

**Grievance and Disciplinary Policy**

June 2011

This document should be read in conjunction with the Volunteering Policy, the Volunteer Agreement, the Equal Opportunities Policy and any other, more specific, codes of practice and guidance as appropriate.

**Complaints, Grievance and Disciplinary**

**Policy & Procedure for Volunteers, Staff and Service Users**

1. Introduction and Equal Opportunities Statement

This procedure provides volunteers and service users with a means by which to lodge a grievance or complaint if informal discussions have failed to resolve the issue(s) or where volunteers or service users do not believe that the matter can be dealt with informally.

SVB has a commitment to equality of opportunity. Under no circumstances shall any volunteer, service user or visitor be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, religion, language, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, age, marital status and/or any other grounds that are beyond personal control.

SVB will not tolerate discrimination or prejudice of any kind. We also resolve to create a positive and welcoming atmosphere for all our volunteers, members of staff, service users and visitors. We are committed to an equal opportunities policy that ensures that no volunteer, service user or visitor will be treated less favourably, except on grounds of competence.

2. Grievance / Complaints Procedure

If an individual has a grievance or complaint concerning any area of their volunteering or use of Student Volunteering Bangor services there is a formal means by which to resolve problem.

2.1 Reporting a Grievance or Complaint Verbally

Grievances or complaints should firstly be reported to the Project Leader who will then report the issue to the Student Volunteering Manager. Volunteers and service users can, if necessary report the issue directly to the Student Volunteering Manager if the issue concerns the Project Leader, if the Project Leader is unavailable or if it is otherwise inappropriate. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the issue, the Student Volunteering Manager may ask the volunteer or service users to put the complaint in writing.

* 1. Reporting a Grievance or Complaint in Writing

When reporting a grievance in writing, the volunteer or service user should include all details relevant to their complaint. They should mention names, dates and locations and a description of events that have occurred that have led to the complaint being made.

* 1. Responding to a Grievance or Complaint

The Student Volunteering Manager will review the complaint and will investigate the matter fully. The volunteer or service user should receive a response within one week of the initial complaint being submitted detailing what investigative action is to be taken.

The Student Volunteering Manager may wish to meet with the volunteer or service user and any other individual who may be reported to be involved in the issue. The Student Volunteering Manager will in most cases recruit the General Manager and / or members of the Sabbatical Team to assist with the investigations. A minimum of three individuals will be required to make a fair decision and shall therefore form a Grievance and Disciplinary Panel.

Once all the facts have been investigated, a decision will be made and appropriate action (if necessary) will be taken. In most cases, a decision will be made within 2 weeks of the initial complaint being submitted.

The Student Volunteering Manager may in some cases elect to suspend individuals from voluntary work while the matter is being investigated. Volunteers will be notified of this in writing.

2.4 Grievances Concerning an External Body or Individual

If a volunteer or service user wishes to make a complaint which concerns an individual or group from an external organisation for example, a partnership organisation, the Student Volunteering Manager will firstly gather as much information as possible from within Student Volunteering Bangor. They will then follow the procedure as set out in the partnership agreement with the external organisation. In most cases this will require a report being submitted to the highest relevant authority within the partner organisation.

The Student Volunteering Manager will then liaise with the organisation to reach a decision about how to address the issue. Depending on the seriousness of the issue, steps may be taken to suspend work with that organisation or individual until the issue has been resolved.

If an external organisation or individual wishes to make a complaint concerning a volunteer then they should follow the above reporting procedure but should contact the Student Volunteering Manager in the first instance instead of the Project Leader.

* 1. Grievances concerning the Student Volunteering Manager or other member of Students’ Union staff

The volunteer or Service User should follow the above policy however in these cases the role of Student Volunteering Manager will be carried out by the Students’ Union Director.

* 1. Grievances Concerning a Service User

From time to time, the actions of a Service User may cause unnecessary harm or upset to another service user. All incidents of this matter must be reported to the Student Volunteering Manager and the matter will be discussed. The Student Volunteering Manager will discuss the issue with the volunteers involved and will address the issue with the service user or in the case of a child, their parents. Service users will be given the opportunity to remain on the project subject to the offensive behaviour ceasing. The situation will then be monitored by the Project Leader and if it happens a subsequent time, the Student Volunteering Manager may ask the service user to leave the project.

SVB are under no obligation to provide services to any one member of the general public and may if necessary, decide to withdraw the offer of the service at any time.

3. Disciplinary Procedure for Volunteers

Depending on the decision made by the Grievance and Disciplinary panel, volunteers involved may need to receive disciplinary action.

Volunteers would be disciplined as follows and in this order

**Verbal Warning**

The volunteer will in most cases, in the first instance receive a verbal warning. They will receive written notification of this warning and a copy of the letter will be placed in their file. The record will remain in their file for one year from its issue or until the volunteer terminates their volunteering agreement

**First Written Warning**

If the issue remains or if a new issue arises, the volunteer will in most cases, or depending on the severity of the issue, receive a written warning. A copy of this written warning will be placed in their file. The record will remain in their file for one year from its issue or until the volunteer terminates their volunteering agreement

**Final Written Warning**

The volunteer will in most cases, in the third instance, or depending on the severity of the issue, receive a final written warning. A copy of this written warning will be placed in their file. The record will remain in their file for one year from its issue or until the volunteer terminates their volunteering agreement.

**Volunteering Work will be Terminated**

Finally, if a volunteer is disciplined for a fourth time, or the nature of the issue for which they are being disciplined is very serious, their volunteering agreement will be terminated and they will asked to leave their voluntary role

Depending on the severity or seriousness of the issue, the Grievance and Disciplinary panel may decide to move straight to the Written Warning, Final Written Warning or terminate the volunteering work.

4. Appealing against a Grievance / Complaint or Disciplinary Decision

* 1. Appealing Against a Grievance or Complaint Decision

If the volunteer or Service User disagrees with the decision made by the panel, they may appeal the decision. Any intention to appeal a decision must be made in writing within two weeks of notification of the decision. The volunteer or Service User should appeal in writing detailing their reasons for appealing the decision and include any new information they may have regarding their complaint. A new panel will then be formed and will meet within two weeks of the appeal and will make a decision based on the same evidence and reports used to make the first decision. The Volunteer or Service User will be notified as soon as a decision has been reached.

* 1. Appealing against a Disciplinary Decision for Volunteers

If the volunteer disagrees with the disciplinary decision made by the panel, they may appeal the decision. Any intention to appeal a decision must be made in writing within two weeks of notification of the decision. The volunteer should appeal in writing detailing their reasons for appealing the decision. The panel will then meet again within two weeks of the appeal and will make a decision. The volunteer will be notified as soon as a decision has been reached.

5. Reviewing the Policy and Procedure

This policy will be reviewed every three years and will next be reviewed in July 2012.