

Grievance and Complaints Policy

Orion Wildlife

1. Policy Statement

Orion Wildlife is committed to dealing with concerns, grievances, and complaints fairly, promptly, and transparently. We recognise that issues may arise from time to time and view feedback as an opportunity to improve our work and relationships.

This policy ensures that grievances and complaints are handled consistently, respectfully, and without discrimination, victimisation, or retaliation.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Trustees/directors
- Contractors and associates
- Members of the public, learners, participants, and partner organisations

3. Definitions

- **Grievance:** A concern or complaint raised by an employee, volunteer, or trustee about their work, role, treatment, or working environment.
- **Complaint:** A concern raised by an external individual or organisation about Orion Wildlife's services, activities, behaviour, or decisions.

4. Principles

Orion Wildlife will ensure that:

- All concerns are taken seriously
- Procedures are fair, clear, and accessible
- Issues are handled confidentially where possible
- No individual is disadvantaged for raising a genuine concern
- Outcomes are proportionate and justified

PART A: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE (Internal)

5. Informal Resolution

Where possible, individuals are encouraged to raise concerns informally with:

- Their line manager or supervisor, or
- The volunteer coordinator or trustee lead

Many issues can be resolved quickly through open discussion.

6. Formal Grievance Procedure

Step 1: Submitting a Grievance

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, a formal grievance should be submitted in writing and include:

- The nature of the grievance
- Relevant dates, facts, and individuals involved
- Any supporting evidence

Grievances should be submitted to:

Name/Role: Nick Rout Director

Step 2: Acknowledgement and Investigation

- The grievance will be acknowledged within **5 working days**
- An impartial investigation will be carried out
- The individual may be invited to a meeting to discuss the issue
- The individual may be accompanied by a colleague or representative

Step 3: Outcome

A written outcome will be provided, outlining:

- Findings
- Any actions to be taken
- The reasons for the decision

Step 4: Appeal

If the individual is dissatisfied, they may appeal in writing within **10 working days**.

An appeal will be reviewed by a different person where possible, and a final decision issued.

PART B: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (External)

7. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints can be made:

- In writing
- By email

- Verbally (where accessibility requires)

Complaints should include:

- Name and contact details
- A clear description of the issue
- Dates, locations, and individuals involved

Complaints should be sent to:

Contact/Role: Nick Rout / Director

8. Complaints Handling Process

Stage 1: Acknowledgement

- Complaints will be acknowledged within **5 working days**

Stage 2: Investigation

- The complaint will be reviewed fairly and objectively
- Additional information may be requested
- Relevant records will be examined

Stage 3: Response

A written response will be provided outlining:

- Findings
- Any actions taken or proposed
- Reasons for the decision

9. Escalation and Review

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request a review of the decision. A final response will be issued following review.

Where appropriate, complainants may be advised of external routes (e.g. relevant regulators or funders).

9A. Independent External Review (Complaints Concerning Directors)

Where a complaint concerns the conduct, decision-making, or actions of a Director of Orion Wildlife, and:

- The complainant reasonably believes that the internal complaints process cannot be impartial; or

- The complaint relates to governance, conflicts of interest, or alleged misconduct at Director level;

An independent external review may be requested.

In such circumstances, Orion Wildlife may invite the **Chair of Deer Management Qualifications** to oversee or review the complaint process, subject to their agreement and availability.

The role of the external reviewer may include:

- Reviewing documentation and evidence
- Assessing whether due process has been followed
- Making recommendations regarding resolution
- Providing independent oversight to ensure fairness and transparency

The external reviewer will not replace Orion Wildlife's legal or statutory responsibilities but may provide independent scrutiny to strengthen confidence in the process.

The findings or recommendations of the external reviewer will be considered in good faith by Orion Wildlife's remaining Directors or governing body.

Where necessary, and depending on the nature of the complaint, appropriate external authorities, regulators, or legal advisers may also be consulted.

10. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be considered where sufficient information is provided, but investigation may be limited.

11. Vexatious or Unreasonable Complaints

Orion Wildlife reserves the right to manage complaints that are:

- Repetitive
- Abusive
- Unreasonable or disproportionate

Any such decision will be proportionate and documented.

12. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- All information will be handled sensitively
- Records will be stored securely
- Data protection legislation will be followed

13. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Policy (where applicable)

14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and compliant with best practice.

15. Policy Approval

This Grievance and Complaints Policy was approved by Orion Wildlife management.

Effective Date: 17 Feb 2026

Review Date: 15 Jan 2027

Signed: Nick Rout

Role: Director