, the hearing will be held in their absence based on the information provided.

Wherever possible, a record will be kept of all meetings and issued to both parties in attendance.

Where a director is implicated, the grievance will be heard by another director of the Group. Where there is an appeal relating to this, wherever possible, the appeal may be heard by another director or, if appropriate, by an independent specialist/ consultant in order to satisfy the right of appeal.

### **Support Counsel**

The support counsel may be a work colleague, a trade union representative or full time official. A trade union representative who is not an employed official must have been certified by their union as being competent to accompany a worker.

The support counsel is allowed to address the hearing to put and sum up the employee's case, respond on behalf of the employee to any views expressed at the meeting and confer with the employee during the hearing. The support counsel does not, however, have the right to answer questions on the employee's behalf, address the hearing if the employee does not wish it or prevent the employer from explaining their case.

Informal meetings, discussions, investigations or counselling do not bring the right to be accompanied by support counsel. Only when there is a formal disciplinary or grievance hearing is the right to be accompanied applied.