

## **Grievance Procedure**

The objective of this policy is to provide a process through which employees, volunteers and trustees can raise questions, concerns or problems relating to their work with Time 4 Children.

### **This Procedure applies to...**

This policy applies to all direct employees of Time 4 Children, volunteers and Trustees. This procedure is for guidance only and does not form part of any employment contract or voluntary/trustee agreement in force.

### **Introduction**

The Charity recognises that from time to time individuals may wish to raise problems or concerns about their work, working environment, or working relationships and possibly seek redress for grievances. In this respect, the Charity's policy is to encourage free and frank communication between themselves and the Practice Manager on a range of issues, such as working relationships, conduct of fellow colleagues, health and safety concerns about working conditions or queries relating to terms and conditions of employment or provision of services in the case of volunteers/trustees. We encourage individuals with concerns to come forward so that these issues can be raised and resolved as quickly as possible.

The Charity's aim is to ensure that such questions and problems arising during the course of employment or provision of services (in the case of volunteers and trustees) can be aired and, where possible, resolved quickly to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Generally, complaints about discrimination and harassment should be dealt with under the Charity's Equality and Diversity policy.

On receipt of a written grievance an initial assessment will be made to determine the potential seriousness. It may be that the nature of the grievance is such that it is possible to resolve by informal discussion without the need to follow the formal grievance procedure.

Complaints that amount to an allegation of misconduct on the part of another employee, volunteer or trustee will be investigated and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure and you will be informed of the outcome.

### **Inappropriate Grievances**

Time 4 Children takes any complaints and grievances raised by its employees, volunteer or trustees seriously.

If on initial assessment of a grievance it is found to;

- Be related to a current grievance issue, the individual may be advised that as the issues are linked the new grievance will be dealt with as part of the original grievance.
- Be a repeat of a previous complaint that has been dealt with, and there is no new information or evidence available, the previous outcome may be referred to and the grievance rejected. If new information/evidence is brought to light the previous grievance will be reopened and heard again.
- Be clearly frivolous, the individual may be advised that the grievance procedure will not be followed unless they can demonstrate the grievance is raised on a legitimate concern.
- Be false or malicious, the individuals who raised the grievance may find themselves subject to disciplinary action for reasons of misconduct.

In any of the above circumstances the individual has the right to appeal the decision made. In doing so the individual needs to provide the reasons for appealing the decision and further details/information in support of their appeal.

### **Right to be accompanied**

At both grievance meetings and grievance appeals meetings, you are entitled to be accompanied to meetings by a colleague or qualified trade union representative. There is generally no right to be accompanied at grievance investigation meetings.

### **Confidentiality**

All matters dealt with through this procedure (including any records produced) will, as far as practicable, be kept confidential to those involved in the investigation and any follow up action which is taken.

Please note, however, that it may be necessary in some circumstances to explain or report the contents of the grievance to others, for example, because this is the only way follow up action can be taken. You will be informed where such wider disclosure is necessary.

A record of the outcome will be placed on your Personnel file.

### **Conduct during the grievance procedure**

The Charity recognises that a formal grievance procedure can be stressful and upsetting for all parties involved. Everyone involved in the process is entitled to be treated with respect. The organisation will not tolerate abusive or insulting behaviour from anyone taking part in or conducting the grievance procedures and will treat any such behaviour as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure.

### **Informal Procedure**

Where possible, you should try to talk issues or problems over with your immediate manager or supervisor. You may be able to agree a solution through informal channels.

## **Formal Procedure**

### **Step One**

To initiate the formal procedure, you must put your grievance in writing giving specific details of the reason for the grievance and of the desired outcome. You should include any relevant facts, documentary evidence, dates and names of the individuals concerned, so that we can investigate it.

If required, an initial meeting of an exploratory nature may be held so that the Practice Manager can fully understand details of the grievance.

### **Step Two**

You will be invited to attend a formal grievance meeting, normally within one week of the receipt of your grievance. You must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. You have the right to be accompanied to this meeting by a work colleague or a qualified trade union official.

We may adjourn the meeting if we need to carry out further investigation, after which the meeting may be reconvened.

You will be informed of the outcome of the meeting in writing. The charity will endeavour to respond within 10 working days from the date of the meeting. If this is not possible you should be told when you can expect a response and the reason for the delay. In this letter, we will notify you of any action that may need to be taken to resolve the grievance.

### **Step Three**

You have the right to appeal against this decision if you are unhappy with the outcome. Appeals should be made in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees within 5 days of receiving written confirmation of the decision. We will hold an appeal meeting, normally within two weeks of receiving the appeal. This will normally be heard by a senior manager who has not previously been involved in the case.

You have the right to bring a companion to this meeting; this person can be either a work colleague or a qualified trade union official.

The decision of the appeal meeting will be advised to you within one week and is final. There is no further right of appeal.

### **Alternative point of contact**

If the nature of the grievance makes it difficult for you to raise the issue with the Practice Manager, either because it is of a personal nature, or directly related to the Practice Manager, you should raise the issue with the Chair of the Board of Trustees who will arrange for the matter to be dealt with appropriately.

### **Joint Grievances**

Grievances felt by a group of employees should be raised jointly through a spokesperson using the above procedure. However, all employees concerned will individually be asked to confirm their grievance.

### **Timescales**

The timescales given above are intended for guidance only. Wherever possible, and particularly in urgent cases, the matter will be dealt with and resolved as quickly as possible. Grievance meetings may be adjourned to allow time for the manager holding the meeting to make further investigations.