

Complaints Policy

Version 2

First Approved on:	October 2022
Last reviewed on:	N/A
Date of next review:	October 2025

1. Introduction / Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Bowls Development Alliance (BDA) 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. Responding positively to compliments, comments and complaints is an important aspect of this commitment and will help in our process of continuous improvement.

2. Policy Rationale

- 2.1 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, and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.
- 2.2 The purpose of a formal complaint's procedure is to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently, confidentially and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.
- 2.3 Where a complaint is investigated and found to be unsubstantiated, the following of the formal procedure will be equally important to show that everything has been done fairly and equitably.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 **A complaint** is any negative comment received verbally, electronically or in writing from an individual or representative of an organisation, expressing concerns about the operation of the BDA or a member of staff / Director of the BDA.
- 3.2 **Confidentiality** is applied in all but exceptional circumstances to complaints so that only those with a need to know about the complaint to allow for its full investigation, are informed about the nature or content of the complaint. Where it is not possible to maintain confidentiality, for example, if there is a link to a safeguarding concern requiring onward referral to appropriate agencies, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

- 3.3 **The Complainant** is a person making a complaint.
- 3.4 **Vexatious complaints** are complaints that are made for retaliatory or bad faith purposes, or otherwise forms part of a pattern of conduct by the requestor that amounts to an abuse of the complaint process.

4. Scope of the Policy / Who it applies to

- 4.1 This policy applies to the members of the Board of Directors of the BDA and members of staff. It is not the staff Grievance Policy which is explained within the staff handbook.
- 4.2 Any member of the public may be the source of a complaint in an individual capacity or as a representative of an organisation.

5. Policy Details

- 5.1 The purposes of the complaints policy and associated procedure are to: ‘
- Listen to the concern raised by the complainant,
 - Respond to the complaint in a satisfactory, open, timely and candid manner,
 - Identify whether the complaint is upheld, not upheld or partially upheld.
 - Ensure that where faults are identified, they are recognised, addressed and where possible remedial action is undertaken,
 - Learn and improve service provision,
- 5.2 The BDA has a three stage complaints procedure to allow for resolution of complaints. These stages are contained in section 6 below.
- 5.3 Complainants are treated with respect and courtesy and they will not face discrimination as a result of making a complaint.
- 5.4 Vexatious complaints which are brought regardless of their merits, solely to harass or subdue a member of the Board or a member of staff will not receive ongoing responses.

6. Linked Procedures

The BDA three stage complaints procedure is detailed below:

6.1 Stage 1

- In the first instance, if a complaint concerns a Director of the BDA, or a member of the BDA staff and it is not possible to resolve the issue informally, the complainant should write to the BDA Business Operations Manager.

- The complaint letter should set out the details of the complaint, any supporting evidence, the consequences for the complainant as a result, and the remedy being sought.
- The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.
- A response and an explanation will be sent within 15 working days.

6.2 Stage 2

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint, they may ask for the complaint and the response to be reviewed by the Board. They should write to the Managing Director who is an Ex-Officio Board member and include the initial complaint and response.
- The BDA 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, an interim response, describing what is being done to deal with the matter, will be sent within a further 15 working days. It will detail when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

6.3 Final Stage

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the subsequent reply from the BDA Managing Director on behalf of the Board, then they have the option of writing to the Chairperson of the BDA stating the reason why they are dissatisfied with the outcome. This must be within 10 days of receiving the written response from the BDA Managing Director.
- The Chairperson (or their nominee) will normally respond within 10 working days to inform the complainant of the action which will be taken to investigate the ongoing complaint, and when to expect to hear the outcome of the investigation.
- **Their decision will be final.**

7. Record-keeping

- 7.1 Records of all compliments, comments and complaints will be kept by the BDA Business Operations Manager. The record will include responsibilities to investigate or take action and records of resolutions of complaints.
- 7.2 Complaints are discussed as a standing item at each Board Meeting.

8. Legislative References

- 8.1 The BDA is a Limited Company and is therefore governed by the Companies Act 2006 and subsequent amendments.

8.2 This policy is informed by the requirements of the Code for Sports Governance 2021.

9. Responsibility

9.1 The Chair of the Board is responsible for the maintenance of this policy. They will be supported to examine and apply updates by the BDA Business Operations Manager.

10. Monitoring and review

10.1 The policy will be reviewed at least every three years with an interim review possible if there is a change to legislation or sports governance requirements.

Review History

Date of Review	Comments
September 2011	Version 1 reviewed and approved for use
October 2014	Reviewed and re-approved for use
October 2015	Reviewed and re-approved for use
September 2016	Reviewed and re-approved for use
June 2019	Minor text changes and approved for use
October 2021	Text updated and new logo added. Approved for use.
July 2022	Updated to new template and added evaluation of committees and reference to 2021 Code for Sports Governance
October 2022	Approved for use by Board
Feb 2024	Updated with new role details

Revision History

Version	Change Log	Date
1	Initial release of policy	September 2011
1.1	Updated release	June 2019
1.2	Updated release	October 2021
2	Updated for Oct approval	July 2022