



Grievance Policy

Policy and Finance Approved: January 2015
Last Reviewed: November 2025
Due for next Review: November 2028

Policy Elements (Principles and Scope)

1. Policy Statement

Fleet Town Council is committed to maintaining positive working relationships and addressing workplace concerns promptly, fairly, and consistently. Employees have the right to raise genuine concerns about their employment without fear of disadvantage or victimisation.

This policy complies with the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Equality Act 2010, and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The Council encourages early resolution wherever possible, and will ensure all grievances are handled confidentially, impartially, and without delay.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees of Fleet Town Council.
- Agency staff, volunteers, and contractors working on behalf of the Council, where applicable.

It does not apply to:

- Issues subject to separate procedures (e.g. disciplinary matters, whistleblowing, or external complaints).
- Councillors, who are subject to the Code of Conduct for Members.

3. Aims

- To promote fair, transparent, and timely resolution of workplace issues.
- To encourage informal resolution wherever possible.
- To ensure employees know how to raise concerns and what to expect.
- To protect individuals from retaliation when grievances are raised in good faith.
- To respect confidentiality.

- To avoid vexatious or malicious complaints.

4. Responsibilities

The Council and Line Managers

- Create an open and respectful working environment.
- Handle grievances sensitively and in confidence.
- Ensure decisions are based on fact and in line with this policy.
- Maintain records in accordance with GDPR.

Procedural Elements (How the Policy Works in Practice)

5. Informal Resolution

The Council and its employees benefit when grievances are resolved quickly and informally.

- Employees should raise issues with their **line manager** as soon as possible to explore solutions.
- Where the issue concerns the manager, the employee may raise it with the **Executive Officer** or **Chairman of the Establishment Committee**.
- Managers should respond promptly and fairly.

If informal action does not resolve the matter, or the issue is too serious for informal handling, the formal grievance process should be followed.

6. Formal Grievance Submission

The employee must submit a formal written grievance to the Executive Officer (or to the Chairman of the Council if the grievance concerns the Executive Officer).

The written grievance should include:

- The nature of the grievance.
- Relevant facts, dates, and evidence.
- Any steps already taken to resolve the issue.

7. Acknowledgement and Notification

Within **10 working days** of receiving the grievance, both parties will receive a written invitation to attend a **Grievance Meeting**.

The invitation will include:

1. The names of the Chair and a minimum of other two members comprising the Grievance Panel.

2. A summary of the grievance.
3. The date, time, and venue of the meeting (normally within **25 working days** of receipt).
4. The right to be accompanied by a **trade union representative, work colleague**, or (with agreement) another suitable companion.
5. A copy of this policy.
6. Confirmation that both sides may call witnesses, and their names should be submitted **five working days** before the meeting.
7. Confirmation that both sides must share supporting evidence at least **five working days** in advance.

8. The Grievance Meeting

At the meeting:

1. The Chair introduces the panel and outlines the process.
2. The employee (or companion) presents their grievance and desired outcome.
3. The panel may ask questions or call witnesses.
4. The employee (or companion) may question any witnesses.
5. The employee (or companion) will have an opportunity to summarise their case.
6. The Chair will explain the next steps and when to expect an outcome.

No audio or visual recording of proceedings is permitted.

Following the meeting:

- The Grievance Panel will consider all evidence and, where needed, conduct further investigation.
- The employee will receive the **Panel's decision in writing** within a reasonable timeframe, including:
 - The outcome and any actions to be taken.
 - Their right to appeal and the deadline for doing so.

9. Appeal

If either party is dissatisfied with the decision, they may appeal in writing to the Chairman of the Council within **five working days** of receiving the outcome.

The appeal request must specify the grounds, which may include:

- Failure to follow procedure.
- Decision not supported by evidence.
- Inappropriate or insufficient action.
- New evidence arising since original meeting.

An Appeal Panel (three Members not previously involved) will hear the case.

The employee will be invited to attend within 25 working days of receipt of the appeal and may again be accompanied.

At the meeting:

1. The Chair introduces the panel and explains the purpose of the meeting.
2. The employee (or companion) presents their grounds for appeal.
3. The panel may ask questions and deliberate privately.
4. The decision will be confirmed in writing within **five working days** of the meeting unless otherwise agreed.

The Appeal Panel may:

- Uphold the original decision, or
- Substitute its own decision.

The outcome will be confirmed in writing within five working days of the appeal meeting. The decision is **final**.

10. General Principles

- The Council may extend time limits with mutual agreement.
- Mediation may be offered at any stage if appropriate.
- Raising a grievance in good faith will not result in disciplinary action.
- If a grievance is raised during disciplinary proceedings, the two processes may run concurrently or sequentially at the Council's discretion.
- All grievance records will be held securely and confidentially in line with GDPR.
- If an employee is unable to attend a meeting for medical reasons, reasonable adjustments will be considered.