

## **Complaints Policy**

### **Friends of the Earth Scotland**

#### **Purpose**

This policy sets out how Friends of the Earth Scotland (FoES) will handle complaints and suggestions. We are committed to listening, learning, and improving, and we take all complaints seriously.

#### **Our policy is to:**

- Provide a fair, respectful, and proportionate complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- Make sure everyone at FoES knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- Ensure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- Resolve complaints wherever possible.
- Facilitate restorative measures to repair relationships where this is appropriate.
- Gather information to help us improve what we do and apologise where mistakes have been made.

This policy will be kept under review by the FoES Board and updated when needed. It was first published in September 2025.

#### **Definition of a Complaint**

- A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of FoES's work, staff, volunteers, trustees or activities.
- A disagreement with FoES's advocacy or campaign position will only be treated as a complaint under this policy where the complainant is reasonably seen as individually affected adversely by the position, not simply because they hold different views.

FoES can only respond to complaints that relate to actions for which FoES is responsible or that fall within our sphere of influence.

#### **Document version control**

Version: 1.0

Approved by: FoES Board

Date: September 2025

Review Date:

## **Procedure**

### **Step 1: Raising a Complaint or Suggestion**

If you have a suggestion or complaint about any aspect of FoES's work, if possible, please first raise it directly with the staff member or volunteer you have been working with. In most cases, we hope this will resolve the issue.

Misunderstandings can often be sorted out informally. However, if you feel the matter needs to be considered more formally, please follow the procedure below.

#### **Complaints must be made by using one of the following channels:**

- Email: [director@foe.scot](mailto:director@foe.scot) or to give feedback about the director and or senior staff you can contact the chair directly by email to [chair@foe.scot](mailto:chair@foe.scot).
- Letter: Friends of the Earth Scotland, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PR.
- Phone: 0131 243 2700

We encourage complaints to be raised as soon as possible after an issue arises.

### **Step 2: How We Handle Complaints and Suggestions**

#### **Acknowledgement**

- We will acknowledge all complaints and suggestions within 5 working days.

#### **Investigation**

- If there is a complaint, it will be investigated by a relevant manager, the Director or Board member not directly involved in the issue.

#### **Response and closure**

- We aim to provide a full response to the person who has made the complaint or suggestion within 20 working days. If this is not possible, we will provide an update within this time with a full response at the soonest possible date thereafter.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, our response will describe:

- The action taken to investigate the complaint.
- The conclusions reached.
- Any actions taken as a result.

### **Escalation**

- If the complainant is not satisfied, they may request a review by the Chair of the Board who will either review the complaint themselves or delegate this to another board member.
- This decision will be final.

The decision taken at this stage is final. Any internal action flowing from the decision is a matter for the FoES Board and will be reported to them.

### **Confidentiality**

- All complaints will be handled sensitively. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in resolving the issue. Any information collected during the complaints process will be held in line with our Data Protection Policy.

### **Learning and Improvement**

- We aim to learn from all suggestions and complaints.
- We will record complaints and review them annually with the Board to improve our activities and governance.

### **External Regulation**

Friends of the Earth Scotland is a charity, registered in Scotland (No. SC003442).

The Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) is responsible for ensuring charities are well-run and accountable, and for maintaining public trust and confidence in charities. Concerns about FoES can also be raised directly with OSCR:

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/raise-a-concern/>