



WIRRAL BRANCH
Striving for Equality

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Tony Williams
Assistant Director
HR & OD

Dear Tony

I am writing to you to formally request a change to the Employment Appeals Process.

This request follows previous discussion in JCC and other meetings.

We are specifically requesting a change to Appeals against dismissal, that is "Appeals by employees against dismissal for reasons of conduct, capability (absence and performance) and some other substantial reason (SOSR) will be considered by a panel compromising at all times.". The change that we are seeking is to the makeup of the Appeals Panel.

Currently the Panel consists of 3 Officers of the Council with the Chair being at Chief Officer Level.

It is Unison's view that as a Council headed by directly elected members it is appropriate that there is member involvement in this Panel. In many aspects the working life of employees is impacted by the decisions taken by Councillors. The Termination of employment is the ultimate sanction that can be applied to an employee of the Council. On that basis Unison contends that in the interests of fairness transparency and accountability that elected members be involved in the application on that sanction. It will also provide appellants with some reassurance that the process is fair; to be clear I am not suggesting hearings are not currently fair, but that this measure will increase the appearance of fairness.

We therefore suggest a reasonable approach is for elected members to sit on the Appeals Panel in these situations. We would propose that the Chair of the Panel remains as a Director of the Council, whilst the two wing members are Councillors. This provides the opportunity for political balance if required, with one Councillor from the largest party and one from the other parties. The retention of a Director as Chair allows for someone with a good knowledge of Council procedures and practices to be responsible for ensuring the appeal is heard according to procedure.

Yours sincerely

David Jones
Branch Secretary

the public service union