



Welsh Lawn Bowls – Complaints Policy & Procedure.

(Reviewed 10/11/2025)

Welsh Lawn Bowls (WLB) considers complaints as an opportunity for review, development & continual improvement. Most importantly, WLB has a duty to the complainant to thoroughly investigate their case and to put right anything which has been done wrong.

WLB policy is:

To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.

To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so everyone is aware how to use it.

To make sure everyone associated with the WLB knows what to do if a complaint is received.

To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner.

To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.

To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

1. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of WLB.

2. Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any person or organisation that has a legitimate interest or connection with WLB.

A complaint notified verbally or by phone must be confirmed by email or in writing. A complaint may also be directly by email or in writing.

3. Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively and passed onto only those who need to know and treated as required by any relevant data protection requirements.

4. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with Executive Committee of WLB who delegates management of the process to the Hon. Secretary.

5. Review

This policy shall be reviewed every three years or sooner if the executive committee feel it necessary, and it will be updated as required.



6. Stage one - making, receiving & recording a complaint:

Written complaints may be sent to the Honorary Secretary – contact details as per website. All telephone or in person complaints made directly to the Secretary will be logged on the complaint form and the Secretary will ask for the complainant to send a written version of their complaint confirming all details by email or by post (unless the complaint can be resolved immediately by the secretary in which case they will note the action taken on the complaint form). The Secretary shall respond to the complainant within one week of initial contact acknowledging the complaint.

Officials (other than Secretary) receiving Complaints by phone or in conversation, or by email

- i. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded on the complaint form. If the complaint can be dealt with immediately by the official (e.g. mistake on website, so correct information given by official to the complainant) they just need to note on the form the action taken & forward to the Secretary within three days of the complaint.
- ii. If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately then the official should ask the complainant to send an email or write by post to the Secretary putting the complaint in their own words. The official must also send the form to the Secretary within three days of the complaint so it can be logged.
- iii. If the official receives the complaint by email, they must complete a form and forward this and the email to the Secretary within three days of the complaint.

7. Stage two – complaint investigation.

On receipt the Secretary will decide how the complaint will be investigated. There are a number of options:-

- (a) In many situations the investigation can be handled by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. The person may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. For example, if the Competition Secretary was responsible for making a draw for a competition and the complainant claimed that they had entered the competition but were not included in the draw, the best person to resolve this would obviously be the Competition Secretary.
- (b) For more complex complaints, the Secretary may refer the matter to the relevant sub-committee who will review the complaint, examine all the facts and possibly interview people before making a judgement on whether the complaint is justified and what action is recommended. For example, a complaint may be made by a team who claim that the team who beat them in a competition should be disqualified as they fielded an ineligible player, in this situation the Secretary would refer the



complaint to the competition disputes panel. Another example would be if a club raised a complaint against another club (and the relevant county had failed to resolve the issue to their satisfaction), then the secretary may refer the issue to the complaints sub-committee for their investigation.

- (c) If the complaint refers to the behaviour of an individual who has broken the WLB code of conduct, then this becomes a potential disciplinary matter and the Hon. Secretary will follow the “WLB Disciplinary Procedure” from hereon in. The Hon. Secretary shall record the outcome of the Disciplinary Procedure on the complaint form & close it out.
- (d) If a complaint is received which alleges any potential wrong-doing by someone (referred to as the accused) which may be considered harmful to a vulnerable child or adult who was directly or indirectly involved in a WLB event then the Secretary will log the incident, and immediately inform the WLB Safeguarding officer, who will follow Bowls Wales Safeguarding procedures. The Secretary will log the information on the complaint form which will be kept strictly confidential.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person or committee investigating the complaint within five days of receipt. The acknowledgement should state who is investigating the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

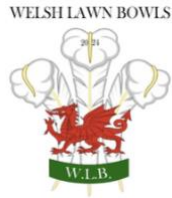
Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks of raising a complaint from the Hon. Secretary. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report (written by the investigation person(s) or sub-committee) should be sent by the Hon. Secretary to the complainants with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

If the complaint is justified, then a suitable and robust corrective action should be recommended and timescale agreed for its implementation.

8. Stage Three – Review of corrective actions implemented.

Within 12 months of the implementation of the corrective action (preferably 6 months if possible) one of the executive officers (referred to as the auditor) will complete a review of the corrective action which will involve a simple audit of the actions taken to ensure they are effective. The auditor should not have been involved in the initial investigation and implementation of corrective actions. If the auditor is not satisfied that corrective actions have been fully implemented or fully effective, they will agree further actions with the owner of the corrective action & arrange another audit within 3 months. All Reviews &



Audits must be logged on the original complaint form, and it is only when this has been done to the satisfaction of the auditor that the complaint can be fully signed off.

9. Appeal procedure.

If the complainant or accused are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they have a right of appeal, and this is fully described in the **WLB Appeals Policy & Procedure.**

10. Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The WLB Executive committee reserve the right to vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint involving the Secretary should not be sent to the Secretary in writing. In such circumstances it would be prudent to send the complaint to the President.

11. Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints will be reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

12. Appendix 1 - Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation.

Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam".

Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry.

Show an interest in what is being said.

Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details.

Ask for clarification wherever necessary.

Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down.



Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable). You can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the WLB e.g "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you".

If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of the WLB then apologise.

Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue.

Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.

Don't promise things you can't deliver.

Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met.

Make sure that the person understands what they have been told.

Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal.

Appendix 2 – Complaint Registration & monitoring form.

The standard complaint registration and monitoring form is shown on the next page.

This policy and procedure shall be reviewed by the WLB Executive Committee every three years or before if necessary.

Next Scheduled Review:- November 2028.



WELSH LAWN BOWLS - COMPLAINTS PROCESS FORM

Individual/Organisation lodging complaint			
Nature of complaint			
Person complaint was made to (verbal or written)		Name of person complaint forwarded to, if applicable	Date complaint received
INFORMAL		Details of Actions Taken.	
1	Contact person settled complaint immediately		
STAGE 1 - Making, receiving & recording a complaint			
Procedure		Details	Date of reply
2	1 week from initial contact from complainant, the secretary sends email to complainant acknowledging the complaint. If resolved within this time Secretary includes details of actions taken.		
3	Details of who Hon. Secretary assigned the investigation to and the expected resolution date.		
STAGE 2 – Complaint investigation			
Procedure		Details	Date of reply
4	Investigator acknowledges complaint within 5 days		
5	Definitive reply with written report & corrective actions (if applicable) within 28 days of original complaint date (email received)		
6	Date Secretary forwarded report to complainant.		
STAGE 3 – Review of Corrective Actions implemented			



7	Executive Officer will audit corrective Actions within 12 months of them being created & signed off if satisfied they are effective.		
8	If Auditor was not satisfied corrective actions had been fully implemented or fully successful, they will agree new actions with owner & re-audit within 3 months.		
Appeals			
9	Complainant must request appeal within seven days of notification of findings.		
10	Hon. Secretary replies within 2 weeks to advise if appeal request had been granted.		
11	Appeal panel verdict within 28 days of appeal being initiated with relevant corrective actions.		
Complaint Process details:-			
Date Complaint raised:			
Investigation panel names:			
Date Complaint responded to:			
Complaint Accepted	(y/n):-	Corrective Actions implemented?	
Complaint decision Appealed?	(y/n):-	Date Appeal commenced:-	
Appeal panel members:-		Date Appeal was completed:-	
Appeal upheld or dismissed: -		Appeal Corrective Actions implemented:-	(y/n)
Date of Audit of CA		Audit Successful?	(y/n)
Follow-up Audit date		Follow-up Audit successful?	(y/n)
Date Complaint Officially Signed-off:			
Signed off by (Secretary):-			