

Employment Law Fact Sheet No. 12

GRIEVANCES



How to recognise one

Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that an employee may raise with you. Grievances may arise due to matters such as:

- Dissatisfaction over terms and conditions of employment
- Health and safety issues
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Organisational change

Grievances may be raised verbally or in writing (including email). Where a grievance is raised in writing, however obliquely, it must be dealt with in accordance with the procedure set out below.

How to deal with it

You should follow the ACAS Code of Practice for disciplinary and grievance procedures.

The ACAS Code recommends that informal resolution of issues before they turn into formal grievances is best. However, if this is not possible, or where the employee has already made a grievance in writing, the code sets out the following steps:

STEP 1	<p>Invite the employee to a meeting to discuss the grievance. Advise of the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.</p> <p>After due consideration advise the employee in writing of your decision and any action which will be taken. Advise of the right to appeal.</p>
STEP 2	<p>If the employee wishes to appeal, invite him or her to a meeting to discuss. After due consideration advise the employee of the final decision.</p> <p>Whilst the code itself is not legally enforceable it is important that you follow it as an employment tribunal will take this into account and failure to follow could lead to a finding against you.</p>

Further information

[ACAS Code of Practice](#)

[ACAS on grievances](#)

Action points

- Be mindful of the ACAS code.
- Recognise that a grievance is not always labelled as such. If in doubt, always check with the employee whether it is a grievance and whether they want it to be treated as such. Obtain this clarification in writing.
- Keep a paper trail and minute your conversations and meetings.

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