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# Grievance Policy and Procedure

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Including homeworkers, office workers, part time, full time, permanent or fixed term contract. This policy also applies to employees during their probation period.

## 1.2. Policy

The RTPI is committed to creating a work environment where everyone feels able to raise concerns both informally and formally if they feel unfairly treated or are unhappy about any aspect of their employment at the RTPI, The purpose of this policy and procedure is to provide a route for resolving problems at work at the earliest opportunity and in a fair and timely manner.

No RTPI colleague will be victimised for raising a grievance in good faith, even if the grievance is not upheld. However, if it is found that a grievance is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent, the situation may result in disciplinary action.

## 1.3. What is a Grievance

According to ACAS, grievances are “concerns, problems or complaints that employees raise with their employers.”

Grievances can be collective or individual. Grievances apply to complaints where the concerns are not covered by any other organisational policy and cannot be resolved through alternative means (i.e. informal discussion). The following are examples for which a grievance may be raised, and is not an exhaustive list:

- Terms and conditions of employment
- Working Relationships
- Working conditions
- New working practices/changes

## 1.4. Out of Scope

If you have a concern relating to bullying and/or harassment, please refer to the Dignity at Work Policy.

If you have a concern regarding potential malpractice or impropriety, please refer to the Protected Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy.

If you have a complaint about disciplinary action taken against you, this will be dealt with as an appeal under the Disciplinary Procedure.

If you have a complaint about the outcome of a redundancy consultation, this will be dealt with as an appeal under the Managing Change Procedure.

## 2. Responsibilities

### 2.1. All RTPI Colleagues

All RTPI colleagues have a responsibility to:

- Familiarise themselves with the content of this document;
- Engage with managers in any attempts to resolve their grievance informally;
- Raise concerns as soon as possible to allow matters to be resolved as quickly as possible using this policy and procedure; and
- Keep records where possible of any incidents related to the grievance.

### 2.2. Managers

All managers have a responsibility to:

- Seek support regarding the application of this policy from the designated HR Representative as appropriate
- Gain a thorough understanding of the nature of the employee's concern being raised and seek to agree a resolution.

### 2.3. The HR department

The HR department will:

- Ensure that formal meetings are conducted appropriately
- Provide advice to managers and employees concerning the application of this procedure where appropriate
- Monitor the application of the policy to ensure it is applied in a fair and consistent manner to each concern;
- Remind colleagues of their right to be accompanied at formal meetings; and
- Maintain a record of informal and formal grievances and resolutions.

## 3. Procedure

### 3.1. Informal Stage

Most grievances can be raised and settled informally with your line manager during the course of everyday working relationships. If you have problems or concerns about your work, working conditions or working relationships, the first course of action is to raise these concerns informally with your manager who will attempt to resolve the concern on an informal basis.

If you don't feel able to raise the matter with your manager or if your manager is the subject of the problem or concern, you can ask for support from the Human Resources department who can either provide support or may be able to raise the matter on your behalf.

## 3.2. Formal Stage

### 3.2.1. Raising a grievance

If attempts to resolve the matter informally do not work, it may be appropriate for you to raise a formal grievance under this procedure.

A formal grievance can be raised by putting your grievance in writing, heading it 'Formal Grievance' and submitting it to your manager without unreasonable delay and normally within three months of the date of any alleged incident. Your grievance must include:

- The nature of the grievance i.e. what events or situation has caused your concerns
- The outcome that you are looking for (please see notes below)
- Any supporting documentation or evidence that you wish to be considered.

If your grievance is unclear, you may be asked to clarify your complaint before any meeting takes place.

When considering the outcome that you are looking for, take into consideration the limits on what can be offered as a resolution through the Grievance Procedure. For example, you may feel that it is appropriate for an investigation to take place into a colleague's conduct which may, if appropriate, lead to action under the Disciplinary and Capability Procedure. However, it is not appropriate to ask that a colleague is dismissed or given a warning because that would be determined separately by following the Disciplinary and Capability Procedure, not the Grievance Procedure. In compliance with data protection rules, it may not be possible to provide full details of any action taken under the Disciplinary and Capability Procedure.

If your manager is the subject of the grievance, you may submit your formal grievance to the Human Resources department who will appoint an appropriate manager to consider the grievance.

Grievances raised while you are subject to disciplinary proceedings or investigations will usually be heard only when the disciplinary process has been completed. If a grievance has any bearing on disciplinary proceedings, it can be raised as a relevant issue in the course of those proceedings.

Confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible by all parties involved in the grievance process, including the individual who has raised a grievance, whether this is at the informal or the formal stage. The investigation will normally require limited disclosure on a 'need to know' basis.

### 3.2.2. How the grievance will be considered

The Human Resources department will identify an appropriately skilled manager to hold a grievance meeting with you, investigate the matter and come to a decision. Normally this will be your line manager but an alternative manager will be allocated to investigate if this is not appropriate.

You will be invited to this meeting in writing within a reasonable time of receiving the grievance.

The purpose of the grievance meeting is to openly discuss and carefully consider the grievance with you, and to look for ways to resolve it with a positive outcome. Ideally this meeting will take place

directly, but, owing to the geographical spread of our workforce, on occasion and by agreement, this may take place virtually.

This meeting forms the start of the manager's investigation of the grievance. It is therefore likely that the meeting will be adjourned to allow further investigation. The extent of the investigation needed will depend on the nature of the grievance. The investigation may involve further meetings with you and may also involve taking statements from other colleagues or the gathering of other relevant information. All meetings which take place during the investigation will be minuted. In exceptional circumstances, the evidence given by individuals may have to remain confidential. Where confidentiality is necessary, this will be explained to you and an appropriate summary of the evidence gathered will be shared.

### **3.2.3. *The grievance decision***

The manager will take some time to carefully consider the grievance and will be advised by the Human Resources department. You will be informed of the outcome and any action that will be taken in writing. This should usually be within 10 working days. If a decision cannot be made within the usual 10 working days you will be informed of when you should expect an outcome.

## **4. Support**

Grievances and their investigation may be upsetting for all parties concerned and you are reminded of the services of Health Assured, which are completely confidential. If you are the subject of a grievance, it does not necessarily mean that you have done anything wrong. The point of the grievance investigation process is to establish the facts and what the issue(s) is and the focus is to resolve the problem(s).

As the originator of the grievance or as the subject of the grievance, you are entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative at all official meetings. If you feel you need additional support, please let HR know, who will discuss options with you.

## **5. Appeal**

If you feel that your grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, you may make a formal appeal against the outcome and any proposed actions.

Your appeal should be made in writing to the Human Resources department within five working days of receiving written confirmation of the grievance decision. Your appeal must state clearly either:

- why you feel that the decision was incorrect
- why you feel the investigation into the grievance was flawed or
- why you are dissatisfied with the remedy to the grievance.

The Human Resources department will assign an appropriately skilled manager to hear the appeal. As far as is reasonably practicable, the appeal will be with a more senior manager than the one who dealt with the original grievance. If this is not possible, then another manager, who has not had any involvement with the matter will hear the appeal.

You will be invited to attend a grievance appeal meeting in writing within a reasonable time of receiving the appeal.

The appeal manager will review the grievance meeting notes and any other related documents, consider the case that you make in the appeal meeting, take advice from the Human Resources department and may undertake further investigation if appropriate. The appeal manager will then decide whether or not the conclusion reached in the original grievance hearing was appropriate.

You will be informed of the decision in writing, normally within 10 working days. If a decision cannot be made within the usual 10 working days you will be informed of when you should expect an outcome. The decision will be final and the appeal is the final stage of the grievance procedure.

## 6. The role of the companion

You may, if you wish, bring a work colleague or trade union representative as a companion to a grievance meeting or appeal meeting. If you choose to be accompanied, you must inform the Human Resources department in writing in advance of the grievance meeting, stating who your companion is – either a fellow employee or a union official. The companion can:

- have a say at the meeting;
- confer with you at any time during the meeting;
- put your case; and
- sum up your case.

However, the companion is not permitted to answer questions on your behalf or to address the meeting without the your consent.

If your chosen companion is unavailable on the day scheduled for the meeting, the meeting can be rescheduled, provided that you can propose an alternative time within five working days of the scheduled date.

## 7. Contacts

The main contact should be your line manager. However, if you require further information on the Grievance Procedure please contact the Human Resources department.

## 8. Related documents

[Dignity at Work Policy](#)

[Protected disclosure \(Whistleblowing\) Policy](#)

[Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)

[Employee Assistance Programme \(Health Assured\)](#)

## 9. Monitoring and review of the policy

This policy has been discussed at the staff committee and will be reviewed and amended in line with legislation and will be subject to a formal review every three years by the Human Resources department.