

GLOUCESTERSHIRE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Complaints Procedure

The Gloucestershire Hockey Association (GHA) is committed to providing a fun and safe environment for those who wish to play recreational and competitive hockey. However, we know that things can go wrong, so if you are unhappy about any aspect of our service, we would like to hear from you and we have this procedure that you can use. We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future as well as a chance to put things right for the person/people of organisation(s) that has/have made a complaint.

This procedure is to provide an open and consistent approach for handling complaints. All complaints / allegations will be treated confidentially.

Any complaint or allegation concerning the Welfare of Young People must be reported to the GHA Welfare Officer immediately at welfare@glos-ha.org.uk. Safeguarding procedures always take precedence.

1. Complaint

A complaint can be made by someone from inside the GHA or from outside and is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of GHA.

Our complaints policy does not cover:

- Anonymous complaints.
- Complaints regarding umpiring decisions.
- Child Safeguarding Concerns (see above).

2. Our standards for handling complaints

- We can receive complaints by letter or email.
- We treat all complaints seriously.
- You can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times.
- We expect that you will also treat our staff dealing with your complaint with the same courtesy, respect and fairness.

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- We will treat your complaint in confidence.
- We will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within 10 working days where we have a return address and you can expect to have a full reply within 20 working days.
- We may make use of or refer to England Hockey Policies when considering complaints; in particular the Code of Ethics and Behaviour, Discipline and Disrepute or any other relevant Policy.
- We may refer the complaint to England Hockey for guidance.

3. Complaints process

Complaints should be dealt with, wherever possible, verbally at the time and place at which it arose. In the first instance, a concern or complaint could be made verbally, directly with the person(s) to see if the issue can be addressed satisfactorily in an informal manner. This may be done with the assistance of another person if this is helpful.

If a satisfactory conclusion cannot be found informally at that time, a complaint should be made in writing within 5 working days of the incident occurring to the Secretary of the GHA. The complaint should outline all relevant details about the issue, event, other parties involved, times, locations, witnesses, etc and include a return address for our response. It should be sent to secretary@glos-ha.org.uk.

The Complaints Committee (See Appendix 1) should review any relevant paper work and hold any necessary meetings with all parties to establish the facts. Once these are known, these will determine what action(s) is required. Decisions will be made on a majority basis. If the conclusion is that misconduct or similar has occurred and a disciplinary process has to be applied then the Committee must inform the Chair of the GHA Committee within 10 working days.

GHA aims to send a full response within 20 working days of receiving each complaint. We aim to complete our investigation into all complaints received about our service within the timescales set out above. However, in a limited number of

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cases - for example, if a complaint is very complex, requires further breakdown or referral to England Hockey for guidance, it may be necessary to extend the time limit to ensure we have all the information necessary to deal with it. If this is the case, we will keep the complainant informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and inform them of next steps.

During the process to establish the facts, the Complaints Committee should furnish the complainee with the nature of the complaint being made against him/her and afford him/her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing, but usually at a meeting with the Complaints Committee.

Written confidential records of all complaints should be safely and confidentially kept.

Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the Complaints Committee should notify the complainee of any sanction being imposed. The notification should be made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to the parent(s) or carer(s).

The Complaints Committee should inform the complainant of the outcome of complaint. In the event that an incident of misconduct has taken place the Complaints Committee must ensure that the rights of confidentiality of all involved are respected.

4. Appeals

If the complainee or complainant is unhappy with the decision of the Complaints Committee, he/she has the right to appeal the decision to the Appeals Committee (see Appendix 2). Any appeal should be made in writing within 5 days of the decision of the Complaints Committee and sent to chair@glos-ha.org.uk.

The Appeals Committee has the power to confirm, set aside or change any action imposed by the Complaints Committee.

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Any appeal would focus on the range and comprehensiveness of the evidence. For example, evidence may have been disregarded or a person not given a full opportunity to state his/her case. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final and binding.

5. Remedies

When we get things wrong we will act to:

- Accept responsibility and apologise.
- Explain what went wrong and why.
- Put things right by making any changes required.
- Learn lessons from mistakes and change policies and practices where proportionate and sensible to do so.

6. Redress

The action we take to put matters right (i.e. redress) in response to a complaint can include any combination of the remedies set out in the list below.

The general principle we follow is that complainants should, so far as possible, be put in the position they would have been in, had things not gone wrong. The remedy applied needs to be proportionate and appropriate to the failure in service, and take into account what redress people seek when they complain.

An apology is generally the most appropriate action, but other action may also be necessary in some circumstances.

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List of remedies

- A full apology, explaining what happened and/or what went wrong.
- Remedial action, which may include reviewing or changing a decision on the service given to an individual complainant.
- Provide the service required in the first instance (immediately, if appropriate).
- Putting things right (for example a change of procedure to prevent future difficulties of a similar kind, either for the complainant or others).
- Training or supervising staff; or a combination of both.
- Or any other action that may resolve the matter.

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Appendix 1 – Complaints Committee

Chair:

- GHA Secretary

Members:

- GHA Welfare Officer.
- 1 other GHA Officer.

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Appendix 2 – Appeals Committee

Chair:

- GHA Chair.

Members:

- GHA Welfare Officer.
- 1 other GHA Officer not involved in hearing the original complaint.