

Equality Impact Assessment

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

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1. Defining the Aims of the Procedure

- To provide a clear mechanism for employees to raise problems or concerns regarding work, the working environment or working relationships.
- To provide a framework for such issues to be dealt with informally, but with recourse to a formal procedure when required.
- To recognise that unresolved grievances are likely to undermine the confidence and trust between managers and employees and the achievement of expected work standards.
- To ensure that grievances are taken seriously and that the process is clear and consistent.
- To signpost to employees that there are separate procedures for reporting bullying and harassment and for whistleblowing.

The Procedure is defined by the Corporate HR team. It is managed by departmental HR teams. The appeal process is administered by the Corporate HR Team.

The stakeholders are: HR, all employees, all managers, the Trade Unions and the Elected Members who hear appeals. Ex-employees are now also able to raise grievances.

What might hinder the Procedure?

- If employees are not aware of the correct procedure to follow or are unclear about the outcomes they are seeking.
- If managers do not respond swiftly and appropriately, in line with the aims of the procedure, either due to a lack of skill and knowledge or because of a particular management style and culture.
- In the past, in some areas, grievances have been considered by several people – starting for example with a supervisor. This could leave the employee feeling, by the time the issue reaches a senior manager, that the same decision is going to be made, rather than fresh consideration being given to their grievance. This may also delay the procedure.
- It must be recognised that it is a difficult decision for most employees to follow a formal procedure. They may feel that their job prospects will be adversely affected.
- The current procedure does not outline a structure for what will happen at the Grievance Hearing. This has been criticised in the past at the appeal stage and elected members have specifically asked for this to be developed.

2. Available Data and Research

The Authority is working towards collecting up to date monitoring data for all employees, in line with the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000. This will include monitoring of grievances. Currently, data is only available within the Social Services and Housing department. This has therefore been used to provide a snapshot for the purposes of this impact assessment. It should be noted that data is only collected on formal grievances submitted and the outcomes – whether the grievance is upheld or not, or upheld in part, are not recorded. In future, monitoring will take place on an ongoing basis, led by the Equalities Monitoring Group.

In 2004/5, 6 formal grievances were dealt with. 3 were from female staff and 3 from male. All were white British and none declared themselves to be disabled.

3. Assessment of Impacts

Based on the available data – which must be acknowledged as minimal – there is no evidence of adverse impact based on race, disability or gender.

4. Possible Measures to Mitigate Impact / Promote Equality of Opportunity

- Relaunch a revised procedure and communicate this to staff, including a procedural flowchart to aid understanding.
- Include a standard form to try to ensure that the stages of the procedure are followed within the agreed timescales and involving the right people. This should also ask the employee to indicate the outcome they are seeking.
- The new procedure should include more detail about how matters can be resolved informally, including the support that is available to all parties. This should, in some cases, avoid formal grievances and allow for an early resolution of the issue.
- Managers should be trained in the Grievance Procedure. The Middle Managers' Knowledge / Skills programme will address this.
- The procedure should include a structure for the Grievance Hearing.
- Due to new statutory guidance, the procedure needs to include a route for ex-employees to have grievances heard.
- The Equality Monitoring Group needs to advise on the exact data to be recorded and ensure this includes the outcomes of employee grievances.

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