

Grievance

1. The Purpose

This policy sets out the Forestry Commission's approach to managing complaints from employees about their work, work environment or colleagues.

2. The Principles

The principles of our policy are to:

- encourage an open environment where employees feel able to raise their concerns so that they can be addressed;
- establish the facts before any action is taken to try to address a concern or complaint;
- try to resolve any issues informally and promptly at local level where possible;
- comply with the ACAS Code of Practice and all statutory requirements in relation to managing grievances; and
- ensure that management actions are objective, non-discriminatory and in line with the Forestry Commission's commitment to equal opportunities.

3. The Policy

The Forestry Commission accepts that there may be times when employees have concerns or complaints about their work, working environment or colleagues.

Grievances will be considered impartially and should be brought to the attention of a manager within three months of the incident that has prompted the complaint.

Employees will be encouraged to try to resolve the issues informally where possible however a formal process is also available and is detailed in [HR Procedure – Grievance](#).

This policy and associated procedure has been developed in consultation with the Forestry Commission Trade Unions (FCTU).

3.1 Your responsibilities as an employee

You are expected to:

- consider trying to resolve an issue informally in the first instance;
- submit your grievance in writing if you wish to raise the issue formally;

- be prepared to fully explain your concerns and suggest actions that could be taken to resolve the matter;
- understand that an unpopular situation is not necessarily unfair;
- participate fully in an investigation if you are called as a witness;
- familiarise yourself with this policy and the associated procedure;
- maintain confidentiality throughout the grievance process; and
- accept management decisions on the final outcome of your grievance.

3.2 Your responsibilities as a manager

You are expected to:

- make sure that you and your team are familiar with this policy and the associated procedure;
- attempt to resolve employee concerns or complaints informally, where possible;
- remain objective when establishing the facts and assessing the issues raised;
- manage grievances in line with the timescales specified in [HR Procedure – Grievance](#), including conducting formal meetings where required;
- maintain confidentiality throughout the grievance process; and
- clearly communicate your decision on the outcome of an employee's grievance, together with your reasons.

3.3 Human Resources responsibilities

Human Resources have responsibility for:

- providing advice, guidance and training to managers who are trying to resolve employee grievances;
- organising formal investigations where required;
- maintaining accurate records of employee grievances so that any trends can be identified;
- maintaining appropriate confidentiality throughout the grievance process;
- advising on the appropriate use of the disciplinary procedure if allegations of misconduct are raised against another employee; and
- monitoring and reviewing the policy and the associated procedure, in consultation with the FCTU.

4. Examples of Grievances

Grievances could relate to any element of working life, for example:

- health and safety;
- equal opportunities issues, such as alleged discrimination;

- breaches of statutory rights;
- terms and conditions of employment;
- working environment;
- organisational changes and new working practices;
- performance management issues;
- behaviour of colleagues;
- harassment or bullying (see [HR Policy – Harassment and Bullying](#) for more information); or
- behaviour of contractors or clients.