

Talk to Us

Volunteer Complaints Procedure

What to do if you are unhappy when volunteering

VOLUNTEERING

Procedure Number: VOL 2

Date Issued: January 2020

Issue Number: 001

Date Last Reviewed: September 2021

Issued by: Volunteering Team

Review Date: January 2023

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1. Introduction

Volunteers generously give the gift of time to Sue Ryder, continuing to support us to be there when it matters. We depend upon our volunteers and appreciate their time, enthusiasm and skills they contribute.

Volunteering is a mutually beneficial experience whereby you provide time, skills and experience in areas where the charity has a need. In return, Sue Ryder strives to ensure our volunteers are safe and have a meaningful and rewarding experience with us.

However, we appreciate that from time to time the volunteering relationship may not run as smoothly as we might like, and sometimes things can go wrong. When this happens, we aim to ensure that issues are handled and resolved as considerately and timely as possible. This policy explains what should happen if a problem arises.

We have created this volunteer complaints procedure to help and guide you. While the outcome may not always be the one that you hope for, our aims are to give you the opportunity to be heard and to make sure that you feel the process is fair.

2. What you need to do

Stage 1: Informal

A concern can often be resolved informally locally. In the first instance you should raise your concern locally with your line manager in the place where you volunteer. If the issue requires discussion, they will arrange a time with you when you can speak privately with them about your concern.

If your complaint/concern relates to equal opportunities or diversity and inclusion your line manager will be direct you to our People Advisors who will offer expert support to resolve the issue.

Stage 2: Formal

If you feel your concerns have not been resolved, you can take this to the next tier of management. Please see appendices 1 and 2 for more information about who this is.

We recommend that you write, email or call the manager to outline your concern and state whether or not you have previously raised the issue.

At this stage we may invite you to a meeting where we can discuss the matter and establish how best to resolve the situation. A volunteer can be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, family member or a colleague, you cannot be accompanied by a solicitor or trade union representative.

You will receive a written response within 14 working days of the meeting outlining how the concern/complaint will be responded to. If the complaint is against another member of staff or volunteer, or requires further investigation, the relevant manager will need to carry out meetings or investigations. In this case, the 14 working days limit may need to be extended. You will be sent a written outcome after the last meeting has taken place, this will include information about your right to appeal the outcome of the complaint.

Stage 3: Appeal

If you feel unsatisfied with the outcome of your concern/complaint you can appeal against the decision. The appeal must be in writing within five working days of you receiving the written outcome outline in Step 2.

We will arrange an Appeal Meeting to hear the appeal. As a Volunteer you can be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, family member or colleague, but not a solicitor or trade union representative.

The Appeal decision will be final.

Appeals can be sent by letter or email. Please see appendix 1 and 2 for information about your Appeal Hearing Manager.

Sue Ryder maintains a log to track the nature of complaints; this helps us to continually update and improve our process and the experience that volunteers have during their time with us. By monitoring and reviewing the complaints log we are able to take action to reduce the likelihood of similar issues arising again. These logs are shared with our board of Trustees every year.

3. Your rights as a volunteer

Legally Sue Ryder has a duty to ensure the health and safety of volunteers and to comply with the data protection act. We look to mirror the processes we have in place for paid staff, where possible, understanding that these are two different relationships as one is voluntary and the other is under contract.

Please be assured that you can expect your complaint to be kept confidential and discussed only by those involved in trying to find a solution. We will take your concerns seriously, and inform you of the steps taken to resolve the issue.

Paid employees have employment contracts, which include grievance and disciplinary procedures. An employment contract also gives you other rights, such as the right to take your employer to an employment tribunal.

As a volunteer, you don't have a contract. This means you don't have the same legal status and protections that paid workers have in the UK under employee Law. Volunteers do not have

the same legal rights as staff in relation to investigative procedures and appeals process. However, we believe it is right that volunteers have a clear process for raising concerns and having them dealt with appropriately.

In certain serious cases volunteers may be asked to stop volunteering with immediate effect. We may suspend volunteering activity whilst carrying out relevant investigations where we think it is in the volunteers and charity's best interests.

We also reserve the right to cease a relationship with a volunteer where we feel the mutual trust and respect essential for a beneficial volunteering experience no longer exists or where the relationship has irretrievably broken-down.

4. Sources of support

If you have questions or if you would like advice on the volunteer complaints procedure, additional support can be provided by calling 01302 380067 (Mon to Fri) or emailing: volunteering@sueryder.org

Appendix 1 - Healthcare and Fundraising Volunteers

Stage 1: Informal

If you feel uncomfortable raising the issue with your line manager you can contact your local Volunteer Coordinator or Befriending Coordinator.

For complaints/concern relating to equal opportunities or diversity and inclusion, line managers can reach the appropriate People Advisor by contacting peoplehelpline@sueryder.org

Stage 2: Formal

Your next tier of management is the Service Director at your local centre, or the local Head of Hospice Fundraising. You can ask your Volunteer or Befriending Coordinator for the correct contact details if you are unsure.

Stage 3: Appeal

Appeal Hearing Manager – Bluebell Valentine, Volunteer Manager (Healthcare and Fundraising)

Email: bluebell.valentine@suerydercare.org

Address: FAO Bluebell Valentine, Sue Ryder Volunteering, Kings House, King Street, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2ED

Appendix 2 – Retail volunteers

Stage 1: Informal

If you feel uncomfortable raising the issue with your line manager you can contact your local Retail Volunteer Coordinator. Details of your Retail Volunteer Coordinator can be sourced by calling the retail volunteer helpline on 01302 380067 or email: volunteering@sueryder.org

For complaints/concern relating to equal opportunities or diversity and inclusion, line managers can reach the appropriate People Advisor by contacting peoplehelpline@sueryder.org

Stage 2:

Your next Tier of management is Stuart Mitchell, Volunteer and Community Plus Manager (Retail & Corporate). Email: Stuart.mitchell@suerydercare.org
Address: FAO Stuart Mitchell, Sue Ryder Volunteering, Kings House, King Street, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2ED

Stage 3:

Appeal Hearing Manager – Ali Cadman Head of People (Retail & Corporate) at Sue Ryder.
Address: FAO Ali Cadman, Sue Ryder Volunteering, Kings House, King Street, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2ED