

Swansea Canal Society



Cymdeithas Camlas Abertawe

Grievance Policy

A good policy gives Trustees guidance when a problem arises and ensures volunteers operate fairly. For a volunteer, it shows what route to take if they have a problem or grievance. There is a statutory minimum procedure which must be adhered to.

This model document is provided for guidance only and should not be regarded as an authoritative statement of the law.

Introduction

Swansea Canal Society is committed to the provision of high quality services and expects high standards of everyone in the organisation. The organisation is committed to creating an inclusive environment based on team work and respect.

The aim of this Grievance Procedure is to enable the organisation to settle grievances or complaints fairly and quickly. Every effort will be made to resolve issues at the earliest possible stage, and at each stage efforts will be made to avoid proceeding to the next stage and to settle the issue amicably.

Scope

The types of grievances raised in workplaces typically stem from interpersonal issues such as discrimination, bullying and harassment, as well as discontent regarding pay and benefits, workload and working conditions. This procedure applies to all Swansea Canal Society volunteers and applies to the settling of grievances relating to their

employment. It does not apply to matters of discipline or poor performance which are dealt with under the Disciplinary policy.

Principles

This policy applies to all staff and it aims to ensure consistent and fair treatment when dealing with grievance issues. Swansea canal Society expects and encourages volunteers to solve differences in a mutually acceptable way as quickly as possible and at the lowest possible level.

Grievances

Nothing in this procedure is intended to prevent any volunteers from informally raising any matter they may wish to mention. Informal discussion can frequently solve problems. It is generally expected that most problems will be resolved at this informal level. So that everyone has the greatest opportunity to resolve differences at this informal stage, there must be evidence of a mutually acceptable solution within one month of the issue being raised.

If a volunteer has a problem with any other member of staff or volunteer and is unable to sort it out informally, the matter should be referred to their chairman and raised as a formal grievance in writing.

In the case of a grievance being taken out as a counter-grievance, or in response to the start of disciplinary action, it may be appropriate to deal with both issues at the same time. If appropriate, the disciplinary procedure may be temporarily suspended to deal with the grievance.

The Procedure

Raising a Grievance

- The volunteer should raise the grievance with their Safeguarding Officer, in writing. This should be done without unreasonable delay, normally within one month of the incident (or final incident) which gives rise to the complaint
- If the grievance is against the line manager, the matter should be raised with *the chairman*. In the case of the grievance being against the Chairman, the matter should be raised with the Chair of Trustees

- The volunteers must give details in writing of the specific circumstances which constitute the grievance, with dates, times and any witnesses, as applicable
- As soon as possible after receiving a grievance, the Safeguarding Officer should carry out an investigation. In many cases, this will be a relatively straightforward fact-finding exercise. The investigation process will depend on the specific circumstances of the case. The aim of the investigation is to establish the full facts of the grievance before any decision is taken
- If the grievance involves other members of staff, they should be informed and given an opportunity to provide their own evidence
- Where the investigation finds other staff have breached the employee code of conduct, these should be addressed and fully investigated under the disciplinary policy and procedure

Invitation to a Grievance Meeting

- After the investigation, the Chairman should hold a meeting with the volunteer so that he or she has an opportunity to explain the complaint
- The meeting should take place, without unavoidable delay and should ideally be arranged within seven working days of receiving the written grievance
- The volunteer has a statutory right to be accompanied at any grievance or appeal meeting.

Grievance Meeting

- The Safeguarding Officer will introduce the meeting, read out the grounds of the volunteers' grievance, ask the volunteer if they are correct and require the volunteer to provide clarification regarding details of the grievance if unclear
- The Safeguarding Officer will give the volunteer the opportunity to put forward her/his case and say how they would like to see it resolved
- The volunteer may call witnesses and refer to any documents previously provided to the Safeguarding Officer.
- The Safeguarding Officer can ask questions of the employee and any of their witnesses.
- The grievance meeting may be adjourned by the Safeguarding Officer if it is considered necessary to undertake further investigation. Any further investigations will be carried out to establish the facts of the case
- The meeting will be reconvened as soon as possible. The person who deals with the grievance, will normally be excluded from hearing any appeal

Grievance Decision

- Having considered the grievance, the Chairman must decide whether to uphold or reject the grievance. They will give their decision in writing to the volunteer as quickly as possible, and normally within five working days of the meeting
- Where appropriate, the decision will set out what action the Society intends to take to resolve the grievance or if the grievance is not upheld, will explain the reasons for the decision
- The letter should also provide the volunteer with a right of appeal and let them know the procedure if they want to appeal

Appeal

- The employee wishing to appeal against a grievance decision, must do so in writing within five working days of receiving written notification of the grievance decision. They must set out the reasons for the appeal and attach any documents submitted in support of the appeal
- An appeal should be dealt with by an impartial manager and, where possible, a more senior manager than the person who dealt with the grievance. This might mean that the appeal is heard by a trustee, depending on where in the organisation the grievance started
- The appeal meeting should be held without unavoidable delay
- The employee is entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at the appeal
- Most appeal meetings will be in the form of a review but can take the form of a rehearing if the initial stage was procedurally flawed
- The meeting may be adjourned by the person hearing the appeal, if it is considered necessary to undertake further investigation. The meeting will be reconvened as soon as possible
- After the appeal, the employee should be informed in writing of the outcome
- The decision of the person hearing the appeal shall be final

Whilst it is intended that the timescales set in the procedures will be adhered to, when this is not possible an extension may be mutually agreed.

To maintain good working relations where employees and their managers are working to resolve their differences, it will generally be expected that both parties work normally.

Further Information

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