

Preparing for a Formal Grievance Meeting – Guidance for Managers

Extract from ACAS Guide – Discipline and Grievances at Work

What is a grievance meeting?

In general terms a grievance meeting deals with any grievance raised by an employee.

Preparing for the meeting

Managers should:

- arrange a meeting promptly, in private where there will not be interruptions e.g. telephones should be diverted and mobile phones switched off
- consider arranging for someone who is not involved in the case to take a note of the meeting and to act as a witness to what was said
- whether similar grievances have been raised before, how they have been resolved, and any follow-up action that has been necessary. This allows consistency of treatment.
- consider arranging for an interpreter where the employee has difficulty speaking English
- consider whether any reasonable adjustments are necessary for a person who is disabled and/or their companion
- consider whether to offer independent mediation.

Conduct of the meeting

Managers should:

- remember that a grievance hearing is not the same as a disciplinary hearing, and is an occasion when discussion and dialogue may lead to an amicable solution.
- make introductions as necessary
- invite the employee to re-state their grievance and how they would like to see it resolved
- put care and thought into resolving grievances. They are not normally issues calling for snap decisions, and the employee may have been holding the grievance for a long time. Make allowances for any reasonable 'letting off steam' if the employee is under stress
- consider adjourning the meeting if it is necessary to investigate any new facts which arise
- sum up the main points
- tell the employee when they might reasonably expect a response if one cannot be made at the time, bearing in mind the time limits set out in the organisation's procedure.

Be calm, fair and follow the procedure

Grievances can sometimes be taken as personal criticism – managers should be careful to hear any grievance in a calm and objective manner, being as fair to the employee as possible in the resolution of the problem.

Following the grievance procedure can make this easier.

Grievances about fellow employees

These can be made easier by following the grievance procedure and the Behavioural standards in the workplace guidance ([insert link](#)).

An employee may be the cause of grievances among his or her co-employees – perhaps on grounds of personal hygiene, attitude, or capability for the job.

Employers must deal with these cases carefully and should generally start by talking privately to the individual about the concerns of fellow employees. This may resolve the grievance.

Dealing with special cases

Whistleblowing cases will be dealt with under the Authority's Whistleblowing policy and Procedures.

The same grievance raised by one or more employee from the same department will be dealt with under the Authority's Collective Disputes Policy.

Clearly confidentiality is of prime importance when handling any such grievance, although the outcome may need to be made known if, for instance, someone is found to have bullied or harassed an individual and the result is disciplinary action.