



GREEN SHELTER SOCIETY UK

Complaints and Whistleblowing Procedure

Document control

Field	Details
Organisation	Green Shelter Society UK
Charity registration number	1192803
Policy owner	Board of Trustees
Operational lead	Chair or nominated Complaints Lead
Version	1.0
Approval status	Board approved
Effective date	4 th September 2026
Next review	12 months from approval, and after a serious complaint, whistleblowing report or significant legal or organisational change
Applies to	Trustees, staff, workers, volunteers, contractors, partners, participants, supporters, donors and members of the public

Approval requirement The Board of Trustees must approve this procedure, name the responsible contacts and complete the approval record before publication.

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1 Purpose and scope

Green Shelter Society UK welcomes feedback and takes concerns seriously. This procedure gives people a simple way to complain about our services or conduct and a safe route to report serious wrongdoing in the public interest.

It applies to complaints about GSSUK and to concerns raised by trustees, workers, volunteers and others connected with our work. Safeguarding concerns, immediate danger and suspected crime may require urgent action outside the usual stages.

2 Choosing the right route

Route	Use it for
Complaint	Dissatisfaction about a service, decision, delay, communication, fundraising approach or the way someone was treated.
Whistleblowing concern	Information about serious wrongdoing that affects the public interest, such as fraud, theft, serious safeguarding failure, dangerous practice, major legal breach, misuse of charity assets or deliberate concealment.
Safeguarding report	A concern that a child or adult at risk is being harmed, abused, neglected or placed at risk. Follow the Safeguarding Policy immediately.
Personal disagreement	A routine disagreement or relationship problem should normally be discussed with the relevant supervisor or lead unless it also involves serious wrongdoing or risk.

GSSUK will help a person use the appropriate route. Giving a report the wrong label will not prevent it from being considered properly.

3 Our commitments

- Listen respectfully and make reasonable adjustments so people can raise concerns.
- Consider matters fairly, proportionately and without avoidable delay.
- Use a person who is not directly involved in the matter wherever practicable.

- Keep information as confidential as reasonably possible and share it only when needed.
- Do not tolerate retaliation against anyone who raises a genuine concern or helps an investigation.
- Record outcomes and use complaints and concerns to improve our work.

4 How to make a complaint

A complaint may be made by email, letter, telephone or in person to the Complaints Lead. Someone may complain for another person with their consent, unless there is a safeguarding or legal reason to act without it. We will provide reasonable help where a person has communication, language, disability or access needs.

Please include, where possible:

- your name and preferred contact details;
- what happened, where and when;
- who was involved and any relevant evidence;
- how the matter affected you or another person; and
- what you would like GSSUK to do.

Complaints should normally be made within three months of the event or of becoming aware of it. We may accept a later complaint where there is a good reason and it can still be considered fairly.

Anonymous complaints will be considered, but limited information may make investigation difficult.

5 How we handle complaints

Informal resolution

Where appropriate and safe, the person receiving the complaint may try to resolve it promptly through an explanation, correction, apology or practical action. The complainant may ask for the matter to be handled formally.

Formal stage

- We aim to acknowledge a complaint within five working days.
- A suitable person will clarify the issues, review relevant information and speak to people where needed.
- We aim to provide a written outcome within 20 working days. If more time is needed, we will explain why and give a revised date.
- The response will explain what was considered, the conclusion, any appropriate action and how to request a review.
- We may not be able to disclose confidential information, personal data, safeguarding details or action taken about another individual.

6 Review of a complaint

If the complainant believes the process or outcome was unfair or missed important information, they may request a review within 10 working days of the response. The request should explain the reason for review.

Where practicable, a trustee or other suitable person not involved in the original decision will review the handling and outcome. We aim to respond within 20 working days. This is normally the final internal stage. The response will identify any appropriate external route.

7 How to raise a whistleblowing concern

A person should normally report serious wrongdoing to the Chair or Whistleblowing Contact. If the concern involves that person, it may be sent to another uninvolved trustee. A report may be made verbally or in writing and should explain the facts, dates, people involved, possible impact and any supporting evidence.

The reporter should not investigate personally, obtain evidence unlawfully, confront a suspected person or place anyone at risk. A reasonable and genuinely held concern may be raised even if it is later not substantiated. Knowingly false or malicious allegations may be addressed under the relevant conduct process.

Workers may have statutory protection for qualifying disclosures made in the public interest and through an appropriate route. Volunteers do not generally receive the same statutory whistleblowing protection, but GSSUK will apply its no-retaliation commitment to volunteers and others who raise genuine concerns.

8 How we handle whistleblowing concerns

- We aim to acknowledge the concern within five working days, unless doing so would be unsafe or impossible.
- An uninvolved trustee or suitable investigator will make an initial assessment of seriousness, immediate risk, conflicts and any reporting duties.
- Urgent steps may be taken to protect people, evidence, money, property, systems or the integrity of an investigation.
- The concern may be investigated internally, referred to a specialist or authority, or handled under safeguarding, disciplinary, financial or other procedures.
- The reporter may be asked for more information and told when the matter is expected to be reviewed.
- GSSUK will give as much outcome information as is lawful and appropriate, but cannot promise full details or a particular result.

9 Urgent and external reporting

Call 999 where someone is in immediate danger or a crime is in progress. Suspected crime may also be reported to the police. A person does not need GSSUK's permission to contact an appropriate authority or obtain independent legal advice.

Depending on the issue, an external route may include the Charity Commission, police, Action Fraud, HM Revenue and Customs, Information Commissioner's Office, Health and Safety Executive or local authority, Fundraising Regulator, or another prescribed regulator. Workers considering a protected disclosure may seek independent advice from Protect, a trade union, Citizens Advice or a legal adviser.

The Charity Commission is not an appeals service for ordinary dissatisfaction with a charity. Reports to it should concern serious harm or wrongdoing within its regulatory remit. A reporter should use current official guidance before making an external disclosure, particularly to the media or on social media.

10 Confidentiality anonymity and protection

Information will be limited to those who need it to assess, investigate, respond, protect people or comply with the law. GSSUK cannot promise absolute confidentiality because information may need to be shared for fairness, safeguarding, legal reporting or law enforcement. Details may also make the source apparent.

Anonymous reports will be assessed using the information available. Providing a confidential way to make contact may help GSSUK clarify the concern. No person should suffer bullying, threats, exclusion, loss of opportunities or other retaliation for raising a genuine concern or assisting a review. Suspected retaliation must be reported to an uninvolved trustee promptly.

11 Safeguarding serious incidents and criminal matters

Safeguarding concerns must be passed to the Safeguarding Lead without delay and handled under the Safeguarding Policy. Evidence should be preserved and confidentiality maintained; GSSUK will not delay a necessary referral while completing its own complaint process.

Trustees will consider whether an actual or alleged event must be reported to the Charity Commission as a serious incident, to the Disclosure and Barring Service, police, local authority, insurer, data-protection regulator, funder or another body. Reporting decisions and reasons should be recorded.

12 Records data protection and learning

GSSUK will keep a proportionate record of the complaint or concern, evidence considered, decisions, actions, communications and review. Records will be kept securely, accessed only when needed and retained in line with the Privacy and Data Protection Policy and retention schedule.

The Board will review themes, serious cases, overdue actions and lessons at an appropriate level without unnecessary personal information. This procedure will be reviewed annually and after a serious case or important legal or organisational change.

13 Contacts

Complaints and Whistleblowing Lead	Name: Nehlin Sayed Email: admin@greenshelter.org.uk Telephone or postal route: +44 7412153708, 55 Chertsey Rise, Stevenage, SG2 9JJ
Alternative uninvolved trustee	Name: MS Rahman Contact route: +44 7450214564
Safeguarding Lead	Name: Iqbal Hussain Contact route: info@greenshelter.org.uk +447725986852

14 Trustee approval

The Board of Trustees confirms that it has reviewed this procedure, appointed the contacts, agreed secure reporting and record arrangements, and understands its responsibility to consider safeguarding, regulatory and serious-incident reporting duties.

Approval record	Details
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Date approved	04 th September 2026

Chair name and signature	MS Rahman, MS RAHMAN
Effective date	04 th September 2026
Next review date	04 th September 2027

Appendix A Simple complaint or concern record

Use this record only when helpful. A person may still raise a concern without completing the form.

Information	Record
Complaint or whistleblowing concern	
Date received and method	
Reporter and contact preference	Anonymous if not provided
Summary of what happened	
People or services affected	
Immediate safety safeguarding or evidence action	
Person handling the matter and conflicts checked	
External reports or advice	
Outcome actions and response date	
Review requested and final response	
Learning actions owner and completion date	