**Constructing my defence**

Being invited to a disciplinary hearing is always going to be a stressful and upsetting experience, especially if the allegations or issues are misplaced or are incorrect. If you are facing a disciplinary hearing at work you will have defend yourself in a professional, structured and powerful manner. You will have to construct your defence in such a way that it will reduce your risk of receiving a disciplinary warning, a demotion or from being dismissed.

• Before you attend any hearings it is important that you have fully prepared your arguments, your defence and your documentation. For example, prepare your case, are there any mitigating circumstances, or were you provoked.

• It may be useful to draft a witness which could be used as an opening statement.

• Depending on the outcome of the hearing and whatever sanctions have been imposed on you, for example a warning, a demotion or even a dismissal that is not the end of the matter. Everyone has the right of appeal and you should always appeal.

• For the appeal review the whole process both from a procedural angle and from a legal aspect. Prepare a solid, structured, powerful appeal which that enables you to present credible reasoning around why the sanction imposed or the procedure used was not reasonable. The appeal is the last line of defence at work, it is very important, always use it, it could make the difference between keeping your job and losing it, but you have to be quick preferably within two weeks of any imposed sanction.

Remember you have rights at work which mean you cannot be dismissed from your job unfairly (The Employment Rights Act 1999: section 94). These rights also allow you a powerful voice which can be used to challenge your employer when you have the disciplinary procedure used against you, which can be for many reasons including, being disciplined for capability, performance and misconduct issues, absence issues or if the disciplinary procedure is being used against you for short-term or long-term illness matters.