

British Institute of Technology

Grievance Policy and Procedure

Version: 1.5

Owner: Academic Board

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Aims and Principles**
- 3. Grievance Monitoring and Responsibilities**
- 4. Informal Action**
- 5. Formal Grievance Procedure**
- 6. Grievance Investigations**
- 7. Right to be Accompanied**
- 8. Grievance Outcome**
- 9. Appeals**
- 10. Support to complainants absent due to ill-health**
- 11. Vexatious grievances**
- 12. Grievance withdrawal**
- 13. Grievances from or concerning Chief Executive Officers or Directors**
- 14. Record of Proceedings**
- 15. Overlap with other policies**
- 16. Equality and Diversity**
- 17. Review**

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the framework for dealing with complaints or concerns relating to the work environment, outlining when it is relevant to use the grievance procedure and how the process works.

The policy applies to all staff of British Institute of Technology (Institute), including Hourly Paid Lecturers, and aims to ensure a fair, systematic and consistent approach to achieving and maintaining appropriate standards of conduct. Whilst the policy will apply where a group of staff raises a collective grievance about the same issue, it will not apply to collective disputes between Institute and trade unions nor to disputes between members of staff in their private capacities.

The policy also applies to ex-employees, although in this case, the grievance must be raised in writing to the Human Resource Manager, within three months of the employee's departure from Institute.

The People and Culture Strategy details the culture we are creating at Institute, our expectations in terms of behaviours and conduct, and the support we will provide to employees. However, Institute's 'Behavioural Framework' and EPIIC Values will not be used in any way in conjunction with the operation or deployment of the Grievance Policy, whether directly or indirectly.

Institute encourages employees to resolve issues voluntarily and informally. However, from time to time, this may not be possible, so it may be necessary for Institute to use a formal process where an individual considers they have been mistreated.

If the conduct relating to the complaint constitutes bullying, victimisation, discrimination or harassment this policy should be used. Employees wishing to raise concerns of a public interest nature, i.e., criminal or illegal conduct, are advised to use the Whistle blowing (Speak Up) Policy.

Institute acknowledges that in some cases, new, controversial or unpopular opinions or ideas, as well as challenges to conventional wisdom, may be hurtful or offensive to some. However, provided that such speech is lawful, it is likely to be acceptable under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 which seeks to protect (and secure) Freedom of Speech and academic freedom.

As such, we discourage any complaints arising out of a staff members' lawful expressions of a particular viewpoint.

Any other complaint(s) under Institute's Freedom of Speech Code of Practice (such as unlawful speech) should however be brought under this policy.

Where a grievance also involves, or may involve, an Institute student, Institute will appoint a case manager (usually the Institute Secretary or nominee), to co-ordinate the grievance investigation with any student procedures. The case manager will liaise with all internal stakeholders, as necessary, whilst maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality. This will include agreeing clear arrangements with the HR representative regarding the provision of evidence and sharing of information to ensure staff are kept fully apprised of the situation and (where appropriate) are able to defend their actions.

Please contact the HR Business Partnering team or your trade union representative for further advice and guidance.

2. Aims and Principles

It is Institute's policy to ensure any grievance is dealt with fairly, and promptly, whether it is raised informally or formally. As such, the following principles will apply:

- Grievances must be centered around an issue, event or situation which is currently happening or in the recent past. Employees cannot raise grievances on behalf of another employee or relating to a matter already dealt with through another formal procedure. Employees and managers are expected to deal with grievance matters professionally, and to respect the confidentiality of those involved.
- Employees have the right to be represented and accompanied by their trade union representative, full-time union official or work colleague at all formal meetings held under this policy. Although neither HR representatives nor union/workplace representatives will normally attend informal meetings, they may attend as a 'reasonable adjustment' where the employee is disabled, or where the process is affecting their physical or mental health.
- At all stages, any employee against whom a grievance has been raised will be given a full explanation of the complaint (in writing where the formal procedure is being used), and the opportunity to state their case before a decision is taken.
- It is recognised that memories fade and evidence is likely to be lost the greater the time elapsing between an alleged incident and the grievance investigation taking place. For this reason, employees are encouraged to raise issues at an early stage, although it is recognised that in some cases, the employee may not be comfortable disclosing their concerns immediately.
- Investigations (and if applicable, any subsequent disciplinary hearing), will be undertaken in a timely manner.
- Where possible and appropriate, informal action should be used to resolve an issue of conduct before formal disciplinary action is considered.
- At all formal stages of this policy the employee has the right to appeal. All appeals will be heard by an appropriate manager who has had no previous involvement in the case, and whilst the same HR representative will normally support both hearing and appeal stages, the employee may request the involvement of a different representative, and this right will be stated in the outcome letter at each stage of the grievance process.
- Notes of grievance and appeal hearings will be taken by a person not involved in the decision-making process and these notes will constitute the only formal record of the hearing unless all parties agree that an audio/visual recording may also be made.
- Audio/visual recordings of meetings may only be made with the express agreement of all parties. Where agreement is obtained, Institute will make the record, and the agreement of the parties will be recorded in the notes of the meeting. A copy of the recording will be made available to the employee and their companion, and where applicable, to the manager allocated to deal with any appeal.
- The use of surveillance evidence submitted as part of the case must comply with the organisation's surveillance policy.
- The HR Business Partnering team will be proactive in making all employees involved in grievance proceedings aware of the available support (including details of the recognised trade union representatives) and who to contact if they require reasonable adjustments etc.
- Where a union representative or officer is subject to a grievance investigation, the Institute secretary must be informed immediately and will be responsible for informing the union's Branch Secretary and Regional Officer, so they may seek representation for the individual from the appropriate union official.

- In all cases, the action recommended following a grievance investigation will depend on the seriousness of the complaint received and/or the number of times the behaviour has been repeated within a given period.
- The procedure will be applied in accordance with the provisions of Article 17 of the Articles of Association, which related to Academic Freedom.
- Grievance matters should be dealt with sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of the employees involved. For this reason, all those involved must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with an investigation or grievance matter. Employees are, however, permitted to discuss details of the matter with their union representative or workplace colleague.
- Employees against whom a grievance has been raised will normally be told the names of any witnesses whose evidence is relevant to the investigation, unless, on rare occasions, both the manager and HR representative consider a witness's identity should remain confidential.
- Annual monitoring of disciplinary action initiated and any sanctions issued will be undertaken to ensure that no one group or area is unfairly impacted. Monitoring data will be shared with the trade unions.
- Working days are exclusive of Bank Holidays, annual leave and Institute closure dates.

3. Grievance Monitoring and Responsibilities

It is important that the individuals involved in the grievance process are clear about their roles:

Executive Team members and other senior managers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is properly applied, championing a culture of respect and dignity in the workplace.

Line managers are expected to act as role models for employees in terms of their own behaviours and professionalism, and to apply this policy in a fair and consistent manner. Managers also have a specific responsibility to ensure that where concerns are raised, they are investigated promptly to ensure the matter is resolved efficiently and effectively.

Employees are expected to familiarise themselves with Institute's procedures as part of their induction and ongoing development, and to understand Institute's expectations in terms of professional behaviour.

Managers will be responsible for ensuring employees have time to do this during normal working hours and for offering support where required.

The HR Business Partnering team will be responsible for:

- Advising managers how best to address complaints which may be brought to their attention;
- Providing advice and guidance to all parties on the operation of this policy and the circumstances in which informal and formal action should be considered;
- Where necessary, ensuring an appropriate person is appointed as Investigating Manager, that there are clear terms of reference and a target completion date;
- Where necessary, arranging formal meetings, supporting the Investigating Manager to compile their investigation report (see below), advising on HR policy/process, and ensuring documents are shared with all relevant parties and saved in the HR system;
- Attending formal hearings to provide HR guidance to the Chair (asking questions where appropriate) and assisting the Chair to compile their outcome letter (see below).

Whilst the HR representative should support the Investigating Manager in compiling their investigation report in terms of format, flow/sequence and typography, their role is not to influence the findings of the Investigating Manager.

The team also provides advice, guidance and training to managers as part of Institute's management development activity.

Line Manager

When an employee raises concerns or a complaint regarding the conduct or actions of another employee, the complainant's line manager should take advice from the HR Business Partnering team before determining whether:

- The concerns are less serious and could be addressed informally. However, should the employee not wish their complaint to be addressed informally, it is their right to have the matter addressed using the formal procedure.
- Mediation might be appropriate;
- An investigation is necessary;
- Suspension should be considered in relation to the subject of the complaint (in accordance with the Disciplinary policy).

Where informal action/mediation is agreed, a written record will be retained and copies provided to all parties, for reference should the situation arise again, or matters escalate. Employees will also have the right to request amendments if they feel the notes don't accurately reflect the discussion.

Grievance Investigation Manager

Any manager asked to undertake a grievance investigation will be responsible for:

- Deciding who should be asked to give statements / interviewed and what additional information (e.g. documents, records) should be checked;
- Explaining to participants why they are being interviewed, that notes will be taken and that these notes may be made available to the employee;
- Chairing interviews and arranging for witnesses to review and sign the notes from their interview;
- Ensuring, as far as practicable, that the investigation is completed within the agreed timescale and keeping all parties informed of progress;
- Compiling an investigation report or outcome letter, with support from the HR Business Partnering team.

HR Business Partnering Team

The HR Business Partnering team will provide the following support:

- Advising managers how best to respond to specific concerns raised by employees;
- Ensure an appropriate person is appointed as Investigation Manager, that there are clear terms of reference and a target completion date and (where necessary) arrange formal meetings;
- Where necessary, support the Investigation Manager to compile their investigation report and ensure copies of all relevant documents are saved in the HR database;
- Where a formal meeting is required, provide advice and guidance to all parties, attend the meeting to provide HR guidance to the Chair (asking questions where appropriate), and assist the Chair to compile their outcome letter.

Whilst the HR representative should support the Investigating Manager in compiling their investigation report in terms of format, flow/sequence and typography, their role is not to influence the findings of the Investigating Manager.

PROCEDURE

4. Informal Action & Mediation

Before raising a formal grievance, employees are encouraged to resolve issues informally, by raising the issue with their line manager, or the other member of staff involved, in the first instance. However, if the employee is concerned about doing so, they should speak to their senior line manager or Director, and advice can also be sought from the HR Business Partnering team or the trade unions.

Grievances should be raised and dealt with promptly, so the complainant should raise their concerns as soon as reasonably practical and should be invited to attend an informal meeting which takes place within 10 working days of their complaint being received.

The aim of this meeting will be to enable the manager or colleague to listen to the employee's concerns and seek a positive resolution. It may therefore be appropriate to use mediation.

The purpose of mediation is to enable the perspective of all parties to be shared and for future ways of working together to be agreed. However, while mediation is encouraged, it is only possible with the agreement of both parties.

Mediation should be facilitated by either an internal or external trained mediator. Where a mediator is proposed, their qualifications should be made available to the employee, and they should be able to raise any concerns or objections within a reasonable timeframe for consideration by the HR representative, including whether another or differently qualified mediator might be more suitable.

Although union/workplace representatives are not permitted to attend mediation meetings, they will be able to support colleagues, if requested by an employee, during the individual preparation meetings held with the mediator prior to the mediation sessions.

The main points raised by the parties during the mediation meeting, and any actions agreed, should be noted by the facilitator, and shared with all parties, including the HR representative.

This informal process is an integral part of the process, so should only be omitted if the HR representative believes it would not be appropriate or possible to resolve matters informally, or where the employee has exercised their right to request that the matter is dealt with under the formal procedure.

5. Formal Grievance Procedure

The formal procedure should be used either when informal action is considered inappropriate due to the potentially serious nature of the complaint, or if the complainant believes that the nature of their complaint makes the use of the informal procedure inappropriate. Notification of a formal grievance can be sent by e-mail or letter, but in either case should be headed 'Grievance', and the employee should set out:

- the issue of concern (including as much detail as the employee is able to provide), and how it has a negative impact on the job or atmosphere in which they work,
- the solution being sought, how this might be achieved, and any other background information as may appear relevant and useful; and
- any relevant supporting information or evidence, including (where relevant) details of the action taken at the informal stage.

Where the formal procedure is being invoked following informal action or mediation, the employee should submit their complaint within a reasonable timeframe following the informal meeting or mediation session.

The grievance notification should normally be sent to the line manager, unless the employee's grievance relates to that individual, or they have specific concerns about doing so, in which case it should be sent to the senior line manager or to the relevant HR Business Partner or Advisor. If submitted to the senior line manager, a copy should be sent to the HR representative, and receipt should be acknowledged in writing by both parties.

Where the complaint has been raised against the employee's line manager, it may be appropriate for temporary line management arrangements to be put in place, pending the outcome of the investigation. In such cases, the HR representative will liaise with the complainant's Dean/Director to identify an alternative manager and the Dean/Director will be responsible for communicating the arrangement to all parties.

6. Grievance Investigations

Investigations should be conducted by a manager with no prior involvement in the matter, and in all cases the Investigation Manager should seek advice from the HR representative prior to proceeding. The employee may therefore request that the investigation is undertaken by someone outside of their own School or Department if they believe their own management team will not be impartial and the fairness of the process will therefore be impacted.

In this event, the employee should raise their concern with the HR representative as soon as they are advised of the Investigating Manager's name, so an alternative can be identified without undue delay.

On rare occasions, e.g., where a case is very complex, or there is a lack of internal expertise, at the discretion of the Human Resource Manager, an external investigation company may be appointed to undertake the investigation.

In this event, the investigator will be required to follow Institute's grievance procedure, as set out in this document, and to liaise with an Institute HR representative, who the employee and their representative can contact should they have any concerns.

The external investigator's role will be limited to leading the investigation process, and (if it is subsequently determined that a formal disciplinary hearing is required to address conduct concerns which have become known during the grievance process), to present the investigation report to the Hearing Chair.

The employee raising the grievance will be invited to attend an investigation meeting, where practical, within 10 working days of Institute's receipt of their grievance notification, and the invitation will include the names of the Investigation Manager, HR representative and notetaker. The purpose of the meeting will be to give the complainant an opportunity to provide full details of their complaint, the names of any witnesses who can provide relevant evidence, and details of the solution they are seeking from the grievance process.

As part of their investigation, the Investigation Manager will review all relevant documents and policies, interview witnesses or request witness statements or written responses to specific questions. Any additional meetings will be completed as quickly as possible, dependent on the availability of those involved. However, where a delay may occur, the HR representative will agree a timetable with the Investigation Manager and inform all parties.

The employee under investigation and their representative may gather their own evidence and also provide the Investigation Manager with questions they would like to be considered and included in the investigation report. The HR representative will be present at all investigation meetings, and a

notetaker will also attend. Notes from the meeting will be circulated for review as stated in section 14 below.

Where either party or their representatives wish to contact a witness named in the grievance to obtain evidence, they should seek permission in advance from the HR representative. This is to protect both parties, and where the witness is considered particularly vulnerable, the employee may be required to submit their questions in writing, rather than meeting the witness in person.

Witnesses may also be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative and will be given sufficient notice of the investigation meeting and provided with copies of any relevant documents in advance. These will normally be provided a minimum of 5 working days prior to the meeting.

If a delay in the Investigation Manager's ability to conclude their investigation occurs, the HR representative will agree a timetable with them and the employee/their representative, and all parties will be informed.

7. Right to be Accompanied

Complainants have the right to be represented at formal meetings by a colleague or trade union representative. Whilst this will not normally apply to meetings held under the informal procedure, representatives or workplace colleagues may attend at this stage, (1) as a 'reasonable adjustment' where the employee is disabled, (2) where the process is affecting the employee's physical or mental health, (3) where English is not the employee's first language, or (4) where both parties at an informal stage agree to the employee being accompanied.

If the employee or their chosen companion is unable to attend on the first identified date, the meeting may be postponed for up to 5 working days, although a different date may be agreed depending on the availability of all parties.

To minimise the risk that a representative will be unavailable on the first date chosen, the HR representative will liaise with them directly to ascertain their availability. However, if the employee's chosen companion is unable to attend within a reasonable timeframe, e.g. due to long-term illness, the meeting will proceed in a timely manner and the employee will be required to seek alternative workplace or union support.

Where the Hearing or Appeal Chair or HR representative is unavailable, a suitable alternative will be assigned in line with this policy. This is to ensure that the meeting can proceed in a timely manner. Any changes will be communicated in writing to the employee and their representative, so that any potential concerns with the newly appointed personnel can be raised at this point.

The role of the representative will be to support and advise the employee, so whilst they may not respond to any questions on the employee's behalf, they may present statements written by or with the employee and may also suggest questions for the Investigation Manager to ask other employees or witnesses. Workplace colleagues will be allowed reasonable time off from their duties to support an employee without loss of pay, but no one is obliged to act as a companion if they do not wish to do so.

Where English is not the employee's first language and it is requested, the HR representative will arrange either for a translator to attend meetings, or for other translation services to be provided. Where an internal translator is proposed, their name should be provided to the employee in advance so that external translation services can be requested if the person named is not considered to be impartial.

Occasionally, it may be agreed that a disabled employee can be accompanied by a family member or carer as a reasonable adjustment, but in this case, the employee will also retain their right to bring a union representative or workplace colleague. However, permission must be sought from the HR representative prior to the family member or carer attending the meeting.

If the grievance has been made against a colleague, they will be notified in writing of the complaint against them, provided with any documents the Investigation Manager wishes to discuss, and invited to a meeting at which they will be able to present their perspective. This meeting will be held as soon as reasonably practicable, but the employee will be given a minimum of 10 working days' notice.

The employee against whom a grievance has been raised also has the right to be represented at investigation meetings by a colleague or trade union representative. They and their representative may gather their own evidence and also provide the Investigation Manager with questions they would like to be considered and included in the investigation report.

8. Grievance Outcome

Following the conclusion of their investigation, the Investigation Manager will produce a report which should be provided to the employee within 10 working days of the final meeting undertaken as part of the investigation.

The report will summarise the investigation process, detail the findings in respect of each complaint, and include any recommendations being made. Where all or some of the grievance is not upheld, details of the employee's right of appeal should also be provided in a covering letter or email.

If the Investigation Manager believes that no part of the grievance should be upheld, the report should clarify the reason/justification in each case, and the subject of the complaint should also be informed without delay.

If, however, the Investigation Manager believes that the grievance should be fully or partially upheld, their report should clarify which elements fall into each category and the Investigation Manager should also speak to the HR representative to discuss any recommendations they may wish to make.

These recommendations may include disciplinary action against either the subject of the complaint or other staff identified during the investigation, wider recommendations for consideration by the relevant Executive or senior manager, and/or use of mediation to re-establish positive working relationships.

Where the employee feels that the Investigation Manager's recommendations are insufficient, they should contact the HR representative within 10 working days of receipt of the report with their proposed additional recommendations; however, the final decision will be that of the Investigation Manager.

Where a recommendation includes disciplinary action, the investigation report will form the basis of the disciplinary investigation, and documents and statements gathered during the grievance investigation will be considered as part of the disciplinary process. Whilst this may shorten the duration of the disciplinary investigation, the investigation should be conducted in line with the disciplinary policy. The grievance Investigation Manager should not be assigned as the Investigation Manager for the disciplinary investigation.

9. Appeals

Employees wishing to appeal against the outcome of the investigation should do so in writing within 10 working days of their receipt of the outcome letter or report. Extensions may be requested where the employee is unwell or has planned annual leave, etc., but these must be reasonable.

Appeals should be addressed to the Human Resource Manager, and clearly set out the employee's full grounds for appeal and what could be done to resolve the matter. Appeal grounds should be based on one or more of the following:

- The finding of the grievance investigation on a point of fact;
- Failure to adhere to the agreed procedure;
- Concerns of bias/interpretation of evidence;
- New evidence not available at the time of the hearing which is pertinent to the case and could have affected the decision taken.

Any relevant supporting documents should also be submitted.

On receipt of the appeal letter, the document will be acknowledged in writing by the HR representative, and an appeal meeting will be arranged.

Appeals should be conducted by a manager senior to the Investigating Manager who has had no prior involvement in the matter. In all cases the Appeal Manager should seek advice from the HR representative prior to proceeding.

The employee will be invited to attend an appeal meeting, where practical, within 10 working days of Institute's receipt of their appeal. The purpose of the meeting will be to give the complainant an opportunity to explain the grounds for their appeal and the solution they are seeking from the appeals process.

Should the employee wish the Appeal Manager to meet with the original subject of the complaint, or any other colleagues, they should explain their reasons so the Appeal Manager can decide whether it would be helpful to do so. Should the Appeal Manager choose not to agree to their request they will be required to explain their reasons to the employee.

The role of the Appeal Manager is not to revisit the hearing, but to examine the grounds on which an appeal has been made, so if new evidence is presented, consideration will be given as to whether (had it been available previously), the original hearing decision would have been different.

The HR representative will be present at all appeal meetings, and a notetaker will also attend. Notes from the meeting will be circulated for review as stated in section 14 below.

Once the Appeal Manager has considered the appeal and reviewed any additional evidence, they will summarise their findings in an outcome letter, which will be sent to the employee within 10 working days of the final meeting undertaken as part of the appeal.

There will be no further right of appeal.

10. Support to complainants absent due to ill-health

Should the complainant be absent due to ill health during the investigation, their permission may be sought to write to their GP or refer them to Occupational Health to obtain an assessment of their fitness to participate in the process.

In this case, the employee will be expected to co-operate with the Occupational Health process to facilitate the timely identification of reasonable adjustments to support their involvement in the process.

Where the GP/Occupational Health specialist determines that they are fit to participate, the process will continue, although reasonable adjustments will be made to support their participation in meetings and hearings, where required. In addition, if they are medically unable to attend meetings either in person or remotely, they will be allowed to submit information or responses to questions via email, post or telephone.

Where the employee refuses permission for the Institute to write to their GP, or fails to co-operate with an OH assessment, or is deemed fit to participate in the process, but fails to attend meetings without good reason the process may continue in their absence, and they will be informed of the outcome.

11 Vexatious grievances

Fabricated or unsubstantiated grievances may result in disciplinary action being considered against the employee concerned.

12 Grievance Withdrawal

If the employee wishes to withdraw their grievance, they must confirm their reasons in writing to the HR representative. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, the HR representative may consult with the Investigation Manager to decide whether it would be appropriate to continue with the investigation process.

The employee's preference will carry significant weight, and information and support will be provided to them, so that if they feel they are being pressured to withdraw a grievance they have action and contacts for what to do and who to speak to.

If the decision is taken to proceed, the complainant will be invited to attend an investigation meeting, but should they choose not to attend, the investigation will proceed based on the available evidence.

On completion of the investigation, the Investigation Manager will draft a report which will be shared with the employee and line manager (or senior manager where the line manager was the subject of the complaint).

13 Grievances from or concerning the Principal or Executive Team members

When grievances relate to, or are raised by, the Principal or Executive Team members, the complaint should be submitted to the Vice Chair of Governing Body (the Council), via the Institute Secretary and Clerk to the Council.

The Vice Chair will seek advice from the Council and, where appropriate, an investigation will be conducted by the Vice Chair, supported by Independent members, in accordance with the formal investigation process outlined above.

If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, they will have the right to appeal. In this case, they will have 10 working days from receipt of the outcome report or letter to submit their appeal in writing to the Chair of the Council, via the Institute Secretary and Clerk to the Council.

The Chair of the Council, supported by a different Independent member and the Group Chief Officer, will deal with the appeal as detailed above.

14 Record of Proceedings

Notes will be taken at all meetings and drafts will be made available to employees for review as outlined below, as well as being issued outcome letter/reports. Draft notes should be circulated to participants within 10 working days of a meeting, with a deadline of 5 working days for signed notes (or details of any requested amendments) to be provided to the HR representative and meeting Chair.

Where amendments are agreed, a revised copy of the notes will be provided for the employee's signature. However, where the amendments are not deemed by the Investigation Manager to reflect what was actually said during the meeting, the original notes will form the official record, but a copy of the employee's amendments will be added to the appendices.

Should the employee fail to return either their signed notes or any proposed amendments by the deadline date, the unsigned notes will form the official record.

In the interest of accuracy, Institute may also supplement written notes with an audio recording of the meeting. If this approach is proposed, the consent of all parties must be obtained, and will not be unreasonably refused by the Chair or HR representative.

Recordings will be deleted following the conclusion of the investigation (or appeal where one is submitted). No other requests to record the proceedings electronically will be agreed nor accepted as evidence.

15 Overlap with other policies

Ordinarily, the grievance procedure is to be used separately from the disciplinary procedure, i.e. an employee who is the subject of a disciplinary process may raise a grievance. Where the matters are unrelated, it will normally run independently and in parallel.

However, if an employee raises a grievance in response to action being taken against them on the grounds of conduct, the HR representative will liaise with the line manager/Investigating Manager to determine whether the disciplinary procedure should be paused to allow time for the grievance to be investigated, or whether they should be addressed concurrently.

Whilst in most cases the matters will be dealt with concurrently, the disciplinary process may be paused where the grievance is submitted prior to the hearing being scheduled or where the grievance relates to aspects of the disciplinary process itself.

16 Equality and Diversity

We will apply this policy consistently and fairly and will not discriminate against anyone based on any relevant characteristics, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010.

17 Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if there is a specific legislative, regulatory or service requirement or change in guidance, law, or practice. Reviews will be constituted by negotiation with recognised trade unions, and changes to the policy will only take place following formal ratification by both parties.