

IPS Grow Complaints Procedure

1. Purpose

IPS Grow is committed to providing high quality service for all stakeholders. We recognise however that on occasion there may be dissatisfaction or concerns to raise about an aspect of your experience. We welcome the opportunity to correct mistakes, learn and to make improvements. This procedure outlines the steps you should follow should you wish to raise a complaint.

2. Procedure

The procedure is divided into two parts, an Informal Procedure, which emphasises resolution at the 'local' point where the complaint arose, and a Formal Procedure. All parties are expected to take every opportunity to resolve a complaint before escalating the matter to the next stage of the process. Each stage of the process should be exhausted or attempted before moving on to the next stage, however, matters of a very serious or sensitive nature may be escalated to Stage 2 where appropriate.

2.1 Stage 1: Local Resolution

- 2.1.1 Anyone who wishes to make a complaint about their experience of IPS Grow should try first to resolve the matter informally, in consultation with the person who has caused the complaint. Wherever possible please raise the issue with the member of staff most directly involved in the event leading to the complaint, in order to give that person the opportunity to address the concerns.
- 2.1.2 If, for any reason, a complaint cannot be raised in this way or the matter is not resolved through speaking with the person directly, you can raise the concern with that person's line manager, or with another appropriate person within the area of IPS Grow where the complaint has arisen. Please complete the [Stage 1 Complaints Form](#) summarising the key points of your complaint and your expectations around how the matter should be resolved.
- 2.1.3 The member of staff receiving the complaint will make every effort to resolve the complaint simply and quickly. If necessary, they may invite you to a meeting to discuss the matter.

- 2.1.4 At the end of the informal stage you will be provided with a written response to the complaint, which will either: detail the proposed resolution; or if no resolution has been proposed, explain why.
- 2.1.5 Informal complaints will be dealt with in a timely fashion and where possible, completed within 1-2 calendar months, depending on the complexity of the issue. IPS Grow may need to extend the timescales if, for example, it becomes difficult to schedule meetings with the relevant individuals or if matters are complex and require additional time to fully investigate.

2.2 Stage 2: Formal Complaint

- 2.2.1 If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, the person wishing to make the complaint should detail the matter causing the complaint in writing to the IPS Grow National Director via the organisations HR department at hr@socialfinance.org.uk.
- 2.2.2 The organisation recommends that the complaints be put in writing, identifying the person(s) concerned and what has happened and when. The Company will appreciate details of any specific incidents. Individuals are encouraged to provide any times and dates and names of any witnesses or other people involved to assist with the investigation.
- 2.2.3 The investigating manager (nominated by HR) will take immediate action to investigate the complaint. The actions that will be taken very much depend on the nature of the allegation but can include conciliation between those involved if the individual agrees to this, initiating an investigation and/or suspending the person concerned pending investigation.
- 2.2.4 Serious allegations will likely lead the investigating manager, in association with Head of HR, to consider suspending the person concerned to keep them away from the workplace during the course of an investigation. The act of suspending the person(s) concerned is not in itself a disciplinary sanction and does not prejudice the allegations that have been raised against them.
- 2.2.5 **Investigation process:** The Company investigation process in respect of complaints raised under this policy is robust and objective. The investigating manager, supported by an HR representative, will conduct their investigation into the allegations confidentially, subject to the need to discuss the situation with those involved and any witnesses so as to establish the situation.
- 2.2.6 The person against whom the allegation is made will receive, in writing and before their interview, exact details of the description of the complaints raised against them.
- 2.2.7 The investigating manager will accord both parties the necessary respect during the investigation to what happened. Separate meetings and interviews will take place and employees may be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative during these.

- 2.2.8 After the investigation has been completed and all those involved interviewed, the investigating manager will complete an investigation report setting out their conclusions. The final report will be sent to the Head of HR and a copy will be provided by HR to the complainant and the person against whom the allegation was made but no other form of disclosure will take place. The investigation report may contain redacted names, or have sections removed before disclosing to concerned parties, so as not to identify third parties to the alleged perpetrator.
- 2.2.9 **Investigation outcome:** The investigation report may require the organisation to undertake disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator to prevent the issue from taking place again. The report may recommend training or re-training to ensure appropriate conduct is reiterated.
- 2.2.10 Substantiated acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimisation are considered by the organisation to be acts of gross misconduct. An organisation Disciplinary Policy is in place which covers this in more detail.
- 2.2.11 The investigation report may conclude that that no further action is required. The report may also conclude that the allegation was false or malicious and may suggest next steps to take.
- 2.2.12 **Appeals:** Individuals that are dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation into their formal complaint under this policy may submit an appeal in writing to the Chief Executive Officer.
- 2.2.13 Employees must ensure they comply with the time limit set out in the investigation report for submitting the appeal. This is usually two weeks from the date of receipt of the investigation report. The appeal should set out the full details of the individuals reasons for their dissatisfaction with the outcome.
- 2.2.14 The organisation will, in connection with the Chief Executive Officer, arrange an appeal hearing to consider the grounds for their appeal, usually within two weeks of the appeal being received. At this hearing, employees are entitled to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative. The appeal hearing will review the grounds for the dissatisfaction and explore potential solutions, with a written outcome supplied to the employee or person within two weeks of the appeal hearing.
- 2.2.15 If the appeal is upheld, the written outcome will explain what actions the organisation will take or proposes to take as a result of the appeal. If the appeal cannot be upheld, the written outcome will set out the reasons as to why and confirm that no further action will be taken. There is no further stage under this procedure once the appeal has been decided.

- 2.2.16 **Records:** Allegations under this policy are recorded for monitoring the effectiveness of the organisation's equality and diversity policies, which includes the production of management statistics on complaints received, upheld, rejected and the consequential actions.
- 2.2.17 The records include a summary of the type of allegation, the type of issue (discrimination, harassment etc), the organisation's investigation, actions taken by the business (and why) and the outcome sent to the employee or person. These records are held by the HR department. The storage of these records complies with the organisation's obligations in line with current data protection obligations.

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