



# ELHAP Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure

## Introduction

A problem solving policy may sound unnecessary for people who are volunteers and not employees of an organisation. However, as volunteers do not have employment rights and do not have the legal recourses open to employees, we consider it important that there are guidelines to ensure that volunteers are treated fairly and consistently.

The problem solving policy may be applied for the following issues:

- Capability: a volunteer's ability to undertake the role
- Performance: how well a volunteer is performing the role
- Conduct: behavior, attitude or approach when taking part in volunteering.
- When a volunteer feels that they have not been treated fairly
- Where a volunteer feels they have cause for complaint.

## Definition

For the purposes of this procedure, a problem is considered to be when the general standards of behavior that are expected from both staff and volunteers are not adhered to.

## General Principles

- a) This procedure applies to all volunteers.
- b) Volunteer placements at ELHAP are offered on an individual basis, nobody is entitled or obligated to volunteer at Elhap. Voluntary placements are offered on a termly basis and determined by the needs of the charity and the matching process.
- c) Any steps under this procedure should be taken promptly unless there is a good reason for delay and any delays will be communicated to all parties. The time limits in this procedure may be extended if it is reasonable to do so.
- d) All problems or concerns will be treated seriously and volunteers will be able to voice their concerns and air their views.
- e) We may vary this procedure as appropriate to a particular case. The procedure may also be discontinued if it becomes impracticable for either party to continue with it.

- f) If you have difficulty at any stage of this procedure because of a disability, you should ask for assistance. We will make reasonable adjustments for a person who is disabled.
- g) It is important for all parties that information and proceedings relating to a problem remain confidential as far as possible.
- h) In all cases, the ELHAP Director must be consulted and kept informed of developments by senior staff and volunteers raising a problem.

### **Problem solving procedure**

We will do our utmost to ensure that all problems are resolved as quickly as possible. Problems will be dealt with seriously, and volunteers will not be treated differently or unfairly as a result of raising an issue under this procedure.

Advice can be sought by volunteers at any time from a senior staff member unconnected to the problem.

Anonymous complaints will not be considered. Issues raised that are found to be intentionally malicious will result in the complainant being asked to stop volunteering.

The process is as follows:

#### ***Informal discussion***

In the first instance, a volunteer should take their concern to the ELHAP Project Manager or Team Leader informally. We will endeavour to resolve problems at this stage.

#### ***Formal written complaint***

If the problem could not be resolved informally to the volunteers' satisfaction, the volunteer should put their problem in writing to the ELHAP Project Manager or Senior Team Leader. The ELHAP Project Coordinator/Senior Team Leader will investigate and inform all parties concerned of their recommendations within one calendar month.

#### ***Director's Review***

If the volunteer is unsatisfied or the matter is unresolved then the ELHAP Director will review the case and their decision will be final.

We recognise that there may be situations where the volunteer feels unable to raise a matter directly with senior staff. In these situations, the volunteer can submit the problem in writing directly to the ELHAP Director or the ELHAP Board of Trustees who will investigate and make a final decision.

### **Concerns about a volunteer's conduct or performance**

Another volunteer, a service user, a staff member or a member of the public may raise concerns about the work of a volunteer. Anonymous complaints are not considered.

If there are concerns about a volunteer's behaviour, attitude or performance, the matter will be discussed informally by the ELHAP Project Manager or Team Leader. This discussion is intended to establish facts so that the senior staff can decide whether further action is necessary.

If the evidence shows that the volunteer's behaviour, attitude or performance does not meet the standards expected, steps will be taken to address this. Each case will be considered individually but steps may include additional training and mentoring, exploring other more suitable opportunities within the charity

and in some cases volunteers may be asked to stop volunteering at Elhap and be de-registered.

If the volunteer is dissatisfied with this process he or she may use the appeals procedure below.

### **Serious Misconduct**

If there is concern that a volunteer may have behaved in such a way that constitutes serious misconduct the ELHAP Project Manager or Senior Team Leader will immediately investigate the matter and discuss this with the volunteer. Any decisions or actions will be documented and a copy given to the volunteer.

It may be appropriate to ask the volunteer to stop volunteering until the investigation is complete and this decision will be made in collaboration with the ELHAP Director. Any decision will be conveyed in writing within 14 days.

If it transpires that a volunteer has behaved in such a way that threatens the organisation's work or reputation; is unable to adequately fulfil the expectations and duties of a volunteer; threatens people connected with the organisation or members of the public, or undermines the organisation's necessary relationship of trust with a volunteer then the volunteer placement will end with immediate effect.

If the volunteer is dissatisfied with this process they may use the appeals procedure.

### **Volunteer Appeals Procedure**

Volunteers may appeal against any decision to end their involvement as volunteers in the Charity's work.

A volunteer who wishes to appeal should notify the ELHAP Director or ELHAP Board of Trustees in writing within 10 working days of the date of the letter informing them of the decision. The volunteer's appeal letter must specify the issues which the volunteer wishes to appeal or contest.

The ELHAP Director or ELHAP Board of Trustees will consider the appeal and may consult further on the issue. The ELHAP Director or ELHAP Board of Trustees may request a meeting or telephone call with the volunteer. The volunteer may be accompanied by a fellow volunteer or a colleague employed by Elhap during the meeting. Volunteers will be provided with copies of the notes of the meeting.

The decision will be sent in writing to the volunteer and this decision will be final.

### **Further Information**

Please contact the Volunteer Project admin team at:

Tel: 020 8550 2636

Email: [volunteer@elhap.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@elhap.org.uk)