

Dignity at Work

Dean was asked to attend a meeting with his manager and supervisor to discuss some recent concerns about his conduct at work. Whilst Dean does not have a problem with this, at the meeting Dean felt offended by the way in which his manager spoke to him as he thought it was condescending and made him feel belittled. He said that his manager had been swearing and raising his voice inappropriately. Dean subsequently wrote to the Head of Service to complain about the way in which he was spoken to by his manager.

After seeking advice from HR, the Head of Service advised Dean that it would be appropriate for this matter to be dealt with under the Dignity at Work Policy. Dean was given a copy of the policy and invited to attend a meeting with the Head of Service and a HR Officer. Dean attended along with his trade union representative and went over the main issues of his complaint.

The informal and formal routes of the Dignity at Work Policy were explained to Dean and he was asked which of these he would prefer to take.

Informal Route

Dean could have a meeting with his manager and the Head of Service in order to discuss his feelings with his manager in an open and honest way. This would allow both parties to express their views about what happened and hopefully find a positive way forward.

Formal Route

After discussions with Dean a formal statement would be taken from him and a meeting would then be called with the Head of Service, HR and the manager in question to discuss Dean's allegations. A formal statement would also be taken from the manager (and possibly the supervisor in attendance at the meeting) in order to gather as much information as possible from all parties.

This information would then be passed to a Chief Officer within a different service area for consideration. This may have involved merely considering the information provided by HR or required both parties to attend a meeting with the Chief Officer to discuss the matter further (perhaps in more complicated circumstances).

A decision would then be made as to whether Dean's allegations were upheld or not. If allegations were upheld as to inappropriate conduct by the manager, the matter would be passed back to the Chief Officer of the manager's service area for disciplinary action. If the decision was that there was no case to answer both parties would be informed in writing.

Outcome

Dean chose to take the informal route as he felt that he had previously had a good working relationship with his manager and hoped that the matter could be discussed informally. He did not feel that the formal process would be needed but wanted to raise the complaint in order for the manager to be made aware that their behaviour had not been acceptable. He hoped that this would prevent the issue from occurring in the future.

At the meeting with Dean, his manager and the Head of Service, Dean's manager apologised that he had felt upset by the way in which he had been spoken to and that whilst certain issues had needed to be addressed, the intention had never been to upset Dean. Dean was happy to accept this and the matter was resolved.