



Volunteer Conduct and Concerns Policy and Procedure

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <i>Reference:</i> | <i>Volunteer Conduct and Concerns Policy and Procedure</i> |
| <i>Date Approved:</i> | 16 th May 2021 |
| <i>Approving By:</i> | <i>Jonathan Andrew Greenwood</i> |
| <i>Implementation Date:</i> | 16 th May 2021 |
| <i>Version:</i> | 1 |
| <i>Supersedes:</i> | |
| <i>Consultation Undertaken:</i> | <i>Internal</i> |
| <i>Target Audience:</i> | Staff and Volunteers |
| <i>Review Date:</i> | 16 th May 2022 |
| <i>Lead</i> | Jonathan Andrew Greenwood |
| <i>Author/Lead:</i> | Denise Read |



Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. SCOPE..... | 3 |
| 2. PURPOSE | 3 |
| 3. PRINCIPLES | 3 |
| 4. THE PROCEDURE | 5 |
| 5. INVESTIGATION | 5 |
| 5.1 Stage 1 – Verbal Concerns Update..... | 6 |
| 5.2 Stage 2 – Further Concerns and Issues of Volunteer Monitoring..... | 6 |
| 5.3 Stage 3 – Termination of a Volunteer Agreement..... | 7 |
| 6. SERIOUS MISCONDUCT:..... | 7 |
| 7. APPEAL PROCESS:..... | 7 |
| 8. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY | 8 |

Volunteer Conduct and Concerns Policy and Procedure

1. SCOPE

This Volunteer Conduct and Concerns Procedure applies to all volunteers and management at System and Group levels of Group Hug.

2. PURPOSE

To ensure that all employees are aware of the standards required in conduct, job performance and behaviour in their job. To provide help and guidance to meet the required standard as a volunteer for Group Hug.

- To clarify the rights and responsibilities of management and volunteers in respect of Volunteer Conduct and Concerns action.
- By providing fair and consistent means by which Volunteer Conduct and Concerns rules are observed and standards of performance and conduct are maintained.
- To provide a method for dealing with breaches of organisational policies, rules and procedures, or persistent poor performance. The intention is that Volunteer Conduct and Concerns action, if taken, is appropriate to the circumstances.

3. PRINCIPLES

System and Group Level Management have a responsibility to ensure that the volunteers, and management at System and Group Level for whom they are responsible, are aware of general and specific rules, standards and procedures laid down for the regulation of volunteering and conduct with the realms of volunteering. All System and Group Level Management and volunteers are required to familiarise themselves with these standards and procedures and to co-operate with their management to ensure that they are met.

In cases of minor or unacceptable performance or behaviour within their volunteering role, Managers should exhaust all other means of achieving the required standards before formal Volunteer Conduct and Concerns action is taken especially with volunteers as they do not have a legally binding contract, only a volunteer agreement.



This will include setting clearly defined objectives and standards, monitoring them over a reasonable time period and providing additional coaching or training. In some cases, this may also include reference to other appropriate sources of counselling and assistance.

- No Volunteer Conduct and Concerns action will be taken until a case has been thoroughly investigated.
- The volunteer or System and Group Level Management involved must be fully informed of the issues involved and be given the opportunity to respond.
- Volunteer or System and Group Level Management will not have their volunteer agreement terminated for the first incident of concern except in the case of gross misconduct or an equivalent act.

At all stages of the procedure both Manager and the individual concerned must ensure the confidentiality of events and discussions. This will not preclude the sharing such confidence when seeking advice.

Conduct and Concerns issues for the purposes of volunteers, a note will be made on their volunteer record only.

The following outlines some examples of poor conduct:

- Violation of health and safety rules
- Disclosure of business information
- Offensive language to public and colleagues/inappropriate behaviour towards the public
- Breach of equal opportunity policy
- Violation of rules
- Theft of money or property
- Consistent failure to follow established Group Hug procedures

Group Hug may summarily terminate the Volunteer agreement without prior notice where the Volunteer or System and Group Level Management has committed an act of serious misconduct.

An act of serious Misconduct will be deemed where the Volunteer or System and Group Level Management:

- commits a substantial breach of any of their obligations under the Volunteer agreement
- breaches any of the regulations in respect of their professional duties under current legislation, including but not exclusive to breaching any Code of Practice
- is guilty of any conduct which brings Group Hug into disrepute
- is convicted of any criminal offence (other than road traffic)
- commits theft, fraud or deliberate falsification of records
- assaults or fights with another person
- deliberately damages company property
- is under the influence of illegal drugs whilst volunteering



- through serious negligence causes unacceptable loss, damage or injury
- carries out a serious act of insubordination
- deliberately or maliciously breaches Group Hug's Equal Opportunity Policy.
- conducts themselves in any way that is defamatory; offensive or obscene; untrue or malicious or in breach of copyright
- uses any methodology for purposes of intimidation or harassment
- deliberately or maliciously breaches Group Hug's Social Media Policy

This list is not exhaustive and whether a particular act or omission is serious misconduct, or general misconduct will depend on the circumstances.

4. THE PROCEDURE

All formal Volunteer Conduct and Concerns action for Volunteers, Group Level and System Level Management will be taken by the System Level Management and HR. A System Level Management Team member or HR will conduct the investigation where appropriate.

The hearing will be conducted by a System Level Management Team member. A System Level Management Team member may involve other knowledgeable management, HR or other volunteers to assist in the investigation on a strictly confidential basis.

In the event of Volunteer Conduct and Concerns action being taken against a System Level Management Team member the investigation and formal hearing shall be undertaken by another System Level Management Team member. A System Level Management Team member may involve other knowledgeable employees assist in the investigation on a strictly confidential basis.

A System Level Management Team member must submit any proposal to terminate the volunteer agreement to another member of the System Level Management Team or HR.

A verbal concerns update will be given for minor offences and is not part of the formal Volunteer Conduct and Concerns procedure. The details of the discussions should be recorded in the volunteers' file. Should this verbal concern update have no effect, the following stages will apply.

5. INVESTIGATION

No Volunteer Conduct and Concerns action will be taken without a thorough investigation of the circumstances, normally conducted by a member of the System Level Management Team or HR.

The purpose of the investigation is to:



- establish the facts
- where necessary speak to witnesses/third parties

A record of the investigation should be kept.

The results of the investigation should be made known to the volunteer or member of the management team involved so that he/she can respond.

The investigation should be done in a timely manner.

The member of the System Level Management Team or HR must then decide:

- if no further action is required
- if counselling or coaching is appropriate
- to proceed to a formal Volunteer Conduct and Concerns hearing which may result in the termination of their volunteers' agreement with Group Hug.

The volunteer involved is informed in writing of the result of the investigation and where Volunteer Conduct and Concerns action is being taken, the nature of the offence.

5.1 Stage 1 – Verbal Concerns Update

If a volunteer's conduct or volunteering performance does not meet acceptable standards, they will normally take part in a Verbal Concerns Update meeting. The employee will be advised:

- of the reason for the verbal concerns update
- of the reason for the decision i.e., nature of the area of concern
- of the improvement required and timescale
- of the right to appeal
- of how long the verbal concerns update will remain open.

A brief note of the verbal concerns update will be kept on the Volunteer's file and will last for 6 months.

It may be necessary to put in place some specific measures or monitoring during the 6-month period to ensure the volunteer is aware of his/her status.

5.2 Stage 2 – Further Concerns and Issues of Volunteer Monitoring

If the required standard of the volunteer shows no improvement, is not met, or a more serious offence is committed, a Further Concerns Meeting will take place. The Volunteer will be advised:

- of the reason for and level of the issue or concern
- of the reason for the discussion i.e., nature of the issue or concern
- of the improvement required and timescale
- of additional training, retraining or coaching which can be offered if applicable
- of the right to appeal
- of further monitoring, dates and expiry of monitoring

A copy of the meeting and subsequent notes will be kept on the volunteers file but will be disregarded for Volunteers Conduct and Concerns purposes after 12 months subject to the required standard being met.

5.3 Stage 3 – Termination of Volunteers Agreement

If the required standard is still not met or for a single act of Serious misconduct termination of the voluntary agreement will result. Group Hug System Level Management can only sanction this. The volunteer will be provided with:

- the reason for and level of the issue
- the reason for the decision i.e., nature of the offence
- the right to appeal

6. SERIOUS MISCONDUCT:

The following are further examples of serious misconduct – the list is not exhaustive.

- Theft
- Fraud
- Assault
- Being under the influence of drink or drugs
- Negligence that causes damage or injury
- Acts of discrimination or harassment
- Bringing the reputation of Group Hug into disrepute
- Gross insubordination
- Disclosure of confidential information

7. APPEAL PROCESS:

A Volunteer may appeal against any Volunteer Conduct and Concerns action made against him or her. This should be:

- done within 5 working days following the Volunteer Conduct and Concerns decision
- outlined in writing, the reason for the appeal, to another member of the Group Hug System Level Management Team who will carry out the appeal with one other member

The purpose of the appeal hearing is to give the volunteer an opportunity to appeal against a Volunteer Conduct and Concerns action, not to re-hear the entire case. This can be done at any stage of the Volunteer Conduct and Concerns procedure. Grounds for appeal may include:



GROUP HUG

A social concept, powered by volunteers, here to free your mind

- not considering extenuating circumstances
- new evidence
- inconsistent, or too harsh a penalty

The appeal will be heard by another member of the Group Hug System Level Management Team and one other member. They will consider all previous and any new evidence. A decision will then be made, and the reasons given to the volunteer.

The decision is final and may include:

- agreement of the original decision
- overturn of the original decision
- reinstatement

8. 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.