

How to raise a problem at work

If you have a problem at work it's normally better to raise it informally with your employer first.

You may feel nervous about raising an issue, but employers are often open to resolving problems quickly without going through a formal procedure.

You should approach your line manager first. If you do not feel comfortable doing that, try and find someone else you feel comfortable talking to (such as another manager or someone in HR).

An informal chat can range from a quiet word to a more structured meeting. If a meeting is set up you can ask a colleague to come with you if you feel you do not want to go alone. At this stage your employer does not have to agree to this.

1. When an informal chat is not the best option

For some serious issues, such as sexual harassment or [whistleblowing](#), an informal chat is not the best approach. You should instead [raise a formal grievance to your employer](#).

If an informal meeting is set up, it's a good idea to:

- check the Acas website for information about your problem and how it might be dealt with
- prepare what you want to say, for example how to explain what you're unhappy about
- think about what you'd like your employer to do

You can ask someone to go with you. The person you choose must be either:

- a work colleague
- a trade union representative

- an official employed by a trade union

You can bring someone else for extra assistance or support, for example a translator or carer.

It's up to your employer to agree if you want to bring anyone else, such as a friend or parent.

At the meeting

At the meeting you can:

- explain what the problem is and what you think should happen
- show your manager evidence if necessary, for example your payslips and contract if you think your holiday pay was wrong
- take notes if you want to remember what was said

Resolving the problem should be a two-way process. Your manager should allow you to explain the problem. You should also listen to what they have to say.

It may not always be possible to solve the problem in the way you'd like, but hopefully you can find a solution that works for both of you.

Related content

[Download the Acas Code of Practice and guide for disciplinary and grievance pro...](#)

Sometimes an issue cannot be resolved informally and you may need to make a formal complaint to your employer. This is known as raising a formal grievance.

Find out more about [raising a formal grievance](#).

If raising a formal grievance does not resolve the problem, you might be able to [make a claim to an employment tribunal](#).

Related content

[Download the Acas Code of Practice and guide for disciplinary and grievance pro...](#)