

## Problem Solving Procedure for Volunteers

Whilst we hope that volunteering with CLAPA will be a positive experience for all our volunteers, we are aware that sometimes things can go wrong. As an organisation, CLAPA is committed to ensuring that staff, volunteers and beneficiaries alike are treated fairly and are not discriminated against.

This procedure will ensure consistency in our response to problems and resolving them, and will set out what should happen if a problem arises or if you have a complaint to make, or if someone makes a complaint against you.

Please note that any complaints will be treated confidentially, and will only be discussed amongst those who are directly involved in trying to resolve the issue. CLAPA will keep confidential records of what happens and who is involved at each stage. You are entitled to ask for copies of these records at any stage.

### **PART A - What to do if you need to make a complaint / raise a concern**

#### **Stage 1 | Informal Complaint**

Initial complaints, whether concerning a member of staff, the organisation or another volunteer, should first be discussed informally. Many issues can be resolved this way. Complaints should initially be raised with whoever is your main point of contact (a Regional Coordinator or Engagement Officer). If the complaint concerns this person, you should contact the Deputy Chief Executive (Deputy CEO): Claire Cunniffe – [claire.cunniffe@clapa.com](mailto:claire.cunniffe@clapa.com)

If you are not comfortable speaking to Claire, you should speak to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), David Stokes – [david.stokes@clapa.com](mailto:david.stokes@clapa.com).

In both cases please send an email advising that you are a volunteer, and that you would like to have an informal discussion about an issue. An informal meeting will then be arranged. Ideally this stage will result in mutually agreed actions to resolve the issue.

#### **Stage 2 | Formal Complaint**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, you should make a formal complaint in writing using the Volunteer Complaint Form, within 7 days following the informal discussion to the Deputy CEO. CLAPA is committed to acknowledging this complaint within 7 working days, and to investigating it and providing a response within 28 days. As part of this process, you will be offered an opportunity for a meeting with the Deputy CEO. You will have the option to bring someone with you.

#### **Stage 3 | Opportunity to Appeal**

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you have the right to appeal to the CEO. At this stage the evidence and processes followed will be reviewed. No further representations / evidence will be considered. A final decision will be made and communicated to you in writing within 28 days.

## **PART B - What will happen if someone complains about you, or an issue arises that concerns you. This may include concerns about your suitability for your particular volunteer role.**

### **Stage 1 | Informal discussion**

If someone makes a formal complaint about you, the first step will be an informal discussion about the complaint/issue. This is an opportunity for you to hear about the complaint/issue and offer your comment. It may also seek to identify some solutions, if required and appropriate. If you refuse this step, you may be asked to discontinue volunteering at this point. However, if you in turn feel that you have been unfairly treated you will have the opportunity to initiate a complaint as in PART A.

### **Stage 2 | Written Statement**

If the issue hasn't been or cannot be resolved at Stage 1, you may be issued with a written statement outlining the reason for the complaint / the concerns that have been raised, and offering you the opportunity to attend a formal meeting.

You will be given the opportunity to state your case formally to the Deputy CEO (as in Part A), and to be accompanied to any meetings by a person of your choice.

Depending on the nature of the complaint or the concerns, further objectives may be set or offered. However, if you are asked to discontinue volunteering, you will have the opportunity to appeal.

### **Stage 3 | Opportunity to Appeal**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you have the right to appeal to the CEO. The CEO will respond within 28 days, and their decision will be final. At this stage the evidence and processes followed will be reviewed. No further representations/evidence will be considered. A final decision will be made and communicated to you in writing.

### **Exceptions**

In some cases volunteers may be asked to stop volunteering immediately while the matter is explored. For example, if the volunteer is accused of harassment, theft, aggressive behaviour, ignoring a request from a supervising staff member or where CLAPA is notified that the volunteer is the subject of a safeguarding investigation. The decision to ask you to stop volunteering will be confirmed by CLAPA in writing.

In any case where the volunteer has been asked to discontinue their volunteering, and the volunteer feels they have been treated unfairly they have the right to initiate a complaint as in Part A of this procedure.