

Selsey Community Forum

Grievance Policy



Policy Statement

This procedure has been designed to provide a mechanism for the evaluation and resolution of staff grievances that may arise in the course of employment with Selsey Community Forum. It aims to provide a framework for fair and swift settlement of grievances.

Scope

The policy relates to all Selsey Community Forum employees, excluding those within their probationary period. The policy statement will be brought to the attention of all Selsey Community Forum employees.

Legislation/Codes of Practice

- Employment Relations Act 2004
- Employment Rights Act 1996

Whenever an employee has the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative it may include a workplace representative or a full-time official.

Policy Standards

1. Generally

If a grievance relates to employment, the employee has a right to express their grievance and this procedure is designed to provide an effective method for this to occur. However, certain specific matters will be dealt with under a separate procedure or process relevant to that type of issue:

Subject Area	Procedure
Disciplinary matters	Disciplinary Rules and Procedures
Bullying and harassment	Harassment at Work Policy
Allegations of impropriety	Whistleblowing Policy

Where an employee is uncertain which policy or procedure to follow, it should be raised with the Manager or Chair of the Trustees to establish the appropriate course of action.

2. Procedure

2.1 Selsey Community Forum encourages the resolution of grievances and believes that informal mechanisms such as discussion between the staff member and their manager provide the best means of a swift and effective resolution to most problems. Notes of such discussions should be made by the manager and copied both to the employee and to their personal file. The employee may also wish to make their own notes.

2.2 However where the grievance cannot be resolved in this way, the formal procedure described below should be followed.

2.3 All meetings held under the formal Grievance Procedure are also attended by a representative from the Board of Trustees and minutes of the meeting should be taken. In addition, all formal letters sent by either side must be copied to the designated presiding Trustee representative and any documentation to be used in the meetings copied to the Manager and the other side at

least two working days before the meeting takes place unless otherwise agreed.

3. Time Periods

It should be noted that where time periods are given, they are for guidance only. However, it is intended that they should normally be followed wherever possible. If this is not possible, then the reason for a delay must be given to the employee or employer as appropriate. The employee should also be advised when the hearing or written response can be expected.

4. Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible. However, the grievance may need to be discussed with other members of staff and Trustees for the purpose of proper investigation of the issue or issues raised. If this is necessary, it will be done discretely and will be done only to the extent that is required to obtain sufficient information. Any other staff involved will be required to respect the confidentiality of the matter.

5. Representation

Where this policy refers to the employee's right to be accompanied, this is a statutory right to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union representative.

6. Grievance Meeting

- 6.1 If all formal mechanisms have failed, then the employee should put their grievance in writing to the Chair of the Trustees. The letter must state that they are raising the issue under the formal Grievance Procedure and provide as much detail of the grievance as possible, including what outcome the employee feels would be satisfactory. It is helpful if grievances are made known at the earliest possible opportunity to assist in making effective investigations and to resolve the issue as soon as possible.
- 6.2 When appropriate and necessary, grievances will be heard by a nominated Trustee or in certain circumstances by an outside agency to ensure objectivity and fairness.
- 6.3 The nominated presiding Trustee should make enquiries as to the grievance, specifically examining whether the matter is contested. Where the Trustee finds that the grievance is contested, they should invite the employee to discuss the grievance at a formal meeting, which will also be attended by the Manager or a second Trustee. The employee must be advised in writing of their right to be accompanied to such a meeting by a work colleague or Trade Union representative. It is intended that normally either a full response is made or that the date is set for a meeting, as described above, within 14 working days of the written grievance being received from the employee by the residing Trustee.
- 6.4 Unless a shorter period is mutually agreed, the employee shall be given not less than two working days' notice in writing of the hearing arrangements. The letter, which will be sent by the manager, shall be accompanied by a copy of this procedure along with all relevant documentation, evidence and witness statements if appropriate, along with the hearing arrangements at the request to attend.
- 6.5 Any party to the grievance may provide a witness statement from a non-employee but the decision to invite or allow a non-employee witness to attend the grievance hearing, give evidence and answer questions will be a decision made by the presiding Trustee.
- 6.6 Where either party intends to rely on witness statements made by other employees, documents, CCTV footage, data collected from electronic recording systems or other evidence, copies of the witness statement, documents and other material should be prepared and issued to the other party in good time, normally at least two days in advance of the hearing. Employees will not be charged for copies of this material. Witnesses should be requested to be on hand at the

hearing to answer questions from either party.

6.7 Following a grievance meeting the presiding Trustee must normally confirm in writing their decision within 7 working days.

6.8 It is hoped that most formal complaints will be satisfactorily settled at this stage. However, the presiding Trustee when setting out their findings, must explain the employee's right to appeal against the grievance decision and move to the second and final stage of this procedure.

7. Appeal

7.1 If the decision is not acceptable to the employee, they may appeal to Chair of the Trustees, within 7 working days of receiving the outcome in writing. An appeal should be in writing explaining the basis of the grievance, why the employee believes that the grievance hearing resolution was not acceptable and what the employee now believes would be a satisfactory conclusion.

7.2 The Chair of the Trustees will be nominated as the Grievance Appeal Officer and should set the date for the appeal with the employee within 10 working days. The employee should be reminded of their right to be accompanied as explained in section 5. Following this meeting the Grievance Appeal Officer should normally write to the employee within a further 10 working days confirming their decision. The response should include a review of previous responses and any relevant comments on the grievance itself.

7.3 This decision is final and there is no further right of appeal within Selsey Community Forum.

7.4 Selsey Community Forum regards grievance mechanisms as an important component of employee relations and will treat issues raised under this procedure with serious consideration and appropriate investigation. However, should it emerge that an employee is wilfully vexatious in submitting grievances or is repeatedly raising the same issue, then Selsey Community Forum reserves the right not to progress the grievance through the stages of this procedure.

8. Other Matters

A written record is to be retained detailing the outcome of all complaints and all Formal Notifications.

Any complaints or grievances related to a safeguarding issue are to be dealt with in accordance with Selsey Community Forum's Adult Safeguarding Policy or Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy as appropriate.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Selsey Community Forum's Staff Handbook and is applicable to all the activities in which Selsey Community Forum is or becomes involved; it is to be reviewed and updated as necessary at least annually.

Reviewed and Approved by Trustees: November 2024

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Mike Nicholls, Chair, Selsey Community Forum