General Complaints Policy

BowlsWales · BowlsCymru

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Approved by	BowlsWales Board
Owner	General Manager

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1. General Statement and Commitment

BowlsWales is responsible for setting and maintaining the standards of service delivery to our members, stakeholders and the wider public. We are firmly committed to dealing with any complaint equitably, comprehensively, objectively and in a timely manner.

Our objective is to ensure that all complaints are handled consistently, efficiently and with due regard to fairness and transparency for all parties involved.

2. Core Principles

The emphasis of BowlsWales's General Complaints Procedure is on the early, informal resolution of problems.

- Fairness and sympathy: All complaints will be dealt with sympathetically, impartially and honestly.
- Thorough responses: Responses will be as full, detailed and evidence-based as possible.
- Accountability and learning: If BowlsWales, its employees, Directors, volunteers or usual processes are found to be at fault, this will be explicitly acknowledged. The complainant will be informed of the specific remedial actions to be taken. This commitment drives continuous improvement.

3. Definition and Scope

A general complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that is not linked to an action associated with a criminal, disciplinary, anti-doping or safeguarding matter. Those matters are governed by separate BowlsWales policies.

A general complaint is defined as:

- An expression of dissatisfaction about an action (or inaction) or decision (or policy) of BowlsWales as a corporate body.
- A complaint concerning an employee, a Director, or another volunteer acting on behalf of BowlsWales.

3.1 Submission of a complaint

A complaint may be initiated verbally — the complainant will be asked to follow it up in writing within five working days — or in writing. Complainants may be a member, a club, another organisation, a parent or guardian, or a member of the general public.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

In all cases, the complaint will be directed to the most appropriate person, as set out below.

Complaint against	Initial recipient	Investigation & resolution	Final appeal
BowlsWales (corporate body) or Directors	General Manager	Chair (or designated Non-Executive Director if complaint is about the Chair)	Board of Directors (or independent arbitration)
Employee	General Manager	Chair	Board of Directors

Complaint against	Initial recipient	Investigation & resolution	Final appeal
General Manager	Chair	Designated Non-Executive Director	Board of Directors
Self-employed contractor or volunteer	Staff member responsible for the relevant area	General Manager	Chair or other designated Board Director

5. Formal Complaint Process and Timescales

Stage 1 — Acknowledgement and initial review

All formal written complaints will be acknowledged in writing within five working days of receipt. The acknowledgement will confirm the assigned investigator, outline the procedure and state the target date for the full formal response.

Stage 2 — Investigation and resolution

The investigator will determine the facts, keep the complainant informed and provide a full written response within ten working days of the acknowledgement date, unless a justified extension is communicated.

Stage 3 — Internal appeal and final resolution

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage 2 response, they must inform BowlsWales in writing within five working days, clearly outlining the grounds for appeal. The complaint will be referred to the final appeal person or body as set out in Section 4. A final conclusive written response will be issued within ten working days of receiving the appeal request.

6. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

All complaints will be treated with appropriate confidentiality. Information will be disclosed only to those necessary for the investigation.

A secure and centralised record of all complaints must be kept, including the initial complaint, all correspondence, investigation notes and the final response. The General Manager (or Chair) will conduct a quarterly review of logged complaints to identify patterns, systemic issues or repeated failures, to inform policy changes.

7. Closure of Correspondence

BowlsWales reserves the right to bring a matter to a close once the original complaint and any subsequent substantive appeal issues have been answered and/or resolved. The General Manager or Chair may issue a final letter stating that no further correspondence will be entered into if they reasonably believe that discussions are no longer constructive.

8. Vexatious or Persistent Complaints

BowlsWales is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly, but will not tolerate complaints that are vexatious, overly persistent, abusive or frivolous.

8.1 Definition

A complaint may be deemed vexatious or persistent if it demonstrates characteristics including:

- Excessive persistence: continuing to pursue a matter after the completion of Stages 1–3 without new substantive evidence.
- Harassment or abuse: using aggressive, abusive or unreasonable language, or making threats against BowlsWales staff or volunteers.
- Frivolity: complaints that are clearly ill-founded, irrational or malicious in nature.
- Unreasonable demands: demanding disproportionate or unrealistic action, resolution or compensation.
- High volume or repetition: submitting large numbers of identical or substantially similar complaints covering previously closed matters.

8.2 Procedure

Stage 1 — Warning: If a complaint begins to exhibit vexatious behaviour, the General Manager (or Chair if applicable) will issue a formal written warning specifying the behaviour considered vexatious and the actions that will follow.

Stage 2 — Cessation of contact: If vexatious behaviour continues after the warning, the Chair (in consultation with the Board) has the authority to formally designate the complaint as vexatious and cease all further communication on the subject matter.

Stage 3 — Notification: The complainant will be notified in writing of the decision to cease correspondence, the reasons for this decision, and that any subsequent attempt to pursue the matter may be dealt with as a breach of the BowlsWales Code of Conduct or reported to relevant authorities.

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