



Willingdon Community Hub Library - GRIEVANCE POLICY (Version 1 July 2019)

1. Introduction

1.1 It is intended that the Willingdon Community Hub Library (WCHL) is a safe and healthy working environment. However it is recognised that there may be times when volunteers or others associated with the WCHL may wish to raise a concern/ concerns in connection with their association and/or workplace.

1.2 This policy is to enable staff to raise concerns they may have about practices or treatment from other individuals and, where a genuine problem exists, to ensure the concerns are resolved as quickly and fairly as possible.

1.3 The policy sets out guidance on the Grievance procedure.

2. Definition

2.1 Grievances are concerns, problems that an individual may raise and may include but are not exclusive to:

- Health and Safety
- Work relations
- Bullying and harassment
- Working Practices
- Working Environment
- Discrimination

2.2 Grievance procedures do not include:

- Volunteer conduct
- Volunteer performance

2.3 Investigating officer: Person who will lead the investigation of the grievance

Independent officer: A person unrelated in any way to the parties involved in the grievance or to the substance of the grievance.

3. INFORMAL resolution of Grievance

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3.1 In many circumstances it is anticipated that grievance resolution might be resolved informally through discussion between the individual raising the grievance and the Secretary of WCHL.

3.2 Should there be a conflict of interest or the Secretary is the cause of the grievance the aggrieved individual should raise the issue with the WCHL Chair person or one of the WCHL Trustees.

3.3 If no independent officer is available the WCHL will consider appointing an external consultant although for informal grievances this would not be a preferred route.

3.4 Grievances must be submitted in writing with associated evidence but the submission of a written grievance does not automatically mean escalation to a formal process.

3.5 All grievances, discussions and resolution must be documented with a copy being provided to the aggrieved party and a copy being kept in WCHL records.

3.6 Timescales for investigation and resolution, where possible, must be practicable and as short as feasible with the aim of a maximum of 28 days.

3.7 If the grievance can be resolved informally the investigating officer will inform the aggrieved party of their decision, reasons for their decision and resolution in a meeting and in writing.

3.8 If the aggrieved party does not agree with the resolution the concerns will be raised to a formal level.

4. FORMAL resolution of Grievance

4.1 If a grievance cannot be resolved at the informal stage or if it is of sufficient seriousness it will be addressed as a formal grievance.

4.2 A formal grievance must be raised with the Secretary of the WCHL in the first instance.

4.3 In the event of a conflict of interest or the Secretary is the cause of the grievance the aggrieved individual should raise the issue with the Chair person or one of the Trustees.

4.4 For a FORMAL grievance, if no independent officer is available, the WCHL will appoint an external consultant.

4.5 The aggrieved party must provide a written grievance supported by as much evidence as they have to support their case.

4.6 Evidence may include but is not restricted to:

- **Written documentation**

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- Relevant E Mails
- Signed witness testimony
- Time lines with dates/ times
- Diary notes

4.7 The aggrieved party must also include a realistic expectation of the investigation and a statement setting out their own proposals for a resolution.

4.8 The investigating officer will provide a timely acknowledgement of the receipt of the grievance and invite the aggrieved party to a meeting.

4.9 The aggrieved party may have a supporter/ advisor attend the meeting.

4.10 At the meeting the aggrieved party will have the opportunity to explain their grievance and provide supporting evidence.

4.11 The investigating officer will decide, at the meeting, if any other persons should be interviewed prior to decision making. This must be done with the agreement of the aggrieved person.

4.12 If the grievance is against another individual this person must be officially informed of the grievance and given the opportunity, in interview, to provide evidence or argument in defence of their position.

4.13 They may have a supporter/ advisor at the meeting.

4.14 If the investigating officer is able to make a decision based on review of the evidence and interviewing all parties they must inform the aggrieved party of the decision and future actions, should they be required, within one week of the interviews. If one week is not possible the parties must be informed on an anticipated time scale.

4.15 The investigating officer may or may not meet with the parties to provide details of their findings and conclusion but a written letter must be provided in any case.

4.16 All documents must be retained and all discussions, decisions, outcomes and resolutions must be documented.

4.17 If the investigating officer is unable to make a decision they may pass the grievance to the chair person who may review the case alone or form a small group of officers, Trustees or committee members to review.

5. Appeals

5.1 If the aggrieved party does not feel their grievance has been resolved they may appeal within two weeks of the letter of judgement being sent.

5.2 To appeal the aggrieved party must provide documentation stating their grounds for appeal and any new, supporting information.

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5.3 It is not sufficient to appeal a decision on the grounds that it is not agreed with. There must be reason for review such as new information.

5.4 The person hearing the appeal will be the WCHL liaison officer at the Eastbourne Borough Council.

6. Collective Grievances

6.1 If the same grievance is raised by more than one individual the process will remain the same but all parties will be interviewed and informed.

7. Vexatious or Malicious Grievances

7.1 If a grievance is found to be vexatious or malicious the individual(s) raising the grievance may be subject to disciplinary action.