



Langton Matravers Parish Council

Grievance Procedure

Purpose and scope

It is the policy of the Council to give employees the opportunity to air and seek redress for any grievance which they may have. Grievances may be any concerns, problems or complaints that employees wish to raise with the council. This procedure will apply to all employees unless it conflicts with contractual or statutory requirement, which will take precedence.

Principles

1. At every stage in the procedure the employee will be given the opportunity to state his or her case before any decision is made.
2. Grievances will be dealt with promptly and consistently.
3. At all formal stages the employee will have the right to be accompanied by an agreed nominated representative other than a solicitor or legal representative.
4. An employee will have the right to appeal against the outcome of a Grievance Meeting.
5. At no time, will an employee be penalised or victimised for having raised a grievance against the council.

Stage 1 - Raising the Complaint

Wherever possible, any grievance including bullying or harassment should be raised informally with the Parish Clerk, who will seek to resolve the matter. If the employee does not consider it appropriate to raise the grievance informally then the employee should submit a formal written grievance to the Parish Clerk. In the case where the Parish Clerk is raising the grievance or is the subject of the grievance, then the grievance should be directed to the Chairman of the Council's Staff Employment, Discipline and Complaints Committee (SEDACC) unless the complaint is about the Chairman of SEDACC in which case another member of SEDACC will be identified to handle the grievance. If the grievance relates to the whole of the Council, advice will be sought from an appropriate outside body. If the grievance relates to a possible breach of the Code of Conduct by a Councillor then the matter must be handled under the complaints procedure which takes legal precedence.

Stage 2 – The Formal Grievance Meeting:

Normally, within 5 working days of receipt of a written complaint, the Chairman of SEDACC will arrange a meeting with the employee. At the meeting, SEDACC will investigate the substance of the complaint and hear submissions from the employee concerned together with such other evidence as shall be considered appropriate.

The Chairman of SEDACC will advise their decision to the employee in writing within 14 days of the meeting and, where appropriate, include an action plan to assist in the resolution of the problem. This will be copied into the council.

Stage 3 – The Appeal:

An employee who wishes to appeal against a grievance decision should write to the Chair of SEDACC within five working days giving reasons for the appeal. An appeal may be raised if:

- the employee thinks the finding or penalty is unfair or
- the employee thinks that the procedure was not applied properly and he/she thinks that they might have been disadvantaged due to this.

The Appeal will be heard by The Staff Appeals Committee (SAC). The employee will have the right to be accompanied by an agreed representative. The outcome of the appeal and reasons for it will be advised to the employee within 14 days of the meeting in writing. The decision taken at the appeal hearing will be final.

Relevant Committees

SEDACC and SAC will be elected annually by the full Council. In situations where individual members are implicated in the dispute or have undertaken an investigatory role then they will not be able to sit on that specific panel.

Confidentiality

So far as is reasonably practicable, the council will keep any grievance confidential between those investigating the grievance, the employee and the person about whom the grievance or complaint is made. If it is necessary to investigate the matter with any other employee or person, those other parties will be advised, as appropriate, as to the confidentiality of the matter.

Note Taking

The Clerk or Committee Chairman as appropriate will take notes of any Stage 1 grievance meeting which he/she calls. A note-taker will be provided by the Council for all Stage 2 and 3 hearings and appeals. These notes will be placed in a confidential file and kept for as long as is reasonable.

Grievances raised during Disciplinary Procedure

Where a matter is subject to both a disciplinary and grievance procedure then the grievance process will normally take precedence.

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