

Guidance - Managing Concerns from Volunteers

Each Force will manage concerns, safeguarding or otherwise, differently and your force may have a process in place. However, here are certain things to think about when managing volunteers. The unit lead or person responsible for volunteers should be made aware of the issue as soon as possible and they should:

- Make an initial assessment of the concern raised as soon as information is shared with you by the volunteer.
- Never assume action has been taken. Remember, unit leaders may not be clear about what they should do. Collecting and considering the information enables you to do two crucial things:
 - Identify what the issue is that has been reported to you.
 - Establish the level of risk to the individual who has been, or is being, abused or is at risk of harm.
- Always ask what action has already been taken. Never assume that someone else will take responsibility when a threat of harm, such as further abuse, is identified.
- You must clearly establish who is responsible for doing what and ensure that all actions are completed. Remember: you don't have to be certain about the type of concern, to share information with other appropriate individuals. However, you do need to know what the cause for concern is, so you can identify the appropriate action to take.
- During your talk with the volunteer making the report, you should try to gather all the relevant information. If you have a Designated Safeguarding Officer/Named Person, then at this point you should speak to them if the concern is a safeguarding one and follow the Safeguarding Reporting Process. This will also require a report to the [National VPC Safeguarding Manager](#).
- You should always deal with complaints and concerns, especially if they are about a person's behaviour. They can escalate into a safeguarding concern if they are not addressed and managed early on.
- You should always offer support to a volunteer if they are involved in a concern because they may feel very distressed. Good practice states that the organisation should have access to local support services
- You should always consider the following when managing a concern, as this will help you prioritise your actions:
 - You need to identify who is affected by this situation? E.g. volunteers, young people, parents/carers
 - How do you think those affected are reacting or will react? E.g. are there any attitudes or emotions that you may have to be aware of?

- Will this situation impact local operations? E.g. will there be consequences for anyone?
 - What information do you need to share/ and, who needs to know what?
 - Is additional support needed? If so, what, and who, needs it?
 - What are you going to do or say, is asked by parents/carers, community members or beneficiaries?
- You should always review any concern after you have managed it so that you can learn from any mistakes or successes. You should build in time after the concern has been managed to share with volunteers. An ideal time is to bring this into supervision time, as they may also have reflections to share.
 - It is good practice to have one person in the organisation who is able to liaise with external agencies especially if there needs to be communications shared with parents/carers and or the local community. This ensures the communication is clear, factually correct and timely.