



# Complaints Procedure

## WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are involved with Tennis Lancashire. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to about any provision of facilities or services that we provide.

### The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Tennis Lancashire takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

## REPORTING A COMPLAINT

We recommend reviewing the guidance below to ensure your complaint is addressed in the most effective manner and through the appropriate channels or organisations where applicable.

### Local Matters

Where relevant, the most effective way to resolve an issue can be at a local level, by talking or writing to the people involved, such as the club, safeguarding officer, coach or the LTA. We would encourage checking with the organisation involved to find out how to raise your complaint locally.

Here are some examples of complaints where this process would apply:

- 'The courts at my club are not well maintained'
- 'The rules about access for different members at my club are unfair'
- 'I have not been refunded for lessons that my tennis centre cancelled'

### LTA Competition Complaints

In the event of a complaint in respect of an LTA Official Competition (including in relation to an Organising Committee, Referee, Chair Umpire, Line Umpire, Court Supervisor or coach), a written complaint may be lodged with the LTA at **[officiatingsupport@lta.org.uk](mailto:officiatingsupport@lta.org.uk)** within 7 days of the occurrence of the situation leading to the complaint. Please refer to the [LTA Competition Regulations](#) (see

paragraph 8.1, page 32) for further information about how we deal with Competition complaints.

### Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

**If you have a Safeguarding concern, please contact our Safeguarding Officer on [info@tennislancashire.com](mailto:info@tennislancashire.com)** . If you need to speak to someone outside of office hours, you can also call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 or if someone is in immediate danger, call the police (999). Information can also be found within our [safeguarding policy](#).

### Reporting a Serious Concern about unacceptable practice or misconduct

Tennis Lancashire is committed to reducing unethical practices – please help us by reporting any suspicions or malpractices (for example if you experience or witness dishonest or unethical practice, health & safety breaches, harassment, bullying or other forms of serious wrongdoing).

The LTA provides an independent, confidential and if required anonymous reporting service, Safecall 0800 915 1571 which is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year (calls are not audio recorded). Alternatively a report can be made online: [www.safecall.co.uk/report](http://www.safecall.co.uk/report).

### Guidance for LTA Venues, Coaches and Officials

If you are an LTA Registered Venue, an LTA Accredited Coach or an LTA Licenced Official, you can obtain free advice from Brabners, a specialist business and legal advice telephone helpline. Find more information in our [Help & FAQs](#).

### All other Tennis Lancashire complaints

If your complaint cannot be resolved informally and you would like to submit a **formal complaint**, you can do so by emailing to: **[complaints@tennislancashire.com](mailto:complaints@tennislancashire.com)**

Please provide as much information as you can; it can be difficult for us to deal with a complaint with limited information.

### Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR ALL OTHER TENNIS LANCASHIRE COMPLAINTS (SEE SECTION 1.6)**

At each stage in the procedure we want to resolve the complaint.

If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review Tennis Lancashire's policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

Withdrawal of a complaint If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

### Resolving complaints – stage 1

It is to be hoped that most complaints can be expressed and resolved, informally, before stage 1. Complaints that haven't been able to be resolved informally should be raised with Tennis Lancashire. At this point complainants should not approach individuals. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.

Tennis Lancashire will appoint an appropriate person to investigate the complaint. At the conclusion of their investigation, the appropriate person investigating the complaint will provide a written response within ten working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to move to stage 2.

### Resolving complaints – stage 2

If you are not satisfied with our response, you can request for your complaint to be escalated to stage 2. A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made via email, within 5 working days of receipt of the Stage 1 response. Tennis Lancashire will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 working days. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

Your complaint will be reviewed by a panel. Tennis Lancashire will organise a panel hearing consisting of three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

Tennis Lancashire will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 10 working days of receipt of the request. If this is not possible, Tennis Lancashire will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed. If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, Tennis Lancashire will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The committee will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 working days.