



Complaints Policy

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Contents

1.	Introduction.....	2
2.	Definitions	2
3.	Who can make a complaint?	3
4.	Who is not covered by this policy?	3
5.	How to make a complaint?.....	3
6.	Process for dealing with a complaint.....	4
7.	Responsibilities for the Policy	7
8.	Policy Review	8

1. Introduction

Conserve Global is a registered charity in England and Wales in 2021, with **Charity Number: 1195017** and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales in 2020, with **Company Number: 12705139**. Conserve's vision is an Africa where wilderness and its constituent biodiversity are effectively secured and recognised as a valuable public good by fulfilling its potential to provide enduring benefits to humanity. To do this, Conserve builds the capacity of local institutions to ensure highly effective long-term management of concession areas and community conservancies. Our aim is to demonstrate the significant value of conservation as a sustainable land use in rural areas. Conserve operates in Africa with subsidiaries and affiliates.

Receiving feedback and responding to complaints is an important part of improving Conserve's accountability. Ensuring our stakeholders can hold us to account will improve the delivery of services and the quality of our work in all areas.

This policy applies to Conserve Global and its subsidiary, Conserve Management Limited, and any other existing or future subsidiaries and affiliates – collectively “Conserve”. A complaint can be made by any supporter, partner organisation, community or individual with whom we work, or any member of the public, whether an individual, company or other entity, in the UK or anywhere else in the world.

2. Definitions

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service, actions or lack of action, by Conserve or its staff and associated personnel¹. It is a criticism that expects a reply and would like things to be changed. Complaints could include the following (which is not an exhaustive list):

- Concern from someone we work with about the quality of programme delivery.
- Concern from a member of the public or supporter about a particular fundraising approach or campaign action.
- Concern about the behaviour of staff or associated personnel.

A complaint has to be about some action for which Conserve is responsible or is within our sphere of influence.

A complaint is **not**:

- A general inquiry about Conserve's work

¹ Contractors, suppliers, volunteers etc.

- A request for information
- A contractual dispute
- A request to amend records, e.g. to correct an address, cancel a donation
- A request to unsubscribe from a Conserve service, e.g. a campaign newsletter or email

The complaints policy does not apply to complaints that are subject to current investigation by any regulatory body or other legal or official authorities in the UK or other countries in which we operate. Such issues will be dealt with by the relevant regulatory body.

3. Who can make a complaint?

This policy is global in application. A complaint can be made by:

- Any supporter
- Partner organisation
- Community or individual with whom we work
- Any member of the public, whether an individual, company or other entity in the UK or around the world.

4. Who is not covered by this policy?

Complaints by staff are managed through Conserve's Grievance Policy for dealing with problems in the workplace and its Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Policy. Complaints relating to serious incidents such as fraud and corruption or safeguarding concerns will be dealt with through the relevant policy and procedures.

5. How to make a complaint?

It is hoped that most complaints or concerns about Conserve's work or behaviour can and will be dealt with informally by staff or volunteers. However, it is recognised that not all issues can be resolved in this way and that a formal complaints mechanism is required for those occasions when an individual or organisation wishes to make their complaint a matter of record and to receive a formal response.

Procedure for making a complaint

You can register a complaint by:

1. Sending a letter to Conserve's management

Postal Address: Conserve Global

101 New Cavendish Street
London W1W 6XH, UK

2. Or sending an email to complaints@conserveglobal.org

We record the following information on receipt to ensure complaints are responded to promptly and that relevant information is captured to assist with improvement.

- The complainant's contact details
- A copy of the letter and/or documentation received
- Specific issues complained about
- Any action requested
- Date the complaint was received
- The person assigned who will prepare the response
- Any immediate action to be taken

With this information, it will be possible to track the complaint through the process and for updates to be provided on request or at pre-determined times.

Fundraising complaints

Fundraising complaints pertain to an action or area within the remit of the Conserve's Fundraising Team, led by the Director of Global Fundraising and overseen by the Director of Strategy. We understand that there may be times when our service or fundraising activities do not meet your expectations. If this happens, we encourage individuals to let us know by formally registering a complaint. We take complaints seriously and seek to address them appropriately.

We are committed to addressing complaints, learning from any shortcomings, and continually improving the quality of our service.

You may register your complaint with us in any of the following ways:

1. Email: fundraisingcomplaints@conserveglobal.org
2. Postal address: Conserve Global, 101 New Cavendish Street, London W1W 6XH, UK

Throughout the complaint process, we will treat individuals fairly and with respect, keep them informed of progress, respond promptly, and let them know how to escalate a complaint. As per the Charities Act, Conserve will report on its fundraising standards, including details of our approach to fundraising and the number of complaints received by the charity or by individuals acting on Conserve's behalf for fundraising purposes.

6. Process for dealing with a complaint

Acknowledgement

Within 14 working days of receiving a complaint, we will send you either:

- a) A final response which adequately addresses the complaint; or

b) A response which:

- Explains why we are still not in a position to make a final response, giving reasons for the further delay and indicating when we expect to be able to provide a final response; and
- Informs you that you may refer the handling of the complaint to another organisation or Conserve contact if you are dissatisfied with the delay.

All complaints will be recorded promptly on our internal database system. A record of complaints is maintained to:

- Monitor the progress of a complaint
- Provide evidence that the complaint was considered and of the outcome
- Identify trends or recurring themes in complaint cases
- Compile reports on complaints.

Prompt recording ensures that reports can be created from the system and sent to the Executive Committee and, in case of serious complaints to the Board of Trustees, which are accurate and reflect the real-time position. Accurate and prompt recording also helps us to comply with certain obligations and requirements.

Assessing the Complaint

- Assess and Assign
 - We will assess your complaint to determine the best way to deal with it.
 - We will assign a specific individual to be responsible for dealing with your complaint.
 - We will identify the issues to be investigated.
- Investigate
 - We will work with you to understand the cause of the complaint you have raised.
 - We may need to contact you during this time and your cooperation will be important in order to complete the investigation.

Taking Action

The action taken will depend on the outcome of the assessment stage. Once the decision has been made to investigate the complaint, an investigation plan will be agreed upon and implemented.

- Gathering evidence
 - Establish and document the facts
- Timeframes
 - The complaint's complexity will drive the required time for investigating a complaint.

- Recording & Storing information
 - Document any steps taken to investigate the complaint
 - A copy of any documents relied upon for resolving the complaint

Resolving the Complaint

- Resolving complaints informally
 - Speaking directly to the complainant

The objective of an informal approach is to resolve the matter with a minimum of conflict or distress.

- Resolving complaints formally
 - Options
 - An apology where the complaint is justified
 - Fixing the specific problem
 - Improving the aspect of service that led to the problem.

Providing feedback

- Responding to the complaint
 - A detailed written response describing the details of the complaint
 - Comments addressing each of the issues/violations alleged in the complaint
 - Outline the investigations undertaken to consider the complaint
 - Stating the findings resulting from the investigation
 - An admission or denial of the allegations
 - Justification or rationale for our actions
 - Explain any improvements made as a result of the complaint.

Closing a complaint

Where the proposed decision or action is accepted by the complainant, then the decision or actions will be carried out and recorded.

Dealing with Unresolved complaints

If you are not satisfied with the response, you can request an escalation of the complaint to senior management. This notification should be made in writing.

Details required in the notification are:

- Your name and contact details
- A short summary of the issue and actions relevant to the complaint
- Staff members involved in the issue
- The action that you are seeking to resolve the complaint. It is essential the desired outcome is clearly stated to ensure there are no misunderstandings regarding expectations.

Appeal Process

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the decisions regarding your complaint, you can request an internal review of a complaint decision.

- Internal Appeal
 - The complaint/appeal should be made in writing.
 - The written complaint should set out briefly the nature of the complaint/appeal, the steps already taken, details of the response received, and a statement as to why you remain dissatisfied and without prejudice to any remedy which you are still seeking.
 - The person conducting the appeal will be more senior than the person who conducted the first investigation.
 - The internal reviewer will receive all of the complaint and investigation material, as well as any representations from you on why the initial decision was incorrect.
 - The reviewer will conduct further investigations if they consider that the initial investigation was insufficient.
 - You will be sent a further acknowledgement letter giving:
 - the contact details of the reviewer
 - the process to be followed
 - timeframes for the appeal.

Once the internal review is complete, you will be informed of the decision and what the external appeal options are. For example, you may contact our UK Regulator, the Charity Commission of England and Wales. Outside the UK, we will notify you if there is an external procedure, but in any event, you may still contact the Charity Commission.

7. Responsibilities

Conserve's Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for this policy, approves it, reviews compliance, and takes action, including investigations and reporting, to ensure compliance. Each Conserve subsidiary and affiliate will approve this policy and cascade it across its institutional structure, operations and project portfolio. Moreover, each Conserve subsidiary or affiliate will regularly review compliance with this policy and take necessary actions, including investigations and reporting, to ensure compliance.

The Director of Operations and Director of Strategy, with support from the Executive Committee, are responsible for overseeing minor or moderate complaints that are handled as per the Complaints Policy and ensure timely resolution. They also monitor the complaint handling process and report to the Board as part of regular performance updates. Moreover, the Director of Operations and Director of Strategy, with the support of the Executive Committee, are responsible for developing annual reports on complaints to the Board of Trustees and external regulators.

For more serious complaints—especially those with potentially significant impact on the charity's reputation, finances, beneficiaries, or operations—the Board of Trustees is involved in reviewing and approving responses or action plans. The Board also evaluates the overall effectiveness of the complaints policy through periodic assessments and is responsible for addressing complaints related to ethical or governance issues. In cases where a complaint represents a serious incident, the Board has the duty to ensure it is reported to the Charity Commission and provide guidance.

The Board of Trustees, led by the Chair, is responsible for handling concerns and complaints involving the Director of Operations, the Director of Strategy, and other Executive Committee members in relation to this policy. We encourage our supporters, partner organisations, community members, individuals we work with, and the public to read and understand our complaints policy and to raise any concerns directly with us.

8. Policy Review

In our commitment to continuous improvement, Conserve regularly reviews our complaints management policy and procedure to identify complaint trends and pinpoint areas that require changes. Relevant complaints are recorded centrally to facilitate effective monitoring and evaluation, and outcomes of complaints and appeals are documented appropriately to produce reports on these matters, noting any recurring themes.

Where applicable, insights from reports are used to improve service across Conserve to benefit the organisation as a whole. The progress of implementing these lessons is monitored to ensure that changes and improvements are fully realised. At all times, Conserve ensures data protection requirements are adhered to, and therefore, care will be taken to ensure sensitive details are not recorded. In the event of a serious incident—such as a complaint that substantially impacts our beneficiaries, reputation, finances, or operations—Conserve will report it promptly to the Charity Commission. All reports to the Charity Commission are managed in a way that upholds the safety and interests of our beneficiaries, staff, donors, and stakeholders.

The Complaints Policy will be reviewed every three years or more frequently if changes to the operating or legal environment justify a review. The review will consider the adequacy of the Complaints Policy in terms of its design and operational effectiveness. The results of each review will be reported to Conserve's Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will approve any changes to the Complaints Policy.