



AOTOS Whistleblowing Policy

AOTOS expects the highest standards of conduct from all our Trustees, staff, volunteers, contractors, members and visitors (“Reporting Persons”). We aim to provide a professional yet friendly service to all our members and to encourage open feedback at all times. Reporting Persons who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters, including illegal or improper conduct, will always be heard and taken seriously.

AOTOS understands that, if a Reporting Person holds a reasonable belief that a qualifying disclosure has taken place, then that belief is sufficient for such person to register a complaint. ‘Qualifying disclosures’ is one made in the public interest by a member who has a reasonable belief that:

- a criminal offence
- a miscarriage of justice
- an act creating risk to health and safety
- an act causing damage to the environment
- a breach of any legal obligation
- a concealment of any of the above

is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed.

AOTOS understands that a reasonable belief is sufficient to register a complaint and that it is the responsibility of AOTOS, not the complainant, to investigate the matter.

Raising Concerns and Complaints

All complaints should be made in writing, via email to the below officials:

- General concerns should be made to the current Chair (chair@aotos.org.uk) who will aim to respond to your complaint within 48 hours. If the Chair is perceived to be involved in the wrongdoing, then members should report to the Past Chair (pastchair@aotos.org.uk)
- Safeguarding concerns should be raised with the AOTOS’ Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy and related policies and procedures.
- If the complainant believes the DSL to be involved in the wrong doing then the complainant should proceed to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead or directly to the AOTOS Chair.

Where a member feels unable to raise a concern with either of the individuals identified above, for concerns relating to children **NSPCC whistle-blowing helpline** is available to them help@nspcc.org

It will also be possible to report a concern to the Charity Commission regarding issues that could seriously harm:

- AOTOS members
- AOTOS staff or volunteers
- The AOTOS Activities (as defined in the Safeguarding Policy)
- AOTOS’ assets
- AOTOS’ reputation

Please see the link below the the Charity Commission's guidance entitled *Report serious wrongdoing at a charity as a worker or volunteer*.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-serious-wrongdoing-at-a-charity-as-a-worker-or-volunteer>

AOTOS is committed to dealing with any complaints in a quick and effective manner.

Last updated March 2022