



1. Purpose and scope

Homemaker is committed to ensuring that the highest standards of practice and conduct are maintained throughout the organisation.

Staff have the right to feel supported within their workplace, and should have the opportunity to appeal against any decision or action which they feel has been applied unfairly.

The grievance procedure offers a mechanism for ensuring that staff are able to raise concerns, problems or complaints with their employer, and to ensure that such procedures are applied fairly and consistently. A grievance may relate to any matters related to their work or employment, including

- Terms and conditions
- Health and safety
- Work relations
- Bullying and harassment
- New working practices
- Working environment
- Organisational change
- Equal opportunities.

The procedure applies to all staff of Homemaker, whether on permanent, temporary, or fixed-term contracts, and should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies, including Code of Conduct, Confidentiality, Whistleblowing, and the Disciplinary procedure.

2. Principles of the Procedure

2.1 Concerns should be raised promptly to try to prevent the issue or problem escalating.

2.2 The manager will make every effort to resolve the matter informally.

3. Grievance

3.1 Informal process

Homemaker hopes that most grievances can be resolved informally, usually between the employee and his/her line manager, to ensure that matters can be dealt with quickly and effectively. Any unresolved issues should be raised formally.

Concerns may be raised and highlighted as a matter of course through supervision, and the manager must always keep a note of the details and the agreed action. The employee should be advised to do the same. Where appropriate, a separate meeting to discuss a particular grievance may be arranged at any time. The employee may explain verbally or in writing the nature of their concern. The Manager should make a note of the discussion and the agreed action, and explain the formal procedure if the employee is dissatisfied with the response.

Grievances involving an employee's direct line manager should be made straight to the next line manager (ie. grievance against first Line Manager direct to the Director or Deputy Director; grievance against the Director to the Chair of the Board).

3.2 Formal process

The formal process must be used when informal efforts to respond to an employee's grievance have failed. The formal process involves a written record, a right of appeal, and a right to be accompanied.

At all stages within the process, the issues must be set out in writing, and there must be a formal and recorded meeting between employee and manager to discuss and clarify each party's position.

There are two possible stages in the formal procedure:

- Stage 1 Grievance dealt with by Line Manager's Manager
- Stage 2 Appeal to Board

Stage 1

If an employee has been unable to resolve a grievance informally, they may raise a formal grievance in writing to the next management level (usually the Director or Deputy Director).

The employee must submit their grievance in writing, clearly stating the details and nature of the grievance – providing specific instances and dates where possible. The employee must state the remedy he/she is seeking and if there is documentary evidence to support the grievance, this should be attached.

This manager must send the individual a written acknowledgement that they are aware of the grievance within 5 working days.

The Manager overseeing this level of the procedure will invite the employee to a meeting as soon as possible, and normally within 10 working days. They must inform the employee of their right to be accompanied. In the meantime the Manager will find out as much information as possible about the grievance from the employee's Line Manager, who may also be asked to be present at the meeting.

The meeting should be confidential to allow ample opportunity for the employee to explain their concerns fully, as well as for the Manager to find out as much as possible about both the background to the grievance, the reasons why the employee feels dissatisfied with their Line Manager's original decision, and the resolution that is being sought.

Having carefully considered all the facts, the Manager will consider a response, adjourning if necessary, informing the employee of when a reply will be given.

Following the meeting, the Manager will respond as promptly as possible, usually within five working days. The letter should explain the decision that has been reached, the reasons for the decision, and the appeal procedure.

Stage 2

Where the employee remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the grievance hearing, he/she may appeal to the Board.

The employee should write a letter to the Chair of the Board with 10 working days of receiving the decision letter. He/she should include

- full particulars of his/her continuing grievance
- reasons why he/she is not satisfied with the Director's decision
- the outcome he/she is seeking.

The Chair should nominate two members of the Board ("the panel") to hold the appeal hearing, and then write to the employee inviting them to a meeting within 15 days of the receipt of the appeal letter, advising them of their right to be accompanied/represented.

The Line Manager and his/her Manager will also be invited to the hearing.

At the hearing the panel should invite the employee to explain their concerns fully, and find out why they feel dissatisfied with the outcome of the grievance hearing. They should also ask the Manager to summarise the reasons for his/her decision.

The panel will then withdraw to consider its decision. If appropriate, the parties may be recalled to hear the panel's decision, although it is not essential that a decision is made the same day if further consideration is needed.

Full notes of the meeting should be recorded, and the chair of the panel will confirm the final decision in writing to the employee within 10 working days of the appeal hearing.

4. Where the Director has a grievance

The Director should contact the Chair of the Board with any grievance. Where it cannot be resolved informally, the Chair should then request a member of the Board to deal with Stage 1 above. Care must be taken at this stage not to compromise the independence of other Board members who may be involved in an appeal. The Chair should identify another two Board members to oversee any appeal.

5. Right to be accompanied

At all stages of the disciplinary procedure an employee has a right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or trade union official. However, it would not be reasonable to be accompanied by a colleague whose presence would prejudice the hearing, or who might have a conflict of interest.

6. Monitoring

The Board has overall responsibility to ensure that this procedure is applied effectively. All formal grievances will be regarded as confidential at each Board meeting, and any discussions will take place confidentially within the "staffing" item.

Date of Review; January 2016

Date of Next review: January 2018