

# COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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## **PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

England Athletics is committed to offering the highest quality of service provision across grassroots athletics and running in England.

Our three values of PRIDE, INTEGRITY and INCLUSIVITY ensure our staff work continually to achieve these benchmarks by working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect.

England Athletics works hard to provide an efficient and effective service to all. However, we recognise that there may be occasions where we fall short of expectations and individuals may not be completely satisfied.

We believe that all individuals should have the opportunity to provide feedback on whether our standards have been met and all feedback, both positive and negative, should be acknowledged. Should this feedback be negative, and an individual is dissatisfied, we have a formal and informal complaints process which we follow to enable us to put things right.

However, some complaints may need to be dealt with under a separate process. For example, Safeguarding issues or Athlete selection.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all stakeholders who wish to make a complaint about any of England Athletics services or activities.

## **OUR AIM**

To ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- We deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- We respond in the right way – for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken;
- We learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints procedure.

## Informal Complaints

If you have a complaint, then in the first instance, you should speak to the member of staff or manager who has responsibility for the work. They are best placed to resolve most problems. However, they will direct you to another organisation, department or process if the complaint cannot be dealt with by England Athletics under this policy or does not fall within the England Athletics remit, for example, safeguarding issues.

In any communication with our team, please provide the details of your complaint, any supporting information, the consequence of this complaint and what action or response you feel would help to resolve the situation. Our staff will work with you to understand why you are dissatisfied and, if possible, act to resolve the matter immediately without need for a formal process to be initiated.

If you are still not satisfied with the response, or feel that the issue should be brought to the attention of England Athletics then please raise a formal written complaint, as detailed below.

In order to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly, we will not usually accept complaints that are made more than 12 months after the event being complained about or brought to your attention.

## Formal Complaints Procedure

### Stage 1

In the first instance, formal complaints are submitted in writing and should be marked for the attention of the Membership Services Manager as follows:

Telephone: 0121 347 6543

Email: [enquiries@englandathletics.org](mailto:enquiries@englandathletics.org)

England Athletics  
Athletics House  
Alexander Stadium  
Walsall Road  
Perry Barr  
Birmingham  
B42 2BE

A formal complaint will always be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt and we aim to respond to you in full within 20 working days. If this is not possible due to further investigations being required, dependent upon the nature and severity of the complaint received, we will always formally advise the complainant of the progress made so far and advise any revised timescales.

It may be necessary to contact complainants verbally during our investigations to enable us to bring the complaint to an amicable resolution. However, we will always formalise any verbal contact in writing following an outcome or action being agreed.

## Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the response to the complaint having followed the procedure above, then you can write to England Athletics Chief Executive, at the above address, and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. You will need to outline why you are dissatisfied with the initial response. You can expect the Chief Executive to acknowledge your request within 5 working days of receipt and they will arrange for the complaint to be reviewed by a member of staff who has not previously been involved with handling your complaint. This will involve a full independent review of the handling of your complaint and all associated evidence. The outcome of the review will be communicated within 20 working days.

England Athletics aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated and reviewed. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

## Final Stage

If you are not satisfied with the subsequent reply from the Chief Executive, then you have the option of writing to the Chair of the Board of Directors, at the above address, stating the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You must do this within 10 working days of receiving the written response from the Chief Executive.

The Chair of the Board of Directors will usually respond within 20 working days to inform you of the action which will be taken to investigate your complaint, and when you can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation. The Chair of the Board's decision will be final.

**Please note: We reserve the right at any point in the process to forward the Complaint to our legal representatives who may respond on our behalf.**

## Vexatious Complaints

If a complaint is considered persistent and/or vexatious, we may bring the communication to a close.

**Vexatious** – a complaint instituted without sufficient grounds and serving only to cause annoyance to the receiver of the complaint; an oppressive complaint (with unjust severity); or otherwise an abuse of the procedures for dealing with complaints or conduct matters.

**Persistent** – a complaint that is substantially the same as a previous complaint (whether made by or on behalf of the same or a different complainant); contains no fresh allegations which significantly affect the account of the previous complaint; no fresh evidence, being evidence, which was not reasonably available at the time the previous complaint was made, is tendered in support of it.

Should further information be required on Persistent or Vexatious Complaints please see the separate England Athletics policy.

## **Confidentiality**

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both England Athletics and the complainant maintain confidentiality. If exceptional circumstances dictate that confidentiality cannot be maintained, then the complainant will always be advised of the situation.

## **Monitoring and Review**

England Athletics is committed to continuous improvement and will record and monitor complaints to enable a continual review of its processes and procedures.

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**NB. The contents of this policy will be subject to revision from time to time.**

### **Version Control**

Issue Number	Date of Issue	Updated by	Update	Communication channel
1		Gill Jones	Created	Email, Website, Sharepoint