

LANCASTER BOWLING LEAGUE COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy aims to establish a clear, transparent and accountable system for dealing with complaints. All formal complaints will be recorded and reviewed by the Lancaster Bowling League Secretary to ensure any learning is properly communicated and implemented.
- 1.2 Any delays in the timescales provided will be communicated to complainants by the League Secretary, together with an explanation for the delay.

2. INITIAL COMPLAINT

- 2.1 Complaints can often arise due to simple misunderstandings and are often quickly and satisfactorily resolved by the parties involved without the need for a formal investigation.
- 2.2 Where this is not possible, complaints should be addressed in writing to the Lancaster Bowling League Secretary within 21 days of the incident giving rise to the complaint. Complainants should provide their name, contact details, the date(s) of the incidents, details of the complaint and any other details they feel appropriate.
- 2.3 If it is not clear if the correspondence is a formal complaint, clarification may be requested before any action is taken.
- 2.4 Complainants may wish to remain anonymous. In these circumstances the complaint will be investigated in the same manner as outlined below, although it will not be possible to provide an outcome or a right of appeal to the complainant.

3. INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 On receipt of the complaint, the League Secretary will appoint an investigator and inform the complainant of the identity of the investigator within five days.
- 3.2 The investigator will be selected from League Committee members, and will have had no prior involvement with the matter giving rise to the complaint. The Chair of the Committee however will not be selected as investigator.
- 3.3 Should all Lancaster Bowling League Committee members have had prior involvement with the matter giving rise to the complaint, the League Secretary may appoint any other suitable person, providing there is no conflict of interest and they have had no prior involvement with the matter.
- 3.4 Should the complainant object to the appointment of the investigator, they should inform the League Secretary in writing immediately, providing reasons for their objection. The League Secretary will make a decision on whether to replace the investigator and will inform the complainant within five days of receiving the objection. The League Secretary will also update the investigators concerned.
- 3.5 Should the investigator have a conflict of interest or any previous involvement in the matter subject to complaint, they must inform the League Secretary immediately. In such circumstances the League Secretary will appoint a new investigator.

- 3.6 The investigator will aim to contact the complainant within five days of appointment to discuss the way forward. Investigators will take whatever steps are necessary to resolve the matter. This may be limited to a discussion with the complainant only but may involve, for example, discussions with others and the collation of any evidence to assist their decision making.
- 3.7 The investigator will aim to complete their investigation within 28 days following initial contact with the complainant. They will then submit a report to the League Secretary outlining their findings.
- 3.8 The League Secretary may decide:-
- i. That no further action is required
 - ii. That the matter can be dealt with informally, for example by way of an apology
 - iii. That, where the matter relates to the conduct of a member of the Lancaster Bowling League, formal disciplinary proceedings should be instigated
- 3.9 The League Secretary will aim to communicate the outcome to the complainant within five days of receipt of the report from the investigator, together with details on how to lodge an appeal.
- 3.10 The complainant cannot however appeal against the decision to instigate formal disciplinary proceedings.
- 3.11 Any matter relating to the conduct of anyone associated with Lancaster Bowling League, who is deemed to have breached the League's Code of Conduct, shall be dealt with under the Lancaster Bowling League Disciplinary Regulations.

4. **APPEALS**

- 4.1 Subject to paragraph 4.2, if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome or the manner in which their complaint has been handled, they may submit an appeal in writing to the League Secretary. Appeals will be dealt with by the Chair of the Lancaster Bowling League Committee (Appeal Chair).
- 4.2 Should the Appeal Chair of the Lancaster Bowling League Committee have a conflict of interest or any previous involvement in the matter subject to complaint, they must inform the League Secretary immediately. In such circumstances the League Secretary will appoint another member of Lancaster Bowling League Committee to Chair the Appeal.
- 4.3 Should the new Appeal Chair thus appointed have a conflict of interest or any previous involvement in the matter subject to complaint, they must inform the League Secretary immediately. In such circumstances the League Secretary will appoint a new member of the Committee to review the appeal.
- 4.4 Appeal grounds include:-
- Decision based on error of fact
 - Procedural or other irregularity
 - New evidence has come to light
 - Corrective action was unreasonable
- 4.5 Appeals should be received by the League Secretary within 21 days of receipt by the complainant of the outcome of the initial investigation and should clearly set out the grounds and reasons for the appeal.
- 4.6 On receipt of the appeal, the League Secretary will aim to provide an acknowledgement to the complainant within five days, informing them of the identity of the person who will be dealing with their appeal.
- 4.7 Should the complainant object to the appointment of the Appeal Chair dealing with the appeal, they should inform the League Secretary in writing immediately, and in any event within three days, providing reasons

for their objection. The League Secretary will make a decision on whether to replace the Chair and will inform the complainant within five days of receiving the objection. The League Secretary will also update the respective Chairs concerned.

- 4.8 The League Secretary will forward the appeal to the Appeal Chair together with details of the original complaint, the investigator's report and any supporting documents.
- 4.9 The Appeal Chair will provide the original investigator with a copy of the appeal and ask for any observations they may wish to make. The Appeal Chair may then conduct a review of all the documentation available or choose to conduct additional enquiries as they see fit to determine the outcome of the appeal. It is good practice for the Appeal Chair to discuss the matter with the complainant before making a final decision.
- 4.10 The Appeal Chair will submit a report to the League Secretary outlining their findings. The League Secretary will aim to communicate the outcome to the complainant within five days of receipt of the appeal decision from the Appeal Chair.
- 4.11 The decision of the Appeal Chair is final.

5. **FURTHER ACTION**

- 5.2 Once appeals have been dealt with, or the appeal period has elapsed without an appeal being received, each case will be discussed at the next Lancaster Bowling League Committee meeting to ascertain if any lessons can be learnt and to ensure they are appropriately disseminated and implemented.

23.09.24