

**Date: 19 July 2016**  
**For: Employees, volunteers**



## **Grievance Policy**

### **Objectives**

The key objective of our Grievance Policy is to allow grievances to be settled quickly and fairly. As far as possible, grievances should be dealt with and resolved informally through discussion. The formal stage of the procedure, where grievances are made in writing, should only be used when the informal stage has failed to resolve the issue or is not making progress at reasonable speed.

This Policy applies to all Ride High employees and volunteers.

### **General principles**

- It is only possible to hear grievances that are within the power of Ride High to remedy.
- All proceedings, whether informal or formal, should so far as is practicable remain confidential.
- The timescales set out below may be extended with the agreement of the parties.
- If more than one employee/volunteer has lodged a grievance relating to the same, or substantially the same, issue, the grievances may be dealt with together in the interests of fair and consistent decision-making.
- A written record will be kept of any grievances raised in informal or formal proceedings, the persons involved, supporting papers and all decision(s) made.

### **Informal procedure**

If an employee/volunteer has a grievance that concerns any other employee/volunteer, in the first instance an attempt to resolve the matter should be made by direct approach to the employee(s)/volunteer(s) concerned.

If such a grievance remains unresolved, or if the grievance relates to individual circumstances at work, the person raising the grievance may request a meeting with the Operations Manager or one of the Trustees, as appropriate, who will try to resolve the issue. Wherever possible, such a meeting should be held within five working days of the submission of the request.

If, after any action to resolve the grievance taken by the Operations Manager/Trustee (as appropriate), the employee/volunteer raising the grievance is still dissatisfied, (s)he may proceed to the formal stage of the procedure.

If the grievance is against the Operations Manager or there is another reason why the employee/volunteer does not wish to raise the grievance with the Operations Manager, the employee/volunteer should seek advice from one of the Trustees on how to deal with the grievance.

### **Formal procedure**

The following general principles apply to a grievance being dealt with through the formal procedure:

- The employee/volunteer raising a grievance has the right to be accompanied by an independent Ride High employee/volunteer at every stage of the formal procedure.
- The procedure is internal to Ride High and does not allow for any external representation.
- A record will be made at the hearing of a formal grievance and a copy of the record will be given to the person raising the grievance and the person against whom the grievance is raised, if any.

If the grievance has not been resolved informally and the employee/volunteer wishes to proceed to the formal stage, the grievance will be heard by a Panel of three Trustees, which will have a gender balance wherever possible. The person raising the grievance must set out in writing the nature of the grievance and the reasons why (s)he is dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal procedure. The employee/volunteer should also explain how (s)he thinks the grievance should be settled.

Should the complaint relate to a process or decision, the Panel will appoint an investigating officer (hereinafter referred to as "IO") who is one of the Trustees who is not a member of the Panel. The IO will be asked to provide a full written report to the Panel together with any relevant documents. The investigation should be conducted as quickly as possible while allowing for all relevant information and evidence to be gathered.

Should the grievance be against a named individual or individuals, the Panel will give the person(s) concerned a copy of the grievance at the earliest opportunity. The person(s) concerned will present their response(s) at the hearing of the Panel.

The hearing of the Panel will be held within ten working days of receipt of the IO's report, where applicable, or within ten working days of the grievance being submitted in writing if it is against an individual. All parties will be given five working days' notice of the date of the hearing.

Any relevant written information or evidence relied upon by either party must be made available to the other party and to the Panel at the earliest opportunity, and, in any case, at least three working days before the hearing.

The hearing shall be conducted as set out in the Appendix.

The failure of either party to attend shall not invalidate the proceedings of the hearing.

The hearing may not proceed unless all three members of the Panel are present.

In seeking to resolve the grievance, the Panel may adjourn the meeting or defer a decision if more information is required.

The decision of the Panel, reasons for that decision and any redress will be communicated to all parties at the earliest opportunity, but in any event within three working days of the hearing. The written decision of the Panel will be handed to the employee/volunteer in writing whenever possible, failing which it will be sent by first class post.

### **Right of appeal**

Should the person raising the grievance wish to appeal against the decision of the Panel, (s)he must make a request in writing to the Chair of the Trustees requesting an appeal. This request must be made within five working days of being informed of the Panel's decision.

A request for an appeal must specify the grounds for the appeal under one or more of the following headings:

- the nature of any redress;
- the finding(s) of the Panel on point(s) of fact which is/are pertinent to the decision of the hearing;
- a failure to adhere to the published procedure.

The Chair of the Trustees will decide whether an appeal shall be permitted and shall communicate this decision in writing to the complainant, giving reasons, within three working days of the request being made. The decision of the Chair of the Trustees as to whether to permit an appeal shall be final.

If an appeal is permitted, it will be heard by an Appeals Panel consisting of two Trustees neither of whom was a member of the original Panel. The Appeals Panel will set a date for the appeal that must not be more than ten working days after the decision to allow the appeal was made. All written submissions must be made to the Appeals Panel at least five working days before the date of the appeal hearing. The person making the appeal should make a written submission covering:

- the grounds and reasons for the appeal;

- a summary of the case;
- the outcome sought;

and should include any supporting documentation.

A member of the original Panel will attend the Appeals Panel to present its findings and the reasons for the decision(s) reached.

The Appeals Panel may:

- uphold all or part of the previous decision; or
- not uphold the previous decision.

If the Appeals Panel decides not to uphold the previous decision in full, it may at its discretion substitute an appropriate remedy of its own choosing.

Within three working days of the appeal hearing the Appeals Panel will record its decision in writing, giving reasons. A copy of the decision will either be handed to the parties concerned or sent by first class post, and will be notified to the Board of Trustees at their next meeting.

The decision of the Appeals Panel shall be final.

### **Stress Policy**

Our Stress Policy confirms our commitment to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our Trustees, employees and volunteers by identifying and dealing with potential causes of work-related stress and helping any Trustee, employee or volunteer suffering from stress.

### **Training and awareness**

A copy of this Policy will be shown to all employees and volunteers, and each must sign the list attached to the original to indicate they have read and understood it.

### **Approval and review**

This Grievance Policy was approved at a Board Meeting of the Trustees on 19 July 2016. It will be reviewed each September thereafter, or more frequently if appropriate.

Signed.....

Date.....

## **Appendix**

### **Format of the formal grievance hearing**

The Panel shall be responsible for the proper conduct of the hearing, which shall be on a formal basis.

The Chair of the Panel will introduce those present and confirm the names of any witnesses who may be called. The Chair of the Panel will ensure that all parties understand the nature of the grievance and ask the person who is raising the grievance to say how they think it should be settled.

The Panel shall order the proceedings as follows:

- The employee/volunteer raising the grievance will be asked to present their case after which the IO or respondent may ask questions. The employee/volunteer may call witnesses or refer to documents previously circulated and necessary for the hearing.
- The IO or respondent will be asked to reply to the case, after which the employee/volunteer raising the grievance may ask questions. The IO or respondent may call witnesses or refer to documents previously circulated and necessary for the hearing.
- The Panel may ask questions on points of clarification at any time. Other questions may only be put to each party after it has presented its case. The Panel may call witnesses after each party has presented its case.
- If either party wishes to present evidence not previously circulated the Panel may adjourn the hearing to allow the other side to consider it.
- The person raising the grievance, followed by the IO or respondent, shall be asked to sum up their cases. Neither party may introduce new matters in their summing up.

The Panel will adjourn to consider its decision, which shall be given as soon as possible after the hearing, but in any case within three working days.

At the same time as the decision is given the employee/volunteer raising the grievance shall be advised of their right to appeal against the decision.