



Grievance Procedure

1. Introduction

FRESH's Board of Directors aims to promote a working culture and environment that is welcoming and supportive for all employees, volunteers, Directors and Members, in which everybody is treated with respect in all circumstances. The Board hopes that any work-related disputes will be rare, and that when they occur they can be resolved informally.

It is therefore expected that employees, volunteers, Directors and Members will first of all try to resolve any problems which arise between among themselves. It is intended that this Grievance Procedure will be used only when informal efforts have been tried and seen to fail.

This Grievance Procedure is intended to cover any problem or grievance that employees, volunteers, Directors and Members may have relating to:

- their relationship with FRESH or its management
- their relationships with each other while working for or with FRESH

It is intended to ensure that such problems and grievances are resolved quickly and fairly. It should be noted that the Procedure concentrates on resolving disagreement, rather than apportioning blame or responsibility. The Procedure will be used to settle all disputes or grievances raised within FRESH, fairly, simply and quickly.

2. General notes on the Procedure

2.1. This Procedure is not intended to inhibit informal discussion between any FRESH employees, volunteers, Directors and Members about anything they may wish to raise. Informal discussion frequently resolves problems, but if employees, volunteers, Directors and Members wish to raise a formal grievance it must be done in writing at the outset.

A formal grievance or appeal should be raised without unreasonable delay, after informal approaches have been exhausted. However, a formal grievance may be raised without first raising it informally, or after informal routes have failed to resolve it.



- 2.2. A formal grievance or appeal should be raised with a Director, who must note the details of the grievance or appeal and convene a meeting of all those involved.
- 2.3. The Director must keep a written record of each meeting. This must include details of the complainant's case, any response from others involved in the grievance, and the outcome of the meeting. It must be agreed and signed by all parties as a true record of the meeting.

Should the parties fail to agree a record, then the Director's record will be put on file with a copy of a note of the disagreement. Copies of the record will be given to all who attended the meeting.

- 2.4. After each stage of the Grievance Procedure, the Director must advise the complainant what will happen next.
- 2.5. All stages of the grievance must be dealt with as quickly as possible, but time limits may be altered by mutual consent. The complainant will normally be notified in writing within ten working days of a meeting of the decision and any right to appeal.
- 2.6. Both the complainant and the person against whom a complaint is made have the right to be represented at any hearing by a trade union representative, a fellow employee, a co-voluntary worker, a family member, carer or friend, but not by a lawyer. A request to be accompanied must be made at least five working days before the relevant meeting.
- 2.7. The representative will be allowed to address the hearing, to put and sum up the complainant's case, to respond on behalf of the person they represent to any views expressed at the meeting, and to confer with the person they represent during the hearing. The representative does not have the right to answer questions on behalf of the person they represent, address the hearing if the person they represent does not wish it, or prevent witnesses or respondents from explaining their case.
- 2.8. Every effort will be made to resolve the grievance, and the proceedings will be kept confidential to the complainant, any person against whom a complaint is made, their representative(s), Directors and any other people involved in hearing the grievance or appeal.
- 2.9. Copies of correspondence and written records relating to a grievance will be kept in the complainant's personal work file.



3. The Grievance Procedure

The complainant

- The complainant should first discuss the grievance or concern with the person or people involved.
- If this is not appropriate, or does not resolve the matter, they should raise the grievance in writing with a Director as soon as possible. This should set out the nature of the grievance and the outcome the complainant wants.
- The employee and their representative should make every effort to attend the meeting once it has been arranged.

The Director

- The Director responsible for hearing the grievance must arrange a meeting with the complainant and their representative (should they want one) without unreasonable delay.
- The Director will be accompanied by a colleague, who will be at Board level and agreed by both parties, and who will act as note-taker.

The hearing

- The complainant must be allowed to explain their grievance and how they think it should be resolved.
- If necessary the meeting should be adjourned to allow the grievance to be investigated.
- At the end of the meeting the complainant should be told what will happen next.

The meeting **MUST NOT** take place unless:

- The complainant has informed FRESH in writing of the basis for the grievance and what outcome they would like to see
- FRESH has had reasonable opportunity to consider their response to the grievance. It is expected that the response will be considered within twenty working days of receipt.

After the meeting

- The Director must reflect on the facts of the case and decide on what action, if any, to take.



- The decision will be communicated , in writing to the claimant within ten working days of the formal grievance being heard, and where appropriate will set out what action FRESH intends to take to resolve the grievance. These time limits should only be exceeded if the investigation requires a longer period, and the claimant should be informed in writing if this is the case.
- The claimant should be informed of their right to appeal if they are dissatisfied with the action taken, and how to do so.

4. Appeal procedure

- 4.1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the grievance procedure , they are entitled to appeal. The complainant should let FRESH know the grounds for their appealing writing, and without unreasonable delay.
- 4.2. The appeal will be heard by an Appeal Panel which will comprise three Directors not previously involved in the case
- 4.3. The Appeal Panel should meet no later than fifteen working days after the appeal is received. Following the appeal meeting the complainant will be informed of the final decision, which will be confirmed in writing within ten working days.
- 4.4. The decision of the Appeal Panel is final.

5. Review

- This procedure will be reviewed annually by the Board on or around the anniversary of its adoption.
- Date of next scheduled review: November 2014

