



volunteer ireland

obair dheonach éireann

Complaints Policy and Procedures

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1. Policy

Policy Statement

Volunteer Ireland (VI) is committed to providing a high-quality service to volunteers, Volunteer-Involving Organisations (VIOs), affiliates and other individuals and bodies interested in our work. We recognise that, from time to time, we may make mistakes, and that people may feel the service they have received from us, or tried to receive from us, is unsatisfactory. The following applies, we will:

1. Facilitate and process a complaint that is relevant to the services we provide or the staff/volunteers who support those services.
2. Deal with a complaint in a fair, transparent, and timely manner and seek a resolution at first point of contact when possible.
3. Accept a complaint through a third party on behalf of a complainant provided they have consent to do so.
4. Take each complaint seriously, treat them equally, with sensitivity and in confidence.
5. Investigate complaints relating to I-Vol where it has not been addressed satisfactorily by the Volunteer Centre (VC).
6. Provide advice to individuals and organisations on best practice to mitigate and address complaints they have with a third party where it is related to volunteering.
7. Not manage a complaint about a VC.
8. Not respond to abusive or anonymous complaints.
9. Respond to each complaint in writing (electronic or paper) and document and record all aspects of the complaint.

Purpose

To set our code of practice for dealing with complaints and to ensure that they are dealt with and managed fairly, efficiently, and effectively.

Scope

Applies to all staff receiving or managing complaints made to or about us. It also applies to volunteers, current or past (including event volunteers), VIOs, VCs, or any other individuals or bodies, who have engaged with us, who wish to make a complaint.

Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures are implemented efficiently and effectively.

All other staff and volunteers (including volunteer Board members are expected to facilitate this process.

2. General Information

2.1 Responding

Every complaint requires a response

3. Procedures

3.1 Facilitating & Managing Complaints

Purpose

To ensure that all complaints are dealt with in a fair, transparent, effective, and sufficient manner.

Responsibility

Board, CEO, All Staff, Volunteers (including event volunteers)

Procedure

2.1.1 Facilitating a Complaint

1. Complaints can be made by an individual or an organisation to any Board member, volunteer (including event volunteers) or member of staff, at any time in-person, by phone or in writing.
2. A formal complaint may be made by a third party on behalf of an individual. If this happens the following applies:
 - a) Inform the individual that they must provide proof that the complainant has given their consent for them to act on their behalf.
 - b) Provide them with the complaints form, which will afford the opportunity for the complainant to sign to confirm their consent.

2.1.2 Managing a Complaint

Should we receive a complaint that is relevant to our work or representatives, the following applies:

Stage 1 – Informal Early Frontline Resolution

1. Once a complaint is received:
 - a) Discuss the complaint with the complainant and attempt to agree a way forward or a solution that suits both parties.
 - b) Aim to resolve the complaint immediately, where possible.
2. If resolved:
 - a) Record the details on the complaint's resolution form and file
3. If unresolved, inform the complainant:
 - a) That they can make a formal complaint
 - b) That it must be submitted in writing to the CEO, or if in relation to the CEO the chairperson of the Board, using the complaints form, within 5 working days.
 - c) Where than can get the complaints form.
4. Document the details on the complaints, resolution form.
 - a) Inform senior management of the complaint.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If a formal complaint is received, the following applies:

1. It should be referred to the CEO or the chairperson of the Board if it is relevant to the CEO.
2. An independent person or persons will be appointed to process the complaint.
3. The complainant must be contacted within 5 working days to acknowledge receipt of the complaint and outline the course of action to be taken.
 - Inform the complainant of the name of the person(s) dealing with the complaint.
4. The representative(s) will undertake an investigation of the complaint.
 - Contact the complainant to confirm the details of their complaint and what outcome they are hoping for.
 - This process must be completed within 30 days of receipt of the complaint.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where the investigation takes greater than 30 days, the complainant must be notified. <p>5. When the investigation is complete the complainant will be notified in writing of the outcome electronically or using the complaints resolution form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform the complainant that if they are not satisfied with the outcome, they appeal the decision to the Board in writing within 10 working days. - A representative(s) of the board will be appointed to carry out the review who will report the outcome to the Board. - The decision of the Board will be final.
Records
Complaints Form, Complaints Resolution Form, Records of Meetings, Emails, Phone Calls

3.2 Complaint about a VIO or Volunteer
Purpose
To ensure that a complainant is provided with accurate information about how to deal with their issue.
Responsibility
Training & Programmes Manager (TPM), Communications & Advocacy Manager (CAM), all staff, volunteers (including event volunteers),
Procedure
<p>If a complaint about a volunteer or volunteer involving organisation is received, the following applies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refer the complainant to the CAM or TPM 2. If neither are available, take the individual's details and pass the message to the CAM and/or the TPM. 3. The CAM or TPM advise the individual of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) There is no legislation governing volunteers or volunteering. b) VI can only offer advice on best practice. 4. If they request advice, advise them of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They should check the volunteer policy and/or the volunteer agreement for internal protocol regarding complaints. - If neither exist, refer to the organisations complaints policy. - Record all communications regarding the complaint in writing. - If their complaint is not solved satisfactorily, check if there are grounds for appeal. - If they have exhausted all options with no resolution, consider leaving the role/disengaging the volunteer. 5. The CAM/TPM should record details of the interaction on the complaints log.
Records
Complaints Log, Emails, Phone Calls

3.3 Complaint about a VC

Purpose

To ensure that a complainant is provided with accurate information about how to deal with their issue.

Responsibility

Operations & Development Manager (ODM), Administration & Communications Officer (ACO), all staff, volunteers (including event volunteers)

Procedure

If an individual wishes to make a complaint about a VC or a VIS, the following applies:

1. Refer the complainant to the ODM or the ACO
2. If neither are available, take the individual's details and pass the message to the ODM and/or the ACO.
3. The ODM or ACO advise the individual of the following:
 - a) That VCs are independent entities with their own Board/Steering Committee and that VI has no control or input into these types of complaints.
 - b) That the complaint should be directed to the manager/coordinator of the VC
 - c) If the complaint is about the manager/coordinator, the complaint should be directed to the Board/Steering Committee or supervising authority.
4. The ODM/ACO should record details of the interaction on the complaints log.

Records

Complaints Log, Emails, Phone Calls

3.4 Complaint about a Role on I-Vol

Purpose

To ensure that all roles on I-Vol meet the terms and conditions.

Responsibility

TPM, ODM, all staff

Procedure

If an individual or organisation wishes to make a complaint about a role on I-VOL, the following applies:

1. Refer the complainant to the ODM or the TPM.
2. If neither are available, take the individual's details and pass the message to the ODM and/or the TPM.
3. The ODM or TPM advise the individual of the following:
 - a. To direct the complaint to the VC responsible for the role.
 - b. If their complaint isn't resolved satisfactorily, they can contact VI again.
4. If the complainant reverts back, the ODM and/or the TPM will inform the VC that we will be reviewing the role to ensure it meets the terms and conditions of I-Vol.
5. This review will result in one of the following outcomes:
 - a. If it is determined that the role meets the terms and conditions of I-VOL, contact the individual/organisation, and explain this using our template statement.
 - b. If it is determined that the role does not meet the terms and conditions of I-VOL, we will remove the role as owners of I-VOL.

6. The ODM/TPM will contact the VC to inform them of the decision and subsequent actions.
7. The ODM/TPM should record details of the complaint on the complaints log.

Records

Complaints Form, Complaints Resolution Form, Records of Meetings, Emails, Phone Calls, Complaints Log

4. Monitoring and Review

- The ODM will monitor the management of complaints and provide a report to the CEO at the next scheduled meeting or sooner if required.
- The CEO will report any issues to the Board at the next meeting or sooner if required.
- The policy will be reviewed every three years, sooner if required by the ODM & Governance Sub-Committee
- The policy will then be presented to the Board for final review and Ratification

Records

Record of Meetings, Document Control Matrix