



Grievance Policy

A complaint is a general expression of dissatisfaction, often informal, about an issue that can sometimes be resolved quickly. A grievance is a formal, serious complaint by a volunteer and is because informal attempts have failed or the issue is severe.

Volunteers could experience a situation where they are unhappy with some aspect of the running of the charity or how they are treated within the charity and in such a situation they would raise a grievance under this policy.

1. Raising a Grievance Informally

Any volunteer who has a grievance relating to their work at the charity may raise the matter informally with a colleague during the course of normal work. This is not part of the grievance procedure. Only if the matter is not resolved between them should the formal grievance procedure need to be used.

2. The Formal Grievance Procedure

Stage 1 The volunteer should put their grievance in writing and send it to a Trustee. The volunteer does not need to state that their complaint is a formal grievance, however it would be helpful if they would do so.

Stage 2 Once a written grievance has been received by the Trustee, then the Charity will investigate the matter and to invite the volunteer to a formal grievance hearing. The volunteer may at this stage, if they wish, be accompanied by a colleague or relative. The Trustees are required to:

1. Record full details of the matter, or accept signed written details of the matter.
2. Provide an answer in writing to the volunteer. Should the volunteer then wish to take the issue to the next stage of this procedure, the Trustees shall ensure all Trustees are aware. A grievance hearing will not take place unless the volunteer informs the Trustees of the basis of their grievance. Also, such a hearing must not take place unless the Trustees have had a reasonable opportunity to consider their response to that information. The timing and location of the grievance meeting must be reasonable. Therefore, should a volunteer make a complaint with regards to an unacceptable working environment, the meeting would usually take place away from this environment.



Stage 3 The Trustees will arrange to meet the volunteer concerned. Following the meeting, the Trustees will send an answer, in writing, to the volunteer. The decision of the Board of Trustees representative will be final.

The various steps of the procedure should be held within a reasonable time.

Notes:

1. A volunteer can be accompanied at a grievance hearing.
2. The Trustee dealing with a volunteer's grievance should respond in writing to the volunteer setting out the basis on which the grievance is accepted or rejected. It is important that there is not undue delay in responding and that the decision is full and reasoned.
3. It is important that the Board of Trustees will give volunteers a reasonable opportunity to obtain redress of grievances.
4. The Board of Trustees should ensure that careful notes are made of grievance hearings. Records of grievance hearings should be retained setting out the nature of the grievance raised, the Board of Trustees' response, any action taken and the reasons for it. It is important for the Board of Trustees to have written documentary evidence on how the grievance was handled.
5. Records of grievance hearings should be kept confidential and retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
6. The Board of Trustees should check their grievance procedures to examine if they reflect or are consistent with the statutory grievance procedure. The Board of Trustees should always follow the requirements of the statutory procedure.