



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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HELPdesk - 0333 050 9227



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Thanks for choosing to volunteer with Isolation Help Bexley or IHB. As an IHB volunteer you'll make a real difference to the lives of the vulnerable and elderly in Bexley and your local community. Our handbook should provide you with all the info you need for volunteering with IHB, but if we've forgotten anything or you have any questions at all, please give us a shout.

WHO ARE IHB?

IHB are a group of volunteers in the London Borough of Bexley. The group was launched on 17 March 2020 in response to the looming COVID-19 Pandemic. Our concern was that the elderly and vulnerable of Bexley, particularly those with no digital footprint, would find the necessity to isolate a significant challenge. Concerns became a reality and for many the everyday possible became simply IMPOSSIBLE.

Simple tasks like collecting a prescription, buying a newspaper or walking a dog, suddenly attracted a degree of risk. Thankfully, the fine people of Bexley quickly rose to the challenge and in the space of just over 2 months, every household in Bexley had received one of IHB's flyers. Over 800 Bexley residents had joined IHB's ranks and voluntarily provided practical help to many hundreds of elderly or vulnerable neighbours. One of the saddest discoveries, was just how many people were 'isolated' before there was a need to self isolate. For that reason IHB plan to hang around long after COVID is defeated and so hope that Bexley's COVID legacy will be the birth of IHB.

As a local community group, we're dedicated to working together and with our partners to ensure that elderly and vulnerable members of our communities know that they will always have a lifeline in a time of crisis. Put simply, our ethos is that we are committed to ensuring that 'NOBODY in Bexley feels isolated'. IHB aim to work with others so together we can 'Build An Even Better Bexley' and make Bexley 'London's Friendliest Borough'!

WHAT DO IHB DO?

As we've already said, IHB are all about preventing isolation and we do this by encouraging traditional neighbourly values and community spiritedness. In reality, IHB offer help to elderly or otherwise vulnerable members of our communities. Help with ordinarily simple tasks like shopping, prescription collection, dog walking or just a friendly chat. Ideally, volunteers will be partnered with an IHBuddy in their community who they then support on a regular basis. Unfortunately, there aren't enough regular IHBuddies to do round, but we also get plenty of ad hoc requests, from people that are only temporarily isolated, or who have specific 1 off needs. Here's how it works.

All requests for help come through our HELPdesk where our HELPdesk volunteers (our IHBees) use the very latest technology to manage them. Requests are allocated using TeamBee, that's the system all volunteers use to register with IHB in the 1st place. TeamBee tells the HELPdesk who's best suited to help and that volunteer then receives an email or text asking them to accept the request. If the volunteer can help, they do. If they can't the HELPdesk tries the 2nd & 3rd choices. If unsuccessful, the HELPdesk broadcast an appeal on WhatsApp which is explained in the communications section.

Once a request has been completed, volunteers send the HELPdesk a result and the job is closed. If volunteers have a regular IHBuddy, that job remains open and is updated each time any help is provided.

Where the needs are more pressing IHB has a bank of volunteer drivers that will deliver an urgent provisions box from IHB's Provisions Hub.

IHB also have a team of highly skilled 'Listeners'. Listeners hold professional qualifications that make them suitable for this role and already hold an enhanced vetting status.

OUR STRUCTURE

IHB is administered by a Board of Trustees made up of our 6 founder members, commonly referred to as The Admins or Admin Team:

Michelle is our HELPdesk Coordinator and is also responsible for the IHB Food Hub. Michelle coordinates a dedicated team of volunteers that staff the IHB HELPdesk during our hours of business. The team are affectionately known as the IHBees and manage the very busy task of matching requests with available volunteers using IHB's Team Bee software. So when Michelle isn't busy with the IHBees, she can be found collecting provisions from local supermarkets or dispatching urgent provisions boxes from the IHB Food Hub. You can [click here to send an email to Michelle](#).

Liz is the IHB Safeguarding lead and also has responsibility for the IHB listening service. Essentially, Liz looks after the welfare of not just IHB's people in need, but also all of us too and is keen to stress that the listeners are there for IHB's volunteers just as much as anybody else. When Liz isn't looking after us all, she also likes to muck in at the IHB Food Hub and can often be found at Michelle's side on those regular, all important shopping trips to stock up on the Hubs supplies. You can [click here to send an email to Liz](#).

Fiona is our Duty Admin. As such, Fiona is the day to day go-to member of the admin team for those tricky situations and help us find a resolution to problems as they arise. Fiona's also the Strand Liaison, covering off tasks that may overlap a number of strands or that don't fit under any specific umbrella. You can [click here to send an email to Fiona](#).

Colin is our Treasurer and manages IHB's finances, keeping a keen eye on donations and outgoings to make sure IHB remains financially stable. As the Treasurer, Colin is responsible for funding applications and is also involved in all of our fundraising efforts. You can [click here to send an email to Colin](#).

Eugene manages our IT, be that Team Bee, IHB's website or any other technological innovations that rear their heads with the potential to make IHB more efficient. You can [click here to send an email to Eugene](#).

Dave is our Secretary and has responsibility for our public image. He has oversight of our Media, Social Media and website content and liaises with outside agencies, like London Borough of Bexley (LBB) and Bexley Voluntary Services Council (BVSC). Dave sends out many of the internal communications you receive and is also responsible for policy writing prior to board approval. As Secretary, it's down to him to set agendas for meetings, take the minutes and ensure that they are duly documented. You can [click here to send an email to Dave](#).

COMMUNICATION

There are plenty of ways of keeping up with what's going on.

WhatsApp – We use 2 main WhatsApp channels. The general chat group for volunteers, but do consider your posts as this will go to everyone, too many posts and replies will generate noise and make the group less useful. [click here to join](#) the group if you are reading this on your mobile, or enter <https://bit.ly/bvg19WhatsApp> on your mobile's browser, this should open the group in WhatsApp for you.

There's also an IHB Broadcast only group, used to send out useful information and announce urgent requests. Only the admin team can post here so there is no chat or reply option. [click here to join](#) this group if you're reading this on your mobile, or enter <https://bit.ly/IHBbroadcastonly> on your mobile's browser.

Facebook – IHB have 2 Facebook outlets and as an IHB volunteer, you have access to both. Our [Closed Volunteer Group](#) or our [Public page](#)

Email – We'll drop you an email from time to time, normally once a month when we send out our IHBulletin, so please make sure you have IHB as an approved sender or we could just end up in that junk folder. Feel free to email us with a general enquiry at the [HELPdesk](#) or any of the Admin team via the links on page 4 of this document.

SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

As a new volunteer, you are invited to attend one of our online induction sessions. They're at 2pm on the last Sunday of the month and should last about an hour. The induction introduces new volunteers to IHB and some of our more important policies like safeguarding. The link to join a session is in your welcome email.

There's also plenty of other opportunities to discuss what you've done with other volunteers or the admin team. The easiest way is using the general WhatsApp chat where we encourage volunteers to share their experiences and learn from each other. It's really important to keep these lines of communication open.

If you are a member of either the HELPdesk or Listening teams, you will have regular contact with Michelle and Liz and will be given the opportunity to receive bespoke online Safeguarding training.

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

If you have any concerns about the safety or welfare of any adult or child you have come in contact with (known as safeguarding) these should immediately be brought to the attention of IHB's [Safeguarding Lead](#) by email or phone. Our safeguarding policy has a reporting procedure within it. You should be familiar with both the policy and procedure so you know what to do if a problem arises. Both policies are included in this handbook.

While we like to think that IHB is a happy place where nobody has cause for complaint, we are realistic and know that there will always be occasions when people get the hump. The reality is that we need to be prepared for this, so we have no option but to have a Problem Solving policy in place. That policy explains the process if there is an issue raised against an IHB Volunteer, but please don't be afraid of this, it's there for your protection.

If you feel that a complaint needs escalating, you can find full details of this process in our Grievance Policy. Again both of these policies are contained within this handbook.

COMPLETING TASKS

You should never perform tasks that you do not feel comfortable with or are outside of your role such as house repairs, personal care or financial support. If you have any concerns or there is additional support that you feel a Person in Need requires, either you or the HELPdesk can signpost to the appropriate group or agency.

We understand that things come up, so if for any reason you can't complete a task that's assigned to you, please let us know. Drop the [HELPdesk](#) an email or if pressing give them a call on **0333 050 9227** but please do try to give us as much notice as possible.

IHB's 'Responding To Requests For Assistance' and 'Handling Emergencies' documents deal specifically with completing tasks and any emergencies that may arise as a result so they're really worth being familiar with. You'll find both in this document.

HEALTH & SAFETY, SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING

IHB have a duty of care towards both our volunteers and those Persons in Need we aim to help. IHB has a Health and Safety Policy in place, and volunteers are covered by our Public Liability Insurance. If you have any safety concerns, please let us know.

In addition, we have a Safeguarding Policy, alongside a Grievance procedure for reporting incidents or concerns. Please make yourself familiar with both documents.

Remember that people who use our services may be vulnerable, through age, illness, disability or mental health status. Our boundaries guidelines set out our expectations of your behaviour. They are in place to protect you as well as the people who use our services – always think about your actions and how they might be perceived. Last of all, you can always speak to any of the IHB Admin or the Listening team members about any aspect of IHB life in 'complete confidence'.

DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

People who use our services may disclose sensitive information, and we must ensure that this is treated responsibly. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) compliance, is important and IHB have a confidentiality policy in place to protect it. We do not ask you to sign it but we do expect all of IHB's volunteers to respect it.

Volunteers' own personal information is kept in line with the Data Protection Act and GDPR guidelines. Only people within IHB have access to it, and it will not be passed on outside of IHB without consent.

EQUALITY, ANTI – BULLYING AND DIVERSITY

IHB is committed to being an inclusive organisation and will not tolerate any form of bullying, discrimination or harassment.

We expect you to follow the letter and spirit of IHB's Equal Opportunities Policy and treat other people with respect, whether they are people who use our services, other volunteers or any other person that you may come into contact with in your capacity as an IHB volunteer.

If you feel as if you are the victim of bullying, IHB have an Anti Harassment and Bullying Policy in place. On the practical front, if you are ever concerned about any such issues, give 1 of the Admin Team a shout as soon as you can so we can address any urgent issues immediately.

INFECTION CONTROL

IHB DO NOT ourselves provide scientific advice on infection control or advice on types or levels of Personal Protective Equipment or PPE. We will of course steer IHB's volunteers in the right direction for such advice, and we recommend official sources of information such as:

Gov.co.uk the NHS, Public Health England or the World Health Organisation.

IHB are part of the London Borough of Bexley Community Champions Network and so will pass on information that we receive from official sources via this outlet.

EXPENSES

We will reimburse reasonable travel expenses. Please see our [Financial rules](#) for further details.

GIFTS

You should not receive any gifts or money from people who use our services which could be in any way misinterpreted. IHB volunteers cannot receive payments for their service, even as a means of thanks. There may be times, such as on special occasions, when small gifts can be accepted such as chocolates, flowers or maybe even a bottle of wine. If you are unsure whether you should accept an item, please give 1 of the admin team a call.

And that's about it. All of those policies and documents that have been mentioned can be found on the following pages.

All that remains is for all of us in the Admin Team to welcome you to IHB and to hope that you get as much satisfaction out of volunteering with IHB as we have.

Take care and stay safe

Michelle, Liz, Fiona, Colin, Eugene and Dave

RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Any Persons in Need (PiN) will normally make contact with IHB via the IHB HELPdesk.

An IHB HELPdesk volunteer will then assess the needs of that PiN.

If that PiN requires food and essentials immediately, the HELPdesk will allocate the task to a volunteer driver and an emergency provisions box will be dispatched from the IHB Provisions Hub and delivered to the PiN's door.

If a PiN wishes to remunerate for a provisions box, they can only do so via IHB's [Donations page](#) on our website.

On no account should IHB volunteers take possession of cash on behalf of IHB.

Many PiNs do not require an emergency box, they simply need a bit of help with their shopping, collecting prescriptions, walking their pet dog or may just want a chat. When this is the case, the HELPdesk will find a volunteer to help. The HELPdesk will first try and find a suitable volunteer that is geographically compatible. This isn't always possible though and when not, an announcement will be made on the WhatsApp Broadcast channel.

Sometimes a PiN's needs are a 1 off and no further help will be needed once the task is complete. On other occasions the PiN will need regular help and the volunteer will have the option of becoming that PiN's regular IHBuddy. Where this is the case, the volunteer is encouraged to assist the PiN in their capacity as a 'Good Neighbour'. The PiN should provide their own cash and the volunteer attend a shop or order online shopping on the PiN's behalf. Once purchased, the goods, their receipt and any change owing should be returned to the PiN.

Volunteers are encouraged to retain their own photographic records of such transactions if they so desire.

Once a PiN has had assistance rendered, Volunteers should complete their Volunteer Log with details of that assistance and submit electronically to the HELPdesk.

It is at the Volunteers discretion as to whether they adopt that PiN on a buddy system for future referrals or not.

IHB do not routinely ask volunteers to enter PiN's addresses or have any physical contact. There are certain situations where this may be necessary as detailed in IHB's Safeguarding Policy.

Volunteers should always adhere to published Government / Public Health England advice concerning infection control.

HANDLING EMERGENCIES

Hopefully you won't encounter any emergencies during your role as a volunteer but please read these guidelines to follow in the event that you do. IHB HELPdesk and Admin Team members will be available to support you but will rely on you for accurate information as the person that is present at the time.

If you arrive at the home of a Person in Need for a scheduled visit but there is no answer

Many of the people we help live alone and are elderly or vulnerable so can be prone to illness or injury. If you arrive and cannot get an answer, please follow these steps;

- Ring the bell and knock a few times, as loudly as possible, in case they haven't heard you
- Try to call through the letterbox
- Look through the windows to see if you can see anything of concern
- Try phoning them and remember to leave it ringing for a long time to give them time to answer if they are in
- Listen for any noise
- Check to see if there are any papers, post or milk left out indicating a lack of normal regular behaviour.
- Check with the neighbours to see if they know of their whereabouts or when they last saw them.
- Contact the HELPdesk or Duty Admin and give all of the information that you have.. We will try contacting the person again and also make contact with any next of kin before making a decision about whether to contact the Police or Social Services.

What to do if a Person in Need has a fall

Many of the people who use our services can be a little unsteady and may be prone to falls. If a Person in Need falls when you are with them, please follow these guidelines;

If uninjured and able to get up

- If the Person in Need is uninjured and able to get up with only a little help, then please assist them by providing a chair or sturdy surface that they can pull themselves up on. If any more than the simplest help in returning to standing is required, see below.
- Please let the HELPdesk know what has happened so that we can check up the person is ok.

HANDLING EMERGENCIES

If Person in Need is injured or unable to get up without minimal support

- If the Person in Need is injured or cannot get up without a lot of support, please call **999** and ask for an ambulance (if the individual is refusing please advise you're unable to pick them up and must call for help, they are able to then refuse treatment from the paramedics but that must be decided by them).
- Keep them as warm and comfortable as possible, staying with them and talking with them to keep them calm. If their condition deteriorates, re contact the ambulance service and advise accordingly.
- When the ambulance arrives please give the Paramedics any information that you have.
- You are not required to go to the hospital with the individual if you do not wish to.
- Please then contact the HELPdesk or Duty Admin and advise them of what has happened. They will contact next of kin as appropriate. If you are aware of any pets in the house, please also let us know.

If a Person in Need is unwell

If you are concerned for the health of anyone you are volunteering for but do not feel that it is life threatening, then please urge them to call 111 for advice. If you feel it is life-threatening then please call 999 and follow the same steps as you would in the event of a fall.

Other concerns

If you have any other concerns about a Person in Need , such as their mobility, living environment or health then please let us know as soon as possible. Please also note down any concerns in your visit log and we will then decide on the best course of action. Alternatively, you can bring this to the attention of the IHB Safeguarding lead or Duty Admin.

Telephone calls

In the very unlikely event of being told of a safeguarding issue whilst talking to a Person in Need on the telephone, please raise the issue with the IHB Safeguarding lead or Duty Admin. The issue will be dealt with in line with our safeguarding policy.

If the Person in Need appears to be in immediate danger, please establish their exact location and ask them to terminate the call and call emergency services themselves. You too should then call the emergency services and provide the exact location as previously disclosed by the Person in Need.

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS POLICY

Contacting the Emergency Services

In an emergency dial 999.

This should be used if:

- Immediate medical attention is needed or
- There is a danger to life, or
- Risk of serious injury, or
- A serious crime is in progress or about to happen

All volunteers witnessing such an incident are empowered to dial 999 you will be able to give the most accurate and timely account of the incident

When it is safe and after calling the emergency services contact the IHB safeguarding officer, Duty Admin or HELPdesk.

IHB has a duty of care towards our volunteers and the Persons in Need who use our services. IHB believes that it is unacceptable for any child or adult to experience any kind of abuse. Given the potential vulnerability of some people who use IHB our duty towards them can be enhanced. As such, we must put measures in place to keep them safe, and this policy forms part of that process. IHB's Safeguarding Policy is aimed at protecting children, young people, adults at risk and volunteers.

The policy covers all volunteers with specific guidance for those regularly in contact with children and young people or adults at risk.

Definition of a Child

The Children Act 1989 defines a child as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, in prison or in a Young Offenders Institution does not change his or her status or entitlement to service or protection.

Definition of an Adult at Risk

IHB takes its definition of an adult at risk from the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) interpretation: ***'people who, because of issues such as dementia, learning disability, mental ill-health or substance abuse, have care and support needs that may make them more vulnerable to abuse or neglect.'***

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS POLICY

This may include people who:

- *are elderly and frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment*
- *have a learning disability*
- *have a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment*
- *have mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder*
- *have a long-term illness/condition*
- *misuse substances or alcohol*
- *are a carer such as a family member/friend who provides personal assistance and care to adults and is subject to abuse*
- *are unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support. (This list is not exhaustive)*

IHB are committed to keeping the people we volunteer with safe from harm and such harm can take many forms; again, we use definitions from SCIE:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Self-neglect

Further information on signs and indicators of abuse can be found at www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse

IHB are also committed to ensuring that the following values underpin our work with those that use our services;

- Respect - for an individual's needs, opinions, wishes, choices, culture, race or religion
- Dignity
- Independence – to make their own decisions and take their own actions
- Equality – please see our Equal Opportunities Policy
- Choice – to have the right to make their own choices and be given information enabling this decision making
- Welfare – the welfare of children and young people or adults at risk is paramount

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS POLICY

Meeting our duty of care

- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- IHB have appointed a Safeguarding lead and any safeguarding issue should be reported to them directly or via the IHB Duty Admin or IHB HELPdesk.
- IHB will provide information, advice and support to all of our volunteers to ensure that they are aware of boundaries and the standards of behaviour we expect of them.
- IHB have established a confidentiality policy to help safeguard personal details and sensitive information
- IHB will revise and update our procedures to ensure they remain in line with relevant legislation and recognised good practice
- Where relevant and or necessary to the role, IHB may carry out criminal record checks in line with Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) guidelines.
- IHB will risk assess volunteer roles and the home environment of the people who use our services (for volunteering services where this is appropriate)
- IHB will inform all staff and volunteers that they have a duty to report any concerns or incidents
- Our Board of Trustees also known as the IHB Admin Team, will be responsible for ensuring that this policy and guidelines are implemented and monitor incidents to ensure best practice is adopted.

Procedure for dealing with concerns

This procedure is not intended to frighten people. You are unlikely to ever come across a situation where you have safeguarding concerns. However, it is important to know what to do if the situation arises.

If you believe someone is in immediate danger you should remove yourself from any immediate risk and call the police on 999.

If someone discloses information to you:

- Listen carefully to what you are being told and reassure the person that you are taking what they say seriously.
- Do not agree to keep what you are told a secret – you cannot do this. Explain to them that you will have to pass the information on. If possible, name the person you will pass the information to.
- Allow the person to talk in their own words. Don't interrupt, finish sentences for them or ask leading questions.

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- As soon as possible, write down what you have seen or heard. Use the person's own words rather than your own interpretation of what they said. Include any details about time, place and circumstances. If you have seen any injuries note their location and appearance. If you have witnessed an incident identify anyone else who was there at the time. Sign and date your report, noting the time and the location.
- Report what has happened to the IHB HELPdesk, Duty Admin or Safeguarding lead, whichever is most easily contactable. Do not discuss what you have been told with anyone else unless it is as part of an official investigation.

Procedure for handling reports

If an incident or concern is reported and a person is believed to be in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed, the appropriate emergency services will be called.

Volunteers

If you are a volunteer and have concerns – e.g. about the behaviour of another volunteer – you must raise them with the IHB Safeguarding lead or Duty Admin, both of whom are contactable via the IHB HELPdesk. Never assume that if there is a problem someone else will have noticed and acted upon it. It is the responsibility of us all to keep people safe. If for some reason you do not believe you can talk to someone within IHB you should contact the London Borough of Bexley's Adult Social Care or Childrens Social Care teams on 020 8303 7777.

Next Steps

The IHB Safeguarding lead or Duty Admin will record all relevant details from the report, in addition to any written report from the person raising the concern. If consent has been given they will make a referral to relevant, local organisations which may include a social services team or the emergency duty team. A referral can only be made with consent of the adult at risk, unless there are grounds for overriding consent, for example if it is a matter of public interest, where others may be at risk, or if the adult at risk is unable to give informed consent. See the IHB Confidentiality Policy for details

If the person at risk is considered unable to give consent, the Safeguarding lead will make an informed decision in consultation with the Board of Trustees about whether to inform the Local Authority about their concerns. They will make a written record of her decision and the reasons for it and will also discuss it with the person who has made the report. Ideally, the decision should be one that everyone feels comfortable with.

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS POLICY

All written information regarding any allegation of abuse or concerns about a person who uses IHB's services' well-being, will be retained securely on the IHB server.

If a decision is taken not to report concerns about someone at that time, the situation will be kept under review by the IHB Safeguarding lead and Board of Trustees, who will keep in close contact with the volunteer involved with the person considered at risk.

Training

All IHB volunteers ARE provided with an online induction providing initial safeguarding training along with an introduction to a number of IHB policies. Advice, information and support on IHB's safeguarding principles are available at any time from a member of the Admin Team.

Any volunteer is engaged in any activity with a perceived adult at risk or engaged in a more high risk activity will receive enhanced Safeguarding training.

IHB training is delivered via e-learning or workshops and will cover abuse and how to recognise it, the delicate balance between disclosure and confidentiality and other areas. All volunteers will always receive a copy of this policy and have easy access to it to assist with a situation that may arise and need reporting.

Wellbeing

IHB are incredibly fortunate to have an excellent listening service consisting of IHB phone buddies and qualified 'Listeners'. Any volunteer can signpost a Person in Need towards the team, but it is critical to remember that those listeners are there for IHB's volunteers too. Each time we fly we are reminded about applying our own oxygen mask before helping others. Well being is no different and we should ensure that we take care of ourselves before helping others in any capacity.

Useful Contact Details - IHB HELPdesk -0333 050 9227

London Borough of Bexley

Civic Offices Broadway Bexleyheath Kent DA6 7LB

During office hours on 0208 303 7777 (Any concern)

Out of office hours on 0208 303 7171 (Children and Young People)

Out of office hours on 0208 303 7777 (Adults at risk)

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS POLICY

Further reading & guidance

Every child matters - What to do if you believe a child is being abused

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/every-child-matters>

SafeLives, dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for everyone and for good.

<https://safelives.org.uk>

Age UK, protection from elder abuse

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/relationships-family/protection-from-abuse/>

Metropolitan Police

<https://www.met.police.uk/>

Bexley Oxleas Urgent Advice Line – Mental Health

0800 330 8590

NSPCC

Helpline 0808 800 5000

Action on Elder Abuse

Helpline 0808 808 8141

HEALTH AND SAFETY – LONE WORKING POLICY

Most IHB roles require volunteering on your own and in a range of environments. This means that the health and safety considerations are different to those in a usual work environment such as an office. Therefore, we need a separate policy to help us keep volunteers safe.

The aim of the policy is to:

- Increase awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.
- Ensure that the risks of lone working are assessed regularly and that systems are put in place to minimise the risk as far as is practical.
- Ensure that appropriate advice is available to volunteers that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone.
- Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working and reduce the number of incidents/injuries relating to lone working.

Risk assessment

We will carry out risk assessments for our services and tasks. This policy forms part of the measures taken to reduce risk. Risk assessments will be carried out for each task, either by IHB or by a partner organisation making a referral. Volunteers will be made aware of any relevant hazards, so long as known about. Volunteers should make the HELPdesk aware of any hazards or risks at any venue that they may visit within their capacity as an IHB volunteer.

Personal responsibility and Health and Safety

Volunteers are expected to act reasonably and look after their own health and safety as well as that of others. IHB volunteers have a duty of care to avoid carelessly causing harm or injury to others, so it is important that IHB provides the right advice and support, and that volunteers take their responsibilities seriously. Volunteers should avoid exposing themselves to any unnecessary risks. If a volunteer feels that they are putting themselves at risk through lone working, or in any other way, they should discuss the situation with a member of the IHB Admin Team.

General Support for Volunteers

All new Volunteers will receive the IHB Volunteers Booklet which will include reference to the IHB Health & Safety Lone Working Policy. Volunteers should know that their safety comes first. They should be aware of how to deal with situations in which they feel at risk or unsafe. IHB will ensure that all volunteers needs are met and that the appropriate advice is provided once recognised.

Checking in and checking out system

If a volunteer is working within the home of a Person in Need they should advise the HELPdesk when they arrive and leave. However, such incidents will be the exception as in most circumstances IHB Volunteers are discouraged from entering the homes of a Person in

Need. There are occasions when this is necessary and is dealt with on a case by case basis and managed by the IHB Safeguarding lead.

HEATH AND SAFETY – LONE WORKING POLICY

Risks of lone working

Risk assessments for volunteers will include:

- Location, eg remoteness, transport, parking
- Any issues that we are aware of related to the people who use our services
- Channels of communication in an emergency
- Premises risk assessment where applicable
- Travelling between appointments
- Reporting and recording arrangements
- Personal safety and security

Volunteers will be provided with a bespoke briefing where specific risks are apparent in relation to any individual Person in Need. Volunteers should know that if they feel unsafe for any reason, they should leave the situation as soon as possible and contact the IHB HELPdesk or Duty Admin. If a volunteer feels they are in immediate danger, they should call the police on **999** before informing the IHB HELPdesk of the situation.

Entering the home of a Person in Need

IHB will provide a full briefing where you are required to enter the home of a Person in Need. Where possible a member of the IHB Admin Team will accompany you on your initial visit to meet that Person in Need. However, the following guidance should always be adhered to:

- You will only be REQUIRED to enter a home if you possess enhanced DBS status.
- You should always be aware of maintaining appropriate boundaries
- You should always be aware of your surroundings
- You should not enter the house if anyone present is under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- You should report any concerns or issues to the IHB HELPdesk or Duty Admin straightaway

If you ever feel concerned about entering, or being in, an individual's home (perhaps where circumstances have changed since the initial assessment) then do not enter, or leave as soon as is practical, and let us know immediately.

Whilst Out and About

You should follow the guidelines set out below when out alone, or with people who use our services;

- Ensure you always have a working and fully charged mobile phone
- Have emergency contact numbers to hand
- Ensure a member of your family or friend knows where you are going and what you are doing.

GUIDELINES AND BOUNDARIES

General guidelines

- If you're ever unsure about an aspect of your role, always ask us – we welcome questions!
- Please remember that you are the public face of IHB
- Enjoy your role! We really hope that you find volunteering with IHB as rewarding as we do.

Guidelines on talking to people who use our services

Some of the people you come across in your role might be quite vulnerable. This means you need to be aware of the things you do and say, to avoid problems or misunderstandings. These guidelines are intended to protect both you as a volunteer and those Persons in Need that you are coming into contact with, by providing clarity about what is, and is not, acceptable behaviour.

Do:

- Be friendly and welcoming
- Try to understand the other person's thoughts and feelings
- Treat people with respect
- Avoid getting into situations that could be misinterpreted
- Be aware of people's personal space
- Complete your volunteer contact log
- Retain copies of receipts and invoices for future reference.

Don't:

- Give out contact details such as telephone numbers, home or email addresses, without the individual's permission.
- Discuss details of a Person in Needs situation that may be confidential or governed by GDPR guidelines with anybody not entitled to know. That may well include other IHB volunteers but will not include the IHB Admin or HELPdesk teams who may need to make decisions around safeguarding, escalation or signposting.
- Prejudge what problems a person faces
- Ask for personal information – if you believe there's any additional information you need, ask us first
- Give or lend money to a Person in Need or other volunteer.
- Accept gifts other than small items on birthdays at Christmas or other special occasions.
- Provide a Person in Need with Financial, Legal or Medical advice.
- Administer any medicines.
- Act as a witness on any legal documents.
- Try to solve a Person in Needs problems yourself – let us know if you have any concerns and we can offer support

- Use inappropriate or offensive language

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

IHB volunteers may have occasion to deal with, or have access to, sensitive or personal information. It is important that this is treated confidentially and with respect, and this policy sets out how we intend to ensure this.

In order that we can provide the best possible help to those that use services of IHB it may be necessary to share information within the organisation. However:

- People who use IHB's services should only be asked for information which is relevant to the service.
- Information about a Person in Need or their physical or emotional health should not be discussed or passed on outside the agreed framework of the organisation, unless under the exceptional circumstances listed below.
- Where information is collected, people who use our services should be informed about its potential use.
- Any information taken in writing should be kept securely and out of sight

There are limits to confidentiality under extreme circumstances. These can include:

- Where a volunteer believes that an individual is at risk of serious or immediate harm, such as causing danger to themselves or to others.
- If a volunteer suspects abuse or has knowledge of abuse
- If the Person in Need gives information which indicates that a crime has been committed
- If a disclosure is required by law, for example, by the police
- If a person is felt to lack the mental capacity to make a decision. In such cases volunteers will discuss the circumstances with IHB's Safeguarding lead or in their absence, another member of the admin team.

The decision on whether to break confidentiality will be decided on a case by case basis and always in conjunction with at least 1 member of the admin team.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR any data that is collected will only be available to volunteers who need to access it as part of the normal functioning of IHB. the project, Anybody whose data we hold will be able to see such data on request. As such, the content of the data that IHB hold, should be appropriate to that need and should not include inappropriate comments.

Breaches of confidentiality will be addressed through our problem-solving procedure which is available to all volunteers.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Our Commitment

IHB are committed to providing equal opportunities in employment (volunteering) and to avoiding unlawful discrimination. This policy is intended to assist putting this commitment into practice. Our aim is that the volunteering environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities. We have a separate anti-harassment and bullying policy, which deals with these issues.

The Law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of a 'protected characteristic'. The Equality Act defines the protected characteristics as being age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership.

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

It is also unlawful to discriminate against or harass a member of the public or service user in the provision of services or goods or to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

Types of Unlawful Discrimination

- **Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. However discrimination may be lawful if there is an occupational requirement which is core to a job role and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Indirect discrimination** means putting in place, a rule or policy or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified.
- **Harassment** is where there is unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not

matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

- **Associative discrimination** is where the individual treated less favourably does not have a protected characteristic but is discriminated against because of their association with someone who does e.g. the parent of a disabled child.
- **Perceptive discrimination** is where the individual discriminated against or harassed does not have a protected characteristic but they are perceived to have a protected characteristic.
- **Third-party harassment** occurs where an employee is harassed by third parties such as service users, due to a protected characteristic.
- **Victimisation** is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken some form of action relating to the Equality Act i.e. because they have supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if they acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.
- **Failure to make reasonable adjustments** is where a rule or policy or way of doing things has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Equal Opportunities in Volunteering with IHB

IHB will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of volunteering including our recruitment, selection for specialisation, promotion, opportunities for training, benefits and problem solving. Role descriptions will avoid any unnecessary requirements (those unrelated to effective performance) that may otherwise have deterred applicants. We will base decisions on objective criteria. We will consider making reasonable adjustments in recruitment as well as in day-to-day volunteering.

Persons in Need, Suppliers and Others

We will not discriminate unlawfully against any Person in Need using or seeking to use the services we provide. If you are bullied or harassed by a Person in Need, supplier or others, or if you witness someone else being bullied or harassed, you are asked to report this to a member of the IHB Admin Team (Board of Trustees) who will take appropriate action.

Training

We will provide information and guidance to those involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise to help them understand their responsibilities and to avoid the risk of discrimination.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Your Responsibilities

All volunteers are responsible for supporting IHB in meeting its commitment and avoiding unlawful discrimination. If you believe that you have been discriminated against you should report this to a member of the IHB Admin Team. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, IHB have a separate policy. IHB take any complaint seriously and you will not be penalised for raising a complaint, even if it is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

If you witness what you believe to be discrimination you should report this to a member of the Admin Team as soon as possible.

Volunteers can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the organisation for any act of unlawful discrimination. Anybody who commits serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence. Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against volunteers or PiNs are disciplinary issues and will be remedied in accordance with IHB's Problem Solving procedures. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to a volunteers removal from IHB without notice.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored periodically to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. We will report to the Board of Trustees on any actions or activities undertaken to improve equality of opportunity. Any information provided by volunteers for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection legislation.

ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

Introduction

IHB are committed to having an environment which is free from harassment and bullying and to ensure that all volunteers and, others who come into contact with us in the course of our work, are treated with dignity and respect regardless of gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, marital or family status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, creed, culture, religion or belief, age, or disability. Striving to ensure that the working environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is central to ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

This policy and procedure is intended to support this commitment in practice and to provide guidance to volunteers on how to deal with concerns of bullying or harassment.

Policy

IHB will not tolerate bullying or harassment in our volunteering workplace or at IHB related events outside of the workplace, whether the conduct is a one-off act or repeated course of conduct, and whether done purposefully or not. Neither will IHB tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. Retaliation or victimisation will also initiate Problem-Solving Procedure, which may in appropriate circumstances lead to a volunteer being Required To Leave IHB . You should also be aware that if a court or tribunal finds that you have bullied or harassed someone, in some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. If, after an investigation, the IHB Board of Trustees decide that any volunteer has harassed or bullied another volunteer, then the offending volunteer may be subject to Problem-Solving procedure and may be Required To Leave IHB.

Volunteers and others who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result. False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. We all have a responsibility not to make false allegations. False allegations made in bad faith will be dealt with under IHB's Problem-Solving procedure.

ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

What type of treatment amounts to bullying or harassment?

Bullying or harassment is something that has happened that is unwelcome, unwarranted and causes a detrimental effect. If a volunteer complains they are being bullied or harassed, then they have a grievance which must be dealt with regardless of whether or not their complaint accords with a standard definition. For further information, please refer to [ACAS guidance](#).

It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable another may find totally unacceptable. All Volunteers must, therefore, treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity.

Bullying does not include appropriate criticism of a volunteers behaviour or proper performance management.

Reporting Concerns

What you should do if you witness an incident you believe to harassment or bullying: If you witness such behaviour you should report the incident in confidence to the IHB Safeguarding Lead. As well as IHB's Safeguarding Lead you can also contact ANY member of the IHB Admin Team, also known as the IHB Board of Trustees. Such reports will be taken seriously and will be treated in strict confidence as far as it is possible to do so.

What you should do if you feel you are being Bullied or Harassed by a stakeholder or PiN (as opposed to a colleague): If you are being bullied or harassed by someone with whom you come into contact with as a volunteer, please raise this with the IHB Safeguarding Lead or 1 of the Admin Team. We will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you.

What you should do if you are being Bullied or Harassed by a Colleague: If you are being bullied or harassed by another volunteer, there are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal.

Informal Resolution

If you are being bullied or harassed by another volunteer, you may be able to resolve the situation yourself by explaining clearly to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to IHB policy and must stop. Alternatively, you may wish to ask a member of the Admin Team or a colleague to put this on your behalf or to be with you when confronting the perpetrator(s).

ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

If the above approach does not work or if you do not want to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if you are being bullied by a member of the Admin Team, you should raise the issue with IHB's Safeguarding Lead who will discuss with you the option of trying to resolve the situation informally by:

- Telling the alleged perpetrator(s), without prejudging the matter, that there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a fellow volunteer.
- That such behaviour is contrary to IHB policy.
- That the continuation of such behaviour could amount to a serious matter of misconduct.

It may be possible for the Safeguarding Lead to have this conversation with the alleged perpetrator without revealing your name, if this is what you want. They will also stress that the conversation is confidential. In certain circumstances we may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The Safeguarding Lead will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.

If your complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not usually be subject to Problem-Solving sanctions. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as a serious allegation of sexual or racial harassment or in cases where a problem has happened before) we may decide to investigate further and take more formal action notwithstanding that you raised the matter informally. We will consult with you before taking this step.

Raising a Formal Complaint

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, you can make a formal complaint about the harassment or bullying to the IHB Safeguarding Lead or a member of the Admin Team. A formal complaint may ultimately lead to the initiation of IHB's Problem Solving Procedure against the perpetrator(s).

IHB will first investigate the complaint. You will need to co-operate with the investigation and provide the following details (if not already provided):

- The name of the alleged perpetrator(s),
- The nature of the harassment or bullying,
- The dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred,
- The names of any witnesses and

- Any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally.

ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

The alleged perpetrator(s) would need to be told your name and the details of your complaint so the issue to be investigated properly. However, we will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible. Where you and the alleged perpetrator(s) work directly with each other, IHB may consider temporarily moving 1 of the parties to another part of the organisation.

After the investigation, we will meet (personally or virtually) with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation. At the meeting, you may be accompanied by a fellow worker or friend.

After the meeting, and normally within five working days, we will write to you to inform you of our decision and to notify you of your right to appeal to The Board of Trustees if you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You should put your appeal in writing explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with the decision. You should submit your appeal within five working days of receiving written confirmation of any decision. If you submit an appeal, you will be invited to attend a meeting to consider it. Once again you may be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union official. You will be written to afterwards to confirm the final decision.

Disclosure and confidentiality

IHB will treat personal data collected during this process in accordance with IHB's Privacy Policy. Information about how volunteers data is used and the basis for processing data is provided in that same document.

Use of IHB's Problem-Solving Procedure

Harassment and bullying constitute serious misconduct. If, at any stage from the point at which a complaint is raised, we believe there is a case to answer and a matter of misconduct might have been committed, we will instigate our Problem-Solving procedure. Any employee found to have harassed or bullied a colleague will be liable to sanction, up to and including being Required To Leave IHB without notice.

EXPENSES POLICY

We encourage our volunteers to claim expenses as we do not want you to be out of pocket for giving your time. We also want to make sure that volunteering with us is accessible to everyone regardless of their personal circumstances.

We will reimburse reasonable travel costs of volunteers and this policy sets out how we will do so. It is written to ensure that neither we nor our volunteers face any legal, tax or benefits problems.

What we will reimburse

- It is currently deemed appropriate to claim expenses where IHB have asked a volunteer to perform a task that requires them to drive their own car or travel on public transport on a journey that they would NOT have ordinarily engaged in as part of their daily routine.
- Examples would be the collection and delivery of care packages from the IHB Hub to the home of a Person in Need. Travel to the home of a person in need by public transport or parking charges incurred while taking a Person in Need to hospital. This is not an exhaustive list.
- The IHB Board will make the final decision on what is an appropriate expense to claim or not.

We ask that you consider the most cost-effective way to travel to undertake your role.

Evidence of expenditure is required to enable reimbursement.

How we will reimburse

Volunteers must record their expenses on the Volunteer Expenses form, which can be obtained by emailing [Colin the IHB Treasurer](#).

These should be submitted at regular intervals, along with receipts, tickets or Oyster card journey history print outs. Expenses must be claimed within 3 months although should ideally be claimed monthly.

Reimbursement will be by cheque or cash.

DRIVING POLICY

There may be times when we ask volunteers to drive their own vehicles, generally to deliver food boxes, but you might be giving a Person in Need a lift to a medical appointment or something similar. This policy aims to reduce the risks for volunteers who drive and to ensure the safety of them and any passengers.

Insurance

As a volunteer driver you will generally need to notify your insurer that you are taking part in such an activity and should be clear that you are not being paid for this role. You shouldn't be charged extra but if there are any issues we're more than happy to provide a letter for your insurers. The Association of British Insurers keeps a list of insurers who confirm that they do not charge for volunteer drivers, and will let you know whether you must inform them that you are using your vehicle to volunteer:

<https://www.abi.org.uk/globalassets/files/publications/public/motor/2019/abi-guide-to-volunteer-driving---the-motor-insurance-commitment.pdf>

Documents

IHB need to see the following documentation to ensure that you are legally entitled to drive. It is a condition of our Public Liability Insurance.

- Driving Licence – you should hold a full licence to drive as part of your IHB volunteering and should only drive the types of vehicles that you hold a valid licence for
- MOT – All vehicles over 3 years old, must have a valid MOT certificate
- Insurance – You must have valid insurance (please see above for more info)
- Tax – Your vehicle must have valid tax

Vehicle Maintenance Checks

It is the responsibility of all drivers to ensure their car is roadworthy and safe to drive and to carry out regular checks on things like lights, brakes, tyres, seatbelts, windscreens and washers.

Fitness to Drive

You must notify us in the event of any health or fitness problems or medication that will affect your ability to drive. You will need to be adequately rested to transport people who use our services so that you are not tired or drowsy whilst driving. You must also ensure that your sight is adequate as per the Highway Code so that you are fit for driving.

Drinking/Illegal Drugs

You should not drive under the influence of any alcohol or illegal drugs. We also ask you to take into consideration that alcohol stays in the system for several hours and it is recommended that you do not drive within 12 hours of drinking alcohol.

Seating Capacity

You should not exceed the seating capacity of a vehicle, as stated by the manufacturer and insurer, and must ensure that every person in the vehicle has a working seatbelt.

DRIVING POLICY

Assisting Passengers

Passengers should be able to get in and out of the vehicle with minimal support. Please do not physically lift any passengers as you are not covered for manual handling.

Passenger Comfort

It is important that people who use our services are comfortable and feel at ease, so we ask that volunteers consider this when driving. This includes observing speed limits, mobile phone laws and use of seatbelts. We also ask that the car is clean and there is no smoking whilst the person using our services is in the car.

Accidents

In the event of an accident you are required to follow normal guidelines regarding exchange of details, expression of liability and reporting to your insurance. We also ask that you let us know as soon as possible if the accident happens while you are volunteering for IHB. Ideally you should include the fact in your volunteer log. If your car is undriveable and you have someone you are volunteering with, with you, please let us know so that we can make other arrangements if necessary.

Breakdown

In the event of a breakdown you should try to make sure that your car is off the main carriageway and that your hazard lights are on. You will need to ensure that any passenger is safe, warm and dry and let us know so that we can make other arrangements if necessary. Up to date breakdown cover is recommended.

Mileage Reimbursement

We do reimburse reasonable travel expenses. Please see our Volunteer Expenses Policy for more information.

PROBLEM SOLVING PROCEDURE

Purpose and Scope

While we like to think that IHB is a happy place where nobody has cause to complain, we are realistic and know that there will always be occasions when there is a genuine cause for complaint. The reality is that we need to be prepared for this, so we have no option but to have a Problem Solving Procedure in place. The procedure explains the process if there is an issue raised against an IHB Volunteer, but please don't be afraid of this, it's there for your protection. But we do also ask that you recognise and appreciate that IHB do need to be in a position to deal with those situations where somebody does behave in a way that is below the standards expected of an IHB volunteer. We know that each and every 1 of you are just that, a volunteer but it's really important that IHB and all of its volunteers reputations are protected.

This procedure is designed to help and encourage all volunteers to achieve and maintain our high standards of conduct and performance. This procedure applies equally to all volunteers and its aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all in IHB.

Principles

- Informal action will always be considered, where appropriate, to resolve problems.
- No action will be taken against any volunteer until the case has been fully investigated.
- For formal action the volunteer will be advised of the nature of the complaint against him or her and will be given the opportunity to state his or her case before any decision is made at a *Problem-Solving* meeting.
- Volunteers will be provided, where appropriate, with written copies of what's supposed to have taken place and exactly what people have said, well before any *Problem-Solving* meeting.
- At all stages of the procedure the volunteer will have the right to be accompanied by an IHB colleague or friend.
- No volunteer will be asked to leave IHB for a first breach of IHB's policies except in the case of a really significant breach, what employees would label gross misconduct. In these cases IHB will ask the volunteer to leave straight away.
- A volunteer will have the right to appeal against any decision made in a *Problem-Solving* meeting.
- The procedure may be implemented at any stage if a volunteers alleged behaviour dictates that this is appropriate.

PROBLEM SOLVING PROCEDURE

Procedure

First stage of formal procedure

This will normally be either:

An improvement note for unsatisfactory performance if performance does not meet IHB's standards. This will: -

- Set out the problem.
- What needs doing to make it better.
- The timescale.
- Any help that may be given and the right of appeal.
- The volunteer will be told that it constitutes the first stage of the formal procedure.

A record of the improvement note will be kept for 6 months and so long as things have improved will then be considered spent.

Or

A first warning for misconduct

If conduct falls below acceptable standards.

This will be in writing and will

- Set out the nature of the misconduct,
- The change in behaviour required, and,
- The right of appeal.

The warning will also inform the volunteer that a final written warning may be considered if there is no sustained satisfactory improvement or change. A record of the warning will be kept, but it will be disregarded for Problem Solving purposes after a specified period (e.g., six months).

Final written warning

If the breach of policies or guidelines or general behaviour is sufficiently serious, or if there is further misconduct or a failure to improve performance during the currency of a prior warning, a final written warning may be given to the volunteer. This will give details of

- The complaint,
- The improvement required and the timescale.

- Failure to improve may mean IHB ask the volunteer to leave
- The Volunteers Right of appeal.

PROBLEM SOLVING PROCEDURE

A copy of this written warning will be kept by The Board, but will be disregarded for Problem Solving purposes after 12 months subject to achieving and sustaining satisfactory conduct or performance.

Requirement To Leave IHB or other sanction

If there is still further misconduct or failure to improve performance the final step in the procedure may be that we ask you to leave IHB.

Requirement To Leave decisions can only be taken by at least 3 members of the IHB Board of Trustees, and the volunteer will be provided in writing with;

- Reasons for being Required To Leave IHB,
- The date on which volunteering will terminate, and,
- The right of appeal.

If some sanction short of Required To Leave is imposed, the volunteer will

- Receive details of the alleged complaint,
- Will be warned that they could be Required To Leave if there is no satisfactory improvement, and,
- Be advised of the right of appeal.

A copy of the written warning will be kept by the Board of Trustees but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months subject to achievement and sustainment of satisfactory conduct or performance.

The following list provides some examples of areas of alleged misconduct which are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

- Theft or fraud
- Physical violence or bullying
- Deliberate and serious damage to property
- Serious misuse of IHB's name, property or bringing IHB into serious disrepute.
- Serious insubordination
- Unlawful discrimination or Harassment
- Serious incapability at work brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs
- Causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence

- A serious breach of health and safety rules
- A serious breach of confidence

PROBLEM SOLVING PROCEDURE

If a volunteer is accused of an act that would constitute gross misconduct, they may be suspended from their IHB volunteering role, normally for no more than five working days, while the alleged matters are investigated.

If, on completion of the investigation and the full Problem-Solving procedure, the IHB Board of Trustees is satisfied that gross misconduct has occurred, the result will normally be that the volunteer is Required To Leave IHB without notice.

Appeals

A volunteer who wishes to appeal against a Problem- Solving decision must do so within five working days. The IHB Board of Trustees will hear all appeals and their decision is final. At the appeal any disciplinary penalty imposed will be reviewed.

A copy of the publication 'Discipline and Grievances at Work, an ACAS Guide' can be found here http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/p/3/DG_Guide_Feb_2019.pdf

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Dealing with Grievances Informally

If you have a grievance or complaint to do with your IHB Voluntary work or the people you work with you should, wherever possible, start by talking it over with 1 of the Admin Team also known as The Board of Trustees. You may be able to agree a solution informally between you.

Formal Grievance

If the matter is serious and or you wish to raise the matter formally you should set out the grievance in writing to a member of the Admin Team. You should stick to the facts and avoid language that is insulting or abusive.

Where your grievance is against a member of the Admin Team and you feel unable to approach them you should talk to another member of that team.

Grievance Hearing

A member of the Admin Team will call you to a meeting (virtually or in person) , normally within five days, to discuss your grievance. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or friend at this meeting if you make a reasonable request.

After the meeting the member of the Admin Team will give you a decision in writing, normally within 24 hours. If it is necessary to gather further information before making a decision the Admin Team member will inform you of this and the likely timescale involved.

Appeal

If you are unhappy with the Admin Teams members decision and you wish to appeal you should let them know.

You will be invited to an appeal meeting, normally within five days, and your appeal will be heard by 3 members of the Admin Team. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or friend at this meeting if you make a reasonable request.

After the meeting the Board of Trustees will give you their decision, normally within 24 hours. The Board's decision is final.

A copy of the publication 'Discipline and Grievances at Work, an ACAS Guide' can be found here <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/b/l/Discipline-and-grievances-Acas-guide.pdf>

