

Grievance Policy

Table of contents:

1. Scope	2
2. Procedure	2
3. Appeal	2
4. General Points	3

Document control table	
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Who this document applies to:	All staff.

1. Scope

OPAL Services (Rural West Cheshire) aims to ensure that employees can deal with any grievances relating to their employment, fairly and without undue delay.

Issues that may cause grievances include:

- terms and conditions of employment
- health and safety
- relations with colleagues or others at work
- bullying and harassment
- unfair discrimination
- working practices
- the work environment
- organisational change

However, you cannot use this procedure to complain about the use of any other procedure or process (e.g. disciplinary, etc) whilst being subject to that procedure.

Grievances relating to bullying and harassment may be dealt with under the separate specific policy.

2. Procedure

Informal stage: If you have a grievance or complaint to do with your work/volunteering or the people you work with, it should be discussed with your Line Manager/OPAL Service Manager in the first instance, with the objective of agreeing a solution. Mediation (internal or external) may be considered at this stage to help resolve matters. If your grievance is related to your Line Manager/OPAL Service Manager, then you should discuss it with the Trustee with Board responsibility for your service. Any agreement should be recorded in writing to help avoid misunderstandings.

Formal grievance: If the matter is serious and/or not resolved at the informal stage, you should set out the grievance in writing to the Chair of Trustees who will formally acknowledge receipt of the grievance (see Appendix A). You should keep to the facts and avoid using language that is insulting or abusive. The Chair will nominate a Trustee to consider the grievance. If the matter is against the Chair it should be brought to the attention of another Trustee via the HR Committee.

The nominated Trustee will invite you to a meeting, normally within 10 working days, to discuss the grievance. You have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative if desired.

Following the meeting, the Trustee will normally confirm a decision within five working days. However, the Trustee may decide that it is necessary to undertake further investigation and, in these circumstances, you will be advised how long this is expected to take. In this event the Trustee will advise of their conclusions following such an investigation. Their decision will be confirmed to you in writing.

3. Appeal

If you are unhappy with the decision of the nominated Trustee, you have the right of appeal. An appeal should be made in writing, stating the grounds, within ten working days of the date notified of the outcome. The appeal will be referred to the Chair of Trustees who may nominate a different Trustee to hear it.

The Chair (or nominated Trustee) will convene a meeting, normally within ten working days, to consider the appeal. You have the statutory right to be accompanied at the meeting by a work colleague or a trade union representative.

After the meeting, the Chair or nominated Trustee who heard the appeal will notify their decision, normally within five working days. The decision will be confirmed in writing. There will be no further right of appeal.

4. General Points

- OPAL will make reasonable adjustments to ensure accessibility to this procedure (e.g. providing documents in alternative formats, allowing extra time if required).
- OPAL's HR Committee will keep a written record of each meeting, which will include details of your case, the response of OPAL and the outcome of the meeting. You will be asked to agree and sign the record of the meeting, after consultation with your representative. Copies of the record will be given to everyone who attended the meeting.
- Records of grievance proceedings will be kept securely and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. They will normally be destroyed after 12 months unless there is a legitimate reason to retain them.
- You will be advised by a member of OPAL's HR Committee of the next stage at the end of every stage of the procedure.
- You and your representative will be allowed adequate time to prepare your case.
- Every effort will be made to resolve the grievance at each stage.
- The proceedings will remain confidential to you, your representative and the OPAL HR Committee.
- No action to change your terms and conditions of employment will be taken while you are following the grievance procedure.
- No employee will be disadvantaged or treated unfairly for raising a grievance in good faith.
- Copies of correspondence and written records relating to the grievance will be kept in your personnel file. This information will be destroyed after 6 months unless the OPAL HR Committee have an important reason not to do so.

**OPAL Services
October 2025**

Appendix A

RE: Acknowledgement of your grievance

Dear [Name],

I am writing with regards to the grievance you have raised dated (state date grievance was received).

As per OPAL's Grievance Policy I will nominate a Trustee to consider the grievance. The Trustee will invite you to a meeting, normally within 10 working days to discuss the grievance.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Hope-Terry

Geoff Hope-Terry
Chair
OPAL Services