

# Complaints Policy

Members need to be able to raise any genuine concerns knowing they will be dealt with promptly, sensitively and fairly.

## Informal resolution

If a member believes they are being treated inappropriately, it may be best to try and resolve the situation informally. Raising an issue at the outset may prevent it escalating or prevent a repeat of it. In many cases the person will be unaware that their behaviour is offensive and asking them to stop may be sufficient to resolve the situation.

In some cases, an incident relating to bullying and harassment may be so serious that it is inappropriate to attempt to resolve it informally. If this is the case, members should raise the issue formally with any member of the committee.

## Formal process

- Once raised, the committee member will discuss the issue with the chair/committee as appropriate to the nature of the complaint.
- Confidentiality is an important part of this policy. Everyone involved in this policy – whether making a complaint or involved in an investigation is responsible for maintaining the high level of confidentiality required.
- Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person/people being complained about must only be disclosed on a 'need to know' basis.
- A committee member would normally conduct the investigation unless they are in some way implicated. In these circumstances, the Chair will carry out the investigation. The investigation will be thorough, impartial and objective and carried out with sensitivity to the rights of all involved. The investigation will be undertaken in a confidential manner.
- Consideration will be given to whether individuals could be temporarily suspended from attending any Club training/runs/races/social events until the process has concluded.
- Members who deliberately provide false information or raise issues maliciously could be considered to have breached the Code of Conduct and will be subject to any related consequences
- Members who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any type of victimisation or retaliation as a result.
- Members who have found to have retaliated against or victimised someone for making a complaint or assisting in good faith with an investigation under this policy will also be investigated. If a breach of the Code of Conduct is found to have taken place, following an investigation, the findings of the investigation will be discussed with the member by made the complaint (although they may not be made aware of any sanction). This will be carried out by the person conducting the investigation.
- Any action or sanction deemed necessary to the club member who breached the code of conduct will be carried out by the Chair. Where the breach is less serious, an oral warning maybe given, or if more serious, a written warning will be given.
- If a 2nd occurrence happens, following an oral or written warning, this would result in dismissal from the club.
- If the breach of the Code of Conduct is deemed a serious breach, then the member may be expelled from the club without need for a written warning.

## Appeal process

The subject of any complaint may appeal to the committee in respect of any disciplinary action being taken within 3 calendar months of the decision being made and shall have the right to demand that the matter be re-heard by a panel of 3 arbitrators.

- The arbitrators must not be members of the committee who have been involved with the original decision-making process, or whose knowledge and understanding of the case may impact the appeal process.
- The panel could include a member of the club who isn't a member of the committee, and may include a person from outside the Club, including a representative of a sports body.
- The arbitrators shall have the power to annul the suspension, exclusion or other disciplinary action, or to annul it subject to the performance of any condition, which the arbitrators see fit to impose. The arbitrators' decision is final, and there is no further appeal process.
- Members whose exclusions are upheld on appeal, or who have not appealed within 3 months, may not reapply for membership.
- Where the member in respect of whom the complaint is made is an official on the committee, he or she shall not take part in any committee proceedings outlined above.