

## **Complaints Policy**

North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT)

### **1. Complaints policy**

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint (both general and regarding fundraising practices).
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- To make sure everyone at North Wales Wildlife Trust or knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- To only deal with material complaints<sup>1</sup>. If the complaint is considered not to be material, merely record it on the complaints log with the reason it was judged non-material and no further action will be required.
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- To learn from complaints and feedback to help us to improve what we do.

#### **Confidentiality**

All complaint information is handled sensitively, in line with relevant data protection requirements.

#### **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Trust Director.

#### **Publically available complaints policy**

A copy of the external complaints policy can be found in Annex 1.

### **2. Receiving complaints**

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

**All complaints** received should be recorded, including those received by telephone or in person.

Guidance for handling oral complaints can be found in Annex 2.

#### **a) Receiving complaints by post or email**

- Follow the procedure outlined in section 3.

#### **b) Receiving complaints by telephone or in person**

- Write down the full details of the complaint.
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number.
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to North Wales Wildlife Trust (for example: general public, North Wales Wildlife Trust member).

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<sup>1</sup> A non-material complaint includes one considered to be trivial, not genuine, or resolved immediately to the full satisfaction of the complainant

- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure.
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take.
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words
- Follow the procedure outlined below.

### c) Receiving complaints through social media

- Complainants to be asked to make a formal complaint using the North Wales Wildlife Trust Complaints Procedure (link to the webpage to be sent to them).

## 3. Resolving complaints from external audiences – Stage 1

1. Assess materiality of complaint. If the complaint is not material, close the matter.



2. Ascertain if the complainant is a North Wales Wildlife Trust member / supporter. If they are, liaise with the Fundraising Director to gain understanding of the relationship (long-term member / volunteer / legacy pledger etc).



3. Record the complaint within the complaints log. Save all copies of complaint correspondence in a newly created case file within the Complaints file [*Surname, forename*].



4. If the complaint is received in written format, acknowledge receipt of it within 5 working days using the template found in Annex 3.



5. Inform Trust Director of complaint



6. Trust Director to appoint a senior member of staff to investigate and resolve the complaint within 20 working days of receiving it. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they will be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond. In such circumstances, their line manager should also be involved.



7. Once resolved, contact the person who lodged the complaint in writing with the outcome. Save correspondence in the case file



8. If it is not possible to resolve the complaint within 20 working days, because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

## 4. Resolving complaints from external audiences – Stage 2

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by North Wales Wildlife Trust's Board of Trustees. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the NWWT Chair and a **new record** should be entered on the complaints log.

The request for a Stage 2 review will be acknowledged within one week of receiving it. The acknowledgement will say when the complainant can expect a reply.

The NWWT Chair may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate either a fellow Trustee or a suitable member of staff or external consultant to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage 1.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they will be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. The Trust Director will also be involved at this stage, unless they are the subject of the complaint. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage 1 will be kept informed of what is happening.

Complainants will receive a definitive reply within 20 working days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant will describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final.

#### **External stage**

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission (England & Wales) at any stage.

## **5. Variation of the complaints procedure**

North Wales Wildlife Trust may vary this procedure if it is felt appropriate or necessary, for example to avoid a conflict of interest. Any variations must be approved by the Trust Director and notified to the complainant where relevant. NWWT's Board of Trustees will be notified of any variations that have occurred during the year as part of the annual summary referred to below.

## **6. Monitoring and learning from complaints**

Complaints will be reviewed regularly by the Trust Director to identify any trends or need for further action, such as staff training. An annual summary of complaints, and action taken, along with any variations to procedure, will be produced by the Trust Director and considered by NWWT's Board of Trustees, to ensure any strategic issues are also addressed.

## **Annex 1**

### External complaints policy



## **North Wales Wildlife Trust**

### Complaints Policy

#### **1. General complaints**

North Wales Wildlife Trust want to exceed your expectation in everything we do. However, we know that there may be times when we do not meet our own high standards. When this happens, we want to hear about it, in order to deal with the situation as quickly as possible and put measures in place to stop it happening again.

We take complaints very seriously and we treat them as an opportunity to develop our approach. This is why we are always very grateful to hear from people who are willing to take the time to help us improve.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- To make sure everyone in our organisation knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- To learn from complaints and feedback to help us to improve what we do.

#### **Confidentiality**

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, in line with relevant data protection requirements.

#### **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Trust Director.

#### **How to make a complaint**

Complaints should where possible be in writing and sent to:

North Wales Wildlife Trust  
376 High Street  
BANGOR  
Gwynedd  
LL57 1YE

[nwwt@wildlifetrustswales.org](mailto:nwwt@wildlifetrustswales.org)

## 2. Complaints about fundraising

North Wales Wildlife Trust is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and is committed to the highest standards in fundraising practice.

In accordance with the Fundraising Regulator's Complaints Policy<sup>2</sup>, a complaint must be made to North Wales Wildlife Trust within 12 weeks of the fundraising incident or communication of which the complaint is made.

If after four weeks following the complaint, the matter has not been addressed or you do not feel that your concerns have been resolved satisfactorily by North Wales Wildlife Trust, you can refer your complaint to the Fundraising Regulator. Concerns should be raised with the Fundraising Regulator within eight weeks following the complaint.

Fundraising Regulator  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
10 St Bride Street  
LONDON  
EC4A 4AD

0300 999 3404

[enquiries@fundraisingregulator.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@fundraisingregulator.org.uk)

Further assistance with regards to your complaint about fundraising can be sought from the following organisations Charity Commission (England & Wales):

Charity Commission  
PO Box 1227  
LIVERPOOL  
L69 3UG

0845 3000218

[www.charity-commission.gov](http://www.charity-commission.gov)

For further assistance with complaints regarding information rights practices (data protection), advice can be sought from the Information Commissioner's Office.

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
WILMSLOW  
SK9 5AF

0303 123 1113

[casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Complaints-Investigations-and-Remedies-Policy-December-2016.pdf>

## Annex 2



### Practical Guidance

#### Handling oral complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation  
e.g. "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you are sure that an apology is deserved for something that was clearly the responsibility of your organisation, and it was clearly handled badly, then apologise. Do not apologise if in doubt.
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal

## Annex 3

### Template acknowledgement letter

ADDRESS LINE 1  
ADDRESS LINE 2  
ADDRESS LINE 3  
ADDRESS LINE 4  
POSTCODE

DATE

Dear NAME

Many thanks for your letter/email/telephone call dated DATE, regarding *[expand as appropriate]*.

North Wales Wildlife Trust want to exceed your expectation in everything we do. However, we know that there may be times when we do not meet our own high standards. We take complaints very seriously and treat them as an opportunity to develop.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
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- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- To learn from complaints & feedback to help improve what we do.

Please be assured that your complaint will be handled sensitively, informing only those who need to know and following all relevant data protection requirements.

A full response will be sent to you by post within 20 working days of lodging your complaint. Should you have any further queries in the meantime, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Frances Cattanach

Trust Director