



# DH Runners Grievance and Disciplinary Policy

DH Runners is proud to be an inclusive, welcoming and supportive running club. We are committed to creating a positive environment where runners of all abilities, backgrounds and experiences feel safe, respected and encouraged to achieve their personal goals. We believe that activities should be enjoyable, empowering and built on mutual respect. Every member plays a part in maintaining the friendly and supportive culture that defines our Club.

This Grievance and Disciplinary Policy exists to ensure that, where concerns arise, they are handled fairly, transparently and in a way that protects both individuals and the integrity of the Club. DH Runners is affiliated to England Athletics and operates in accordance with the rules and regulations of UK Athletics.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the DH Runners Club Code of Conduct, which sets out the standards of behaviour expected from all members, coaches, run leaders, volunteers and officials.

## **Purpose**

This policy sets out the procedure for handling complaints, grievances and allegations of misconduct involving members of the Club. The procedure aims to ensure that all matters are dealt with fairly, consistently, confidentially and in a timely manner, and that all communication is respectful and professional.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all Club members; coaches, run leaders, officials, volunteers and committee members; and any individual acting on behalf of the Club. It covers misconduct occurring during Club activities, at competitions, at Club-organised events, in association with athletics activity, and online or via social media where the Club's reputation may be affected.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

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### **Step 1 – Submission of Complaint**

All complaints must be submitted in writing to the Club Secretary. Where the complaint concerns the Club Secretary, it must be submitted to the Club Welfare Officer. The complaint must include specific details of the alleged misconduct, relevant dates and times, any supporting evidence, and names of any witnesses.

The Club Secretary shall acknowledge receipt within 7 calendar days, keep the complainant informed of the process at key stages.

### **Step 2 – Initial Review**

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Club Secretary (or Welfare Officer, where appropriate) shall review the complaint and supporting evidence, seek advice where necessary (including from England Athletics), notify the Member(s) concerned in writing, and invite a written response within 14 calendar days.

Responses from the member under investigation must not be shared verbatim with the complainant. Any summary provided should be neutral, factual and focus only on the outcome or the decision process.

### **Step 3 – Decision to Proceed**

Following receipt of the response, the Club Secretary shall determine whether the complaint has sufficient grounds, there is credible evidence to support the allegation, and the matter should proceed to a formal hearing. Frivolous, vexatious, or insufficiently evidenced complaints may be dismissed at this stage. If the complaint proceeds, a Disciplinary Panel of three impartial Club members shall be appointed. None shall have had prior involvement in the matter.

### **Step 4 – Disciplinary Hearing**

The Disciplinary Panel shall consider all written submissions, conduct further enquiries as necessary, invite the Member(s) concerned to attend a hearing, and permit each party to be accompanied by a supporter (including a legal representative if desired). Hearings will be conducted fairly, confidentially, and privately.

### **Interim Suspension**

The Panel may impose a temporary suspension pending investigation where necessary to protect individuals, protect the Club, and safeguard the integrity of the investigation. Such suspension shall be without prejudice to the final outcome.

### **Sanctions**

If misconduct is found, the Panel may impose one or more of the following: take no further action, issue a formal written warning, impose conditions on membership, suspend from competition, coaching, administration, or use of Club facilities (for a fixed or indefinite period), terminate membership, or recommend referral or sanction to England Athletics and/or UK Athletics. The Panel shall provide written reasons for its decision within 7 calendar days.

### **Communication of Outcome**

Complainants and respondents shall be informed of the outcome in professional, neutral language. No personal remarks from either party shall be communicated.

## **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

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### **Step 1 – Lodging an Appeal**

The Member or Complainant may appeal by submitting a Notice of Appeal within 7 calendar days of receiving the decision. The Notice must clearly state the grounds of appeal, which may include procedural irregularity, new evidence, disproportionate sanction or error in fact. The Club Secretary shall acknowledge receipt within 7 calendar days.

### **Step 2 – Appeal Panel**

An Appeal Panel of three independent members shall be appointed. None shall have been involved in the events giving rise to the complaint or the original hearing. Parties will be informed of the Panel composition and may object within 7 calendar days, stating reasons.

### **Step 3 – Appeal Hearing**

The Club Secretary shall issue directions covering the format (written or oral hearing), timetable for submissions, and date and venue. Hearings shall normally be private. The Appeal Panel may quash the original decision, confirm the decision, vary the sanction (increase or reduce), or order a rehearing. The Appeal Panel decision shall be final and issued in writing within 14 calendar days.

**Records**

All disciplinary and appeal decisions shall be recorded and retained confidentially for six years in accordance with data protection legislation.

**Notification to Governing Bodies**

Where appropriate, and once appeal rights have expired, the Panel Chair shall notify England Athletics and/or UK Athletics where sanctions affect eligibility, there are safeguarding concerns, or it is necessary to ensure compliance. The governing body may determine whether publication is required.

**Safeguarding**

Where a complaint involves a safeguarding concern (including a child or vulnerable adult), the matter shall immediately be referred to the Club Welfare Officer and handled in line with England Athletics and Cumberland Council's safeguarding procedures. Disciplinary proceedings may be suspended pending any external investigation.

**Co-operation of All Parties**

All parties are expected to co-operate fully in the interest of resolving the issue. If a party refuses to engage or withdraws co-operation at any stage, the Club reserves the right to proceed with a Hearing or Appeal based on the evidence and information available. When dealing with a complaint, the Club Secretary or nominated Club representative shall be entitled to take, or omit to take, such action as is recommended pursuant to legal advice received from a competent legal practitioner and/or the England Athletics legal representative service for affiliated members.

**Date of Last Review:** 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026

**Issue:** 3

**Reviewed by:** Lindsay Graham (Chair & Welfare Officer)

Simon Dolman (Welfare Officer)