

Stafford Showground Limited

Grievance Procedure

Overview

The Company believes that all employees have the right to discuss freely with the management any matter affecting their employment, such as the allocation of work, working conditions etc. and this procedure allows the Company to deal with grievances fairly, consistently, and speedily.

The Grievance Procedure is not a substitute for good day to day communication where employees are encouraged to discuss and resolve daily working issues. Many problems can be resolved informally if channels of communication are kept open and work well. If problems cannot be resolved informally a grievance may be raised and will be investigated as quickly as possible so that it can be resolved within a reasonable timeframe.

If the employee feels unable to approach their manager directly, they should approach another manager who will discuss with them ways of dealing with the matter.

The Company recognises that formal grievances can have a serious detrimental effect on employees and relationships at work, whether they are upheld or not, and will provide appropriate support to any employee involved in a grievance process from the outset to help minimise any impact.

Complaints that amount to an allegation of misconduct on the part of another employee will be investigated and dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure and the employee who has raised the complaint will be informed of the outcome.

All employees are expected to treat their colleagues with the utmost dignity and respect, and may refer to the Company's Dignity at Work and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policies when considering making complaints in certain circumstances.

Mediation

This is where an independent third party or mediator can sometimes help resolve grievance issues on an informal basis. Mediation is a voluntary process where the mediator helps 2 or more people in dispute to attempt to reach an agreement.

Procedure

The Company operates a structured grievance process consisting of the following stages:

Step 1 – Informal Resolution

Step 2 – Formal Written Grievance and Hearing

Step 3 – Appeal

While employees are encouraged to resolve concerns informally wherever possible, formal stages will be followed where issues cannot be resolved at an early stage.

Informal Stage

The employee is encouraged to discuss concerns, problems, or complaints with their manager in the first instance. Any issues will be treated as confidential, notes of any relevant discussions will

be taken and the line manager will respond to the issue within 5 working days. A mutually agreed record should ideally be kept of the outcome, to ensure both parties have an understanding of whether the issue was resolved and what, if any, actions have been agreed.

In cases of bullying, harassment, victimisation, discrimination, and other situations where employees are potentially at risk (eg, health & safety), the Company has a duty of care to investigate any allegations brought to its attention. This responsibility will remain even when the employee decides not to pursue the issue although the Company will endeavour to handle all such situations with sensitivity.

The Grievance Procedure should not be used for appealing against disciplinary action or raising complaints regarding a disciplinary process, as this is subject to the separate appeals procedure under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.

Help and guidance will be provided to assist you in attempting to resolve the issue on an informal basis.

Where an issue cannot be resolved informally to the employee's satisfaction, they should raise the matter formally and without delay with their manager in the first instance. If their grievance relates to their line manager, they should raise the matter formally with an alternative manager.

Disclosures Involving Criminal Conduct

Where a grievance involves allegations that may amount to a criminal offence, such as assault, harassment, or coercive control, the employee may also report the matter to the police or relevant authorities. Doing so will not breach any confidentiality obligations with the Company.

The Company will provide appropriate support and will handle such matters with sensitivity and confidentiality.

Formal Stage

If the grievance is not resolved informally, the employee must submit their grievance in writing to their line manager. The written grievance should clearly set out the nature of the complaint, including relevant facts, dates, and names of any individuals involved, along with the outcome the employee is seeking.

If the grievance relates to the employee's line manager, it should be submitted to an alternative manager or a more senior manager.

Where appropriate, or where senior individuals are involved, the Company may nominate an appropriate independent manager to handle the grievance.

The Company will normally acknowledge receipt of the grievance within 5 working days and will arrange a grievance hearing without unreasonable delay, typically within 5–10 working days of receipt where reasonably practicable.

The Company will endeavour to carry out all necessary investigations prior to the grievance hearing. The investigation will be conducted by the hearing manager (typically this will be the manager, although where they are implicated, a suitable alternative will be sought).

If the investigation is likely to take longer than expected, the employee will be notified in writing or by email of the revised timescales.

Investigations will be conducted in an independent and objective manner and may include meeting with the employee, as the instigator of the grievance; meeting and taking statements from any relevant witnesses, reviewing documentation and electronic files if appropriate.

If, during the investigation, information arises suggesting criminal conduct, the investigator will consult HR and determine whether referral to external authorities is necessary to safeguard employees or fulfil legal obligations. The complainant will be informed of this decision and supported throughout the process.

In serious cases, it may be deemed necessary and appropriate to suspend any involved employee/s on full pay during the investigation. The suspension will be confirmed in writing and should not normally exceed 5 working days. It may be necessary to extend the suspension if for example; more time is required to complete the investigation thoroughly. Suspension is not disciplinary action.

If an allegation is made against the employee, the employee will be kept informed of the allegations and the potential implications and, where appropriate, the outcome of the hearing/appeals.

The employee will be given the opportunity to respond fully to any allegations made and will also have the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union representative during all formal discussions relating to the allegations. A formal meeting will then be arranged as soon as possible. This will normally be within 10 working days of the date of receipt of the grievance letter.

A minimum of 5 working days' notice will be provided to the employee to attend any formal meetings, unless the employee specifically requests less time and the Company is in a position to facilitate this request.

Grievance Hearings

The employee and their companion/representative must make every effort to attend the hearing.

The employee and their companion must make every effort to attend the hearing. If the employee's chosen companion is unable to attend, the Company will postpone the hearing to a time proposed by the employee, provided that the alternative time is reasonable and falls within 5 working days beginning with the day after the day originally proposed. Any further requests to rearrange beyond this statutory window will be at the Company's discretion.

When a grievance is raised during or related to an employee's absence:

- the Company will deal sensitively with the grievance in light of the absence but will expect the process to be concluded within a reasonable timescale;
- the employee will be given every opportunity to attend meetings and/or hearings and present information relevant to your case, within reason;
- where appropriate, medical advice will be sought to confirm whether the employee is fit to participate in the process;
- the employee may also be given the opportunity to make written submissions; and
- if necessary, a decision will be made in the employee's absence.

The employee will be given the opportunity to fully explain the grounds for their complaint and to express the desired outcome.

Formal minutes will be taken during the hearing and the employee will be provided with a copy of these. The employee is not normally permitted to bring recording equipment to the meeting. The employee will have the opportunity to take notes of the hearing or they can ask their companion to do so. It is however usual practice for the Company to use recording equipment in the hearing, this ensures completeness for the purpose of recording the meeting content correctly.

Should the need for further investigation be highlighted, the hearing will be adjourned and the employee will be told when the meeting will be reconvened.

An adjournment will be taken prior to determining the appropriate outcome to carefully consider the evidence discussed during the hearing.

The employee will be notified in writing of the outcome and any follow-up actions normally within 10 working days of the hearing, unless further investigation is required. In this case, the revised timescale will be notified to the employee as well as their right to appeal and the process to be followed. Hearings will be rearranged without reasonable delay.

Where a grievance is raised by someone who is no longer employed by the Company, the grievance will be dealt with at the Company's discretion, and normally in writing only, without holding a grievance hearing.

Right of Appeal

If the employee is dissatisfied with the outcome of the grievance hearing then the employee has the right to make an appeal. In order to exercise this right, employees will need to confirm this in writing within 5 working days of receiving the outcome of the grievance clearly stating the reasons for the appeal.

Any appeals will be heard normally within 10 working days of the date of receipt of the appeal letter.

The appeal will be heard by the next level of manager from the person who heard the original grievance.

An appeal received outside the above timeframe will only be considered at the Company's discretion.

The written appeal must clearly set out your grounds of appeal. Possible reasons for an appeal are set out below but the list is not exhaustive:

- Process – where the employee believes that the Grievance Procedure has not been followed
- Decision – where the employee does not feel that the decision is appropriate, related to the evidence provided or the content of the investigation
- New evidence – where the employee has new substantive and relevant evidence to submit that was not available at the time of the previous grievance hearing

The employee will be invited to an appeal hearing without unreasonable delay. They will have the same rights in terms of being accompanied at the appeal hearing (either a colleague or a trade union representative).

As before, the appeal will be heard without reasonable delay and the employee will receive written notification within 10 working days of the hearing as to the outcome and any follow-up actions. For

the period during which an appeal is being considered, the original grievance hearing outcome will remain in force.

The decision of the appeal hearing will be final and there will be no further appeal process beyond this.

Witness Statements

The Company has a duty of care to protect the employee if they provide a witness statement or are named in statements. Therefore, the Company will normally request the employee's permission before their statements are given to the implicated employee/s.

In exceptional circumstances, where it is deemed appropriate, a summary of the statement, with names removed, will be provided.

Where a Grievance is raised within a Disciplinary Process

When a grievance is raised during the disciplinary process, if the grievance and disciplinary are unrelated, then both matters can be dealt with concurrently and the disciplinary process need not be delayed. If the matters are linked, then the Company may temporarily pause the disciplinary process to deal with the grievance.

Data Protection

Personal information will be treated as confidential and be kept no longer than necessary in accordance with current data protection legislation.

This policy reflects the employee's legal rights but does not form part of their contractual terms of employment and may be amended at any time at the Company's discretion.

Any abuse of this policy may lead to disciplinary action in line with the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.

Support and Wellbeing

The Company recognises that involvement in grievance processes, particularly those linked to harassment or criminal behaviour can be emotionally difficult. Employees will be signposted to confidential support services such as the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), counselling, or external victim support services.

This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time. The Company may also vary the procedure, including any timescales, where it is reasonable to do so in the circumstances of a particular case.

This document was last updated April 2026