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1.0 OBJECTIVE

The aim of the Grievance Policy is to ensure that employees grievances are resolved fairly, consistently and at the earliest opportunity, to maximise employee and business performance, whilst minimising risks to the organisation and its reputation. It is in everyone's interests to resolve problems at the earliest stage before they can develop into a major problem.

2.0 INFORMAL STAGE

If an employee experiences a problem or is feeling aggrieved, (except personal harassment and bullying, for which there is a separate procedure) the employee should firstly discuss with their line manager with the aim to settle the grievance informally. The employee should fully explain the nature and extent of their grievance. A record of this conversation will be made noting the nature of the complaint and any actions agreed, however informal discussion can frequently resolve problems without the need for extensive written records to be made. As far as practicably possible informal grievances will be completed within 10 working days.

Dealing with grievances informally normally allows for problems to be sorted quickly. If a grievance cannot be settled informally or the line manager is not able to resolve the situation to the employee's satisfaction, the employee may wish to raise the grievance formally through the next stage of the procedure.

3.0 FORMAL STAGE

3.1

Step 1: The employee informs the employer of their grievance in writing - Stage 1 (Formal)

To make a formal grievance the grievance must be in writing. The employee must explain fully the nature and extent of their grievance and send it to the line manager's manager (for example if the informal stage has been considered by a Home Manager, this person's line manager is the Regional Manager/Head of Service). If the employee is unsure of who the grievance should be addressed to, they should seek clarification. Where possible, the grievance should be sent within 5 working days of the completion of the informal stage.

3.2

Step 2: The employer invites the employee to a meeting to discuss the grievance - Stage 2 (Formal)

The employee will then be invited to a meeting at a reasonable time and location at which their grievance will be discussed in more detail and considered. The employee has the statutory right to be accompanied at the meeting (if requested) by a colleague or a trade union official.

Further investigation may be required prior to an outcome being delivered, if this is necessary the Grievance Officer will negotiate an agreed timescale to undertake further enquiries/investigations with the employee.

There may be sufficient information from the meeting for the Grievance Officer to reach a conclusion without the need for further investigation however, this will be determined on an individual basis dependent upon the information available and the complexity of the situation. It is important that the employee takes all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. As far as practicably possible formal grievances will be completed within 15 working days. On completion of the investigation, a response to the grievance will normally be given in writing, normally within 5 working days of that meeting, including the right of appeal.

3.3 Step 3: Right of appeal - Stage 3

If the employee is dissatisfied with the outcome of their grievance they have the right to appeal. The employee will be informed of who the appeal should be addressed to and where to send their appeal in their grievance outcome letter. This should be done in writing within five working days of the receipt of the outcome of their grievance (stage 2).

The employee will then be invited to a further meeting at a reasonable time and location at which their grievance will be discussed and considered. The employee has the statutory right to be accompanied at the meeting (if requested) by a colleague or a trade union official. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend. As far as reasonably practicable, the company will be represented by a more senior manager than attended the first meeting (unless the most senior manager attended that Stage 2 meeting).

Following the appeal meeting the employee will be informed of the final decision, normally within ten working days, which will be confirmed in writing.

4.0 THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

An informal approach between employee and Line Manager is often the best way to proceed.

