

# Resolving Problems

This policy is aimed at;

- Volunteers for Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust
- Staff and Trustees for Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust

The purpose of this policy is to;

- a) Ensure that volunteers and staff of the charity have a formal means of expressing any dissatisfaction, in confidence, to the management.
- b) Ensure that complaints / issues of poor performance will be investigated quickly, fairly and in confidence.

We, as a charity, are committed to providing reliable and trustworthy information and support to anyone affected by cervical cancer and cell changes (abnormalities). Alongside this, we strive to ensure that our volunteers gain a positive experience through the valuable contribution they make to our work.

We recognise that, from time to time, there may be cause to address concerns from both the charity perspective as well from the volunteer. This policy seeks to address this and outline the process that should be followed by both the charity and the volunteer.

Problems may arise in a number of ways. A volunteer may make a complaint about another volunteer, a member of staff or the organisation itself. In this instance please also refer to our Complaints Policy which can be found in the Volunteer Manual/Handbook. A volunteer's performance may have declined, or someone may have made a complaint about the volunteer's activities, attitude or conduct.

Having a policy in place can make the process much easier to manage for all those involved. It ensures consistency, provides a means of identifying a solution and demonstrates the organisation's commitment to volunteering good practice. It will also demonstrate the steps that have been taken in the event that a relationship with a volunteer has to be ended.

## **Volunteer Rights**

Unlike employees, volunteers do not have rights in law. They are of course protected by the law in general, but they do not have employment rights specifically as a volunteer.

This means that no organisation has an obligation to offer a volunteer a role or to keep them in a role, however long they have been volunteering with them for. It also means that a volunteer has no obligation to an organisation. They can stop volunteering whenever they like, and do not have to volunteer when they do not want to.

## **What to do if you need to make a complaint**

Please refer to our formal **Complaints Policy** which can be found in your volunteer manual and also on our website. You can also request a hard copy from a member of staff should you need this.

## **What happens if someone complains about you or if there are performance issues**

### *Stage 1 | Oral discussion*

The first step should be an informal discussion about the complaint with the parties concerned and your designated volunteer contact. This is an opportunity for you to hear

about the complaint and offer your own perspective. It may also be an opportunity to identify some solutions, if required and appropriate.

Please note that complaints should not be made anonymously. Everyone should have the right to know what they have been accused of and by whom so that they are able to offer their version of events.

You should also be given the option to be accompanied to a meeting / telephone call by a nominated person of your choice.

#### *Stage 2 | Written warning*

If the issue has not been or cannot be resolved by the oral discussion, you may be issued with a written warning outlining the reason for the complaint.

You will be given the opportunity to state your case formally to a responsible member of the charity. Again, you should be allowed to be accompanied to any meetings by a person of your choice.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, further objectives could be set or help offered. However, if the organisation decides to ask you to leave, you are given the opportunity to appeal.

#### *Stage 3 | Opportunity to appeal*

If you have been asked to leave you will be given the opportunity to appeal in writing to the Chief Executive or the Chair of Trustees.

You will again be given the option to be accompanied to any meetings / telephone calls by a person of your choice. The Chief Executive / Chair of Trustees will need to respond within an agreed time and their decision will usually be final.

#### **Exceptions**

- In some cases volunteers may need to be asked to stop volunteering immediately while the matter is explored. For example, if a volunteer is accused of harassment, theft or angry or violent behaviour
- The decision to ask a volunteer to stop volunteering will be confirmed with you in writing
- All complaints will be treated confidentially, and should only be discussed amongst those who are directly involved in trying to resolve the issue
- The charity will keep secure records of what happens and who is involved
- Meetings will take place in a confidential place
- You will be kept informed at every step of the procedure
- This procedure will not prevent you from using the charity's services, unless there is a valid reason why you cannot

If you're unsure as to what the Resolving Problems Procedure is, you should consult your designated volunteer contact.