



Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust

Internal Grievance Handling Policy

Last Updated: 1 May 2024

ABOUT THIS POLICY

We consider it important that all staff, employees, trustees, and volunteers of the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust (the **Trust**) have access to a clear, fair, and timely procedure to raise, respond to and deal with any complaints and grievances arising through their involvement with the Trust.

We set out below an overview of the scope, purpose, and principles applicable to this policy, as well as the process to raise a complaint or grievance and the steps that the Trust will take to establish and uphold a meaningful and effective process for handling the relevant complaint or grievance.

OVERVIEW

1. **Scope:** This policy applies, and is available, to all staff, trustees, and volunteers of the Trust. For anyone that is not a staff member, trustee or volunteer, please submit your complaint in line with the Trust's [External Complaints Policy](#).
2. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear, fair, and timely process for raising and addressing complaints and grievances that arise internally within the Trust.
3. **Principles:** The following principles will be observed in dealing with complaints and grievances:
 - A. All complaints and grievances will be taken seriously, and the person raising the complaint (the complainant) will be treated with respect and dignity. Complaints and grievances will be dealt with in a fair, consistent, and transparent manner.
 - B. All complaints and grievances will be handled confidentially, with information shared with others only on a need-to-know basis. The Trust will take appropriate action to address complaints and prevent similar issues from happening in the future.
 - C. The Trust will provide support and assistance to complainants and persons subject to complaints and grievances (the respondents) throughout the complaints process.
4. **Types of Complaints / Grievances:** Complaints and grievances can be raised about any aspect of the Trust's operations or the conduct of staff, employees, trustees, and volunteers, including but not limited to:

- A. bullying, harassment, or discrimination;
- B. health and safety concerns;
- C. inappropriate conduct or behaviour;
- D. breach of confidentiality;
- E. misuse of Trust resources;
- F. inadequate services or support;
- G. breach of any Trust policy; and
- H. any other matter related to the Trust's work.

For awareness, the Trust also operates a separate [Whistleblowing Policy](#) to enable staff, employees, volunteers and trustees to report illegal activities, wrongdoing or malpractice. However, where you are directly affected by the matter in question, or where you feel you have been victimised for an act of whistleblowing, you may raise the matter under this [Internal Grievance Handling Policy](#).

GRIEVANCE HANDLING PROCEDURE

1. Raising complaints / grievances informally

Where possible, complainants are encouraged to raise their concerns informally with their relevant line manager or volunteer supervisor. The aim of the informal stage is to resolve the issue quickly and amicably. Complainants can expect to receive a response within two weeks (14 days) acknowledging their complaint and outlining the steps to be taken to address it.

If you feel unable to speak to your line manager or volunteer coordinator because for example the complaint concerns them, then you should speak informally to the General Staff and Volunteer Line Manager: Michael Smythe.

2. Formal written complaints / grievances

If the complainant is not satisfied with the informal procedure above or feels unable to raise their concerns informally with either their line manager, volunteer coordinator or Michael Smythe, they may submit a formal complaint / grievance in writing, using the template complaint form in *Annex 1* below.

The formal complaint / grievance should be submitted to the **Trust Chair** (Sajida Malik, trustees@bethnalgreennaturereserve.org) and/or designated **Human Resources Trustee** (Oliver Grazebrook, grazebrook@gmail.com).

Once received, the Trust will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within two weeks and will then commence its review and/or investigation of the complaint / grievance.

It may be necessary for the Trust to carry out an investigation into your grievance. The amount of any investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from the complainant and any witnesses, and/or reviewing relevant documents. To the extent the complaint / grievance is about another individual, the respondent will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations. We request that all parties involved in a complaint co-operate fully and promptly.

The Trust will try and resolve the complaint as quickly as possible, and this is usually completed within one full month. There may however be certain complaints / grievances that take longer to

investigate. The Trust will keep relevant individuals updated on the status of the complaint and any investigation where it is taking longer than one month to resolve.

The Trust will communicate the final outcome of its review / investigation in writing to the complainant and respondent (where relevant).

3. Appeal

If the complainant or respondent is not satisfied with the outcome of any formal complaint / grievance, they may appeal the decision by submitting an internal written appeal to the Trust, within one month of the date on which the final outcome was sent to them.

An appeal to the Trust should include as much detail as possible, including (but not limited to):

- A. Reasons for the appeal.
- B. Any evidence to support the appeal.
- C. The desired outcome or resolution.

The Trust will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within two weeks (14 days) and will then commence its review and/or further investigation. The Trust will arrange for a review of the appeal by a Trustee who has not been previously involved in the case. If this is not possible, the Trust will take steps to refer to the complaint to an external HR consultant for independent and impartial review.

The outcome of the appeal will be communicated in writing to the relevant individual(s) within one month (where practically possible).

Individuals should be aware that they may also always raise concerns / grievances with the external **Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas)** - the workplace expert for the UK Government (<https://www.acas.org.uk/>). If raising the matter with Acas, please follow the guidance / details in *Annex 2* below.

GENERAL

Contact: If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please contact the **Trust Chair** (Sajida Malik, trustees@bethnalgreennaturereserve.org).

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. The Trust will amend this policy, following review, where appropriate.

Annex 1

Volunteer, Employee, Trustee Complaints / Grievances Form

Introduction:

The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust (the **Trust**) takes all Volunteer, Employee, Trustee complaints and grievances seriously — including those of discrimination, harassment, unethical conduct, or safety violations.

So that we may properly investigate your concern, we ask you to fill out this form completely and return it as soon as possible to the **Trust Chair** (Sajida Malik, trustees@bethnalgreennaturereserve.org), or designated **Human Resources Trustee** (Oliver Grazebrook, grazebrook@gmail.com).

The Trust will be in touch throughout the investigation process, notifying you of the Trust's processes and intended actions. Should you have any questions about the process, please add these at the end of this form and we'll do our best to answer them.

Thank you.

Complaint Details:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Relationship to Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust:

1. Please describe in as much detail as possible the nature of your complaint (including any actions already taken to address the issue, and the desired outcome of your complaint):
2. Please attach or identify all known persons, evidence, documents, and witnesses to your concerns:
3. Please describe how the actions you complain about have affected your ability to participate at the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve:
4. Are there any other employees you know of with a similar complaint?:
5. Please describe any solutions you believe can help resolve your complaint:
6. Please provide any additional matter or comments you wish the Trust to consider when investigating your complaint:

I declare that the facts set forth in this complaint form are true and accurate.

Signature:

Date:

Annex 2

Acas Guidance & Support

UK Government guidance and information on Acas can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/pay-and-work-rights>. Relevant details from that site are set out below.

Acas (<https://www.acas.org.uk/>) provides free and confidential advice to employers, employees and their representatives on employment rights, best practice and policies, and resolving workplace conflict. The helpline has a free translation service for over 100 languages.

Acas helpline and other resources:

You can:

- get advice on the Acas website: (<https://www.acas.org.uk/>)
- call the Acas helpline as follows:

Acas helpline

Telephone: 0300 123 1100

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

You can ask Acas about:

- employment rights and responsibilities
- pay and the National Minimum Wage
- discipline and grievance
- contracts and terms and conditions
- working time, rest breaks and holiday entitlement
- equality in the workplace
- working for an employment agency or gangmaster
- agricultural workers' rights

Complaints

You can make a complaint about your employer or employment agency or complain on behalf of someone else. Further guidance from Acas regarding complaints / grievances is set out here:

<https://www.acas.org.uk/grievance-procedure-step-by-step>

Your complaint will be directed to:

- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), if it's about the National Minimum Wage
- Employment Agency Standards inspectorate, if it's about employment agency legislation (except Agency Worker Regulations)
- Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), if it's about agency workers in agriculture, horticulture, shellfish gathering or associated processing and packaging
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE), if it's about working time issues, including maximum weekly working hours the Agricultural Wages Team in the Rural Payments Agency, if it's about agricultural wages