

# HUMAN RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE

## GRIEVANCE POLICY, PROCESS and GUIDANCE

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APPROVED AT AUTHORITY MEETING ON 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2008

## 1 Policy

- 1.1 The x is committed to establishing a fair and equitable working environment. It is recognised that problems sometimes arise during work and the grievance policy exists to help resolve them. The grievance process provides a mechanism for individuals to resolve any problems or concerns about their work, working environment or working relationships where other routes have not been successful.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 The Grievance Policy applies to all established x employees excluding those covered by Chief Officers` terms and conditions of employment.

## 3 Process

- 3.1.1 There are 3 stages:

Stage One - This is the informal stage of the procedure at which an employee raises an issue of concern with the appropriate manager. Most grievances are considered by an employee's line manager. It is hoped that raising the issue with the manager will enable the matter to be fully considered and hopefully resolved. If the grievance is resolved at this stage, the written grievance, together with a note stating how it was resolved, must be sent to Human Resources & Performance (HR&P), for the purpose of monitoring.

Stage 2 - If an employee is not satisfied with the outcome of the grievance at Stage 1 then they may take the grievance to stage 2 within 10 days of the stage 1 outcome. At this stage the grievance must be formally raised *in writing* (email, memo or letter) by the employee. The grievance will usually be considered by a more senior manager than at Stage 1, advised by a member of staff from HR&P.

Stage 3 - If an employee is not satisfied with the outcome of the grievance at Stage 2 then they may take the grievance to stage 3 within 10 days of the stage 2 outcome, if there is a more senior manager to hear the grievance. The grievance will usually be considered by a more senior manager than at Stage 2, advised by a member of staff from HR&P.

- 3.1.2 Stage 3 is the final stage of this policy. If there is no more senior manager in the organisation structure to hear a stage 3 grievance, stage 2 will be the final stage. There is no further internal right of appeal beyond the grievance process.

### 3.2 Raising a Grievance

- 3.2.1 An employee who thinks they may have a grievance should discuss the problem with their line manager (or other appropriate manager) to try and reach a solution informally.

- 3.2.2 Grievances are usually submitted to a line manager. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to submit a grievance to another manager. HR&P can advise on this.

- 3.2.3 All formal grievances must be raised in writing and, if possible, should set out the outcome the individual is looking for, e.g. an apology. Where the issue has not been resolved at an earlier stage, the grievance should explain why the employee is dissatisfied with the outcome so far.

- 3.2.4 After receiving a formal grievance, the appropriate manager will arrange a meeting, usually within 5 working days, to discuss the matter. Where the grievance has progressed beyond Stage 1, the manager who previously considered the grievance may also be asked to attend the meeting to answer questions.
- 3.2.5 During any stage of the procedure it may be possible to resolve the grievance without a formal meeting (e.g. through delegating action to be taken or through mediation). If this is agreed by the employee they will receive written notification of the action taken and a copy of the notes taken at that stage.
- 3.2.6 The employee has the right to be accompanied by a trade union official or a work colleague (in accordance with statutory provisions) but not an external friend, relative or solicitor.
- 3.2.7 Copies of any papers, names of any witnesses and witness statements which either side intend to rely on at a meeting should be provided at least 2 full working days in advance (more depending upon the volume of documents). They should be sent to all parties simultaneously.
- 3.2.8 Notes of meetings will be taken and kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act. These notes will be copied and circulated to the relevant parties, who must also ensure confidentiality and secure retention.

### 3.3 Outcome

- 3.3.1 The manager hearing the grievance can decide to do one of the following:
- (i) dismiss the grievance;
  - (ii) uphold the grievance (in full or part);
  - (iii) find an alternative solution that is mutually acceptable that resolves the grievance.
- 3.3.2 All decisions should be confirmed in writing within 5 working days, setting out the reasons. In exceptional circumstances, a holding letter can be sent explaining the reasons for a different timescale.

## 4 **Equality and Diversity**

- 4.1 Grievances must be managed fairly and be free from discrimination. When participating in the grievance process those involved should manage the tensions that can arise between meeting the needs of the organisation and the needs of individuals.
- 4.2 Statutory provisions, e.g. equalities legislation, will always take precedence.

## 5 **Manager responsibilities**

- 5.1 To ensure HR&P are informed of all grievances, whether formal or informal, for monitoring purposes.
- 5.2 To seek advice from HR&P after receiving a formal grievance.
- 5.3 To consider an employee's grievance in a fair and reasonable way.
- 5.4 To take equality and diversity issues into account.
- 5.5 To ensure documents are provided in a timely way.

5.6 To ensure notes are taken of any meeting relating to a grievance.

5.7 To maintain confidentiality of all information.

## **6 Employee responsibilities**

6.1 To try to resolve their grievance at the lowest level.

6.2 To submit a formal grievance in writing

6.3 To tell any witnesses s/he wants to rely on of the need to submit a written statement and/or attend a grievance meeting.

6.4 To ensure documents are provided in a timely way.

6.5 To maintain confidentiality of all information.

## **7 HR&P responsibilities**

7.1 To give advice and guidance to managers and employees on how the policy works.

7.2 To organise meetings at Stage 2 and 3 and send out paperwork in good time.

7.3 To give professional advice at Stage 2 and 3 meetings.

7.4 To monitor cases and provide management information.

7.5 To maintain confidentiality of all information.

7.6 To review this policy in line with drivers from change in legislation, through feedback as a Learning Organisation or developments in best practice.

## **8 Relevant Legislation and Key x Policies**

Equality Act 2010

Equality Act 2006

Employment Act 2002

Data Protection Act 1998

Age Discrimination Act 2006

Work and Families Act 2006

Employment Rights Order 2006

Employment Relations Act 2004

Disability Discrimination Act 2005

Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992

Comprehensive Equality Policy (particularly Equality in Employment)

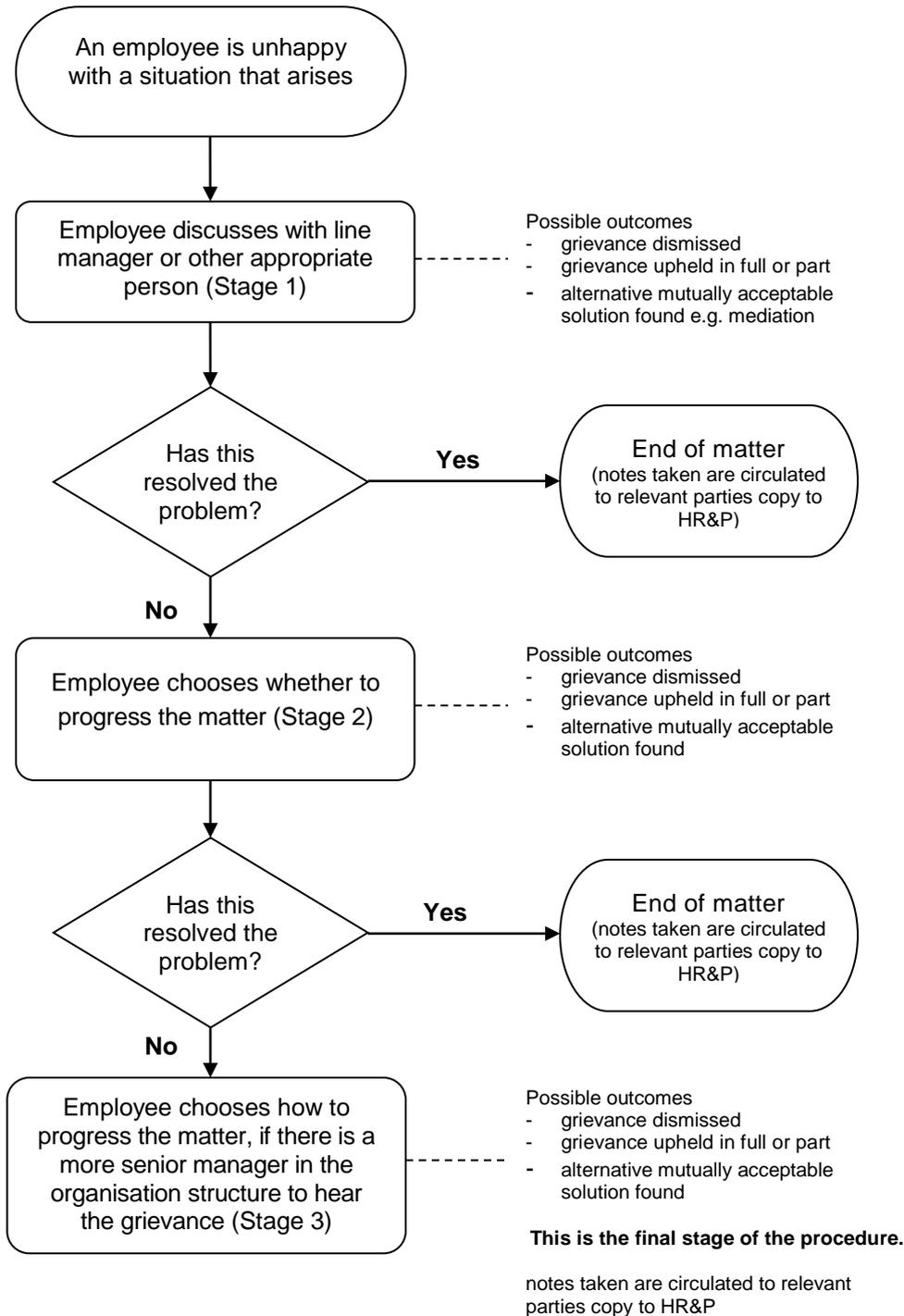
Joint Performance and Achievement Review process

employment policies

Values

# HUMAN RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE

## GRIEVANCE PROCESS



# HUMAN RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE

## GRIEVANCE GUIDANCE

### 9 Guidance for Managers

#### Introduction

The Grievance Policy and procedure has been developed to enable employees to resolve any problems or concerns they have in a fair and quick way. These guidance notes are not part of the grievance policy. These notes set out good practice for you to follow, as well as some suggestions on how to deal with issues that may arise along the way. There are certain things that employees and managers must do to ensure that the x complies with its statutory duties, and these have been included in the policy itself, e.g. submit an appeal in writing, ensure a record of a hearing is made and stored securely.

Each case must be considered on its own merits. Your Human Resources & Performance (HR&P) Adviser can give more guidance and it is important that you keep them informed as you progress. Ultimately, however, you – not HR&P – are responsible for ensuring that you act impartially, fairly and properly when considering a grievance.

#### 9.1 What is a Grievance?

9.1.1 A grievance is a problem or concern that an employee has about their work, the x or a fellow employee where his/her actions have affected them. It is impossible to provide a comprehensive list of all the issues that might give rise to a grievance but it may include:

- terms and conditions of employment including pay and grading issues;
- manager instructions re what work is to be carried out or the method of delivery
- health and safety;
- relationships at work;
- new working practices;
- organisational change;
- equality and diversity issues.

#### 9.2 How to deal with an employee's grievance

9.2.1 Receiving a formal grievance should not be a total surprise to you. Before an employee decides to raise a formal grievance they should usually have tried to resolve the matter informally first. There may be many reasons why a certain event happened or a decision was made and they may not be aware of all the circumstances. By first discussing it with you, as a manager, the employee may find that they understand better and are therefore more accepting of the situation.

9.2.2 It is in everyone's interests to deal with concerns swiftly. Don't ignore an employee who tries to discuss an issue with you, or put it off. Find some time, within a day or so, to talk to them in private. If you can't divulge certain information to them, be honest and tell them this rather than try to avoid their questions. If their concern relates to another member of staff, think carefully about what is reasonable to convey and what the other employee has a right to consider will be kept confidential. If you are unsure, speak to a member of the HR&P team who will be able to advise you.

9.2.3 Where possible, try and find a solution that suits everyone. You may need to arrange for some mediation between two members of staff to help them work better together. Alternatively, you may need to reconsider a decision you have taken and see whether there is another way to achieve the same outcome. It may be that your initial decision is correct and it is not possible to meet the individual's expectation but formally listening to their grievance and discussing the rationale behind the issue may resolve the matter for the employee.

### 9.3 What Should You do if an Employee Raises a Formal Grievance?

9.3.1 An employee is required to raise a formal grievance with you, in writing. This should set out the issue of concern, its effect on them, why they feel it is unreasonable/unfair, and what they would like done to resolve it.

9.3.2 When you receive a grievance you should discuss it with a member of the HR&P team. You will then need to arrange a meeting with the employee who raised the grievance to hear their grievance.

### 9.4 Who and How to Arrange Grievance Meetings

9.4.1 The line manager of the aggrieved employee arranges a Stage 2 grievance meeting for the next higher manager to hear the grievance. HR&P organise grievance meetings at Stage 3. The employee should be given written confirmation of the date, time and arrangements for the meeting including timescales, for submission of documents. Employees should be reminded that they are entitled to be accompanied (see 9.9.3 below for the role of the companion).

9.4.2 Grievance meetings should be arranged within 5 working days (unless there are documented reasons for adjusting this, for example to allow more time to research, investigate and prepare for the meeting).

9.4.3 Documents that either/both parties wish to rely upon and the names of any companion and/or witnesses should be provided and circulated to all parties within 2 days of the meeting.

### 9.5 Who Hears Grievances?

9.5.1 The following is a guide to who usually hears the grievance. It is not intended to be prescriptive and each case will be considered on its own merits.

- Stage 1 - Line Manager
- Stage 2 and stage 3 - More senior manager advised by a member of staff from HR&P

9.5.2 For Heads of Service with only 2 senior managers in the structure, grievances will normally be heard as follows

Stage 1 by their Director

Stage 2 by another Director

Stage 3 by the Chief Executive.

Where the Head of Service reports directly to the Chief Executive a Stage 1 grievance will be to the Chief Executive with Head of HR & P advising on who should hear a Stage 2 grievance dependent on the circumstances. A stage 2 might be either 2 Directors with the advice of HR& P or the Corporate Resources Director (given the role of Monitoring Officer) advised by HR&P.

9.5.3 In exceptional circumstances it may be more appropriate for a grievance to progress directly to Stage 2 or for another manager to conduct the Stage 1 meeting. This is most likely when:

- the line manager does not have the authority to resolve the grievance in the way the employee wants; or
- the grievance directly relates to the behaviour of the line manager.

If this is the case, you need to discuss any concerns with the Head of HR&P who will make arrangements for someone else to hear the grievance.

9.5.4 If a member of HR&P is present at a hearing, their role is to give procedural advice during the hearing and advice on the options available. They do not form a 'panel' with the manager hearing the grievance.

## 9.6 Process to be followed at Grievance Meetings

9.6.1 Where a grievance is being heard at Stage 2 or 3, the manager who conducted the meeting at an earlier stage may not necessarily need to be present. Often it is enough to have a copy of any letter/notes sent to the employee at an earlier stage setting out the decision and reasons behind it.

9.6.2 Meetings can be conducted relatively informally, it is important, however, to ensure that all parties have an opportunity to present their case and refer to any documents that they consider relevant. If witnesses are being called, it may be helpful to formalise the process.

9.6.3 The following process is a guide for meetings, particularly at Stage 2 and 3:

- The employee and/or their companion state their grievance, during which they call any witnesses.
- Any presenting manager and the manager hearing the case can ask the witness(es) and the employee questions.
- The presenting manager sets out their case, calling witnesses.
- The employee and/or their companion and the manager hearing the case can ask any questions.
- The presenting manager sums up.
- The employee and/or their companion sums up
- The manager hearing the case adjourns the meeting to consider the issue and decide the outcome.

9.6.4 Either party may ask for reasonable adjournments during the meeting.

9.6.5 Witnesses should only be called in to give evidence and should not participate in the full meeting.

## 9.7 Decisions

9.7.1 If you are the manager hearing the grievance you can decide to:

- (i) dismiss the grievance if you do not believe there is any validity to the complaint;

- (ii) uphold the grievance in full or part, if you believe the complaint is justified wholly or partly; or find an alternative solution, which is mutually acceptable to all parties. This alternative should resolve the grievance or provide a solution that you consider reasonable in all the circumstances.

9.7.2 Where possible the decision should be made and conveyed to all parties on the day of the meeting. In any case, the decision should be confirmed in writing within 5 working days of the meeting. You should include the key reasons behind the decision.

9.7.3 You should also inform the employee that if they are dissatisfied with your decision, they can take their grievance the next stage. To do this, they should write to HR&P within 10 working days of receiving your written decision, explaining why they are dissatisfied,

## 9.8 Note-taking

9.8.1 There must be a documented record of all grievances.

9.8.2 A note-taker need not be present at grievance meetings. You may, however, find that having a note-taker present is useful and it is essential where the allegation is of a serious nature (e.g. potential gross misconduct). Note-takers should be reminded of the need for confidentiality. You should consider whether it is more appropriate to ask someone from HR&P to take notes rather than another employee.

9.8.3 All notes should be circulated after the hearing; they do not need to be typed but must be legible. The employee and their companion should be given the opportunity to put a copy of their comments/amendments to the notes on file.

9.8.4 Hand-written notes should be kept and stored confidentially along with other documents (see Record Keeping, below).

## 9.9 Right to be accompanied

9.9.1 An employee has the right to be accompanied at a grievance hearing by a trade union official or a work colleague. They may not be accompanied by a solicitor or friend/relative from outside the PDNPA (unless required as a reasonable adjustment, for example, for a disability or to translate).

9.9.2 Where an employee chooses to be accompanied by their trade union official, it is good practice for this person to come from the union recognised by the x, i.e. UNISON. However, an employee does have the right to be accompanied by an official from another trade union, as long as the official is certified by their union as having experience of, or has having received training in acting as a worker's companion at disciplinary or grievance hearings.

9.9.3 The companion's role is to help the employee prepare for the hearing, take notes during the hearing for the employee and remind the employee of information/issues the employee wishes to discuss. The companion may address the hearing in order to put the employee's case, ask questions of witnesses, sum up the employee's case and respond on the employee's behalf to any view expressed at the hearing. A companion may not answer questions directed to the employee, address the hearing if the employee does not wish it, or prevent the manager from explaining their case. The employee and/or the companion may request reasonable adjournments during a hearing e.g. in order to confer.

## 9.10 Record Keeping

9.10.1 All records relating to grievances should be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the x's Data Protection Statement (Appendix 3 of the x's E-policy), which require the secure storage and release of certain data to individuals on their request. The individuals concerned should be given copies, in confidence, of any meeting records, although in certain circumstances some information may be withheld (e.g. to protect a witness). Individuals should seek advice from an HR&P Adviser before withholding information.

# HUMAN RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE

## GRIEVANCE GUIDANCE

### 10 Guidance for Staff

#### Introduction

The Grievance Policy has been developed to enable any problems or concerns you have to be resolved in a fair and quick way. These guidance notes are not an integral part of the grievance policy but are intended to give you more information on how to raise a grievance and prepare for any meeting that arises. There are certain things that both you and managers must do and these have been included in the policy itself.

Each case will be considered on its own merits. If you need more guidance on the way this policy works, you can contact a member of the Human Resources & Performance (HR&P) team or your trade union, if you are a member, a Staff Committee member or a colleague. You can also refer to the ACAS web site ([www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)) and their code of practice for dispute resolution.

#### 10.1 What is a Grievance?

10.1.1 A grievance is a problem or concern that you have about your work, the work of a fellow employee which has affected you. It is impossible to provide a comprehensive list of all the issues that might give rise to a grievance but it may include:

- terms and conditions of employment including pay and grading issues);
- manager instructions re what work is to be carried out or in the method of delivery
- health and safety;
- relationships at work;
- new working practices;
- organisational change;
- equality and diversity issues.

10.1.2 You may wish to discuss how to set out your grievance with a member of the HR&P Team or your trade union or staff committee representative.

#### 10.2 Resolving a Grievance Informally

10.2.1 Before you decide to raise a formal grievance you should always try and resolve the matter informally first. There may be many reasons why a certain event happened or a decision was made and you may not be aware of all the circumstances. By discussing it with your manager (or some other appropriate person) first, you may find that you understand more and are therefore more accepting of the situation.

10.2.2 You should approach your manager as soon as a situation arises so that it doesn't escalate into something more serious. Before you discuss your concerns with your manager, think about the time and the place. You should state that you wish to raise a grievance so that the manager realises that you are concerned and gives due time and process to listening to your concern. You are not going to get the best result if you bombard your manager with questions while they are in the middle of finalising a report or standing in an open plan office.

10.2.3 Explain to your manager that you have a grievance and that you would like to discuss it with them more fully at a convenient time. Arrange to meet informally to discuss your concerns. Your manager might resolve your concerns by explaining the reasons behind the situation, or your manager may change their mind about a decision they have made once they consider your point of view more carefully. Alternatively, they may be able to suggest a different way of resolving a difficulty you have with a colleague that you haven't previously considered. Hopefully, this meeting will be enough to resolve your concerns or it will at least begin a course of action that will ultimately resolve the situation.

### 10.3 When and How do I progress to the grievance to the next Stage/s?

10.3.1 If you have tried to resolve the matter informally without success, you may wish to have your concerns considered more formally. If so, you will need to put your grievance into writing in order to fulfil statutory requirements.

10.3.2 Your grievance should set out:

- a summary of your concerns;
- its effect on you;
- why you feel it is unreasonable/unfair; and
- what you would like done to resolve it.

You might like to talk to a recognised trade union official, a staff committee representative or a work colleague to get another perspective before you pass your formal grievance to your manager. If you do not feel able, or it is not appropriate, to lodge your grievance with your manager, you should seek advice from the Head of HR&P.

10.3.3 In exceptional circumstances your manager, or the person with whom you lodged your grievance, may decide to refer your grievance to another manager or to a more senior manager at a higher stage of the procedure. This will happen when:

- your manager does not have the authority to resolve your grievance; or
- someone else would be better at considering your concerns.

### 10.4 Preparing for a Formal Grievance Meeting

10.4.1 If you intend to rely on any documents at a formal grievance meeting, you need to ensure they are provided in advance. It is helpful if you attach them to your grievance when you submit it. Whatever happens, you should ensure they are with the appropriate manager at least 2 full working days, before the meeting.

10.4.2 You may choose to be accompanied by a trade union official, staff committee representative or work colleague at any formal grievance meeting (see Right to be Accompanied at paragraph 10.5 for further information). You should let your manager (Stage 1) or HR&P (Stage 2 and 3) know the name of your companion no later than two working days before the meeting.

10.4.3 You can ask witnesses to attend at the appropriate time during any formal grievance meeting. In some cases it may be sufficient for them to write a statement for you to submit. If a manager needs more information from a witness to help them make their decision, they can always ask your witness(es) to attend the meeting or they can speak to them separately.

10.4.4 It is always helpful to set out what you want to say before a meeting. Read the documents you have submitted (if there are any). Try to be as factual, succinct and clear as possible. Discuss what you want to say with your companion before the meeting. It can be helpful to get another point of view and if they know what you wish to say they can be helpful in prompting you.

10.4.5 The person hearing your grievance will treat it confidentially. You also should think carefully about what you tell other people and consider confidentiality and the sensitive nature of some issues. That said, you may benefit from support from one or two close colleagues or you may need to discuss your grievance with other people if they witnessed a certain event.

## 10.5 Right to be accompanied

10.5.1 You have the right to be accompanied at a grievance hearing by a trade union official or a work colleague. You may not be accompanied by a solicitor or friend/relative from outside the x (unless required as a reasonable adjustment, for example, for a disability or to translate).

10.5.2 If you choose to be accompanied by a trade union official, it is good practice for this person to come from the union recognised by the x, i.e. UNISON. However, you have the right to be accompanied by an official from another trade union, as long as the official is certified by their union as having experience of, or has having received training in acting as a worker's companion at disciplinary or grievance hearings.

10.5.3 The companion's role is to help you prepare for the hearing, take notes during the hearing for you and remind you of information/issues you wish to discuss. The companion may address the hearing in order to put your case, ask questions of witnesses, sum up your case and respond on your behalf to any view expressed at the hearing. A companion may not answer questions directed to you, address the hearing if you do not wish it, or prevent the manager from explaining their case. You and/or your companion may request reasonable adjournments during a hearing e.g. in order to confer.

## 10.6 I'm a Witness - What does this Mean?

10.6.1 You may be asked to attend a grievance meeting or provide a witness statement if you saw an event happen or have information that may help clarify what happened in a specific situation. As an employee, you are responsible for providing this information as fully and truthfully as possible. The Authority is grateful to employees for being a witness in order to have as much information as possible to make a reasonable decision. You should check any witness statement carefully and ensure that it is accurate before signing it.

10.6.2 You will be told when and where you are needed. The person asking you to attend (either a manager or member of staff) will talk to you before and let you know what questions you are likely to be asked.

10.6.3 As a witness there is no need for you to be accompanied by anyone at a grievance meeting. You have not been accused of anything and there is no reason for you to be worried. As mentioned above we are grateful of your help in providing information to help the manager have as much information as possible for their decision making.

10.6.4 When you attend a grievance meeting you will only be there for the time it takes to

give your evidence. You will not have to stay for the whole of the meeting. People at the meeting may ask you questions. Usually these questions will be for clarification.

10.6.5 You must keep confidential any information you become aware of as part of your involvement in a grievance. Failure to do this could result in formal disciplinary action being taken against you.

## 10.7 Who Hears My Grievance?

10.7.1 The following is a guide to who usually conducts grievance meetings. It is not intended to be prescriptive and each case will be judged on its own merits.

- Stage 1 - Your line manager.
- Stage 2 - Your manager's manager, advised by the Head of HR&P.
- Stage 3 - if the organisation structure allows, a manager more senior than the stage 2 manager.

## 10.8 Stage 1 Meeting

10.8.1 At a Stage 1 meeting your manager will hear your grievance. They will also consider any documents that you present. You will receive written confirmation of the decision/outcome within 5 working days

10.8.2 If you are dissatisfied with the decision, you should take your grievance to Stage 2 by writing to your manager's manager within 10 working days of receiving the Stage 1 decision. In exceptional circumstances this timescale may be extended. You should explain:

- your grievance;
- why you are dissatisfied; and
- if possible, the outcome you consider reasonable.

## 10.9 Stage 2

10.9.1 At this meeting you and/or your companion will be asked to present your grievance. This hearing is a re-hearing of the grievance. Your manager or the manager who heard the Stage 1 grievance may also be present to answer questions. A HR&P adviser will be present to advise on the process and may ask questions. The manager hearing your grievance may ask you questions. Your companion can ask questions and advise you on your responses, but cannot answer questions on your behalf.

10.9.2 If a manager is present, they will be asked to explain the decision they made at the Stage 1 meeting. You and/or your companion will be able to question them, as will the manager hearing your grievance and the Head of HR&P.

10.9.3 Witnesses are called by the relevant party as part of the presentation of their case. Witnesses are only present to give evidence and do not stay for the whole meeting. Witnesses may be asked questions.

10.9.4 A manager may not need to be present if the letter they sent to you setting out their decision following a Stage 1 meeting is sufficient information. If so, you will just present your case and answer any questions.

10.9.5 At the end of the meeting both you and any presenting manager can sum up. If there is a presenting manager, they will go first.

10.9.6 This process is repeated if the grievance is heard at Stage 3.

## 10.10 Decisions

10.10.1 Any manager hearing a grievance has three choices when making a decision. They can:

- (i) dismiss your grievance if they can give you further information which resolves your grievance or if they do not think you are right;
- (ii) uphold your grievance in full or part if they believe you do have a case; or
- (iii) find an alternative solution, which is mutually acceptable to all parties. This alternative should resolve your grievance or provide a solution that is considered reasonable in all the circumstances.

10.10.2 If possible the manager will make a decision on the day of the meeting. Otherwise, they will usually ensure that you receive their decision in writing within 5 working days of the meeting. If you are dissatisfied with the decision, you can move your grievance to the next stage. To do this, you should write to HR&P explaining why you are still dissatisfied, within 10 working days of receiving the written decision.

## 10.11 Note-taking

10.11.1 There must be a documented record of all grievances.

10.11.2 A note-taker need not be present at grievance meetings. However, the manager hearing the grievance must ensure a record of the meeting is kept. This may mean the manager decides to appoint a note-taker.

10.11.3 All notes should be circulated after the hearing; they do not need to be typed but must be legible. The employee and their companion should be given the opportunity to put a copy of their comments/amendments to the notes on file.

10.11.4 Hand-written notes should be kept and stored confidentially along with other documents (see Record Keeping, below).

## 10.12 Record Keeping

10.12.1 All records relating to grievances will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the x's Data Protection Statement (Appendix 3 of the x's E-policy), which require the secure storage and release of certain data to individuals on their request. You will be given, in confidence, copies of any meeting records, although in certain circumstances some information may be withheld (e.g. to protect a witness).