



## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**Rebel Runners Medway** - provides a social running club that is England Athletics "EA" Affiliated.

It is the policy of Rebel Runners Medway to promote good relations between the club, its members/volunteers and the general public. It is of the greatest importance to the club that all members are treated fairly and consistently.

The general complaints procedure provides a good practise guide which will be applied to most general complaints received by the club.

### Club values and principles

*1) 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.

*2) 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.

*3) Accessibility:*

Members should always know how they can raise a complaint/concern. Procedures should be easily accessible and well publicised.

*4) 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.

*5) Safety and welfare take priority:*

We will always give priority to concerns that affect safety and welfare.

*6) Support for the complainant:*

It is important that at any stage in the procedure that the complainant knows that they can be accompanied by a third party for support and knows where they can go for advice/information.

*7) Support for a person complained against:*

If an individual is contacted regarding a complaint made against them, a person must feel they are being treated fairly and know that they will have the opportunity to put forward their case. Equally they should know they can be accompanied by a third party for support and know where they can go for advice/information.

***There is a crucial balance to be maintained between supporting the individual so that his/her rights are maintained and reputation protected, and investigating a Complaint thoroughly and impartially.***

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#### 8) Confidentiality:

We will treat complaints as confidentially as possible. Sometimes we may have to discuss complaints with other organisations/non-members.

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. Where appropriate, we will get advice from other organisations such as the Police.

#### 9) Record keeping:

Complaints should be recorded and monitored regularly by committee members.

#### Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about:

- a) The conduct, actions or omissions by members of the club, or volunteers for whom the club are responsible.
- b) The conduct or actions of athletes and parents/guardians.
- c) The conduct, actions or omissions of any elected general committee member that may constitute a breach of the Club's Code of Conduct.

A formal complaint can be submitted verbally, or in writing to the Club Secretary or nominated Complaints Officer.

The club follows principles of good complaint handling which include:

- Getting it right
- Being member focused
- Being open and accountable
- Treat all information confidentially
- Acting fairly and proportionately
- Aim to put things right in a timely fashion
- Seeking continuous improvement

#### 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 - either a committee member or the complaints officer. They may be able to help to resolve your problem but if they cannot or you would prefer not to you could also make a written complaint following the procedure set out in the paragraph below.

The Complainant should report the matter, including where possible;

- details of what occurred
  - details of when and where the occurrence took place
  - any witness details and copies of any witness statements
  - names of any others who have been treated in a similar way (provided that those people consent to their names being disclosed)
- details of any former complaints made about the incident, including the date and to whom such complaint was made an indication as to the desired outcome.

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### **Next steps:**

The complaint officer will:

- Acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days.
- Record the complaint on the complaints file and allocate each complaint its own unique reference number.
- Keep accurate and up to date records of each complaint
- Appoint an investigating officer, whose name must be given to the complainant, to investigate the complaint.

### **How will my complaint be handled thereafter:**

The club takes all complaints seriously and deals with all complaints in the same manner.

If the person against whom the complaint is made is a member of the Club, the Committee will review the complaint as outlined below. If deemed appropriate the Club may chose to withdraw membership.

If the person against whom the complaint is made is not a member of the Club, we will request that both parties to the complaint and / or any other person with information relevant to the complaint submit written evidence regarding the matter(s). We will then review the complaint and seek advice from appropriate organisations.

Following the conclusion of any investigation into the complaint by the Committee, the complaints officer will submit a report in writing to the Committee setting out their findings and any recommendations they consider appropriate within 28 days of the original complaint

On receipt of the report from the complaints officer the Committee shall be bound by the findings of the complaints officer and may accept any recommendations made.

If a complaint is upheld the Committee will have the power to impose any one or more of the following sanctions:

- warn a member as to future conduct;
- suspend a member from membership
- remove a member from membership
- exclude a nonmember (volunteer/member of general public) from the Club events, either temporarily or permanently
- turn down a non-member's current and/or future membership applications.

Where any of the sanctions above are applied against a particular member, they will be held on file for a period of 12 months from the date of issue. Should further complaints or breaches of the code of conduct be upheld against the member within this time, more serious sanctions may be applied.

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In addition, or alternatively to the above sanctions the Committee may make or take the following steps:

- provide an explanation or apology
- agree to communicate or act differently in future.

The Committee will provide both parties with written reasons for its decision to uphold or dismiss the complaint within one (1) calendar month of such decision being made.

An appeals process will be provided for those who are unhappy with the outcome

If a complaint is made about the complaints officer or a member of the Committee the person complained about will absent themselves from that Committee's meeting called to determine the recommendations and/or outcome of the complaint or the sanctions.

### **The Complaints officer**

Name: Gareth Lehane

E-mail: [complaints-rebelrunners@outlook.com](mailto:complaints-rebelrunners@outlook.com)

### **Other people to complain to**

England Athletics

Telephone: 0121 347 6543

Web site: <http://www.englandathletics.org/contact-us>

### **Additional information**

Parliamentary Ombudsmen Guidance on Good Complaints Handling

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