

MODEL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR SCHOOLS

REVISED November 2010

Document Reference B100 1 044 10

This model procedure has been agreed by South Gloucestershire Council and the relevant Trade Unions/Professional Associations recognised by the Local Authority for Governing Bodies to adopt.

Introduction

1. This procedure applies to all staff based in schools and is intended to help you resolve any concerns that you may have regarding your work and working environment e.g. working conditions, relationships with colleagues, issues relating to work duties and responsibilities etc. It also helps your school to respond fairly and as speedily as possible.
2. If you have a grievance or complaint you should try to settle it quickly and informally where possible (see Stage 1). If you cannot get a solution by talking through the issue at Stage 1 then you have a right to ask for it to be considered formally (Stage 2).
3. Usually a grievance will be considered to have been dealt with satisfactorily if the matter has not been raised again by you or your manager in the following six months.
4. Please note, this procedure does not apply where a grievance is raised by a trade union representative or a work place representative on behalf of two or more employees – this is dealt with under the school's procedure for collective disputes.

Stage 1 - Informal Action

If you have a grievance you should first raise the matter informally, ideally with the person who has caused your grievance, or, if this is not possible, with your line manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). (Many problems can be solved quickly and often a quiet word is all that is needed.) Do let your manager know that you have a grievance, however you choose to deal with it.

You can put your grievance in writing or explain it verbally; either way, stick to the facts and avoid language which may be considered insulting or abusive.

Make it clear what solution you are looking for.

If you can work out a solution with whoever or whatever caused your grievance, then let your manager know you've resolved the problem.

If you have asked your manager or a member of the SLT (who could be the Head teacher*) to help find a solution then he/she will arrange a meeting with you as soon as practicable, and will then tell you his/her decision in writing.

If you would like support during the meeting you can be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative

Your manager will keep a brief record of the issues and outcome on your file. You may receive a copy if you wish.

* The Head teacher may ask a senior manager to act on his/her behalf.

Stage 2 - Formal Grievance

If your grievance is not resolved to your satisfaction at the informal stage, or you think the matter is too serious to be dealt with informally, then you should ask for it to be considered formally, under Stage 2.

To do this you should complete an Employee Grievance Form (Appendix A) stating your grievance and the outcome you are looking for. If you have already been through Stage 1 you should send in this form within 10 working days of getting the Stage 1 written decision.

Send the form to the Head teacher* who will investigate your grievance.

If your grievance is against the Head teacher send the form to the Chair of Governors.

He/she will invite you to a meeting to ask you to explain your complaint and to consider how to deal with it. You can ask a work colleague or trade union representative (a 'companion') to come to the meeting with you and provide support.

The Head teacher*(or Chair of Governors) will try to find a solution that is acceptable to yourself and to the school; this might involve:

- Taking immediate action that resolves your grievance
- Speaking to other members of staff on your behalf
- Carrying out further investigation and meeting with you again when he/she has further information
- Calling in an external third party e.g. a mediator, with your agreement, to help all the parties involved to come to a mutually acceptable solution.

Once the Head teacher* (or Chair of Governors) has taken the appropriate action and reached a decision about your grievance he/she will arrange a meeting with you to inform you of the decision. He/she will then confirm this to you in writing (normally within 20 working days of the first Stage 2 meeting) and will also tell you about your right of appeal (Stage 3).

A copy of your grievance and the decision(s) reached will be kept on your personal file, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998; this Act gives you the right to see certain information that is kept about you.

*The Head teacher may ask a senior manager to act on his/her behalf.

Stage 3 - Appeal

If you don't think the decision made at Stage 2 has resolved your grievance, then you can appeal to the Governing Body's appeals panel. To do this you have to write to the Clerk to Governing Body within ten working days of receiving the written 'Stage 2' decision.

In your letter you should state why you are unhappy with the Stage 2 decision and what solution you are looking for.

A panel of Governors will hear your appeal, normally within 20 working days of receiving your letter. They will be Governors who have not had any direct involvement with your grievance. One of the panel members will be elected as Chair. Usually a representative from Schools' Personnel will be present to give advice to the panel of Governors.

The panel will invite you to a meeting to ask you to explain why you are unhappy with the Stage 2 decision. You can ask a 'companion' i.e. a work colleague or trade union representative, to come to the meeting with you and provide support. The person responsible for the investigation at Stage 2 will also be invited to the meeting to explain how he/she reached the decision.

You can ask the panel to consider new information about your grievance and you can bring witnesses along to support your arguments. Any information that you want the panel to consider should be sent to them no later than 10 working days before the date of the meeting*. You must not raise a different grievance, however, at Stage 3.

You will be informed of the panel's decision in writing, normally within five working days of the meeting.

*If you ask for new information to be considered at appeal the panel may need to delay or suspend the appeal to enable the new information to be investigated properly.

Guidance Notes

When to use the grievance procedure

The purpose of the grievance procedure is to resolve any concerns that you may have regarding your work and working environment.

If your head teacher feels at any stage that your issue can be better dealt with outside this procedure then he/she may suggest this to you; for instance, he/she might advise you that another procedure is more appropriate. The school has the following procedures that could be relevant to your concerns or issues:

- Bullying and Harassment Procedure
- Sickness Absence Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Capability Procedure
- Re-grading (for non teaching staff)
- Request to take Flexible Retirement
- Statutory Right to request Deferred Retirement
- Flexible Working Procedure
- Statutory Right to Request Time to Train
- Whistle-blowing Procedure
- Pay Policy
- School Complaints Procedure (for non-employment related issues).

You (and your union representative) can decide whether or not to accept this advice.

If you raise a grievance and then leave the school your grievance will be dealt with up to Stage 2.

If you raise a grievance after you have left the school the head teacher will seek advice from Schools' Personnel as to whether an investigation into your concern is still appropriate.

When NOT to use the grievance procedure

You cannot use the grievance procedure to raise a concern about any policies or conditions of service that have been agreed either locally or nationally on the school's behalf with the recognised Trade Unions/Professional Associations, unless you are claiming that the policy had been incorrectly applied or interpreted.

You should never raise a grievance that is frivolous, malicious or vexatious; that could lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Standard Practices when using the Procedure

The school will try to respond to your grievance within the timescales set out, but there may be occasions when this is not possible e.g. because a complex investigation and/or a series of interviews are required. Where this is the case, you will be told the reasons for the delay and new timescales will be agreed.

The person hearing your grievance, at any stage, will keep a written note of the issues you have raised and the outcome on file. You will be given copies of documents that form part of the manager's decision-making process, such as notes of meetings held either with yourself or with witnesses. A copy of the documentation will also be kept on your personal file.

All records relating to a grievance are covered by the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that they must be kept confidential, be accurate, relevant and not kept for longer than required. It also means that employees have a legal right to see what has been written about them.

If a manager or another employee is the subject of your grievance then they will be given a copy of the grievance as it relates to them. (This might be amended, with your agreement, from your original statement to make sure that it accurately covers your concerns and ensures they can respond to them.)

If you raise a grievance when you are the subject of a disciplinary process then the disciplinary procedure may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. If, however, the grievance and disciplinary cases are related it might be appropriate to deal with both issues together. Schools' Personnel will advise which option is suitable.

Right to be accompanied

You have the right to be accompanied at all stages of the grievance procedure, by a work colleague or trade union representative employed by the local authority or by a full time Trade Union Official; this person will be referred as your 'companion'.

If your chosen companion is unable to attend an arranged meeting, an alternative date will be given, usually within 5 days of the first date. If your companion can still not attend then they can send in a written statement or you can ask another 'companion' to support you or can attend the meeting on your own. In any case, it is advisable to consult with your trade union at an early stage in the procedure.

If your companion is a work colleague or a trade union representative he/ she will be given reasonable paid time off work so that they can discuss your case with you and prepare for, and attend, the meetings.

Grievance against Headteacher:

If your grievance is against the head teacher then the same procedure applies – you should try to resolve it informally directly with the head. If you are not satisfied with the outcome you should complete an Employee Grievance Form and send it to the Chair of Governors who will follow the procedure for Stage 2*. Any appeal against the decision of the Chair will go to a panel of governors in accordance with Stage 3.

*If you raised your grievance at Stage 1 with the Chair of Governors then another nominated Governor will normally investigate the grievance at Stage 2.

This model procedure has been adopted by governors at BHIS and will be reviewed periodically.

Adopted: _____ date Nov 10 _____

Review date		Signed	
Review date		Signed	
Review date		Signed	
Review date			

Appendix A

Employee Grievance Form

Your Name:

School:

Job Title:

Statement of Grievance: *Please give a full description of your grievance, stating what happened and when and where it happened. Where possible please give the names of all individuals involved and the names of any witnesses to the behaviour or incident.*

How has the behaviour/ incident affected your ability to work effectively?

Have you raised the grievance informally with the individual(s) involved, or with a manager within the school? (If yes, please give details)

What actions do you want taken to deal effectively with your grievance? You may wish to consult your trade union representative about what might be an appropriate remedy but you should bear in mind that the manager hearing your grievance needs to achieve a solution that is as fair as possible to all parties, as well as considering the effect on the school.

Declaration: I confirm that the details above are true and accurate and that I have read and understood the Employee Grievance Procedure. I also understand that a copy of this form will be given to the people I have named in it.

(A shortened version of the form may be given where an individual is named in only part of the form.)

Signature:

Date:

ANNEXES TO GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

ANNEX 1

Guidelines for Managers carrying out a Formal Investigation

Purpose of Investigation

You need to carry out a full investigation so that you can make an informed decision about the nature of the grievance and suggest a reasonable solution. You may, therefore, need to investigate relevant documents or records, you may need to interview the employees involved in the incident and you may need to interview witnesses to the incident.

Normally* the manager who receives the grievance should carry out the investigation. The manager should be senior to anyone who is the subject of the investigation.

The Process

Initial Checks and Meeting with Employee

You should have received an Employee Grievance Form completed by the employee that states the nature of the grievance and the remedy they are seeking. It should also name the other individuals concerned and any witnesses. If you haven't received a form ask the employee to complete one.

Arrange a meeting with the employee and check that the form accurately details their grievance and the action they want taken. Remind the employee that a copy of the form will be given to all the individuals named as part of the grievance and it should not contain any insulting or abusive language. The employee is entitled to bring a work colleague or trade union representative (known as a 'companion') to this meeting to provide support and guidance.

If you think the complaint could be dealt with more appropriately using another procedure, then suggest this to the employee e.g. if their complaint relates to flexible working tell them about the Flexible Working procedure.

N.B. You normally have just 20 working days from this meeting to reach a decision and confirm this to the employee.

Decide what further information is required

You may need to obtain written documents in order to substantiate or dispute allegations; where these have been produced by someone in the course of their work then they should be provided to you on request, unless they contain personal information about another employee who is not involved in the grievance. In those circumstances you can ask for a 'redacted version' (with irrelevant personal information removed or hidden).

You may need to carry out a number of interviews with employees; your list is likely to include anyone against whom the grievance has been raised plus any relevant witnesses that may be suggested by any party.

You may find that your list of potential interviewees keeps growing; if the

employee has provided a long list of witnesses it may be sensible to ask which are key to the complaint so that time is not misspent obtaining the same information from different people. Schools' Personnel can advise when it looks as if the process might become very time-consuming or when it looks like a whole department is becoming involved.

N.B. if you need to interview pupils please contact the Headteacher or Schools' Personnel who will advise on the appropriate procedure including involvement of parent/carer.

Organise the Interviews

- Decide the best order in which to interview the witnesses
- Set up the interviews, briefly explaining the purpose
- Choose a venue that provides confidentiality for those attending
- Tell interviewees not to discuss the content of the interview with anyone
- Advise the interviewees that they have the right to be accompanied by a 'companion' i.e. a work colleague or trade union representative

Conduct the interviews

- Decide the areas of questioning in advance and prepare your questions
- Explain the purpose of the interview and what topics you'll be asking about
- Explain that the information provided may be used as evidence at the grievance hearing, but will be treated as confidential
- Try not to give information to the interviewee before you have heard their version of events
- Ask the interviewee to clarify precise information such as dates/ times/ presence of other witnesses etc.
- Arrange to have someone to take full notes of each interview; if this can be done as responses to prepared questions then a written record of the questions and answers will provide a structured record of the interview. Alternatively a written summary of the interview can be provided to the interviewee. In either case the interviewee should be asked to check the statement, add any comments, date and sign it as a true presentation of the meeting.

Consider Mediation

Sometimes grievances can become very personal and make it hard for both parties to focus on finding a solution that enables effective working; in such situations bringing in an objective, external third party, a mediator, can break deadlock. Mediation is a voluntary process whereby the mediator helps two or more people in dispute to attempt to reach an agreement. Schools' Personnel can provide contact details for mediation services.

Please note that the use of an external mediator will result in additional costs to the school.

Consider the Evidence and Reach a Conclusion

You now have to decide your response to the grievance, taking into account all the evidence and information presented to you that has been established as factual and relevant and produce a written report to give to the employee.

Tell the employee your decision

Arrange another meeting with the employee and his/her representative; tell

the employee your decision and give them your report and inform the employee of their right of appeal.

Role of Schools' Personnel Officer

The investigating officer at a Stage 2 grievance may seek advice from Schools' Personnel and may invite a Schools' Personnel Officer to be present during meetings to advise on the process.

A Schools' Personnel Officer may be present in the role of adviser to the governors' panel at a Stage 3 Appeal to assist with procedural matters associated with the conduct of the hearing and provide guidance during the subsequent deliberations.

Right to Be Accompanied

Employees have the right to be accompanied at all stages of the grievance procedure by a 'companion' (a work colleague or trade union representative employed by the local authority or by a full time Trade Union Official); their choice of support should not, however, lead to unreasonable delay in scheduling meetings.

This right applies not only to the employee who has raised the grievance but also the employee(s) accused of causing or contributing to the grievance

If an employee's chosen companion is unable to attend an arranged meeting, an alternative date should be given, usually within 5 days of the first date. If the companion can still not attend then they can send in a written statement or the employee can ask someone else to support them or come alone.

If the companion is a work colleague or a trade union representative he/ she should be given reasonable paid time off work in order to discuss the case with the employee and prepare for, and attend, the meetings.

The 'companion' may address the meeting in order to put the employee's case, or to confer with the employee. The 'companion' may also raise procedural matters or clarification. He/she does not, however, have the right to answer questions on the employee's behalf or to prevent the employee from stating his/her case.

ANNEX 2: Templates for use with the Grievance Procedure

Template 1- manager's decision following Stage 1 meeting

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear,

Following our meeting on DATE to discuss informally your grievance, I note that the substance of your grievance was:

That.....

.....
You chose to be represented at the meeting and your 'companion' was

.....
OR

You did not choose to be represented at the meeting.

After consideration of the facts and information presented to me I have decided that

.....
.....
.....

I trust that this provides a suitable remedy regarding your concerns and that it will enable you to carry out your duties effectively within a satisfactory working environment.

If, however, you feel dissatisfied with this outcome then you should ask for your grievance to be considered formally under Stage 2 of the procedure, completing an Employee Grievance Form within 10 working days of receiving this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Template 2 – notification to EMPLOYEE of Stage 2 meeting (send two copies to the employee)

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

I acknowledge receipt of your Employee Grievance Form of DATE sent in accordance with Stage 2 of the school's Grievance Procedure and have arranged a meeting for TIME/DATE/LOCATION so that I can check that the form clearly states your grievance and the solution you are seeking. This will enable me to carry out a thorough and focussed investigation of your grievance.

You are invited to bring a Professional Association/Trade Union Representative or a Work Colleague as your 'Companion', if you wish to do so.

A copy of the school's Grievance Procedure, which has been adopted by the Governing Body, is enclosed for your information.

Will you kindly confirm that you will be attending the meeting and the name of your 'Companion', if appropriate, by completing the second copy of this letter and returning it to me?

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

I confirm that I will attend the grievance meeting on DATE

The name of my Companion is*

OR

I do not wish to exercise my right to be accompanied.*

(*Please delete as appropriate)

Signed.....

Date.....

Template 3 – request to INDIVIDUAL INVOLVED with the grievance to attend Stage 2 meeting (send two copies to employee)

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

I have received a formal grievance from NAME, JOB TITLE that suggests that you may have contributed, wittingly or unwittingly, to a situation which this employee finds unacceptable.

Please see enclosed a copy of the Employee Grievance Form which provides details of the alleged incident(s) and of the individuals involved.

The employee has already/has not raised this informally; the procedure at Stage 2 provides for a thorough investigation to be carried out in order to ensure that all relevant information is obtained.

I have, therefore, arranged a meeting with you at TIME/DATE/LOCATION in order to discuss with you the employee's grievance.

You are invited to bring a Professional Association/Trade Union Representative or a Work Colleague as your 'Companion', if you wish to do so.

A copy of the school's Grievance Procedure, which has been adopted by the Governing Body, is enclosed for your information.

Will you kindly confirm that you will be attending the meeting and the name of your 'Companion', if appropriate, by completing the second copy of this letter and returning it to me?

Please note that the purpose and content of the meeting are confidential and should be discussed only with your chosen 'companion'.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

I confirm that I will attend the grievance meeting on DATE

The name of my Companion is*

OR

I do not wish to exercise my right to be accompanied.*

(*Please delete as appropriate)

Signed.....

Date.....

Template 4 – request to EMPLOYEE NAMED AS WITNESS to grievance to attend Stage 2 meeting (send two copies to employee)

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

I have received a formal grievance from NAME, JOB TITLE that states you were a witness to a situation which this employee finds unacceptable.

Please see enclosed a copy of the Employee Grievance Form which provides details of the alleged incident(s) and of the individuals involved.

The employee has already/has not raised this informally; the procedure at Stage 2 provides for a thorough investigation to be carried out in order to ensure that all relevant information is obtained.

I have, therefore, arranged a meeting with you at TIME/DATE/LOCATION in order to discuss with you the aspects of the employee's grievance about which you may have information.

You are invited to bring a Professional Association/Trade Union Representative or a Work Colleague as your 'Companion', if you wish to do so.

A copy of the school's Grievance Procedure, which has been adopted by the Governing Body, is enclosed for your information.

Will you kindly confirm that you will be attending the meeting and the name of your 'Companion', if appropriate, by completing the second copy of this letter and returning it to me?

Please note that the purpose and content of the meeting are confidential and should be discussed only with your chosen 'companion'.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

I confirm that I will attend the grievance meeting on DATE

The name of my Companion is*

OR

I do not wish to exercise my right to be accompanied.*

(*Please delete as appropriate)

Signed.....

Date.....

Template 5 – letter following Stage 2 investigation, enclosing investigation report, with outcome and right of appeal

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear,

Following our meeting on DATE to discuss your grievance under Stage 2 of the school's grievance procedure, I note that the substance of your grievance was:

Brief summary of grievance including date(s), time(s,) location(s), all persons involved and named witnesses

Action Taken

Summarise the action you took in chronological order – original meeting with employee to clarify grievance – interviews with individuals complained about and with witnesses – documentary information obtained etc.

Investigation Report

Enclosed with this letter is a copy of my investigation report, including copies of interview notes, witness statements etc. *(provide these as numbered appendices).*

Conclusions

Taking into account all the factual evidence available to me from my investigation, I have concluded that *explain which part(s) of grievance you feel are justified and proven and why; and which are not justifiable or not proven and why.*

Remedy

I have therefore decided to take the following action in order to remedy the matters which I consider have occurred and which have caused concern to NAME.

Detail action to be taken, with deadline(s) and review date(s)

I consider that the above actions will provide you with a fair and reasonable solution to the matters raised in the grievance and enable you to work effectively in a supportive environment.

Right of Appeal

If you feel, however, that this decision has not resolved your grievance satisfactorily you may appeal to the appeals panel of the Governing Body. To do this, you must write to the clerk to the Governing Body within 10 working days of receiving this report.

Yours sincerely

Encls. Investigation Report

Template 5 - Stage 3 appeal hearing notification (send two copies to employee)

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

I have received your appeal against the decision(s) taken at Stage 2 of the Grievance Procedure by MANAGER on DATE.

I note that you are unhappy with the above decision because *summarise reason(s) given for appeal* and that the solution you are seeking is *summarise solution stated in the letter of appeal*.

Your appeal will be heard on DATE/TIME at LOCATION. The members of the appeals panel will be NAME, NAME, and NAME (Chair). NAME, from Schools' Personnel, will be present to give advice to the panel of governors.

You are invited to bring a Professional Association/Trade Union Representative or a Work Colleague as your 'Companion', if you wish to do so.

You must provide a list of the witnesses you wish to bring and any information that you wish the panel to consider no later than 10 working days before the date of the meeting. You can ask the panel to consider new information about your grievance; please note that the panel may choose to adjourn or postpone the meeting if they feel further investigation is required concerning the new information.

You must not, however, raise a different grievance at this Stage in the procedure.

Will you kindly confirm that you will be attending the meeting and the name of your 'Companion', if appropriate, by completing the second copy of this letter and returning it to me?

Yours sincerely

Clerk to Governors

I confirm that I will attend the grievance meeting on DATE

The name of my Companion is*

OR

I do not wish to exercise my right to be accompanied.*

*(*Please delete as appropriate)*

Signed.....

Date.....

Template 6 - Stage 3 appeal hearing outcome

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

You appealed against the decision of DATE taken by NAME regarding your formal (Stage 2) grievance.

The appeal meeting took place on DATE and I am now writing to inform you of the decision taken by the appeals panel.

The panel decided that the decision to stands

OR

The panel decided to amend/ change that decision and the following action will therefore be taken
.....

You have now exercised your appeal under the school's grievance procedure and this decision is final.

Yours sincerely,

NAME

Chair of Appeals Panel

ANNEX 3: Suggested Format for Stage 3 Appeal Hearings

Please note: this is only a guideline for the format of a grievance meeting. It is not the same as a disciplinary hearing; it is a meeting where discussion and dialogue should aim to produce a resolution. It is not intended to create an adversarial setting, but rather to provide an opportunity for the panel to hear and understand the elements of the case.

1. The Chair of the Panel will introduce those present and explain their role and the order of proceedings and ensure that everyone present has copies of all the relevant documentation. The Chair of the Panel will ensure that all parties understand the nature of the complaint, and will confirm the names of any witnesses who may be called.
2. The employee or his/her 'companion' will be asked to explain why the decision at Stage 2 – Formal was not acceptable and what outcome he/she is seeking. The employee can invite relevant witnesses to present evidence and respond to questions put to them.
3. The manager who heard the grievance at Stage 2 will then be able to ask questions of the employee and any witnesses.
4. The Appeal Panel may then ask questions of the employee and witnesses. *(Witnesses will be present in the meeting only when they are required for questioning.)*
5. The manager who heard the grievance at Stage 2 will then be asked to explain his/her decision and can invite relevant witnesses to present evidence and respond to questions put to them.
6. The employee or his/her companion may then ask questions of the manager and witnesses.
7. The Appeal Panel may then ask questions of the manager and witnesses.
8. If either party asks for new information to be considered at appeal the panel may need to delay or suspend the appeal to enable the new information to be investigated properly.
9. The employee or companion will then sum up his/her case.
10. The manager will sum up his/her case.
11. The Appeal Panel will then deliberate; the employee should be informed when they might reasonably expect a response if the Panel decides that it cannot give a response on the day. The employee will receive written confirmation of the decision within 5 working days of the appeal hearing. The decision will be final.

(N.B. The 'companion' may address the meeting in order to put the employee's case, or to confer with the employee. The 'companion' may also raise procedural matters or clarification. He/she does not, however, have the right to answer questions on the employee's behalf or to prevent the employee from stating his/her case.)

ANNEX 4

Extract from ACAS Code of Practice

Employers should arrange for a formal meeting to be held without unreasonable delay after a grievance is received.

Employers, employees and their companions should make every effort to attend the meeting. Employees should be allowed to explain their grievance and how they think it should be resolved. Consideration should be given to adjourning the meeting for any investigation that may be necessary.

What is a grievance meeting?

In general terms a grievance meeting deals with any grievance raised by an employee. For the purposes of the legal right to be accompanied, a grievance meeting is defined as a meeting where an employer deals with a complaint about a 'duty owed by them to a worker'.

Preparing for the meeting

Managers should:

- arrange a meeting, ideally within 10 working days, in private where there will not be interruptions
- consider arranging for someone who is not involved in the case to take a note of the meeting and to act as a witness to what was said
- find out before the meeting whether similar grievances have been raised before, how they have been resolved, and any follow-up action that has been necessary. This allows consistency of treatment
- consider arranging for an interpreter where the employee has difficulty speaking English
- consider whether any reasonable adjustments are necessary for a person who is disabled and/or their companion
- consider whether to offer independent mediation – see Annex 3.

Conduct of the meeting

Managers should:

- remember that a grievance hearing is not the same as a disciplinary hearing, and is an occasion when discussion and dialogue may lead to an amicable solution
- make introductions as necessary
- invite the employee to re-state their grievance and how they would like to see it resolved
- put care and thought into resolving grievances. They are not normally issues calling for snap decisions, and the employee may have been holding the grievance for a long time.
- Make allowances for any reasonable 'letting off steam' if the employee is under stress
- consider adjourning the meeting if it is necessary to investigate any new facts which arise
- sum up the main points
- tell the employee when they might reasonably expect a response if one cannot be made at the time, bearing in mind the time limits set out in the organisation's procedure.

Be calm, fair and follow the procedure

In smaller organisations, grievances can sometimes be taken as personal criticism – employers should be careful to hear any grievance in a calm and objective manner, being as fair to the employee as possible in the resolution of the problem. Following the grievance procedure can make this easier.