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Grievance Policy

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We want to ensure that all employees have access to a procedure to help deal with any grievances relating to their employment fairly and without unreasonable delay. We aim to investigate any formal grievance you raise, hold a meeting to discuss it with you, inform you in writing of the outcome, and give you a right of appeal if you are not satisfied.

Issues that may cause grievances include:

- Terms and conditions of employment.
- Health and safety.
- Work relations.
- Bullying and harassment.
- New working practices.
- Working environment.
- Organisational change; and
- Discrimination.

Using this procedure: If you have difficulty at any stage of the *Grievance Procedure* because of a disability, or because English is not your first language, please discuss the situation with your supervisor/Manager or the Personnel Manager as soon as possible.

This *Grievance Procedure* should not be used to complain about dismissal or disciplinary action. You should appeal instead, using the appropriate procedure in this Handbook.

We have a separate *Bullying & Harassment Procedure* (see policy) that may be useful if you have been the victim of bullying or harassment or wish to report an incident of bullying or harassment involving other people.

We operate a separate *Whistle-blowing Policy* to enable employees to report illegal activities, wrongdoing or malpractice. However, where you are directly affected by the matter in question, or where you feel you have been victimised for an act of whistle-blowing, you may raise the matter under this *Grievance Procedure* as well as under the *Whistle-blowing Policy*.

This procedure does not apply to grievances concerning two or more employees raised by a representative of an external representative body. Such collective grievances will be dealt with using a procedure appropriate to the facts of the case.

Written grievances will be placed on your personnel file along with a record of any decisions taken and any notes or other documents produced during the grievance process.

Raising grievances informally: most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with your supervisor/Manager. If you feel unable to speak to your manager, for example, because the complaint concerns him or her, then you should speak informally to a more senior manager i.e. Personnel Manager or Managing Director. If this does not resolve the issue, you should follow the formal procedure below.

Formal written grievances: if your grievance cannot be resolved informally you should submit it in writing to your supervisor/Manager, indicating that it is a formal grievance. If the grievance concerns him or her, you may submit it instead to the Personnel Manager or Managing Director.

The written grievance should contain a brief description of the nature of your complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved, and any evidence which is relevant to the issues you raise. In some situations we may need to ask you to provide further information.

Investigations: In some cases we may have to conduct an investigation into your grievance. The amount of investigation required will vary from case to case, depending on the nature of the allegations. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from you and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. This investigation may be carried out by your supervisor/Manager or someone else appointed by us if it is thought appropriate.

You must co-operate fully and promptly with any investigation, *e.g.* by informing us of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to us and attending interviews, as part of our investigation.

We may initiate an investigation before holding a grievance meeting where we consider this appropriate. In other cases we may hold an initial grievance meeting before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. In those cases we will hold a further grievance meeting with you after our investigation but before we reach a decision, so you may comment on the evidence uncovered by the investigation.

Right to be accompanied: you may bring a companion to any grievance meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. The companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague. You must tell the person holding the grievance meeting who your chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting.

At the meeting, your companion may make representations to us and ask questions, but should not answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during the meeting.

No-one can be compelled to act as your companion. If someone agrees to act as your companion, they will be allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to do so. In certain circumstances we may ask you to choose a different companion, *e.g.*:

- If in our opinion your companion may have a conflict of interest, or may otherwise prejudice the meeting; or
- If your companion works at another site and someone suitable is available where you work; or
- If your companion is unavailable and will remain so for more than five working days afterwards.

GRIEVANCE MEETINGS

We will arrange a grievance meeting, normally within one week of receiving your written grievance. You and your companion (if any) should make every effort to attend grievance meetings. If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified, you should inform us immediately and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time, ideally within the next 7 days.

We hold a grievance meeting so that you may explain your grievance and how you think it should be resolved, and to assist us in reaching a decision based on the available evidence and the representations you have made. After an initial grievance meeting, we may carry out further investigations and hold further grievance meetings as we consider appropriate. Such meetings will be arranged without unreasonable delay.

Your companion may make representations to us and ask questions, but they should not answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during the meeting.

We will write to you, usually within one week of the final grievance meeting, to inform you of the outcome of your grievance and any further action that we intend to take to resolve the grievance. We will also remind you of your right of appeal. Where appropriate we may hold a meeting to give you this information in person.

APPEALS

If the grievance has not been resolved to your satisfaction you may appeal in writing to the Managing Director, stating your full grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.

We will hold an appeal meeting, normally within one week of receiving your written appeal. This will be dealt with impartially by one of the directors, and preferably one who has not previously been involved in the case (although they may ask anyone previously involved to be present). You have a right to bring a companion to the meeting (see points 15–17 above). We will confirm our decision in

writing, usually within one week of the appeal meeting. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further appeal.