



# Grievance policy and procedure

**Contents**

Purpose.....Page 3

Scope.....Page 3

Policy.....Page 3

Procedure.....Page3/4

Appeal.....Page 5

Overlapping Grievance and Disciplinary Cases.....Page 5

## **Grievances Policy and Procedure**

### **Purpose:**

The Grievance Policy is a framework for resolving a formal grievance which an employee has concerning any aspect of his/her employment.

The basic aim of the grievance procedure is to try and arrive at a mutually satisfactory solution of the grievance as quickly as possible. Employees are therefore encouraged to deal with the problem informally in the first instance with their manager. If it is not possible to resolve a grievance informally, employees should then formally raise the matter without unreasonable delay with a manager who is not the subject of the grievance. This should be done in writing and should set out the nature of the grievance.

The objective of a grievance procedure is to provide a recognised channel through which a grievance can be brought to the attention of management by providing the right for an employee to have their grievance heard, investigated and, if proved justified, remedied.

### **Scope:**

All employees.

### **Policy:**

- The John Graham Centre (JGC) recognises that from time-to-time employees may wish to seek redress for grievances relating to their employment.
- In this respect, the organisation's policy is to encourage free communication between employees and their managers in order to ensure that questions and problems arising during the course of employment can be aired and, where possible, resolved quickly and to the satisfaction of all concerned.

### **Procedure:**

*This procedure is not part of your contract of employment; however, we will not depart from it without good reason.*

- If there is any matter relating to your work, or the people with whom you work, with which you are unhappy, you should use the following grievance procedure.
- If your grievance relates to an equal opportunities matter, it may be easier to deal with all complaints under one procedure rather than using both the grievance procedure and our equal opportunities complaints procedure. We will advise you of which procedure is most appropriate.
- At any formal meeting, you have the right to be accompanied by a single companion who is either:
  - A work colleague; or,
  - A full-time official employed by a trade union; or,
  - A lay official, so long as they have been certified in writing by their union as having experience of, or as having received training in, acting as a worker's companion at disciplinary or grievance hearings.

- Your companion has the right to explain and sum up your case, and to respond to any views expressed at the hearing. They may not answer questions on your behalf. If your companion cannot attend on the date we have set for the interview, we will always postpone the interview for up to five days and may (at our discretion) postpone it for longer should it become necessary.

**Informal Stage:**

- Where possible, the employee should first discuss on an informal basis, their grievance with their manager who is usually in the best position to help.
- On hearing the employee's grievance, the manager shall reach a decision within five working days or as soon as reasonably practical. If a delay to a decision is unavoidable, the manager will provide the employee with the reason why and the anticipated timescale expected to reach a decision.

**Formal Stage:**

- If it is not possible to resolve a grievance informally the employee should raise the matter formally and without unreasonable delay with a manager who is not the subject of the grievance. The grievance should clearly set out the facts in writing of the exact nature of the complaint or problem and the redress being sought. You should state that this comes under the formal stage of the grievance procedure.
- The grievance will be investigated, and the manager will arrange as soon as possible a mutually agreed date for a meeting where the employee will be given an opportunity to state their grievance. During the meeting the employee will be allowed to explain their grievance and how they think it should be resolved.
- During this meeting, the employee may also be accompanied by a companion if they wish. To exercise this right, the employee must first make a reasonable request in advance to the manager. What is reasonable will depend on the circumstances of each case however, it would not normally be reasonable for employees to insist on being accompanied by a companion whose presence would prejudice the hearing or where it is not sensible logistically for a companion to attend for geographical reasons.
- If the meeting is likely to take longer to arrange then this will be communicated to the employee giving the reason for the delay.
- Consideration may also be given to adjourning the meeting for any further investigations as it may be necessary for us to make further enquiries with other people about your grievance, and possibly to have a second meeting with you.
- The grievance meeting will be recorded in writing and the signature of the employee will be obtained as verification to the accuracy of the statement. After the meeting, we will write to you with the outcome of your grievance. The letter will include a right to appeal if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

**Appeal:**

If after receiving the grievance decision the employee is still aggrieved, they may inform a more senior manager in writing that they wish to appeal stating the grounds on which the grievance should be reviewed. This appeal must be submitted in writing within five working days of receiving the last decision. After this period, the right to appeal will be lost.

Following receipt of the employee's notification of their wish to exercise their right to appeal, the manager will arrange the appeal hearing for as soon as possible on a mutually agreed date. The employee again will have the right to request a companion at the meeting.

The decision of the Appeal will be conveyed in writing within ten working days. Where this is not possible, the employee will be given an explanation for the delay and notified when a response can be expected.

The decision of the Appeal shall be final and binding.

**Overlapping Grievance and Disciplinary Cases:**

Where an employee raises a grievance during a disciplinary process then depending on the circumstances, the disciplinary process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related, it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

On hearing the employee's grievance, the manager shall reach a decision within five working days or as soon as reasonably practical. If a delay to a decision is unavoidable, the manager will provide the employee with the reason why and the anticipated timescale expected to reach a decision.

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