



## **POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS**

Bowls England is committed to providing a quality service for its members and working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our stakeholders.

One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our members, customers and stakeholders (sponsors), and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible
- We treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response
- 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 etc
- We learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints Policy and Procedures.

Bowls England recognises that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

- Resolve informal concerns quickly
- Keep matters low-key
- Enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Bowls England defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction (with Bowls England, a Director or a Member of Staff) that relates to Bowls England and requires a formal response'.

The purpose of a formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Bowls England's responsibility will be to:

- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing
- Respond with a stated period of time
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint
- Take action where appropriate

A Complainant's responsibility is to:

- Bring their complaint, in writing, to Bowls England's attention normally within eight weeks of the issue arising
- Raise concerns promptly and directly with the Chief Executive of Bowls England
- Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date
- Allow Bowls England a reasonable time to deal with the matter
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Bowls England's control

### **Responsibility for Action**

The Chief Executive and Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Board of Bowls England are responsible unless involvement of the Board of Bowls England should of a necessity be involved.

### **Confidentiality**

Apart from in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Bowls England maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality and each complaint will be judged on its own merit. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

### **Monitoring and Reporting**

Directors of Bowls England will receive annually an anonymized report of complaints made and their resolution.

## **FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### ***Stage 1***

In the first instance, if your complaint concerns a Director of Bowls England, or a member of Bowls England staff and you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to the Chief Executive, so that he has a chance to put things right. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 4 working days of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within 15 working days.

### ***Stage 2***

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint then you can ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed by the Board.

Bowls England's 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. 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 Bowls England's Chief Executive on behalf of the Board, then you have the option of writing to the Chair of Bowls England stating the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You must do this within 10 days of receiving the written response from Bowls England's Chief Executive.

The Chair (or their nominee) will respond normally within 10 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.

His/her decision will be final.