

## **Dartford, Gravesham & Swanley Mind**

### **Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Volunteers**

Although DGS Mind values and appreciates the contribution freely given by its volunteers, there are standards and values which must be upheld, and this Policy spells out the actions which may be taken when a volunteer fails to meet satisfactory standards with regard to conduct, reliability or implementation of policies laid down by the Board of Trustees. DGS Mind will ensure it adequately covers this policy in training staff who will have a role in the supervision of volunteers.

**Part One: This Part of the Policy and Procedure relates to volunteers who are not Trustees.**

#### **Informal Warnings**

When alerted to concerns regarding the volunteer's conduct, their immediate supervisor should arrange to meet with them as part of the process of establishing the relevant facts. The alert may have arisen through an informal or formal grievance or complaint, but may equally arise from longer-term concerns that the supervisor has had.

This meeting should explore with the volunteer how DGS Mind might help them to reach the required standard. The following strategies may be suggested:

- Time out from volunteering
- Further discussion
- Extra support
- Training
- Alternative volunteering opportunities within DGS Mind

If the Supervisor sees fit, they may also give a informal warning to improve conduct or performance. Such an informal warning is not part of any formal disciplinary procedure, and does not need to be recorded. In most cases, improvements resulting from the above strategies should resolve problems and make any formal disciplinary action unnecessary.

However, should formal action be necessary, the procedure will be as follows:

#### **Formal Warnings/Disciplinary Procedures**

1. The volunteer's immediate supervisor must:
  - (a) Establish the known facts relevant to the issue.
  - (b) Inform the volunteer of the nature of the issue, invite them to attend a meeting with the immediate supervisor, and inform them they may if they wish be accompanied by a fellow volunteer or any other supporter of their choosing.
  - (c) At the meeting, summarise the concerns and invite the volunteer to state their case from their perspective, discuss the issue and take account of any mitigating circumstances when considering action.

2. Where the facts of the case appear to call for action other than summary dismissal, the following procedure will be followed:
  - (a) Consider the value of the supportive strategies outlined above.
  - (b) Where appropriate, the volunteer will be informed by the immediate supervisor that their behaviour makes them liable for an oral warning and that this warning is part of the formal disciplinary process. They must also be informed of their right to appeal
  - (c) The supervisor must confirm the oral warning in writing and tell the volunteer that a copy of the warning has been kept on file. The volunteer should be advised that three such oral warnings with written confirmation will lead to dismissal. These warnings may concern a single or a range of incidents.
  - (d) In the event of three warnings, the volunteer must be informed by the supervisor in writing that DGS Mind is no longer able to use their services, giving the reason for this decision. These reasons must have been made clear to the volunteer throughout the disciplinary process and written records of all conversations and correspondence kept by the supervisor.
  - (e) All such Meetings, whether resulting in a formal warning or not, must be reported to the CEO.
3. Volunteers may be summarily dismissed where one or more of the following offences is committed:
  - Grossly indecent or immoral behaviour, abuse, deliberate acts of unlawful discrimination or serious acts of harassment
  - Dangerous behaviour, fighting or physical assault
  - Incapacity at work or poor performance caused by intoxicants or drugs
  - Possession, supply or use of illicit drugs
  - Deliberate falsification of expense claims
  - Undertaking private work on the premises without express permission
  - Taking part in activities which result in adverse publicity to DGS Mind, or lead to a loss of confidence in the integrity of the volunteer
  - Theft of property belonging to DGS Mind, another volunteer, paid staff member or service-user
  - Acts of violence towards a member of staff, paid or voluntary, or against a member of the public.
  - Malicious damage to property belonging to the charity, its service users or its staff, paid or voluntary.
  - Deliberate falsification of income received by DGS Mind
  - Disclosure of confidential information relating to DGS Mind or its clients.
  - Convictions of a criminal offence that undermine a volunteer's suitability for deployment by DGS Mind
  - The provision of false personal information, or failure to disclose information relevant to her/his deployment as a volunteer.
  - Sexual, racial, or any other form of harassment.

- Refusal to be CRB checked

Summary dismissal can only be decided by the CEO or by the appointed Deputy in their absence. While the case is being investigated, the volunteer may be suspended. The volunteer will have the right to put her/his case to the CEO/Appointed Deputy and to be accompanied by a friend or advocate. The volunteer will be informed in writing of the results of the investigation within one month of suspension.

## **Appeals**

All volunteers have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action brought against them by their immediate supervisor. In the case of a formal warning an appeal is made to the CEO. The appeal must be made in writing within seven days of receipt of the written confirmation of the oral warning. The CEO will interview both the supervisor and the volunteer. The volunteer may be accompanied by a friend or advocate of their own choice.

The Manager's decision shall be conveyed, in writing, to both the supervisor and volunteer within seven days of the interview.

In the case of dismissal, the volunteer will have the right of appeal to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Notice of the appeal must be given within two weeks of receipt of the written decision. The Chair will independently gather the necessary information and evidence and after interviews with the volunteer, the volunteer's supervisor and the CEO will make a binding decision. The volunteer will be informed of the outcome within one month of making the appeal. The Chair's decision is final.

## **Part Two: This Part of the Policy relates to volunteers who are Trustees.**

### **Trustees as Frontline Volunteers**

It is not appropriate for the chair to also function as a frontline volunteer in other parts of the organisation. Other Trustees who do work as volunteers in specific parts of the organisation will be subject, for this work only, to the same supervisory and supportive arrangements as any other volunteer working in that branch of the service. Issues which give rise to informal warnings will be dealt with by the supervisor for that part of the service, as detailed above.

Where the supervisor sees a potential need for a formal warning however, the matter will be passed to the Chair who will then undertake the role of immediate supervisor for the purposes of investigation and decision as to whether a formal warning should be given.

Appeal will be to the Board, whose decision is final. No dismissal of a Trustee can be made by the Chair, but must likewise be referred to the Board for majority vote.

### **Trustees in their role as Members of the Board**

Where there are concerns about the conduct of a Trustee in their role as a Member of the Board, this is dealt with in the Policy/Procedure 'Dealing with Misconduct by a Trustee'.