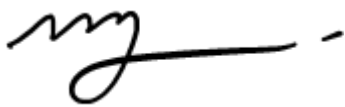


Apprentify Group Limited Staff Grievance Policy

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Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Apprentify Group Limited (AGL) and its subsidiaries.

Purpose

This policy provides employees with a structured procedure for addressing workplace concerns. It does not replace normal employee–manager dialogue but serves as a formal process when informal discussions fail to resolve issues.

AGL promotes a culture of open communication, cooperation, and active listening, aiming to resolve most issues informally. However, if issues remain unresolved, they may be escalated as grievances. Employees are encouraged to use this procedure to seek resolution.

This policy outlines both informal and formal grievance processes. AGL is committed to addressing grievances promptly, fairly, and consistently, ensuring necessary investigations and providing employees with the right to appeal formal decisions.

Where possible, employees and managers should attempt to resolve issues informally, as this is often the most effective approach. However, if an issue is too serious or remains unresolved, a formal grievance may be submitted.

Employees have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union official at each formal grievance meeting.

This grievance procedure does not apply to appeals against disciplinary sanctions, as the disciplinary procedure provides mechanisms for such appeals.

AGL reserves the right to engage external third-party assistance at any stage of the grievance process.

This procedure does not constitute contractual terms and may be amended by AGL as required.

What issues may be covered by a grievance?

Grievances may include, but are not limited to, concerns regarding:

- Workplace relationships
- Bullying, harassment, and discrimination
- Employment terms and conditions
- Working conditions and health & safety
- The work environment

Complaints related to bullying, harassment, discrimination, or inappropriate behaviour should also be considered under the Dignity at Work Policy.

The grievance procedure does not apply to dismissals or disciplinary actions; employees should use the appeal process outlined in the disciplinary policy.

If a grievance arises during disciplinary proceedings, AGL may pause the disciplinary process or handle both matters simultaneously if they are related.

If the grievance concerns a process with an existing appeal mechanism (e.g., grading, flexible working), the employee should use that procedure.

Complaints involving third parties (e.g., visitors, contractors) will be handled as much as possible under this policy.

Group grievances (multiple employees raising the same issue) are covered under this policy, but collective bargaining matters are not.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Employee: Responsible for raising grievances promptly and participating constructively in discussions and reasonable requests by management.

- Managers & Supervisors: Support employees in raising concerns and encourage informal resolution where possible.
- HR Team: Provide professional guidance and facilitate the timely resolution of grievances.
- Grievance Chair: Investigates grievances, ensures fair procedures, and communicates decisions promptly.
- Appeal Manager: Reviews grievance appeals fairly and determines outcomes.
- Companion/Trade Union Representative: Supports the employee in preparing for and attending meetings.
- Notetaker: Documents formal meetings and, if necessary, informal discussions.

All involved parties must maintain confidentiality throughout the grievance process; failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Procedure

Informal resolutions

Many workplace issues can be resolved informally through discussion with a line manager or relevant individual. If the concern involves the line manager, the Employee should speak with a more senior manager or HR.

- If the issue only affects the Employee, they should first raise it informally with their line manager. The manager will handle the concern confidentially, investigate as needed, and aim for a fair and prompt resolution.
- If the issue involves relationships with other employees, the Employee can address it directly or seek support from others to facilitate the conversation.

Direct Informal Resolution

If the Employee is comfortable, they should address the issue directly as soon as possible, either in person or in writing. They should:

- Give specific examples of the behaviour.
- Explain how it made them feel.
- Suggest a solution or desired outcome.

This approach often resolves issues without further action and helps establish a better working relationship.

Employees can seek support from HR, their line manager or trade union representatives to prepare for the conversation.

Informal Resolution with Support

An Employee can seek support from their line manager, a senior manager, or HR to resolve an issue informally. The Dignity at Work Policy provides further guidance on bullying, harassment, discrimination, and misconduct.

The person providing support may meet with both parties separately to understand the issue, its impact, and any previous attempts to resolve it.

They will work with the Employee to agree on next steps, which may include a facilitated meeting to understand concerns, find a resolution, and prevent future issues.

Mediation

Mediation is a voluntary, confidential process to resolve issues and improve working relationships. It can be used at any stage and involves:

- Preliminary meetings with the parties involved led by an impartial party to understand the aims of the mediation meeting
- The mediation meeting led by the impartial party

Formal Resolution

If an issue cannot be resolved informally or is too serious to be dealt with informally, the Employee should submit a formal grievance in writing to the HR department. It should:

- Clearly describe the grievance with relevant facts, dates, and names.
- Focus on specific events or actions.
- Avoid insulting or abusive language.
- Mention any informal resolution attempts.
- State the desired outcome.

An individual of appropriate seniority with no conflict of interest will be assigned to chair the Grievance (Grievance Chair). If this is not a member of HR, they will be supported by the local HR representative.

Formal Grievance Meeting

The Grievance Chair will invite the Employee to a grievance meeting, which should be held promptly. The Employee must make every effort to attend and may bring a colleague or trade union representative.

The meeting allows the Employee to explain their grievance and suggest resolutions. It should focus on resolution rather than conflict. The Employee must provide supporting evidence within a reasonable timeframe, or a decision may be made based on available information.

After the meeting, an investigation may be conducted, ranging from a brief fact-finding exercise to a formal report. The Grievance Chair will lead the investigation.

The Grievance Chair may meet with the Employee, the Respondent (the person being complained about), and other relevant individuals (Interviewees). Respondents and Interviewees can submit documentary evidence within a reasonable timeframe.

The grievance details will only be shared as needed for a fair investigation. Some information may be redacted, with reasons explained if necessary.

Investigations should be conducted without delay, with updates provided if delays occur.

A notetaker or HR Representative will record investigation meetings, unless the Grievance Chair is comfortable to do this themselves. These notes will form part of the Investigator's findings and may be used in formal procedures.

The findings will be documented, including relevant evidence and meeting notes.

Decision

After the grievance meeting, the Grievance Chair will decide on the outcome and any actions to resolve the issue. The Grievance Chair will provide the Employee (and Respondent) with a written decision within 10 working days. The letter will outline the outcome, any actions to resolve the grievance, and the Employee's right to appeal if unsatisfied.

If the grievance is upheld, the Grievance Chair, with HR, may take actions like:

- Requiring training
- Starting disciplinary procedures (the investigation report may be used here)
- Taking steps to resolve the issue (e.g., mediation, if both parties agree).

The Respondent should be informed separately of any decisions affecting them, with reasons. While confidentiality is important, some outcomes may need to be shared with others, such as changes to procedures. The Employee will be told who else will know about the decision but will not receive details of any disciplinary process against the Respondent.

If the grievance highlights issues with policies, procedures, or conduct, they should be addressed and reviewed promptly.

If the grievance is found to be malicious or vexatious, the Grievance Chair may start a disciplinary process for the Employee. This does not apply if the grievance is mistaken but not malicious.

Appeal

If dissatisfied with the outcome, the employee may appeal in writing to HR, stating their reasons. The appeal will be reviewed by an employee of the same or higher seniority to the Grievance Chair, following the same procedural steps as the grievance process.

- The appeal outcome will be communicated within five working days of the meeting. If delays occur, the employee will be informed of the reason and timeframe.
- The appeal decision is final.

Simultaneous grievance and disciplinary matters

If a grievance is raised during disciplinary proceedings, AGL will determine whether to pause the disciplinary process for short period whilst the grievance is investigated. AGLs' Directors will make the final decision on any suspension of disciplinary actions.

Protection against detriment

Employees will not face adverse treatment for raising legitimate concerns under this procedure. However, malicious or vexatious grievances may result in disciplinary action.

Grievances from Ex-employees

If an employee raises a grievance before leaving, efforts will be made to conclude the process before their departure. If unresolved, the procedure may be modified.

For grievances raised by ex-employees, AGL reserves the right to modify the process, including responding in writing.