



# King's Group Academies

## Grievance Policy and Procedure

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### 1. Introduction

KGA is committed to ensuring a positive working environment where people are treated fairly and with respect. This policy sets out informal and formal processes to follow. We aim to deal with grievances promptly, fairly, consistently and without unreasonable delay.

We recognise employees may, from time to time, have concerns or complaints about their work, working relationships or working environment. In this event employees can raise a grievance under this policy, unless the matter is subject to other formal procedures such as disciplinary, capability or absence. It is expected that the majority of concerns will be resolved informally with the Line Manager and genuine attempts should be made to find mutually acceptable solutions and both parties will agree on any actions to be taken and by when. If you feel unable to speak to your manager, for example, because the complaint concerns him or her, then you should speak informally to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Headteacher/Principal.

Informal resolution will allow ongoing working relationships the greatest chance to continue in an appropriate and constructive manner. Where attempts to resolve the matter informally have been unsuccessful or if the matter is serious, it may be appropriate for a formal grievance to be raised under this policy.

At any stage of the procedure, those involved in attempting a resolution or in investigating a complaint must act fairly and in accordance with good practice. Any person against whom a complaint has been made has the right to know the nature and sufficient details of the complaint in order to respond. It is important that no decision is taken until the complaint has been investigated and any Respondent has had the opportunity to respond. All persons involved in the procedure should be fully conversant with the procedure and the guidance contained in this policy.

This procedure applies to employees of the Trust only. We aim to investigate any formal grievance raised, hold a meeting to discuss it and inform the employee in writing of the outcome, giving a right of appeal if they are not satisfied.

This procedure does not form part of any employee's contractual terms and conditions and the Trust may vary or amend it at any time.

Reference to "relevant manager" refers to the person within the Trust who is best placed to manage the grievance process. This could be, for example, the Line Manager, Assistant Headteacher or member of the Board, depending on the level of Seniority of the colleagues named in the grievance. References to "working weeks" refer to weeks when the Trust / School sites are in session and exclude closure periods.

## 2. Purpose

The ACAS Code of Practice defines grievances as "concerns, problems or complaints that employees raise with their employers". Grievances may involve a wide range of issues such as working relationships, bullying, harassment, discrimination, terms and conditions of employment, working practices or health and safety in the workplace.

The primary aim of this procedure is to provide a mechanism for employees to raise any complaints arising from their employment with their Line Manager or employer and for such complaints to be resolved promptly, fairly and consistently.

For grievances related to bullying, harassment, discrimination or other inappropriate behaviour such as sexual misconduct, this procedure should be read in conjunction with the KGA Anti-Harassment and Bullying policy, which sets out the behaviour expected.

This grievance procedure should not be used to complain about a dismissal or disciplinary action. In these cases, employees should submit an appeal under the procedures set out in the relevant Disciplinary Policy.

We operate a separate whistleblowing policy to enable employees to report illegal activities, wrongdoing or malpractice. However, employees who feel that they have been directly affected, or victimised for having blown the whistle, are entitled to raise the matter under this policy.

This procedure provides a process whereby:

- Grievances can be raised so that they can be considered by the relevant manager and resolved as soon as possible;
- The procedure will be applied consistently with a defined process for each stage
- All employees will be treated fairly and sensitively and supported during the process
- Confidence and trust between individual employees and their managers and / or colleagues are maintained.
- Employees have the right to be accompanied at formal meetings
- Employees have the right of appeal against the outcome of the grievance procedure

Written grievances will be placed on an individual's personnel file along with a record of any decisions taken and any notes or other documents compiled during the grievance process. These will be processed lawfully in accordance with Data Protection principles.

## 3. Malicious or vexatious complaints

A **malicious complaint** is one that is made with the intention of causing harm by seeking to defame a colleague or manager, through knowingly providing false or misleading information or withholding information about an incident or issue.

A **vexatious complaint** is one that is made solely or mainly to harass, annoy or subdue another person, or something that is unreasonable, without foundation, frivolous, repetitive, deliberately burdensome or unwarranted.

If it is found that an employee has made a malicious or vexatious complaint, they can be subject to disciplinary action. However, an employee will not be treated less favourably because they have made, or supported, a grievance in good faith.

#### **4. Exceptions/Exclusions**

The Grievance Procedure cannot be used to circumvent the consideration of legitimate management action on matters of discipline, attendance, or capability. The employee will not normally be allowed to raise a separate formal grievance related to any action taken, or contemplated under another procedure. Such concerns will usually be managed within the meetings and hearings taking place within these procedures. However, there may be exceptional occasions where an employee reasonably holds a genuine sense of grievance about how management is handling a disciplinary or capability investigation, prior to any formal meeting or hearing, where it may still be relevant to consider the matter under the formal grievance procedure.

If an employee raises concerns during another formal procedure (e.g. absence, capability, discipline) these will normally be addressed within the hearing or appeal process detailed within the relevant procedure. Where the concerns are not related to the other formal procedure, that procedure may, in exceptional circumstances, be temporarily suspended to deal with the grievance.

#### **5. Raising Grievances Informally**

An employee with a grievance should normally first raise the issue(s) informally with their Line Manager or any other individual concerned, in the course of everyday working relationships. This can be verbally, or in writing. The employee should make it clear in any correspondence that the grievance is being raised at an informal level. If the grievance relates directly to the employee's Line Manager, the employee should raise the issue informally with another member of the Senior Leadership Team or HR.

Where the nature of the concern affects an employee's dealing with any other employees, the employee can choose either an informal direct approach, in which the individual addresses the issues themselves or an informal approach with support, where the process is facilitated through the support of the line manager, or HR, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

If the employee feels able to approach the other party directly, they should:

- Do so at the earliest opportunity
- Approach the other party in person or in writing
- Provide specific examples of the unwanted behaviour
- Explain why this has caused an issue (i.e. made them feel uncomfortable)
- Explain what the desired outcome is, or what the possible solutions might be.

In many cases this may resolve the issue without the need for further action and it may be possible to agree on a constructive way of working in the future.

If the employee feels as though they require support for the informal resolution process, they should liaise with their Line Manager in the first instance. The Line Manager should arrange to meet separately with all parties involved to discuss the situation, they will establish the circumstances, identify the impact on the employee, any steps already taken to address the issue (if applicable) and the response of the other party(ies). The Line Manager can seek to agree a course of action with the employee.

This could involve facilitating a meeting with the other party(ies), focusing on understanding the reason why the issue has occurred, how it can be resolved and how it might be avoided in the future.

Grievances should, as far as possible, be resolved through informal discussion with the relevant manager without the need to invoke the formal stages of the procedure. The relevant manager may need to undertake further investigation in order to resolve the grievance at this informal stage. All parties are expected to make use of the informal stage of this procedure. However, in exceptional circumstances an employee is entitled to lodge a formal grievance without utilising the informal stage.

The employee has no statutory right to be accompanied at the informal meeting. However, the employee may seek advice from their professional association or trade union representative.

## 6. Outcome of informal process

The outcome of the informal meeting should be shared with the employee concerned. This should include details of the next stage of the procedure if the employee feels that the informal stage has not satisfactorily resolved their grievance. Possible outcomes at the informal stage may include, but are not limited to, conciliation, informal discussion with all parties, identified training or supervisory needs. The relevant manager should keep a written record of the discussions and outcome at the informal stage.

## 7. Investigations

When an employee raises a grievance, either informally or formally under this procedure, the relevant manager should consider whether further investigation is required. It is for the relevant manager to determine the amount of any investigation, which will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. The investigation may be initiated before holding a grievance meeting where appropriate. In other cases, a grievance meeting may be held first before deciding what investigation (if any) to carry out. Where necessary, an Investigating officer (IO) can be assigned to undertake the investigation or the relevant manager may conduct the investigation. In exceptional circumstances, it may be deemed appropriate to use an external IO.

The investigation may require the relevant manager or IO to:

- gather any further information they feel is relevant in as confidential a manner as possible;
- request written responses from any other party they consider appropriate;
- meet with the other relevant parties to discuss the grievance and obtain relevant information;
- produce an investigation report to capture the key issues and findings arising from the investigation and suggested resolution where appropriate;
- to be impartial and unconnected with the grievance complaint (i.e. not named in the grievance).

The employee must cooperate fully and promptly in any investigation. This may include informing the relevant manager of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents to them and attending interviews, as part of the investigation.

Investigations should be undertaken in a timely manner and should avoid unnecessary delay.

## 8. Formal Written Grievances

If a grievance cannot be resolved informally and/or where the informal step within this grievance procedure has been exhausted or the employee is unwilling to resolve the matter informally, a formal grievance should be submitted in writing, normally within **7 days** either of the event giving rise to the grievance or the outcome of the informal stage (as applicable), indicating that it is a formal grievance.

If the grievance concerns the Line Manager, then it will be referred to the Assistant Headteacher, and be escalated up the Senior Leadership Team as Appropriate.

If the grievance relates to the CEO and the person feels unable to discuss the matter with them, it may be appropriate for an employee to raise their grievance with the Chairperson of the Board.

The written grievance should include as much detail as possible to assist with resolution of the grievance including:

- the facts of the complaint (reason(s));
- dates;
- name(s) of individual(s) involved;
- how the issue(s) have arisen;
- how the employee thinks a resolution can best be achieved;
- any other relevant information.
- what resolution(s) the employee is seeking;

*NB. Avoid language which may be considered insulting or abusive*

If the employee wishes to proceed directly to the formal stage, then this must be complied with.

Grievances are as much about the feelings and emotions of an individual as they are about a set of facts. A grievance therefore, is unlikely to be “resolved” by any process that simply determines whether the aggrieved is right or wrong. It will be important for the process to address the specific grievance, provide an opportunity for that individual to express their feelings, be listened to and have their feelings acknowledged. It is unlikely that any compromise solution will be achieved until these feelings have been expressed. For this reason, at all stages of the grievance procedure, up to and including formal hearings by the Board, opportunities for conciliation processes and ways of resolving the issue by mutual agreement should continue to be explored.

Some grievances will be of a sensitive nature, and confidentiality should be preserved at all times by the parties involved.

For grievances that are lodged whilst the employee is still employed by the Trust and where the process continues following the employee’s exit from the Trust, this procedure should be followed.

The audio or video recording of any meetings or hearings held under this procedure is not permitted by the employee. Where an employee is unable to take his or her own notes of a meeting due to a physical, sensory or mental impairment, it is expected that the employee’s representative will take notes on their behalf and/or alternative options will be considered to remove any potential disadvantage that an employee may have. Only in exceptional cases may an employee request an audio or video recording of the meeting as an alternative. In such cases, consideration will be given as to whether or not recording the meeting is appropriate in all the circumstances, including an assessment of whether other options have been considered as above.

If a number of staff are raising a grievance, the Collective Grievance Procedure contained in Appendix 1 of this document should be followed.

It is important to note that an employee who raises a grievance has a responsibility, along with the relevant manager for resolving the issue(s) in the most effective way, including cooperation with all stages of the procedure, availability for meetings in line with the procedural guidelines and clear communication in relation to the issues and outcomes that they are seeking.

Where the CEO is the aggrieved employee, they should raise their grievance with the Chairperson of the Board, or if the grievance is against the Chair of the Board, it should be addressed to the Clerk to Board who will consult the Board in order to identify who will manage the grievance. Where the CEO is not satisfied with an employee’s conduct, this would be addressed through the disciplinary procedure, not as a grievance.

## 9. Objections

Where an employee believes that there is a justifiable reason for objecting to a particular person being appointed to conduct a formal stage of the grievance procedure, they can raise an objection in writing to HR stating the reasons why they believe that person's involvement may prejudice the outcome. HR will consider the reasons for the objection and may allocate an alternative manager.

## 10. Formal Procedure Stages

There are 2 key stages within the formal grievance procedure:

- Stage 1 Formal Grievance Meeting
- Stage 2 Appeal

The employee has the right to be accompanied at a formal meeting by a Trade Union representative or an appropriate work colleague. The representative is allowed to make representations on behalf of the employee, submit papers, ask questions and address a meeting, but is not allowed to answer questions on behalf of the employee. It is the employee's responsibility to arrange their own companion and to advise management of who will be representing them. The right to be accompanied is by one companion only.

If the employee or their representative is unable, for good reason, to attend a formal meeting under this procedure, an alternative date will be rearranged, (once only), normally within five working days. If the employee fails to attend without notice, consideration can be given to proceeding and making a decision in their absence.

## 11. Stage 1 - Formal Grievance Meeting

A grievance meeting will be arranged as soon as possible after receiving the grievance. The invitation letter should include the following detail:

- inform the employee of the formal stage of the procedure being followed;
- provide the employee with a minimum of **5 working days'** notice of the meeting;
- inform the employee of who will be Chairing the meeting;
- inform the employee of who else will be attending the meeting;
- inform the employee of the right to be accompanied at the meeting;
- inform the employee of the requirement to confirm before the meeting whether they intend to be accompanied at the meeting, and if so, by whom;
- inform the employee that, if they wish to refer to any written information at the meeting that has not previously been provided, this should be submitted at least **3 working days** before the meeting;
- explain that if the employee needs special support or assistance during the meeting, they should notify the HR department in advance
- enclose a copy of this procedure (where this has not already been provided to the employee).

The purpose of a grievance meeting is to enable the employee to explain their grievance, and how they suggest it could be resolved, what outcome they would be looking for and to assist in enabling a decision to be reached based on the available evidence and the representations that have been made. The meeting should be conciliatory in nature rather than adversarial and remain focused on the resolution of the employee's grievance.

The Trust will decide on the appropriate person to conduct the grievance meeting with the employee and to determine the outcome to the grievance, taking into account the nature of the complaint and any person(s) to whom the complaint relates.

The grievance meeting may be conducted by the employee's Line Manager or another relevant manager from the senior leadership team or the CEO. It may in some circumstances be appropriate for the grievance meeting to be conducted by the Chairperson of the Board.

The format for a Stage 1 Formal Grievance Meeting will normally be as follows:

- the relevant manager will introduce all parties and explain the format for the meeting;

- the employee will be given the opportunity to summarise their grievance;
- the relevant manager will ask any questions they need to in order to further explore the grievance or events surrounding the issue;
- the employee will be given the opportunity to tell the relevant manager how they feel the grievance could be resolved;
- the relevant manager will ask any questions they need to in order to further explore the grievance or events surrounding the issue;
- summary notes should be taken by a member of the HR Department throughout the meeting to capture an accurate summary of salient points. These points should be recorded in such a way as to be useful within any subsequent meetings and the summary notes should be provided to the employee who has raised the grievance;
- next steps and timescales will be confirmed including any necessary investigation.

Following the formal grievance meeting, it will usually be necessary to conduct an investigation, which may be a brief fact-finding exercise. The relevant manager may carry out the investigation themselves, or appoint an Investigation Officer (IO) to do so and will be supported through the process by a member of the HR Department, who will provide procedural advice and will act as a note taker in any investigation meetings necessary.

Interviewees should be made aware that the meeting notes will form part of the findings and may be used in any subsequent formal procedures such as a disciplinary procedure.

The person who conducts the Investigation will document their findings, detailing the facts established and attach any relevant meeting notes and documentary evidence collected as part of the investigation. If a separate IO has been appointed; they should submit their report to the relevant manager within five working days for them to carefully consider all the evidence.

## **12. Stage 1 - Grievance Outcome**

Once the grievance meeting has been held and any necessary investigation has taken place, the relevant manager will write to the employee usually within 10 working days from the date of the grievance meeting to inform them of the outcome and if appropriate, any further action that the Trust intends to take to resolve the grievance. If it is necessary to vary this timescale, the employee should be notified as soon as possible. The employee will be provided with the findings of the investigation, along with copies of the relevant evidence.

Where appropriate, a further meeting may be convened to provide the outcome in person prior to it being followed up in writing. The letter should include details of the next stage of the procedure if the employee feels that the formal stage has not satisfactorily resolved their grievance. In the event of non-resolution at formal meeting, the employee has the option to invoke an appeal meeting.

Potential outcomes of the formal stages of the grievance procedure are:

- Grievance not upheld
- Grievance partially upheld
- Grievance fully upheld

Where the grievance is upheld fully or in part, appropriate actions will be determined as a result of the grievance. Even when a grievance is not upheld recommendations can still be made where appropriate in order to prevent similar complaints being raised in the future and implement appropriate measures.

Possible actions at the formal stage may include, but are not limited to, mediation, informal discussion with all parties, identified training or invoking the disciplinary procedure if appropriate to resolve the issues. A clear and reasonable timescale should be agreed and defined for this to take place. The manager will keep a written record of the discussions and outcome at the formal stage and place a copy on the employee's personal file.

Actions taken to resolve a grievance may have an impact on other individuals, so therefore any other party(ies) involved will be informed separately of any aspect of the decision that affects them and the reasons for it.

Should the outcome of the grievance result in a disciplinary for the other party(ies), the original employee will not be entitled to any information about the disciplinary that may be commenced. The employee will be advised that the matter will be addressed appropriately.

At the end of the agreed timescale the employee should receive a letter to confirm the agreed actions have taken place, and to provide them with the opportunity to submit a Stage 2 Appeal if they are not satisfied that their grievance has been resolved.

If the grievance highlights any concerns regarding policies, procedures or conduct, they should be addressed as soon as possible. Any action taken should be monitored and reviewed, as appropriate, so that it deals effectively with the issues.

### **13. Stage 1 - Decision Making**

Where evidence is contested or contradictory, the decision as to what happened will be taken on the balance of probabilities, i.e. whether it is more probable than not that a specific incident occurred as described. What is perceived by one individual as inappropriate behaviour may not be perceived in the same way by another. When deciding the appropriateness of behaviour, factors will be taken into consideration such as the specific context, the motive or intent of the individual demonstrating the behaviour, the impact on the individual and whether that impact is reasonable in the circumstances and the standards set out in the code of conduct.

### **14. Stage 2 – Appeal**

If, following the outcome of Stage 1, the grievance has not been resolved to the employee's satisfaction they may appeal in writing to the HR Department using Stage 2 of this procedure. The appeal should be submitted **within 5 working days** of receipt of the outcome letter of the Stage 1 grievance meeting setting out the grounds for and basis of the appeal.

The purpose of an appeal is to enable an impartial review to be carried out as to the 'reasonableness' of the outcome of the grievance at Stage 1. The appeal should not normally become a re-hearing, but should focus on the specific points of appeal, reviewing the process followed, and the reasonableness of the decision that was taken.

The employee shall be invited to an appeal hearing and given at least **5 working days'** notice of the meeting date. The employee may be accompanied at the meeting by a Trade Union representative, or an appropriate work colleague. The employee will need to provide papers relating to the appeal at least **3 working days** in advance of the meeting to allow time for the information to be considered.

Grievance appeals will usually be heard by someone senior to the Headteacher/Principal as long as they are not named in the grievance and have had no previous involvement in the case. In which case it will be escalated to the Chairperson of the Board.

At this stage it is important for the person hearing the grievance to continue to focus on remedies and solutions. There may be instances in which the person hearing the grievance consider it appropriate to uphold or reject the grievance and this should apply on a case-by-case basis. It would be acceptable to advise on whether the previously suggested solutions were appropriate or whether there are further actions that could help to resolve the original issue.

### **15. Stage 2 - Conduct of Appeal Meeting**

- Copies of all relevant documentation will be supplied to all parties in good time ahead of the meeting.



- The employee should make every effort to attend the meeting. It will only be rescheduled once, within five working days of the original date. If they then fail to attend, the CEO or Board Member may proceed in their absence with the evidence available.
- Others involved in the previous stages of the procedure (i.e. the relevant manager, Investigating Officer etc) may be asked to attend the appeal meeting in case there are any questions the CEO wishes to ask them.
- The CEO will consider the information presented by all parties, including the investigation outcome and documentary evidence.
- No decision will be made during the appeal hearing itself. The person hearing the meeting may consider it necessary to carry out further investigations before reaching any decisions.

## **16. Stage 2 - Outcome of Appeal**

- The committee will confirm its decision in writing to the employee raising the appeal without unreasonable delay.
- The committee will confirm its decision in writing to the employee subject to the grievance without unreasonable delay.
- The Stage 2 appeal represents the end of the grievance procedure and there is no further internal right of appeal.

## **17. Recurrent Grievances**

If an issue has already been fully and properly addressed through the grievance procedure, and any agreed resolutions have been actioned, it is not open to the employee to restart the procedure in respect of the same issue. However, care must be taken to ensure that new issues that have emerged since the original procedure was initiated are properly addressed. The Line manager / relevant manager and the CEO are entitled, in appropriate circumstances, to reach a decision that they will not hear a grievance which has already been properly addressed.

## **18. Unacceptable Conduct**

Given that grievances often affect the feelings and emotions of an individual, the employees involved may display an element of frustration or unhappiness. However, if at any stage of this process the dissatisfaction of any employee involved in the grievance manifests itself in unacceptable conduct, appropriate action may be taken under the disciplinary procedure.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Collective Grievance Procedure**

A group grievance may be against an action or decision by a colleague, a Line Manager, member of SLT, Executive or the CEO.

In order to progress the handling of a collective grievance, which is a grievance submitted by a group of employees, individuals, (but no more than two), will be identified by the group who have raised the grievance, to act as a spokesperson at any formal meeting(s) held.

A representative of a recognised professional association/trade union may raise a grievance on behalf of two or more members.

The collective grievance procedure will mirror that of an individual grievance as follows:

- **Informal Stage** - informal grievance raised with Line Manager
- **Stage 1 Formal Grievance** - formal grievance raised with Line Manager or member of the senior leadership team
- **Stage 2 Appeal** - appeal raised which will be heard by the CEO or Board member as appropriate.

The spokesperson/spokespeople have the right to be accompanied at all formal stages of the grievance procedure. If there is more than one spokesperson and they are members of different professional associations or trade unions, it may be appropriate to allow more than one representative to accompany these individuals at the formal stages of the procedure.

When arranging the hearing of the grievance HR will ensure that the nominated spokesperson/spokespeople are accepted by the larger aggrieved group and that the group has access to any information concerning formal meetings, as well as the outcomes.

An appeal meeting will follow the same format as with an individual grievance meeting, with spokesperson / spokespeople being nominated to attend.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Responsibilities**

## **Employee**

An employee who wishes to raise a grievance has a responsibility to do so in a timely manner and:

- Be aware of their own conduct and act in accordance with acceptable behaviour when seeking to resolve issues or concerns.
- Participate constructively in an open discussion of the issues they have raised, whether at the informal or formal stage of a grievance.
- Maintain confidentiality and answer questions openly and honestly.

## **Line Manager / Relevant Manager**

Managers should be aware of an employee's right to raise a grievance under this policy and support employees in raising issues, as well as:

- Demonstrating acceptable behaviour and promote positive working relations.
- Adopting early intervention strategies to resolve workplace issues and avoid them escalating into grievances.
- Challenging and stop unacceptable behaviour in the workplace.
- Facilitating informal resolution

## **Investigating Officer**

- Meet with the employee who has raised the grievance and carry out a thorough and impartial investigation.
- Review and consider all of the information thoroughly and make a decision in relation to the outcome of the grievance.
- Maintain confidentiality.

## **Appeal Officer (senior to Headteacher/Principal)**

- Review all documentation thoroughly and chair an appeal hearing.
- Carefully consider all of the information presented and make a final decision in relation to the appropriateness of the outcome of the grievance.
- Maintain confidentiality.

## **Trade Union representative / Work Colleague**

- Accompany employee to formal meetings if they wish – the chosen companion does not have to agree to attend a meeting if invited, the role is voluntary and the employee may select someone else if need be.
- Assist as appropriate by asking questions or seeking clarification – the companion will be allowed to address the meeting, to sum up the employee's case and confer with the employee. The companion does not have the right to answer questions on the employee's behalf or obstruct the employer from hearing the case.
- Maintain confidentiality.

## **Human Resources (HR)**

- Provide impartial advice and guidance to all parties involved in the Grievance procedure.
- Support timely resolution of the issues raised.
- Attend meetings as advisor and to take minutes.
- Retain the master copies of all documentation gathered as part of the process in line with retention schedules.
- Maintain confidentiality

## *Appendix 3*

### **Grievance procedure flow chart**

### Informal Resolution

Employees who may have problems, complaints or concerns should raise these through their line manager to look for a resolution. Dealing with grievances informally can often lead to the quickest and most effective resolution.

Is the grievance resolved?

→ **YES** →

No further action required

### Formal Grievance Meeting

The meeting should be arranged as soon as possible without unreasonable delay but ideally within 20 working days of receipt of the written Grievance.

The employee has the right to representation.

If deemed necessary following the grievance meeting, an investigation may be conducted which may be a brief fact-finding exercise.

Following the completion of an investigation the Investigation Officer will document their findings and submit their report to the relevant manager within 5 working days for them to consider all the evidence.

The manager will write to the employee, usually within 10 working days from the date of the grievance meeting, to inform them of the outcome and if appropriate, any further action that the Trust intends to take to resolve the grievance.

If it is necessary to vary this timescale, the employee will be notified as soon as possible.

↓ **NO** ↓

### Formal Grievance

Employee puts their complaint in writing (outlining the outcome they are seeking as a resolution), normally within 7 days either of the event giving rise to the grievance or the outcome of the informal stage (if applicable)

### Appeal

Being discontent with the outcome of the grievance is not a reason to appeal. However, if the employee is not satisfied that all the information relating to the grievance has been fully considered, or new information has come to light in support of their original grievance, then they may submit an appeal within 5 working days of receipt of the outcome letter.

← **NO** ←

Is the employee satisfied within the response?

↓ **YES** ↓

Appeal meeting to be held without unreasonable delay giving at least 3 working days notice. Employee has the right to representation. The Appeal outcome letter will be sent without unreasonable delay

The Appeal meeting represents the end of the grievance procedure and there is no further internal right of appeal.

No further action required

## Appendix 4

### Other resolution methods

Depending on the nature of the grievance, there may be other ways that may help to resolve the issues:

- **Mediation**  
Mediation involves the appointment of a qualified mediator (usually external to the organisation) who seeks to resolve disputes between the parties.
- **Facilitated discussions**  
An independent third party such as an impartial manager or HR can facilitate a discussion between the parties. This is not mediation but having someone else involved in the discussion may aid communication. This process is voluntary and can only take place if all parties agree.

The grievance procedure may be suspended if an alternative resolution method is deemed to be an appropriate way of attempting to resolve the issue, rather than invoking the formal process.

If it is unsuccessful, the issue will revert back and be dealt with as part of the grievance procedure.