

GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY

It is AVP's policy to encourage employees with grievances relating to their employment to use the procedure below to seek satisfactory solutions. AVP will try to resolve grievances as quickly as possible to the satisfaction of the individual(s) concerned. Where this is not possible, every effort will be made to explain the reasons for the decision.

Volunteers should use the complaints procedure rather than the grievance procedure.

If employees are not satisfied with the outcome, they have the right to pursue their grievance to the next stage. It is hoped that most grievances will be resolved during the informal discussion. Employees who have raised grievances will be treated fairly at all times before, during and after the grievance hearing(s).

PROCEDURE

INFORMAL STAGE

If you have a grievance about your employment you should discuss it informally with your immediate line-manager. The manager will give a response within five working days. (See Notes 1–3 below for exceptions to this procedure.)

STAGE 1

If you feel that the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily through informal discussions, you must put your grievance in writing to your immediate manager. You will receive a reply within five working days and a meeting will be arranged. You, any relevant witnesses and the manager will attend the meeting. You may choose to be accompanied by a colleague, lay or trade union official. The manager will give a response within five working days of the meeting and will inform the employee of the appeals procedure.

STAGE 2

If you are not satisfied with the manager's response, you may raise the matter, in writing, with the trustee having responsibility for personnel matters. A meeting will be arranged, constituted as in Stage 1, except that two trustees will replace the manager.

Those trustees will give a decision within five working days of the meeting. This decision will be final.

INVESTIGATIONS

AVP is committed to ensuring that all grievances are investigated fully. This may involve carrying out interviews with the employee concerned and third parties such as witnesses, colleagues and managers, as well as analysing written records and information. The investigation report will be made available to all the parties concerned. The identity of witnesses will be kept confidential where necessary.

NOTES

1. You may raise a complaint directly with a trustee if it:
 - a. concerns your immediate manager
 - b. is of too personal or sensitive a nature to raise with your immediate manager.
2. Complaints concerning discrimination, bullying or harassment by your immediate manager may be raised directly with a trustee. This may be done informally, or formally ie at Stage 2 of the procedure.

If your complaint concerns an alleged wrongdoing or criminal offence by someone within AVP, you should raise it immediately with a trustee. Please refer to the separate Whistle-blowers' Policy for details of the additional protection available for protected disclosures.
3. The grievance procedure should not be used for appeals against disciplinary decisions, as that is the purpose of the disciplinary appeals procedure. If, however, you have a complaint against the behaviour of a manager during the course of a disciplinary case, you may raise it as a grievance with a manager or trustee. The disciplinary procedure may be suspended for a short period if necessary until the grievance can be considered.
4. Employees are encouraged to raise grievances and will not suffer any detriment from doing so. If your grievance is found to be malicious or to have been made in bad faith, however, you will be subject to AVP's disciplinary procedure.
5. A second employee or trustee may be invited to attend formal grievance meetings to act as a witness and note-taker.
6. The timescales listed above will be adhered to wherever possible. Where there are good reasons, eg the need for further investigation or the lack of availability of witnesses or companions, each party can request that the other agrees to an extension of the permitted timescale.
7. AVP reserves the right to seek assistance from external facilitators at any stage in the grievance procedure.
8. This procedure is for guidance only. The contents may be subject to revision from time to time.

Date Approved by Board: 1 June 2018

Date for next review: June 2021