The British Biathlon Union Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out how the British Biathlon Union (BBU) will handle complaints made by staff, athletes, BBU members and those third parties providing services to the BBU.

1.2 The BBU believes that it is in everybody's best interests to address concerns or complaints at the earliest opportunity before they escalate into more significant issues. Accordingly it is expected that the person making the complaint (complainant) will raise the issue(s) informally in the first instance. The formal procedure should only be used when informal resolution has failed to resolve the matter or is not making progress at a reasonable pace.

2. The definition of a complaint

2.1 A complaint is:

"An expression of dissatisfaction about BBU's action or lack of action, or about a standard of service, whether the action taken or the service was provided by a BBU staff member, a volunteer acting on behalf of BBU, or a body or organisation acting on behalf of BBU".

2.2 This policy does not apply to:

- Appeals against athlete selection decisions, competition/games decisions or results
- Anti-doping issues
- Matters covered under the BBU Whistleblowing Policy
- Matters which are subject to legal proceedings

2.3 All complaints that relate to sport integrity will be investigated under the relevant policies (safeguarding, anti-doping, anti-bribery) irrespective of elapsed time.

2.4 Complaints we can't help with.

We will not consider your complaint if you:

- Make it anonymously
- Wish to disagree with one of our published policies, including selection
- Wish to disagree with wider government policy

2.5 We reserve the right not to consider your complaint(s) or to cease to do so if the BBU determine it is unreasonable, vexatious, or aggressive. See Appendix A for a non-exhaustive list of examples.

3. Who can make a complaint?

A complaint can be made by staff, athletes (or their representatives in the case of minors), members, volunteers and third parties providing services to the BBU.

4. Overarching principles

Our approach:

- We will be consistent and fair to all parties, treating them with dignity and respect.
- We will be transparent and open.
- All proceedings, whether informal or formal, should as a far as is reasonably practical remain confidential.
- To avoid unreasonable delay
- Enable all parties to be able to present their case either in writing or in person, as determined by the BBU
- Where more than one complainant has submitted a complaint relating to the same or substantially the same issue, the complaints may be dealt with together in the interests of fair and consistent decision-making
- If the complainant has difficulty in expressing their complaint in writing, for instance, because English is not their first language, or they find expressing themselves in writing challenging, they should make the BBU aware by contacting the BBU Safeguarding Lead

5. How to raise a complaint

Informal resolution

5.1 In the first instance, you should raise the issue with the other person involved and if necessary arrange with them a suitable time and place to discuss the matter informally.

5.2 If the matter cannot be resolved, or you feel that you cannot raise the matter with the other person involved, then you should raise the matter with the member of staff who is the appropriate next level up, as per the table below.

Subject	Appropriate Next Level
Athlete	Coach
Coach, volunteer	Senior Coach
Senior coach, BBU member	Chief Executive Officer
Chief Executive Officer	Chair of the Board
Board member	Chair of the Board

5.3 If you are unsure which person to contact, please email: info@britishbiathlon.com for guidance. All such correspondence will be treated in confidence.

5.4 If it becomes apparent that informal resolution will not be possible, you will be given the option of raising a formal complaint.

Formal complaint procedure

5.5 A formal complaint should be made in writing and be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer by post or email to the following address:

British Biathlon Union
25 Robert Franklin Way
South Cerney
GL7 5UD

Email: info@britishbiathlon.com

5.6 Formal complaints must be submitted within **14 calendar days** of the incident arising. Complaints received after that date will only be considered in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the BBU.

6. What we need to know

6.1 To help us to deal with your complaint, please provide as much of the following information as possible when you submit it:

- A clear description of the complaint, including dates, times, persons involved, etc
- An explanation as to why you were not satisfied with the informal resolution
- What you would like us to do to sort things out
- Your full contact details, including postal address, email and telephone number

7. What happens next?

7.1 We will aim to acknowledge receipt of your formal complaint within 5 working days and aim to provide a response within 20 working days, but if this is not possible we will explain why and give you a date by which you can expect a response.

7.2 The BBU will nominate a responsible person to look into your complaint. The responsible person may be a member of the BBU Board or an independent person appointed by them.

7.3 If the complaint is in respect of a named individual (respondent), a copy of the complaint will be forwarded to them and they will be given the opportunity to respond in writing to it at the earliest opportunity. A copy of that response will be disclosed to you. Both the respondent and you will be sent any other written comments submitted by persons involved with the matter.

7.4 The responsible person will determine the best way of investigating your complaint. They will review the facts and consider any information you and the person(s) involved have provided us with and where necessary seek further information, comment or clarification.

7.5 At the end of the investigation, the BBU will write to you to tell you the outcome of your complaint and explain any action we propose to take.

8. Appeal

8.1 If your complaint is still not resolved, you can ask the Chair of the BBU to review the matter by way of an appeal.

8.2 All appeals must be submitted in writing and posted or emailed to the Chair of the Board within **5 working days** of receiving the written outcome of your complaint. Appeals submitted after that that date will only be considered in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Chair of the Board.

8.3 We will aim to acknowledge receipt of your appeal within 5 working days and aim to provide a response within 20 working days, but if this is not possible we will explain why and give you a date by which you can expect a response.

8.4 The Chair of the Board will determine the best way of reviewing your complaint. They will review the facts, consider any information you have provided to the BBU and also review our prior handling of your complaint. The Chair of the Board may at their discretion ask another member of the Board, or an independent person to assist in reviewing your complaint.

8.5 At the end of the review, the Chair of the Board will write to you to tell you the outcome of your appeal and explain any action that we propose to take.

8.6 The determination of the Chair of the Board is final.

9. Mediation

9.1 Mediation is a fast and effective method of resolution and way of restoring working relationships. It involves the use of a trained third party (mediator) to help the parties to find their own workable solution to an issue. It can be undertaken in person or online and often takes less than a day. Mediation can be entered into at any stage and should be considered in any event when a formal complaint is submitted and at any time at the request of the respondent, BBU or yourself.

10. Confidentiality

BBU staff, athletes, members and third parties providing services to the BBU should not discuss any matters relating to complaints with anyone other than those persons with responsibility for investigating or determining the complaint or appeal.

11. What we expect from you

11.1 The BBU understands that if you have a complaint you are likely to feel strongly about it. You may also feel angry, frustrated or upset by the circumstances that led to your complaint and that this may cause you to act in a way that is out of character. Nevertheless we expect you to be polite and courteous to our staff, Board members and volunteers and we will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour. There is a large amount of work in BBU being done by a team of volunteers and we expect complainants to respect that at all times.

Appendix A:

1. Unreasonable complaints

1.1 In most cases complaints can be dealt with quickly and simply. However, in a minority of cases complaints are pursued in unreasonable and inappropriate ways.

1.2 Unreasonable complaints are complaints that because of the nature of the contact or frequency with which the complaint is pursued, hinder the ability of the BBU to properly consider the matters at hand or place unwarranted demands on staff time. Unreasonable complaints may be justified grievances pursued in inappropriate ways, or they may be complaints which appear to have no substance, or which have already been fully investigated or responded to.

1.3 If the BBU deems a complaint unreasonable, it will take action that is proportionate to the nature and frequency of the complainant's contact with the BBU. The decision to apply measures to manage unreasonable complaints will be taken by the Chief Executive Officer or Chair of the Board. The complainant will be informed of the measures in writing.

1.4 Examples of unreasonable complaints (non-exhaustive):

- Refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of assistance from staff
- Refusing to co-operate with the complaints procedure whilst still wishing for the complaint to be resolved
- Refusing to accept that some of the issues are not within the remit of the BBU's complaints procedure despite having been provided with the information
- Changing the basis of the complaint while the procedure is in process
- Introducing trivial or irrelevant new information or raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insisting they are fully answered
- Adopting a 'scattergun approach' – repeatedly contacting different members of staff with different information and or questions or pursuing a complaint simultaneously with a number of different public bodies
- Submitting a repeat complaint once the matter has been concluded or refusing to accept a decision and repeatedly arguing a point or complaining about the decision

1.5 Measures may include:

- Refusing to consider further, additional complaints about a matter currently under consideration
- Placing limits on telephone conversations or personal contact, for example by limiting contact to one member of staff
- Limiting the methods of contact available to the complainant, such as by written means only
- By refusing to consider matters that have already been comprehensively dealt with

2. Vexatious, aggressive complainants

2.1 Examples of behaviour which can be defined as vexatious or aggressive include, but not limited to:

- Excessive and repeated attempts to contact staff and volunteers
- Pursuing multiple complaints against the organisation at the same time

- Making unreasonable demands of staff and volunteers
- Threats (including those of legal action) against staff, volunteers or the organisation
- Repeated raising of unreasonable complaints (see above)
- Making multiple complaints to multiple external organisations about BBU

2.2 If the BBU deems a complaint to be vexatious or aggressive, it will take action that is proportionate to the nature and frequency of the complainant's contact with the BBU. The decision to apply measures to manage unreasonable complaints will be taken by the Chief Executive Officer or Chair of the Board. The complainant will be informed of the measures in writing (see above for some examples of measures that may be taken).

2.3 If appropriate a complainant may be reported for disciplinary proceedings.

Reviewed: 1 September 2024, EFG. Accepted by the Board 2 September 2024.