Respect & Dignity at Work: Raising a Concern – Employee Guide

Introduction

Everyone in GHC has the right to work in a safe, respectful culture, free of abuse, harassment, bullying or other inappropriate behaviour. However, sometimes misunderstanding, conflict or inappropriate behaviour at work can happen. The purpose of the process in the Respect & Dignity at Work policy is to enable staff to raise concerns about conflict or unwanted behaviour in a way that allow everyone involved to be heard and the matter resolved quickly and constructively.

This guide is for employees experiencing inappropriate behaviour or workplace conflict with a colleague. It includes information about the stages of process and guidance to consider. It should be read alongside the Respect & Dignity at Work Policy and Action Card which has flowcharts setting out the process.

Identify the issue

Before raising the matter it is important to take time to identify what is happening. You may find it useful to consider and identify:

- the specific behaviours or conflict that upset you or were inappropriate, rather than focus on the colleague who is behaving this way
- the instance or instances when the behaviour / conflict happened
- how the situation made you feel
- if the behaviour, action or approach was respectful and appropriate within the context colleague's work role, i.e. what the policy describes as 'firm but fair'
- any actions already taken to address the matter or improve the relationship
- any resolutions you can think of or would like to see.

There are a range of options for you to seek advice or raise concerns in a different way, or occasionally to a raise concern anonymously where this is more appropriate. These include:

- Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and Advocates
- Vivup – this is GHC's Employee Assistance Programme provider
- Direct to Douglas – this is an informal way of making direct contact with our Chief Executive

You can find more information about all of these and how to contact or access them on the intranet.

Understanding the process

If you feel you are experiencing inappropriate behaviour we understand you may feel reluctant about raising the issue or worried about the consequences if you do. So it is important you know the Trust is committed to supporting you to resolve the situation in a fair way, through discussion with everyone involved and only using a formal process when appropriate.

There are three potential stages of the process:

- informal
- formal
- appeal.

If you experience inappropriate behaviour at work you should try to resolve the matter informally in the first instance, either by speaking to the colleague or your manager about the inappropriate behaviour. Unless the matter is so serious that consideration should be given to using the formal process from the outset.

Options that might be pursued at the informal stage include:

- you speaking to the colleague directly about the concern
- you raising the concern with your manager
- a facilitated/supported conversation
- mediation

The policy sets out more detail about each of these. The focus of the informal stage will be to resolve the conflict or stop the inappropriate behaviour, not finding fault or blame.

If following the informal stage if you believe the behaviour continues you should raise the matter formally.

The formal process

To raise the matter formally you need to send your concerns in writing to either your manager or the manager who supported the informal process. Your manager will acknowledge receipt within seven calendar stage and advise you what will happen next.

Exactly what will happen during the formal process may vary, depending on the nature and seriousness of the concern raised. However in most cases it will involve:

- an appropriate manager being identified to explore your concerns
- an initial formal meeting between you and the manager so they can explore your concerns with you and any resolutions you are seeking
- the manager gathering any further information as appropriate, which will often involve talking to other colleagues
- a second formal meeting between you and the manager so they can inform you of their findings, the outcome and any recommendations, so far as they are able to
- the outcome being confirmed in writing within seven calendar days of the second meeting taking place.

As set out in the policy, possible outcomes of the formal process could include:

- further steps to improve working relationships, such as formal mediation
- temporary or permanent redeployment of those involved
- for the case to be considered further under another relevant procedure
- treating the case as a potential disciplinary matter in line with the process set out in the Disciplinary Policy.

Support at meetings

At formal meetings you can be accompanied to formal meetings by a trade union representative or a work colleague who is a GHC employee. If you wish to be accompanied by a colleague it is important they are not associated with the matter at all.
It is your responsibility to arrange to be supported and to inform your representative / colleague of the date, time and location of any meetings.

You do not have any right to be accompanied to informal meetings.

Right to appeal

After the formal stage if you remain dissatisfied you have the right to appeal if you have grounds (reasons) believe:

- the procedure was 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.

To appeal you must:

- submit your appeal within seven calendar dates of being informed of the formal outcome
- submit your appeal in writing, in line with the details included in the outcome letter.