

## Complaints Policy

- Responsibility** The Director of Operations is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and ensuring the charity complies with it.
- Other Directors and all staff have roles in the implementation of the policy, as explained in this document.
- The Trustees are only involved when an investigator recommends termination of membership.
- Policy Review** The policy and process will be reviewed at least every three years, with the first review due by December 2020.

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## 1. Principles

We hope everyone who comes into contact with Cycling UK has a positive experience. However, we recognise there may be times when people have concerns. When this happens, we want to hear about their concerns, so we can deal with them and prevent similar situations in the future. When someone does this, we call it a 'complaint'. We aim to:

- Respond to complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible, while being fair to everyone involved.
- Provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use, when a formal investigation is needed; and to publicise it on our website and other appropriate media.
- Handle all complaint information sensitively, in line with relevant data protection requirements.
- Make sure all our staff know what to do if someone complains to Cycling UK.
- Apologise if we have got something wrong and act quickly to put it right.
- Monitor complaints and learn from them.

## 2. What is a complaint?

This policy applies to complaints raised by a Cycling UK Member, a Cycling UK volunteer, a member of the public or an organisation we have dealt with.

A complaint is when someone tells us they are dissatisfied with something Cycling UK has done (or not done) or the way its staff, members, member groups or volunteers have behaved.

We welcome feedback about our policies and decisions and are happy to explain the reasons for them. However, we won't treat such feedback as a formal complaint unless there is a possibility that we have breached our own procedures or legal powers in arriving at those policies or decisions.

## 3. How to complain to Cycling UK

We have a few rules about how to complain:

- We welcome an initial complaint by letter, email or face-to-face.
- We only accept complaints about things that have happened in the last three months.
- We encourage members to complain directly to the Chair of their Member Group if their complaint is about something that has happened in the Member Group.
- We do not generally investigate anonymous complaints.
- We do not accept complaints that are broadly the same as a previous complaint from the complainant.
- We do not progress complaints that we believe to be vexatious or malicious.
- We do not tolerate abusive behaviour or language from complainants.

## 4. How we deal with complaints

We believe most complaints are best dealt with informally by the staff or Member Group responsible for the issue. Sometimes a formal investigation is needed. Our complaints process therefore has three stages.

### Stage 1: Informal response

We encourage people to complain to any member of Cycling UK's staff or their Member Group committee if the complaint relates to the group. Sometimes people may also complain to trustees or other volunteers. Whoever receives the initial complaint should find out what they can about it and either deal with it themselves if they are competent to do so or refer it to an appropriate colleague.

In most cases, we expect this informal contact to resolve the situation. However, if we haven't met the complainant's expectations and they wish to take it further, the staff (or volunteer) handling the complaint should escalate it to stage 2 by informing the senior manager with responsibility for the subject area of the complaint (or the Director of Operations if they are not sure which person is appropriate).

### Stage 2: Formal investigation

When a complaint is escalated to stage 2, it will be investigated by the senior manager with direct responsibility for the subject area of the complaint. They are referred to here as the 'Investigator'.

The investigator will acknowledge the complaint in writing, normally within seven working days of it being escalated. They will try to complete the investigation as quickly as possible. If it is likely to take a long time, the Investigator will let the complainant know what is happening.

After completing their investigation, the investigator will decide whether to uphold or reject the complaint, deciding on any sanctions if applicable. They will inform the complainant in writing about the decision, any actions Cycling UK will take and their right of appeal.

### Stage 3: Appeal review

If the complainant feels their complaint was not handled appropriately, or still feels they have not had a satisfactory answer, they may appeal within 28 working days of being given a decision by emailing the Director of Operations with their request - explaining the basis on which they are making the appeal.

The Director of Operations will appoint another senior manager to review the appeal - someone who has no direct accountability for the subject area. When they have completed their review, they will inform the complainant in writing about their decision and any actions Cycling UK will take.

The original response to a complaint may be reviewed just once. Once the appeal has been reviewed and a response provided to the complainant, the matter will be closed.

### Terminating membership

Where a complaint has been upheld against a Member, the investigator may recommend to the Board of Trustees that the person's membership be terminated. In such instances, if the stage 3 appeal has been unsuccessful, the Member will have the opportunity to draft a one-page letter to the Board stating the reasons why they feel their membership should not be terminated. The Board or delegated Trustee Committee will then decide whether to accept the Investigator's recommendation to terminate membership.

This arrangement is in accordance with the following clauses in Cycling UK's constitution:

10.3 The Board of Trustees may, in its absolute discretion, decline to admit any person as a Member.

10.7.2 if the Trustees resolve to terminate his membership provided that he shall have had reasonable opportunity to explain to the Trustees why he should not be removed

## Safeguarding

Where a complaint raises a potential safeguarding issue, staff should immediately refer it to the Director of Operations who will decide whether it should be dealt with under Cycling UK's safeguarding policy, rather than this complaints policy.

## 5. Managing the complaints process

The Director of Operations has overall responsibility for the effective implementation of this process. This includes:

- Maintaining the policy and recommending updates when appropriate.
- Ensuring staff understand the process and how to deal with a complaint.
- Ensuring the policy is appropriately communicated.
- Assigning appropriate people to investigate a formal complaint or review an appeal.
- Recording formal complaints and their outcome.
- Informing the Senior Management Team of issues raised by complaints which might need a strategic response.