



VASL Complaints Policy and Procedure

Introduction

VASL exists to support volunteers, carers and isolated individuals across our communities. We aim to provide high-quality services, support and advice, and to act in a way that is accountable to our trustees, funders, and the people who use our services.

However, we recognise that from time to time an individual or organisation may feel dissatisfied with the service they have received or may wish to raise a matter of concern. VASL takes all concerns seriously and wherever possible we will aim to resolve issues at the earliest stage.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

In the first instance, concerns or complaints should be raised directly with the relevant Team Manager. This can be done by phone, email, in person, or by completing the VASL Complaints Form.

The Team Manager will contact or meet with the complainant to understand the concerns in more detail. Following this discussion, the Manager will investigate as appropriate and work towards a resolution. The outcome will be communicated in writing (normally by email) to the complainant. In most cases, we hope this informal process will resolve the matter.

Key timescales – Stage 1 Informal Resolution:

Acknowledge receipt of complaint: within 5 days.

Contact/meeting with complainant: within 10 days of receipt.

Written outcome: within 5 days of meeting.

If the complaint concerns the Team Manager, it should be directed to the appropriate Senior Manager. Contact details are available by emailing hr@vasl.org.uk.

Stage 2 – Formal Procedure

If Stage 1 does not resolve the issue, the complainant may escalate the matter to the Charity Manager within 10 working days of receiving the Stage 1 outcome.

This must be done in writing. The written complaint should include the nature and circumstances of the complaint, why the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 1 outcome, and what resolution they are seeking. The Charity Manager will clarify the issues, carry out further investigation if required, and meet with the complainant. Other staff may be involved where appropriate.

In some cases, the Stage 2 meeting may lead directly to a resolution; in others, further consideration may be needed before reaching a conclusion. The Stage 2 outcome will usually be communicated within 5 working days of the Stage 2 meeting, shared verbally where possible and then followed up in writing.



Key timescales – Stage 2 Formal Procedure:

Formal escalation to Senior Manager: within 10 days of Stage 1 outcome.

Acknowledgement of complaint: within 5 days.

Meeting with complainant: within 10 days of receipt.

Written outcome: within 5 days of meeting.

Stage 3 – Appeal

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may submit a written appeal to the Board of Trustees within 10 working days of receiving the Stage 2 outcome. The appeal should set out the grounds of appeal and the resolution sought. The Chair of the Board may, at their discretion, convene an Appeal Panel of up to two trustees depending on the nature of the complaint. The panel will normally meet within 15 days of receiving the appeal. The panel may request a further meeting with the complainant if needed. The panel's decision will be communicated in writing within 10 working days of the appeal panel meeting. The Appeal Panel's decision is final and no further internal review is available.

Key timescales – Stage 3 Appeal:

Appeal submitted: within 10 days of Stage 2 outcome.

Acknowledgement of appeal: within 5 days.

Appeal Panel meeting: within 15 days.

Written decision: within 10 days.

Complaints Involving the Charity Manager

Where a complaint concerns the Charity Manager, it must be addressed to the Chair of the VASL Board of Trustees, c/o VASL, marked Private and Confidential. Stage 1 will be undertaken by a trustee. Stage 2 will be undertaken by the Chair and one additional trustee, depending on the nature of the complaint. Stage 3 will be considered by an Appeal Panel of up to three trustees who have not been previously involved.

Additional Notes

VASL may seek external support such as mediation or arbitration at any stage.

Complainants may be accompanied at any formal meeting by a colleague, friend or advocate, but not by a legal representative.

Managers or trustees may delegate responsibilities to another appropriate senior member of staff or trustee in circumstances such as leave, sickness, conflict of interest or prior involvement.

Timescales may be extended in exceptional circumstances with agreement from both parties; extensions should not normally exceed 15 working days. References to "days" in this policy mean working days.

VASL will record complaints for learning and quality improvement in line with data protection requirements.

VOLUNTARY ACTION SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE

Complaints Form

Name of person making complaint:

Address:

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Tel:

Details of complaint

Date of Incident:

Reason for complaint: -

*Staff conduct	*Staff attitude	*Ill treatment by staff
*Racial abuse	*Poor conditions	*Poor Communication
*Delay in service	*Breach of confidentiality	*Funding
*Behaviour/Attitude of other users	*Personal Data	
*Other (state)		

Person receiving complaint: Date:

Passed for action to: -

Action taken: -

Documented in writing.....



If Appeal: -

Date of Appeal:

Outcome of Appeal: -

Date record completed: Signed: