

Grievance procedures – a simplified view

Grievance law is designed to encourage employers and employees to discuss problems before resorting to a tribunal and is a three-step process.

Step one – put in writing

The practice must put the reasons why they are considering disciplinary action or dismissal in writing, in broad terms to the employee. Similarly, the employee must state in writing the reasons for a grievance against the practice.

Step two – meet and discuss

A face-to-face meeting between you and the employee. Both must be given time to consider the facts of the other's complaint prior to the meeting. After this meeting, the practice must inform the employee of their decision and the employees right to appeal.

Step three – appeals

An appeal meeting – if required. This may happen after sanctions have already been imposed. The practice must inform the employee of the outcome of the appeal.

It is always better to try to resolve any problems at an early stage and if clear guidance is given to staff, eg through procedure manuals and contracts of employment, many problems can be resolved through simply talking. However, if this cannot be achieved satisfactorily, the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service policies and procedures document the steps to take to ensure that the process is fair and equitable to both parties.