



Resolving issues at work

If there's a problem, we want to help so tell us. This is how we work together to resolve grievances at work.

At M&G plc we encourage colleagues to tell it like it is, but understanding needs to come before challenge; and challenge needs to be delivered with care and integrity. We value 'better together' relationships. If something's not right at work or you're not happy with how you've been treated, tell us. Whether we follow an informal or formal grievance process, we'll take it seriously and work with you to resolve the problem. We promise to be responsive and treat you with fairness and respect. When issues are raised in good faith you will never be treated less favourably as a result of raising a grievance.

We hope this covers most of the detail you need. For anything else, **submit an HR request** under the 'resolving issues at work' category on the **People Hub**.

Resolving issues at work applies to all UK M&G plc employees. Non-M&G plc employees i.e. Contractors, may only raise a grievance about issues that relate directly to the statutory rights of Contractors, or alleged discrimination.

For those engaged through a 3rd party i.e. AMS, any complaint should be directed to the 3rd party to have this investigated in line with their relevant policy.

The informal approach

We encourage all colleagues to tell us about any concerns at work. We understand you may have a lot of questions about what this entails so we've created a ['colleague support' document](#) to help answer any questions on the formal or informal approaches you can take. In our experience, tackling the issue informally is often the best way. If you feel you've been treated unfairly, or you believe a colleague's conduct isn't appropriate, a direct informal conversation and [feedback](#) can help. As soon as possible after the incident when you are feeling calm (and within thirty calendar days) find somewhere confidential and give objective and honest feedback. Perhaps the individual involved doesn't realise the impact of their actions. By telling them how you feel and giving them a specific example of their conduct or behaviour, you give them the opportunity to change. Ask questions to understand their experience and how you can move forward together. If having a one-to-one conversation doesn't feel right, speak to your manager and ask for their help. Perhaps someone else can give the feedback? Would it be more appropriate coming from HR? Perhaps a different manager can help? Can the colleague support adviser, or trade union representative support? Whatever you decide, if you feel comfortable, talking things through informally can be an effective way to put things right and move forwards.

Colleague Support Adviser

We recognise it isn't always easy to have a difficult conversation or to look at something from another perspective. It can even be tricky figuring out how to resolve something informally or what to do next. Our Colleague Support Adviser is here to support colleagues in this space. From being a confidential sounding board to having coaching conversations. Talking it through can really help you know what to do next. Reaching out early can often be the difference between a situation starting to improve or continuing to become more difficult. Our Colleague Support Adviser can facilitate conversations and offer mediation which is often a swifter way of addressing concerns and reducing the detrimental impact for all involved. Confidentially contact the colleague support adviser directly or **submit an HR request** on the **People Hub** to find out more.

The formal approach

For more serious matters, such as bullying, harassment or discrimination, it may not be appropriate to tackle things informally. Perhaps you've raised concerns before and the conduct or behaviour hasn't changed, if so, the formal grievance procedure may be the next step. You should put your concerns in writing as soon as possible after the incident (and within thirty calendar days) when the details are fresh in your mind. Be specific and provide as much detail as possible including any relevant documents, dates, times and names of witnesses who may have seen or heard the incident. Send your written grievance to your manager (if appropriate) Or if the grievance involves them submit an HR request on the People Hub under the resolving issues at work category. Keep all details confidential and your manager or a member of HR will contact you about next steps.

Mediation

If appropriate and you haven't already engaged the colleague support adviser we may suggest mediation if this isn't an avenue you've already explored. This involves an impartial trained mediator working with the parties involved to find a positive way forward. The mediator won't decide the outcome, but will facilitate discussions to build bridges and resolve the issue. At any stage of the grievance process, a manager or grievance hearer can recommend mediation. You can also request that mediation takes place. The formal procedure may be paused while mediation occurs if appropriate. If mediation doesn't work, the formal grievance procedure will resume. Mediation is most effective when everyone involved commits to the process and agrees on the approach. It won't be suitable for all grievances but the Employee Relations team will be in touch if it could help or you can speak to the colleague support adviser to find out more.

Grievance investigation

An appropriate manager will be appointed to look into your concerns. If you haven't tried to resolve things informally we may discuss this with you. Depending on the level of detail in the grievance letter, we may need to speak to you to clarify points or to seek additional information. Each investigation is different and may involve reviewing policies, getting witness statements and speaking to colleagues named in the grievance. We will conclude the investigation as quickly and effectively as possible.

Grievance hearing

You'll receive a written invite to a grievance hearing including relevant information from the investigation that we plan to discuss. Where possible any hearing will be scheduled on a day where you typically work from an M&G office, however you may be required to attend the office on an additional day. You'll get at least three working days' notice and you may choose to bring a colleague, the colleague support adviser, or trade union representative to support you. See below for details of their role and let us know in advance if you plan to be accompanied and who you will bring. If you or your companion is unable to make the hearing let us know as soon as possible and we will reschedule for up to five working days later. If you don't attend the hearing we may make decisions in your absence based on the information available. The hearing is held to discuss the issue, to find out how you would like it resolved, to talk through your points and any relevant information. It will normally be chaired by an independent manager who hasn't been involved in the process to-date with the support of a note taker and/or HR. When all relevant points have been discussed the hearing will be adjourned. Sometimes further investigation is required and additional meetings may be arranged.

Giving evidence at a hearing or attending as a witness

Any colleague who has been involved in the allegations may be called as a witness to participate in the process. This includes being interviewed or providing a statement/documents relevant to the grievance or attending a hearing.

Grievance outcome

The hearing manager will consider the grievance investigation and all of your points. They will decide on an appropriate outcome which may include upholding the grievance, partially upholding the grievance or not upholding the grievance. We aim to provide a written decision and the reasons for it within a reasonable timescale and without undue delay. In some circumstances we may also deliver the outcome verbally, and where possible this will be scheduled on a day where you typically work from an M&G office, however you may be required to attend the office on an additional day to allow delivery of the outcome to be held face to face. As part of the outcome the hearing manager may make recommendations to address any contributing factors e.g. sub-culture, team dynamics, rebuilding relations. If serious conduct or behaviour issues have been highlighted, these may be managed under the disciplinary procedure. We have a duty of care to all parties involved and responsibilities under GDPR so it may not be appropriate to give details of action taken against other colleagues as a result of the grievance.

The appeal

You can appeal against any formal grievance outcome. You do this by writing to the appeal manager named in the outcome letter within five working days of receiving the written decision. Your letter should clearly explain your grounds for appeal. Examples include, but are not limited to;

- You feel that the procedure has not been followed correctly
- You believe that the level of sanction is too severe
- You now have new, or additional, relevant evidence not previously taken into account, which you were not aware of earlier in the process.

We'll arrange an appeal meeting as soon as possible. Where possible any appeal meeting will be scheduled on a day where you typically work from an M&G office, however you may be required to attend the office on an additional day to allow the appeal meeting to be held face to face. It will normally be chaired by an independent manager who hasn't been involved in the process to-date with the support of a note taker and/or HR. You can bring a companion to the meeting to support you and must let us know in advance if you plan to do this and who you will bring (see below for further details on their role). If you fail to attend the hearing we may make decisions on the information available. The decision made at the appeal hearing will be final and will normally be communicated within ten working days of the hearing.

The role of a companion

You may choose to bring a colleague, trade union representative, or the colleague support adviser to support you during a grievance hearing or appeal meeting. Their role is to offer support by conferring with you, asking questions and summing up, however they can't answer questions on your behalf. If your chosen companion cannot make the hearing, we will reschedule for

up to five working days later. If you wish to be accompanied you must let us know in advance who you will be bringing. More details on representatives can be found in the **Your voice, your representatives policy**.

Victimisation

It's really important that colleagues feel comfortable to raise concerns at work. We have a colleague support adviser role, within the HR team, dedicated to supporting and advising colleagues with personal concerns at work. Read our '[colleague support document](#)' which will answer any questions you may have. We will treat all grievances raised in good faith sensitively and fairly. M&G's approach is zero tolerance around victimisation or subject to less favourable treatment because they have raised a concern at work, even if the grievance is not upheld. Any concerns raised that are not considered to be in good faith will be managed under the disciplinary policy.

Confidentiality

We ask that anyone involved in a grievance treats it as confidential. It's important that we manage all cases sensitively and fairly and that details are not discussed outside of an investigation meeting or grievance/appeal hearing unless there is a valid reason. If you are unsure about this, please go to the **People Hub** and raise a query via **resolving issues at work**.

Support

We would like to draw your attention to our free 24/7 confidential online support service. UK colleagues have access to a free, 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), giving a wide range of support on physical and mental wellbeing, counselling and access to finance and debt specialists. You can find out more about our EAP on [the People Hub](#).

For more information about the resources available to you, please visit the 'Wellbeing Hub'.

And finally

Please note the above procedure is non-contractual and may be changed from time-to-time.

Please note, this policy reflects the current position under any relevant UK law. Should the law change, then this policy may change to reflect that. The policy is non-contractual and may be amended at any time. It applies to all UK employees in M&G plc.