

Acklington Parish Council

Grievance Policy (England)

1. Purpose

This policy provides a fair and transparent process for employees to raise concerns about workplace issues and ensures that grievances are handled consistently, promptly, and in line with employment law and best practice.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees of the Council (including the Clerk/RFO)

It does **not** apply to:

- Complaints from members of the public (these should be handled under the Council's Complaints Policy)
 - Councillor conduct issues (handled under the Code of Conduct via the principal authority)
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3. Legal Framework

This policy is guided by:

- Employment Rights Act 1996
 - Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures)
 - Best practice guidance from NALC and SLCC
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4. Principles

The Council will:

- Treat all grievances seriously
 - Act promptly and fairly
 - Maintain confidentiality where possible
 - Ensure no employee suffers detriment for raising a genuine concern
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5. Informal Resolution

5.1 Employees are encouraged to raise concerns informally in the first instance with:

- The Chair of the Council (if the grievance relates to the Clerk), or
- The Clerk (if the grievance relates to another employee)

5.2 Many issues can be resolved quickly without the need for formal procedures.

6. Formal Grievance Procedure

6.1 Raising a Formal Grievance

- The grievance must be submitted in writing
- It should include:
 - Details of the concern
 - Relevant dates and facts
 - Any supporting evidence
 - Desired outcome

6.2 Acknowledgement

- The Council will acknowledge receipt within **5 working days**

6.3 Investigation

- The Council will appoint an appropriate person (e.g. a panel of councillors) to investigate
- The investigation may include:
 - Interviews
 - Review of documents

7. Grievance Hearing

7.1 The employee will be invited to a formal meeting to discuss the grievance.

7.2 The employee has the right to be accompanied by:

- A trade union representative, or
- A workplace colleague

7.3 The hearing panel should consist of impartial councillors.

8. Outcome

8.1 The Council will provide a written outcome within **10 working days** of the hearing where possible.

8.2 The outcome will include:

- Findings
- Any actions to be taken
- Reasons for the decision

9. Appeal

9.1 The employee has the right to appeal the decision.

9.2 Appeals must:

- Be submitted in writing within **5 working days**
- Clearly state the grounds for appeal

9.3 The appeal will be heard by councillors not previously involved.

9.4 The appeal decision is final.

10. Confidentiality

10.1 All grievance matters will be handled sensitively.

10.2 Information will only be shared where necessary.

11. Malicious or Vexatious Complaints

11.1 If a grievance is found to be deliberately false or malicious, this may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

12. Record Keeping

12.1 Records of grievances will be:

- Kept securely
 - Retained in accordance with data protection requirements under the Data Protection Act 2018
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13. Roles and Responsibilities

Council

- Ensures fair application of the policy
- Appoints panels and investigators

Chair

- Acts as initial contact where appropriate

Clerk

- Administers the process
 - Maintains records
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14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually
 - Updated in line with changes in legislation and guidance
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Adoption

This Equality and Diversity Policy was adopted by Acklington Parish Council:

Date: 5th May 2026

Signed: S Ingleby (Chair)

Signed: B Watson (Clerk)