

How can I report a concern as a volunteer?

Have you experienced or witnessed something when volunteering that has had a negative impact on you personally or someone else? If you have, please let us know about it.

Incidents like these always needs to be addressed. By telling us about your experience, we can challenge unwanted and unwelcome behaviour.

We recognise that it can be difficult to raise a concern on your own, or on behalf of someone else. We also appreciate that being made aware that your behaviour has had a negative impact on another person can be difficult to hear. The purpose of this guidance is to provide support for everyone involved and to resolve issues promptly, safely and fairly.

When should I report a concern?

Volunteers are encouraged to let us know when any matters or behaviours have negatively affected them personally, or when they've witnessed others being negatively affected.

Some people may be unaware that their behaviour is having a negative impact on others. It may be that their words or actions have been

misinterpreted and that an informal chat may help them to understand the impact of their behaviour. In some cases, this might be enough to resolve the problem.

You may feel able to resolve a situation yourself with an informal chat. Informing someone that their behaviour has had a negative impact on you or someone else. However, if you don't feel comfortable doing this, you can always reach out to others for support.

Please let us know when issues haven't been resolved. Sustrans will always treat these concerns seriously and they will be dealt with in a sensitive way.

How can I report my concerns?

You can let Sustrans know about what you've experienced and report your concerns in different ways:

- 1. Reach out to your volunteering contact:** This could be your local volunteer leader, volunteer coordinator, or the Sustrans employee who is your main point of contact. You should already have their contact details (email and/or phone number).
- 2. Contact the Sustrans-wide volunteering team:** On **volunteers-uk@sustrans.org.uk**, write 'Reporting a concern' in the email subject line. Please note that this inbox is only accessed by four Sustrans employees.
- 3. Fill in our [anonymous online form](#):** Use this if you are not comfortable with us knowing who you are. Please note that these forms are only accessed by three Sustrans employees. **[Fill in the form here.](#)**
- 4. Print and post our paper form:** **[Find the print version here.](#)** Please note that it can then take a bit longer for the form to reach us.

Cases of discrimination, harassment, abuse and threats

If what you have experienced or witnessed is direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, or a threat, please contact your local volunteer coordinator, or the Sustrans employee who is your main point of contact. They will provide you with any support or advice needed.

Cases of discrimination, harassment, abuse and threats are considered unlawful in the UK. The police can be contacted if you decide to involve them.

If you are in immediate danger, always call or text 999.

You can register your phone on **emergencySMS** to be able to text 999. Or use the app **TapSOS**, for another non-verbal method to contact emergency services.

Where can I access additional help and support?

External organisations may also be able to help you personally with what you have experienced. The **External organisations support list** is available to download from our website. Alternatively, contact the Sustrans employee who is your main point of contact for a copy.

What will happen once I have reported my concern?

Sustrans will respond to your report by supporting you to try and resolve the issue(s) raised. We require Sustrans employees to always act on reports of unacceptable behaviour and to never be silent. We expect this from local volunteering leaders too.

What if concerns have been raised about me?

We understand that it is not pleasant being told that something you have said or done has had a negative impact on someone else. But the impact may be very upsetting for this person, in ways which you might not realise. This is something that needs to be talked about so that you can move forward with greater awareness.

Please read our **Examples of unacceptable behaviour document**, which is available to download from our website. It will help you to identify what unacceptable behaviour can look like in a volunteering context.

If you feel your behaviour has been misunderstood, then a conversation or informal chat may be a good opportunity for you to explain your behaviour and/or offer an apology.

You can always contact the Sustrans employee who is your main point of contact, or your local volunteer coordinator for support and guidance.