

How employers should manage a grievance

Dealing with an employee's grievance

In circumstances where an employee raises a grievance about their employment or working conditions employers should follow the steps outlined below.

Preparation

- The company's written grievance procedure should be followed in full.
- There should be no delay. Any grievance should be dealt with promptly.
- The handling of the complaint should be impartial and unbiased.
- An alternative person should hear the grievance if the person who would normally hear the grievance under the terms of the policy is personally involved.
- The employer should establish whether the complaint can be resolved informally before following a formal procedure.
- The grievance should be investigated thoroughly, including interviews with the employee raising the grievance, any witnesses or employees named in the grievance as appropriate.
- Notes should be taken and records made throughout the process.
- The grievance hearing should take place at a suitable private location.
- Arrange for an independent person to take notes at the hearing. An interpreter or other adjustments may have to be made if the employee speaks English as a second language or is disabled.
- The employee must be advised of the arrangements for the hearing and of their right to be accompanied to that meeting.

Hearing

- The employee should be asked to explain the grounds for their grievance.
- Companions should be allowed to address the hearing and to ask questions to clarify issues.
- The companion is entitled to support the employee but that it is not their role to answer questions on the employee's behalf. They may, however, put the employees' case and respond to any view expressed at the hearing.
- The employer should summarise the employee's case and seek their confirmation that it understands it correctly.
- The employer should explain the organisation's position and acknowledge those points where there is agreement where there is dispute.
- The parties should then discuss how the problem might be resolved.
- The employer should consider whether any further investigation is required.
- The meeting should then be adjourned and, if necessary, carry out any further investigation.
- The decision should be communicated to the employee either in person, with confirmation in writing, or by way of letter. This communication should advise the employee of their right to appeal.