



# 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: behaviour when taking part in volunteering.
- When a volunteer feels that they have not been treated fairly and consistently
- Where a perceived wrong causes a volunteer to feel resentment and therefore considers they have cause for a complaint which has not been dealt with

## 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

This procedure applies to all volunteers.

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.

All problems or concerns will be treated seriously and volunteers will be given a fair hearing.

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.

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.

It is important for all parties that information and proceedings relating to a problem will remain confidential as far as possible.

In all cases, the ELHAP Manager 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 should have no fear of victimisation as a result of raising an issue under this procedure.

Advice can be sought by volunteers at any time, through an unconnected senior staff member.

If a volunteer who raises an issue feels that they are being victimised as a result of their complaint, they may raise this as a separate issue to the ELHAP Board of Trustees.

Anonymous complaints will not be considered. Issues raised that are found to be intentionally malicious may 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 Coordinator or Team Leader informally. We will endeavour to resolve problems at this stage.

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

If the problem could not be resolved informally, the volunteer should put their problem in writing to their ELHAP Project Coordinator. The ELHAP Project Coordinator will investigate and inform all parties concerned of their recommendations within one calendar month.

#### ***Manager's review***

If the volunteer is unsatisfied or the matter is unresolved then the ELHAP Manager 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 will submit the problem in writing directly to the ELHAP Manager 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 or performance, the matter will be discussed informally

by the ELHAP Project Coordinator 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 or performance does not meet the standards expected, the staff contact and volunteer will agree steps to address this. These may include additional training or mentoring. Notes will be made of any discussion, and volunteers will be provided with copies of the notes. A date will be set within six months when the volunteer's performance will be reviewed.

If the performance has not reached the required standard by the date of the review meeting, the ELHAP Project Coordinator will consider whether further training, support and supervision should be provided. Alternatively, the volunteer may be invited to explore other volunteering opportunities within the Charity or be asked to stop volunteering.

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

### **Serious Misconduct**

If there is concern that a volunteer may have behaved in such a way that constitutes serious misconduct the ELHAP Project Coordinator will immediately investigate the matter and will 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 by the staff contact in collaboration with the ELHAP Manager. 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; threatens people connected with the organisation or members of the public, or destroys the organisation's necessary relationship of trust with a volunteer then the volunteer will be asked to stop volunteering with immediate effect. A written report will be kept on the volunteer's file and a copy will be passed to the volunteer.

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 Manager 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 Manager or ELHAP Board of Trustees will consider the appeal and may consult further on the issue. The ELHAP Manager or ELHAP Board of Trustees may request a meeting or telephone call with the volunteer as soon as is reasonably practicable. The volunteer will be given at least five working days notice, and may be accompanied by a fellow volunteer or a colleague employed by the Charity during the meeting and will be provided with copies of the notes of the meeting or telephone call.

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)