

Grievance Policy

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Alternative Formats

This documentation can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, disk, audio tape or in an ethnic-minority language upon request. Requests for alternative formats can be made to the Probation Board using the following contact information:

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1.0 Application of Policy

Employee - is any person under a current contract of employment with PBNI including fixed term contracts.

2.0 Rationale for Policy

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) recognises that matters of employee grievance can often be resolved quickly and informally at the level at which they arise. Grievances which cannot be resolved in this way may be raised formally using the Grievance Procedure.

The Grievance Policy and supporting Grievance Procedure seek to establish a clear course of action which will ensure the fair, consistent and supportive treatment of individuals should a complaint be made.

3.0 Overarching Aim

The Grievance Policy and Procedure aims to promote good working relations and deliver fair and equal treatment of all employees. The Procedure details the process to be followed by employees who wish to raise a work-related grievance and how the PBNI will take prompt and effective action to resolve the grievance, as far as reasonably practicable.

4.0 Policy Objective

To provide a framework of guidance which will allow PBNI to deal with grievance matters and consider the rights and obligations of those involved.

5.0 Policy Outcome

Grievance matters within the PBNI will be dealt with in a fair and consistent manner in accordance with this policy and the supporting Grievance Procedure.

6.0 Policy Statement

The PBNI recognises its obligation to deal with grievance in a fair and consistent manner with due regard for the rights of all concerned. All employees are entitled to use the Grievance Procedure and should not be victimised for having done so. Equally, no-one should victimise anyone else because of a grievance he or she has raised or because a grievance has been raised against him or her. Anyone doing so may be subject to disciplinary action as detailed in the PBNI Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. The PBNI is committed to ensuring a

In the event that an informal grievance is raised that:

- The employee raising the grievance, and subject of the grievance is aware of what help and support is available.
- The employee raising the grievance knows they can approach their line manager and that their grievance will be dealt with promptly, seriously and confidentially.

- Understands that whilst ideally the aim should be to resolve issues informally without escalating the grievance, that this does not prevent them from pursuing a formal grievance either initially or if the informal grievance is unresolved.

In the event a formal grievance is raised that:

- The employee raising the grievance, subject of the grievance and any witnesses are aware of what help and support is available.
- The situation will be established quickly and grievance issues dealt with consistently.
- Each stage of the procedure will be actioned without unreasonable delay.
- The grievance will be investigated by an appropriate manager (Investigating Officer) unless they are undisputed.
- Where an investigation is carried out, an Investigating Officer will produce a written report on the findings.
- The employee raising the grievance and the employee who is the subject of the grievance will be provided with a copy of the Investigating Officer's report (unless there are valid reasons as to why it would not be appropriate in the circumstances of the case to allow full disclosure).
- At a formal meeting the employee may be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative.
- A grievance will not be considered to have been raised dishonestly or maliciously because it has not been upheld following completion of the process. If it is found an individual has acted dishonestly or maliciously in raising a grievance they may be subject to disciplinary action.
- The decision will be made on the balance of probabilities. Employees will be informed in writing of the outcome normally within 5 working days.
- The employee raising the grievance will have the right to appeal under the Grievance Procedure.
- The responsibilities placed on PBNI by employment legislation will be observed.

Additionally, management reserve the right to act in a proactive manner regarding grievance issues, for example, management do not need to wait until an employee registers a formal grievance to take action.

7.0 What is a Grievance

Anyone working in an organisation may, at some time, have problems, concerns or complaints about their work, working conditions or relationships with colleagues that they want to talk about and sort out with management. It is clearly in the interest of the organisation and the employee that problems are sorted out before they develop into major difficulties for everyone concerned. Grievances may primarily be about people but they can also be about processes.

Issues that may cause grievances include:

- Terms and conditions of employment
- Health and safety
- Working relationships
- Bullying and harassment*

- New working practices
- Organisational change
- Equal opportunities

Grievances can occur at all levels.

* PBNI has a separate Dignity at Work Policy and associated procedures to ensure that:

- PBNI's commitment to promoting dignity and respect at work is clearly articulated
- Staff and managers are aware of their responsibilities
- Everyone clearly understands what is acceptable, and unacceptable behaviour.

Therefore should a member of staff wish to make a complaint of bullying and harassment he/she should follow the process set out in the Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure.

8.0 Linkages

This policy also links with the following:

- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection Policy

9.0 Review

This policy will be reviewed four years from approval.

Interim reviews may be promoted by feedback and/or identified changes in practice.