

The Royal Air Forces Association Volunteer Programme Complaints Policy and Procedure for Volunteers

The following policy applies to all individuals volunteering for the RAF Association in a welfare, event or fundraising role, whether directly for the Association or for an Association Branch.

The Association is committed to ensuring that all our volunteering activities are conducted in a fair and professional manner. The Association constantly strives to meet the expectations of our supporters, and we welcome feedback on where our services can be improved or where expectations have not been met.

This document sets out the Association's policy on handling complaints from volunteers and about volunteers and what you can expect as a volunteer in terms of the Association's commitment to complaints-handling, as well as the procedure to follow if you have a problem. The intent is to ensure that, within reasonable tolerances, an agreed conclusion is reached with the person who originated the complaint and with the person involved.

For the purposes of the following policy, both Branch and Association volunteers will be referred to as 'volunteers'.

Statement of Policy

The Association believes that volunteering should be a positive experience for everyone, including volunteers, staff and the clients that volunteers are involved with. In addition to protecting the reputation of the Association, we wish to protect both our volunteers and our staff, as well as minimise disruption to beneficiaries and other volunteers.

The Association defines a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction, written (postal or email) or verbally (telephone or face-to-face), which requires investigation, action (if appropriate) and/or follow up, verbally or in writing.' The Association will handle each complaint raised in a fair, confidential (where possible) and professional manner, according to the steps below:

The Association takes complaints from volunteers or about volunteers very seriously and we welcome the expression of any issues or concerns, to ensure that they are resolved and will not reoccur in the future.

Complaints from volunteers

If a volunteer feels they have been unfairly treated or would like to raise an issue, we would kindly ask them to follow the steps below, beginning with Level 1.

Solving problems involving volunteers

If a client (someone benefitting from a service directly from a volunteer) or member of staff has an issue about a volunteer, feels they have been treated unfairly or would like to raise an issue we would ask them kindly to follow the steps below also.



Level 1 – Informal complaint

Complainant	Responsible party to contact with the issue
Volunteer (about a beneficiary, other volunteer, member of staff or other issue)	Immediate manager
Beneficiary (about a volunteer)	Relevant volunteer manager (including all staff who manage volunteers working with beneficiaries. This may be the Area Welfare Officer or local Branch Chair)
Member of the public (about a volunteer)	Volunteer Manager at Head Office or any other relevant staff member
Member of staff (about a volunteer)	Volunteer Manager at Head Office or relevant manager

Steps to be taken by responsible party	Additional information
Listen to the issue being raised	
Make notes on the issue	These will be stored in accordance with data protection laws.
Apologise to the complainant where appropriate	
Inform the complainant of the steps they will take to resolve the issue	This may be to follow up with the person as to the cause of the issue (if permission is sought from the complainant to do this) or this may be to change a process to avoid a similar situation reoccurring.
Reassure the complainant that they will do everything they can to resolve the issue	
Inform the complainant of when they will next contact them, to provide an update	

Complaints about managers of volunteers

If a volunteer needs to raise a complaint about their immediate manager (which they cannot raise to them personally), or does not feel their immediate manager has taken appropriate steps to resolve their complaint, we would ask volunteers to then:

- Contact the Volunteer Manager at Head Office on 0116 266 5224 or on volunteers@rafa.org.uk or
- Contact the Director of HR and Volunteering on 0116 266 5224 or on hr@rafa.org.uk

They will then take appropriate action and ensure that the complaint is resolved.

Level 2 – Formal complaints

If a complainant does not feel their issue has been appropriately addressed or suitably resolved, following raising the complaint informally or over the phone, we ask complainants to then:

- Submit a written complaint within one month of making the initial contact to raise a problem.

The Association will then take the following steps:

- Respond to the volunteer to confirm they have received the complaint (within 48 hours where possible)
- Ensure the volunteer is replied to, in writing (within 10 working days), to confirm the steps they have taken so far and to confirm subsequent steps they intend to take and to provide any updates on the investigation to date
- Follow up with the volunteer by phone to resolve any outstanding issues.

Level 3 – Appeal

A complainant has a right to appeal the decision made about their issue and should make their appeal to the Director of HR and Volunteering within 10 days of the final decision. They can be contacted on 0116 266 5224 or on hr@rafa.org.uk.

Level 4 – If still dissatisfied

The volunteer/complainant should contact the RAF Association Secretary General if they are still not content with the outcome of their complaint or a complaint made about them. The Secretary General can be contacted via secgen@rafa.org.uk or via the postal address. The Secretary General's decision on the matter is final.

Confidentiality

Where possible, each complaint will be handled confidentially between the parties involved. If for any reason the issue raised is such that an external organisation, such as the police, need to be informed, the Association will inform them without the permission of the aggrieved or any other parties involved.

Any notes made about an issue that a volunteer has raised or that someone has raised about a volunteer will be kept on the Association's secure data system and will not be accessible to anyone other than the parties involved. If any of the parties wish to request data stored about them by the Association, in accordance with the Data Protection Act, they may do so by writing to volunteers@rafa.org.uk or Volunteer Manager, RAF Association, 117 and a Half Loughborough Road, Leicester, LE4 5ND.