

CALDICOT TOWN COUNCIL

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Policy

It is the Council's policy to encourage employees with grievances relating to their employment to use the procedure below to seek satisfactory solutions. The Council will try to resolve grievances as quickly as possible to the satisfaction of the employee(s) concerned. Where this is not possible, every effort will be made to explain the reasons for the decision.

If employees are not satisfied with the outcome, they have the right to pursue their grievance to the next stage. It is hoped that most grievances will be resolved during the informal discussion. Employees who have raised grievances will be treated fairly at all times before, during and after the grievance hearing(s).

Procedure

Informal stage

If you have a grievance about your employment you should discuss it informally with your line manager. The manager will normally give a response within five working days. (See Notes 1–3 below for exceptions to this procedure.)

Stage 1

If you feel that the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily through informal discussions, you must put your grievance in writing to your line manager. You will receive a reply normally within five working days and a meeting will be arranged. You, any relevant witnesses and the line manager will attend the meeting. You may choose to be accompanied by a colleague, lay or trade union official. The manager will give a response within five working days of the meeting and will inform the employee of the appeals procedure.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the line manager's response, you may raise the matter, in writing, with the Council. The Council will arrange to appoint a Panel of no more than 3 Councillors to hear the grievance, constituted as in Stage 1, except that the Panel will replace the line manager. The Chair of the Panel will give a response within five working days of the meeting and will inform the employee of the appeals procedure.

Stage 3

If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should put your grievance in writing to the Chair of the Appeals Committee. You will receive a reply within seven working days and a meeting will be arranged. The constitution of the meeting will be as in Stage 2 except that the Appeals Committee will replace the Panel. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will give a decision within five working days of the meeting. This decision will be final.

Investigations

The Council is committed to ensuring that all grievances are investigated fully. This may involve carrying out interviews with the employee concerned and third parties such as witnesses, colleagues and councillors, as well as analysing written records and information. The investigation report will be made available to all the parties concerned. The identity of witnesses will be kept confidential where necessary.

Notes

1. You may raise a complaint directly with the Council if it:
 - a. concerns your line manager
 - b. is of too personal or sensitive a nature to raise with your line manager.
2. Complaints concerning discrimination, bullying or harassment by your line manager may be raised directly with the Council. This may be done informally or formally, i.e. at Stage 2 of the procedure.
3. The grievance procedure should not be used for appeals against disciplinary decisions, as that is the purpose of the disciplinary appeals procedure. If, however, you have a complaint against the behaviour of your line manager during the course of a disciplinary case, you may raise it as a grievance with the Council. The disciplinary procedure may be suspended for a short period if necessary until the grievance can be considered.
4. Employees are encouraged to raise grievances and will not suffer any detriment from doing so. If your grievance is found to be malicious or to have been made in bad faith, however, you will be subject to the Council's disciplinary procedure.
5. A second Councillor may be invited to attend formal grievance meetings to act as a witness and note-taker. (This Councillor should not be involved in any other part of the procedure).
6. The timescales listed above will be adhered to wherever possible. Where there are good reasons, e.g. the need for further investigation or the lack of availability of witnesses or representatives, each party can request that the other agrees to an extension of the permitted timescale.

7. The Council reserves the right to seek assistance from external facilitators at any stage in the grievance procedure.
8. For employees during their first year of employment, the Council reserves the right to speed up the decision making process and may choose to follow a shortened version of the above procedure.
9. This procedure is for guidance only and does not form part of employees' contractual rights. The contents may be subject to revision from time to time.