

East Sussex Community Voice

Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure

Policy Schedule

Version	Date of next review by ESCV Board	Date of adoption by ESCV Board
1	n/a	September 2013
2	March 2015	x
3	March 2016	January 2024
4	January 2026	
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ESCV wants to ensure that volunteering is a positive experience for everyone involved. There are occasions however, when problems may arise. The Problem-Solving Procedure is based on principles of fairness and good practice.

1 Dealing with complaints

1.1 All complaints should be resolved openly, fairly and quickly to:

- Protect our volunteers
- Minimise any risk of disruption to our staff, other volunteers and partners
- Demonstrate that the organisation respects its volunteers
- Protect the reputation of the organisation

2 Complaints from volunteers

2.1 ESCV believes that volunteers have every right to make complaints on any matter which gives them cause for concern in the course of their volunteer activities.

The procedure follows three stages:

2.1.1 Stage 1 - Oral Complaint

Initial complaints, whether concerning a member of staff, the organisation or another volunteer, should first be discussed between the volunteer and a member of the engagement team.

If the complaint concerns a member of the engagement team, the matter should be referred to the Volunteer and Engagement Manager or Executive Director. The volunteer has the option to be accompanied to any meetings to discuss their concerns by a nominated person of their choice. If the issue cannot be resolved at this stage, then the matter should proceed to stage 2.

2.1.2 Stage 2 - Written Complaint

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome of the oral complaint, they should make a formal complaint in writing to the Executive Director within two weeks of making the oral complaint.

The Executive Director will respond to the complainant within 10 working days (or notify the volunteer within two weeks if the response will take longer). East Sussex Community Voice (ESCV) wants to ensure volunteering is a positive experience for everyone involved. There are occasions, however, when problems may arise.

2.1.3 Stage 3 - Opportunity to Appeal

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the response to their written complaint, they may appeal in writing to the Chair of ESCV. The volunteer will be advised at the start of the appeals process of the timescales involved. The Chair's decision on the matter will be final.

2.2 Addressing Problems with Volunteers

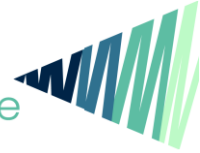
Most issues will be picked up and dealt with during support and supervision sessions. If an issue is not resolved through these sessions or if a third party raises a concern or complaint, then a similar three stage Problem Solving Procedure exists and the steps are set out below:

2.2.1 Stage 1 - Oral Discussion

The first step is to discuss the complaint with the volunteer. This meeting should seek to identify goals that will help the volunteer fulfil their role, and offer extra support, supervision and training where necessary. A deadline should be agreed for reviewing the situation with the volunteer. If the complaint was raised by someone else, the Volunteer and Engagement Manager should keep them (or the complainant) informed of the measures being taken to rectify the situation and how long the process should take.

2.2.2 Stage 2 - Written Warning

If the issue hasn't been or cannot be resolved by Oral Discussion or the review; the Volunteer and Engagement Manager will issue the volunteer with a written warning (logged on their volunteer file) outlining the reason for the complaint. The volunteer will be given the opportunity to state their case, which could be to either to the Volunteer and Engagement Manager or a member of the engagement team. The volunteer is allowed to be accompanied by a person of their choice at meetings on the matter. Depending on the nature of the complaint, further objectives could be set, and help offered to the volunteer. However, if the organisation decides to



ask the volunteer to leave, then the volunteer will be given the opportunity to appeal.

The decision to ask a volunteer to leave is the last resort. If this is the only outcome available to ESCV, timescales will be agreed with the volunteer if not with immediate effect.

2.2.3 Stage 3 - Opportunity to Appeal

If the volunteer has been asked to leave, they can appeal to the Chair of ESCV. The Chair's decision on the matter will be final. The volunteer will be informed of the Chair's decision within 7 working days of the appeal being submitted.

If ESCV decides to ask a volunteer to leave, ESCV staff and/or Board members will meet with them to explain the decision, identify learning and tie up loose ends.

3 Exceptions

- 3.1 In some cases, volunteers may need to be suspended immediately while an investigation is carried out. This decision will be made by the Volunteering and Engagement Manager. These include, but are not limited to, acts that constitute gross misconduct: theft, assault, act of violence, malicious damage, deliberate falsification of documents, harassment or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- 3.2 The decision to suspend a volunteer will be confirmed to the volunteer in writing. In some cases, legal proceedings may need to be concluded before the next step of the Problem-Solving Procedure can take place.

4 Informal Leaving Interviews

- 4.1 Wherever possible, leaving interviews should be held with all volunteers. This will provide a useful means to tie up loose ends and inform staff and other volunteers of the volunteer's departure. If the volunteer was working on a particular project the project lead will be informed (if they have not already been involved in the complaint).

5 Compliance, monitoring and review

- 5.1 The Board of East Sussex Community Voice has the ultimate responsibility for implementing and reviewing this policy. The board will scrutinise our work on volunteering to ensure that we meet our legal, ethical and operational commitments.

- 5.2 The East Sussex Community Voice Chief Executive holds the day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented.
- 5.3 This policy will be reviewed and updated on a two-year rolling basis by the East Sussex Community Voice Board.
- 5.4 This policy may be revised sooner if there is a change in working premises, conditions or laws directly affecting volunteering or any other aspect embedded in the document.