

TITLE

WADHURST PCC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all employees have access to a procedure to help deal with any grievances relating to their employment fairly and without unreasonable delay.

We aim to investigate any formal grievance raised by an employee, hold a meeting to discuss it with them, inform them in writing of the outcome, and give them a right of appeal if they are not satisfied.

CONTENTS

1. About this procedure
2. Using this procedure
3. Raising grievances informally
4. Formal written grievances
5. Investigations
6. Right to be accompanied
7. Grievance meetings
8. Appeals
9. Overlapping grievance and disciplinary cases

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

1. About this procedure

Issues that could cause grievances may include:

- terms and conditions of employment
- health and safety
- work relations
- bullying and harassment
- new working practices
- working environment
- organisational change
- discrimination.

2. Using this procedure

This Grievance Procedure should not be used to complain about dismissal or disciplinary action. If an employee is dissatisfied with any disciplinary action, they should submit an appeal under the appropriate procedure.

If an employee has difficulty at any stage of the Grievance Procedure because of a disability or because English is not their first language, the employee should discuss the situation with the Vicar or a churchwarden as soon as possible.

Written grievances will be placed on the personnel file along with a record of any decisions taken and any notes or other documents compiled during the grievance process. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

3. Raising grievances informally

Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with the Vicar or a churchwarden. If the employee feels unable to speak to one of these, for example, because the complaint concerns him or her, then the employee should speak informally to a different churchwarden or another officer of the PCC who has no conflict of interest with either the employee or any person about whom a complaint is being raised. If this does not resolve the issue, the employee should follow the formal procedure below.

4. Formal written grievances

If the employee grievance cannot be resolved informally the employee should put it in writing and submit it to the Vicar or a churchwarden, indicating that it is a formal grievance.

If the grievance concerns the churchwarden or Vicar, the employee may submit it to the second churchwarden instead. If the grievance concerns the Vicar and both churchwardens, or the churchwarden not the subject of the grievance is absent for a

significant period, then the matter should be raised with another officer of the PCC who has no conflict of interest with either the employee or any person about whom a complaint is being raised.

The written grievance should contain a brief description of the nature of the complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved. In some situations, we may ask the employee to provide further information.

5. Investigations

It may be necessary for us to carry out an investigation into the employee grievance. The amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from the employee and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. The investigation may be carried out by the Vicar or churchwarden, or a PCC member appointed by them who has no conflict of interest with either party.

The employee must co-operate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing us of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to us and attending interviews, as part of our investigation.

We may initiate an investigation before holding a grievance meeting where we consider this appropriate. In other cases, we may hold a grievance meeting before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. In those cases, we will hold a further grievance meeting with the employee after our investigation and before we reach a decision.

6. Right to be accompanied

The employee may bring a work companion to any grievance meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. The employee must tell the Vicar **OR** the person holding the grievance meeting who the employee's chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting.

At the meeting, the employee's companion may make representations to us and ask questions but should not answer questions on the employee's behalf. The employee may talk privately with them at any time during the meeting.

Acting as a companion is voluntary and the employee's colleagues are under no obligation to do so. If they agree to do so they will be allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion.

If the employee's chosen companion is unavailable at the time a meeting is scheduled and will not be available for more than five working days afterwards, we may ask the employee to choose someone else.

We may, at our discretion, allow the employee to bring a companion who is not a colleague (for example, a member of the employee's family) if this will help overcome a disability, or if the employee has difficulty understanding English.

7. Grievance meetings

We will arrange a grievance meeting, normally within [one week] of receiving the employee's written grievance.

The employee and the employee's companion (if any) should make every effort to attend grievance meetings. If the employee or the employee's companion cannot attend at the time specified, the employee should inform us immediately and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

The purpose of a grievance meeting is to enable the employee to explain the employee's grievance and how the employee thinks it should be resolved, and to assist us to reach a decision based on the available evidence and the representations the employee has made.

After an initial grievance meeting, we may carry out further investigations and hold further grievance meetings as we consider appropriate. Such meetings will be arranged without unreasonable delay.

We will write to the employee, usually within one week of the final grievance meeting, to inform the employee of the outcome of the grievance and any further action that we intend to take to resolve the grievance. We will also remind the employee of the employee's right of appeal. Where appropriate we may hold a meeting to give the employee this information in person.

8. Appeals

If the grievance has not been resolved to the employee's satisfaction the employee may appeal in writing to the Vicar stating the full grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to the employee. If the grievance concerns the Vicar the employee may submit their appeal to a churchwarden, and if both the Vicar and churchwardens are the subject of the grievance, to another officer of the PCC who has no conflict of interest with either party.

We will hold an appeal meeting, normally within one week of receiving the employee's written appeal. This will be dealt with impartially by a member of the PCC Executive who has not previously been involved in the case (although they may ask anyone previously involved to be present). The employee has a right to bring a companion to the meeting (see paragraph 6).

We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. This is the end of the procedure and there is no further appeal.

9. Overlapping grievance and disciplinary cases

Where an employee raises a grievance during a disciplinary process the disciplinary process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.