

## CAAT's Grievance procedure

The aim of this grievance procedure is to deal with issues employees, Steering Committee (SC) members, volunteers, freelancers or supporters have in a quick and fair way. Where grievances cannot be resolved informally, the aim is to ensure they are dealt with in a lawful, consistent and systematic way. All cases should be handled with appropriate confidentiality by all parties. Any breach of this may be treated as a disciplinary case of misconduct.

### **1 Introduction and general principles**

1.1 Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that individuals involved with CAAT (listed above) have with others in the organisation, or the organisation itself and should be raised with either a member of staff, Staff Support Group, or the non-staff Steering Committee Disciplinary and Grievance Panel (hereafter referred to as the Panel), depending on the level of grievance. It is the responsibility of the whole of SC to monitor the implementation of this policy.

1.2 If an individual raises a grievance during a disciplinary process it is up to the Panel to decide whether to temporarily suspend the disciplinary process in order to deal with the grievance, or to deal with the issues in the order they were raised. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

1.3 A collective grievance is where a number of individuals have the same grievance at the same time. This procedure aims to outline a process for both individual and collective grievances.

1.4 At all times during this procedure individuals should ensure they stick to the facts and avoid language which may be considered insulting or abusive.

1.5 Issues that may cause a grievance include, but are not limited to:

- terms and conditions of employment
- health and safety
- work conditions or relations
- bullying and harassment against yourself or others
- new working practices or policies
- working environment
- organisational change
- discrimination against yourself or others

### **2 Procedure for employees**

#### **2.1 Informal procedure**

2.1.1 If an employee has a grievance they should try to resolve it informally through discussion with the person or persons involved. This discussion could involve the employee's Static Reviewer if preferred and considered helpful. If the grievance involves the Static Reviewer then another member of staff could take their place. If the grievance is with the organisation or with a number of individuals the employee(s) may decide to take the issue to Workplan with the support of their Static Reviewer(s).

2.1.2 It is up to CAAT to facilitate relevant training for staff and SC to ensure all are skilled and feel empowered to bring up issues with each other in a fair and considerate way. The document 'how best to support each other' saved in the CAAT workarea should be kept up to date by the Office Coordinator and given to new members of staff when they join CAAT.

#### **2.2 Formal procedure**

2.2.1 If the employee(s) feel the issue was not resolved through informal means, or that the grievance was sufficiently serious to bypass the informal process, they may pursue a formal grievance.

2.2.2 The employee(s) must submit their grievance in writing to the Panel Secretary who must acknowledge it as soon as possible with an arrangement to convene a grievance hearing, with the relevant people involved, as soon as possible. At least three members of the Panel should attend each formal meeting. An employee has the right to trade union representation or be accompanied by a friend at any formal meeting if they wish.

2.2.3 Both the employee(s) and the person(s) who the grievance is against must be present throughout the hearing. If this is not possible then the Panel Secretary will decide how the hearing can proceed in a quick and fair way. The Panel Secretary shall confirm the grounds of the employee's grievance and ask the employee(s) to provide clarification if needed. The employee(s) will be given the opportunity to put forward their case, calling witnesses and referring to documents if required. The employee(s) could also offer a solution as to how they think the grievance should be resolved.

2.2.4 The person(s) who the grievance is against can then explain and justify their actions. They may also call witnesses and refer to documents. The Panel can ask questions at any time.

2.2.5 The Panel will then adjourn the hearing aiming to give their decision to both parties in writing within two working days or to conduct further investigation if considered necessary. The Panel members shall not discuss the details of the case outside of the Panel. However, they can seek advice from internal or external sources as appropriate (e.g. on employment law or CAAT's staffing policies). If the Panel needs clarification on any point then the hearing must reconvene with both parties recalled and clarification sought in the presence of both parties. If the panel are unable to reach a decision then the Appeals Panel will take over the formal process.

2.2.6 Any action agreed as a result of the Panel's decision should be monitored and reviewed by the Panel for a fixed amount of time as defined by the Panel.

### **2.3 Appeal**

2.3.1 If the employee(s) are not satisfied that the grievance has been resolved by the decision of the Panel following the formal hearing they may appeal. A grievance Appeals Panel will consist of three non-staff Steering Committee members not on the Disciplinary and Grievance Panel, nor been involved in the case so far.

2.3.2 The employee(s) must submit their appeal in writing to the Appeals Panel, details of which can be got from the Panel, who will acknowledge it within five working days with an arrangement to convene an appeals hearing, with the relevant people involved, as soon as possible.

2.3.3 Both the employee(s) and the Panel member(s) who attended the formal hearing must be present throughout the appeal. The Appeals Panel Secretary shall confirm the grounds of the employee's appeal and ask the employee(s) to provide clarification if needed. The employee(s) will be given the opportunity to put forward their case, calling witnesses and referring to documents if required. The employee(s) could also explain how they think the grievance should be resolved.

2.3.4 The Panel member(s) who attended the formal hearing can then explain their decision. They may also call witnesses and refer to documents. The Appeals Panel can ask questions at any time. The Appeals Panel will then adjourn the appeal hearing aiming to give their decision to both parties in writing within two working days or to conduct further investigation if considered necessary. The Appeals Panel members shall not discuss the details of the case outside of the Appeals Panel. However, they can seek advice from internal or external sources as appropriate (e.g. on employment law or CAAT's staffing policies). If the Appeals Panel needs clarification on any point then the appeal must reconvene with all parties recalled and clarification sought in the presence of all parties.

2.3.5 The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final.

### **3 Procedure for Steering Committee members**

This is very similar to the above procedure for staff with the following alterations:

3.1 At the informal stage it is encouraged for discussions to include another SC member to support the SC member raising the grievance.

3.2 If the grievance is with the organisation or with a number of individuals they can request the issue is discussed at a staff meeting as soon as possible. It is up to the SC member whether they attend that meeting or not. If not, then any outcome of the discussion by staff will be relayed in writing to the SC member as soon as possible.

3.3 If the SC member who has a grievance happens to be on the Panel then once the procedure reaches the formal stage another member of SC will need to take their place on the Panel.

#### **4 Procedure for volunteers, freelancers or supporters**

Again, this is very similar to the above procedure for staff with the following alterations:

4.1 At the informal stage it might be preferred or helpful if discussions could include another member of staff to support the individual raising the grievance.

4.2 If the grievance is with the organisation or with a number of individuals they can request the issue is discussed at a meeting as soon as possible with relevant staff in attendance. It is up to the staff whether they consider it necessary for the individual(s) with the grievance to attend that meeting or not. If not, then any outcome of the discussion by staff will be relayed in writing to the individual as soon as possible.