

Key Changes to Grievance and Harassment

Executive Summary

Split of policy vs. procedure:

The 2018 single policy has been decomposed into separate Policy and Procedure documents for both Grievances and Harassment/Bullying, plus a standalone Informal Resolution guide. This clarifies “what” (policy) vs. “how” (procedure) and should make navigation and implementation cleaner.

Time standards tightened and simplified:

Many target response times are shortened (e.g., manager acknowledgement in 2 working days vs. 5, and explicit 2-day expectations to meet at the informal stage). These appear across the new Grievance and Harassment packs and the Informal Resolution guide.

Clearer role of ER/HR (“Service Desk/ER Consultant”):

The new suite routes submissions via HR Service Desk and places ER Consultants centrally for triage, chairing support, and investigations, replacing prior references to “HR Business Partner/Consultancy Team.”

Sexual harassment handling elevated:

The harassment policy now signposts a separate Sexual Harassment Policy and allows six months to raise sexual-harassment complaints (vs. three months for other allegations). It also permits management-led action in serious cases even if the reporter doesn’t wish to proceed. The inclusion of this stipulation reflects the legal duty as an employer, as advised by legal counsel, to act on issues of harassment whenever they arise.

Anonymous submissions policy clarified:

New policies do not accept anonymous grievances/complaints, with a carve-out to use Speak Up/Whistleblowing for sexual-harassment scenarios.

Stronger informal-first expectation:

A full, practical Informal Resolution Procedure now exists (who does what, within what times, and what to record), making “informal first” operational rather than aspirational.

Table of Changes

Theme	2018 position (Old)	2024/25 change (New)
Document structure	One combined Grievance & Harassment Policy + an appended harassment/bullying process.	Four core documents: Grievance Policy, Grievance Procedure, Harassment & Bullying Policy, Harassment Procedure; plus Informal Resolution guide. Improved ordering of policy sections for readability.

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Who in HR does what	“HR Business Partner/Consultancy Team” handles acknowledgements, contact, and guidance.	ER Consultant via HR Service Desk acknowledges, triages, notifies subjects, schedules meetings, and advises next steps.
Informal stage expectations	Encourage informal resolution; 20 working days to resolve if possible; mediation available.	Meet within 2 working days, do light fact-finding, record key items, set a committed timescale, options listed, mediation route, and ER advice triggers.
Acknowledgement & scheduling SLAs	Formal grievance: acknowledge in 5 working days; Stage 1 meeting normally in 10 days (or delay by ≤20 if investigating first).	Acknowledge in 2 working days; Formal meeting in 10 working days from acknowledgement (default path). Similar 2-day/10-day cadence in harassment procedure.
Time limit to raise	“Normally within three months” of act/decision (grievance and harassment).	Grievance: still three months. Harassment: three months standard but six months for sexual harassment.
Anonymous cases	Not expressly ruled out; general confidentiality and GDPR principles stated.	Not accepted as a rule (grievance/harassment), with sexual-harassment exception via Speak Up/Whistleblowing.
Subject notification	Notified once investigation/action route chosen in harassment process; general rights explained.	Named subjects notified at the point a formal meeting is arranged; they do not see CF1/GF1.
Manager authority to proceed without complainant	Not explicit.	For serious harassment or where substantial evidence exists, managers (with ER advice) may initiate formal action even if the reporter opts out.
Recording & GDPR	Confidentiality and GDPR referenced; no specific record list for informal stage.	Explicit records to keep at informal stage (dates, fact-finding, notes, steps, outcomes, follow-ups).