

Volunteer Raising Concerns and Complaints Policy

While we hope that all of our volunteers will be happy in their roles, we know that sometimes problems can arise. Volunteers like employees may not always be happy whilst volunteering with us and we welcome comments on how volunteering with us can be improved. And equally, should there be an issue with a volunteer their supervisor or colleague can follow this process too.

Unresolved problems can lead to bad feelings and affect relationships and performance. Therefore we try to deal with situations as quickly as possible. And all complaints will be looked into and considered carefully.

Why do we have a raising concerns and complaints process?

Complaint processes may sound rather formal but they're intended to promote fairness and ensure that as far as possible volunteers have the same rights as paid staff.

We hope that most difficulties can be settled informally through talking openly with someone. Good supervision, support and monitoring processes all help to address issues at the earliest possible stage. If this doesn't work or isn't possible then we have a more formal process to help us deal with things in a fair and open way.

How can a volunteer complain or raise a concern?

If you have a complaint about your own personal circumstances, for example, bullying, harassment, discrimination, in the first instance, try and talk about the issue informally, as soon as possible, with your Supervisor, your Shop Manager or the Retail Area Manager if the problem involves the Shop Manager. They'll take the problem seriously and make sure that everything is done to try and resolve it. It is hoped that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this stage.

Formal process

If the volunteer feels that the matter hasn't been resolved through informal discussions, they can put the complaint in writing to the Manager of the Supervisor or the Retail Area Manager for our shops. They'll investigate the situation and talk to the volunteer and anyone else they feel they need to clarify any issues raised. They'll also let the Volunteer Development Manager know.

As soon as we've completed the investigation we'll write to the volunteer to let them know the outcome. We aim to do this within 10 working days but we'll let you know if it's going to take longer than this. There will be reference made to the right of appeal in this letter.

If the volunteer is satisfied with the outcome, they may continue in their role or they may ask to be moved to another shop/voluntary role within Tenovus Cancer Care if appropriate.

Appeal

If the volunteer feels the issue still hasn't been resolved satisfactorily, they should raise the matter, in writing, with the Director of People and Development / Head of Retail. They'll invite the volunteer to a meeting where they can discuss the matter and how we can try to resolve the situation.

Following the meeting, we'll write to you within 10 working days with our outcome. On some occasions it may take a bit longer. In this case, the 10 working days limit above, may need to be extended.

Raising serious concerns

If you are concerned about any form of malpractice such as a criminal offence, fraud, someone's health and safety is in danger, the charity is breaking the law, you can contact the Volunteer Development Team.

Email volunteer@tenovuscancercare.org.uk

Telephone 029 20768323

By knowing about malpractice at an early stage, the Charity stands a good chance of taking the necessary steps to safeguard the interests of all staff and protect the Charity.

This procedure is not for normal complaints. If you have a complaint about your own personal circumstances (for example bullying, harassment, discrimination) then you should use the complaints procedure above.

After you have raised your concern the charity will decide how to respond in a responsible and appropriate manner. Usually this will involve making internal enquiries first, but it may be necessary to carry out an investigation at a later stage which may be formal or informal depending on the nature of the concern raised. As far as possible, the charity will keep you informed of the decisions taken and the outcome of any enquiries and investigations carried out. However, the charity will not be able to inform you of any matters which would infringe the duty of confidentiality owed to others.

The charity would expect that in almost all cases raising concerns internally would be the most appropriate action for you to take. However, if for whatever reason, you feel you cannot raise your concerns internally and you honestly and reasonably believe the information and any allegations are true, you could consider raising the matter with the charity commission.

How can we resolve a problem with a volunteer?

We value the contribution made by our volunteers and don't expect there to be any problems. However, if an issue does arise, we need a process to deal with these problems in a fair and consistent way. This makes sure that all our volunteers achieve and maintain satisfactory standards of conduct and performance, and gives people the opportunity to improve and learn.

We recognise that it can be difficult to raise an issue with a volunteer, but it is better for all concerned to raise concerns and issues than to let them worsen. The Volunteer Development Manager can offer support throughout this process.

We'll work together to solve any problems that can arise. This process helps us work closely with the volunteer if problems arise.

Informal process

Most problems should be addressed this way. Where there are minor problems with performance or conduct (e.g. poor timekeeping, unreliability, mistakes with tasks etc.) the Supervisor/Shop Manager should talk honestly with the volunteer to see how they can help and deal with the issue. It could be that the volunteer isn't enjoying what they're doing or don't understand what they need to do.

The Supervisor/Shop Manager should inform the volunteer of what is expected, set clear goals and explain what actions will be taken if things don't improve. Where the issue is related to the volunteer's ability to undertake the role, the Supervisor/Shop Manager will address this during day-to-day supervision and monitoring.

If there's no improvement, the Supervisor/Shop Manager can hold an informal meeting with the volunteer and a Tenovus Cancer Care representative. The volunteer can have someone with them at the meeting to support them if they would like. This should be explained to the volunteer before the meeting takes place. At this meeting the Supervisor/Shop Manager can:

- offer reasonable changes to the role to enable the volunteer to carry it out
- offer a change of role, where appropriate and available, including moving the volunteer to another shop
- put a plan in place to address problems with a specific time frame. The Shop Manager will evaluate whether problems are addressed and carry out a review at the end of the period
- follow the formal process if necessary

Formal process

Where more serious problems of performance or conduct are alleged, or there's no improvement with a volunteer's conduct or performance, we'll arrange a meeting to talk through the issues. This may be with the Supervisor/Shop Manager or Line Manager/ Retail Area Manager depending on the situation. We'll let you know what the concerns are before the meeting and give the volunteer the opportunity to explain things from their point of view. We'll also give you the opportunity to have someone with you to support you if you would like.

We'll agree an appropriate course of action and confirm this in writing to the volunteer, within ten working days of the meeting. Some of the actions below, although not limited, can be followed:

- Issue a formal warning (in writing) advising the volunteer of future expectations, a specified review period if appropriate and an indication that the placement will be terminated if expectations are not met
- Offer a change in role and location of volunteering if appropriate
- Terminate the placement with immediate effect and to confirm this in writing to the volunteer.

Serious concerns

If a very serious problem is alleged, Tenovus Cancer Care may suspend the volunteer from their role immediately whilst an investigation is carried out following the formal process above. If we feel it's appropriate and significantly serious then we reserve the right to end the volunteer placement with immediate effect. The Volunteer Development Manager will have the final decision in regard to this.

Right to appeal

The volunteer may appeal against any formal action taken. They should put the grounds of appeal in writing to the Volunteer Development Manager within one week of receiving notification in writing of the penalty.

The Volunteer Development Manager will identify the best person to consider the appeal and issue their decision in writing. This decision will be final.

At all stages and in all discussions a volunteer can have someone with them to support them if they'd like. If you need any clarification on this procedure, please ask to speak with the Volunteer Development Manager.

Examples of problems that may arise

Outlined below are examples of the type of behaviour and actions that Tenovus Cancer Care feel are general, serious and very serious problems.

While it's not possible to write all the problems where action may be necessary, the examples listed below give some guidance. The list is neither comprehensive nor exclusive. We reserve the right to determine which breaches fall into which category.

General problems

- Poor timekeeping and unreliability
- Failure to carry out reasonable instructions
- Poor performance and the unwillingness of a volunteer to carry out the role effectively
- Wilful or negligent disruption of other staff or volunteers
- Uncooperative attitude or rudeness to supervisor, colleagues, volunteers, staff, clients or customers
- Any breach of our Volunteer Agreement and Standard for volunteers

Serious problems

- Aggravated offences listed under general problems
- Action(s) of a nature that verges on very serious problems

Very serious problems

- Acts of dishonesty
- Acts of violence
- Serious acts of discrimination or harassment
- Serious misuse of facilities, equipment or time
- Verbal abuse or extreme rudeness/discourtesy towards managers or other colleagues, clients, volunteers or customers
- Being in an intoxicated and offensive or intoxicated and incapable condition whilst carrying out their volunteer role, unless caused by drugs prescribed by a medical practitioner and properly administered
- Serious breaches of our Volunteer Agreement for volunteers
- Serious breaches of confidentiality relating to Tenovus Cancer Care, its employees, volunteers, Board Members or clients

- Smoking when representing Tenovus Cancer Care
- Acts of indecency in relation to volunteering work, Tenovus Cancer Care events, clients, colleagues, volunteers, contacts or customers.

Please note that these lists are by no means exhaustive.