

IMSP060H: GRIEVANCE POLICY & PROCEDURE

Version 1.4 (03/2025)

The bottom of the page features a series of overlapping, abstract red geometric shapes. These include a large triangle on the left, a large triangle on the right, and a large, rounded shape at the bottom center, all in various shades of red, creating a modern, dynamic background.

Reference number/version: 1.4**Departments: HR****Document Owner: Jo Fry, Group HR Director****Effective from date: March 2025****Review date: Every 2 years as a minimum****Document History**

Version number	Edited by	Date reviewed	Summary of changes
1.0			Version 1
1.1	HR		Format change, EDI section included
1.11	HR	April 2021	EDI section and post termination section reworded
1.2	HR	April 2023	Cyclical review and added in 48 hour notice of a meeting
1.3	HR	July 2024	Right to be accompanied amendment
1.4	HR	March 2025	Cycle review and added the requirement of rescheduled meetings to be held within 5 days of original date and right for an under 18 year old to be accompanied by a guardian/parent.

1. PURPOSE

The Company recognises that occasionally employees may have grievances relating to their employment. With this in mind, the Company encourages free communication between employees and their manager to ensure that questions and problems arising during the course of employment can be aired in a professional manner and, where possible, resolved quickly and to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Wherever possible, grievances should be raised with an employee's immediate manager, informally in the first instance. Where the grievance cannot be resolved informally, it should be dealt with under the procedure set out below, except in the circumstances detailed within the policy.

Mears Group policy is to ensure that where there are employee concerns that cannot be resolved informally, this document provides a procedure where they are dealt with fairly, that steps are taken to establish the facts and give employees the opportunity to respond at a meeting before any action is taken.

2. SCOPE

This policy and procedure applies to all Mears Group Plc employees and within their subsidiaries.

This does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. Management may also vary this procedure, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

The policy does not apply in the following circumstances:

- Where the matter constitutes an appeal against a disciplinary decision. It should be taken up in accordance with the Company's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- Where an employee or the Company has reasonable grounds to believe there is a significant threat to personal property, such as violent, abusive or intimidating behaviour or harassment, then the disciplinary process and suspension under that process may be appropriate.
- Where an employee raises a concern about wrongdoing under the Company's Whistleblowing Policy, this should be taken up in accordance with that policy.
- Where matters constitute an appeal against any other formal management process such as absence management, probation, redundancy or performance management. This should be taken up with the relevant policy and procedure.

3. DEFINITIONS

Line Manager - refers to the direct line manager/supervisor on Workday for the employee, or alternatively in the event that they are not available, then the manager's manager.

HR – primarily refers to the HR Advisor Team who will be responsible for providing advice and guidance to managers on policy and process.

Employee – is an individual who is directly employed by Mears Group and or any of its subsidiaries. It does not include self-employed, agency or contractors for the Group.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the policy, responsibilities are devolved as follows:

Line Manager:-

- Read and understand contents of policy and procedure
- Arrange meetings with employees in line with policy
- Treat any grievance raised confidentially and with sensitivity
- Maintain regular contact with employee in line with policy
- Carry out a fair and thorough investigation
- Provide a written outcome to the grievance

Employee:-

- Raise any concerns in a timely way
- Provide as much information as possible about their grievance
- Cooperate fully with the process avoiding unnecessary delays
- Maintain confidentiality if grievance relates to another employee
- Seek to resolve matters informally before requesting a formal process

HR:-

- Provide advice and guidance on the application of the policy and related policies to employees and managers
- Any grievance is managed in line with the Company's procedures
- Ensure Workday is accurately maintained.

5. POLICY

Collective Grievances

Where more than one employee shares the same grievance, the matter should be represented by one employee from the Group who will raise the grievance using this procedure, ensuring that all employees have signed the document/letter of grievance. Any decision following the grievance will apply equally to all employees represented.

Informal Procedure

Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally by discussing it with your line manager. If employees feel unable to speak to their line manager, for example, because the grievance concerns them, then they should speak informally to a more senior manager or a HR Representative. If this does not resolve the issue you should follow the formal procedure below.

Formal Grievance

Where an employee has a grievance arising from their employment that has not or cannot be resolved informally, it should be raised in writing either to their line manager or HR Department. The notification of grievance should set out as clearly as possible the grounds for the grievance including any relevant facts, dates, times, and names of individuals involved.

Grievance Meeting

A formal meeting will be arranged to discuss the details of the grievance within 28 days of HR receiving the grievance. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting, which will be rearranged only in exceptional circumstances, such as pre-arranged and pre-paid for holidays. An employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a representative from an independent trade union if they so wish.

With a minimum of 48 hours' notice for a meeting to be given to the employee. Rescheduled meetings must be held within 5 days of the original date of the meeting.

At the meeting, the employee will have the opportunity to explain their grievance and should be prepared to state what action they feel will settle the matter. If any further investigation is necessary, the meeting will be adjourned until such time as that investigation can be carried out.

After due consideration of the grievance, the relevant manager will give a decision in writing, normally within 5 working days of the meeting. The employee will be notified of their right of appeal at this stage. If it is not possible to respond within this time period, an employee will be given an explanation for the delay and told when a response can be expected.

Appeal Process

If an employee is dissatisfied with the decision of the Grievance Manager, they may appeal the decision. Appeals should be made within 5 working days from the date of receiving the grievance decision letter. This should be done in writing to the HR Advisor Team stating the grounds for the appeal, an employee not agreeing with the decision is not a ground to appeal. The HR Advisor Team will then liaise with management to appoint the an independent manager available who is more senior to the original manager. Any subsequent appeal hearing should then be held within 14 days from the receipt of the written appeal request. With a minimum of 48 hours' notice for a meeting to be given to the employee.

An employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a representative from an independent trade union if they so wish.

Rescheduled meetings must be held within 5 days of the original date of the meeting.

Any additional information provided by the employee will be investigated and the matter will be reconsidered.

A decision will be given in writing normally within 5 working days from the appeal hearing. If it is not possible to respond within this period of time, the employee will be given an explanation for the delay and told when a response can be expected. This decision is final.

A record will be kept of each grievance meeting and a copy will be given to the employee. Certain information may be withheld in some circumstances, for example, to protect a witness.

Post Termination Grievances

Where an employee resigns in response to something related to their employment and they have not already raised a complaint about it and their resignation is not linked to any formal disciplinary or performance procedures; the employee will be advised to raise a formal complaint under this procedure or alternatively, where they will be invited to a meeting to discuss their concerns.

Right to be accompanied

An employee may choose to be accompanied to the formal meetings by either a work colleague or trade union representative. If an employee's family member is also an employee for the company they will not be allowed to accompany them to the grievance hearing or appeal as this would be a conflict of interest and potentially affect the fairness of the process. If a trade union representative is not known to the manager conducting the hearing, then appropriate evidence to support the trade union representative is appropriately certified to act as a representative may be requested.

If an employee is under the age of 18 they will have the right to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

The role of the companion is to support the employee. This support may simply take the form of moral support. Alternatively, the employee may prefer that the companion present the employee's case. The companion has no right to answer questions or respond on the employee's behalf to any view expressed at the meeting or address the meeting if the employee does not wish it, or to prevent the employer from explaining their case.

The companion will be expected to act in a professional manner at all times and if, in the view of the Grievance Manager, the companion's behaviour is such that it is disruptive or

not conducive with the conduct of a balanced process, the companion will first be warned and ultimately may be removed from the meeting.

Confidentiality

All proceedings and records relating to grievance matters will be treated as confidential. Wherever possible, only those individuals directly involved will be aware of the details of the case, including HR, managers, witnesses and those acting in an advisory capacity. Obviously, however, in a bid to conduct a fair process it may not be possible to keep the matters entirely confidential.

If the outcome of the grievance raised is that further action is required in line with company policies and procedures involving other employees, the aggrieved employee will not be entitled to be notified of the outcome.

6. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mears Group will take all reasonable steps to ensure that its staff comply with the Equality Act 2010 so that no individual is subjected to unlawful discrimination because of a protected characteristic.

7. MONITORING

HR Business Partners will monitor and analyse data on a quarterly basis. They will use the data to monitor the implementation of the policy and management of cases. In addition, the data will be collated and analysed for information regarding the fairness and consistency in application of grievance outcomes/action and patterns and frequency of grievance issues occurring and in relation to diversity issues. Subsequently, the data will be used to inform and improve policies, as well as provide recommendations for improving working practices.

From time to time, it may be appropriate to arrange debriefs with managers to review the way that a grievance was handled and to consider further training and development needs. The HR Business Partners will share matters of best practice and will monitor consistency in managerial decision making across the Group and may recommend additional training and development for managers as required. HR Business Partners will also identify any patterns or trends in grievances being raised by employees and report any significant findings to the Group HR Director.

8. SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Confidential support is available through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The EAP service is a confidential 24/7, 365 days a year service. Accredited counsellors and experienced information specialists offer support and signposting across a range of personal legal, medical, health and wellbeing issues, as well as a telephone counselling service.

Support can be accessed via the telephone helpline and there is also an online portal available, where you can access further information. The service is also available to partners and dependents over the age of 18, (or over 16 in full-time education) residing in the same household.

You can use the service as often as you wish and remain totally anonymous. You can contact the EAP helpline by calling 0800 756 0834 for help with issues including health and relationships, financial or legal queries.

You can also speak to a Mental Health First Aider, the list and contact numbers can be located on Connect.

9. OTHER RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

This policy works in conjunction with a number of other policies, procedures and working practice which are as follows:

- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Mears Group Complaints Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Probationary Review Policy
- Improving Work Performance Policy
- Performance Management Policy
- Management of Attendance Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy

10. APPENDICES

There are no appendices referred to within the policy.