



Grievance Policy and Procedure for Volunteers

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Grievance Policy and Procedure

1. POLICY

The primary purpose of this grievance procedure is to enable Volunteers at Group level and System Level to air any concerns that they may have about practices, policies or treatment from other individuals whom are part of Group Hug, and to produce a speedy resolution where genuine problems exist. It is designed to help all Volunteers to take the appropriate action, when they are experiencing difficulties, in an atmosphere of trust and collaboration.

Although it may not be possible to solve all problems to everyone's complete satisfaction, this policy forms an undertaking by Group Hug that it will deal objectively and constructively with all Volunteers grievances, and anyone who decides to use the procedure may do so with the confidence that their problem will be dealt with fairly.

This grievance procedure is not a substitute for good day-to-day communication within Group Hug, where we encourage Volunteers to discuss and resolve daily volunteering issues in a supportive atmosphere.

Many problems can be solved on an informal footing very satisfactorily if all Volunteers are prepared to keep the channels of communication between themselves open and working well.

This procedure is designed to deal with those issues which need to be approached on a more formal basis so every route to a satisfactory solution can be explored and any decisions reached are binding and long lasting.

This grievance procedure is **entirely non-contractual** and does not form part of any Volunteers Agreement.

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to provide a means for Volunteers to raise concerns relating to their volunteering and have them dealt with in a fair and consistent manner, this policy works alongside the Volunteers Conduct and Concerns Policy.

- Where appropriate concerns will be settled without recourse to a formal process (see Volunteers Conduct and Concerns Policy for more details .
- The procedure will be applied consistently with a defined process for all stages.
- All Volunteers will be treated fairly and sensitively and supported during the process.
- Grievances will be investigated promptly, thoroughly considered and in confidence.
- Volunteers have the right to be accompanied at formal meetings.
- Volunteers have a right of appeal against the outcome of the grievance procedure.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Volunteer

- To be aware of their own conduct and to act in accordance with our values and behaviours when seeking to resolve issues or concerns.
- To seek to resolve issues or concerns informally through discussions with their manager or colleagues before escalating to the formal stage of the procedure.
- Where it is not possible to resolve concerns informally, raise the matter formally.
- To co-operate fully at all stages of the grievance procedure.
- Maintain confidentiality and answer questions openly and honestly.

2.2 Manager

- Role model our values and behaviours and promote positive working relations.
- Adopt early intervention strategies to resolve volunteering issues and avoid them escalating into formal grievances.
- Challenge and stop unacceptable behaviour in the App.
- Provide support to employees who raise a formal grievance.

2.3 Grievance Manager

- Meet with the Volunteer (either face to face or via online methods e.g. Skype or Zoom), who has raised the grievance and carry out a thorough and impartial investigation.
- Review and consider all the information thoroughly and decide in relation to the outcome of the grievance.
- Prioritise meetings and maintain confidentiality.

2.4 Appeal Manager

- Review all documentation thoroughly and chair any appeal hearing.
- Carefully consider all of the information presented and make a final decision in relation to the appropriateness of the outcome of the grievance.
- Prioritise the hearing and maintain confidentiality.

2.5 HR/System & Group Level Management

- Provide impartial advice and guidance to all parties involved on the application of the Grievance Policy and Procedure.
- Make the final decision in the event of an objection from a Volunteer to a particular manager's involvement in the formal process.
- Where appropriate, attend formal meetings.
- Retain master copies of all documentation gathered as part of the process in line with our retention schedules.

3. PROCEDURE

If you cannot settle your grievance informally, you should raise it formally. This procedure has been drawn up to establish the appropriate steps to be followed when pursuing and dealing with a formal grievance.



3.1 Stage 1

- In the event of having a formal grievance relating to your Volunteering you should, in the first instance, put your grievance in writing and address it to your line manager, making clear that you wish to raise a formal grievance under the terms of this procedure.
- Where your grievance is against your line manager, your complaint should be addressed to an alternative manager or to the appropriate System Level Manager dependent on what your grievance is about i.e., Safeguarding, Support or HR. This grievance procedure will not be invoked unless you raise your grievance in accordance with these requirements.
- A manager (who may not be the manager to whom your grievance was addressed) will then invite you to attend a grievance meeting to discuss your grievance and you have the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a fellow Volunteer of your choice.
- Every effort will be made to convene the grievance meeting at a time which is convenient for you and your companion to attend. If this means that the meeting cannot be held within a reasonable period (usually within five working days of the original date set), we ask you decide with another companion who is available to attend.
- You must make every effort to attend the grievance meeting.
- At the meeting, you will be permitted to explain your grievance and how you think it should be resolved.
- Please note that it is prohibited for you to record (whether covertly or otherwise) the proceedings at the grievance meeting, and at any appeal meeting, without the express permission of Group Hug.
- Following the meeting, Group Hug will endeavour to respond to your grievance as soon as possible and, in any case, within five working days of the grievance meeting. If it is not possible to respond within this time period, you will be given an explanation for the delay and be told when a response can be expected. You will be informed in writing of Group Hug's decision on the grievance and notified of your right to appeal against that decision if you are not satisfied with it.

3.2 Stage 2

- In the event you feel your grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, you may then appeal in writing to a System Level Manager or HR within five working days of the grievance decision. You should also set out the grounds for your appeal.
- On receipt of your appeal letter, a more senior manager or HR (who again, may not be the person to whom your appeal was addressed), or an independent chairperson appointed by Group Hug, shall make arrangements to hear your grievance at an appeal meeting and at this meeting you may again, if you wish, be accompanied by a trade union official or a fellow employee of your choice.



- You must make every effort to attend the grievance appeal meeting.
- Following the meeting, the System Level Manager or HR or independent chairperson will endeavour to respond to your grievance as soon as possible and, in any case, within five working days of the appeal hearing. If it is not possible to respond within this time period, you will be given an explanation for the delay and be told when a response can be expected. You will be informed in writing of Group Hug's decision on your grievance appeal.
- This is the final stage of the grievance procedure and the Group Hug's decision shall be final.

4. Disciplinary issues

- If your complaint relates to your dissatisfaction with a disciplinary, performance review or dismissal decision, you should not invoke the grievance procedure but should instead appeal against that decision in accordance with the appeal procedure with which you will have been provided.
- In the event Group Hug discovers a grievance previously raised by you is malicious, fabricated or falsified it reserves the right to take disciplinary action against you. Please note that this could result in your dismissal as a volunteer for gross misconduct.

5. Records

- Confidential records will be kept of all appropriate documentation generated during the stages of the formal process and retained by the Manager dealing with the formal process in line with Group Hug's retention schedule.
- Where appropriate, a representative will take a record (not verbatim) of the formal meetings. Written records of the grievance and investigation meetings will be given to the employee/witness to sign and return, as stated above. Copies will be enclosed with the outcome letter when it is sent to the Volunteer. Notes of any appeal hearings will be made available to the employee within ten working days of the hearing.
- No parties involved in the process are permitted to attend a formal or informal meeting with a recording device. This is to encourage openness and full participation by all parties during meetings.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

This Policy shall be deemed effective as of 16th May 2021. No part of this Policy shall have retroactive effect and shall thus apply only to matters occurring on or after this date.