



# Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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Report 1963/PSC

## **GRIEVANCE & DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDURE 2011**

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This procedure applies to all employees of the council.

The objectives of the procedure are: -

- To foster good relationships between the council and its employees by discouraging the harbouring of grievances;
- To settle grievances as near as possible to their point of origin;
- To ensure the council treats grievances seriously and resolves them as quickly as possible; and
- To ensure that employees are treated fairly and consistently throughout the council.

Matters excluded from this procedure are as follows: -

- Appeals against salary or gradings;
- Appeals against disciplinary actions;
- Income tax, national insurance matters, rates of pay collectively agreed at the national or local level;
- Rules of pension schemes; and
- A grievance about a matter over which the council has no control.

#### 2 INFORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

In the interests of maintaining good working relations the employee is encouraged to first discuss any grievance with his/her immediate line manager with a view to resolving the matter informally if appropriate. If the employee feels that this is not appropriate or he or she wishes to pursue a formal grievance they should follow the procedure detailed below.

#### **FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

#### 3 STANDARD COUNCIL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

- 3.1. The employee must set out his/her grievance in writing ("Statement of Grievance") and provide a copy to his/her line manager with a copy to the Town Clerk.

- 3.2. Once the council has had a reasonable opportunity to consider its response to the information provided in the Statement of Grievance the employee will be invited to attend a grievance meeting to discuss the matter.
  - (i) The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
  - (ii) Grievance meetings will normally be convened within ten working days of the council receiving the Statement of Grievance.
  - (iii) The employee has the right to be accompanied to a grievance meeting by a fellow employee or by a Trade Union representative.
  - (iv) If the meeting is inconvenient for either the employee or his or her companion, the employee has the right to postpone the meeting by up to five working days.
- 3.3. A grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the employees manager time to consider the decision.
- 3.4. After the meeting the employee will be informed of the council's decision within seven working days. The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose. The council's decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.
- 3.5. If the employee wishes to appeal against the council's decision he or she must inform the council in writing within five working days of receiving the decision.
- 3.6. If the employee notifies the council that they wish to appeal, the employee will be invited to attend a grievance appeal meeting before a member's panel that will ordinarily comprise the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Personnel Sub-Committee. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend that meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a grievance appeal meeting by a fellow employee or by a Trade Union representative.
- 3.7. A grievance appeal meeting will normally be convened within seven working days of the council receiving notice that the employee wishes to appeal pursuant to 3.5. above. If the meeting time is inconvenient for the employee or his or her companion, the employee may ask to postpone the meeting by up to five working days.
- 3.8. After the grievance appeal meeting the employee will be informed of the council's final decision within five working days. The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose. The council's decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

#### 4 COUNCIL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE (FOR FORMER EMPLOYEES)

- 4.1. If an ex-employee wishes to raise a grievance, he or she must set out their grievance and the basis for that grievance in writing and provide a copy to the Chairman of the Personnel Sub-Committee.
- 4.2. Following receipt of a statement of grievance pursuant to 4.1. above, the council will either write to the ex-employee inviting him or her to attend a meeting to discuss the grievance, or to ask for the ex-employee's agreement to the council responding to the grievance in writing. If the ex-employee does not agree to the matter being dealt with by correspondence within 7 working days of the council writing to them then
  - 4.2.1. pursuant to 4.2. above steps 3.1. to 3.4. of the standard council grievance procedure will be followed. The meeting will be conducted as set out in paragraph 3.6.
  - 4.2.2. If the ex-employee does agree to the matter being dealt with by correspondence, the nominated Councillors determining the grievance will consider his or her grievance and will respond to the ex-employee in writing within fourteen days of the receipt of such confirmation setting out the basis for the council's decision.

## 5 GENERAL PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

- 5.1. Grievances raised under the standard council grievance procedure will normally be investigated, and any meetings to discuss the grievance conducted by the employee's line manager and/or the Town Clerk.
- 5.2. If an employee's grievance is about his/her line manager they should raise the matter with the Town Clerk, or if the Town Clerk is the line manager about who there is a grievance, with the Chairman of the Personnel Sub-Committee. In such circumstances the Town Clerk or the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Personnel Sub-Committee will conduct all investigations and any grievance meeting respectively and three members of the Personnel Sub-Committee other than the Chairman and Vice Chairman will conduct any grievance appeal meeting.
- 5.3. Where a grievance is raised by the clerk to the council any grievance meeting will be conducted by two members of the Personnel Sub-Committee (to be agreed with the clerk) other than the Chairman and Vice Chairman and any grievance appeal meeting will be conducted by three members of the council (agreed with the clerk) who do not sit on the Personnel Sub-Committee. If the members and clerk cannot agree on membership then it will go to arbitration as set out in "The National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service"
- 5.4. A copy of the Statement of Grievance, a note of the decision taken at the first stage of the procedure, any notice of appeal and appeal decision will be placed on the employee's/ex-employees personnel file, together with any notes or evidence taken or compiled during the course of the procedure.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This disciplinary procedure is designed to help and encourage employees to achieve and maintain acceptable standards of conduct and job performance at all times, including the need to: -

- Fulfil the duties specified in their contract of employment.
- Be honest and act beyond suspicion of dishonesty.
- Maintain high standards of integrity and conduct to protect the council's image and reputation with the public.

1.1 This policy indicates the disciplinary procedure that will normally be followed in the event of misconduct. The following list provides examples of conduct that will normally be regarded as misconduct leading to disciplinary proceedings. The list is not exhaustive. These are examples only:

- i. Unsatisfactory time keeping.
- ii. Absenteeism, including any absence from work during a working day without prior authorisation or instruction.
- iii. Failure to comply with rules and regulations applicable to job requirements.
- iv. Failure by an employee to perform the duties and responsibilities of his or her post to the standard expected by the council. Insubordination.
- v. Any other conduct that from time to time is defined by the council as amounting to misconduct.

1.2 For first instances of minor misconduct the employee's line manager may speak to the employee informally before implementing a formal disciplinary procedure. However there is no obligation for the employee's line manager to do this.

1.3 Before any disciplinary action is taken by the Council, a notice in writing giving details of the matter, either signed by the Chairman and authorised by the Council, or your line manager in accordance with their delegated responsibilities, shall be given to you.

## 2. SCOPE

**The procedure applies to all employees of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council.**

## 3. VERBAL WARNINGS

Verbal Warnings are issued for most first instances of general misconduct, depending on the seriousness of the offence. If the employee is given a Verbal Warning he or she will be warned of the likely consequences of any further disciplinary offences or a failure to improve his or her conduct to the satisfaction of the council. A note confirming the Verbal Warning will be placed on the employees personnel file and a copy will be provided to the employee. A Verbal Warning will normally remain in force for twelve months.

The Verbal Warning stage of the procedure may be omitted if the offence is of a sufficiently serious nature.

## 4. FIRST WRITTEN WARNING

In the case of a serious offence or repetition of an earlier minor offence the employee will normally be given a First Written Warning. A First Written Warning will be issued by the employee's line manager and will set out:

- i. the nature of the offence and the improvement required (if appropriate) and over what period;
- ii. the likely consequences of any further offence or failure by the employee to improve his/her conduct to an acceptable standard;
- iii. that further offences will result in more serious disciplinary action; and
- iv. the employee's right of appeal.

**A first Written Warning will normally remain in force for twelve months.**

The First Written Warning stage of the procedure may be omitted if the offence is of a sufficiently serious nature.

## 5. FINAL WRITTEN WARNING

If further misconduct occurs within the time period specified in a First Written Warning, or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious the employee will be given a Final Written Warning. A Final Written Warning will be issued by the employee's line manager and will set out:

- i. the nature of the offence and the improvement required (if appropriate) and over what period;
- ii. the likely consequences of any further offence or a failure by the employee to improve his/her conduct to an acceptable standard;
- iii. that further offences will result in more serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal; and
- iv. the employees right of appeal.

Final Written Warnings may also be issued in circumstances where the misconduct does not amount to gross misconduct, but is sufficiently serious enough to warrant only one written warning.

A Final Written Warning will normally remain in force for eighteen months.

## 6. STANDARD COUNCIL DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

- 6.1. In the case of further misconduct within the time period specified in any Final Written Warning or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious and the council deems it to be appropriate to contemplate the dismissal, demotion or suspension (without pay) of the employee the following formal disciplinary procedure will be followed.

- 6.2. The council will investigate the alleged misconduct and will establish the facts surrounding the complaint as necessary, taking into account the statements of any available witnesses.
- 6.3 The council will set out in writing the alleged conduct or other circumstances which lead the council to contemplate dismissing the employee or taking disciplinary action against the employee and the basis for the allegation and will send the employee a copy of the statement inviting the employee to attend a disciplinary meeting to discuss the matter. The employee will be provided with a reasonable opportunity to consider his or her response to the information provided in the statement before attending the meeting. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
- 6.4 Disciplinary meetings will normally be convened within five working days of the council sending the employee the written statement referred to in 6.3 above. The employee may be accompanied to any disciplinary meeting by a fellow employee or by a representative of a trade union. The employee's line manager and/or the Town Clerk will represent the council.
- 6.5 If the time or date proposed for the meeting is inconvenient (either for the employee or for the employees companion should he or she wish to be accompanied to the meeting pursuant to 6.4 above) the employee may ask to postpone the meeting by up to five working days.
- 6.6 The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the employee's line manager time to consider the decision.
- 6.7 After the meeting the council will inform the employee of their decision and any applicable sanction within five working days. The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose. The decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.
- 6.8 If the employee wishes to appeal against the decision he or she must notify the council in writing within five days of receiving written notice of the decision.
- 6.9 If the employee notifies the council that he or she wishes to appeal, the employee will be invited to attend a disciplinary appeal meeting before the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council's Personnel Sub-Committee. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend that disciplinary appeal meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a disciplinary appeal meeting by a fellow employee or by a representative of a trade union.
- 6.10 A disciplinary appeal meeting will normally be convened within seven working days of the council receiving notification that the employee wishes to appeal pursuant to 6.8 above. If the meeting date is inconvenient for the employee or the employee's companion he or she may ask to postpone the meeting by up to five working days.
  - i. Any new evidence that the employee wishes to put forward will be considered, as will any new evidence from the council. The original disciplinary penalty will be reviewed.
  - ii. The disciplinary appeal sanction originally imposed cannot be increased upon appeal.
  - iii. The disciplinary appeal meeting will not necessarily take place before any disciplinary sanction imposed by the council takes effect. If the employee's appeal is against dismissal and the appeal is successful the employee will be reinstated and continuity of employment will be preserved.
  - iv. The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the Council's representatives time to consider their decision.
- 6.11 After the disciplinary appeal meeting the council will inform the employee of its final decision within five working days. The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose. The decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

#### COUNCIL DISMISSAL PROCEDURE FOR USE IN GROSS MISCONDUCT

- 7.1. The following list provides examples of conduct that will normally be regarded by the council as Gross Misconduct. This list is not exhaustive. These are examples only:
  - i. Refusal or repeated failure by an employee to carry out his or her duties.

- ii. Falsification of documents or information (including expense claims).
  - iii. Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.
  - iv. Assaulting a fellow employee or any other person whilst acting or purporting to act on behalf of the council.
  - v. Insulting, indecent or offensive behaviour towards a fellow employee or any other person whilst acting or purporting to act on behalf of the council.
  - vi. Serious or repeated harassment (including sexual and racial harassment).
  - vii. Incapacity at work due to the influence of alcohol, unprescribed drugs or any other substance.
  - viii. Wilful damage to council property.
  - ix. Theft, unauthorised use or possession of council property or theft of the property of a fellow employee.
  - x. Conduct bringing the council into disrepute.
  - xi. Any other conduct that from time to time is defined by the council as amounting to gross misconduct.
- 7.2. If an employee is accused of any Gross Misconduct he or she may be suspended from work on full pay pending the outcome of an investigation into the alleged offence(s). Such a period of suspension will not normally exceed ten working days unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 7.3. The council will investigate the matter and will establish the facts surrounding the complaint as necessary, taking into account the statements of any available witnesses. As part of that investigation the employee will be interviewed.
- 7.4. If the council believes the employee is guilty of gross misconduct his or her employment will be terminated summarily without notice or pay in lieu of notice.
- 7.5. The council will send the employee a statement, setting out the allegations of misconduct that led to the employee's dismissal and the council's basis for thinking that the employee is guilty of that misconduct. The date on which the employment terminated will be confirmed to the employee and the employee may be reminded of any continuing obligations he or she may have following the termination of employment. This statement will also explain the employee's right to appeal against the council's decision.
- 7.6. If the employee wishes to appeal against the council's decision he or she must notify the council in writing within five working days of receiving notice of the council's decision pursuant to 7.5 above.
- 7.7. If the employee appeals the council will invite the employee to attend a disciplinary appeal meeting before the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council's Personnel Sub-Committee. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a disciplinary appeal meeting by a fellow employee or by a representative of a trade union.
- 7.8. Any disciplinary appeal meeting will normally be convened within seven working days of the council receiving notice from the employee that he or she wishes to appeal pursuant to 7.6 above. If the date of the meeting is inconvenient for the employee or his or her companion the employee may ask to postpone the meeting by up to five working days.
- i. Any new evidence that the employee wishes to put forward will be considered as will any new evidence from the council. The original disciplinary penalty will be reviewed.
  - ii. The disciplinary sanction originally imposed cannot be increased upon appeal.

- iii. The disciplinary appeal meeting will not necessarily take place before any disciplinary sanction imposed by the council takes affect. If the employees appeal is against dismissal and the appeal is successful he or she will be reinstated and continuity of employment will be preserved.
  - iv. The meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the Council's representatives time to consider their decision.
- 7.9. After the disciplinary appeal meeting the employee will be informed of the council's final decision within five working days. The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose. The council's decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

#### GENERAL PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

- 8.1. Verbal Warnings and Written Warnings will normally be issued by the employee's line manager]. Disciplinary proceedings raised under the standard council disciplinary procedure will also normally be investigated and any meetings to discuss the disciplinary proceedings conducted by the employee's line manager and/or Town Clerk as appropriate.
- 8.2 Where disciplinary proceedings are instigated against the Town Clerk, the Chairman of Personnel Sub-Committee will issue verbal warnings and written warnings on behalf of the Council. Two members of the Personnel Sub-Committee other than the Chairman and Vice Chairman will carry out any investigations and any meetings. Any disciplinary appeal meeting will be conducted by three members of the council who do not sit on the Personnel Sub-Committee will conduct any appeal.