

Grievance

1. The Purpose

This policy is designed to make sure we have and maintain appropriate standards of performance and conduct that are core to the FC's values, efficiency and ability to deliver high levels of service. We have developed this policy to make sure that we can deal with any individual complaints about work, or work environments, promptly and appropriately.

Our approach is to deal with concerns, problems or complaints in a caring and supportive way, helping employees to resolve these fairly, responsibly and consistently. However, we must do this in the context of reasonableness and the operational needs of the Commission.

2. The Principles

The principles are to:

- treat employees fairly and consistently;
- make sure rules for handling grievances are clear, transparent, specific and accessible;
- encourage an open environment where employees are able to have their concerns addressed;
- listen impartially to employees' point of view;
- always try to resolve any concerns, problems or complaints informally, in the first instance;
- identify the facts;
- give employees the opportunity to be accompanied or represented at any meetings;
- resolve grievances fairly and quickly;
- prevent grievances escalating;
- use mediation if appropriate; and
- treat grievances confidentially.

3. The Policy

The FC recognises that at times there can be concerns, problems or complaints raised by an employee and there is a need for a policy to manage these. This policy lays the groundwork that must be used, when a grievance is raised.

It:

- meets statutory requirements;
- complies with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) Code of Practice; and
- has been developed in consultation with the Forestry Commission Trade Unions (FCTU).

3.1 Your responsibilities as an employee

You are expected to:

- make yourself aware of, understand, accept and support this policy;
- always attempt to resolve issues informally in the first instance;
- submit formal grievances in writing;
- understand that an unpopular situation is not necessarily an unfair one; and
- accept the final outcome of the grievance.

3.2 Your responsibilities as a manager

You are expected to:

- make sure that you and your team understand, accept, and support this policy, associated procedures and guidelines and implement them effectively;
- always attempt to resolve issues informally;
- remain objective when establishing the facts and in assessing the issues raised;
- observe the specified timescales; and
- clearly communicate decisions and the reasons behind them.

3.3 Human Resources responsibilities

Human Resources have responsibility for:

- monitoring and reviewing the policy in consultation with the FCTU;
- giving advice, guidance and training to line managers on applying this policy, its procedures and guidelines;
- making sure HR Case Managers are fully trained in the policy and procedures and can advise and help those involved with any concerns, problems or complaints; and
- producing statistical information to enable the identification of trends.