Alzheimer's Society Resolving Concerns Raised with a Volunteer (Informally)

Guidance for Volunteers

Policy and procedure apply to:		Employees: n/a	Volunteers: All
		Contractors: n/a	Other: n/a
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Introduction

Volunteers are vital to Alzheimer's Society. They enable us to reach further, shout louder and get closer to a world without dementia. Volunteering with Alzheimer's Society is usually a rewarding and positive experience. However, as with everything, there can be times when things don't go quite as we would expect or like 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 as a volunteer to understand the process and what to do if a concern is raised with you. The main aim of the process is to continue working with you in a way that works for us all so that together we can continue to make a difference to people affected by dementia. The aim of this guidance is also to ensure that all problems or concerns raised by Alzheimer's Society with 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

If you wish to raise a concern or a complaint, please refer to **Alzheimer's Society Resolving Concerns and Complaints raised by a Volunteer (Informally) – Guidance for Volunteers.**

Purpose

The overwhelming majority of concerns raised with 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.

Identifying the issue

Where there is an issue about how a volunteer is carrying out their volunteer role this is likely a performance issue and should be addressed in regular catch ups and support sessions between the volunteer and their volunteer manager. A resolution could be more training or a reassessment of your induction. It is not classed as a 'concern'.

This guidance is focussed on a concern which often is not directly linked to carrying out tasks as set out in your volunteer role description. It could be regarding an incident while you were volunteering or something that has been done by you outside the remit of your volunteer role description.

If you are concerned the issue raised is not being dealt with correctly, speak to your volunteer manager, in the first instance and if you are still not happy contact the Volunteering Experience Team volunteeringsupport@alzheimers.org.uk

Informal process

It is always best to seek to resolve a concern informally first and most concerns raised can be resolved through discussion. A concern may be dealt with informally if:

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

Nipping it in the bud

Unless they are serious, problems are best resolved informally by volunteers and their volunteer manager. 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 anyone.

Concerns should be raised by the relevant volunteer manager (if you have more than one) directly with you. It is recommended that both your volunteer manager and you, work 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.

Meeting with your manager

At the initial meeting raising an informal concern with you, your Volunteer Manager should have an open conversation with you outlining the concern and what the expectations are of you in your role, as well as agreeing what should happen next to ensure matters are resolved to

everyone's satisfaction. It is also your opportunity to speak of the concern raised from your perspective and suggest a way forward.

An Informal Meeting might include:

Action	Completed
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 give your point of view about the issue raised	
If necessary, any additional support or training needs are identified and addressed appropriately	
Reference, if relevant, to documents such as the Volunteering Guide, Our Values and your volunteer role description.	
Agreement decisions/outcomes are clear and measurable so that everyone understands any expected improvements or changes and how these will be measured	
Agree a specific time for improvements/ changes to be demonstrated	
Agree notes from the meeting and keep them securely	

If during the discussion it becomes clear that the issue is more serious or your 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 will be considered to find a resolution.

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 at volunteeringsupport@alzheimers.org.uk

Volunteers can also contact the Volunteering Experience Team at volunteeringsupport@alzheimers.org.uk if they need any support understanding the 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 at volunteeringsupport@alzheimers.org.uk

Related Policies

(Please read the policies that relate to the concern 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

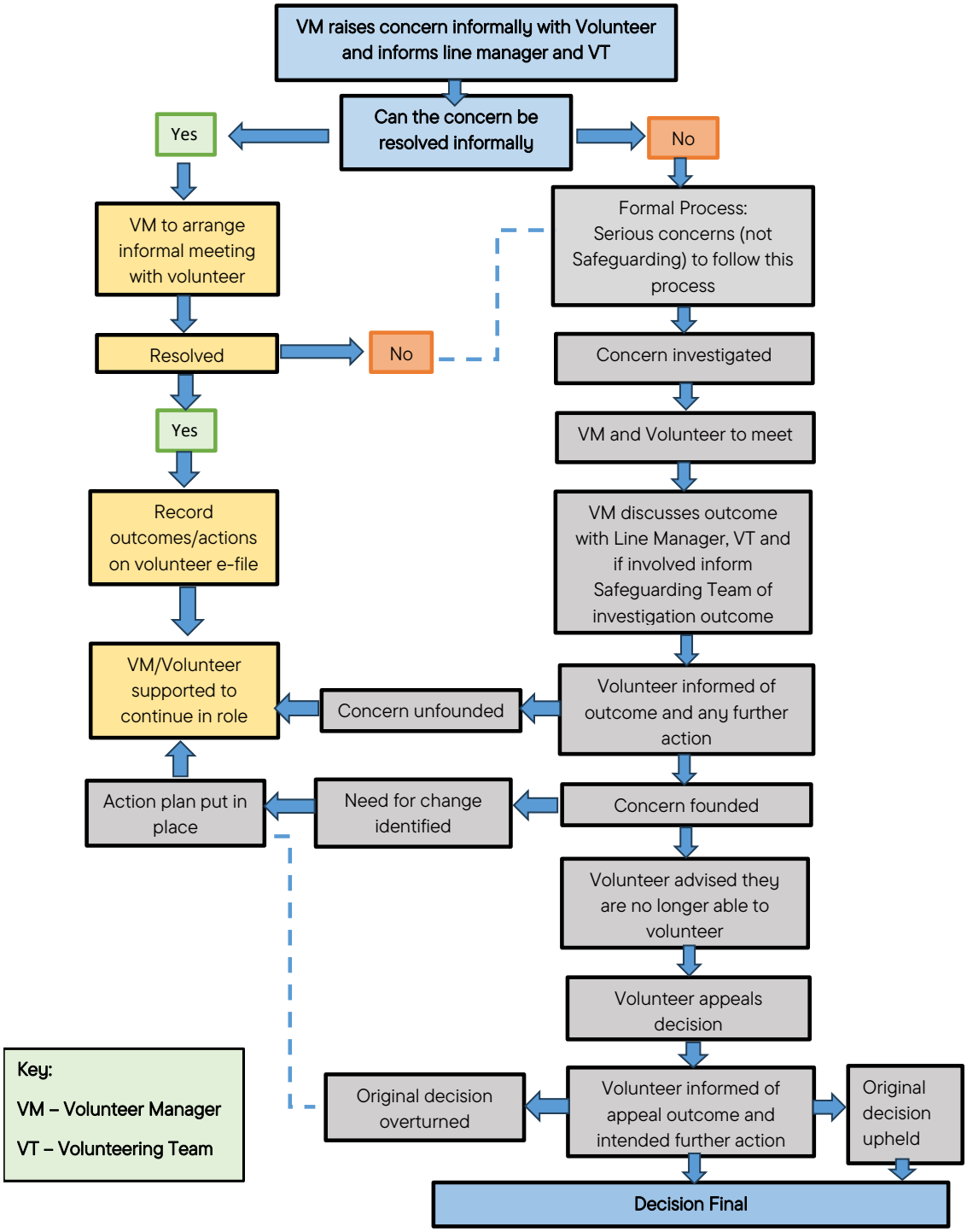
Travel and Expenses Policy

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.



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