

## **CITIZENS ADVICE REIGATE AND BANSTEAD GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **1. Introduction**

This policy applies to all permanent and fixed term employees of Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead who have satisfactorily completed their probationary period and been confirmed in post.

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a fair and effective method for resolving individual grievances within a reasonable time of any particular issue being raised. Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead believe it is necessary for all employees to have the opportunity to raise any complaint they may have concerning their employment. A grievance procedure is used to help establish a fair, consistent and effective method for resolving individual grievances ensuring that they are dealt with promptly and satisfactorily.

### **2. Responsibilities**

You have a responsibility to:

- co-operate in complying with this procedure in good faith and to treat your colleagues with respect and dignity.
- provide as much supporting evidence as possible
- ensure a high level of confidentiality is maintained

Your Manager has a responsibility to:

- ensure employees know where to find details of the Grievance Policy and Procedure
- ensure the principles of this policy are conveyed during induction and training programmes.
- monitor the workplace to try to identify potential issues and to resolve them whenever they can.

### **3. Process**

#### **3.1 Informal stage**

Staff are encouraged to resolve misunderstandings and problems informally wherever possible, depending on the circumstances. This allows for issues to be dealt with quickly and helps minimise damage to working relationships, whilst allowing you to retain much more control over the process for resolving the issue. Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead recommend you always use this stage as a first option as it can lead to a speedy and successful resolution of problems.

If you feel you have been victimised, bullied or harassed or are unhappy with someone's behaviour towards you, you should wherever possible, start by talking it over with your manager as it could be a matter of misunderstandings which could be resolved by using one of these options:

- Speak to your line manager who will attempt to resolve the situation on an informal basis. If you feel unable to approach your line manager directly you should approach an appropriate manager and discuss ways of dealing with the matter;
- Speak to the person with whom you have the complaint and share your point of view;
- Say what you want to happen - for example, 'When we are in meetings, I would like you to listen and not talk over me', 'From now on, I would like you to speak to me in a calm way' ;

If your complaint is resolved informally then this would end the process, if not, this will then move on to the formal stage of the grievance procedure.

### **3.2 Mediation**

In certain circumstances both at the informal and formal stages it may feel appropriate to use mediation to address certain issues. Both parties have to agree to mediation.

Mediation aims to:

- resolve conflict and reduce tension, anxiety, fear, etc;
- resolve conflicts at an early stage;
- provide a way to deal with behaviour through constructive and efficient negotiations which focus predominantly on the parties' needs and interests and which broaden the search for options and alternative solutions; and
- encourage individuals to take charge of their own decisions and to accept responsibility for the consequences of their decisions.

When you are involved in a conflict with another work colleague, talking to that person can seem impossible, so mediation can help re-establish those channels of communication.

Mediation is a confidential process, so anything that is discussed in any such meetings will not be passed onto anyone else, unless that is agreed by all parties.

### **3.3 Formal stage**

If the matter is not resolved informally you should raise the matter formally in writing fully stating your grievance for your line manager or if the grievance concerns your line manager you should raise the matter with the next level of management within Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead.

It may be necessary to raise the matter to a member of Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead trustee board if the matter was raised with Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead manager at the informal stage.

### **3.4 Meeting**

The purpose of the meeting will provide you the opportunity to state your case alongside providing any supporting evidence to assist it.

### **3.5 Investigation**

If need be, management will investigate further into your grievance claims. This means, additional meetings may be conducted with other parties involved in the complaint.

### **3.6 Outcome**

At the end of the investigation and having considered all the evidence presented, the manager will inform you of the next steps. This will be one of the following three outcomes:

1. The manager upholds the grievance and states the proposed resolution.
2. The manager believes no further action is necessary and explains why.
3. The manager does not uphold the grievance and explains why and informs you of your right to appeal.

You will receive the outcome in writing within 10 working days of the last meeting with you looking into the allegations. Any delays in the process/timeline will be communicated to you.

### **3.7 Final stage appeal**

If you feel that the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved you can appeal. If you wish to appeal you must do so in writing within five working days of the decision being taken. This should set out the full grounds for appeal and be sent to the manager identified in your outcome letter.

Where practicable the appeal meeting will be held within 15 working days. You have the right to be accompanied to the appeal meeting by a workplace colleague or trade union official.

The decision will be final and, where practicable, you will be informed of the decision in writing within five working days of the appeal hearing.

#### **4 Dishonest claims**

Please be aware that if a grievance is raised which is malicious or without substance, disciplinary action may be taken.

#### **5. Further information**

Contact your line manager or BMIS for further support and guidance.