

# Grievance Policy

**February 2016**

Starfish endeavours to treat everyone fairly and aims to provide a workplace free from bullying, harassment and violence. If a volunteer feels they have experienced something that breaches our code of conduct or have seen others behaving in a manner that breaches our code of conduct, they must approach the volunteer manager to discuss the issue. They must follow up this conversation with a short email summarising the problem so both volunteer and manager have an electronic copy of the issue raised. The complaint will be reviewed in relation to Starfish Foundation's policy and Code of Conduct.

The volunteer must speak to the volunteer manager to try and resolve the issue informally by taking part in mediation and/or suggesting solutions and desired outcomes, where appropriate. If the issue cannot be resolved informally, or it involves allegations of violence or sexual harassment, then the volunteer can raise a formal grievance.

A formal grievance can be raised if there is an allegation of bullying, or any form of discrimination, use of drugs or alcohol on shift, sexual harassment or violence, or any other form of serious breach with the Code of Conduct. If you wish to make a formal grievance, then please inform the volunteer manager. All parties involved will be immediately take a leave of absence while investigations take place. This is non-negotiable and is part of the contract you make with Starfish when volunteering with us. Consequently, a fact find will be undertaken by the Starfish management, consisting of a discussion of the person complained against, as well as any other witnesses to the alleged offence and access to relevant emails or text can be requested if necessary. Notes and/or an electronic copy will be made of all interviews undertaken. If the allegation involves more than one member of the team, or a member of the Starfish management, an independent investigation will be undertaken by a mediator.

A panel of three long term Starfish members will discuss the findings and may ask the people involved further questions, if they have any. The panel will aim to come to a conclusion within five days, which will be delivered orally and in writing. Conclusions can consist of no case to answer, formal warnings, suspension and dismissal. All decisions are final.

If there are allegations of violence, sexual assault, or breach of local law, the person making the allegation will have our support in involving the police to resolve the matter, if that is what the person involved wishes, and also will have access to professional psychological support. Starfish cannot investigate serious crime in lieu of the police and is not a legal body that is able to convict people against whom allegations are made with the attendant consequences.

All parties are bound by confidentiality and will not share information about grievances except with those persons who in the discretion of long term Starfish members have a legitimate need to know and will not be shared with outside parties.