

Grievance: First Response Checklist

What to do before you investigate or reach a conclusion

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THE FIRST RESPONSE

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Acknowledge it

Confirm receipt promptly and explain that the concern will be handled under the organisation's grievance procedure.

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Do not decide yet

Avoid agreeing, rejecting, promising an outcome or confronting anyone before the facts and process are clear.

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Secure the information

Preserve the original complaint and relevant records. Limit access to people who genuinely need to know.

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Check the correct route

Review the written procedure and identify an appropriate, sufficiently impartial person to manage the matter.

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Consider immediate risk

Assess whether any temporary, proportionate step is needed for wellbeing, safety or evidence - without treating it as a sanction.

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Move from acknowledgement to a fair process

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PLAN THE PROCESS

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Clarify the issues

Identify what is being alleged, the relevant dates, who may hold information and what outcome the employee is seeking.

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Arrange the meeting

Invite the employee without unreasonable delay and explain any applicable right to be accompanied.

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Investigate proportionately

Gather relevant evidence, test competing accounts and keep an open mind. Do not collect material simply to support a preferred conclusion.

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Communicate delays

If the process will take longer than expected, explain why and provide a realistic update date.

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Confirm and offer appeal

Provide the decision in writing, explain the reasoning and state how the employee can appeal.

PROCESS NOTE

A grievance may overlap with disciplinary, whistleblowing, discrimination, health, safeguarding or data-protection issues. Pause and obtain appropriate advice when the correct route is unclear.

Reference points: Acas Code of Practice and Acas grievance procedure guidance; GOV.UK workplace grievance overview. Check the current guidance before relying on this resource.