



Volunteer Management Procedure - Problem-Solving

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Purpose of Procedure

To deliver services to people living with sight loss, Guide Dogs expects high standards from all our people; both staff and volunteers. This procedure sets out how issues with volunteer behaviour or ability must be dealt with. This supports staff in handling such problems, and ensures volunteers are treated fairly and consistently throughout the process. This procedure replaces the previous Behaviour, Attitude, Ability (BAA) procedure.

Safeguarding or serious incidents

- If any safeguarding concerns are suspected the staff member involved should telephone The Safeguarding Team on 0345 1430199, who will advise as to next steps.
- Similarly, issues involving health and safety or data protection should also be reported to the relevant teams, whose processes and investigations will take precedence over the problem-solving procedure.
- If a serious incident such as fraud or criminal activity is suspected the staff member involved should follow the [Serious Incident Reporting Procedure](#). If there are any doubts the Association Secretary should be consulted: associationsecretary@guidedogs.org.uk
- In these cases, this process may need to be suspended pending the outcome of any serious incident or safeguarding investigations.



- For volunteers in multiple roles, the problem-solver must inform the relevant team handling the matter that the individual volunteers in other capacities. The problem-solver should also inform all volunteer managers that a safeguarding or serious incident concern has been raised. It is presumed that the volunteer will be asked to cease volunteering in all roles while the issues is being investigated, in which case their roles should be lapsed on Fetch during this period (suspended on Salesforce when Fetch is retired).

Definitions:

Appropriate volunteering adviser - a member of staff with responsibility for supporting volunteering within a directorate. See the Responsibilities section for such arrangements within the Operations and Fundraising directorates.

Improvement plan - plan to resolve a problem, agreed with a volunteer.

Line manager - the manager of the volunteer manager. This applies even if the problem-solver is not the volunteer's volunteer manager - their line manager remains the individual to be consulted over important decisions.

Problem-solver - the staff member responsible for following the Problem-Solving Procedure. This is presumed to be the volunteer's volunteer manager, although the line manager has discretion to appoint an alternative, as described in stage one of the formal process.

Problem-Solving Procedure - informal name for the Volunteer Management Procedure - Problem-Solving.

Reviewer - the staff member responsible for the stage two review of an initial decision.

Serious concerns - actions that caused, or could have caused, clear harm to people, property, or Guide Dogs as an organisation.

Volunteer manager - the key contact for a volunteer, responsible for their experience while in a specific volunteer role.



Volunteer complaints procedure - the procedure for handling complaints from volunteers. Referred to as complaints procedure in this document.

Companion - a friend, family member or fellow volunteer who accompanies the volunteer to meetings held under the procedure.

Roles and Responsibilities

Volunteer Manager - responsible for informal problem resolution and seeking confirmation from their line manager to instigate the problem-solving procedure.

Line Manager - responsible for reviewing the informal problem resolution and agreeing the instigation of the problem-solving procedure, providing support to the volunteer manager if needed. They are responsible for confirming who will act as problem-solver.

Operations Volunteering Experience Lead - responsible for providing appropriate volunteering advisers to support problem solvers and others within the operations directorate to implement this procedure. They are responsible for overseeing stage one and two of the procedure and for recording outcomes of the problem-solving procedure.

Fundraising Volunteering Development Lead - responsible for providing appropriate volunteering advisers to support problem solvers and others within the fundraising directorate to implement this procedure. They are responsible for overseeing stage one and two of the procedure and for recording outcomes of the problem-solving procedure.

Head of Volunteering - responsible for the third stage review, which could include instigating a second stage review again, or ending the problem-solving process.

Problem-solver - responsible for the stage one formal intervention, or the investigation of serious concerns. In cases where the volunteer has multiple roles, they are also responsible for informing the volunteer's other volunteer managers as described in the body of the procedure.



Reviewer - responsible for the stage two review. In cases where the volunteer has multiple roles, they are also responsible for informing the volunteer's other volunteer managers as described in the body of the procedure.

Procedure Instructions

Inclusion statement

Even if it is on record for general communication, the volunteer should be asked to confirm their preferred format for communication for this process, and this should be followed at all stages of the procedure. This means recording it within records of the complaint, to ensure that a subsequent reviewer also has this information.

Refusal to engage in the process

If a volunteer refuses to engage in the formal process - e.g. by not attending meetings without reasonable excuse, or non-compliance with an improvement plan, Guide Dogs may consider them to have withdrawn themselves from volunteering. This decision would be taken by the problem-solver in consultation with the line-manager and an appropriate volunteering adviser.

Such decisions would apply to all volunteering roles held by the individual.

Informal problem resolution

Most problems that arise with volunteers can and should be dealt with informally. Unless the problem is in relation to one specific incident, the expectation is that the issue being dealt with under the formal procedure should be one that has been previously raised with the volunteer.

If informal interventions are not successful, the problem should then be addressed through the formal procedure.



When informal resolution should not be used

The nature or seriousness of a problem may mean that informal intervention is not appropriate. The formal procedure places the issue on record, and offers the potential to ask the volunteer to leave, or give them a warning about their behaviour that could result in their volunteering coming to an end if further concerns are raised. The decision to open a formal process should be taken with the advice of the line manager. See [Appendix 1: Serious concerns definition](#).

For issues related to health and safety, data protection or safeguarding, the appropriate teams must be informed, and their processes and investigations will take precedence over this procedure. The same applies to the [Serious Incident Reporting](#) process. Volunteers will be asked to pause all volunteering until any investigations are concluded.

Stage one: formal intervention

Starting a formal problem-solving process

The volunteer manager should consult with their line manager before starting the formal process. This is to confirm that formal intervention is justified, or whether the problem to resolve amounts to a 'serious concern'.

It is presumed that the volunteer manager will act as problem-solver, but the line manager can select an alternative member of staff to conduct the process where appropriate.

There must be a clear justification for this, which the line manager must pass to the problem-solver for inclusion within the records of the process. Circumstances where this may be a legitimate decision include:

- The volunteer having made a complaint involving the volunteer manager in response to the same issue.
- The volunteer manager being unavailable.
- The volunteer manager lacking the experience necessary to confidently manage the process (although additional support,



e.g. through another volunteer manager buddying them through the process, should be the primary option here).

Support from an appropriate volunteering adviser from within the directorate may also be sought at this stage for guidance on whether a formal process should be opened, whether an issue amounts to a serious concern, or whether it would be more appropriate for someone other than the volunteer manager to act as problem-solver.

Once the decision has been made to open a formal problem-solving process, the issue should be logged (See [recording problem solving](#)).

Is the issue a serious concern?

Where we have a serious concern (see Appendix 1 for examples), the volunteer must be asked to temporarily stop volunteering while the issue is investigated. See the serious concerns section below.

If problems with the volunteer's behaviour or ability have been addressed through the problem-solving procedure in the past, the problem solver may, in consultation with their line manager, decide that cumulative problems amount to a serious concern, which means that the process could consider whether it is appropriate to end the volunteer relationship. An appropriate volunteering adviser can be involved in this discussion, and should be consulted if there is any uncertainty or disagreement.

Fact finding

The stage one formal process should be concluded within 20 working days. Where this cannot be met the volunteer should be informed and given a new timeline for a resolution.

The problem-solver must inform the volunteer that the problem-solving process is being used to help resolve an issue. Where reasonable to do so this should be communicated verbally, but followed up in writing. This must include a copy of this procedure and the related volunteer



guidance.

A meeting should be arranged with the volunteer, giving at least 5 working days' notice. The problem-solver should allow time to gather together relevant information prior to the meeting - e.g. speaking to people present at an incident, compiling instances of an ongoing issue. This may include consulting with an appropriate volunteering adviser or line manager.

Meeting with the volunteer

The purpose of the meeting is to set out the problem that needs to be resolved, allow the volunteer the opportunity to put forward their perspective, and where possible find a way forward.

The meeting may be virtual, where this is more practical for either party, or where this is the preference of the volunteer. Telephone calls may be used with the agreement of the volunteer.

At any meeting as part of this process volunteers can be accompanied at the meeting by a 'companion' - a friend, family member, or fellow volunteer. They will be able to provide emotional support, but, unless otherwise agreed, cannot speak for the volunteer. Companions should be provided with information to clarify these expectations - see appendix of the accompanying guidance document.

Where it is reasonable to do so, the meeting may conclude with a decision on the part of the problem-solver.

Depending on the nature of the issue, more fact finding may be needed following a meeting - for example, where the volunteer has put forward information that needs to be verified. Alternatively, the problem-solver may wish to consult with the line manager or an appropriate volunteering adviser within their directorate before reaching a decision.

Decisions reached during the meeting will be followed up in the volunteer's preferred format, including a summary of key points during the meeting, as well as the decision and next steps.



Where a decision is not reached during the meeting, the problem-solver should either conclude their investigation within 5 working days, or the 20 working day total period for stage one, whichever is sooner. Where this is not possible (e.g. due to the need to investigate further information, or a key person being on leave or holiday) the volunteer must be informed and given a revised deadline.

Possible outcomes

The decision will be:

- There is no problem to resolve and the process has concluded.
- There is a problem to resolve, and an improvement plan will be implemented to support the volunteer and work towards a resolution.

Improvement plans

Improvement plans are used to give a clear pathway for resolution of the problem. Depending on the nature of the issue, they may set out additional support or training for the volunteer, expected behaviour changes (e.g. an improvement in timekeeping) or other actions on the part of the volunteer.

If a volunteer does not accept the need for an improvement plan, or disagrees with proposed measures for change, they may seek a stage 2 review. The reviewer will have the discretion to accept a review request after the usual 10 working days of a decision where the dispute is over the contents of the improvement plan, but if this is the case, the request should be no longer than 5 working days after the last substantive discussion between the volunteer and the problem-solver.

If the volunteer does not seek a review, or refuses to engage following a failed review, the line manager and appropriate volunteering adviser can, if they agree that the proposed improvement plan was fair and reasonable, consider the volunteer to have ended the volunteering relationship and will communicate this to the volunteer.

Improvement plans must have a timescale and review date. A review at the end of the period will decide whether the plan is:



- concluded, and the problem has been resolved
- needs to be extended, e.g. where the problem is not yet resolved, but progress has been made.
- or has failed to resolve the problem.

If the problem has not been resolved, and there are no reasonable grounds for extending the timescale or expecting a resolution, the volunteer will be asked to leave their role.

Where the decision to end the role is based on volunteer ability rather than behaviour, the problem solver must consult with the Volunteering Office about the possibility of alternative roles better suited to the volunteer.

Additional problems that arise during the lifetime of the plan will initially be considered under its scope, rather than a new process being started. The problem-solver may conclude that additional problems amount to a failure to complete the improvement plan, and ask the volunteer to leave.

Handling serious concerns

Having asked the volunteer to pause their volunteering and lapsing them on Fetch during this period (suspended on Salesforce when Fetch is retired), the problem-solver should proceed as they would with any other issue, gathering information and arranging a meeting with the volunteer.

Decisions open to the problem-solver are:

- There is no problem to resolve and the process has concluded.
- The problem was not as serious as it appeared, and, an improvement plan will be implemented to support the volunteer and work towards a resolution
- A serious concern has been upheld, and the volunteer will be asked to cease volunteering permanently. This will apply to all volunteering roles the volunteer may have within Guide Dogs. In cases of multiple roles, the problem-solver must inform all other volunteer managers of this decision.



Decisions to end the volunteer relationship must be made in consultation with the line manager. In clear cut cases such an outcome may be endorsed by the line manager as a possibility prior to the meeting, and given verbally at the end of the meeting. In such cases the decision must be followed up in writing, including details on how to ask for a review.

If a volunteer is asked to stop volunteering, they must return all Guide Dogs Equipment immediately, including their ID badge and any clothing provided by Guide Dogs. Please see the [Volunteer IS Equipment and Access procedure](#). Any data related to Guide Dogs or their role must be passed on to us, and deleted from their personal devices. Non-compliance may result in legal action taken against the individual.

A sticky note should be added to their Fetch record which states that the volunteer is not permitted to reapply for another volunteer role as the result of a problem-solving outcome. The Volunteering Office will check sticky notes if they are asked to reinstate past volunteers.

Any roles which the volunteer is leaving must be updated on Fetch (Salesforce once Fetch is retired) with the status 'Former' and the [Leavers procedure](#) should be followed.

Stage two review

Volunteers wishing to request a review should do so within 10 working days of receiving the written decision. As before, where possible this should be in writing, but the reviewer can take the request verbally, writing down the reason for the review and confirming its accuracy with the volunteer.

The request must show that there are sufficient grounds to justify reviewing the initial process and decision. These should fall under the following criteria, although the reviewer has discretion to consider other justifications:

- Not all relevant information was considered / new information has come to light



- The issue under consideration was not something that presented a genuine problem
- The conclusion or the proposed resolution to the problem were unreasonable given the circumstances.
- The procedure was incorrectly followed
- The process was not fully accessible for the volunteer

A reviewer should be identified from the same directorate. They should be senior to the initial problem solver and should not be the line manager, as they will have been involved in supporting the problem solver.

The reviewer will decide if it is reasonable to re-examine the process and decision based on the information given by the volunteer.

The reviewer must ensure that the problem-solving records are updated to reflect the review (see [recording problem solving](#)). As with stage one, they must maintain a full record of the review, including timelines, notes of meetings, actions and communications.

The reviewer must acknowledge receipt of the request within 5 working days. Reviewers will consider the previous decision in light of the volunteer's objections, alongside any new information that has been raised.

The reviewer may review the case without setting up a meeting with the volunteer if they feel they have adequate information. Should a meeting be necessary this could be online or in person, taking into account volunteer preferences and access needs. The volunteer can choose to be accompanied by another volunteer, friend, or member of staff, under the same conditions as set out above.

The reviewer will conclude their investigation within 15 working days of receiving the request for a review, or, where this is not possible (e.g. they wish to speak to someone involved who is on annual leave), must give a new deadline, which should be as soon as is reasonably practical.



In the volunteer's preferred format, the reviewer should provide a summary of the investigation, their decision and details of how to ask for a final stage review. This must include information on how to contact the Head of Volunteering.

Final stage review

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome of the stage two review, they have the opportunity for a final review of the process.

They must contact the Head of Volunteering within 5 working days of receiving the review decision.

The Head of Volunteering will decide whether there is reason to re-examine the process and decisions based on information provided by the volunteer. The same criteria applies as for a review. There must be either new information, or sufficient grounds to suggest the process may have been flawed. A decision not to proceed with a review is final.

A final stage review is not a re-investigation of the initial problem - it should consider and review the actions and findings of the earlier stages, based on the volunteer's submission and the records kept of the earlier stages.

The Head of Volunteering should acknowledge receipt of the request for a review within 5 working days.

They will consider:

- Whether the procedure and process has been adequately followed
- Whether all information open to the problem-solver/reviewer was properly considered
- Whether decisions taken appear fair and balanced based on the available information
- Whether additional information is sufficient to overturn earlier decisions



- Whether the volunteer was disadvantaged in some way during the process (e.g., there was a failure to make reasonable adjustments to ensure their full participation)

At their sole discretion the Head of Volunteering may liaise with an appropriate Senior Manager to support objective decision-making. The Senior Manager must be from a department that is not involved in the issue.

The outcome of the review will be communicated to the volunteer in their preferred format within 10 working days of Guide Dogs' receiving the request for Final Review. If it is not possible to respond within the specified time, the volunteer should be given an explanation for the delay and told when a response can be expected. The decision taken at this stage will be final.

If this review finds that there have been unacceptable flaws in the process, the Head of Volunteering should pass the problem on for a re-review at a stage two level. This must be carried out by a new reviewer. Their decision will be final.

Recording problem solving

Problem solvers and reviewers are responsible for recording key information as part of this procedure. See [Appendix 3 - Recording the formal process](#) for details on this should be done.

The Operations Volunteering Experience Lead and the Fundraising Volunteering Development Lead are responsible for ensuring that the recorded information is securely stored in the agreed file locations and the spreadsheet log is updated.

Records of both informal and formal interventions or investigations are subject to the same data retention periods as all volunteer information, but such records should only inform future problem-solving processes where they are directly relevant - based on the nature of the issue, in demonstrating a pattern of behaviour, or considering the cumulative impact of several issues over time.



Volunteers carrying out more than one role

All relevant volunteer managers must be informed that the volunteer is the subject of a problem-solving process. In particular, they must be aware of circumstances that do or could impact on the volunteer's engagement in their role, that is where:

- a safeguarding concern or other serious incident (as outlined in the opening of this procedure) has been reported, and is being followed up by the appropriate team. In addition, the team dealing with the issue must be informed that the volunteer has additional roles, as they may well be asked to pause all forms of participation while the matter is investigated.
- a serious concern as defined within this procedure has been raised. They must be made aware that the volunteer has been asked to pause volunteering in the role in which the issue arose, and that the outcome may be to end the volunteering relationship, which, unless this decision was purely based on ability (see below) will apply to all volunteering roles.
- an improvement plan is in place with a volunteer

Serious concerns and other roles

If the serious concern under investigation relates to the volunteer's behaviour, relevant managers for other roles, in conjunction with appropriate volunteering advisers, can decide whether or not to ask the volunteer to pause volunteering - consideration should be given to the nature of the concern, and any relevant risks, which includes reputational risk for the organisation.

When a decision is made to end a volunteer's role due to their behaviour, this will apply to all their roles, and they will not be able to reapply in the future.

If the decision to end the volunteering relationship is based on their ability to carry out a role, this will not automatically apply to all roles, although advice should be sought from appropriate volunteering advisers on whether the lack of ability in question was directly



relevant to other roles, and/or presents a potential risk relevant to such roles.

Improvement plans and other roles

If the volunteer has failed to comply with the process of agreeing to or following an improvement plan, a decision to end the relationship must apply to all roles.

If an improvement plan in place due to the capability of the volunteer within their role is not satisfactorily concluded, and the volunteer is asked to leave their role, this should not apply to other roles.

If an improvement plan in place due to the behaviour of the volunteer is not satisfactorily concluded, there is a presumption that a decision to end the volunteer relationship will apply to all roles, but this is at the discretion of those other business areas, in consultation with appropriate volunteering advisers.



Appendix 1: Serious concerns definition_s

Serious concerns cover actions which:

- Have, or could have caused harm, either to individuals, dogs, or Guide Dogs as an organisation

And/or

- Represent serious breaches of Guide Dogs policies, legislation or other regulatory or legal obligations the organisation is subject to.

Harm is intended in its broadest sense, to encompass not just physical harm but also financial, emotional or discriminatory harm, and reputational damage to the organisation or those associated with it.

The following list provide examples of behaviours or actions which are normally regarded as serious concerns:

- theft, fraud, and deliberate falsification of records
- physical violence or threats of violence
- harm or abuse towards children or adults
- mistreatment or cruelty to dogs, as defined by Guide Dogs
- bullying, violence, harassment or victimisation
- breaches of privacy or confidentiality
- misuse of, or deliberate damage to Guide Dogs property
- actions which did, or could have brought Guide Dogs into serious disrepute
- incapability whilst volunteering brought on by alcohol or being under the influence of illegal drugs
- actions or serious negligence which caused or might have caused health and safety or safeguarding risks
- refusal to respect policies, boundaries or reasonable instructions

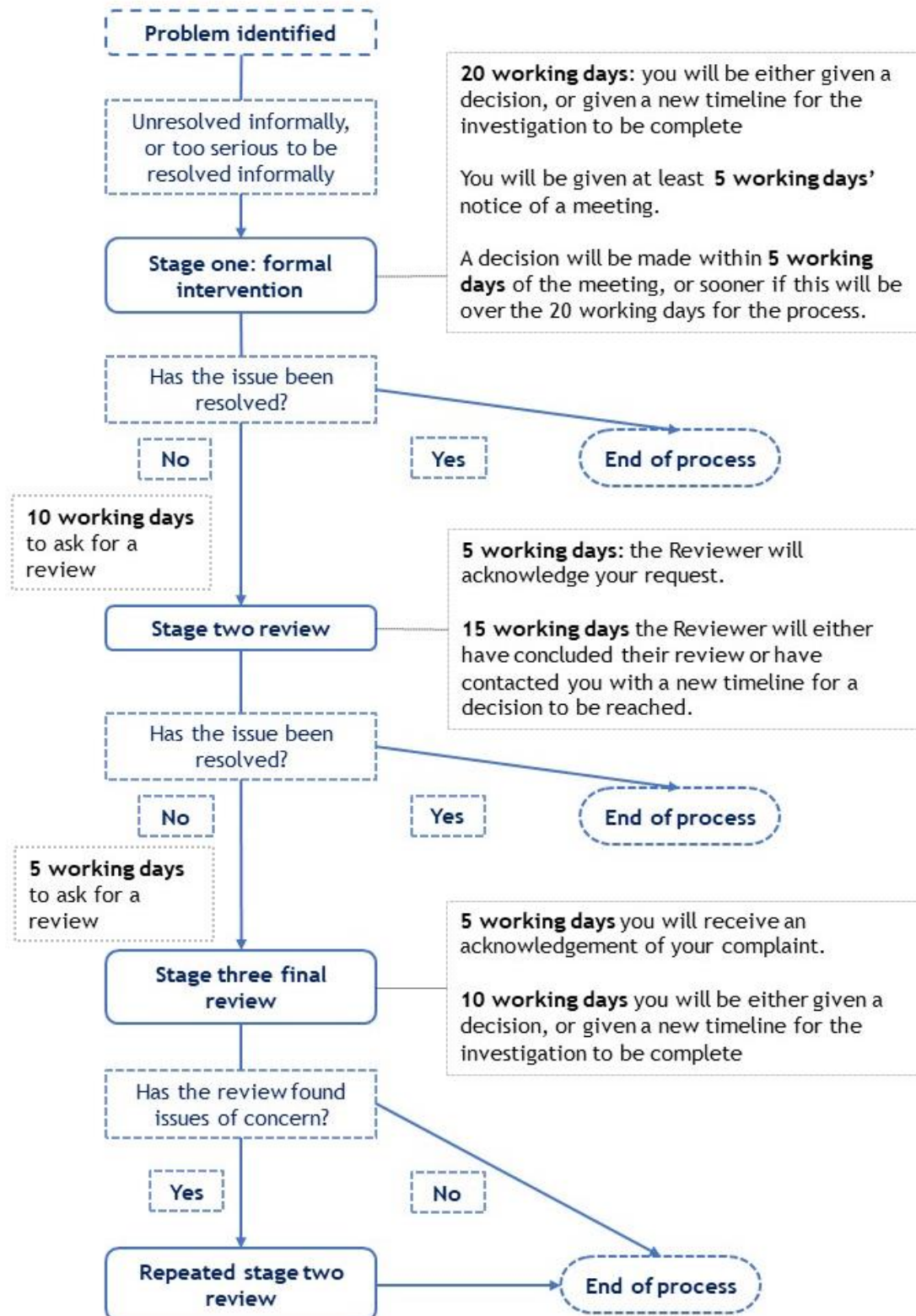
The list is illustrative, and not intended to be exhaustive.



As stated within the body of the procedure, a pattern of previous problems, evidenced by records, can also be considered to amount to a serious concern based on the decision of a line manager.

Appendix 2: Process and timelines

This flowchart is followed by the same information in text form.





Written summary of process and timelines

Informal resolution

Most problems should be raised informally. If the issue is not resolved, or is of a serious nature, it can be taken to stage one.

Stage one formal intervention

Within 20 working days you will be either given a decision, or given a new timeline for the investigation to be complete.

You will be given at least **5 working days'** notice of a meeting.

A decision will be made within **5 working days** of the meeting, or sooner if that would be over the 20 working days for the process

If you wish to request a review, you must do this within **10 working days** of receiving the decision.

Stage two review

Within 5 working days of asking for a review the reviewer will acknowledge your request.

Within 15 working days of asking for a review the reviewer will either have concluded their review or have contacted you with a new timeline for a decision to be reached.

If you wish to request a final review, you must do this within **5 working days** of receiving the decision.

Stage three final review

Within 5 working days of asking for a review the Head of Volunteering will acknowledge your request.



Within 10 working days of asking for a review the Head of Volunteering will either have concluded their review or have contacted you with a new timeline for a decision to be reached.

If the Head of Volunteering finds that the problem has been handled fairly and in line with the procedure, their decision is final.

If they find that there have been problems with the handling of the problem, the problem will be passed on for the equivalent of a stage two review. This will be subject to the stage two timelines. The decision of the reviewer at this stage will be final.



Appendix 3 - Recording the formal process

The investigating manager is responsible for ensuring that the case is logged on the Problem-Solving database. Brief details of the matter must be sent to the following email address:
volconcerns@guidedogs.org.uk.

This should include:

- Investigating manager
- Volunteer name
- Summary: Just 3 or 4 words to describe the issue- e.g. 'Not following process', 'Verbal abuse'.
- Whether the process is closed, or remains open (i.e. an improvement plan is in place)

It is the investigating manager's responsibility to ensure the case is recorded by sending an update when the investigation and formal meeting are complete. This should include all relevant documents and correspondence, as well as a brief timeline of the issue and process.

If a review is requested, the reviewer should log this by e-mailing volconcerns@guidedogs.org.uk and similarly updating with an outcome, including where it has been decided there were insufficient grounds for a review.

If a final review is lodged, the Head of Volunteering should log this by e-mailing volconcerns@guidedogs.org.uk and recording their final decision.



Appendix 4: Counter complaints raised during a problem-solving procedure

If a volunteer raises a complaint during and about the problem-solving process, there are recommendations for how to proceed below based on the nature of the complaint. The line manager must decide on the appropriate course of action in consultation with the Guide Dogs complaints team. This is ensure that the complaints team are aware of and satisfied with the handling of the complaint.

The volunteer must be informed about how the issues raised will be handled.

If a complaint arises in relation to the problem-solvers' involvement in the initial issue/incident, and they are currently engaged in a stage one investigation, the line manager should ask another member of staff to take over the investigation/complaints handling.

Complaint is about the handling of the problem and or process

In consultation with the complaints team and an appropriate volunteering adviser, such a complaint may be considered either as:

- A concern that falls more appropriately within the review process of the problem-solving procedure
- A concern that should be considered on its own grounds

Regarding a complaint as a call for a review within the problem-solving procedure

The problem-solving procedure includes the opportunity to ask for a review of the process and the decisions made. It may therefore be reasonable to regard a complaint over the handling of the problem as a call for a review within the problem-solving procedure, unless all three stages of the procedure have been completed.

If the problem solving process has been exhausted, then the complaint



may still be handled as if it was a review rather than a full investigation of a complaint. That is, it can be assigned to a reviewer, who can decide whether or not there appears to be grounds for a full review. In such cases this review can be considered the final stage of the complaints process.

Standalone complaints about problem-handling

It is presumed that a complaint about problem-handling should be dealt with through the existing provisions for a review within this procedure.

However consultation with the complaints team and appropriate volunteering adviser may lead to the conclusion that a separate complaints process may need to be opened.

If the problem-solving procedure is ongoing it should be paused while the complaint is considered. In cases where a serious concern is under investigation, the volunteer must not return to volunteering over this time.

If the problem-solving procedure has been through all three stages, and the subsequent complaint comes to a third stage final review, the Head of Volunteering should delegate this to an appropriate manager, given their direct involvement in the problem-solving procedure.

Complaint relates to the same issue/incident

If the complaint is based on an alternative perspective on a particular issue or incident, the problem-solving and complaints procedures can be treated as the same process. That is, an initial investigation considers all perspectives on the issue, being the formal stage 1 for both procedures.

The overall structure of a combined problem-solving and complaints procedure would remain a three stage process:

- Stage one: Formal intervention and investigation
- Stage two: Review
- Stage three: Final review



The complaint must be acknowledged within five working days, in line with the complaints procedure.

Combined stage one investigation

The problem-solver would assess:

- whether the volunteer had displayed behaviour or a lack of ability that warranted formal intervention
- whether the volunteer's complaint was justified

The outcomes do not have to be mutually exclusive - depending on the nature of the issue and the complaint it is possible to find that the volunteer had both acted in a manner that is unacceptable, and had a justifiable complaint.

Where possible stage one should be completed within 20 working days, but if this is not possible the volunteer should be informed, and given a new timeline.

As logs of complaints and problem-solving processes are currently held in separate systems, this will mean duplicating the storage of records. This should be clearly noted in the logs, and to avoid confusion exactly the same records should be stored in the separate systems.

Stage two and three reviews

Should the volunteer wish to challenge the outcome of the combined stage one investigation, whether in relation to the problem-solving or complaints aspect, they can ask for a stage two review.

The nature of the challenge might be clearcut, and only refer to the outcome of either the problem-solving or complaint aspect of the stage one decision, in which case stage two (and stage three if required) can be considered as simply following the appropriate procedure. This means that the other aspect can be considered closed.

If the volunteer's objection to the stage one decision impacts on both the complaint and problem-solving aspects of the situation, then stage two will continue to be considered as part of both the complaints and problem-solving procedures (as would stage three if required). The



volunteer would have to show that there were reasonable grounds for considering the process or decision to be flawed. Records would continue to be kept as part of both processes.

Complaints related to the incident raised after stage one of the problem-solving procedure has concluded

Suggested process:

- Combined complaint investigation/problem-solving procedure review
- Combined stage three final review

In such cases the complaints team and an appropriate volunteering adviser should be consulted.

Where it is reasonable to do so, the complaint investigation may be considered as part of a joint process at the level of a stage two review. That is, it can take into account the information that has been gathered, but can consider additional information related to the complaint, and may therefore take more active steps than is usual for a review.

The combined process means that the decision on the complaint can also change the initial decision from the problem-solving procedure.

Challenges to the decision arising from this joint stage two review would be considered a call for a stage three final review.

This suggested process does mean that there is a shortened complaints process - two rather than three possible stages. However it reflects the expectation that relevant issues would have been raised earlier or as part of the problem-solving procedure.

Documentation:

Volunteer Improvement Plan

Permissible exceptions:

Any investigation related to compliance (safeguarding, health and safety, data protection) or other legal matters (e.g. a potential



criminal offence) will take precedence over the timelines within this procedure, during which time all volunteering by the individual volunteer will be paused.

Related Policies or Processes:

[Volunteer Manager Guidance - Problem-Solving](#)

[Volunteer Manager Guidance - Resolving problems informally](#)

[Volunteer Manager Guidance - Volunteer Improvement Plans](#)

[Volunteer Guidance - Problem-solving procedure](#)

[Volunteer Management Procedure - Complaints](#)



Governance Information. Please do not remove.

Governance Review & Approval Table:

The table below contains two rows and five columns.

Governance Area:	H&S	Protection of Children & Adults	Insurance	Legal	GDPR
Date Approved:		28 Jan 2025			

Review Frequency:

Procedures - Subject Specific: Every 2 years

Reviews should be done in accordance with relevant regulation, legislation changes or as a result of ad hoc activity, such as continuous improvement initiatives.

Version control table:

The table below contains four rows and four columns. (Only the original approval date and the most recent amendment should be included in the table.)

Date	Version	Status	Details of Change
29 Jan 2025	1.0	Approved	New procedure, replacing BAA.

End of document