PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCEDURE FOR VOLUNTEERS

While we hope that volunteering with RLSB will be a positive experience for all our volunteers, we are aware that sometimes things can go wrong. As an organisation, RLSB is committed to ensuring that staff, volunteers and beneficiaries alike are treated fairly and not discriminated against.

This procedure will ensure consistency in our response to problems and resolving them, and will set out what should happen if a problem arises or if you have a complaint to make, or if someone makes a complaint against you.

Please note that any complaints will be treated confidentially, and will only be discussed amongst those who are directly involved in trying to resolve the issue. RLSB will keep confidential records of what happens and who is involved at each stage. You are entitled to ask for copies of these records at any stage.

PART A - What to do if you need to make a complaint / raise a concern

Stage 1 | Informal Complaint

Initial complaints, whether concerning a member of staff, the organisation or another volunteer, should first be discussed informally. Many issues can be resolved this way.

Complaints should initially be raised with whoever usually supervises you, or the Volunteer Manager, if you don’t have a regular supervisor. If the complaint concerns this person, you should contact the Volunteer Manager: Alberta Gutteridge - alberta.gutteridge@rlsb.org.uk

If you are not comfortable speaking to Alberta, you should speak to the Director of Services, Sue Sharp – sue.sharp@rlsb.org.uk

In both cases please send an email advising that you are a volunteer, and that you would like to have an informal discussion about an issue. You do not need to explain the issue in writing. An informal meeting will then be arranged.

Ideally this stage will result in mutually agreed actions to resolve the issue.
**Stage 2 | Formal Complaint**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, you should make a formal complaint in writing within 7 days following the informal discussion to the relevant Corporate Team member.

If you volunteer in Marketing, Fundraising, or Corporate Services this should be to Florence Orban, Director of Customer Development – florence.orban@rlsb.org.uk

If you volunteer in the Education or Community Services teams, this should be to Sue Sharp, Director of Services – sue.sharp@rlsb.org.uk. If you have already spoken to Sue Sharp in Stage 1, you should address your formal complaint to Florence Orban, as above, at this stage.

The organisation is committed to acknowledging this complaint within 7 days, and to investigating it and providing a response within 28 days. As part of this process you will be offered an opportunity for a meeting with the relevant member of the Corporate Team. You will have the option to bring someone with you.

**Stage 3 | Opportunity to Appeal**

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome you have the right to appeal to the CEO. At this stage the evidence and processes followed will be reviewed. No further representations/evidence will be considered. A final decision will be made and communicated to you in writing.

**PART B - What will happen if someone complains about you, or an issue arises that concerns you. This may include concerns about your suitability for your particular volunteer role.**

**Stage 1 | Informal discussion**

The first step will be an informal discussion about the complaint /issue. This is an opportunity for you to hear about the complaint/issue and offer your comment. It may also seek to identify some solutions, if required and appropriate.

If you refuse this step, you may be asked to discontinue volunteering at this point. However, if you in turn feel that you have been unfairly treated you will have the opportunity to initiate a complaint as in PART A.
Stage 2 | Written Statement

If the issue hasn’t been or cannot be resolved at Stage 1, you may be issued with a written statement outlining the reason for the complaint / the concerns that have been raised, and offering you the opportunity to attend a formal meeting.

You will be given the opportunity to state your case formally to one of the Directors (as in Part A), and to be accompanied to any meetings by a person of your choice.

Depending on the nature of the complaint or the concerns, further objectives may be set or offered. However, if you are asked to discontinue volunteering, you will have the opportunity to appeal.

Stage 3 | Opportunity to Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome you have the right to appeal to the CEO. The CEO will respond within 28 days, and their decision will be final. At this stage the evidence and processes followed will be reviewed. No further representations/evidence will be considered. A final decision will be made and communicated to you in writing.

Exceptions

In some cases volunteers may be asked to stop volunteering immediately while the matter is explored. For example, if the volunteer is accused of harassment, theft, aggressive behaviour, ignoring a request from a supervising staff member or where RLSB is notified that the volunteer is the subject of a safeguarding investigation. The decision to ask you to stop volunteering will be confirmed by RLSB in writing.

In any case where the volunteer has been asked to discontinue their volunteering, and the volunteer feels they have been treated unfairly they have the right to initiate a complaint as in Part A of this procedure.