



‘Dealing with Problems’ Volunteer Policy

Statement of Policy

Occasionally, there may be a problem or complaint made about a volunteer's behaviour or a volunteer may have a complaint about an Ulster Wildlife policy, practice, member of staff or fellow volunteer. Although this is very rare, Ulster Wildlife believes it is important that problems or complaints are dealt with fairly, openly and consistently. The procedures below will be followed in the event of an issue arising.

Implementation

If a complaint has been made about a volunteer representing Ulster Wildlife or an Ulster Wildlife member of staff has a complaint about a volunteer:

Informal Complaints

We hope that most problems or complaints can be solved informally:

- The Volunteer Officer will privately and informally discuss the matter with the volunteer.
- If it is felt necessary, an informal warning may be issued with steps agreed, between the Volunteer Officer and volunteer, to amend conduct.

Formal Complaints

Formal procedures will be followed where it is believed that a volunteer's behaviour has not been in keeping with Ulster Wildlife's aims, policies, procedures or Volunteer Health & Safety Policy:

- The Volunteer Officer will raise the issue in a formal meeting with the volunteer, and if it is felt necessary, a formal written warning may be issued with steps agreed to amend conduct within an agreed timeframe.
- If the issue is not resolved after the agreed timeframe, a review meeting involving the volunteer and Volunteer Officer will be called. There will be further discussion of the issue and the steps previously agreed to amend conduct will be reviewed and a new timeframe for amended behaviour established.
- If the issue is still not resolved after the reviewed timeframe, a meeting involving the volunteer, Volunteer Officer and appropriate senior Ulster Wildlife member of staff will be called. This may result in the volunteer being asked to leave if the issue cannot be resolved.

At any time where a volunteer is believed to have behaved in a manner that has, or could have, seriously affected: Ulster Wildlife; its reputation; its staff; volunteers; service users or members of the public using Ulster Wildlife services – for example, theft, bullying or violence – they will be asked to stop volunteering while the matter is investigated by the Volunteer Officer and Operations Director will normally be made within 14 days.

If the complaint is upheld against the volunteer, they will be excluded from volunteering.

Volunteers can appeal decisions by writing to the Operations Director. A final decision will normally be given within 14 days.

All formal complaints will be responded to in writing, recorded and confidentially stored for a period of 2 years.

At all stages, volunteers have the right to put their case forward, and be accompanied at meetings on these issues by a fellow volunteer or member of staff.

It is Ulster Wildlife's policy to report, to the PSNI and/or any other relevant authorities, a suspected criminal offence.

If a volunteer would like to make a complaint about an Ulster Wildlife policy, practice, member of staff or fellow volunteer:

Informal Complaints

- We hope that most problems or complaints can be solved informally by raising the matter either with your Supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.
- If the complaint is against the Volunteer Coordinator, then the volunteer should raise the matter with their Supervisor and vice versa (If the Volunteer Coordinator is their Supervisor then they should raise the complaint with the Operations Director).
- If the issue is not resolved or warrants a formal complaint, please refer to the formal procedures below.
- If the complaint is in relation to inappropriate behaviour by a volunteer, staff member or service user towards a child/young person/vulnerable adult, please report these to the Designated Officer – Operations Director as set out in our Safeguarding Policy.

Formal Complaints

Stage 1

Complaint made to the Volunteer Coordinator - Formal complaints should be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator (or if the Volunteer Coordinator is unavailable, or the complaint is about them, go to Stage 2) - At this stage, the complaint is investigated. A record of the complaint and investigation will be made and kept confidentially. You will be informed of how long it will take to investigate the complaint and when a decision will be communicated. This is usually within 14 working days. - Once a decision has been made, this will be communicated to you and any actions required will be agreed and implemented as soon as possible.

Stage 2

Appeal of Decision to Operations Director - If you feel the complaint has not been satisfactorily dealt with at Stage 1, or the complaint is about the Volunteer Coordinator, then the formal complaint should be referred to the Operations Director. The Operations Director will record, investigate the complaint, reach a decision and communicate this to you.

Stage 3

Final Appeal Stage - If you still feel the complaint has not been satisfactorily dealt with, the complaint should be referred in writing to the Chief Executive of Ulster Wildlife. The CEO will review the investigation carried out and reach a decision. - The CEO's decision is final.