

Internal and External Grievance Procedures

1. Internal and External Grievance Procedures

1.1. PAL Policy

As an employer, we know that sometimes problems and tensions can arise between people at work and that, if such issues are not dealt with and resolved quickly, they may well get worse rather than better. If staff are unhappy about the treatment that they have received or about any aspect of their work, they should discuss this with their line manager in the first instant, who will attempt to resolve the situation on an informal basis. If staff are unable to approach their line manager directly, staff should approach a member to the HR department, who will discuss ways of dealing with the matter with them.

Where attempts to resolve the matter informally do not work, it may be appropriate for staff to raise a formal grievance under this procedure.

The Grievance Procedure is open to all members of staff at any time during their employment with us. The purpose of the procedure is first to allow an employee freely to express a complaint or matter of concern and then, where appropriate, to try and resolve the issues raised by means of a discussion and negotiation or, if necessary, counseling or training.

If an employee is concerned about matters such as fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by employees or officers of the Company, then these concerns should be raised using the "Whistle blowing" policy. The Whistle blowing policy sets out the way in which individuals may raise any such concerns that they have and how those concerns will be dealt with.]

The procedure is not intended to prevent an issue being resolved informally without a written record, but if an employee should wish to have a grievance formally investigated and recorded, he/she may so request. Therefore, whilst the following explanation of the various levels of the Grievance Procedure should be seen as a route to be followed in most cases, it is not essential that all levels are used on every occasion.

It may not be possible to solve all problems to everyone's complete satisfaction, however 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 procedure exists to give employees a means of raising a grievance they may have with the minimum possible delay. There are 3 levels when pursuing and dealing with a formal grievance.

Level 1

In the event of staff having a formal grievance relating to their employment staff should, in the first instance, put their grievance in writing and address it to their line manager, making it clear that they wish to raise a formal grievance under the terms of this procedure. Where staff grievance is against their line manager, their complaint should be addressed to an alternative manager or to the HR department.

A manager (who may not be the manager to whom staff grievance was addressed) will invite them to attend a grievance meeting to discuss their grievance and staff has the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union official or a fellow employee of their choice. Every effort will be made to convene the grievance meeting at a time which is convenient for staff and their 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 staff make arrangements with another companion who is available to attend.

Staff must make every effort to attend the grievance meeting.

At the meeting, staff will be permitted to explain their grievance and how they think it should be resolved.

Following the meeting, the Company will endeavor to respond to staff 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, staff will be given an explanation for the delay and be told when a response can be expected. Staff will be informed in writing of the Company's decision on the grievance and notified of their right to appeal against that decision if you are not satisfied with it.

Level 2

Where staff feels their grievance had not been satisfactorily resolved, staff may then appeal in writing within five working days of the grievance decision. Staff should also set out the grounds for their appeal.

On receipt of an appeal letter, a more senior manager or a Director (who again may not be the person to whom an appeal was addressed) shall make arrangements to hear the grievance at an appeal meeting and at this meeting staff may again, if they wish, be accompanied by a fellow employee of their choice.

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

Following the meeting, the next level of management or Director will endeavor to respond to any grievance as soon as possible and, in any case, within five working days of the appeal hearing. If it is not possible to respond within the time period, staff will be given an explanation for the delay and be told when a response can be expected. Staff will be informed in writing of the Company's decision on your grievance appeal.

Level 3

Should the matter still not be resolved, the employee shall refer the matter to the Managing Director, who shall be the final arbiter in this procedure.

Mediation

It may be appropriate for the matter to be dealt with by way of mediation, depending on the nature of your grievance. This involves the appointment of a third-party mediator, who will discuss the issues raised by your grievance with all of those involved and seek to facilitate a resolution. Mediation will be used only where all parties involved in the grievance agree.

Disciplinary issues

If a staff complaint relates to their dissatisfaction with a disciplinary, performance review or dismissal decision, they should not invoke the grievance procedure but should instead appeal against the decision in accordance with the appeal procedure with which they will have been provided.

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

1.2. External Grievance Management

Any grievance raised by an external agency will be subject to a thorough investigation and consultancy process to resolve the issues. The Commercial Manager is responsible for non operational external grievances and the Director Operations responsible for management of all operational grievances. The 360CustomerCare™ process of regular client meetings should be used in the first instance to identify and resolve issues. Any un-resolved issues should be elevated to the Director Operations for resolution.