



GRIEVANCE POLICY

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Bridge Case Management (BCM) is committed to ensuring that any potential issue at work, concerns, and grievances, are brought to a resolution in a fair and consistent manner in line with our behaviours.
- 1.2 BCM recognises that issues may arise that have the potential to negatively impact upon good working relations. The aim of this document is to provide a framework to aid the resolution of such issues and to provide colleagues with a reasonable and prompt opportunity to speak up.
- 1.3 Conflict in the workplace may be concerned with a wide range of issues, for example, the allocation of work, the working environment or conditions, the opportunities that you have been given for career development, disputes between colleagues or the way in which you feel you have been managed.

2 Responsibilities

2.1 All parties should co-operate constructively in resolving any issues that arise. To this end, colleagues are encouraged to follow the formal grievance procedure, once all efforts have been made to resolve the issue through informal discussions.

2.2 We commit to:

- Creating a working environment whereby colleagues treat each other with respect at work and in accordance with our Group behaviours, showing kindness and trust to each other.
- Ensure all colleagues are treated with respect at work and guidance to make sure all matters are settled informally where possible.
- Ensure all colleagues are made fully aware of ways to speak up where there are concerns, without fear of consequences or retribution.
- Training managers and all colleagues about their rights and responsibilities under the grievance policy and for managers, specifically how to appropriately manage the process.

Investigating any complaints in line with the relevant policy and take appropriate action in a timely way, with importance and significance given to the process.

2.3 Line Managers should:

- Promote an informal approach to the resolution of any conflict in the workplace.
- Refer to our Chief Operating Officer to ensure the grievance procedure is followed appropriately.
- Treat all conflict seriously, dealing with each one fairly, consistently, and sensitively and in line with our behaviours.

Address any conflict promptly and within the given timescales.

2.4 Colleagues should:

- Familiarise themselves with how to raise any grievances or deal with any conflict
- Raise issues in a timely manner and at the earliest opportunity
- Work in constructive dialogue with their manager on an informal basis to genuinely seek resolution to an issue
- Co-operate in full of any investigation initiated following a submission or a formal grievance

3 Raising a concern

- Concerns that require resolution will not normally be admitted for consideration at a formal stage until all attempts have been made to resolve at an informal level. Where the concern is deemed to be serious, it may be necessary to progress immediately to a formal stage, this will be agreed with the involvement of the line manager and Chief Operating Officer.
- An informal resolution may involve a conversation or meeting to discuss the grievance. Where there is conflict between two colleagues, it may involve asking the line manager to arrange a meeting between the two parties with the line manager or a member of the Executive Team as a mediator. Colleagues will need to consider what outcome they are looking for.
- Once informal channels have been exhausted and matters remain unresolved, concerns should be submitted in writing to the colleague's current line manager, or in cases where the conflict relates directly to the line manager, it should be raised with the Chief Operating Officer or another member of the Executive Team. Colleagues should ensure it includes:
 - A concise summary of the issue
 - What steps have been taken to resolve informally
 - Details of any witness or supporting evidence
 - A desired outcome/resolution

3.1 Upon receipt, the letter will be acknowledged, and an investigation carried out. The colleague will be invited to a meeting, the outcome of which will be confirmed in writing.

3.2 The meeting will be held as soon as it is reasonably practical for all parties. It will normally be conducted by the line manager or, if inappropriate, by an independent manager and a note taker will keep a record of the meeting. The colleague will be asked to explain the nature of the conflict and what action would resolve the matter. Where appropriate, the meeting may be adjourned to allow further investigations to take place.

3.3 The colleague will be entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by either a work colleague or union representative. It is the colleague's responsibility to ensure their chosen companion is willing to accompany and available to attend the meeting.

3.4 If unable to attend because of circumstances beyond personal control, the colleague must inform the manager chairing the meeting as soon as possible. If the colleagues fail to attend without explanation or fails to engage in the process, we will consider that the matter raised has been withdrawn. In exceptional circumstances, meetings may be held in their absence.

3.5 Following the meeting, the colleague will be informed in writing of the outcome within 14 days, this may be extended if there are further investigations, and the colleague will be informed in writing. The Manager can either decide that the issue raised is:-

- Not upheld
- Partially upheld
- Fully upheld

3.6 The outcome will include a summary of the reasons for the decision, the proposed resolution and notification of the right to appeal against the outcome of the meeting.

4 COLLECTIVE PROCEDURE

4.1 When more than one colleague in more than one area is raising a concern regarding the same issue, a meeting will be convened inviting all parties. If this involves many colleagues, they can nominate an agreed representative (usually to a minimum of 3 colleagues) to represent them at any stage of the procedure. The Chief Operating Officer should be involved to support the process.

5 APPEAL PROCEDURE

5.1 If a colleague is dissatisfied with the outcome following a meeting, they have 5 working days within which to lodge a formal appeal. An appeal must clearly state the grounds of appeal i.e., the basis on which the outcome was wrong or that the action taken as a result was inappropriate. Typical grounds for appeal may include, but are not limited to:-

- Procedural flaws within the process that might have influenced the outcome.
- A further review of the evidence previously provided.
- The assertion that the outcome issued is not supported by evidence.

5.2 The colleague will be invited to the appeal meeting. If the colleague is unable to attend because of circumstances beyond their control, this must be communicated as soon as possible.

5.3 The appeal meeting will be conducted by an independent manager who chaired the initial meeting. The chair will consider the grounds and assess whether the conclusion reached in the original meeting was appropriate. The appeal is not a rehearing of the original meeting, but rather a consideration of the specific areas outlined in the appeal document. The manager conducting the appeal may therefore confine discussion to those specific areas rather than reconsider the whole matter.

5.4 If the colleague fails to attend without explanation, it will be taken that they have considered the matter resolved or closed.

5.5 The outcome of the appeal will be communicated in writing within 5 working days unless there are further investigations, The outcome will be final with no further right of appeal.

6 DISCIPLINARY CONNECTION

6.1 In the situation whereby a colleague raises a grievance during a disciplinary process, the disciplinary may be temporarily suspended to enable the dispute to be heard and concluded. When it is unrelated, it may be appropriate to manage both the disciplinary and the dispute investigation concurrently.

- 6.2 If the dispute constitutes mitigation to the allegations being dealt with under the terms of the disciplinary procedure, then it may be considered appropriate to deal with the issues raised as part of the on-going disciplinary proceedings.
- 6.3 The grievance procedure should not be used simply to provide a further level of appeal against a disciplinary sanction already issued and appealed.