



NOTES FOR GUIDANCE CONCERNING THE ROYAL MAIL GROUP INDIVIDUAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

These Guidelines provide guidance on the application of the Individual Grievance Procedure. If additional advice and support is required a list of contacts can be found at the end of these guidelines.

Who is covered by the procedure?

All current Royal Mail Group plc employees can raise complaints under this procedure i.e. full-time, part time, casual employees and those on temporary and fixed term contracts. Sub-postmasters and owner-drivers are not covered by this procedure.

How complaints will be treated

1. Complaints will be handled sensitively and everyone will be treated with dignity and respect.
2. No employee will be disadvantaged in any way if they raise a complaint under this procedure.
3. Manager and employee should actively participate in finding a reasonable solution to any complaint raised.
4. Complaints will be handled as speedily as possible. Normally all stages in the procedure will be completed and the outcome shared with the individual within 28 working days of the complaint being raised.
5. The complaint will be dealt with in confidence. However, very occasionally it may be necessary to share some details with others with the agreement of the employee in order to progress the complaint. This point will be fully explained to by the manager before the need arises.
6. The employee may ask to see personal or other documents directly related to the complaint. Access will be given, subject to confidentiality and security requirements.

Right to be accompanied

The employee has the right to be accompanied at any meeting by a companion who can be their trade union representative or work colleague from any location.

The role of a companion

The companion will be allowed to confer with the employee and, if the employee wishes, they may address the meeting in order to put forward and sum up the case and to respond on the employee's behalf to any view expressed at the meeting.

Considering complaints raised on behalf of a group of employees

The procedure is designed to pursue issues or complaints that affect an individual. Collective issues should be raised through the Industrial Relations Framework.

Making a complaint

A complaint must be raised with the line manager. This can be done either by speaking with the manager or by putting it in writing. The line manager may need to meet with the individual and will normally give a decision within 5 working days.

If the line manager isn't able to resolve the complaint to the employee's satisfaction the complaint can be pursued further with the second line manager. This must be done in writing, preferably by using the

Cont...

Complaint Form. The manager will meet with the individual wherever possible within five working days to try and resolve the issue and will let them know their decision normally within another 5 working days.

Situations where the complaint may be raised directly with the second line manager

There may be rare occasions where an issue is of such a personal and sensitive nature that the employee feels they cannot raise it with their immediate line manager. In this instance the individual will need to go straight to Stage 2 of the procedure and confirm in writing the nature of the complaint and why they feel they are unable to raise it with their line manager.

Obtaining a Complaint Form

The standard complaint form, can be obtained locally, via the HR Help Intranet Site or the P&OS Helpline on 0845 6060603 or, for POL employees, 0845 6016260.

Is it necessary to put the complaint in writing?

Yes, it is necessary to put the complaint in writing at the second stage of the procedure. If the employee subsequently wishes to take their complaint to an employment tribunal they will need to show a written complaint has already been raised with Royal Mail in writing.

Seeking help in putting the complaint in writing

Help can be sought from the line manager or alternatively a work colleague, trade union representative or the Disability Advice Helpline on 0114 2414731.

Discussing the complaint

The meeting provides an opportunity for the manager to understand the individual's complaint and to allow them to discuss possible solutions. Both the employee and manager should make constructive proposals for reaching a solution.

Adjourning a meeting

If it is felt that further investigation is necessary before a solution can be proposed then an adjournment can take place.

What if there is likely to be some delay in hearing the complaint?

All reasonable efforts should be made to complete the procedure as quickly as possible. Delays should only occur if the case is particularly complex or it would be difficult to gather all relevant information within the advised timescales. It is expected that in almost all cases the timescales will be adhered to. If however a delay is unavoidable the manager will tell the individual why straight away and confirm when they will be able to meet.

Making adjustments for an employee who is disabled or has special needs

In these circumstances, reasonable adjustments will need to be made to the arrangements for hearing the complaint to ensure the employee is not disadvantaged as a result of their disability or special needs. For example, if they are hard of hearing it may be necessary to have an interpreter at a meeting.

Postponing a meeting at any stage of the procedure

If the companion cannot attend on the proposed date the employee can suggest another date as long as it is reasonable and not more than 5 working days after the date proposed by the manager dealing with the complaint. This may be extended by mutual agreement.

Postponed meetings would normally only be rearranged once.

Cont...

Purpose of Stage 3

The purpose of this stage is to acknowledge that the employee is dissatisfied with the outcome of the first two stages and to allow a manager of appropriate authority and independence to consider whether a different decision is appropriate in the circumstance and whether an agreed solution can be found. Individuals should make their request to progress to Stage 3 to the second line manager who will send case papers and the request to a central Gateway team in People & Organisation Services. A manager will be appointed who has not previously been involved in the case and has the authority to make any necessary changes to policy or practice.

What if an employee raises a complaint about their employment after they have left the business?

Ex Employees under certain circumstances can raise complaints when they are considering going to an employment tribunal. When an ex employee does raise a complaint the manager should contact the People & Organisation Services Helpline on 0845 606063 or, for Post Office Limited 0845 6016260.

What about complaints raised by agency staff or contract workers?

In some cases individuals working for Royal Mail Group plc, but who are not our employees, may be able to bring complaints in an Employment Tribunal against Royal Mail. This covers all complaints of unlawful discrimination (sex, race, disability, sexual orientation and religion and belief) as well as complaints about pay and working time.

In these cases, the individual should be encouraged to raise his/her complaint with us first under the Complaints Procedure. In certain cases, however, it may be more appropriate for them to raise their complaint with a third party (for example, the agency supplying them to the business). This would be the case for example, where a complaint covers deduction from wages, and an agency is responsible for paying the individual.

Where further assistance can be obtained from

Further assistance is available from a number of sources:

- HR Help intranet site
- P&OS HR Helpdesk on 0845 6060603 or 0845 6016260 for Post Office Limited employees.
- Employee Health Service helpline 0845 77994400
- Disability Advice Helpline on 0114 241 4731 or via www.royalmail.com/dac
- Both the EHS and the Disability Advice Helpline will be able to provide guidance on reasonable adjustments for employees who need support to assist them with their disabilities