Resolution

1 What this policy covers

GHC is fully committed to ensuring that you are managed in a supportive, consistent, fair and effective way. This policy is designed to support you should you wish to raise a grievance, including issues relating to equality and inclusion. A grievance is any concern, problem or complaint relating to your employment. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Freedom to Speak Up and Respect and Dignity at Work policies.

2 Principles

This policy applies to all staff employed by GHC, including employees seconded out to other organisations. It does not apply to bank workers, although they may still raise concerns as necessary, which will be considered by GHC. It does not apply to staff seconded into GHC or agency staff.

The grievance procedure aims to resolve issues or complaints at the lowest appropriate level and as informally as possible with minimal delay and conflict. Interventions such as facilitated discussions and mediation will be encouraged at any stage of the process wherever appropriate with the aim of resolving issues in as positive a way as possible.

At any stage of the procedure it may be determined that your concerns should be considered under an alternative policy as appropriate, depending on what new information comes to light.

2.1 Issues this policy covers
Any employment-related concern or complaint from an employee or group of employees about their work, working environment or working relationship, such as:

- local terms and conditions of employment
- working practices
- dissatisfaction with an action your manager has taken or proposes to take.

All grievances must be raised, informally or formally, within three months of the incident or concern unless there are exceptional circumstances preventing this.

There are a range of options for you to seek advice or raise concerns in a different way, or to a raise concern anonymously where this is more appropriate, before raising the matter with your manager as a grievance. These include:

- Freedom to Speak Up
- Vivup (GHC's employee assistance programme provider).

2.2 Issues not covered by this policy
The following are not covered by this policy:

- any outcome of a disciplinary hearing or other process that has its own appeals process
- nationally agreed terms and conditions of employment
- organisational change
- public interest disclosures
- any issue outside GHC's control or responsibility.

If you believe a working relationship with a colleague has become strained or broken down or you feel you are being harassed, victimised or the subject of discrimination, you should refer to the Respect and Dignity at Work policy.

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3 Responsibilities

You are responsible for:

- raising concerns in an appropriate and clear manner
- being realistic about the outcome you are seeking
- taking part in open discussions about your concern and working to find mutually appropriate solutions
- respecting confidentially and only sharing information with agreed parties.

Managers are responsible for:

- taking all workplace concerns seriously and dealing with them appropriately
- working with the staff involved to find mutually acceptable solutions
- signposting staff to sources of support that they can access.

4 Collective grievance

If more than one person raises a grievance and you are seeking resolution as a group, you may raise a collective grievance using this policy and the same process will apply. The group should be represented at meetings by a maximum of three of the people raising the grievance.

5 Procedure

5.1 Informal stage
In the first instance, as soon as you identify a problem or concern you should raise it with your manager (or their manager if the issue involves your manager) with the aim of resolving your grievance informally. This could be by discussing the matter or putting your concerns in writing.

Outline your concerns and provide as much information as possible. It is often helpful to:

- explain the nature of the problem
- provide dates and times of any specific incidents or examples
- give the names of any witnesses
- detail any action already taken
- be clear and specific about the resolutions or outcomes you are seeking.

When your manager receives this information they will arrange a meeting with you within 14 calendar days and seek advice if they need it. The purpose of meeting is to ensure that your manager fully understands the issue and the outcome you are seeking, and discuss any next steps so the problem can be resolved informally. Where necessary, they may need to speak to other people or find out further information to establish the most suitable resolution after they have spoken to you.

Once they have done this, your manager will discuss any resolutions and a way forward and confirm the main points discussed in writing. They will explain what you can do if you are not satisfied with the outcome and/or it is not possible to reach a resolution informally.

5.2 Formal stage
If the informal process did not give the outcome you were seeking and you feel you have reasonable grounds for moving to the formal stage, you should complete the Grievance Notification form and send it to the manager who dealt with your informal grievance. You must do this within seven calendar days of receiving the outcome of the informal stage.

The manager will acknowledge receipt within seven calendar days and inform their HR manager about your grievance. Formal grievances will be considered within four weeks of a grievance being acknowledged, where possible. If not possible, for example, because the matter is complex or individuals cannot attend meetings, any delays should be discussed with you, with progress updates provided.

An appropriate manager will be identified to explore resolution to your grievance. They will arrange a meeting with you as soon as reasonably practical. At the meeting the manager will:

- check their understanding of the issue that you are raising
- discuss the resolutions you are seeking as an outcome
- allow you to expand on the concerns you've outlined
- review any further documentation provided

- decide if they need to seek further information to enable them to reach a decision.

You can be supported by a trade union representative or work colleague who is a GHC employee. The manager will be supported by HR.

Depending on the nature/seriousness of the concerns raised, interim measures may need to be considered while further information is gathered, such as a temporary change to duties or a move for those involved.

After any additional information gathering is completed, the manager will contact you to arrange a second meeting to inform you of their findings and outcome, including any next steps, unless you wish to receive the outcome in writing only. Where the outcome involves others, after speaking to you, the outcomes/next steps will be discussed with them as appropriate. It may not be possible to share details of the actions relating to other staff due to GHC's duty of confidentiality to all staff.

The outcome will be confirmed in writing, usually within seven calendar days of the meeting, and include:

- a summary of findings
- any recommended actions (due to data protection restrictions you cannot be advised about any precise action or outcome relating other individuals as a result of the grievance)
- the outcome, which could be to:
    - find in favour of all grounds – meaning your grievance is upheld
    - find in favour of some but not all grounds – meaning your grievance is partially upheld
    - not find in favour of any grounds – meaning your grievance is not upheld.

5.3 Appeal

You can appeal if you have grounds to believe:

- the procedure has not been followed correctly
- the decision reached was not fair, reasonable and/or consistent with similar decisions within GHC
- the decision was not appropriate in light of the evidence presented.

You must appeal in writing within seven calendar days of receiving the outcome. The outcome letter will detail how to submit your appeal. Any appeal will be heard in line with the GHC appeal process.

6 Status quo working

During any stage of the process the status quo will remain (ie the procedures, policies, working and management arrangements which applied before you raised the issue) until the process is exhausted. Exceptionally, the status quo may be set aside when it is agreed by both parties to do so or when maintaining the status quo would mean breaches of statutory, mandatory or regulatory obligations, or delays might compromise service delivery. Only a Director or the Director of HR and OD can vary the status quo for a collective grievance.

7 Grievances in relation to other procedures

If you submit a grievance during another formal process and your grievance is directly related to the issue being addressed by that formal process, the manager to whom you submit it must seek HR advice before taking any further action. Usually grievances raised while staff are subject to formal proceedings are only heard after the other formal process has been completed.

However the process may be paused if your grievance relates to:

- discrimination, or bullying/harassment allegations
- deviations from the formal procedure.

8 Withdrawing a grievance

You may decide to withdraw your grievance at any stage. If you do, you will not be able to re-submit the same grievance in the following six months. Depending on the nature and substance of your grievance, it may be determined that it is appropriate to follow up on the issues you raised, even if you do not wish to pursue it.

9 Leaving GHC

If you are planning to leave GHC's employment and have raised a grievance, you may leave before there has been time to complete the grievance process. If so, the process will usually end without being completed on your last day of service. Occasionally, the process may continue due to the specific nature or substance of your grievance.

If you submit a grievance after your employment with GHC has ended, it will not be pursued if it is established that you could have raised the matter before your last day of service. If it was not possible for you to raise the grievance before you left GHC, a decision will be made about using the grievance process, based on the issue being raised and/or the resolutions you are seeking.

10 Exceptions

You cannot raise a second grievance on the same or related grounds within six months of an outcome/ resolution being issued, unless any action agreed as a result of the original grievance has not been completed.

Any grievance considered to be frivolous, vexatious or malicious will not be considered using the resolution procedure. Examples of this may be:

- persistently pursuing a grievance where the resolution procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed
- seeking to prolong contact by continually raising further concerns or questions upon receipt of a response
- unwillingness to accept documented evidence as being factual
- focusing on a matter to an extent which is out of proportion to its significance and continuing to focus on this point (recognising that determining this can be subjective and careful judgement must be used in applying these criteria to ensure that there is evidence to support this conclusion).

If there is evidence that demonstrates that your grievance is frivolous, vexatious or malicious, it will be considered if disciplinary action is appropriate. This decision would only be taken after advice is sought from HR, and if appropriate, discussing the matter with you. If disciplinary action is considered, GHC's disciplinary procedures will be followed. The evidence collected as part of the original grievance may be used as the basis of any report required for use in the disciplinary process.