

Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure

1. Introduction

We value your willingness to volunteer with us and we do not expect there to be any problems. However, in case problems arise, we need a procedure to deal with these problems in a fair and consistent way. To ensure that this aim is fulfilled, Freedom Social Projects (FSP) has adopted a problem solving procedure. This procedure is designed to help and encourage all our volunteers achieve and maintain satisfactory standards of conduct and performance, and to provide the opportunity for improvement where necessary.

We have a collaborative approach to problem solving. This procedure helps us work with closely with you if problems arise.

The following procedures will apply to allegations of unsatisfactory performance or conduct that may arise after the trial period and confirmation of your volunteering placement. Please note that problems with performance, conduct or commitment during your trial period or any extension of the trial period will not be dealt with under this procedure but in accordance with Section 7.2 of the Volunteering Policy.

2. Informal procedure

Where minor problems of performance or conduct are alleged (e.g. poor timekeeping/unreliability, minor mistakes in the tasks being undertaken etc.), your supervisor should hold an informal discussion with you to discuss this and decide on an appropriate course of action. Your supervisor should inform you of future expectations, set clear goals and tell them about future action that will be taken if expectations are not met.

Where the issue is related to your ability to undertake the role, your supervisor will address this during supervision and support sessions. Appropriate expectations and goals will be set. Where there is no improvement, your supervisor will hold an informal three-way meeting with you and the Project Manager. The following courses of action will then be available:

- Reasonable changes to your role to enable you to carry it out;
- Change of your placement, where appropriate and available;
- Developing a time-bound plan to address problems. Your supervisor will evaluate whether problems are addressed and carry out a review at the end of the time-bound period; and
- Following the formal procedures listed in section 3 below.

3. Formal procedure

Where more serious problems of performance or conduct are alleged, or there is no improvement in relation to any earlier issues dealt with informally, the following procedure will be followed:

3.1. Investigation

Your supervisor or another suitably appointed person will investigate the matter and prepare a report for the Project Manager (or a senior manager).

3.2. Review meeting

The Project Manager / Senior Manager will hold a review meeting with you and your supervisor. You will be advised in advance of the allegations against you and given time to answer the allegations. You may, if you wish, be accompanied to the meeting by a colleague.

3.3. Action

If, following the review meeting, the Project Manager / Senior Manager finds the allegations to be upheld then they will decide an appropriate course of action depending on the seriousness of the performance problems or misconduct. The following courses of action will be available, although they do not preclude other/alternative action:

- To issue a formal warning (to be confirmed in writing) advising you of future expectations, a specified review period if appropriate and an indication that the placement will be terminated if expectations are not met; and
- To terminate the placement with immediate effect and to confirm this in writing to you.

3.4. Very serious problems:

If a very serious problem is alleged, Freedom Social Projects (FSP) may suspend you from the premises immediately while the case is being investigated. Where the Project Manager / Senior Manager considers the allegation to be upheld, your placement will be ended with immediate effect. Examples of the actions, which FSP considers to be very serious problems, are set out in Appendix 1 of this document. This list is neither comprehensive nor exclusive.

4. Appeals

You may appeal against formal action taken under this Procedure. If you wish to do so, you should put the grounds of appeal in writing to the Project Manager within one week of receiving notification in writing of the penalty.

The Project Manager will identify a senior manager (other than the one who took the original decision) to consider the appeal and issue his/her decision in writing. The senior manager's decision will be final.

Appendix 1

Examples of action that FSP classifies as general, serious and very serious problems:

Types of problems

While it is not possible to set down all the specific problems where action may be necessary, the examples listed below give some guidance. The list is neither comprehensive nor exclusive. FSP reserves the right to determine which breaches fall into which category.

General problems:

- (a) Poor timekeeping and unreliability;
- (b) Failure to carry out reasonable instructions;
- (c) Work below an acceptable standard where poor performance is considered to be attributed to a wilful disinclination of the volunteer to carry out the role effectively;
- (d) Wilful or negligent disruption of the work of other staff or volunteers;
- (e) Uncooperative/subordinate attitude or rudeness to managers, colleagues, volunteers or clients;
- (f) Any breach of FSP's Code of Conduct (see the Volunteer Induction Manual) where the breach is not considered serious or gross.

Serious problems:

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

Very serious problems:

This list is neither comprehensive nor exclusive.

- (a) Acts of dishonesty;
- (b) Acts of violence;
- (c) Serious acts of discrimination or harassment;
- (d) Serious misuse of facilities, equipment or time;
- (e) Verbal abuse or extreme rudeness/discourtesy towards managers or other colleagues, clients or working contacts.
- (f) Being in an intoxicated and offensive or intoxicated and incapable condition whilst carrying out work for FSP, unless caused by drugs prescribed by a medical practitioner and properly administered.
- (g) Serious breaches of FSP's Code of Conduct.
- (h) Serious breaches of confidentiality relating to FSP, its employees, Board Members or clients.
- (I) Acts of indecency in relation to volunteering work, work-related events, clients, colleagues or working contacts.