



SLEAFORD TENNIS CLUB

Complaints Policy

Our Aim

SLEAFORD TENNIS CLUB (the Club) is committed to providing a quality service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our members and visitors, and by responding positively to complaints.

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- making a compliment or complaint is as easy as possible.
- we welcome compliments, feedback, and suggestions.
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a timely 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 we have got things wrong or information on any action taken etc.
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly. We aim to resolve these informal concerns quickly and keep matters private. This policy ensures that we welcome compliments and provide guidelines for dealing with complaints from members of the public about our services, facilities, staff, and volunteers.

Values and principles

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction however it is expressed. This would include complaints expressed face to face, via a phone call, in writing, via email or any other method.

You have the right to complain, we take complaints seriously. You should not be harassed, bullied, or put at a disadvantage because of making a complaint.

Equality: You should receive a proper response to your complaint, regardless of your age, gender, disability, race, religion, nationality, social status, sexual orientation, or political persuasion.

Fairness: We believe that complaints should be dealt with fairly and openly. Unless it would put other people at risk, those affected by a complaint should have a chance to contribute and respond to any investigation.

Safety and welfare: We will always give priority to concerns that affect safety and welfare. Issues affecting children will be treated very seriously.

Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, we treat complaints as confidentially as possible. 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 facts). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

If necessary, we will get advice from the LTA or other organisations such as the Police or Social Services.

How to make a complaint?

If you have a complaint it should, in the first instance be brought to the attention of the Club Chairperson preferably in writing.

If your complaint is made verbally and needs to be investigated further, you will be **formally asked** to put your complaint in writing. We will accept anonymous complaints, but it is often very difficult to investigate these properly. It is easier for us to handle your complaint if you provide as much detail as possible.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to the attention of the Club chairperson normally within 28 days of the issue arising.
- raise concerns promptly and directly.
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date.
- allow investigators a reasonable time to deal with the matter, and
- recognise that in some circumstances may be beyond the Club's control.

Who to contact to make a complaint?

- The Tennis Club Chairperson in the first instance admin@sleafordtennisclub.co.uk

or if they are not available you can contact any of our other committee members

However, if your complaint is referencing the overall management and structure of the Club, it should be brought to the attention of the Club Secretary on the following email address:

a.f.lingard@gmail.com

What will we do to investigate?

- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing.
- Respond within a 30-day period.
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint; and
- Act where appropriate.

Sometimes we will ask to show copies of information from the investigation to other people to allow them to respond. This is because we believe in fairness and openness. We will not share information if we think that this will endanger someone's safety or welfare.

How will I know what is happening?

You will be given the details of a person who will be your point of contact at the place to play. That person will make sure that you understand the process and will help to answer any questions or concerns that you have. You will be given an update on the progress of your complaint every two weeks. If there are delays in handling your complaint for any reason, we will keep you informed. If your complaint leads to formal disciplinary action against someone, we will usually inform you about the outcome. We will not tell you the outcome if that person is a child, or if we believe that telling you would create a risk to other people. In this situation, we will still try to tell you about how you are affected by the action that we have taken.

What are the possible outcomes or results of my complaint?

In many cases, we hope to resolve problems informally. This might include:

- A change in arrangements for activities
- Responding in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong or information on any action taken etc.
- Learning from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures to communicate or act differently in future.

If an informal resolution is not suitable, then a small committee of members of the Club Committee will look at the information about the complaint. We will endeavour to ensure that this sub-committee does not contain anyone directly involved with the initial investigation of your complaint. They might decide to take the following action:

- Formal disciplinary action under the rules of the Club.
- Formal disciplinary action against a club member.
- Changes in formal contracts or arrangements put in place by the Club.
- A decision to refer the case to another organisation such as the LTA, Police, or Social Services.
- Closure of your complaint without action.

If you are not happy with the result of the investigation, you may appeal the decision in writing to the Club Chairperson. The basis for any appeal must be clearly stated eg: new evidence or lack of process. Once consideration has been given to the appeal, the final decision on the matter will be communicated in writing to the complainant usually within 14 working days of the appeal being lodged.

Who can I talk to?

The LTA can advise on a range of different complaints (see <https://www.lta.org.uk/4ab7e2/siteassets/about-lta/file/customer-guidance-lta-support-and-complaint-handling.pdf>)

However, if you are worried about the [safety or welfare of a child¹ or vulnerable adult²](#) contact the Club Welfare Officer, Julie Leighton **07519 633157** admin@sleafordtennisclub.co.uk who will follow the LTA safeguarding procedures.

Or in the event of an emergency

- Childline, or the NSPCC advice line, local Social Services, Police

Questions or queries about this policy

If you have a general query about this complaints policy, you should email the Club Administrator, Julie Leighton at admin@sleafordtennisclub.co.uk

¹ A child is as anyone under the age of 18 years

² Vulnerable adult: a person aged eighteen years or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is, or may be, unable to take care of, or unable to protect him or herself against abuse or neglect.