

CAAT's Volunteer Problem Solving Policy – October 2015

The following policy states how CAAT will deal with any complaint or grievance involving a volunteer. It includes procedures in dealing with problems and shows CAAT's strategy in ensuring a fair and inclusive working environment for all staff and volunteers.

The following are examples of what a possible problem might be:

- lack of support from CAAT staff
- taking on tasks which go outside the agreed remit or CAAT's ethos (found at <https://www.caat.org.uk/about>)
- failure to respect staff/volunteers confidentiality, dignity, independence and individuality
- breach of health and safety regulations (found at <https://www.caat.org.uk/handbook> or on the noticeboard above the photocopier)
- misuse of the organisation's equipment or facilities
- theft
- discrimination on grounds of disability/race/age/gender, abuse, or other offensive behaviour
- arriving for work under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or other substance
- disregarding CAAT's equal opportunities policy (found at <https://www.caat.org.uk/handbook>)

Although CAAT does not have legal duties towards volunteers, and does not wish to create a formal agreement with them, we feel it is important that problems or complaints are dealt with fairly, openly, quickly and consistently. To help with this we have the following procedures:

If a volunteer has a complaint about the organisation, a member of staff or another volunteer:

We hope that most problems can be solved informally. If a volunteer is unhappy about an issue falling within their conditions of service, working conditions and volunteering duties they should try to resolve it informally through discussion with the member of staff who supports them. The member of staff may take the issue to Workplan if deemed appropriate. Where the issue is not resolved through informal means, the volunteer may pursue a more formal grievance by following the process below.

The volunteer must detail in writing the specific circumstance of their complaint, with dates, times and the names of any witnesses. They should raise the matter formally with the member of staff who supports them. If the complaint is against that particular member of staff, then the volunteer should discuss the matter with the Office Co-ordinator. The matter will then be dealt with by the appropriate staff member within 14 days. If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome they can appeal to a member of the Steering Committee Disciplinary and Grievance Panel (whose names are listed at: <https://www.caat.org.uk/handbook> with contact details on the database) and will receive a further response within another 14 days.

If there is a problem or grievance with a volunteer:

Again, hopefully this can be resolved informally between the volunteer and the staff member who supports them. Many 'problems' are simply due to training needs, a lack of support, inappropriate roles and so on. Where informal measures are not enough the member of staff responsible for the volunteer will raise the issue in a formal meeting with the volunteer. Details of the specific circumstances of the grievance, with dates, times and names of witnesses will be provided. The volunteer will be entitled to put forward their view of the situation.

If it is felt necessary an informal warning may be issued, with steps agreed to improve conduct.

If the issue is still not resolved another meeting involving the volunteer and staff member will take place. This may result in a formal warning, with the understanding that if there is no resolution of the problem following this the volunteer will be asked to leave CAAT.

If a volunteer is believed to have behaved in a manner that has or could have seriously affected the organisation – for example theft, bullying, or violence – they will be immediately suspended while the matter is investigated by CAAT staff. The volunteer will be given the opportunity to put forward their case, and a decision will be made within 14 days. If the complaint against the volunteer is upheld they will be excluded from volunteering at CAAT. Volunteers can appeal the decision to a member of the Steering Committee Disciplinary and Grievance Panel (whose names are listed at: <https://www.caat.org.uk/handbook> with contact details on the database) and will receive a final response within a further 14 days.