

Cambridge Carbon Footprint Grievance and Serious Concerns Procedure for volunteers

Rationale

It is recognised that anybody working in an organization may have problems or concerns about their work. ACAS list some of the grievances that affect employees, any of which might also affect people working in an unpaid capacity:

- terms and conditions of volunteer agreement
- health and safety
- work relations
- bullying and harassment
- new working practices
- working environment
- organisational change
- discrimination

See: www.acas.org.uk

This is not an exhaustive list, and the broader category of 'grievances and serious concerns' would include issues that may arise for CCF volunteers in their work with members of the public, for example. A grievance or serious concern is simply an issue that is not easily resolved in an everyday way, is particularly sensitive or contentious, or simply one that requires careful and close attention. The aim of the CCF Grievance and Serious Concerns Procedure is to simplify and clarify a process that we hope will support a constructive response to such issues, contribute to a culture of mutual respect, and lead to positive ways forward.

The procedure refers to the relationship between CCF and its volunteers, according to CCF volunteer agreements and policies.

Cambridge Carbon Footprint

Grievance and Serious Concerns Procedure for volunteers

Stage 1 – informal discussion with the person who supervises your work

If you have a complaint, serious concern or grievance about any matter involving your work with CCF in relation to the following:

- your relationship with CCF staff or trustees
- contact with people in other organisations
- a member of the public

you should not hesitate to discuss this with the person who supervises your work, or with the director of CCF. In practice, identifying a concern as a serious one, and taking the time to talk it through, frequently brings a resolution. Discussion can also help you to clarify whether a concern is one that should be acted upon immediately, or whether there is an issue that you feel should be kept under review. If it is not possible to discuss the issue with the person you usually work with, please contact the director of CCF, or the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Stage 1 – ‘Mediation’ or ‘Serious Concern’ Meeting option

If it seems that a miscommunication issue has arisen, or if for any reason you feel it would be helpful to involve a third person, there is also the option for you and the person who supervises your work to arrange to meet with someone else within CCF to discuss the issue further (*to be referred to as a ‘Mediation’ or ‘Serious Concern’ Meeting at Stage 1 of the Grievance and Serious Concerns Procedure*). The aim of this meeting would be to come to a better understanding of the issue, to clarify any miscommunication, and form a plan of action and/or mediate a resolution, before or instead of, moving to a more formal stage in the procedure.

If either you or the person who supervises your work considers that the issue is too sensitive or contentious to be addressed informally, or if a Stage 1 Meeting does not resolve the issue for you, either a Grievance or Serious Concern Meeting should be arranged at Stage 2 of the Procedure.

Stage 2 – ‘Grievance’ or ‘Serious Concern’ Meeting

If the grievance concerns the person who supervises your work, and you feel unable to approach them directly, you should approach the director of CCF about the matter. If the director is your supervisor, and the grievance (or serious concern) is about the director, you should contact the Chair of CCF’s Board of Trustees. The Chair may conduct the meeting, (*to be referred to as a ‘Grievance’ or ‘Serious Concern Meeting at Stage 2 of the Grievance and Serious Concerns Procedure*), or they may ask another trustee to do this.

Prior to the Stage 2 Meeting, you should set out the circumstances that are of concern in a factual manner, in writing. The meeting should then be arranged with you as soon as possible, ideally within 5 days or less.

The Grievance (or Serious Concerns) Meeting will be held in a room away from the general office, and the person conducting the meeting will treat any information disclosed by you respectfully, with clear agreement as to confidentiality (see CCF Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures Ground Rules). Please let the person conducting the meeting know if you would like someone to come with you, to support you.

Either you, or the person conducting the meeting, may suggest an adjournment if further time, consideration or information is needed.

Response

Although the person conducting the meeting may respond directly to your grievance, it is more likely they will need time afterwards to reflect on what has been said, and perhaps to make further enquiries. They should write to you with a response to your grievance or serious concern within 7 days, or contact you to explain if they need more time than this. The response letter should include a summary of the discussion that has taken place, and any action proposed to resolve your grievance or serious concern, with time frames.

You are asked to make a written reply to this letter within 7 days of receipt, or let the person who conducted the meeting know if you need more time before responding. In your letter, you should say whether you are satisfied with the response, or whether you wish to appeal.

In the event that you are satisfied with the response, you may wish to make a date to review matters with the person who conducted the meeting, to ensure that the issue has been fully and satisfactorily resolved.

If you are dissatisfied with the meeting, or with the written response, you can request a further meeting under Stage 3 of the Grievance and Serious Concerns Procedure.

Stage 3 – Appeal Meeting

The request for an Appeal Meeting should be made to the director of CCF, or if the director conducted the Grievance or Serious Concern Meeting, you should approach the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If a trustee conducted the Stage 2 meeting, another trustee will conduct the Appeal Meeting. You should also let your line manager know that you are appealing.

You may wish to amend or rewrite the original letter outlining your concerns, in which case you should send the new letter to the person conducting the Appeal Meeting, with sufficient time for them to consider your concerns in detail beforehand. Please let the person conducting the meeting know if you would like someone to accompany you.

The person conducting the Appeal Meeting should write to you as soon as possible after the meeting with a summary of discussion, and any plan of action to resolve the matter, with time frames.

This is the final stage of the CCF Grievance and Serious Concerns Procedure for volunteers.