

Grievance Policy & Procedure

Policy · UK · Updated 2026-07-23 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A grievance policy is the written route an employee uses to raise a concern, problem, or complaint about their work, working conditions, or working relationships — and the procedure your organisation follows to hear it, look into it, and respond. It turns "I need to talk to someone about this" into a process with named people and predictable steps.

Unresolved grievances rarely stand still. They become resignations, absence, or tribunal claims in which the first question is whether the employer followed a fair procedure. A clear policy, applied consistently, resolves most issues long before that point.

This template follows the ACAS Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures: raise the grievance in writing, meet without unreasonable delay, allow accompaniment, decide, communicate the outcome in writing, and offer an appeal.

Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how employees of [Your company] raise concerns about their work, terms, working environment, or treatment by others, and how we respond. It applies to all employees, including those on probation.

Some issues have their own route: concerns about wrongdoing that affects others or the public go through the whistleblowing policy, complaints of bullying or harassment may be raised under the bullying and harassment policy, and appeals against disciplinary action go through the disciplinary procedure. This policy is non-contractual and may be amended from time to time.

Policy statement

[Your company] wants problems raised early, heard properly, and fixed where they can be. We follow the ACAS Code of Practice at every formal stage, deal with grievances without unreasonable delay, and keep them as confidential as a fair investigation allows.

No one suffers any detriment for raising a genuine grievance, whatever the outcome.

Informal resolution

Most concerns are best resolved quickly and informally. Raise the issue with your line manager first — in person where possible — and give them a chance to put it right. If the concern is about your line manager, go to [alternative name/role] instead.

The manager should hear the concern properly, agree any actions, and note the conversation in [system/location]. If informal resolution fails or the issue is too serious for it, move to the formal procedure.

Raising a formal grievance

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Put the grievance in writing to [name/role]. If it concerns that person, send it to [alternative name/role] instead.

2. State what happened, when, who was involved, what informal steps have already been tried, and what outcome you are seeking.
3. Attach or list any evidence — messages, documents, dates of incidents, names of witnesses.
4. [Your company] acknowledges the grievance within [number] working days and names the manager who will hear it.

The grievance meeting

1. Hold the meeting without unreasonable delay — our target is within [number] working days of the written grievance.
2. Remind the employee they may be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union representative.
3. Let the employee explain the grievance fully and say how they think it should be resolved, then ask questions to understand it properly.
4. Adjourn to investigate where facts are disputed — speak to witnesses, review documents — and reconvene if the investigation changes the picture.
5. Keep a confidential written record of the meeting and any investigation.

Outcome and appeal

The manager hearing the grievance gives the decision in writing within [number] working days of the final meeting, stating what was decided, why, and what actions will follow, with an owner and a date for each.

If the employee is not satisfied, they may appeal in writing to [senior name/role] within [number] working days, stating why. The appeal is heard without unreasonable delay by someone senior to, and where possible not previously involved in, the original decision. The appeal outcome is confirmed in writing and is final.

Special situations

- Grievance raised during a disciplinary process: the two may run concurrently where they are related, or the disciplinary process may be paused briefly — [name/role] decides and tells the employee which.
- Grievances involving several employees about the same issue are handled together with a single response, with each employee retaining their own right of appeal.
- Mediation by a trained internal or external mediator may be offered at any stage where both parties agree — it often repairs working relationships better than a formal finding.
- Grievances from former employees are handled at [Your company]'s discretion: [state your approach, e.g. a written response from [role] without a meeting].

Records and review

Grievance letters, meeting notes, investigation records, outcomes, and appeal decisions are stored confidentially in [system/location] and retained in line with our data retention policy, separate from day-to-day personnel records.

This policy is reviewed [frequency, e.g. annually] and after any grievance that exposes a gap in it. Owner: [name/role]. Next review due: [date].

How to use this template

1. Name the people, not just roles, for receiving grievances — and always give an alternative route in case the grievance is about the named person.
2. Set realistic response deadlines for your size of business, then hit them; a missed deadline in your own policy is the easiest criticism to avoid.
3. Reference this policy from your written statement of employment particulars, which must say how to raise a grievance.
4. Decide your approach to former employees and mediation now, in the calm, rather than mid-dispute.
5. Train managers to hear grievances without becoming defensive — the meeting is for understanding the problem, not contesting it.

Official guidance

- › [ACAS — Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures](#)
- › [ACAS — Grievance procedure: step by step](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/grievance-policy> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.