

Alzheimer's Society

Resolving Concerns and Complaints Raised by a Volunteer (Informally)

Guidance for Volunteers

Policy and procedure apply to:		Employees: n/a	Volunteers: All
		Contractors: n/a	Other: n/a
Version 1.0	Published November 2025	Average Read Time 5 minutes	

Contents

Introduction	1
1. Purpose	2
2. Identifying the Issue.....	2
3. Complaints and compliments	2
4. Informal Concern.....	3
5. Additional information to consider before meeting.....	3
Reasonable adjustments	4
Confidentiality and storage	4
Young or vulnerable volunteers	4
6. Further information	5
Related Policies.....	5
Process Map	6

Introduction

Volunteering with the Alzheimer's Society is usually a rewarding and positive experience with volunteers encouraged to raise any concerns or issues about their volunteering with their volunteer manager informally in the first instance. As with everything, there can be times when things don't quite go as we would expect or want them to. At the Society we expect all our people to adhere to our values and carry out their role.

This guidance is here to support you in understanding as a volunteer the process and what to do if you wish to raise a concern, make a complaint or share a compliment. The aim of this guidance is to ensure that all problems or concerns raised with Alzheimer's Society by volunteers are:

- responded to promptly and consistently
- handled with fairness and respect
- dealt with sensitively and confidentially
- resolved as quickly as possible by the relevant team

- logged in accordance with Alzheimer's Society regulatory obligations and internal process

The overwhelming majority of concerns raised by volunteers are resolved informally by conversation and agreement between the volunteer and their volunteer manager. This document will focus on informal resolution but in the rare occurrence of more serious concerns, your volunteer manager will share with you the process for concerns raised formally or through safeguarding.

For concerns raised **with** you as a volunteer please refer to **Alzheimer's Society Resolving Concerns Raised with a Volunteer (Informally) – Guidance for Volunteers**.

Purpose

This document will outline and signpost to two different processes for dealing with feedback from volunteers:

1. Complaints (or Compliments)
2. Concerns raised by volunteers (informally)

Identifying the issue

You firstly need to decide if the issue you want to raise, as a volunteer, is a concern or a complaint:

- A concern is when a volunteer is unhappy with something they experienced or witnessed within their volunteer role or experienced as a volunteer at Alzheimer's Society
- A complaint is when a volunteer is unhappy with something at Alzheimer's Society that is not directly related to being a volunteer (for example an advertising campaign or how we spend the money we raise)

If you aren't sure if you want to raise a concern or a complaint speak to your volunteer manager and/or the Volunteering Experience Team volunteeringsupport@alzheimers.org.uk as there is a different process for each.

Complaints and compliments

Complaints and compliments made by volunteers are not dealt with in this guidance, please see:

Alzheimer's Society Complaints and Compliments Policy - not on the portal

Alzheimer's Society Complaints and Compliments Procedures - not on the portal

These documents relate to complaints and compliments made both by volunteers and employees at Alzheimer's Society and by people external to the Society. The documents will guide you through the complaints and compliments process. Again, your Volunteer Manager or the Volunteering Experience Team volunteeringsupport@alzheimers.org.uk will help you with access or any other issues.

Informal Concerns

If the issue is a concern raised by you, as a volunteer, that relates to your volunteer role or your experience while volunteering at the Society, it is always best to seek to resolve it informally first. Most concerns can be resolved through discussion with your volunteer manager. A concern may be dealt with informally if:

- It was not deliberate
- The likely consequences are not serious
- It has not been raised by the volunteer before

Nipping it in the bud

Unless they are serious, problems are best resolved informally by you and your volunteer manager, and anyone else involved in the concern. Resolving problems is easiest if they are dealt with as soon as they happen – ignoring a problem and hoping it will go away does not usually help. It is recommended that both you and your volunteer manager work together to resolve matters quickly, simply and informally.

Most informal resolution will involve little more than discussions between people affected and a verbal agreement on expectations for future ways of working. But it is important, in keeping everyone safe, that we keep notes of these conversations.

Volunteer Manager part of the concern.

If your concern is regarding your relationship with your volunteer manager or you feel unable to raise the complaint with them, you can request a meeting with your volunteer manager's line manager to discuss your concern. If you do not know who your volunteer manager's line manager is, you can seek help from the **Volunteering Experience Team** volunteeringssupport@alzheimers.org.uk.

Meeting with your volunteer manager or their line-manager

At the initial meeting discussing the concern you raised, your volunteer manager or their line manager will listen and have an open discussion with you about your concern and work with you to find a satisfactory solution and time limit for this to be implemented that is acceptable to everyone. Your volunteer manager or their line manager will document this discussion, providing you with a copy.

An Informal Meeting might include:

Action	Completed
Tackling issues as close as possible to the event – delays can cause additional problems	
A private space and protected time are made available so that concerns can be discussed in sufficient detail and confidentially	
Time provided for you, the volunteer, to discuss your concern fully.	
If necessary, any additional support or training needs are identified and directed appropriately (if others involved)	

Reference, if helpful to your discussions, to documents such as the Volunteering Guide, Our Values and your or other volunteer role descriptions.	
Agreement decisions/outcomes are clear and measurable so that everyone involved understands any expected improvements or changes and how these will be measured	
Agree a specific time period for improvements/ changes to be demonstrated (where applicable)	
Record agreement with the resolution and way forward.	
Agree notes from the meeting and keep them securely	

If during the discussion it becomes clear that the issue is more serious, has safeguarding implications or the volunteer manager has tried to deal with the issue informally but feels that progress is not being made or the problem cannot be resolved in this way, a more formal process may have to be considered to find a resolution. Your volunteer manager or their line-manager will advise you on what will happen next.

Additional information to consider before meeting

Reasonable Adjustments

It is important to us that all our volunteers are enabled to fully engage with the processes outlined in this guidance. As such the need for reasonable adjustments should be considered throughout e.g. written material in alternative formats, the provision of a translator, or ensuring a meeting venue is accessible. Volunteers should make the person who is working with them to resolve the concern aware of any such needs, or if they do not feel comfortable doing so, they can speak to Volunteering Experience Team volunteeringsupport@alzheimers.org.uk

Volunteers can also contact the Volunteering Experience Team volunteeringsupport@alzheimers.org.uk if they need any support understanding this guidance and how it applies to their situation.

Confidentiality and storage

All documentation will be stored securely. Those attending meetings will be reminded all meetings related to an informal concern are confidential. Records of incidents involving volunteers will be kept for 6 years after the incident has been resolved or referred.

Young or vulnerable volunteers

Where problems involve volunteers who are children (under 18) or vulnerable adults, the Quality Safeguarding team will provide advice and support. A parent, guardian or a companion must accompany a child or vulnerable adult at all stages of problem solving. The role of a parent, guardian or companion is to provide emotional support and reassurance. Parents, guardians and companions may help the volunteer to express their feelings and thoughts and may put points across on their behalf if required.

Further information

For advice, support or guidance with any aspect of this process, please contact the **Volunteering Experience Team** volunteeringsupport@alzheimers.org.uk

Related policies

(Please read the policies that relate to the concern you raised. Your volunteer manager can provide you with these)

[Volunteering Policy](#)

[Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)

[Counter Fraud and Theft Policy](#)

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)

[Fundraising Policy](#)

[Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Information Management Policy](#)

[Information Security Policy](#)

[Professional Boundaries Policy](#)

[Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidance](#)

[Travel and Expenses Policy](#)

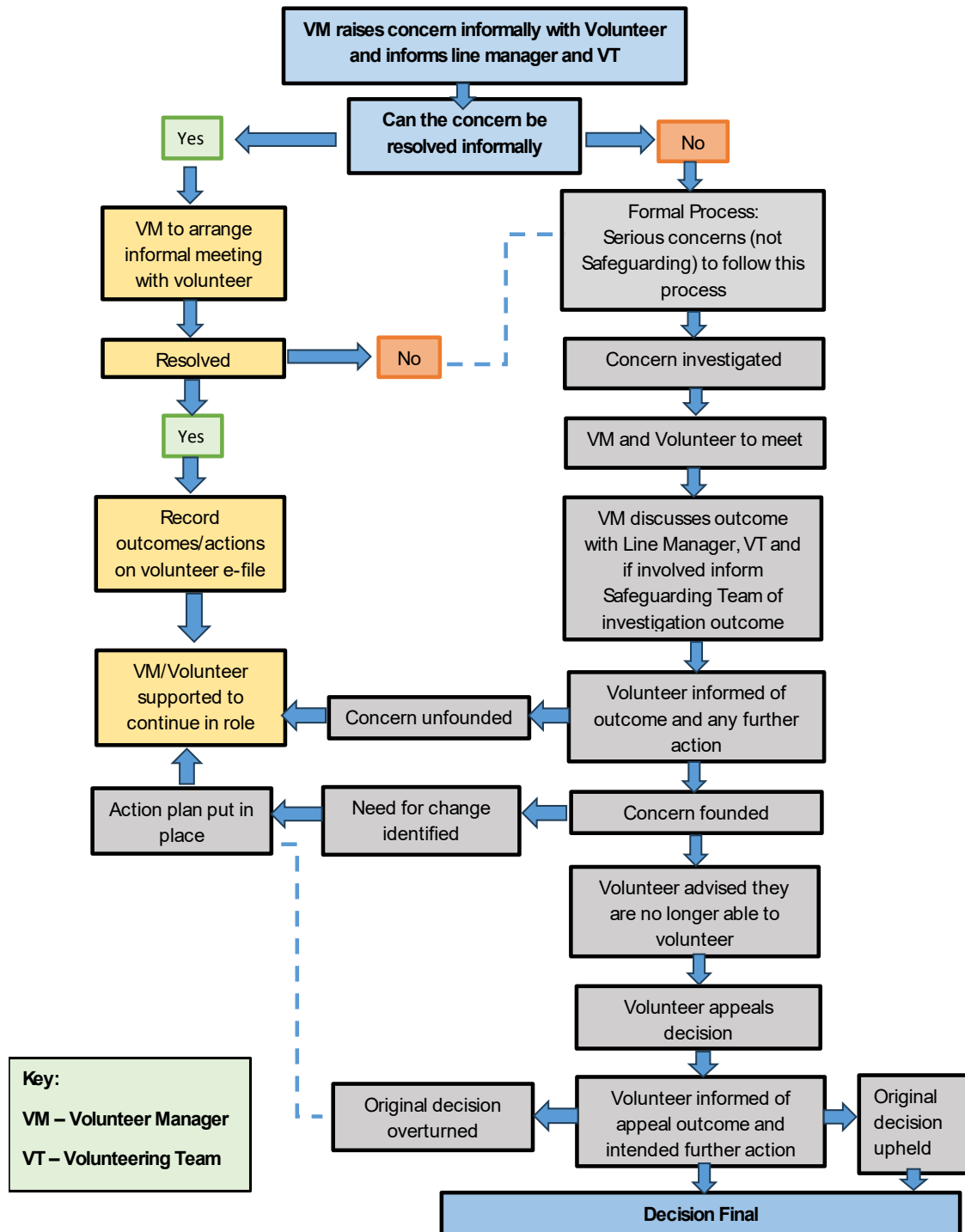
[Whistleblowing Policy](#)

Process map

Alzheimer's Society Concerns and Complaints Raised with Volunteers Process Map

If the concern is a Safeguarding concern, the concern must be raised with the Safeguarding Team on the same day.

The VM will wait for instruction from the Safeguarding Team before proceeding with the concern. The Safeguarding Team will inform the VM whether to follow the informal or formal (investigation) process.



Document details

Author/Owner:	John Carlin, Volunteering Team
Next review:	November 2026
First version published	November 2025

