

Principles of Grievance Mechanisms

Provision of information

All workers should be informed about the grievance mechanism at the time they are hired, and details about how it operates should be easily available, for example, included in worker documentation or on notice boards.

Transparency of the process

Workers must know to whom they can turn in the event of a grievance and the support and sources of advice that are available to them. All line and senior managers must be familiar with their organization's grievance procedure.

Keeping it up to date

The process should be regularly reviewed and kept up to date, for example, by referencing any new statutory guidelines, changes in contracts or representation.

Confidentiality

The process should ensure that a complaint is dealt with confidentially. While procedures may specify that complaints should first be made to the workers' line manager, there should also be the option of raising a grievance first with an alternative manager, for example, a human resource (personnel) manager.

Non-retribution

Procedures should guarantee that any worker raising a complaint will not be subject to any reprisal.

Reasonable timescales

Procedures should allow for time to investigate grievances fully, but should aim for swift resolutions. The longer a grievance is allowed to continue, the harder it can be for both sides to get back to normal afterwards. Time limits should be set for each stage of the process, for example, a maximum time between a grievance being raised and the setting up of a meeting to investigate it.

Right of appeal

A worker should have the right to appeal to a higher level of management if he or she is not happy with the initial finding.

Right to be accompanied

In any meetings or hearings, the worker should have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a representative.

Keeping records

Written records should be kept at all stages. The initial complaint should be in writing if possible, along with the response, notes of any meetings and the findings and the reasons for the findings.

Relationship with collective agreements

Grievance procedures may be included in collective agreements. Any additional processes should be consistent with these. Relationship with regulation: grievance processes are set out in employment codes. Workplace processes should be compliant with these.