

Complaints Policy

This policy tells you how to make a complaint at Townsend Lawn Tennis Club

This is the policy that we will follow if your complaint is about someone's conduct or behaviour. This could be because you think that someone has behaved in a way that is unsafe, unprofessional, discriminatory, offensive or intimidating. It could be because someone has broken important rules or policies.

Values and principles

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

Confidentiality: we treat complaints as confidentially as possible.

Sometimes we have to discuss complaints with other organisations. If we are worried about a risk to a person or to the public, we might need to pass on our concerns to the right authorities. If necessary, we will get advice from other organisations such as the Police, Social Services or the LTA.

How to make a complaint?

If you have a complaint, it is often best to start by having a conversation with someone at the club. There are some suggestions below about who to speak to. They may be able to help to resolve your problem. You could also make a written complaint. The address for written complaints is at the bottom of this policy.

If your complaint needs to be looked into further, you will normally be asked to put your complaint in writing. We 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.

Who to contact to make a complaint?

Complaints will be handled by the Chairperson and/ or committee members. Useful contact details are set out on the club's website <http://www.townendsports.co.uk/tennis/committee.aspx>.

- Committee: you can speak to any of our officials/committee members
- Coaches: any of the coaches can also tell you how to make a complaint
- Welfare Officer: if you are a child, or if you are worried about the safety or welfare of a child
- Anyone else involved at the club that you trust

What will we do to investigate?

We will give an initial response to your complaint as soon as possible, appointing someone to investigate it, who is independent from the incident. That person may be a committee member or an external mediator. We will investigate your complaint fairly. This means that we will discuss the complaint with you and all relevant people. We will try to gather any information that may be relevant to handling your complaint. You will be entitled to bring a companion to any meeting to provide you with additional support if you prefer this.

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 club. 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. If there are delays in handling your complaint for any reason, we will keep you informed.

What are the possible outcomes or results of my complaint?

In many cases, we are able to resolve problems informally through deciding, for example, on:

- A change in arrangements for particular activities
- An explanation or apology
- An agreement to communicate or act differently in future

If an informal resolution is not suitable or you wish to appeal the decision, then a small committee of senior officials will look at the information about the case. We will try to make sure that this committee does not contain anyone directly involved with your original complaint. They might decide to take the following action:

- Formal disciplinary action under the rules of the club
- Formal disciplinary action against a member of staff
- 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

Is there anyone else I can talk to?

Sometimes it can be useful to speak directly to someone outside the club:

- You need urgent advice about someone's safety or welfare
- You don't want to discuss the issue with someone at the club
- Your complaint is very serious
- Your complaint involves other organisations
- You need specialist advice

The LTA is able to advise on a range of different complaints, and in some cases will handle the complaint directly. If you are worried about a child's welfare, you can contact the following people:

- The Child Protection Officer at the County LTA
- The National LTA Child Protection Department (24hrs)
- 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 speak to the following person:

Name/Committee Member: Trevor Bull, Chairperson
Townsend Lawn Tennis Club
8 Waverley Road
St Albans
Herts
AL3 5PA

Contact Number/Email: 07887 545259 trevor.bull@ntlworld.com