

Volunteer Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure

The Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (the Trust) expects a high standard of conduct, integrity and loyalty from its volunteers. Volunteers should expect the same from the Trust. Disciplinary and grievance procedures are helpful to the proper and successful functioning of the Trust and exist to ensure that issues are addressed and all individuals are treated fairly.

Volunteers and line-managers are encouraged to discuss ordinary, day to day concerns informally. This allows them to be addressed promptly and can stop situations escalating unnecessarily.

Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure

The Volunteer Disciplinary Procedure should be used to deal with situations where conduct calls the Trust into disrepute or seriously impairs its efficient running. The procedure applies to all volunteers.

Examples of misconduct which may lead to formal disciplinary action being taken are as follows:-

- Refusal to comply with reasonable requests from the immediate supervisor
- Prolonged absence from a role where specified duties and/or attendance is required
- Incapacity to perform the duties of the post effectively due to drunkenness or unauthorised drug-taking
- Harassment of any Trust employees, volunteers, members, visitors, clients or partners
- Breach of confidentiality
- Breach of Trust regulations, rules or conditions including those relating to Health and Safety
- Prolonged bad attitude
- Serious misrepresentation or negative representation of the Trust
- Unsatisfactory performance of the duties of the role

Informal Procedure

In the event of an issue arising, the immediate line-manager (and/or next level of seniority if appropriate) should arrange to have an informal discussion with the volunteer. This should result in sufficient improvement within a given timescale, so that no further action needs to be taken. This meeting will be conducted informally, although a note of the meeting and agreed actions will be kept.

Formal Procedures

If the informal discussions have not improved the volunteer's conduct or performance within the given timescale or if it emerges that there are allegations of a serious nature, the immediate line-manager (and/or the next level of seniority if appropriate) should arrange a formal meeting with the volunteer.

- The volunteer should be informed of the date and time of the meeting in writing, and given every opportunity to attend
- This should include a statement setting out in writing the volunteer's alleged conduct, characteristics, or other circumstances, which have led to action being contemplated
- The volunteer should be given the opportunity to bring a friend or colleague and a reasonable opportunity (usually one week) to consider their response to the information given to them
- The meeting should be held in a quiet room which will be free of interruptions
- The meeting should be held by the immediate line-manager (and/or next level of seniority as appropriate) with at least one other person besides the volunteer present to take notes
- The volunteer should be given an opportunity to fully explain their side of the story and to respond to allegations

- If reasonable steps to attend the meeting are not taken by the volunteer, the meeting may continue in their absence

Potential Outcomes

A hearing may result in no warning at all being issued, a verbal warning (that will be confirmed in writing), a written warning, a final written warning or a dismissal.

Following the meeting the volunteer must be informed of the decision made in writing including, how long it will last, the action which may be taken if there is insufficient improvement, the right to appeal and details of a named person to whom they can appeal. A copy will be filed by HR in the volunteer records, where it will remain for the relevant duration.

Appeals Procedure

If a volunteer wishes to appeal, they must write to the named person (see above) giving their reasons for their appeal. This person will be responsible for arranging a meeting with the volunteer who must take all reasonable steps to attend. The volunteer will also have an opportunity to be accompanied to this meeting. Following the meeting the volunteer must receive written notification of the final decision. A copy will be kept on file by HR.

Volunteer Grievance Procedure

The Volunteer Grievance Procedure should be used where informal discussions are unsuccessful in resolving a situation, or circumstances make this route inappropriate.

Examples of grievances that may be raised include complaints regarding:-

- Supervision or management
 - Harassment, bullying or discrimination
 - Health and safety
 - Unmanageable workload
1. A volunteer with a grievance should first write to their immediate line-manager (or to the next level of seniority if this is not appropriate), explaining their concerns and send a copy to the Human Resources Manager.
 2. The volunteer should be invited to attend a meeting to fully discuss the grievance, once both parties have had a reasonable amount of time to consider the matter in hand. The volunteer must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting and may be accompanied to the meeting.
 3. Following the meeting the volunteer must be informed in writing of:
 - a. any decisions taken relating to their response to their grievance
 - b. their right to appeal
 - c. a named person who any appeal should be addressed to, if they are not satisfied with the response they have received.
 4. If the volunteer is not satisfied with the result, they may appeal in writing stating their grounds for appeal to the named person who will organise a further hearing.
 5. Decisions taken as a result of a grievance appeal hearing are final, however, if a volunteer is concerned about criminal activities, a failure to meet legal obligations, financial fraud, miscarriages of justice, health and safety infringements, environmental damage or cover-ups they should contact a Trustee via the PA to the Chief Executive under our Whistleblowing Procedure.