



**DeaflympicsGB**



**UK Deaf Sport**

**Complaints Policy and Procedure**

## The Issue Status

The Issue Status is indicated by the version number in the footer of this document. It identifies the Issue Status of the 'UK Deaf Sport Complaints Policy and Procedure'.

When any part of this document is amended, a record is made in the Amendment Log shown below.

The 'UK Deaf Sport Complaints Policy and Procedure' can be fully revised and re-issued at the discretion of the UK Deaf Sport Board.

Issue	Amendment	Date	Initials	Policy Owner	Approving Body	Date Approved by Approving Body	Review Date
1.0	First version	01.02.2018					
2.0	Revised and updated following BDO audit	01.12.2022	DB	JC	UKDS Board	23/01/2023	December 2024

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## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. UK Deaf Sport (UKDS) is committed to providing a quality service for its members, deaf athletes and stakeholders working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. We work hard to get things right the first time but occasionally we recognise that things may go wrong or there may be the need to raise a concern.
- 1.2. One of the ways in which we continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our members and stakeholders, and in particular by responding positively to complaints and by putting mistakes right. If you have a complaint about the service you have received from UKDS, please let us know.
- 1.3. 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 things have gone wrong, or provide information on any action taken.
  - We learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review bi-annually our complaints policy and procedures.
- 1.4. UKDS will follow a three-stage process for managing and investigating complaints against UKDS or any of the services it provides as follows:
  - Stage 1: the complaint is dealt with informally.
  - Stage 2: the complaint is investigated formally.
  - Stage 3: the complaint and the complaint process is reviewed for a final decision.
- 1.5. If you are not happy with the outcome of your decision from UK Deaf Sport after Stage 3, you can contact a specific regulator such as The Charity Commission. Details on how to do this are included in this policy.

## **2. Complaints Procedure**

- 2.1. UKDS aims to offer the highest level of service at all times. However, we recognise that from time to time there may be the need to raise a concern about an aspect of our work or the conduct of our staff or Board members. We take all feedback – both good and bad – very seriously and are continually working to improve the level of service we offer.
- 2.2. Below you will find the different ways you can contact us and what you can expect when you do. We pledge to:

- Handle your complaint swiftly and keep you informed of the situation.
- Treat you with respect.
- Investigate all complaints thoroughly and objectively.
- Send you a full response which addresses all the issues you have raised.
- Provide clear guidelines about what to do if you are unhappy with our response including next steps if you are unhappy with our initial response.
- Record and monitor all complaints.
- Take the relevant actions in order that our service improves.

2.3 UKDS is committed to equal opportunities and our aim is to make our complaints policy easy to use and accessible to all our members and stakeholders. We will take reasonable steps to accommodate any reasonable adjustments you may have to enable you to access this policy or receive responses to complaints in other formats and provide such assistance as you may reasonably require.

### **3. Stage 1: Raising a Concern Informally**

3.1 We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

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

3.2 If you have a complaint or if you are unhappy with any aspect of UKDS, in the first instance discuss it with the person who dealt with you so that they have a chance to put things right. You are encouraged to talk through any areas of concern as soon as possible in order that they can be resolved quickly. Explain to the person what your concern is, what impact it has had on you and what actions you would like UKDS to take to put things right.

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

### **4. Stage 2: Raising a Formal Complaint**

4.1 If you are not satisfied with the response to your informal complaint or wish to express your concerns about UKDS formally, you should follow the formal complaint process. You should send an email/letter setting out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking, to the following email or address:

[Admin@ukds.org.uk](mailto:Admin@ukds.org.uk)<sup>1</sup> stating **Formal Complaint** in the subject line.

**Postal Address:**

UK Deaf Sport  
c/o Kings Chartered Accountants,  
Unit 4 Grovelands  
Boundary Way  
Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7TE

- 4.2 When your complaint is received it will be investigated by the CEO or sent to the most appropriate person in UKDS to investigate, ensuring there is no conflict of interest between the person making the complaint and the person who investigates it. If your complaint relates to the CEO or you feel a conflict may arise, please write to the UKDS Chair via the same email or address, clearly stating that the complaint is for the attention of the Chair in the subject line.
- 4.3 We will acknowledge your complaint within **5 working days** of receipt and let you know who will be investigating your concerns.
- 4.4 You will receive a response within **10 working days** from the person that will be investigating your complaint. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

**5. Stage 3: Escalating a Complaint**

- 5.1 If you are not satisfied with the initial response you receive to your formal complaint then you can ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed by the UKDS Chair.
- 5.2 Please contact the UKDS Chair using the same Admin email and address above within **10 days** of receiving a response if you are not happy with the reply you have received to your formal complaint. If your complaint regards the UKDS Chair or you feel there is a conflict of interest, then address your response in the subject line to the Senior Independent Director to oversee the process.
- 5.3 Please clearly state on your correspondence in the subject line whether your complaint, or request for a review of your complaint, is for the attention of the Chair or Senior Independent Director.

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<sup>1</sup> Please be aware that emails you send us, and those that we may send to you, are not secure as email messages can be intercepted. This also means any documents containing personal data that you send to us could be at risk. Emails received after 3pm will be processed on the next available working day.

5.4 The nominated individual will:

- Read through the evidence that has been submitted.
- Speak to relevant individuals involved with the complaint.
- Check whether or not the procedure has been followed properly and fairly.
- Make a final decision.

5.5 A response will be sent within **20 working days** which will confirm:

- The final decision about the complaint.
- The reason for the decision.
- Any action that may have been taken in light of the review and report.
- The solution, if appropriate, which will be offered.

5.6 If you are not happy with the decision arising from Stage 3 of the UKDS Complaints Process and your complaint falls within the remit of an external regulator, you should contact the relevant regulator.

5.7 If your complaint meets the definition of a serious risk of significant harm to a charity's beneficiaries, assets, services or reputation you can complain to **the Charity Commission**. You can check whether your complaint falls within the remit of the Commission at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/risk-framework-charity-commission>. The Commission may refuse to take up an issue if it judges it not to be in the public interest to use its resources investigating or resolving it.

5.8 If your complaint relates to Fundraising you can contact the **Fundraising Regulator** to complain about:

- The way you've been asked for donations.
- How fundraisers have behaved.

5.9 You can contact the Advertising Standards Authority if your complaint relates to advertising, and you have complained about:

- An advertising campaign you think is offensive, deceptive or inaccurate.
- The amount of emails or mail you get from UKDS.

5.10 If your complaint relates to the use of a specified grant, UKDS will provide the contact details of the funder to the complainant.

## 6. Contact Details

6.1 To confirm, formal complaints must be made in writing and sent to UKDS by email or letter.

- 6.2 If you would like to email your complaint, please send it to [Admin@ukds.org.uk](mailto:Admin@ukds.org.uk) stating **Formal Complaint** in the subject line.

If you prefer to contact us by post, please write to:

UK Deaf Sport  
c/o Kings Chartered Accountants,  
Unit 4 Grovelands  
Boundary Way  
Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7TE

- 6.3 We will acknowledge your complaint within **5 working days** of receipt and let you know who will be investigating your concerns.
- 6.4 You can raise a concern with **the Charity Commission** at:  
<https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/>
- 6.5 You can raise a complaint with **the Fundraising Regulator** at:  
<https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/complaints>
- 6.6 You can raise a complaint with the **Advertising Standards Authority** at:  
<https://www.asa.org.uk/make-a-complaint.html>

## 7. Investigation

- 7.1 Whilst it is our aim to resolve all matters as quickly as possible, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated, sometimes independently. In circumstances where time limits cannot be met you will be notified within the **10 days**. The interim response will include what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.
- 7.2 Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both UKDS and the complainant maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

## 8. Monitoring your Complaint

- 8.1 The Governance and Insight Manager will record and monitor complaints and their resolution to maintain our commitment to continuous improvement. In circumstances where time limits cannot be met you will be notified. The reasons for the delay with



adjusted timescales will be supplied by the person responsible for handling the complaint.

## **9. Vexatious and Unreasonably Persistent Complaints**

9.1 A vexatious complaint is one that is falsely made, that is, it is not made in good faith or based on evidence.

9.2 All complainants have the right to have their concerns examined in line with the UKDS complaints procedure. In most cases, dealing with complaints will be a straightforward process, however, in a minority of cases, the complainant may act in a manner that is deemed unacceptable.

9.3 They may act in a way that is considered abusive, unreasonably persistent or vexatious and by doing so it may hinder UK Deaf Sport's ability to investigate their complaint or the complaints of others. This behaviour may occur at any time before, during or after a complaint has been investigated.

9.4 The term 'unreasonably persistent' and 'vexatious' may apply separately or jointly to a particular complaint. Vexatious behaviour can also include complaints that are made with the purpose of disrupting UKDS business or of undermining UKDS or its Board.

9.5 Examples of vexatious or unreasonably persistent behaviour includes:

- Refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of help.
- Refusing to cooperate with the complaint's investigation process.
- Refusing to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the UKDS's jurisdiction or within the scope of the complaints procedure.
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with UKDS's complaints procedure or with good practice.
- Making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues.
- Speaking to staff or the person investigating the complaint in a derogatory manner which causes offence.
- Swearing, either verbally or in writing despite being asked to refrain from using such language.
- Using threatening language towards UKDS staff or Board members which provokes fear.
- Repeatedly contacting the person investigating the complaint regarding the same matter which has already been addressed
- Raising many detailed but unimportant questions, and insisting they are all answered.
- Making excessive demands on the time and resources of staff or the person investigating the complaint with lengthy phone calls, emails, or detailed letters every few days, and expecting immediate responses.
- Submitting repeat complaints with minor additions/variations, which the complainant insists make these 'new' complaints.

- Refusing to accept the decision; repeatedly arguing points with no new evidence.
- 9.6 This list is not exhaustive, nor does one single characteristic on its own imply that the person will be considered as making vexatious or unreasonably persistent complaints.
- 9.7 Where UKDS consider that a complainant has behaved in a manner which is deemed unreasonable, UKDS may take any actions against the complainant that it considers to be reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.
- 9.8 Types of actions UKDS may take include:
- Where the complainant tries to reopen an issue that has already been considered through the UKDS complaints procedures, they will be informed in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.
  - Where a decision on the complaint has been made, the complainant should be informed that future correspondence will be read and placed on file, but not acknowledged, unless it contains important new information.
  - Limiting the complainant to one type of contact (e.g., letter, email, etc.).
  - Assigning a nominated person to read the complainant's correspondence, in order to ensure appropriate action is taken.
- 9.9 When the decision has been taken to consider a complainant as vexatious or unreasonably persistent UKDS will contact the complainant in writing to explain:
- Why this decision has been taken.
  - What action UKDS will be taking.
  - The duration of that action.
- 9.10 If the complainant continues to behave in a way which is deemed unacceptable then the Board in consultation with the CEO, may decide to refuse all contact with the complainant and cease any investigation into his or her complaint(s).
- 9.11 Where the behaviour is so extreme or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff or Board members, UKDS will consider other options, for example, reporting the matter to the Police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.