

Hambleton Athletics and Running Club

Complaints Policy

Approved 2nd September 2024

Introduction

This document outlines the Complaints Policy of Hambleton Athletics and Running Club (“the Club”). It has been prepared based on the guidance provided by England Athletics.

All concerns, allegations or reports of malpractice or abuse relating to the welfare of children or vulnerable adults will be recorded and responded to swiftly and appropriately in accordance with the Club’s and England Athletics’ safeguarding policy and procedures. The Welfare Officer shall be the lead Officer for all Members in the event of any safeguarding concerns.

Any complaints of misconduct (improper or unprofessional conduct) regarding the behaviour of Members or Officers shall be dealt with by the Club in accordance with the processes set out below.

How to complain

The expectations of Club Members are set out in the relevant Codes of Conduct which can be accessed using the following link:

<https://myathleticsportal.englandathletics.org/userprofile/membercodeofconduct>

Additional expectations may also be set out in our Club Rules from time to time which can be accessed via our website.

You should make your complaint in writing to the HARC Secretary who can be contacted at secretary@harc.uk.

When making your complaint you should let us know:

- Your name
- Details of how you would like us to contact you
- What has happened. Please provide as much relevant detail as possible to enable us to understand and look into the matter
- How you would like us to resolve the matter

If you need help in making your complaint, you can contact one of the Welfare Officers in person or at welfare@harc.uk and they will be able to guide you through the process.

Your complaint will be kept confidential at all times, and we ask that you also do not disclose the details of your complaint to anyone until the process is complete.

Who can make a complaint?

- Club members
- Non-club members
- Committee members
- Coaches
- Parents / Guardians / Advocates on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Officers of the club can make complaints about a member on behalf of the club as a whole

The process

Your complaint will be risk assessed when received, and this will be continuously reviewed at every step of the process.

If your complaint can be resolved informally then the Secretary will liaise with you direct in relation to this. You will be provided with a written response and we will request your agreement to this in writing.

If you remain unsatisfied with the outcome of the informal resolution, then you can request that your complaint is escalated to a formal complaint.

Once you have submitted your complaint, the Secretary will appoint an Investigator and an Adjudicator. If the Secretary is unavailable within this time period, then a delegate will be appointed to undertake this.

The Investigator will contact you to confirm your points of complaint and desired outcomes within 48 hours. The role of the Adjudicator is to ensure that the investigation is fair and thorough.

Once appointed, the Investigator will interview any parties involved and ask them to provide relevant evidence, witnesses etc. Please note that other coaches, committee members and volunteers may be called upon to give evidence during the investigation.

Should you wish for any confidential information to be disclosed and taken into account as part of the investigation, such as medical notes that we may hold, then you should request this via the Welfare Officer who will have access to the details you have provided the club.

The Investigator will prepare a full report which will be reviewed by the Adjudicator to ensure it is fair and thorough. Once the Adjudicator is satisfied, the report will be presented to a panel of 3 committee members, and one panel member will be appointed Chair. The panel members will be decided at the start of every year, however, they will be subject to change should a conflict of interest arise.

The Panel will be held in person within 14 days at a hired venue and minutes of the Panel will be taken. Usually, neither you nor any other parties will be invited to attend the Panel.

The Chair will write to you with the outcome of your complaint together with the Investigator's report. This should be done within 16 days, however, please note that in complex cases or due to panel availability, this may take longer. We will update you if this is the case.

In the event that all committee members form part of your complaint, members that do not form part of the committee will be appointed as Investigator, Adjudicator and to sit on the Panel.

What if I am not happy with the outcome of my complaint?

Should you remain unsatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you are able to appeal the decision within 3 weeks. Appeals should be made to the Secretary who can be contacted at secretary@harc.uk.

Once an appeal has been received, the Investigator will consider any further information you have provided, and revise their report as necessary. A new Adjudicator will be appointed, and they will review the report for fairness and thoroughness. Once the new Adjudicator is satisfied, the report

will be presented to a new panel of 3 committee members (the Appeals Panel), none of whom were involved in the original complaint process. The Appeals Panel members will be decided at the start of every year, however, they will be subject to change should a conflict of interest arise.

The Appeals Panel will be held in person within 14 days at a hired venue and minutes of the Panel will be taken.

The Chair will write to you with the outcome of your complaint together with the Investigator's report. This should be done within 16 days, however, please note that in complex cases or due to panel availability this may take longer. We will update you if this is the case.

In the event that all committee members form part of your complaint, members that do not form part of the committee will be appointed to sit on the Appeals Panel.

Once you have received the outcome of the Appeal, if you remain dissatisfied then you are able to contact England Athletics. Details on how to do this can be found at:

<https://www.englandathletics.org/welfare/reporting-a-concern/>