

Grievance policy

Overview

We are all personally responsible for our behaviour at work and should all treat our colleagues fairly and with dignity. This procedure outlines what we should do if we have a grievance to raise within the workplace.

The Force and OPCC also recognise that some disagreements in the workplace can be normal in some cases where the role is of a challenging nature or environment, and this can apply in many areas of the Police force and the OPCC. When this occurs the vision of the organisation is to support all parties to resolve the concerns, and work together to conclude disputes and conflicts proactively, collaboratively, and in a timely manner. It is the aim of the organisation to reassure all colleagues that no one should feel reprisal in the event of raising a grievance.

The document is aimed to provide information for you, your line manager, and all members of the Police Force and the OPCC. The document clearly explains how the grievance process can be approached in an open and professional way.

The grievance process provides a framework through which a member of the Police Force or the OPCC can raise concerns that should be addressed in a timely and structured way. Some grievances can be communicated via the appropriate line manager, arranging informal conciliation and engagement with the colleague's agreement. The formal grievance procedure is in place to support where the informal resolution process may not have worked, or an agreement could not be reached. The individual has the right to decline informal resolution and early intervention if they wish to take the formal route.

The grievance procedure comprises of three stages:

Informal	Informal resolution and engagement with your line manager, or an alternative suitable manager, or HR representative to explore the grievance and discuss possible resolution.
Formal	Formal Investigation and resolution meeting(s)
Appeal	Formal Appeal to Senior Management or Executive Leadership Team

Glossary of terms



Term	Meaning
Grievance	An issue raised formally by an individual about alleged treatment they have experienced in their work environment

Term	Meaning
Resolution	An outcome that provides the individual with satisfaction that their concern has been given due consideration and where possible & appropriate, that action has been taken to address their concerns
Mediation	An exchange of views that provides a basis for resolution of the concerns that have been raised. Facilitated by a third party, both parties enter into an agreement and commitments to support a mutually agreeable outcome.
Individual	The individual who is raising the complaint
Assigned Manager	The nominated member of the organisation who is responsible for the informal stage of the process including reviewing all information and advising on the most appropriate method of resolution.
Investigating Officer	The nominated member of the organisation who is responsible for the completion of the investigation and advising on the most appropriate method of resolution.

Policy Aim

The grievance policy is aimed to secure sustainable solutions to workplace disputes, conflicts and complaints. Examples of this may include;

- Disagreements between colleagues
- Disagreements within or between teams or departments
- Disagreements between managers and their colleagues or team
- Concerns or complaints about the allocation or distribution of resource or workload
- Concerns or complaints raised around the organisations decision making

General Principles

This process is aligned to the ACAS Code of Practice for grievance procedures.

By raising a grievance, the individual is accepting the terms of this procedure and enters into the process with the agreement to seek a resolution. All parties should have the opportunity to seek an amicable resolution at the most appropriate stage within the process.

The individual has the right to representation for all stages of the process.

Confidentiality should be defined and agreed at the start of proceedings. Any serious misconduct or criminal matters may need to be escalated further. The individual party has a responsibility of confidentiality in the respect of the other parties involved. The disclosure of facts to others within the organisation will need to be formally agreed.

When raising a grievance, in the first instance this can normally be raised with the line manager. Where this is not appropriate, the grievance may be referred to another line manager or the HR team, who can assign an alternative manager to support with the grievance process.

All members of Wiltshire Police and the OPPC have the right to have their grievance heard through all stages within the process, up to and including the final stage of appeal with an assigned senior manager.

The procedure is open to both individuals and to a group/team who may wish to raise their grievance/s.

In most cases grievances can be raised formally and in writing via the online Grievance Form on the HR System. There may be instances where a matter is raised by an alternative method. The manager and individual may take the decision this would be best resolved via the grievance procedure.

Outline of the grievance process

Stage		
Informal	Meet with the individual to fully understand the issues being raised	Line Manager or Alternative suitable manager or HR Representation
	Explore Options	Agreed timescales with all parties
	Identify Appropriate Channel	
Formal	Investigation and Resolution	Investigating officer
	Once briefed on the matter the IO will meet with the individual and advise on appropriate timescales	Agreed timescales with all parties
Appeal	Senior Management or Chief Officers	Relevant ELT or SLT (Force or OPCC)
	Review initial Investigation and follow up outstanding actions if required	A meeting to be set up, within 14 days of Formal stage concluding

What is a grievance?



On occasion there will be colleague disagreements that may result in a grievance being raised. If they are addressed at the earliest opportunity, they are more likely to achieve a prompt resolution. Grievances that are not resolved can leave individuals distressed and anxious over a prolonged period.

Colleagues are encouraged to have discussions with their line manager or HR to enable them to explain their grievance. They will be given an opportunity to explore what a successful resolution may look like. Examples of this could be early interventions like informal conversations, mediation and engagement resolution.

Formal complaints are grievances where early interventions have been unsuccessful, or considerations have been made during proceedings that the grievance is so significant/serious that it warrants enacting a formal investigation.

Complaints fall into two categories, these are:

- Complaints against organisational decisions
- Behavioural complaints

Issues excluded from the grievance process



The grievance procedure is not intended to apply, and will not be used, under the following circumstances:

- Illegal activities, wrongdoing or malpractice (protected disclosures) and any concerns relating to this should be raised under the police force reporting
- An existing appeal/review process is already in place or begun i.e. job evaluation process, disciplinary/conduct matters, redundancy, flexible working or study allowance
- Expiry of a fixed term contract of employment
- Concerns related to organisational benefits and pensions, statutory deductions from pay, for example income tax and national insurance
- Personal matters not relating to employment
- Complaints such as disappointment when an individual has not been successful in a promotion/interview process.

Timeframes



Where the formal procedure has been initiated it should always be the aim to resolve grievance proceedings in the most realistic timeframe and with the agreement of all parties. This will be determined by the complexity of the case, number of colleagues involved, and the agreements that are made. It should be clear the proceedings are not open ended, and the process should be delivered in a timely manner for all parties through to resolution.

Where there maybe concerns that the agreed timescales cannot be met, amended timeframes can be agreed in conjunction with HR, and with the agreement from all parties. For example, sickness or absence of an involved individual cannot mean that the matter will be delayed indefinitely, and in some cases will be reviewed in conjunction with the HR team.

All extensions to the agreed timescales must be documented and a rationale provided.

What does resolution look like?



Formal resolution can be delivered in many forms and will usually be individual to the grievance that has been raised. Some examples include:

- Clarification of a misunderstanding
- Exchange and acceptance of differing perspectives/feelings
- Agreement to provide feedback to someone on their behaviour
- Acceptance of an explanation or an apology
- Agreement to implement a development plan or actions
- Agreement to modify poor practice or behaviour
- Agreement to engage in mediation sessions to improve relations

There are several other examples to support resolution, and some will not be appropriate for every case. However, it does provide insight to some of the types of the resolution processes.

Process requirements:

- All parties that are involved to treat each other with dignity and respect when working towards a resolution.
 - Those managing the grievance process should apply honesty, integrity, and transparency within a realistic and agreed timescale
-

Raising a grievance

To initiate the process, the individual should complete the online Grievance Form within Unit 4 HR system which will go directly to HR for review before being allocated. Line Management should encourage the reporting of all grievances via the Grievance Form, however, in rare circumstances a Grievance Form may be completed by an HR Representative upon receiving a verbal report of a grievance.

The Grievance Form provides the basis and information for the grievance, so it is important that the individual completes the Issue Details tab thoroughly. The form should outline clear details of the nature of the grievance and any potential resolution the individual hopes to achieve so that the assigned manager can review.

If it is deemed that the matter is suitable for the grievance process then a meeting will be arranged with all parties in a reasonable timeframe agreed between the individual, the assigned manager, and HR.

Informal



The Informal stage is an opportunity for the individual to explore the issue with a line manager, suitable alternative manager or HR representative. Initial contact should be made by HR or line manager within 10 working days of receipt of the Unit 4 Grievance form.

The Informal stage may not include a full investigation if the Assigned Manager and the individual can agree on a suitable resolution from an initial discussion meeting.

Assigned manager actions at the conclusion of the Informal stage

Outcome: The Assigned Manager should confirm verbally the outcome of the resolution meeting within seven working days of the meeting taking place.

Enter the mediation process: The HR representative will support and engage with the individual to organise for suitable mediation to take place.

Timescales: The Assigned Manager should monitor the next seven working days and ensure the individual has reached their decision in relation to any further action. The matter cannot be left unresolved.

Notification: The Grievance form on Unit 4 ERP should be completed and all relevant paperwork uploaded. This will be reviewed by HR prior to being signed off as complete.

If the matter is resolved: The individual will receive information by email through the Unit 4 HR system.

If the matter is unresolved: Individuals are invited to respond to the notification from the Unit4 HR system to escalate to Formal. The HR team will be notified of this and will progress as appropriate.

Withdrawal of the grievance: The individual should notify HR to complete the closure of the Grievance form.

Formal



Where an individual does not feel that their grievance has been resolved within the informal stage, the individual may escalate this to a Formal Stage. They should respond to the Unit 4 notification to reject the outcome from the Informal stage.

The Formal stage is to be concluded within a reasonable and agreed timescale. A period of up to 10 working days from receipt of that written notification is then permitted for the HR team to allocate a suitable Investigation Officer, and for the Investigating Officer to make contact with the individual. In the case of OPCC staff the Investigation Officer must be a member of a shared services department.

The Investigating Officer will be responsible for discussing the time frames with all those involved and agreeing and outlining the expectations of those. We recognise that some investigations can be more complex and so may require more time to reach a conclusion. It is the responsibility of the Investigating Officer to keep all parties updated throughout the duration of proceedings.

Once the Formal stage of the grievance process has commenced, the role of the Investigating Officer is to investigate and determine possible resolution/s. This will vary according to the nature and complexity of the grievance.

Initial discussion: The Investigating Officer will have a discussion with the individual at an early stage. They must understand the nature of the grievance and scope the level of intervention that may be required.

Investigation: The grievance should be fully investigated within this stage. The structure of the investigation is the responsibility of the Investigating Officer, and the scale of the investigation should be proportionate to the nature of the grievance.

Where a colleague is seen to be part of the grievance investigation (e.g. where they are the subject of the grievance or a witness), they should be provided with appropriate details, mindful of GDPR, of the grievance prior to a meeting. This is normally communicated via a manager or HR representative aligned to the grievance stage. In some cases, the Investigating Officer may elect to provide the colleague with a summary if there is sensitive information contained within the Grievance Form.

At the conclusion of the investigation, a draft copy of the report can be made available to the individual prior to any resolution meeting so they have time to consider their response/s. In some circumstances the evidence given by some witnesses may have to remain confidential. The Investigating Officer should engage with HR prior to sharing report or findings with an individual. Where confidentiality is required an appropriate summary of the evidence gathered can be provided. It is recommended that the Investigating Officer informs the individual what the potential outcome may be prior to the resolution meeting.

Resolution meeting(s): Following the investigation the Investigating Officer will meet with the individual and offer suggested solutions based upon the findings of their investigation. This may involve others or be on an individual basis.

NB: The individual is entitled to representation from their staff association, or a colleague, at each stage of the proceedings

After the resolution meeting the Investigating Officer should provide written notification to the individual, summarising the outcome of the meeting.

A period of up to seven working days from receipt of that written notification is then permitted to allow the individual time to consider if they are: (list not exhaustive)

- Satisfied that the grievance has been resolved and the matter can be closed
- Not satisfied and wish to Appeal the outcome
- Commencing the mediation process

Investigating Officer actions at the conclusion of the Formal stage

Outcome: The Investigating Officer should confirm verbally the outcome of the resolution meeting within seven working days of the meeting taking place.

Enter the mediation process: The HR representative will support and engage with the individual to organise for suitable mediation to take place.

Timescales: The Investigating Officer should monitor the next seven working days and ensure the individual has reached their decision in relation to any further action. The matter cannot be left unresolved.

Notification: The Grievance form on Unit 4 ERP should be completed and all relevant paperwork uploaded. This will be reviewed by HR prior to being signed off as complete.

If the matter is resolved: The individual will receive information by email through the Unit 4 HR system.

If the matter is unresolved: Individuals are invited to respond to the notification from the Unit4 HR system to appeal the outcome. The HR team will be notified of this and will progress as appropriate.

Withdrawal of the grievance: The individual should notify HR to complete the closure of the Grievance form.

Appeal



Where an individual does not feel that their grievance has been resolved within the Formal stage, the individual may request an Appeal. They should respond to the Unit 4 notification to reject the outcome from the Formal stage.

An appeal meeting does not require any subsequent investigation or rehearing of the case, unless deemed necessary.

Appeals should normally be heard by an appropriate manager from the relevant ELT / SLT (Force / OPCC). The availability of the SLT/ELT manager may impact upon timescales and should be considered, and communicated, at the earliest opportunity.

The assigned SLT/ELT manager will consider the reasons for the appeal within the information received and assess the appropriateness of previous conclusions.

Outcome: The outcome of the appeal meeting should be confirmed in writing to the individual within seven working days of the meeting taking place.

The appeal stage of the grievance procedure will now have been exhausted and this outcome is final. All paperwork must be attached to the Unit 4 ERP Grievance form.

It should be highlighted, when all stages of the internal procedure have been exhausted, in some cases of grievance, it may still not be possible to mutually resolve differences. There is no further right to an internal appeal.

^ General Information

DATA PROTECTION

Any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual recorded as a consequence of this policy will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulations and the Force Data Protection Policy.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Suitable for public release.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY IMPACT

This policy has been drafted to comply with the principles of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010. Members of Wiltshire Police administering this policy are responsible for ensuring that in its application, those to whom the policy applies, shall not receive less favourable treatment because of their age, colour, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender re-assignment, marital status, nationality, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation.

This policy has been subject to an equality impact assessment and has been graded Medium Impact. A full Equality Impact Assessment can be found on the [Equality Impact Assessment SharePoint page](#).

^ Revision History

Version	Date	Summary of Changes

