

Dispute Resolution: Grievance Procedure



Introduction

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a fair and effective method of resolving individual grievances within a reasonable time of any issue being raised.

All formal grievances taken up under this procedure must be put in writing. If you have difficulty in expressing your views in writing for any reason, please contact the Company's Governance Director, confidentially, and they will help you prepare your written grievance. Notes arising from any grievance issue will be retained on your personal file if you have one.

The grievance procedure is non-contractual and can be amended and updated as required.

1. Informal Discussions

If you have a grievance about the work that you do for the Company, you should discuss it informally with the Chair of the relevant committee, or a Board member if the grievance involves this person. We hope that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this stage. There is no right to be accompanied by a companion at such informal discussions.

2. Stage 1

If you feel that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, you should put your grievance in writing to the Chair of the relevant committee, copied to the Company's Governance Director. If your grievance concerns this person, the grievance should be raised with a Board member. A meeting will be convened as soon as possible and, in any event, within five working days to discuss your grievance. The purpose of the meeting is to understand your complaint and investigate all the options. The Chair or Board member may need to conduct additional investigations outside the meeting. At this stage (and at the appeal stage), you may, if you wish, be accompanied by a companion (as may the other party to the complaint). If they consider it appropriate to do so, the Company may appoint an independent third party to chair the meeting.

You will be notified in writing of the outcome within five working days, or as soon afterwards as is reasonably possible. If you are unhappy with the outcome you may appeal against the decision to the Board of the Company.

3. Stage 2 - Appeal

You may request a meeting with the Chair of the West Board (the Appeal officer) or another Board member, if the Chair is involved in any way. If appropriate, they will be accompanied by another person and or arrange for the meeting to be chaired by an independent third party. Again, your grievance should be expressed in writing and you should set out the basis of the appeal. It is the Appeal officer's responsibility to try to resolve the matter and provide an answer within five working days. The Appeal officer will review the facts and conduct any additional investigation if appropriate, before reaching a conclusion. You will be notified in writing of the outcome. The Appeal officer is the ultimate authority in all grievance matters and their decision is final.

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Note

The purpose of the grievance procedure is to explore genuine concerns connected with work that is conducted for the Company, and the Company takes this duty very seriously. However, in certain circumstances, the Company reserves the right to review or refuse to hear grievances.

In order to process the grievance in an efficient and meaningful way, the Company will ask you what your preferred outcome is. The Company reserves the right to defer holding any meetings until this has been clearly expressed.

The Company reserves the right not to hear grievances where the matters related to the grievance took place three or more months before the date of complaint.

Where a grievance that has already been addressed is raised again, the Company will ask you to provide new evidence which justifies the re-opening of the matter.

Following initial assessment, the Company reserves the right to ask you for further information or evidence to help with understanding and dealing with the grievance. This will take place before convening the grievance meeting.

Where you raise a grievance which in the reasonable opinion of the Company is frivolous or vexatious or has already been resolved (or is likely to be resolved very shortly) the Company reserves the right not to pursue such grievances unless you provide relevant evidence.

Where there is an ongoing dispute about your conduct or performance standards, the Company reserves the right not to pursue grievances connected to this matter unless you can provide evidence that improper conduct has taken place.

Please note that where an issue relating to your conduct or performance is raised in a proper and appropriate fashion, this does not constitute bullying or harassment, and the Company will not treat a complaint about such issues as a grievance.