

Talk to Us Volunteer Complaints Policy

People Directorate

Policy number: VOL 6

Issue number: 001

Issued by: Volunteering Team

Date issued: January 2020

Date last reviewed: May 2025

Review date: May 2027



**Because no one
should face death
or grief alone**

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1. Equity Statement

Sue Ryder designs and implements policies, procedures and ways of working that meet the diverse needs of our clients, service users and employees. We ensure that our policies not only don't discriminate but also consider the unique needs of certain identities and communities. This document has been reviewed to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the protected characteristics of their age, disability, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity. We consider the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 whilst going above and beyond to protect people who aren't protected in the act, for example, non-binary people.

2. Introduction

Volunteers generously contribute their time, skills, and enthusiasm to support Sue Ryder, and we value their vital role in helping us be there when it matters. In return, we are committed to providing a safe, meaningful, and rewarding experience. Recognising that issues may occasionally arise, our volunteer complaints procedure ensures concerns are addressed promptly and fairly, giving volunteers a clear process to be heard and feel confident in the resolution.

3. General Principles

Sue Ryder has a legal duty to ensure volunteers' safety and follow data protection laws.

Volunteers are not protected by the same employment laws as paid staff, but we aim to offer the same protection and quality of support wherever possible. Paid employees have employment contracts with grievance and disciplinary procedures, giving them legal rights, including taking their employer to an employment tribunal. Volunteers, however, do not have contracts and do not have the same legal protections or rights related to investigations and appeals. Nonetheless, we believe volunteers should still have a clear process to raise concerns and have them addressed properly.

Volunteer Complaints will be kept confidential and only discussed by those working to resolve them. We will take your concerns seriously and will update you on the steps taken.

Volunteers may be asked to stop volunteering immediately, if necessary, especially during investigations, to protect everyone involved. We may also end the volunteer relationship if trust and respect are lost or if the relationship breaks down beyond repair.

4. Eligibility

In the context of this policy, a volunteer is a person who performs a service willingly and without pay to support Sue Ryder's work. This includes people spending time with Sue Ryder through work experience, supported volunteering programmes, and those who are referred to the charity through community sentencing.

The policy is for all Sue Ryder volunteers and any Sue Ryder staff who work alongside or provide support to volunteers.

5. Responsibility

Individuals

Volunteers are responsible for reporting concerns promptly and openly, following this procedure.

Managers

Managers are responsible for reporting and recording concerns using our reporting system, DCIQ. Some managers are responsible for investigating concerns; managers will be made aware of this responsibility and trained appropriately. Managers who have not completed the appropriate Investigations Training should not carry out investigations. Managers are responsible for supporting and communicating with volunteers and the national Volunteering Team appropriately throughout the process. Managers must ensure that the well-being of any involved volunteers is always considered.

People Team

The People Team are responsible for leading investigations that involve a member of staff.

Other Teams

The national Volunteering Team are responsible for overseeing the effective management of complaints. Where appropriate, the Volunteering Team will support or lead investigations. The Volunteering Team will track trends in complaints and ensure appropriate action is taken to improve systemic issues. The Volunteering Team will oversee appeals.

6. Procedure

6.1 Stage 1: Informal

If you have a concern, start by raising the issue informally with your local staff team. Wherever possible, we'll do our best to address it informally and promptly. Raise your concern with your manager. If you feel uncomfortable raising the issue with your line manager:

Healthcare, Grief Kind and Fundraising Volunteers - contact your local Volunteer Coordinator, Grief Kind Coordinator or Befriending Coordinator.

Retail - contact our retail volunteer helpline on 01302 380067 or email volunteering@sueryder.org

What to expect: Your complaint will be handled quickly and fairly, with your manager making sure you feel satisfied with the resolution and scheduling a follow-up to confirm the issue has been resolved. Issues should be resolved within one month of you submitting the complaint.

6.2 Stage 2: Formal

If your issue cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint should be submitted in the following way:

Healthcare, Grief Kind and Fundraising Volunteers – Contact the Regional Director of Healthcare Operations at your local centre, or the local Head of Hospice Fundraising. You can ask your Volunteer, Grief Kind or Befriending Coordinator for the correct contact details if you are unsure.

Retail – Contact your local Retail Sales Manager. If you are unsure of the correct contact details for your Retail Sales Manager, you can request them via the retail volunteer helpline on 01302 380067 or email: volunteering@sueryder.org

What to expect: You will get a confirmation of your complaint within 10 working days, along with details of what will happen next. If needed, an investigation will be done quickly and fairly by a trained staff member. You will be kept updated at every stage, including how long the investigation will take and any follow-up steps. Where possible, the outcome will be shared with you, however, there will be times when we are unable to share specific information due to our obligations under GDPR.

Don't forget that you can also raise concerns (anonymously if you prefer) through our Speak Up platform. You can find details of that on the Volunteer Hub.

6.3 Appeals

An appeal can happen if you ask for a review or reconsideration of a decision or action taken by the organisation regarding your complaint. If you feel that their issue wasn't properly addressed or that the outcome was unfair, you can request an appeal to have the matter looked at again. You can do this by contacting us in the following ways, with as much information as possible about your request:

Healthcare, Grief Kind and Fundraising Volunteers: Appeal Hearing Manager – Volunteer Manager (Healthcare and Fundraising)

Email: volunteering@suerydercare.org

Address: FAO Volunteer Manager (Healthcare and Fundraising), Sue Ryder Volunteering, 183 Eversholt St, London NW1 1BU

Retail Volunteers: Appeal Hearing Manager – Volunteer Manager (Retail and Community Plus)

Email: volunteering@suerydercare.org

Address: FAO Volunteer Manager (Retail and Community Plus), Sue Ryder Volunteering, 183 Eversholt St, London NW1 1BU

What to expect: You will get a reply within 10 working days confirming we received your appeal and explaining what will happen next. Your complaint will be reviewed fairly and quickly by a different staff member to make sure it's unbiased. We will keep you updated at each step, including how long the investigation will take, the results, and any next actions. Once a decision is made on your appeal, it will be final, and the process will be closed.

6.4 Your wellbeing

Your wellbeing matters to us. We will do our best to support you with compassion and kindness throughout the process. If you ever feel your wellbeing is being negatively impacted or not being cared for, please tell a staff member. You can find information about the support available, including mental health first aiders, on the [Volunteering Hub](#).