

Document Title	Problem Solving Procedure for Volunteers
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Related Documents	RTPI Code of conduct Complaints Procedure Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Protected Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy RTPI Volunteering Charter Trustee Code of Conduct
Training and Awareness	Procedure published on the Intranet. Included in staff Induction policy reading. Included in Induction for new volunteers, in particular with new Chairs who may be approached by an individual raising a concern. Shared through internal comms channels to staff and volunteers that the policy is in place.

Introduction and Purpose

We hope that the experience of volunteering at the RTPI will be a positive one, however there may be occasions that either volunteers have a concern that they want to raise, or that others have a concern about a volunteer that will need to be addressed. The purpose of this procedure is to outline how we will seek to resolve any problems arising and wherever possible support the volunteer to undertake their role.

Scope

This procedure applies to any member volunteering on behalf of the RTPI. Section 3 of the document covers specific considerations that are applicable to RTPI Trustees as volunteers bound by the RTPI's Byelaws 64 and 65 and outlined in the Trustee Code of Conduct.

The procedure sits alongside other key related documents such as the RTPI's Complaints Process and indicates the appropriate document to refer to and under what circumstances.

This Problem-Solving procedure is specifically for resolving problems related to members engagement as volunteers with the RTPI, when undertaking RTPI business. For example, a volunteer might raise a concern that the Expenses Policy is being unfairly applied across

areas of volunteering or perhaps a staff member needs to address an issue with a volunteer acting out with the boundaries of their voluntary role. The Welcome to Volunteering Handbook and Volunteering Charter outline the expectations of volunteers, and is supported by role descriptions, and role specific induction and training provided for volunteers, that detail the extent of the different roles of RTPI volunteers.

There may be other circumstances under which other procedures should be followed – for instance if the concern is about a member who is alleged to have breached the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct or the concern is wider than a member’s conduct as a volunteer. In such cases, the formal RTPI Complaints Process regarding member’s adherence to the Code of Professional Conduct will usually be actioned and concluded first, from which a decision on volunteering will be taken. If, on conclusion of Stage 1 of the RTPI Complaints Process, a formal investigation is not undertaken, an RTPI Director will notify the relevant Head of Service or Senior Executive Team (SET) member who can use this procedure to resolve any concerns. On occasion, an issue raised via the RTPI Complaints Process may also be relevant to this procedure if a member is also an active RTPI volunteer. For example, if the complaint is about inappropriate conduct that also affects how the person conducts themselves as a volunteer.

The RTPI also has a Protected Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy the purpose of which is to enable colleagues, volunteers, workers or contractors, to confidentially raise serious concerns with an independent third-party organisation regarding malpractice or impropriety within the RTPI.

For Sections 1 and 2 below, as stated, the aim of the meetings is to understand the issue and identify a solution to resolve the matter, if necessary. Wherever possible, a supportive approach will be taken to enable the individual to continue their volunteering. Discretion may be exercised by the panel in exceptional circumstances (for example, serious illness, accident, absence/holiday or other compassionate grounds) if more time is required by the volunteer and the panel considers it is appropriate in relation to the level of concern that has been raised.

Also, in relation to Sections 1 and 2 if the volunteer chooses not to engage in the process a further attempt to contact them will be made. If they continue not to participate a decision will be made in their absence regarding the way forward which may include pausing or ending the volunteer engagement. This decision will be taken by the Chief Executive under delegated authority and their decision is final.

Procedure

1. If a volunteer has a concern

The following procedure will be applied if a volunteer raises concerns about their experience of volunteering with RTPI.

1.1. Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

Should a volunteer have a concern about their volunteering with RTPI, this should be discussed with their relevant Chair, if appropriate, or their key staff contact. If they wish, volunteers can be accompanied to this meeting by another RTPI volunteer or RTPI member of staff. Most issues can usually be resolved this way.

This meeting will normally be held within three weeks of the concern being raised.

1.2. Stage 2 - Ongoing Concern

If the volunteer does not feel the matter has been resolved, they can complete this online [form](#). This is submitted to the Volunteer Project Co-ordinator who will contact the relevant staff member. The appropriate Head of Service or member of the Senior Executive Team (SET) will carefully consider the issue. The Head of Service / SET member may wish to have a conversation with the volunteer, as part of this process. If this is necessary, the volunteer may be accompanied by another volunteer or RTPI member of staff to the meeting.

The Head of Service / SET member may need to carry out some further investigation and will subsequently respond in writing, setting out the outcome of the meeting and any decision.

This investigation and meeting, if necessary, will normally be held within one month. The outcome will be communicated within three weeks of the meeting.

1.3 Stage 3 - Appeal

The volunteer can appeal this decision if they do not feel the matter has been resolved. A member of SET will review the evidence, perhaps seek to discuss this with the volunteer and decide on an outcome. Their decision will be final.

This stage should be completed within one month.

2. If concerns are raised about a volunteer

The following procedure will be followed, if concerns are raised regarding the conduct or capability of a volunteer engaged in RTPI activities. If the volunteer is also an RTPI Trustee, then section 3 of this document will be followed.

2.1. Initial Steps

If a staff member has a concern, this should initially be discussed in confidence with their line manager, seeking advice from HR if necessary. Depending on the concern, an initial informal conversation with the Complaints Investigator will help identify whether it should be referred to the RTPI Complaints Process in the first instance and not use the Problem-Solving procedure.

In serious cases, volunteers may be asked to temporarily stop volunteering immediately. For example, if a volunteer is accused of harassment, theft, angry, violent behaviour, or any conduct which the Chief Executive believes to be of a serious nature. Such cases will be referred to the Complaints investigator and determined under the Code of Professional

Conduct, in the first instance. If a precautionary suspension is issued to a member under RTPI Regulations, who is also registered in a volunteering capacity with the Institute, they will be requested to stop volunteering immediately until the matter has been resolved.

2.2 Stage 1 – Informal Discussion

If the concern is one which relates to volunteer activity and does not initially require referral to the RTPI Complaints Process, the first step should be a discussion about the concern, between the volunteer and their relevant Chair, if appropriate, or key staff contact. The meeting should be held no later than three weeks of notifying the volunteer of the concern. This is an opportunity for the volunteer to hear what the nature of the concern is and to offer their side of the story. The volunteer will be given the option to be accompanied by another RTPI volunteer or member of staff.

The aim of this discussion is to understand the issue and identify a solution to resolve the matter, if necessary. The outcomes may include:

- a. Take no further action,
- b. Recommend a course of action to resolve the matter, such as further training or support,
- c. Mutually agree that the volunteer will stand down from their role(s). In this instance the issue may also be referred to the RTPI Complaints Investigator, under the terms of the Code of Professional Conduct.

In all cases, the volunteer will receive confirmation of the outcome of the discussion in writing, within three weeks. For outcome b this will outline the concerns, standards expected, how they will be supported to achieve these standards and a timeframe for review.

The individual who has raised the concern will be notified once the concerns have been addressed but there is no entitlement for details of any action taken to be disclosed.

2.3. Stage 2 – Ongoing Concern

If outcome b was selected above and the concern remains unresolved after the agreed timeframe a panel will be appointed by the relevant Director and consist of a Trustee of the Board, an Independent Member of the Appointments and Remuneration Committee and a senior staff member.

The panel will review the concern and meet with the volunteer and any other relevant people, within one month. If they wish, volunteers can be accompanied to this meeting by another RTPI volunteer or RTPI member of staff.

The volunteer will receive confirmation of the outcome of the discussion in writing, within three weeks. This will either;

- a) Outline the concerns, standards expected, how they will be supported to achieve these standards and a timeframe for review. Making it clear that if this is not achieved the volunteering relationship will end.

- b) End the volunteering relationship with the RTPI giving the reasons why this decision has been taken. In this instance the issue may also be referred to the RTPI Complaints Investigator under the terms of the Code of Professional Conduct.

2.4. Stage 3 - Volunteer Appeal

To note, if the matter is being dealt with through RTPI Complaints Process and a formal investigation under the Code of Professional Conduct has commenced then any appeal process with regards the problem-solving procedure will be paused until that investigation has concluded.

The volunteer that the concerns were raised about, can appeal the Stage 1 or 2 decision if they feel that the outcome was not appropriate. The matter will then be considered by a panel. The panel will be appointed by the Chief Executive and Chair of the Board of Trustees and will comprise a Trustee and a senior member of staff.

The volunteer will be given the opportunity to state their case to the panel and can be accompanied to the meeting by a RTPI member of staff or another RTPI volunteer.

The panel will carefully consider the matter and apply one or more of the following outcomes:

- a) Close the case as no action is required.
- b) Support the outcome of Stage 1 or 2,
- c) Suggest a new course of action to resolve the matter, such as training or support, to be implemented within an agreed timeframe.
- d) End the volunteering relationship with RTPI.

The decision of the volunteer panel is final and will be confirmed in writing.

This stage will be completed within one month, with the confirmation in writing within three weeks of the appeal meeting.

3 RTPI Trustees as volunteers

While we hope that most concerns will be resolved informally, the Trustee Code of Conduct and Section 64 and 65 of the RTPI's Byelaws outline specific provisions related to the 'Termination of Office' of Trustees. This means that a concern raised (as outlined in section 2) about a Trustee will be carried out as follows:

Stage 1 - Informal discussion. This would take place with the Chair or Convenor if appropriate.

At stage 2, the Chair of the Board in conjunction with the Chief Executive will convene a panel of five General Assembly members in accordance with the Byelaws.

Stage 2 – Alternative outcome b. Written notice of a resolution to the General Assembly proposing to remove the Trustee from office in accordance with Bye-Law 66.

Appeal Stage - If the appeal relates to a decision to proceed to a written notice of resolution to the General Assembly the appeal will take place before the resolution is submitted.

Appeal Stage outcomes – an alternative outcome to d will be to,

d) Proceed with written notice of a resolution to the General Assembly proposing to remove the Trustee from office in accordance with Bye-Law 66.

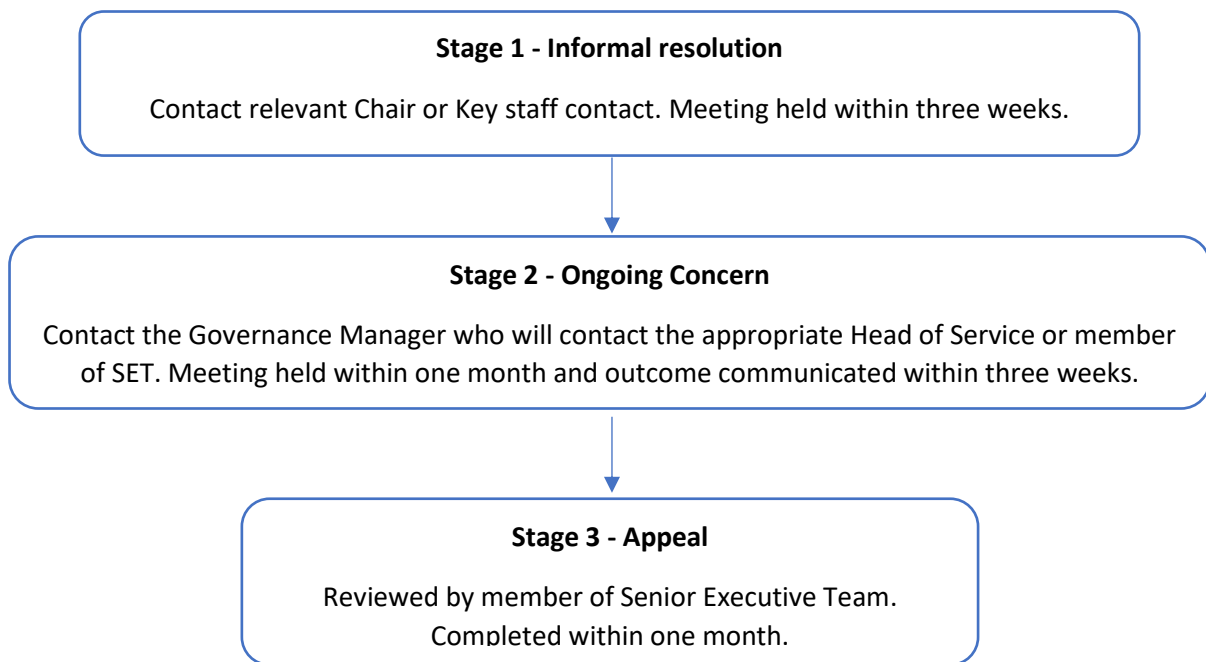
Recording the Process

Records will be kept confidentially on the CRM. The staff member overseeing the process is responsible for recording the process.

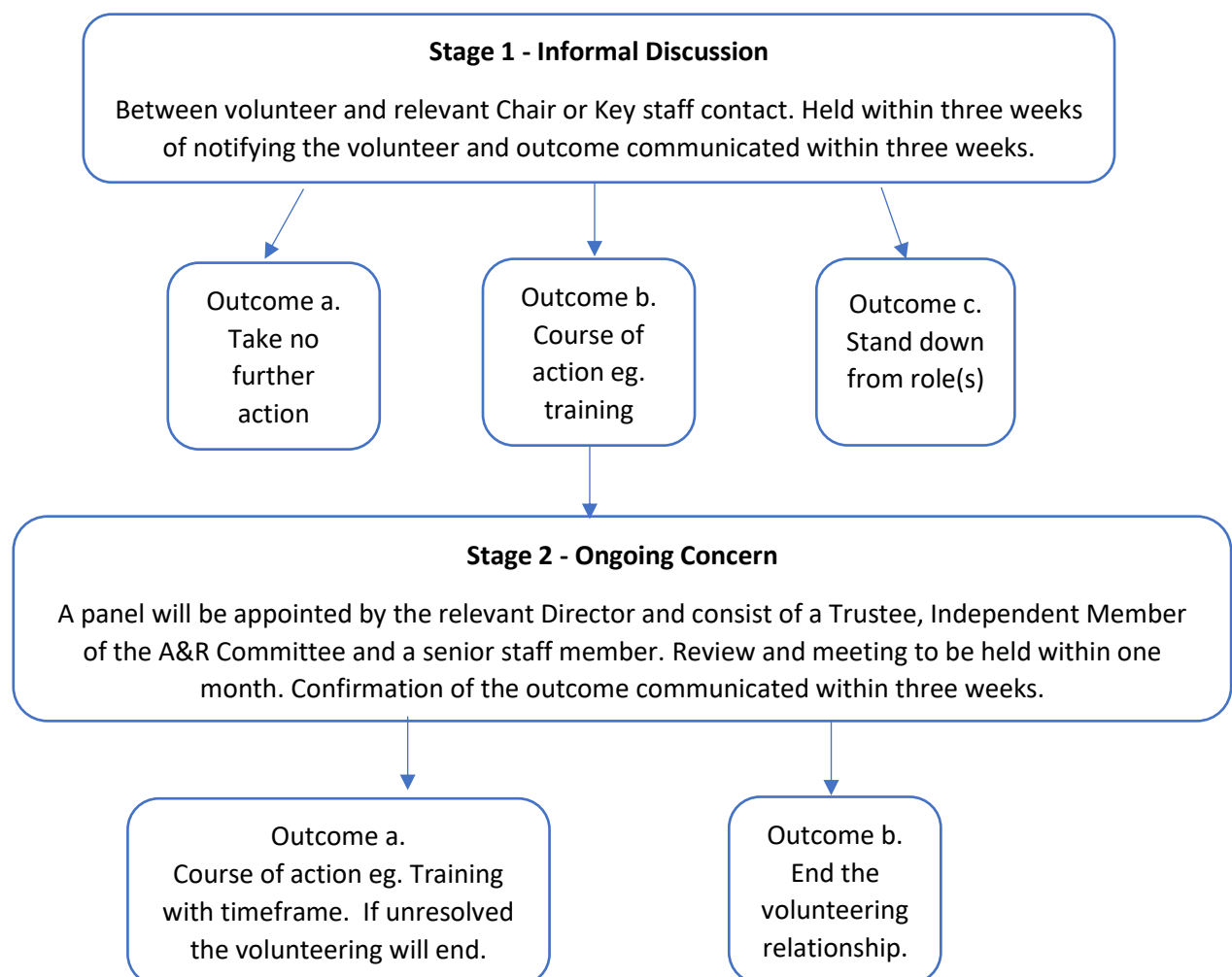
Review

This procedure will be reviewed every three years or as required.

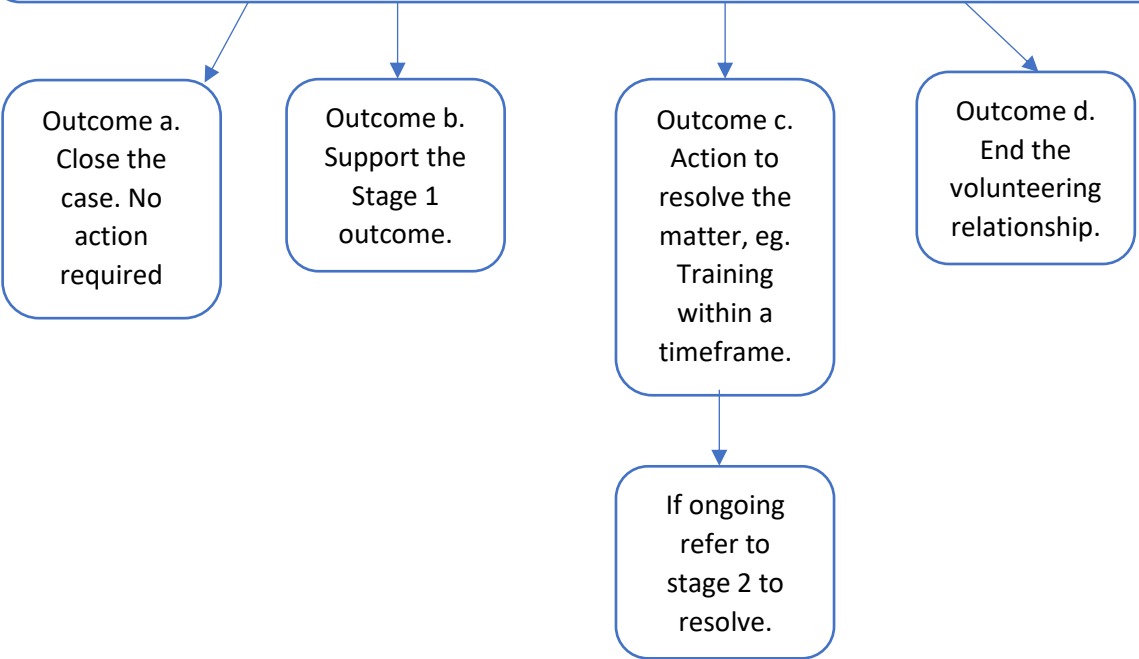
If a volunteer has a concern



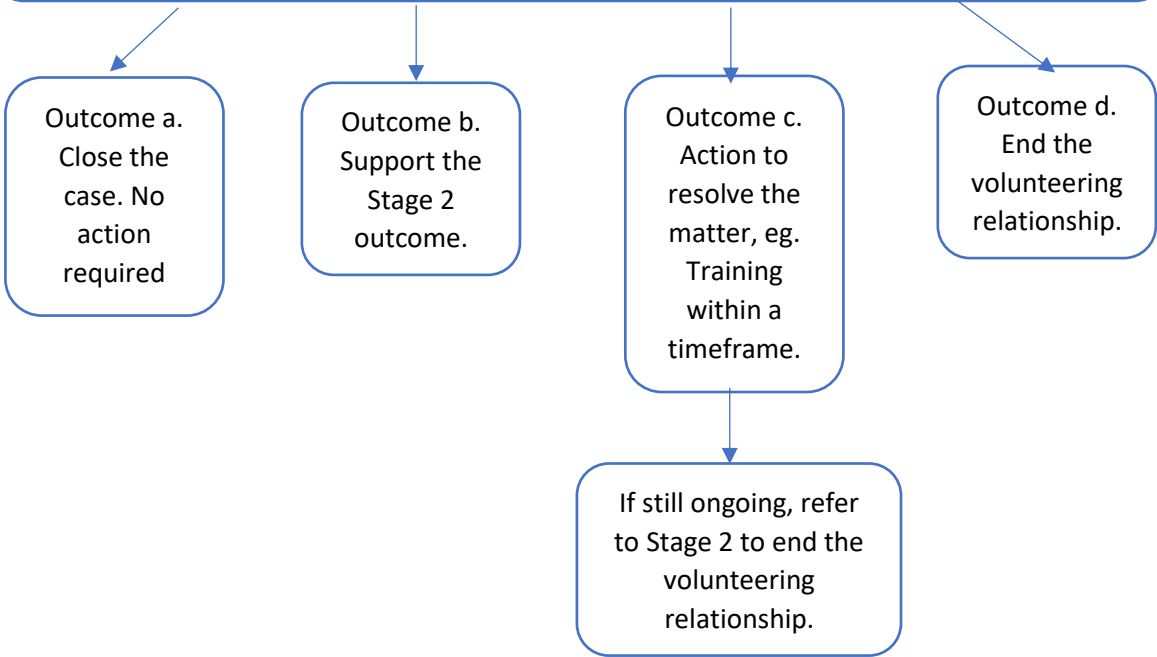
If concerns are raised about a volunteer



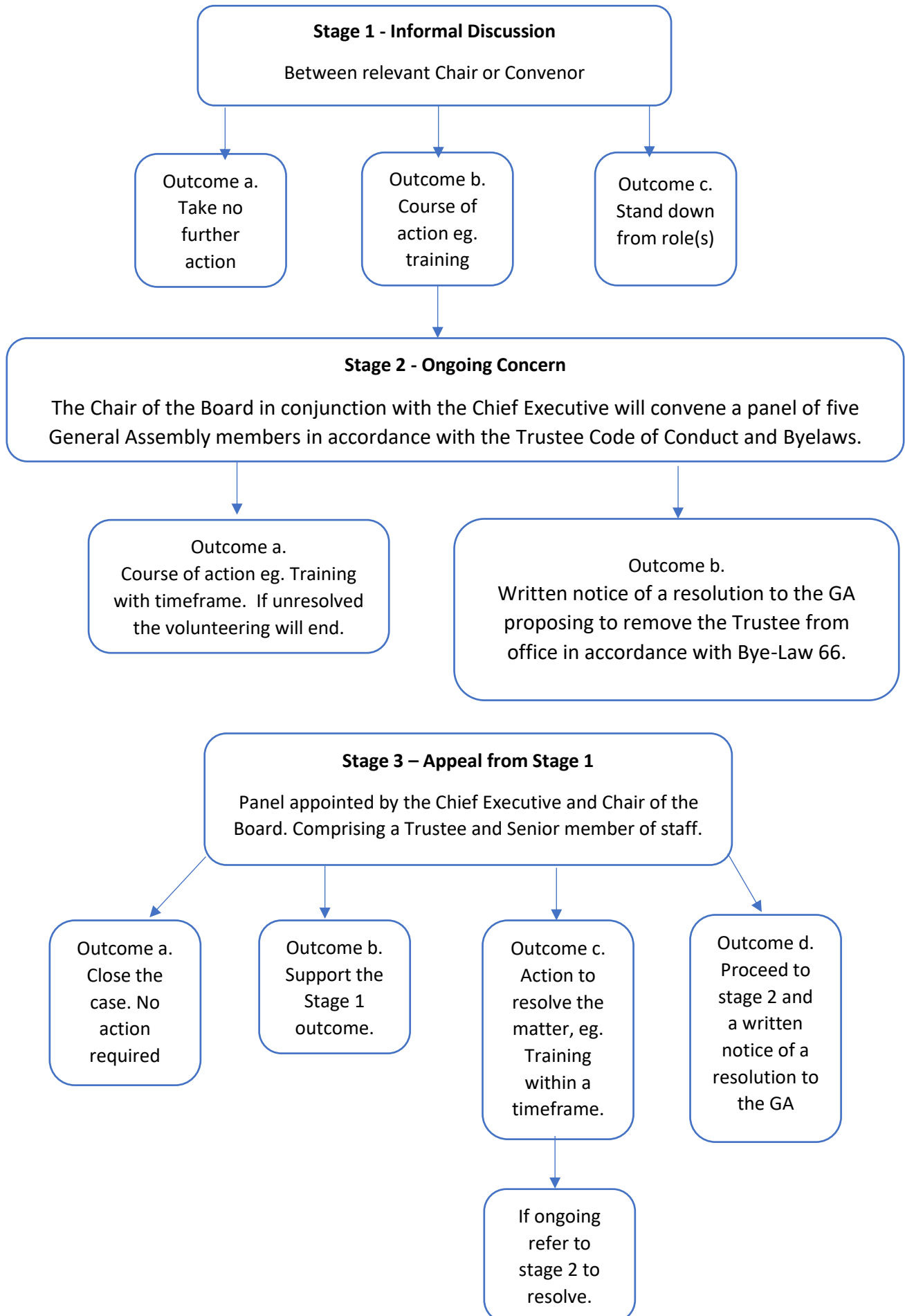
Stage 3 – Appeal from Stage 1
Panel appointed by the Chief Executive and Chair of the Board. Comprising a Trustee and Senior member of staff. Completed within one month and outcome within three weeks.

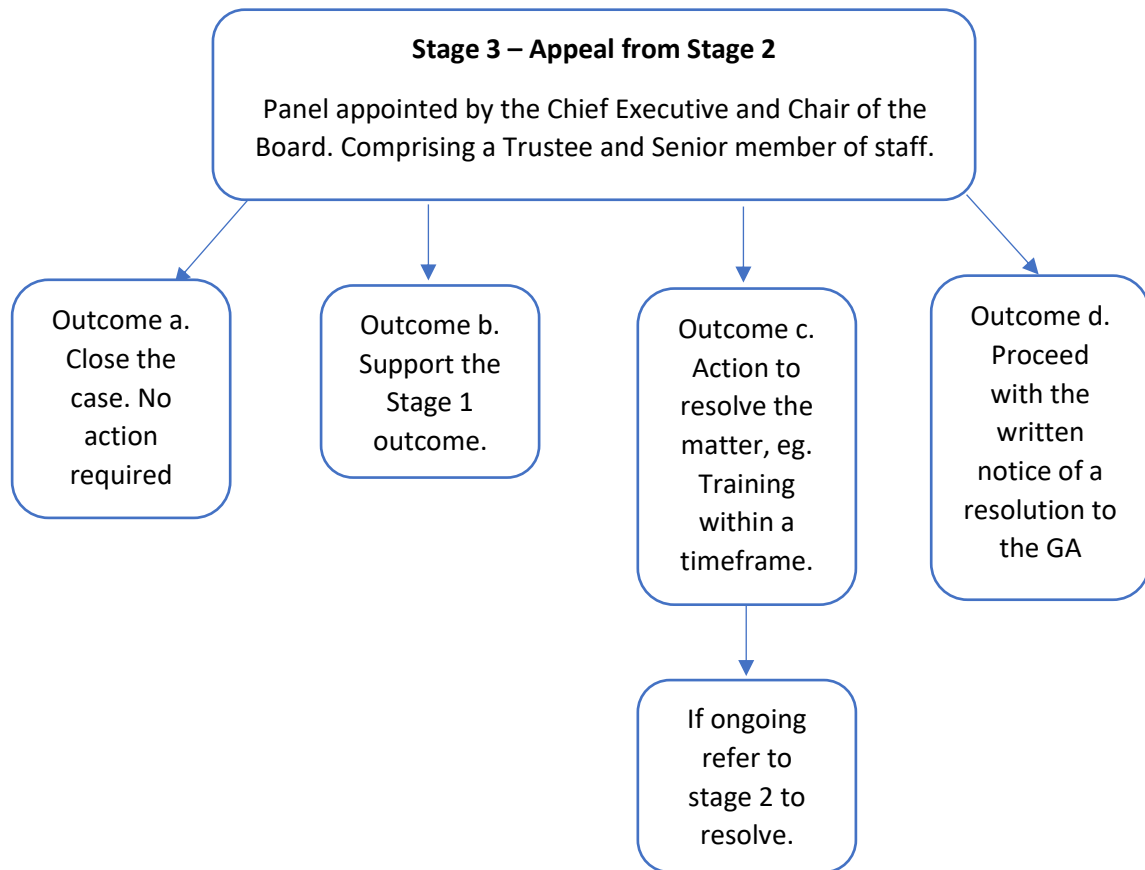


Stage 3 – Appeal from Stage 2
Panel appointed by the Chief Executive and Chair of the Board. Comprising a Trustee and Senior member of staff. Completed within one month and outcome within three weeks.



For Trustees





Appendix 1 – Outline Agenda for Stage 2 – Ongoing Concern

Those present: *(record the names and roles of those present)*

Apologies: *(record the names and roles of any participants that have sent in their apologies)*

Absence: *(record the names and roles of any participants not in attendance)*

Item 1: Purpose of the meeting

Item 2: Outline the concerns raised, summary of discussion so far and what was agreed at stage 1, option b. Such as timeframe agreed, support or training provided and expected change in behaviour.

Item 3: Hear from the volunteer.

Item 4: Discussion

Item 5: summarise the agreed outcome (see options above)