12. Grievance

UKSBS foster a culture in which employees can raise workplace issues, complaints, or concerns in a supportive framework. UKSBS will ensure that all grievances are dealt with promptly and fairly.

Most grievances can be resolved informally, and various options are available to support this including internal/external mediation.

However, if an informal approach does not resolve matters, is not appropriate, or a grievance is serious in nature, employees may choose to raise a formal grievance.

Grievances should be made formally in writing, setting out the nature of the grievance, times/dates, available evidence, and clearly state the outcome/s sought.

Grievances must be submitted by email to the People Team , whilst there is no statute of limitations on raising a grievance, to enable a thorough and effective investigation, grievances should be raised and dealt with promptly.

If a grievance is raised more than a year after the event that led to the grievance, an employee will need to demonstrate a valid reason for not doing so earlier.

Upon receipt of a grievance, the following process will be initiated, timelines are indicative and dependent on the complexity of a grievance, and investigation required. UKSBS will always endeavour to investigate and address grievances as quickly as possible.

Grievance stages and timeline

Stage 1 – Appointing an Investigating Officer/HR Representative (days 1-5)

- An Investigating Officer must be appointed, who is at least one grade senior to the employee submitting the grievance/anyone named, and who is not the line manager of said employee, or named within the grievance, directly, or indirectly.
- A member of the People Team will be assigned to the grievance as an HR representative and advisor.
- The employee will be notified that UKSBS has received their grievance, and of the appointed Investigating Officer and HR representative.
- If the grievance is against a named individual or group of employees, they will be informed that a grievance has been raised by another employee that involves them or makes allegations against them. They will be informed of the nature of the allegation(s), that no judgement has been made on the validity of the grievance, and that the matter will be fully and impartially investigated before any decision is made as to what, if any, action needs to be taken.
- Named employee/s will be given a full opportunity to provide their version of events at a properly convened investigatory meeting and be informed by the investigator of the outcome/decision.
- The Investigating Officer will undertake a preliminary review of the grievance submission and seek clarity from the employee raising the grievance where required.

Stage 2 – Investigation and fact finding (days 5-20)

- An investigation will be undertaken as set out in ACAS' guidance, where all relevant information will be collated and reviewed, including witness statements.

- Consideration will be given to any explanations or mitigating circumstances that may be relied upon.
- The individual who submitted the grievance should be interviewed first, followed by any witnesses or other relevant parties involved.
- If an extension is required to conduct further investigations, the employee will be notified, and timelines will be adjusted accordingly.

Stage 3 – Hearing a grievance (days 21-30)

- A meeting to hear the grievance will be scheduled, and held, where possible in person at the employee's usual place of work, but virtually if this is not possible. An employee may be accompanied to the meeting by a colleague or union representative, the appointed HR representative will also attend the meeting. Any reasonable adjustments will be made.
- The meeting is an opportunity for the employee to openly and frankly discuss their concerns, and the outcomes and resolutions they seek.
- Notes will be taken and made available to the employee, and their representative, with their explicit permission.
- If an employee is unable to attend the grievance meeting because of circumstances beyond their control, they should inform the appointed People Team representative as soon as possible. If the employee fails to attend without explanation, or if it appears that they have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the grievance meeting may take place in their absence, based on written grievance statement and any other documentation available.

Stage 4 – Outcome (days 31-40)

- Following the hearing, the Investigating Officer will re-examine the evidence in the light of the employee's explanations and carry out any further investigations, if an extension is required to conduct further investigations, the employee will be notified, and timelines will be adjusted accordingly.
- The Investigating Officer will consider whether there is genuine evidence and an honestly held belief that an act of misconduct or inefficiency has occurred, and ensure their findings and outcome are made considering all the facts, and testimony available.
- Once the Investigating Officer has reached an outcome, the employee will be advised in writing usually within five working days.

Grievance (and other) appeals

An appeal against the outcome/s must be submitted by the employee, in writing, via email to the People Team within five working days of an outcome/decision being issued.

A senior manager will be appointed to hear the appeal, and an appointed HR representative will also attend. The appeal hearing will normally be scheduled within ten working days of receiving an appeal letter.

The appeal meeting will be conducted by a more senior manager than the manager who conducted the original meeting/made the decision, who will consider the grounds that the employee has put forward and review the original outcome/decision.

In most cases, an employee may make a written response, or representations instead of attending an appeal hearing.

The appeal hearing will be held and outcomes communicated as per Stage 3 and 4 of the grievance process.

The outcome of an appeal is final, there is no further right to appeal.