**Human Resources information and guidance - top ten tips**

**Fact Sheet Eight: Managing grievances and complaints.**

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| **What should we do if a member of staff takes out a grievance or raises a complaint with us?** |
| Tip one | Take what is raised seriously! It is worth checking out what a good outcome would be to the staff member raising the complaint/grievance so it is clear from the outset what and how they would like things resolved, so you know what you are dealing with. |
| Tip two | There is a template grievance policy attached, which gives a variety of ways in which to follow up a grievance/complaint. In particular if other members of staff, or others eg PCC members or others are included you will need to review what responsibilities you have. |
| Tip three | It is always a good idea where possible for a third party who can be a little more objective to undertake the grievance review. This may just be one or two meetings but will give reassurance that what has been raised is being taken seriously. |
| Tip four | Where a grievance includes allegations against another member of staff you may need to review disciplinary or other action, but tread carefully between different policies and practices and take advice where you need to. |
| Tip five | Sometimes a grievance is raised where an individual doesn’t understand the context/situation of a colleague eg where a health issue or condition affects their day to day communication skills, being clear within appropriate confidentiality may be needed. |
| Tip six | Check what mechanism resolutions you may be able to apply, and what if any training a line manager or other may need in order to work them through; for example mediation or facilitation skills; check what training and awareness raising there may be. |
| Tip seven | A grievance may include information about how a member of staff feels they have been unfairly treated at work, bullying, harassment, discrimination, overlooked for promotion for example. Any issue raised is important and should be investigated thoroughly. |
| Tip eight | Encourage an employee to give as much detail as possible, as this will help have all the information in one place at one time, and may save time later if there are a range or/other issues that they then later remember/want to bring up. |
| Tip nine | Not all grievances will be upheld and result in the outcome that an individual may have hoped for; and this may result in a disgruntled colleague. |
| Tip ten | A grievance process shouldn’t be used where there is another appropriate policy for example an appeal policy within a capability, disciplinary process. |

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| **Information sheet seven – further information,** **and a draft PCC grievance and appeal policy** |

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| **Other sources of advice and support** | <https://www.acas.org.uk/grievance-procedure-step-by-step/step-2-raising-a-formal-grievance> |
| **Potential support mechanisms** | MediationFacilitationTraining and awareness raising |
| **Template PCC grievance policy** | Attached |

**Appendix 1 Draft PCC Policy**

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| **PCC policy – template grievance policy – LOGO of parish** |

**Scope**

1. This policy applies to paid employees only. It does not relate to any volunteers in a parish role.

**Background and introduction**

1. The PCC is committed to comply with the ACAS statutory Code of Practice on discipline and grievance. We will comply with this Code in all formal disciplinary circumstances. [www.acas.org.uk/acas-code-of-practice-on-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures](http://www.acas.org.uk/acas-code-of-practice-on-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures)
2. All employees (and their representatives) should feel comfortable with this approach which should sit well with our distinctive context. As we work to develop our guidelines and policies, we will not lose sight of our core values which set the highest standards of expected behaviour and integrity, including the principles of fairness and transparency, hope and respect, forgiveness and reconciliation.
3. The PCC will ensure that any grievance-related issues are dealt with fairly, consistently and reasonably, with the individual afforded every opportunity to state their case or appeal against any decision where appropriate.
4. Where some form of action is needed, what is reasonable or justified will depend on the circumstances of the particular case. Staff and line managers should raise and deal with issues promptly and not unreasonably delay meetings or decisions.

**Setting standards of dignity and respect at work**

1. The PCC’s ethos and expectations include the culture of:
* Valuing colleagues
* Effectively and appropriately communicating with colleagues and ‘customers’
* Respecting difference and diversity
* Behaving professionally and with integrity
* Not letting things get ‘out of control’
* Knowing what to do when things go wrong and who to go to for support
* Sharing responsibility for getting things right
* Seeking positive ways forward – being prepared to apologise
* Sharing information together
* Seeking compromise
1. Grievance policies, procedures and standards are necessary to ensure consistency in behaviour and attitude within an organisation and a policy document like this one should be used as a means to encourage high standards and seek understanding, not simply to impose sanctions.
2. Managers should be mindful of required standards of behaviour and performance, so they are consistent in their approach, and in their ways of seeking to resolve an issue as quickly, quietly, and effectively as possible.

**Stages, informal and formal**

1. A pre-formal process: Many potential grievance issues can be resolved informally. Often a quiet word is all that is required with an employee to resolve an issue. Staff are encouraged to seek resolution to their issues informally – and if they require some assistance, or advice to do this, they should talk things through with their line manager or an appropriate member of the PCC in confidence.
2. Formal grievance**:** If it is not possible to resolve a grievance informally, an employee should put their grievance in writing formally and submit it to their line manager.
3. Where a line manager is the subject of the grievance, the matter should be referred to an appropriate member of the PCC this would usually be a Churchwarden.

**Holding the meeting**

1. The staff member has the right to be accompanied at a meeting to discuss the grievance by an appropriate workplace colleague or a trade union representative of their choice. The staff member should inform the line manager/PCC member in advance the name of their chosen companion.
2. This meeting will be formally minuted and minutes will be shared appropriately.
3. The meeting may be adjourned if further investigations are needed, after which the meeting will usually be reconvened.
4. The line manager/PCC member as appropriate will make the decision as to what steps will be put in place to resolve the grievance and this will be put in writing to the staff member. They will also be informed of their right to appeal if they are not content with the action proposed/taken.

**Overlapping grievance and disciplinary cases**

1. Where a staff member raises a grievance during a disciplinary process, the process *may* be temporarily suspended in order to consider the grievance.
2. Where the two cases are related, it *may* be appropriate to deal with both processes concurrently.

**Informal and formal mechanisms for resolving grievances**

1. In order to promote the prompt and effective resolution of grievances, there is an expectation that all parties will approach a problem with a clear commitment to engage constructively and adopt a positive and problem-solving approach.
2. The manager will work to resolve issues for example by team meetings, team building, personality awareness and facilitated meetings which may all be ways in which differences can be resolved collectively.
3. Where there are individual problems, where it is appropriate, the appropriate line manager will do what they can to bring people together to resolve an issue, and to set out a framework of dignity and respect at work and to communicate what standards of behaviour are acceptable, and what are not.

**Governance and PCC responsibilities**

1. The PCC may from time to time review its employment practices.
2. The PCC may appoint or delegate certain employment oversight, projects or developments for recommendation etc to a small working group/standing committee to oversee practical issues and to report back to the wider PCC.

**Appeals policy**

1. Appeals will be heard without unreasonable delay at an agreed time and place.
2. An employee must inform of their wish to appeal against a redundancy decision that has been taken, and the grounds on which they wish to appeal and should put these in writing within [one week] of the date that the decision was sent or given to them.
3. All appeals are considered by a Churchwarden and one other member of the PCC (or delegated members of a PCC employment working group) not previously involved.
4. The decision will be confirmed in writing without unreasonable delay [and usually within one week of the appeal hearing]. There is no further right of appeal.

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| **Policy version** | Version one |
| **Approved by the PCC on (date)****Date for renewal of policy**  |  |
| **Signed by (name)****Print Name****Role**  |  |