

FORCED TO FLEE GRIEVANCE POLICY

Adopted June 2023

For review June 2024



Introduction

The aim of the Grievance Policy ('this policy') is to settle grievances or complaints fairly, quickly and in a simplified manner. Every effort will be made to solve the issue at the earliest possible stage, and at each stage efforts will be made in order to avoid proceeding to the next stage, and to settle the issue amicably.

If an employee has a grievance with any other Member, and is unable to sort matters out informally, the matter should be referred to a recognised authority¹ within Forced To Flee ('the organisation'). You may be able to agree an informal solution between you.

If the problem is serious or remains unresolved or the Member wishes to raise the matter formally, the employee can use the formal grievance procedure outlined below.

In the case of a grievance being taken out as a counter-grievance, or in response to the start of disciplinary action, it may be appropriate to deal with both issues at the same time. If appropriate, the disciplinary procedure may be suspended temporarily to deal with the grievance.

The Procedure

1. Raise the grievance in writing;
 - a. The Member should raise a grievance with a recognised authority without unreasonable delay, normally within one month of the incident (or final incident) which gives rise to the complaint;
 - b. If the grievance is against a recognised authority, the matter should be raised with an alternative recognised authority. In the case of the all recognised authorities, the matter should be raised with the Founder of the organisation. Whoever deals with the grievance at the meeting, will normally be excluded from hearing any appeal;
 - c. The Member ('complainant') must detail in writing the specific circumstance(s) which constitute the grievance, with dates, times, witnesses, etc. as applicable. The Member should stick to the facts, and avoid insulting or abusive language.
2. Invitation to a grievance meeting;
 - a. The recognised authority (or Founder) will invite the Member to attend a meeting, without unavoidable delay to discuss the matter;
 - b. The recognised authority (or Founder) will also state that the Member is entitled to be accompanied by another Member at the meeting if they wish.
3. The grievance meeting;
 - a. Where possible and appropriate, a note-taker, who must be uninvolved with the case will take down a record of the proceedings;
 - b. The recognised authority (or Founder) will introduce the meeting, read out the grounds of the Member's grievance, ask the Member if they are correct and require the Member to provide clarification regarding details of the grievance if unclear;
 - c. The Member will be given the opportunity to put forward their case and say how they would like to see it resolved. The Member may call witnesses and refer to any documents previously provide to the recognised authority (or Founder);
 - d. The recognised authority (or Founder) may question the Member and any witnesses. The Member's companion will also be given the opportunity to sum up but may not introduce any new material not provided by the complainant;

¹ For the updated list of recognised authorities within the organisation, please see the Forced To Flee Volunteer Agreement, available at forcedtoflee.co.uk/governance.

- e. The meeting may be adjourned by the recognised authority (or Founder) if it is considered necessary to undertake further investigation. Any necessary investigations will be carried out to establish the facts of the case;
 - i. The meeting will be reconvened as soon as possible;
 - f. Having considered the grievance, the recognised authority (or Founder) will give their decision regarding the case in writing to the complainant which will normally be within five working days. If appropriate, the decision will set out what action the organisation intends to take to resolve the grievance or if the grievance is not upheld, will explain the reasons. This will also include notifying the Member of their right of appeal and the procedure to be followed.
4. Appeal;
- a. If still unresolved, the complainant may refer the matter, in writing, to the Founder of the organisation, or if the Founder has already been involved in an earlier stage of the procedure, to another recognised authority within the organisation;
 - b. The Member wishing to appeal against a grievance decision, must do so in writing within five working days of receiving written notice of the grievance decision, stating the reasons for the appeal. Any documents submitted in support of the appeal must be attached;
 - c. Arrangements for the appeal meeting will be made by the Founder (or other recognised authority) who will ensure that a note-taker is present, if possible. The appeal meeting should be held without unavoidable delay. Where possible, at least the Founder and another ordinary member or recognised authority not involved in the case will constitute an Appeal Panel. The persons hearing the appeal should if at all possible, have no direct involvement with the case;
 - d. The Member is entitled to be accompanied by another Member at the appeal;
 - e. The meeting may be adjourned by the Appeal Panel or person hearing the appeal, if it is considered necessary to undertake further investigation;
 - i. The meeting will be reconvened as soon as possible;
 - f. The decision of the Appeal Panel or person hearing the appeal shall be final.

Review

This policy came into force in June 2023. This policy should be reviewed by Forced To Flee's leadership every year. Thus, the next review of this policy is due in June 2024.