

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that employees raise with their employers. This document sets out the procedures that Godalming Town Council will use to deal with their employees' grievances.

In most cases of grievance an informal approach between employee and line manager is the best way to proceed. This procedure is for use when an informal approach has not resolved matters to the satisfaction of an employee or when the informal approach seems inappropriate.

Inevitably, because the Town Council is a small organisation, Members will be required to hear either a grievance or an appeal. Members must always follow this procedure and should always seek external support and advice when dealing with a grievance raised by an employee (particularly when the grievance is raised by, or is about, the Town Clerk). Suitable sources of advice include the Surrey Association Local Councils (SALC) or the Town Council's solicitors (Penningtons LLP).

STEP 1 – STATEMENT OF GRIEVANCE

- The employee must put their grievance in writing and send the statement or a copy of it to the Town Clerk or the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Staffing Sub Committee (acting as 'the employer').
- The Town Clerk must inform the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Staffing Sub Committee that a statement of grievance has been received.

STEP 2 – MEETING

- The Town Clerk or the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Staffing Sub Committee (the employer) must invite the employee to attend a meeting to discuss the grievance. The invitation to the meeting should be in writing and specify the date, time and place that the meeting is to take place and inform the employee of their right to be accompanied (see below).
- The meeting must not take place unless:
 - i) the employee has informed the employer what the basis for the grievance was when they made the statement under Step 1; and
 - ii) the employer has had a reasonable opportunity to consider their response to that information.
- The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
- The employee has the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow worker, Trade Union official, friend or family member.

- The employer may be represented by two individuals as appropriate: either the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk; the Town Clerk and a Member of the Staffing Sub Committee; or the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Staffing Sub Committee and another member of that sub-committee.
- The meeting must be held as soon as possible, preferably within five working days of receipt of the statement of grievance, and in private in a proper office or meeting room (for example it would not be appropriate for the meeting to take place at anyone's home).
- If the employee, or the employee's companion, cannot attend on a proposed date the employee can suggest another date so long as it is reasonable and is not more than five working days after the date originally proposed by the employer. This five-day time limit may be extended by mutual agreement.
- Within five working days of the meeting the employer must inform the employee in writing as to their response to the grievance and notify them of the right of appeal against the decision if they are not satisfied with it. The employer's response may be that further investigation is required, subject to the agreement of the employee and to the investigation being concluded in a timely manner.

STEP 3 – APPEAL

- If the employee does wish to appeal they must inform the employer (either the Town Clerk or the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Staffing Sub Committee).
- In the event of an appeal the Town Clerk or the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Staffing Sub Committee must ask the Policy & Management Committee (or Full Council) to appoint an Appeals Panel to consist of two individuals¹ who have not heard the original grievance – the request must go to the next meeting of the Policy & Management Committee (or direct to Full Council if that meets sooner).
- The appeal meeting should be held, in private in a proper office or meeting room, within five working days of the Policy & Management Committee (or Full Council) meeting that appoints the Appeals Panel.
- The employer must invite the employee to attend the appeal meeting. The invitation to the appeal meeting should be in writing and specify the date, time and place that the meeting is to take place and inform the employee of their right to be accompanied (as at Step 2).
- The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the appeal meeting.
- The employee has the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow worker or Trade Union official.
- If the employee, or the employee's companion, cannot attend on a proposed date the employee can suggest another date so long as it is reasonable and is not more than five working days after the date originally proposed by the employer. This five-day time limit may be extended by mutual agreement.
- Within five working days of the appeal meeting the Appeals Panel must inform the employee in writing as to their final decision.

¹ These individuals need not necessarily be Members of Godalming Town Council.