



Disciplinary Procedure for Volunteers (including those with a paid role)

The aim of this policy is to encourage improvement in individual conduct and performance.

Informal Meeting

Before a formal disciplinary procedure is invoked, we may, if appropriate, conduct an informal meeting. Many problems can be resolved by informal discussions or counselling, and often this can avoid the need for formal disciplinary action. This may include mediation or additional training or support for the member/volunteer. An informal meeting would not be recorded as disciplinary action and would be seen as a process of constructive dialogue.

If the problem cannot be resolved informally with your member/volunteer, it might then be appropriate to invoke a disciplinary policy and procedure.

Stage 1 – Formal Verbal Warning

A formal verbal warning may be given to the member if, despite informal discussions or training, the conduct or performance still does not meet acceptable standards. This should follow an appropriate disciplinary meeting delivered by the person within the organisation who is most relevant – this may be a committee chair, Executive Director or member of the board of trustees.

A brief note of the warning should be kept but, subject to satisfactory conduct and/or performance, this would lapse after 6 months.

Stage 2 – Written Warning

If there is no improvement in standards within the prescribed time, or if a further offence occurs, and subject to the board of trustees agreement, the member should receive a letter from their manager inviting them to attend a further disciplinary meeting. The letter should include detailed information on the reason why the meeting is being called.

The disciplinary meeting should take place as soon as is reasonably possible, but with sufficient time for the member to consider their response to the information contained in the letter. The meeting should be an opportunity for both the member (with their representative) and the representative of the charity with a member of the board of trustees to talk about the issues or allegations being made.

Following the disciplinary meeting, if it is decided that no further action is warranted, the member should be informed in writing. Where the member is found to be performing unsatisfactorily or their behaviour is deemed unsatisfactory they will be given a written warning. A copy of the written warning should be kept on file but the warning will lapse after 12 months subject to satisfactory conduct and/or performance. Where a written warning is given, the Chair of the Board of Trustees should be advised and kept up to date with any progress.

Stage 3 – Final Written Warning

If the conduct or performance still remains unsatisfactory by the stipulated date, or if the

misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant only one written warning, a further disciplinary meeting (where the Chair of the Board of Trustees will be present) should be called with the member and, if desired an appropriate representative. The disciplinary meeting will be an opportunity for the member to answer the issues raised. Where this meeting establishes that there has been a failure to improve or change behaviour, then a final written warning should be given to the member.

Final Stage – Exclusion

If the member's conduct or performance still fails to improve or if further serious misconduct occurs, the final stage in the disciplinary process may be instituted and the member excluded and any roles within the organisation terminated.

Gross Misconduct

Where a member is found guilty of gross misconduct, they would normally be subject to summary exclusion (instant exclusion without notice) and the above procedures regarding progression of warnings should not apply.

Examples of gross misconduct might include:-

- deliberate falsification of expenses claims
- disclosure of confidential information (see confidentiality policy)
- convictions of a criminal offence that undermine a person's suitability for volunteering
- provision of false information relevant to a person's volunteering position
- bullying or harassment
- being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- theft of property or misuse of equipment or materials

In cases of gross misconduct, the organisation reserves the right to notify the member's employer and/or other external bodies to investigate further such as the police if it deems appropriate; and will comply fully with any such ensuing investigations.

Appeals

If a member wishes to appeal against any disciplinary decision, this should be made in writing within five working days of the decision being communicated to them, to the relevant person on the board of trustees.

Date approved by Trustees: 13th November 2024

Date of next review: November 2027