Problem Solving Procedure

General information

Volunteers will not be subject to XXXXX disciplinary procedures nor have access to XXXXX grievance procedures, both of which are for employees only.

Although XXXXX takes seriously its duty of care towards its volunteers, volunteers do not have any legal rights unless they can prove that they are in fact employees, or that the organisation has been negligent in its duty of care towards the volunteer.

If a volunteer has a complaint

• Stage 1 - Initial complaint:

If you have a problem with or a grievance against, a member of staff, the organisation or another volunteer, this should be discussed with the Volunteer Manager. If the complaint is about the Volunteer Manager, then the matter should be referred to the Volunteer Development Manager.

During this discussion meeting you can be accompanied by a nominated person of your choice. If the issue cannot be resolved at this stage then you should proceed to stage 2.

• Stage 2 - In writing

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the oral complaint, you should make a formal complaint in writing to the Volunteer Manager (or Volunteer Development Manager). Any written complaint should be made within 1 month from your initial complaint and you should expect a written response from the organisation within two weeks of receipt of your letter.

• Stage 3 - Opportunity to appeal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, then you can appeal to the Chief Officer. You can have a nominated person present with you at this meeting. The Chief Officer will respond within 1 month of your appeal and the decision is final.

If someone complains about a you as volunteer

This part of the problem solving procedure gives you the volunteer the opportunity to be told why a complaint has arisen, the opportunity to state your case, and the chance to appeal.

Sometimes minor issues can arise during the course of volunteering, such as about how a volunteer is fitting into the team or about not being able to meet the required standards when undertaking tasks, or about reliability.

Such issues would usually come up during regular supervision, and would hopefully be resolved without resorting to formal procedures.

• Stage 1 – Oral discussion

The first step involves discussion between you and the Volunteer Manager to discus any external factors influencing your ability to carry out tasks, your behaviour or attitude. We would then identify goals that will help you to fulfil your role, and offer extra support, supervision, and training where necessary. We would agree a deadline for reviewing the situation.

If the complaint was raised by someone else, we will keep them informed of the measures we are taking to rectify the situation.

• Stage 2 – Written warning

If the issue hasn’t been resolved by the oral discussion or the review, then the Volunteer Manager will issue you with a written warning outlining the reason for the complaint. You will be given the opportunity to state your case either to the Volunteer Manager or the Volunteer Development Manager. If you wish, you may be accompanied by a person of your choice.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, further objectives could be set, and help offered. However, if at this point, we decide to ask you to leave, you would be given the opportunity to appeal. Please be assured that a decision to ask a volunteer to leave would be a last resort.

• Stage 3 - Opportunity to appeal

If you have been asked to leave, then you can appeal in writing to the Chief Officer. The Chief Officer will respond within 1 month of your appeal, and the decision is final.

Exceptions

There are some occasions when volunteers can be suspended immediately while an investigation is carried out. These include, but are not limited to: acts that constitute gross misconduct, eg theft, assault, act of violence, malicious damage, deliberate falsification of documents, harassment or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

The decision to suspend a volunteer would be confirmed to the volunteer in writing. In some cases, legal proceedings may need to be concluded before problem solving procedure can take place.