

Conduct – Informal Discussions

Guide for employees

This guide outlines the approach to take when managing conduct and behaviour issues informally

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Getting help

Contact your manager if you have any queries about this guide.

Managers can obtain advice by:

Calling the HR Services Advice Centre on 0845 606063 / 5456 7100

Managers working for Parcelforce Worldwide should call 0845 6042787 / 5456 4747

For web access go to:
<https://www.psp.royalmailgroup.com>



Conduct – Informal Discussions

Guide for employees

- Overview** This guide sets out how to manage and support employees to improve their conduct or behaviour using an informal approach.
- This should be read in conjunction with the Conduct Policy, as well as the related guidance documents listed in the 'related forms and documents' section later in the guide.
- Purpose** Royal Mail Group expects its employees to maintain high standards of conduct and to adhere to our business standards. There may however be times when an employee's conduct or behaviour falls short of the expected standards. Managers should consider if the issue can be dealt with informally in the first instance, as often the right word at the right time can make a difference. An informal discussion may be held following a formal conduct investigation. There may also be occasions where the employee wants to talk to their manager on an informal basis. This guide deals with how a manager can deal with issues through informal discussions.
- Informal resolution** Where an employee's conduct or behaviour is unsatisfactory, a manager, normally the employee's manager, should decide if the issue could be dealt with informally. Once the manager has decided that the issue can be dealt with informally, they would not move to the formal process unless there are exceptional circumstances. Informal discussions can help to resolve the minor conduct or behavioural issue before it becomes more serious.
- Formal conduct outcomes** Following a formal conduct meeting and investigation, the manager can decide that the case can be dealt with informally and the case will be closed with an informal discussion.
- Informal discussion** Where an employee's conduct or behaviour has been or becomes a cause of concern, an informal discussion should normally take place to identify and address any issues.
- The purpose of an informal discussion is to:
- Make the employee aware of the reason why the manager has concerns about their conduct or behaviour
 - Provide an opportunity for the manager to discuss their concerns with the employee and for the employee to provide an explanation for their conduct or behaviour
 - Provide an opportunity for the manager to understand the employee's reasons behind their conduct or behaviour and to take these into account
 - Ensure that the employee understands what conduct or behavioural standards are expected and that they are reminded of the consequences of failing to meet them
 - Identify any steps that can be taken by either the employee or Royal Mail Group to assist and support the employee to meet the standards
 - Provide the opportunity for the employee to ask to meet with their

manager to discuss any concerns that they may have about the standards of conduct or behaviour expected of them

The manager would normally meet with the employee for an informal discussion on the day of the incident or when behaviour is becoming a cause of concern. The manager should advise the employee that they will need to attend an informal discussion and make it clear that the meeting is not part of the formal process. If the employee wishes they can consult with their union representative before the meeting. If any documents are used in the informal discussion these should be shared at the start of the meeting.

The employee can also ask their manager for an informal discussion if they have any concerns or questions.

An informal discussion is an opportunity for the employee and manager to discuss the issues and may cover such areas as:

- Explaining how the standards of conduct or behaviour have not been met
- Evidence and feedback on the cause of concern
- The reasons behind the conduct or behaviour
- Other problems either in or outside of work
- Nature of work, shift system, recent changes to the demands of the job
- Actions required by the employee to improve their conduct or behaviour
- A review of the support that may be required by the employee including any additional coaching, training or information
- A reminder of the support that Royal Mail Group can offer, including if appropriate, the Feeling First Class Support helpline and Occupational Health
- A reminder of standards and potential consequences of not meeting them

The approach should be both sympathetic and supportive. It should be clearly focused on achieving improvement and maintaining standards. The manager and the employee will jointly identify any support measures that may need to be considered. The manager should take time to ensure that the employee understands why they have a concern. The manager should factor in any mitigating circumstances that may have caused a temporary change in conduct or behaviour e.g. personal events or changes at work.

Where improvement is required, it is important that the employee understands what needs to be done and how their behaviour or conduct will be reviewed. The employee should be informed that if there is no improvement, the next stage may be the formal conduct process.

Where the employee's conduct or behaviour does not improve following an informal discussion, consideration should be given to moving to the formal conduct process. For further information, please refer to the Fact Finding Guide.

Informal resolution following the

Following a fact finding meeting or a formal conduct meeting, the decision making manager may decide that the case does not warrant a formal conduct

formal conduct process

penalty and instead the issue should be dealt with on an informal basis. If this is the case then the decision-making manager should invite the employee to an informal discussion and follow the process as outlined above.

Moving to the formal process

If exceptionally, during an informal discussion it becomes clear that there are more serious issues, the manager must stop the informal discussion. The first step of the formal process would be to arrange a separate fact-finding meeting and the manager must make it clear to the employee that they have the right to be represented.

Recording the outcome

A local record should be kept of any conduct or behavioural issue dealt with on an informal basis. The record should include the issue, the date of the meeting and any actions resulting from the meeting, full notes are not required. The record will be shared with the employee. These should be kept locally for between three and six months.

Other support

Support and further information can be found on the Royal Mail Group helpline.

Feeling First Class: Support is the confidential and independent helpline – provided free for employees and available 24 hours a day and can be accessed by:

- Calling 0800 6888 777
- Visiting www.rmgfirstclasssupport.co.uk

Where to go for further information

The Getting Help box on the front page tells you where to find further information.

Guidance is also available on the Policy and Information Site on PSP and HR pages on the intranet (for non-PSP users).

In the case of any inconsistency between this supporting guide and the Conduct Agreement the terms of the Agreement takes precedence.

Related documents

You may find it useful to read the following documents (located on the Policy and Information Site on PSP and HR pages on the intranet (for non-PSP users)) in conjunction with this policy:

- Conduct Agreement
- Conduct Policy
- Fact Finding Guide