

# Policy for Dealing with Difficult Situations

**This document outlines the process that will be followed in the event that we have a concern about a volunteer's attitude, conduct or performance that we feel is not in line with the standards we expect.**

## Informal

We have set out our expectations as clearly as possible in our Volunteer Agreement, and we ensure that each volunteer is provided with this agreement as part of the welcome pack. Whilst those expectations are not binding obligations, and no contract has been established between Young Enterprise NI and a volunteer, we still require our volunteers to agree to those expectations. It is important to us that volunteers achieve a standard of behaviour and performance that is in line with the role they have agreed to carry out and our Volunteer Code of Conduct. We hope that difficult situations can be avoided by making our expectations as clear as possible to each volunteer at the recruitment stage.

Where an issue may arise, the Young Enterprise representative responsible for that volunteer will address the issue in an informal and supportive manner. Where this action does not resolve the issue formal process will be followed (please see below).

## Formal

### Stage 1

**We use stage 1 to address a non-serious concern or complaint (serious concerns or complaints are addressed in stage 2).**

The Young Enterprise representative will request a meeting with the volunteer to discuss the relevant issue(s) including specific details surrounding the concern or complaint, the cause of the concern or complaint, and the identification of support that we can provide as a solution; for example, additional training, or an alternative role. Volunteers are permitted to bring an additional person to this meeting, and an additional Young Enterprise NI member of staff will also be in attendance to take notes. Any notes and details that are recorded at this meeting will be kept in the strictest confidence, and are only available to those involved in the meeting.

A review period and a list of actions will be agreed by both parties at this meeting and a second meeting will be scheduled to review the situation.

Where it appears that the issue has not been resolved, or if a new concern or complaint arises we will move to stage 2.

## Stage 2

**We use stage 2 to address a non-serious complaint that has not been resolved after the agreed review period in stage 1, or to address a serious complaint.**

Where some improvement has been made in relation to the actions that were agreed at stage 1, further support may be offered and an additional review period agreed. This meeting will be carried out by the Young Enterprise Representative (as above) and the same rules apply. However, where little or no improvement has been made (and at the discretion of the Young Enterprise Representative) a meeting will be held with the Young Enterprise Representative and the Head of Stakeholder Engagement. The decision may be taken at this meeting to ask a volunteer to leave their role, but this will only be considered as a last resort. Volunteers have the right to appeal this decision by following our Appeals Procedure.

In the event of a serious complaint a meeting will be held with the Young Enterprise Representative and the Head of Stakeholder Engagement. An additional staff member will also attend this meeting to take notes. The volunteer will have the right to bring an additional person to this meeting for support. Where a serious complaint or allegation is made towards a volunteer, this meeting will be used to make the volunteer aware of the nature of that complaint or concern including specific details, and will more than likely set out a period of "inactivity" where the individual concerned cannot volunteer with our organisation. This is to ensure Young Enterprise NI can carry out an appropriate investigation into the matter,

the results of which will be presented to the volunteer at a subsequent meeting. This meeting will be held under the same conditions as the first. The volunteer will have the opportunity at this meeting to put their case forward, but if as a result of the investigation and this meeting we decide to end the volunteer's involvement with our organisation, they will have the right to appeal via our Appeals Procedure.

Please note: A criminal act will be referred to the PSNI. A concern/complaint over inappropriate behaviour towards children or vulnerable adults will be immediately reported to the Designated Officer and the matter will be dealt with by following the procedures outlined in our Child Protection Policy.

### **Appeals Procedure**

If a volunteer wishes to appeal a decision made in stage 2, they must do so in writing to the Chief Executive Officer. Any staff involved in the original investigation or decision making process will not be involved in the review of a case. The volunteer will be invited to a meeting with the CEO within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal request. As was the case in stage 1 and 2, a volunteer may bring an additional person to this meeting for support and a staff member will be present to take notes.

The CEO will decide whether or not to uphold the original decision and their decision on this matter is final. The volunteer will be notified of the outcome of this meeting within 28 days.