



Complaints Management Process

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Owner name: Communications

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1. Introduction

1.1 Pickleball Scotland seeks to maintain its reputation as the Governing body of Pickleball in Scotland. Pickleball Scotland is also committed to maintaining its responsiveness to the needs and concerns of its members, volunteers and partner organisations.

1.2 The Policy is designed to provide guidance on the manner in which Pickleball Scotland receives and manages complaints made against the Association, its members and volunteers.

1.3 Pickleball Scotland operates a zero-tolerance policy towards any person being abusive or making abusive comments towards any member of the management Committee or volunteer working for the Association.

1.4 If abusive comments are made during a telephone call, e-mail or social media conversation the member of the Management team, will inform the person regarding their behaviour and if it continues will terminate the call, e-mail or social media conversation.

1.5 Pickleball Scotland is committed to providing excellent customer service to everyone who is affected by its operation. Pickleball Scotland does not look at complaints as unwanted and is firmly committed to a process of continuous improvement of which the complaints procedure is just one element.

1.6 Recognising that sometimes things go wrong, or mistakes are made, this policy outlines the procedures to follow to make a complaint and the internal procedures Pickleball Scotland will follow to manage the process.

1.7 The objectives of this complaints management policy are to ensure that:

- (a) Any complaints that are received are investigated at the appropriate level in the organisation;
- (b) All complaints are actioned in the most expeditious way;

(c) Persons making complaints know how their complaint will be dealt with;

(d) Wherever possible, lessons are learned.

2. DEFINITIONS

What is a Complaint

2.1 This policy is intended to address complaints made to Pickleball Scotland. For the purposes of this policy, a complaint is defined as follows:

(a) An expression of dissatisfaction with a service provided.

2.2 Any person or organisation ('the complainant') who is dissatisfied with a service provided by the Association, for any reason, may contact Pickleball Scotland to complain. A complaint must be written. Complaints in the way of negative feedback, which may not require a resolution or formal follow-up is valuable but the policy does not apply to feedback of this nature.

Definition of a Complainant

2.3 For the purposes of the policy, complainants are defined as anyone who has any dealings with Pickleball Scotland and wishes to raise a concern or complaint against any of the following:

(a) Pickleball Scotland Full Member;

(b) Pickleball Scotland Volunteer;

(c) Pickleball Scotland Management committee member or Working Group Member.

2.4 This policy excludes complaints made against employee and between employees - Currently no one is employed and separate policies will be developed when individuals are employed.

2.5 Officers other than the Chair i.e. Treasurer and Secretary are also excluded from this policy. Any Officer with specific issues should raise their complaint with the Chair of Pickleball Scotland, in the first instance.

Should the Chair be the subject of the complaint, it should be raised with another member of the Management Team.

Definition of an Investigator

2.6 For the purposes of the policy, an investigator shall be a member of management committee, or third party not connected (as much as is reasonably possible) to the complaint who has been assigned by Pickleball Scotland to investigate and provide an appropriate response to a complaint.

Misunderstandings

2.7 Even if the complainant does not regard a particular concern as a 'complaint', Pickleball Scotland would still like to know about it as it may help us deal with something the organisation would otherwise overlook. Pickleball Scotland wants to know about these so all involved can get an acceptable solution and Pickleball Scotland can learn from the process.

2.8 In order to avoid feeling that a minor issue is not worth raising as a complaint, Pickleball Scotland will take steps to encourage comment and constructive criticism at every level.

2.9 Guidance will be provided to all volunteers in dealing with all reported issues and misunderstandings. This guidance will include an empowerment to immediately resolve any issue where Pickleball Scotland's level of service has not met expectations. A record will be kept all issues dealt with in this way. The name of the complainant will not be included and the volunteer member will make an objective judgment on the cause of the problem. These will be reviewed on a regular basis as part of the organisation's process of continuous improvement.

3. MAKING A COMPLAINT – THE PROCESS

3.1 The process comprises a four-stage model outlined in this section of the policy.

First Stage Review

3.2 In the first instance the complainant **MUST** discuss and seek resolution of the issue to the party against whom they are complaining e.g. a member, committee members or volunteer.

3.3 If the first stage review does not take place the issue cannot be progressed to second stage review except in exceptional circumstances as appropriate to the case.

3.4 If application for a second stage review is made to Pickleball Scotland without point 3.2 being completed any complaint will be returned to the complainant. Unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Second Stage Review

3.5 Minor complaints are to be made in writing by email or letter. (For who to address this to see Section 4)

3.6 An investigator from Pickleball Scotland will be assigned and will make every effort to investigate each complaint and give an appropriate response.

3.7 Possible outcomes may be:

- (a) Appropriate response supplied; complainant is satisfied with the response so the complaint is considered as being resolved;
- (b) Appropriate response supplied; complainant is not satisfied with the response but accepts the response as factual so the complaint is considered as being resolved;
- (c) Appropriate response supplied, complainant is not satisfied with the response and wishes to escalate the issue by raising a formal complaint (refer to point 3.8 lodging a formal complaint).

Lodging a Formal Complaint

3.8 Persons lodging a formal complaint must submit in writing any complaint to Secretary@pickleballscotland.org.

(a) Pickleball Scotland requires an explanation of the issue that has caused the complainant to be dissatisfied;

(b) A complaint should also contain an explanation of what the complainant is requesting be done to resolve the issue.

3.9 Formal complaints will be recorded.

3.10 Pickleball Scotland will send an acknowledgement by email quoting a complaint registration number. Including this number with any further correspondence will assist Pickleball Scotland to progress the complaint.

Third Stage Review

3.11 An investigator from Pickleball Scotland will be assigned and will make every effort to investigate each complaint and give an appropriate response.

3.12 All correspondence about complaints will be treated as confidential but may need to be shared with the person or group against whom the complaint is made. As part of the investigation correspondence will only be shared on a need to know basis.

3.13 When the second investigator has considered the detail of the complaint, the person raising the complaint will receive a written response detailing any proposed remedial action. This will be done within 28 days of the receipt of the original complaint.

3.14 If it is not possible to give a written response within 28 days, the reviewer will explain this in writing at the end of the 28 day period, providing revised timescales.

3.15 Possible outcomes may be:

- (a) Appropriate response supplied; complainant is satisfied with the response so the complaint is considered as being resolved;
- (b) Appropriate response supplied; complainant is not satisfied with the response but accepts the response as factual so the complaint is considered as being resolved;
- (c) Appropriate response supplied, complainant is not satisfied with the response and wishes to escalate the complaint to mediation before a more senior person within Pickleball Scotland;
- (d) Appropriate response supplied, complainant is not satisfied with the response and wishes to escalate the complaint to a final stage review before a more senior person within Pickleball Scotland.

Final Stage Review

3.16 If a final stage review is requested, the matter will be referred to a more senior person within Pickleball Scotland who will take a fresh and impartial look at the complaint.

3.17 The Pickleball Scotland objective is to find a mutually satisfactory resolution to the complaint.

3.18 Following the final stage review, the complainant will be provided with a final response from Pickleball Scotland detailing any changes to the previously proposed remedial action.

3.19 However, if the complainant is not satisfied with this review after Pickleball Scotland has provided a final response then the complaint will be considered “deadlocked”.

3.20 The final stage review response will be considered the final position of Pickleball Scotland

3.21 However, under exceptional circumstances the final Pickleball Scotland response may also indicate if, and how, the complaint can be progressed beyond the final stage review.

Mediation

3.22 Mediation is an informal process that complements Pickleball Scotland's other formal procedures for dealing with issues. It is a process which is used to help improve working relationships between members, perhaps where there has been a misunderstanding or a disagreement.

3.23 Mediation seeks to provide an informal solution to conflict and it can be used at any point in the process. What mediation offers is a safe and confidential space for participants to find their own answers.

3.24 Mediation is voluntary and completely confidential:

- (a) Mediation may be requested by Pickleball Scotland or either party to a complaint;
- (b) Mediation may be requested at any stage within the complaints management system;
- (c) The Pickleball Scotland objective is to find a mutually satisfactory resolution to any issues.

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Assistance with Making a Complaint

4.1 If you need assistance in formulating or lodging a complaint, the following is a list of people to contact. Contact should be made with the first person on the list that is not subject or part of the complaint being lodged:

- (a) Pickleball Scotland Management Group Member
- (b) Pickleball Scotland Chair

Your Rights During the Complaints Process

4.2 You have the right to enquire as to the status of your complaint by contacting the investigator who has been identified to you as managing your complaint.

Withdrawing a Complaint

4.3 If at any stage the complainant wants to stop a complaint from being progressed, the person can do so by writing an email or letter to the investigator.

4.4 Pickleball Scotland reserves the right to continue to investigate serious complaints in these circumstances.

Results of Complaints

4.5 These will be reviewed regularly by the Management Committee to identify any patterns and improvements

Integrity and Transparency

4.6 During the process of dealing with a complaint Pickleball Scotland will be as open and transparent as possible. Complainants will be given full information about the progress of their complaint except in the cases mentioned below:

(a) Where other legislation overrides publication.

(b) The legal requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Whistleblowers) may restrict the information that can be provided to persons raising complaints

4.7 If either of these situations occurs the investigator will provide an explanation without disclosing any restricted information.

4.8 To ensure confidentiality, information about the progress of a complaint will only be provided to the complainant.

Complaints About the Complaints Process

4.9 If an accusation is made that this complaints management system has not been followed, the matter can be raised for discussion at a meeting of the Pickleball Scotland Management Group. The meeting will not consider the substantive matter because this may invalidate the final

stage review process, but may refer the whole matter back for a second stage review and ask for a report to make sure that the full procedure is followed.

Continuous Improvement

4.10 Pickleball Scotland would appreciate feedback from complainants about their experience of Pickleball Scotland's complaints procedure and may use this to improve the way complaints are managed in the future. Further information will be included in the review of this complaints management system.

If you would like to discuss anything in this Complaints Management Process in the first instance please email: info@pickleballscotland.org