



Free2B Alliance

Grievance Policy

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Amended by: Lee Smith, reviewed by Amica HR

Authorised: Board of Directors

Next review period in 5 years – March 2026

Unless an earlier review is triggered by any of the following changes:

- There are changes to operating environment / or strategic direction of the company
- Work behaviour issues that require clarification
- Changes to government policy or legislation

# Grievance

## Policy

The aim of the policy is to settle grievances fairly, and it is intended to operate simply and rapidly. Every effort will be made to resolve and to settle the issue amicably at the earliest possible stage and avoid proceeding to the next stage. A grievance may be raised against an Employee, a manager or a management decision. This policy is open to all employees to use except for those who are still on their probation period.

In the case of a grievance being taken out as a counter-grievance, or in response to the instigation of disciplinary action, it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently. If appropriate, the disciplinary procedure may be suspended until the outcome of the grievance procedure is known.

If an Employee has an issue with any other Employees or manager, in the first instance they should attempt to find an informal solution. In some cases, this may require assistance such as mediation. It is preferable for both parties to discuss the matter, and the organisation encourages employees to have open and honest discussions where possible to reach a solution. If this not possible, the matter should be referred to the Employee's line-manager or senior manager if the line manager is part of the issue.

If the issue is serious, remains unresolved or the Employee wishes to raise the matter formally, they can by invoking the formal grievance procedure, as detailed below. A grievance should be raised in writing without unreasonable delay, normally within one month of the incident (or final incident) which has given rise to the complaint.

This is three stages of the procedure and there will be at least one meeting to discuss the grievance.

At each stage of the procedure an Employee is entitled to be accompanied by a fellow worker or trade union official, but not a solicitor or lawyer.

All parties will be given at least five working days advance notice in writing of the any grievance hearing(s) date. If the first date offered is not acceptable, the party they must say in writing why and provide dates to be avoided within two working days of receiving the notice. The manager responsible for the grievance should offer one further and final date to accommodate the employees request. However, unless it is beyond the employees control they cannot attend the new hearing date the manager may decide whether to postpone the hearing, this manager's judgement and discretion.

The Employee and their representative will be allowed an adequate time to prepare the Employee's case, within the time limits as set out below.

## Procedure

To start of the process the Employee must detail in writing the circumstances which they believe constitute the grievance, including dates, times, witnesses, etc. as applicable. Employees should be factual in their account.

At each stage of the Grievance the person or panel hearing the case shall undertake a full investigation and there shall be a hearing, to allow the Employee to put their case and state how they would like to see it resolved.

Formal records must be kept and the outcome of each stage shall be confirmed in writing. Employees is encouraged to keep their own records, and are entitled to record their disagreement with the accuracy of the formal record. However, both parties will seek to agree the formal records where possible. If there is a disagreement on the records which cannot be resolved, the investigating officer will retain both versions.

The stages of the procedure are as follows:

#### Stage 1

A grievance should first be raised in writing with their line-manager who should attempt to settle it as soon as possible. The line manager will invite the Employee to attend a meeting, normally within five working days, to discuss the matter. The line manager will hold any additional meetings which would in their view, resolve the grievance. The line manager may adjourn the meeting if it is necessary to investigate any new facts that arise.

#### Stage 2

If not resolved by the line manager within ten working days, the matter may be raised with the Director or Chair where the line manager is the Director. The grievance should be set out in writing, dated and sent to the Director (or Chair). The Director (or Chair) will call a hearing to take place within ten working days of the matter being formally raised. It may be appropriate to have a note taker to make a record of the meeting, a copy of the notes should be provided to the Employee. Where possible the notes should be agreed, but if they cannot, then both sets of notes should be kept on file alongside each other.

#### Stage 3 - Appeal

If still unresolved, the matter may be referred, in writing, to the Board of Directors (through the Chair), who shall appoint an Appeal Panel consisting of not less than two representatives of the Association. The members of this panel should, if at all possible, have had no direct involvement in the case. One member of the Panel shall be elected Chair. A note taker should be present to make a record of the meeting, a copy of the notes should be provided to the Employee. Where possible the notes should be agreed, but if they cannot, then both sets of notes should be kept on file alongside each other.

The Appeal Panel will hold a hearing as soon as possible, but not later than fifteen working days from the receipt of the formal notification from the Employee.

The decision of the Appeal Panel shall be final.

#### **Group grievance**

Where a group of employees has a collective grievance, the procedure should start at Stage 2 above.

#### **Dismissal**

If there is still further misconduct or failure to improve performance, or if the offence constitutes gross misconduct, dismissal will normally result. The Employee will be provided as soon as possible with written reasons for dismissal, the date on which their employment will

terminate and they will be advised of the right of appeal. Dismissal decisions can only be taken by the delegated Management Committee members.

#### Procedure

An Employee will be written to setting out the facts, that termination of their contract is being considered and the reasons for this. The Employee will be invited to a meeting to discuss this matter and put their case forward. At this meeting they will have the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union representative. A decision will be made at this meeting and they will be informed of this in writing. They can appeal against this decision.

Those on a probation who reach a sickness absence level of 5% of their probationary period will be subject to a management committee review. The outcome of the review could be a decision to extend the probationary period or dismissal. There will be no recourse to the appeal, as they do not have two years qualifying service. More information on the dismissal process can be found in the probation section.

#### Levels Disciplinary Action and management authority required

Level of warning	Lowest level of management with Authority to conduct meeting and issue warning	Appeal
Informal	Line manager	No right of appeal
Suspension	Director	No right of appeal
First warning	Line manager	Director
Final written warning	Director	A Director not previously involved
Dismissal	Director	Board of Directors