# Employment tribunal rules on dismissal of charity shop manager over volunteer misconduct



A recent employment tribunal has highlighted the dismissal of Adelaide Ribaud, a manager at a Cancer Research charity shop, due to misconduct involving volunteer management. The tribunal, which convened in Watford, Hertfordshire, examined the case after a series of complaints were filed against Ms Ribaud by three volunteers working at the Edgware shop in London. Her employment spanned from July 2018 to March 2023.

The conflict arose when Ms Ribaud removed certain volunteers from a WhatsApp group chat, which she deemed necessary after claiming they had been irritating her. Among the volunteers who raised grievances were Dafta Shah, Rubeena Anwar, and Adelle Clancy. Shah did not receive an explanation when Ms Ribaud refused her permission to volunteer following a period of leave in October 2022. Anwar reported that upon her arrival for a scheduled shift in November 2022, her access to the till was revoked, and she had been unceremoniously removed from the volunteer group chat. Clancy reported being upset by a 'rude' message Ms Ribaud sent her after interpreting a previous message as sarcastic.

During the tribunal's hearings, it was established that Ms Ribaud showed a lack of remorse for her actions. Employment Judge Amy French noted that Ms Ribaud acknowledged that she could have been more courteous yet seemed to underplay the significance of her behaviour. The judge remarked on the unique dependence of Cancer Research UK on its volunteers, stating that they represent the "life blood of the charity," and any mismanagement could lead to significant operational challenges.

At a disciplinary meeting in March 2023, Ms Ribaud accepted the "essential elements" of her misconduct but argued that her actions should not be classified as gross misconduct. However, the tribunal concluded otherwise, stating that Ms Ribaud's lack of remorse and her actions created a risk of further incidents, thus constituting a serious breach of trust expected within the charity's work environment.

The tribunal ultimately dismissed Ms Ribaud’s claims of unfair dismissal, wrongful dismissal, and victimisation, ruling that the charity was justified in terminating her employment without notice due to the findings of her gross misconduct. The case underscores the complexities of managing volunteer relationships within non-profit contexts, where the balance of authority and sensitivity to the volunteer base can impact overall charity operations.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This is the source article referencing the employment tribunal and the dismissal of Adelaide Ribaud from Cancer Research. However, it lacks specific information or corroboration from other reliable sources regarding the case details.
* <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-us/our-organisation/our-people/volunteering> - This URL highlights the importance of volunteers in Cancer Research, which aligns with the tribunal's observation about volunteers being the 'life blood' of the charity.
* <https://www.gov.uk/employment-tribunal-decisions> - This provides general information about employment tribunals in the UK, which can contextualize the process involved in Ms. Ribaud's case.
* <https://www.acas.org.uk/how-we-help/conflict-management/what-is-gross-misconduct> - This resource explains what constitutes gross misconduct, which is relevant to the tribunal's decision regarding Ms. Ribaud's termination.
* [https://www volunteermatch.org/articles/ Volunteer-Management-Best-Practices](https://www volunteermatch.org/articles/%20Volunteer-Management-Best-Practices) - Although not directly related to the case, this URL discusses best practices in volunteer management, which can provide context for the mismanagement issues highlighted in the tribunal.