



RAMBLERS PROBLEM SOLVING POLICY

Policy title:	Problem Solving Policy
Purpose / scope:	This policy sets out the Ramblers position regarding concerns relating to a volunteer's volunteering, including their behaviour, performance or a grievance they may have.
Related policies:	Safeguarding policy Volunteering policy Complaints policy
Staff policy owner:	Head of volunteering development
Approved by:	Finance and risk committee, on behalf of the Board of trustees
Date approved:	February 2021
Next review due:	February 2023
Version:	2
Applies to:	Volunteers, trustees, staff

Version control

Version	Date	Activity
1	October 2019	New policy, approved
2	December 2020	Revised

PROBLEM SOLVING POLICY

Introduction

The Ramblers values and respects all the charity's volunteers and is grateful for their invaluable support. Volunteers are vital in achieving the Ramblers' aims - from leading walks and clearing footpaths to organising local campaigns and helping to run the Ramblers, their activities help everyone to appreciate the benefits and incredible feeling of being outdoors on foot.

In most cases, volunteering for the Ramblers is a rewarding and positive experience and we have processes in place to support volunteers in their roles. Any issues which occur are normally resolved quickly between the volunteer and the other person involved. Very occasionally, there may be a situation which is more serious and requires further investigation.

The Ramblers is committed to having a clear, consistent process for volunteers and staff to follow to resolve any issue promptly. This policy is for any volunteer or member of staff who wishes to raise a concern about a volunteer or their volunteering.

Scope of policy

This policy applies to all Ramblers volunteers, including those who volunteer for local Groups and Areas in England, Scotland and Wales.

It does not apply to secondments, student placements, interns, trainees and work experience placements - these terms do not refer to volunteering and are types of paid or unpaid work, please refer to our HR policies.

The Policy is not a legal document and does not follow employment law. Volunteering is a non-contractual relationship and issues are dealt with as informally as possible.

This policy might be used in conjunction with the Complaints Policy.

This policy is used when a volunteer:

- Has a concern about some aspect of their volunteering, including staff actions relating directly to their volunteering
- Has a concern about another volunteer's behaviour or actions
- Is alleged or suspected of behaviour which is inappropriate to their role or is considered unacceptable behaviour

This policy is used when a volunteer manager or member of staff:

- Has a concern about a volunteer's behaviour or actions
- Believes a volunteer is not carrying out their role in line with what is expected or required

This policy does not apply to:

- Complaints from Ramblers' volunteers relating to their own membership, or complaints relating to the charity - its activities, aims, objectives or policies.
- Complaints from Ramblers' members about a volunteer or from members of the public about a volunteer – this is covered by our Complaints policy.

Principles

Why do we need a Problem Solving Policy?

- To reduce any disruption to the charity's work and the people involved
- To address unsatisfactory performance or unacceptable behaviour
- To resolve any concerns quickly
- To show that we respect our volunteers and are committed to good practice
- To ensure our volunteers are treated in a fair and equal way
- To protect the reputation and liability of Ramblers

The guidance in this policy is based on:

- Resolving issues:
 - fairly, reasonably, and respecting the right to be heard
 - in a timely way - as quickly as is possible, allowing for time to gather information and come to decisions
 - locally and informally whenever possible, to avoid escalation
 - with care, sensitivity and confidentiality
- Using our Problem Solving Procedure to resolve issues, which includes:
 - a local and informal resolution process
 - a formal procedure
 - an appeal procedure
- Involving only those people who are required by our procedure or whose input is needed for a fair resolution.

Definitions

Problem Solving - this is the term used across the volunteering development sector which refers to the equivalent of an employee discipline and grievance policy/procedure but for volunteers. It applies when a volunteer has raised a grievance about some aspect of their volunteering, or a concern has been raised about how they have carried out their role.

Volunteer - a volunteer freely donates their skills and time, unpaid, to carry out authorised tasks or duties, on behalf of the Ramblers, that contribute to the overall charitable aims and objectives. Volunteers are required to meet expectations, standards, and be limited by the boundaries of their volunteer role description, with consequences if they do not.

Volunteer manager – is responsible for supporting and managing one or more volunteers, this may be their main role or only part of their duties. At the Ramblers, volunteer managers are usually volunteers and can be staff.

Staff – refers to a paid employee of the Ramblers.

Area/ Group – Groups usually cover a geographical area such as a town or district, but also focus on shorter, easier or family-friendly walks, as well as different ages. Groups co-operate together as Areas and they play a key role in communicating our work.

Informal procedure – the process local volunteers and staff follow to resolve issues at a local level.

Formal procedure – the process Ramblers follows if a serious or high-risk issue has been identified.

Serious or high-risk issue – is an issue which is against legislation (for example, criminal action or against the Equality Act), or a less serious issue where the informal procedure has been exhausted.

Investigating manager - is appointed to lead a formal investigation into a problem solving issue - this will be a Ramblers member of staff.

Accessibility and inclusion

The Ramblers is built on the belief that everyone deserves the right to experience the joy of walking outdoors. We strive to be diverse, inclusive and accessible in how we deal with any issues and concerns raised.

Further information

Related policies, procedures and supporting information are available on the Ramblers website: <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/>

- Safeguarding procedure
- Complaints policy
- Volunteering policy