

Good Practice Guides: Building Foundations

No. 9 – Grievance Policy and Procedures

Key Points

Grievance procedures may sound rather formal but they are intended to promote fairness in the treatment of volunteers and ensure that as far as possible volunteers have the same rights as paid staff. It is hoped that settlements of any difficulties can be achieved through the normal channels of communication. Where this is not possible, the purpose of these procedures is to provide for the orderly resolution of joint problems in a fair and open way.

Informal Discussions

In the first instance, if any volunteer has a grievance about their volunteering or a colleague they should discuss it informally, as soon as possible, with their line manager or another manager if the grievance involves the line manager. The manager should take the grievance seriously and ensure that everything is done to try and resolve the issue informally. It is hoped that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this stage.

Formal Procedure

Stage 1

If a volunteer feels that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, they should put the complaint in writing to their line manager. If the complaint involves the staff member's line manager the complaint should be put in writing to another manager in the organisation or the Director.

A meeting will be held between the volunteer and their line manager (or other appropriate person) to respond to the complaints raised. The meeting will be an opportunity for the volunteer to explain their complaints and share how they would like them to be addressed. The volunteer has a right to be accompanied to the meeting.



Following the meeting, the line manager (or other appropriate person) will give a written response within 5 working days of the meeting outlining how the complaint(s) will be responded to. If the complaint is against another member of staff or volunteer or requires further investigation, the line manager (or other appropriate person) will need to carry out further meetings or investigations. In this case, the 5 working days limit above, may need to be extended. The response will follow this meeting and include a reference to the right of appeal.

Stage 2

If the volunteer feels the issue has still not been resolved satisfactorily, the volunteer must raise the matter, in writing, with the Director. The Director will advise the Chair of the Board of Directors. The Director will invite the volunteer to a meeting where they can discuss the matter and establish how best to resolve the situation. The volunteer has a right to be accompanied to the meeting.

Following the meeting, the Director will give a written response within 5 working days of the meeting outlining how the complaint will be responded to. If the complaint is against another member of staff or volunteer, or requires further investigation, the Director will need to carry out further meetings or investigations. In this case, the 5 working days limit above, may need to be extended. The response will follow this meeting and include a reference to the right of appeal.

Right of Appeal

If the volunteer wishes to appeal against any grievance decision, they must appeal, in writing within five working days of the decision being communicated to them to the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors. The Vice Chair will convene an Appeals Sub committee to hear the appeal and the staff member will be invited to a meeting with the Appeals Sub committee. The volunteer will have the right to be accompanied to the appeal meeting. The Chair will not form part of the Appeals sub. The Appeals Sub committee's decision will be final.

More help?

If you would like more help or advice in relation to this Good Practice Guide please contact the Volunteer Centre Edinburgh on the following details:

Tel: 0131 225 0630

Email: admin@volunteeredinburgh.org.uk

Or you can drop in and see us:

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