



Grievance Manager Fact Sheet

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Where do I go for further information	3
Timescales	3
Stage 1: Informal Procedure	3
Voluntary Mediation	4
Stage 2: Formal Procedure	5
Submitting a grievance	5
Grievance meeting	5
Investigation	5
Communicating the outcome	6
Recording the Decision	6
Stage 3: Right to Appeal	6
Submitting an appeal	6
Appeal meeting	7
Investigation	7
Communicating the outcome	7
Recording the Decision	8
Delays	8
FLOW CHART: Grievance Procedure	9
FAQ's	10
APPENDIX 1: Reluctant witnesses and sharing documents	13
APPENDIX 2: Tools and template index	15

INTRODUCTION

The Grievance Policy which is a 'National Collective Agreement' aims to help employees and managers resolve work-related concerns in a positive, constructive and timely way, by providing a robust process for managers to deal with these concerns.

We believe many workplace concerns can be dealt with through day-to-day discussions. A key aim of the revised policy is to encourage employees to discuss the matter with their manager as soon as possible after it arises. By talking through the concern in this way, we think the majority will be resolved at this point.

If concerns cannot be resolved by the first line manager, they may have to be raised with the second line manager, who is accountable for making sure the formal grievance case is completed in a timely manner.

Managers should use this 'Fact Sheet' to help support them in managing grievances and seeking answers to some common queries.

WHERE DO I GO FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

- [Grievance Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Conduct Code](#)
- [Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Whistleblowing Policy](#)

There are a series of checklists that provide guidance to managers on what is required in advance of meetings, what needs to be said during the meeting and what actions need to be taken afterward.

- [Formal Meeting Checklist](#)
- [Investigation Checklist](#)
- [Appeal Meeting Checklist](#)



You should contact [My HR Help](#) for advice and guidance on all formal grievances and appeals submitted 0844 210 2042.

TIMESCALES

The following timescales apply to the grievance procedure.

STEP	TIMESCALES
Grievance meeting to take place	Within 5 working days of receipt of the grievance.
Notice of grievance meeting	3 working days' advance notice
Grievance outcome	Within 5 working days of outcome confirmation.
Right of appeal	Within 5 working days of written outcome
Appeal meeting to take place	Within 5 working days of receipt of appeal
Notice of appeal meeting	3 working days' advance notice
Outcome of appeal	Within 5 working days of outcome confirmation
Postponement of meeting due to representative availability	Max 5 working days from the original meeting date.

The formal grievance procedure should be completed and the outcome shared with the employee within 28 working days of the complaint being raised.

The same timeframe applies for hearing an appeal.

If it is not possible for you to comply with these timescales, the employee should be informed accordingly, together with the reason for the delay and a timeframe for when the response can be expected. See section on [Delays](#).

STAGE 1: INFORMAL APPROACH

Many workplace concerns can be resolved during day-to-day discussions, so we want employees to talk to their line manager as soon as possible.

If an employee raises a concern with you, consider the following:

- Make sure the discussion takes place in an appropriate place where the employee will feel comfortable to discuss their concern.
- Listen to what they have to say and follow up with any questions you have to clarify the details.
- Consider whether you need to review any relevant Post office policies or guidance before identifying a solution
- Try to provide a response to their concern by the end of the discussion. If you need more time to consider your response, make this clear to the employee and agree when you will have a follow up discussion.

If a discussion will not resolve the matter immediately, the employee can ask to meet with you. You should:

- Meet with the employee in an appropriate place where the employee feels comfortable to discuss their concern. They may wish to bring along a work colleague or trade union representative for support
- Listen to what they have to say and follow up with any questions you have to clarify the details.
- Complete any necessary investigation. This could involve, for example, reviewing relevant Post Office policy or guidance or meeting with witnesses.
- Consider the information you have gathered and how best you can resolve the concern.
- Confirm the outcome verbally to the employee, you can also record any discussions or agreed actions on the **Informal Grievance Record**.

You should deal with employees' concerns as soon as possible, preferably on the same day or within a few days. You should take no longer than 10 working days.

If a manager grade employee raises a concern around their mid-year or year-end performance rating and after speaking with your employee you believe that the performance rating should be changed, you should firstly discuss this with your line manager and

HR Business Partner before confirming any changes. Where you agree a change to a performance rating ensure that this is recorded in **SuccessFactors**. If the rating change occurs at year-end the HR Business Partner will notify the Reward and Finance Team.

VOLUNTARY MEDIATION

When you are dealing with an employee's concern you should consider whether it could be resolved through mediation.

Mediation is a way of resolving difficult situations. The mediator is an impartial third party. They help two or more people to have an open and honest dialogue so that they can secure a mutually acceptable outcome.

Mediation is not going to be suitable for all grievances; however, for some it may be more effective than using the grievance procedure.

Mediation will be provided by professionally accredited Post Office employees, trained to a high standard by ACAS.

Always discuss this with the employee as mediation is voluntary and all individuals must agree to take part.

Mediation will be available to all levels of the organisation and can be easily accessed by completing a **Mediation Referral form**.

An employee may make a request for mediation after they have submitted a formal grievance. In these circumstances the formal grievance procedure would be suspended and if mediation is unsuccessful, the issue will revert back and be dealt with as part of the formal grievance procedure.

Voluntary mediation may also be recommended by the investigating manager as an outcome following a formal grievance complaint.

STAGE 2: FORMAL PROCEDURE

Employees can raise a formal grievance with their second line manager when:

- They aren't satisfied with the resolution from their manager.
- Their concern has not been dealt with.
- Their concern involves their manager.

SUBMITTING A GRIEVANCE

If an employee wishes to make a formal grievance, they should complete the **Formal Grievance Form** and send this to the second line manager.

If the employee feels uncomfortable sending their complaint directly to the second line manager they can submit this to the HR Service Centre (hr.grievance@postoffice.co.uk) in the first instance who will allocate to the second line manager for investigation.

Exceptionally the second line manager can assign it to another appropriate manager who has the authority to deal with the case. For example, this could occur where the second line manager is directly involved or where the timeliness of dealing with a grievance is likely to negatively impact on the employee.

ONLY APPLICABLE FOR MANAGER GRADES EMPLOYEES: Manager grade employees who do not agree with their **mid-year and year-end performance rating must submit their formal grievance within the 6 week window** from confirmation of the rating. The grievance window will be stated in communications sent out prior to mid-year and year-end. Where they are submitting a formal grievance against their performance rating they must submit their grievance form to hr.pdr@postoffice.co.uk. The HR Service Centre will then allocate the grievance to you as the second line manager for investigation.

GRIEVANCE MEETING

The formal grievance procedure should be completed and the outcome shared with the employee within 28 working days of the complaint being raised.

You as the second line manager will need to arrange a meeting to take place within 5 days of receiving the grievance through.

You should use the **Invitation to Grievance Meeting Letter** and ensure you allow 3 working days' advance notice of the meeting so the employee can prepare.

The employee has the right to be accompanied to this meeting by a work colleague or Trade Union representative.

If the employee and their representative can't attend the proposed meeting they should let you know. You will need to rearrange the meeting for a different time. This shouldn't normally be more than 5 working days after the first meeting date and any new time proposed by the employee must be reasonable (for example taking into account your availability). You should use **Invitation to rearranged Meeting Letter**.

You should read the **Formal Meeting Manager Checklist** to help prepare for and handle the conversations during this meeting.

You should keep a full record of the grievance meeting notes using the **Meeting File Note Form** and these should be shared with the employee using the **Enclosing Meeting Notes Letter**. The employee should check, amend/agree and sign a further copy of the notes and return these to you within 3 working days.

INVESTIGATION

If you need to undertake further investigation following the grievance meeting it is important that necessary investigations are carried out thoroughly and without unreasonable delay. In

some cases, this may require holding investigation meetings and in other cases the investigation may involve collation of documentary evidence only.

If the grievance is against another employee(s), you should speak directly with them to make them aware that they are the subject of a grievance and share details of the complaint.

You may wish to interview other people in connection with the grievance and this can be done through separate meetings or taking written statements.

If interviews with others are to take place, the employee should be informed of this and advised when they might reasonably expect a decision.

You may wish to meet with the employee again to clarify any points before concluding the investigation. Any evidence collated should be shared with the employee providing 3 working days for them to provide any final comments prior to reaching a decision. You should then use the [Grievance Investigation Report](#) to write up your investigation findings.

You should follow the guidance in the [Investigation Checklist](#).

COMMUNICATING THE OUTCOME

The following are potential outcomes:

- Grievance not upheld.
- Grievance partially upheld.
- Grievance upheld.

Where the grievance is upheld fully or in part, appropriate actions should be determined as a result of the grievance.

Recommendations can still be made, where appropriate, even when a grievance is not upheld in order to prevent similar complaints being raised in the future.

Once you have confirmed the outcome to the employee you should follow this up and confirm in writing within 5 working days, using the [Grievance](#)

[Outcome Letter](#). Where applicable you should also share the completed [Grievance Investigation Report](#).

RECORDING THE DECISION

You should ensure that the [My HR Help](#) are updated with the outcome and all case documentation is uploaded onto the case management system.

ONLY APPLICABLE FOR MANAGER GRADES EMPLOYEES:

Where the grievance was linked to a disagreement with the PDR rating, ensure you update the line manager of the outcome so that they can make any required changes to the employee's performance review records in [SuccessFactors](#). Please ensure you keep the HR Service Centre hr.pdr@postoffice.co.uk updated on the outcome. The HR Service Centre will notify the Reward Team if any change in ratings will effect bonus payments at year-end.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

The appeal should be completed and the outcome shared with the employee within 28 working days of the appeal being raised.

SUBMITTING AN APPEAL

Should the employee be dissatisfied with the grievance decision, and wish to appeal, they should notify the second line manager and complete the Appeal Form in [SuccessFactors](#) within 5 working days of receiving written confirmation of the grievance decision.

If the employee does not have access to [SuccessFactors](#) for reasons such as long term sickness they can complete the [Appeal Form](#) and send this to the HR Service Centre hr.appeals@postoffice.co.uk

The employee should set out why they want to appeal and propose a solution that would resolve the complaint for them.

An independent appeal manager from outside the management line will be

allocated by the HR Service Centre from the appeal manager pool (min 3a). Once an appeal manager has been allocated to the case the second line manager (grievance hearing manager) should ensure that the appeal manager has copies of all documents from the grievance case file. You should already have uploaded electronic copies of evidence onto [My HR Help](#).

If the employee raises an appeal outside of the 5 day window, the second line manager (grievance hearing manager) should use the [Out of Time Letter](#).

APPEAL MEETING

If you are appointed as the appeal manager you will need to contact [My HR Help](#) and review all the evidence collated from the formal grievance case.

You will need to arrange a meeting to take place within 5 working days of receiving the appeal through. You should use the [Appeal Meeting Invitation Letter](#) and ensure you allow 3 workings days' advance notice of the meeting so the employee can prepare.

The employee has the right to be accompanied to this meeting by a work colleague or Trade Union representative.

If the employee and their representative can't attend the proposed meeting they should let you know. You will need to rearrange the meeting for a different time. This shouldn't normally be more than 5 working days after the first meeting date and any new time proposed by the employee must be reasonable (for example taking into account your availability). You should use [Invitation to rearranged Meeting Letter](#).

You should read the [Appeal Meeting Manager Checklist](#) to help prepare for and handle the conversations during this meeting.

You should keep a full record of appeal meeting notes using the [Meeting File Note Form](#) and these should be shared with the employee using the [Enclosing](#)

[Meeting Notes Letter](#). The employee should check, amend/agree and sign a further copy of the notes and return these to you.

INVESTIGATION

If you need to undertake further investigation following the appeal meeting it is important that necessary investigations are carried out thoroughly and without unreasonable delay. In some cases, this may require holding investigation meetings and in other cases the investigation may involve collation of documentary evidence only. You may wish to interview other people in connection with the appeal and this may be done through separate meetings or gaining written statements.

If interviews with others are to take place, the employee should be informed of this and advised when they might reasonably expect a decision.

You may wish to meet with the employee again to clarify any points before concluding the appeal. Any evidence collated should be shared with the employee providing 3 working days for them to provide any final comments prior to reaching a decision. You should then complete an [Appeal Report](#) to collate your findings and confirm your recommendations and outcome.

You should follow the guidance in the [Investigation Checklist](#).

COMMUNICATING THE OUTCOME

The following are potential outcomes:

- Appeal not upheld
- Appeal partially upheld
- Appeal upheld

Where the appeal is upheld fully or in part, appropriate actions should be determined as a result of the appeal.

Recommendations can still be made, where appropriate, even when an appeal is not upheld in order to prevent similar complaints being raised in the future

Once you have confirmed the outcome to the employee you should follow this up and confirm in writing within 5 working days, using the **Appeal Outcome Letter** and share the **Appeal Report**.

RECORDING THE DECISION

You should update the employee's appeal case on [SuccessFactors](#).

Ensure that the [My HR Help](#) are updated with the outcome and all case documentation is uploaded onto the case management system.

ONLY APPLICABLE FOR MANAGER GRADES EMPLOYEES: Where the appeal was linked to a disagreement with the PDR rating ensure you update the line manager of the outcome so that

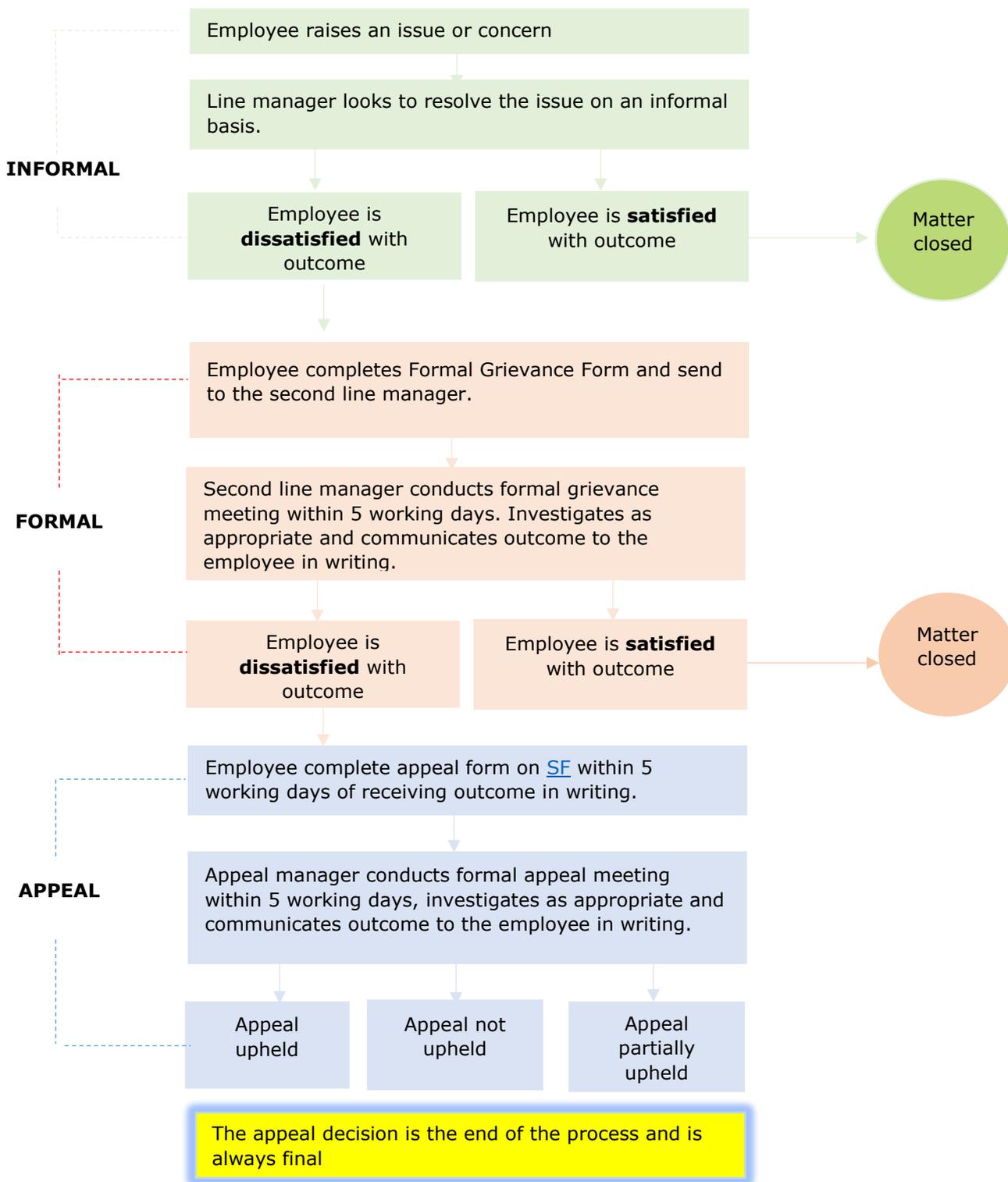
they can make any required changes to the employee's performance review records in [SuccessFactors](#). Please ensure you keep the HR Service Centre hr.pdr@postoffice.co.uk updated on the outcome. The HR Service Centre will notify the Reward Team if any change in ratings will effect bonus payments at year-end.

DELAYS

If it is not possible for you to respond with an outcome within time frames outlined, the employee should be informed accordingly, together with the reason for the delay and a timeframe for when the response can be expected using the **Outcome Delay Letter**.



GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE



FAQ's

GENERAL

What are the types of issues that may cause an employee to raise a grievance?

Issues that may cause grievances include:

- Working duties
- Health and safety
- Work relations
- Working environment
- New working practice
- Terms and conditions of employment

INFORMAL STAGE

Can an employee choose to skip the informal stage?

Yes, the informal stage isn't mandatory but we would encourage grievances to be resolved informally where possible.

Often employees can raise complaints over minor issues. In these cases do I still need to respond to them?

People's perception of the seriousness of an issue differs but it doesn't mean that they should be discounted. Regular discussion of all issues in regular 1:1s can normally address matters properly without the need for a formal grievance. If not, minor issues can escalate and grow into bigger problems and potentially lead to a formal grievance.

One of my team has told me that they would like to submit a formal grievance, but this is the first time they have mentioned this issue to me. Should I try to resolve informally first?

Yes, you should firstly attempt to resolve the issue informally with them through a proper discussion. You can also refer the employee to the [Grievance Policy and Procedure](#) which does encourage informal discussion as a first stage.

I am meeting with an employee as part of the informal grievance procedure, do I need to offer the right to representation?

You do not need to offer the right to representation but if an employee requests that they bring along representation this should be accommodated.

Do I need to confirm anything in writing to the employee at informal stage?

Confirmation in writing is only required after a formal grievance or grievance appeal meeting. However details of what has been agreed, and the final decision reached, could be recorded on the [Informal Grievance Record](#) and signed by both manager and employee.

FORMAL STAGE

I believe there is enough detail in the grievance form, do I need to meet the employee before starting my investigation?

Yes, as it is important to hear from the employee in person precisely the nature of their grievance and how they believe it should be resolved. It would be very unusual if additional information, useful to understanding the grievance and how it might be resolved were not to arise from the meeting.

Can the meeting be recorded?

Participating in a meeting that is being recorded can feel intimidating. Also, recordings are often not of high quality and it can be time consuming and expensive to have transcripts prepared. Also, there is always the risk that the technology fails – which leaves the meeting without notes having been taken altogether. For all these reasons the Company does not organise for meetings to be recorded, nor does it agree for the meeting to be recorded if an employee asks. It is the manager's (note taker) responsibility to take notes as accurately as possible and the employee will be provided with a copy for their reference.

Should I give to the employee who has raised the grievance a copy of

the notes of meetings with witnesses?

Yes. The interest of justice in these cases require transparency. Sometimes witnesses will have very good reasons not to want their names attached to the evidence such as a fear of threats of violence of suffering ill treatment from their line manager or colleagues whom they are giving evidence against. Review [Appendix 1](#) for further information on reluctant witnesses and document sharing.

I have a situation where one employee is saying one thing, and another employee is saying another. How do I determine which is the accurate version of events?

Your responsibility in this situation is to come to a reasonable conclusion. Therefore, consider questions such as:

- Is there any other evidence that tends to support one version over the other?
- Are there particular circumstances that suggest one version of events is more likely than the other?

Refer to the evidence or circumstances to explain why, on considering all of the evidence you prefer the account of one person over another.

Where there is a conflict of evidence, it can be helpful to describe the opposing view to the other person and ask for their comments. This can narrow the differences or provide evidence to consider to determine which version of events you prefer.

When I met with the employee they proposed an outcome that I do not agree to be appropriate, do I have to agree to this proposed outcome?

You should consider the proposed outcome that the employee has provided you with. However if you feel based on what you have discussed and any investigation carried out that this is not appropriate, you do not have to agree to a particular resolution.

Instead you should communicate to the employee what outcome you believe to be most appropriate and why.

APPEAL STAGE

An employee has told me verbally that they want to appeal, should I ask them to put this in writing?

You should remind the employee of the process and ask that they complete the Appeal Form in [SuccessFactors](#).

What is the purpose of the appeal meeting?

The purpose of the grievance appeal meeting is for an independent manager to:

- Review the reasonableness of the decision made at the grievance meeting.
- Consider any new evidence that has come to light since the original meeting.
- Ensure that the procedures have been followed fairly and correctly.

MEDIATION

When is mediation not appropriate?

Mediation is not appropriate in all situations. Some examples of this may include:

- Where one of the individuals is looking to apportion blame instead of seeking a resolution.
- Where one of the individuals isn't happy to proceed.
- Where another process may be more appropriate i.e. disciplinary.
- Where either individual hasn't previously been made aware of the issue and it could be resolved without mediation

What if the individuals can't agree?

It is the role of the mediator to support both parties to work towards a suitable resolution. Sometimes this may not always be possible.

APPENDIX 1 – RELUCTANT WITNESSES AND SHARING DOCUMENTS

Sometimes employees will be reluctant to give evidence. How you should treat these employees will depend on whether they have compelling reasons for not wanting to give evidence. Compelling reasons might include that they fear violence or reprisals of some kind.

The ACAS investigations guide states that an investigator should try to avoid anonymising witness statements whenever possible. ACAS takes the stance that an investigator should only agree to anonymise a witness statement in exceptional circumstances where a witness has a genuine fear of reprisals.

What to do with a reluctant witness

If a witness says at the outset that they don't want to give evidence in the process, you will need to ascertain the reasons why.

Where the witness has compelling reasons for not wanting to give evidence

If an employee has compelling reasons for not wanting to give evidence then you may propose to the employee to take their witness evidence on an anonymous basis.

If the employee agrees to give evidence anonymously, the interview should be conducted in the normal way. Afterwards you should consider what might need to be omitted or redacted from the minutes or witness statement to prevent identification. In some cases it may be possible for witness statements to be anonymised where the statement contains nothing that could make the identity of the witness clear. You should share a copy of the minutes or witness statement with the employee and check that they are comfortable that the witness evidence will not reveal their identity. Only if they are comfortable and agree to the evidence being used should you share the witness statement or minutes with other parties in the process.

Can the anonymous evidence be relied upon?

If the witness agrees that their anonymised evidence may be used then, when making findings in the case, you will need to make an assessment of how much weight to attach to the anonymous evidence. This will involve a balancing exercise between how important and reliable the anonymous evidence appears to be on the one hand, against any unfairness or prejudice caused to any party by the fact that the evidence is anonymous on the other.

Where the potential witness does not have compelling reasons for not giving evidence

If the reluctant witness does not have compelling reasons then you are unlikely to be able to rely on their witness evidence. It wouldn't be legitimate to anonymise evidence without good reason. So the reluctant witness would need to know that if they give evidence in circumstances in which they don't have good reason for anonymity, it will be disclosed. Only if they agree to that should you continue.

Where an employee refuses to give evidence

Where an employee refuses to give evidence, even on an anonymous basis, there may be little you can do to compel the employee to give evidence.

Will the reasons why anonymous witness evidence was relied upon need to be explained?

Bear in mind that, in the event of a claim, the onus is likely to be on you to explain to an employment tribunal why relying on anonymous witness evidence was reasonable in the circumstances, which will include a review of whether the witnesses had compelling reason to wish to remain anonymous. You should always be mindful that where a witness statement is not fully disclosed there may be a strong argument that the case

has not properly been put to the accused employee thereby violating the principles of natural justice. This in itself is also a question for the Employment Tribunal when assessing whether the employee has been treated dismissed.

Can witness anonymity be guaranteed?

It is very likely that any court or employment tribunal will respect a witness's desire to remain anonymous and an employer's decision to protect an employee's anonymity. Where an employer has relied on anonymous witness evidence, the focus for any court or tribunal will likely be on whether the employer was right to do that and whether doing so resulted in any unfairness to the respondent, rather than on exposing and challenging the anonymous witness.

But you should make the witness aware that whilst anonymity is almost a certainty there is always a small risk that their identity could be exposed during proceedings.

Further practical steps to consider

During investigation meetings the investigating manager would be expected to avoid recording extraneous and irrelevant information (e.g. If a witness diverted during the meeting and started talking about their summer holidays, the investigating manager shouldn't record it because it's irrelevant to the issues being investigated).

Investigating managers should redact anything written in investigation meeting minutes that is not relevant to the issue being investigated or contains employee personal data not relevant to the issue under investigation (particularly sensitive personal data concerning employees' health or protected characteristics). The redaction should be accompanied by a witness statement of the investigating manager explaining why the redaction has been made, e.g. it concerned sensitive matters about a third party's health and had no relevance to the issues under investigation.

APPENDIX 2: GRIEVANCE TOOLS AND TEMPLATE INDEX

STAGE	TEMPLATE
Policy	Grievance Policy and Procedure

Fact Sheet and Guidance	Guidelines: Grievance Manager Fact Sheet Guidelines: Grievance Employee Fact Sheet
Informal	Template: Informal Grievance Record Template: Mediation Referral Form
Formal Investigation	Template: Formal Grievance Form Letter: Invitation to Grievance Meeting Checklist: Formal Meeting Checklist Checklist: Investigation Checklist Form: Grievance Investigation Report Letter: Grievance Outcome
Appeal	SuccessFactors: Appeal Form Template: Appeal Form Letter: Out of Time Letter: Invitation to Appeal Meeting Checklist: Appeal Meeting Checklist Checklist: Investigation Checklist Template: Appeal Summary Report Letter: Appeal Outcome
General	Template: Meeting Notes Template Letter: Enclosing Meeting Notes Letter: Invitation to rearranged meeting Letter: Outcome Delay Letter
Sources of Support	SuccessFactors My HR Help HR Advice Centre Employee Assistance Programme Occupational Health Services