

DiABETES UK
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HOW WE SOLVE PROBLEMS TOGETHER

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TOGETHER POLICY

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1. Purpose of this document

We want to make sure that volunteers and the people we help have a positive and fulfilling experience with us. Ideally, we want to prevent problems before they happen and certainly before they get worse. This is why we will try to solve any problems fairly, consistently and as quickly as we can.

There will be times when we need to follow a more structured process in order to solve a problem. This helps us make sure that volunteers, staff and the people we help are able to alert us to any problems and can be confident their concerns will be taken seriously.

This document outlines:

- Our general approach to dealing with feedback, issues or concerns raised by volunteers
- The procedure for volunteers to raise concerns and complaints and how we will deal with these
- What happens when a concern or complaint is raised about a volunteer.

2. Feedback and issues raised by volunteers

By having up-to-date policies and good practice in place we hope we will get things right from the beginning. Regular communication and catch-ups will help keep everyone happy, but we recognise that sometimes things do go wrong.

We take all feedback, issues and concerns raised by volunteers seriously. Volunteers can ask for and receive feedback on their issues at any time.

3. How we deal with complaints made by volunteers

This section outlines how volunteers can make complaints about Diabetes UK or a member of staff, and how we will deal with it.

Our Supporter Care team organises our response to any complaints. The Supporter Care team is responsible for responding to stage 1 complaints and will involve the relevant staff in the charity. We have a two-stage complaint process. All volunteer complaints will be logged and handled in line with the points below. If you wish to raise a complaint, you can do so by emailing helpline@diabetes.org.uk.

Stage 1

3.1 Once the Supporter Care team has recorded a complaint, they will aim to acknowledge it in writing or email within two working days of receiving it but at busy times this may take longer.

3.2 We aim to respond fully to any complaint within seven working days. If this isn't possible, we will make clear why this isn't possible and give the expected date that a full response will be ready.

3.3 Any response we send will include details of what someone needs to do if they are unhappy with our response to their complaint.

3.4 If someone is unhappy with our response, they can take their complaint to stage 2.

Stage 2

3.5 If a complaint is taken to stage 2, a director will be responsible for it. They – or a senior member of staff they choose – will investigate the issue.

3.6 To take a complaint to stage 2, a volunteer will need to tell our Supporter Care team. They will record the stage 2 complaint and aim to acknowledge it in writing or email within two working days, but at busy times this may take longer.. This will be reviewed by a more senior member of staff. They will make clear when a full response will be ready. We aim to respond to any stage 2 complaints in 10 working days.

3.7

- A. The director or senior member of staff will work with the member of staff who answered the complaint in stage 1 to understand what the problems or concerns are.
- B. They will consider the stage 1 response and decide if the volunteer who complained was treated unfairly.
- C. They will decide how to solve the complaint.
- D. They will write a final letter or email to the volunteer making clear what the complaint was and explaining our final position on it. If they think we are at fault the letter should include an apology and any changes, we will make so the problem doesn't happen again.
- E. They will make clear the next steps if the volunteer remains unhappy.

3.8 If we can't give a full response in 10 working days, we will tell the volunteer about the delay, give a reason for it and a new date they can expect a full response. We will keep the volunteer updated with the investigation in writing until it's completed.

3.9 Our stage 2 response will be our final response.

3.10 If the volunteer is still not happy, we will tell them which outside organisation they can take their complaint to and explain how they do this.

4. Dealing with complaints raised about volunteers

This section explains what happens when a complaint is made about the actions or behaviour of a volunteer from a member of the public, a staff member or another volunteer. The steps in this section will be used to manage the relationship with the volunteer in question. The outcome will help us respond to the person who complained, following the steps in section 3.

In the first instance, any feedback about a volunteer's actions or behaviour will be discussed between the volunteer and their local contact. We will summarise any concern as best we can to allow the volunteer to prepare but we may not be able to reveal all details in order to protect anonymity or other sensitive information. Most of the time, this is enough to solve any issue that may have arisen.

For more serious complaints or where a volunteer's conduct or actions continue to be at odds with our values, the below process will be used.

Written concern and volunteer meeting

A written letter (or email) of concern will be sent to the volunteer from their local volunteering contact or another manager if appropriate, inviting them to a meeting to discuss the complaint. Again, we will further summarise the complaint as best we can to allow the

volunteer to prepare but may not be able to reveal all details in order to protect anonymity. The volunteer will have the chance to bring someone to the meeting. An additional member of staff may be present to take notes.

The issue will be discussed with any relevant previous conversations included for context. What will happen next will be agreed between Diabetes UK and the volunteer. This may be:

- Continuing with the volunteer role, but in line with Diabetes UK's policies and values, possibly with a review date set for the future.
- Supporting the volunteer to continue in their role with further training or information.
- Diabetes UK choosing to end the volunteering relationship with the volunteer.
- The volunteer deciding, they no longer wish to volunteer for Diabetes UK.

The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to the volunteer in writing.

4.1 Opportunity to appeal

A volunteer who has been asked to leave can appeal against this decision in writing to the Head of Communities & Volunteering. The Head of Communities & Volunteering will arrange to have a meeting, or phone discussion if preferred by the volunteer, within two weeks of us receiving their appeal.

The volunteer can bring someone with them to this meeting. The Head of Communities & Volunteering will then respond to the appeal within one week of the meeting with the final decision.

4.2 Exceptions

Sometimes more immediate action may be taken. This could include immediately suspending a volunteer from any activity whilst an investigation is carried out or asking a volunteer to permanently stop volunteering with us.

Some examples of when this might happen – please note this list is not exhaustive:

- Complaints, gross misconduct or illegal activity relating to safeguarding of children, theft or malicious damage.
- Intentionally ignoring our policies or endangering others like abusing the [Volunteer Expenses Policy](#), or not following our [Keeping Safe, Legal and Healthy Policy](#).
- If a volunteer refuses to meet the values set out in our policies or is harming our reputation, like using racist or homophobic language.
- A breakdown in our relationship with a volunteer that cannot be fixed.

Any decision to suspend a volunteer or to ask them to step down from their role as a volunteer will be confirmed to the volunteer in writing and is subject to an appeal as outlined in section 4.1 (above). Situations like these are incredibly rare, and most of the time we hope to solve any issues as quickly as possible.

4.3 Using our services

Where a complaint is made about a volunteer, this volunteer will still be able to access Diabetes UK services and support except in cases where the volunteer has been suspended while a case of gross misconduct or illegal activity is investigated.

5. Monitoring and storing complaints and concerns raised by volunteers

- 5.1 An individual staff member of the Volunteering team is responsible for monitoring volunteer complaints. They will encourage quick solutions when issues are raised.
- 5.2 Volunteer complaints will be reviewed at a senior level on a regular basis.
- 5.3 We will keep all information on complaints and issues raised by volunteers confidential. They will be stored securely in line with our confidentiality and data protection policies. This information will be kept on record for at least seven years.

6. Other volunteering policies and resources

We have a set of volunteering policies and documents that may help you when volunteering with Diabetes UK. These can be found on Assemble, our website or are available from your local volunteering team.

1. Volunteering Policy
2. Keeping Safe, Legal and Healthy Policy
3. Volunteer Expenses Policy
4. How we solve problems together
5. Whistleblowing Policy
6. Social Media Policy