

Complaints Procedure

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Index	Page
1: Policy Statement and Aims	3
1.1: What is a Complaint and on what grounds can a complaint be made?	3
1.2: Complaints that are not considered under this Policy	3
1.3: How are Complaints handled?	4
2. Complaints Procedure of Ulster Hockey – Process A	6
3. Complaints Procedure of Ulster Hockey – Process B	9
Appendix 1: Club / School Complaint Document	12
Appendix 2 Complaint Investigation Form	13

1: Policy Statement and Aims

The Ulster Hockey Union (UHU) is committed to delivering a quality service at all times. However we know that things can go wrong. If you are unhappy about any aspect of our service we would like to hear from you, we have a procedure that you can use. We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future as well as a chance to put things right for the person, people of organisation (s) that has/have made a complaint.

Ulster Hockey is committed to support and deal with all complaints fairly, effectively and satisfactorily for any complainants including all Clubs and Schools involved in the sport.

Our 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 that people know how to contact us to make a complaint;
- To make sure that everyone at Ulster Hockey knows what to do if a complaint is received;
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way;
- 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.

1.1: What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Ulster Hockey. Under this policy you can complain to us on two grounds:

- a) Behaviour of Ulster Hockey Staff, Committee/Management Board Members or individuals/volunteers acting in a role that is representing Ulster Hockey.
- b) There has been inappropriate behaviour by a third party associated with Ulster Hockey in particular one of the following:
 - An opposing team during a game
 - A specific player or players
 - An umpire/umpires
 - Spectators
 - A coach/coach who is not acting on behalf of Ulster Hockey

1.2 Complaints that are not considered under this Policy

a) Umpiring

Most complaints from Umpires (depending on their nature) including Red and Yellow card reports will be addressed by the UHU's Disciplinary Committee. (See separate procedures)

Complaints about umpiring decisions made during a game cannot be changed and therefore will not be accepted. As per the FIH Rules of Hockey, all umpires must umpire fairly and with a good knowledge of the rules and the final result of a game cannot be altered.

Complaints about umpires will be directed to the Disciplinary Committee. Currently a payment of £150 should accompany the complaint (see section 7.1 of Disciplinary Procedures).

b) Management Board and Committee Decisions

Complaints about the decisions of the Management Board or any of our Committees are dealt with under the Ulster Hockey Appeals process. Appeals in relation to decisions of the Management Board and Committees are made by Clubs and Schools; Individuals cannot appeal a decision of the Management Board or the Committees, with the exception of appeals against Disciplinary Committee decisions. Under this complaints policy individuals may complain if they consider that the handling of a decision made by the Board or a Committee has led to them being treated unfairly, impolitely or they consider they have been discriminated against.

Staff, Safeguarding and Anti-Doping Issues.

Staff complaints will be handled under the Ulster Hockey Grievance procedure.

Any complaints relating to Safeguarding and Anti-doping will be managed through the Hockey Ireland/Ulster Hockey policies in relation to these areas.

How Are Complaints Handled?

For the purposes of this complaints Policy there will be two approaches to the handling of complaints depending on the nature of the complaint.

Process A will apply to complaints about the action or behaviour of Ulster Hockey (a member/members of staff, the Management Board, Committees or an individual/volunteer acting in a role that is representing Ulster Hockey). Complaints can be made if you consider that:

- "maladministration" has taken place (for example we have delayed, made mistakes in or failed to follow our procedures);
- We have failed to give you access to information, in particular about you, or have given you incorrect advice or information;
- We have not treated you politely;

- We have discriminated against you or not treated you fairly.

Under Process A any individual can make a complaint. Complaints will be handled by the staff, Committees and/or Management Board of Ulster Hockey as appropriate.

Process B will apply to complaints received by Ulster Hockey about the action or behaviour of a third party, in particular:

- An opposing team during a game
- A specific player or players
- An umpire/umpires
- Spectators
- A coach/coach who is not acting on behalf of Ulster Hockey

Under Process B complaints can only be made by the Principal/Head Teacher of a school or the Chairperson/Secretary of an affiliated Club. Complaints will be considered by a Complaints Committee convened by the Ulster Hockey Management Board or the Executive Manager.

Confidentiality.

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements eg as outlined in the Ulster Hockey Privacy Policy.

Responsibility.

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Management Board of Ulster Hockey.

Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on: 18th December 2018

Complaints Procedure of Ulster Hockey - Process A

Process A for handling complaints in relation to the actions or behaviour of staff, a member/members of the Management Board, Committees or an individual/volunteer or acting in a role that is representing Ulster Hockey.

Complaints can be made if you consider that:

- “maladministration” has taken place (for example we have delayed, made mistakes in or failed to follow our procedures);
- We have failed to give you access to information, in particular about you, or have given you incorrect advice or information;
- We have not treated you politely;
- We have discriminated against you or not treated you fairly.

Under Process A any individual can make a complaint.

1.2: How is a Complaint made?

Written complaints may be sent to the Ulster Hockey Administration Officer at the address below or by email to admin@ulsterhockey.com

Ulster Hockey Office, The Mezzanine Floor, Unit 5G, Stirling House, Castlereagh Road Business Park, 478 Castlereagh Road, Belfast BT5 6BQ. Tel 028 90 701417.

Verbal complaints may be made by phone or in person to the Ulster Hockey Executive Manager or to any of Ulster Hockey’s staff.

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded. The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant’s name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Ulster Hockey eg member, sponsor, parent.
- Tell the complainant that Ulster Hockey has a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take;
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainants own words.

Resolving Complaints

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the individual who is responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that individual, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Ulster Hockey Executive Manager within one week.

On receiving the complaint the Ulster Hockey Executive Manager records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they will either:

- delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take the appropriate action, or
- Investigate it and take the appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person they should be informed and given an opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this Complaints Procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 4 weeks. If this is not possible because, for example an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent 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 conclusion from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage 2.

If the complainant considers that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage the complaint will be passed to the Chair.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chair may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate to another suitable Board member. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given the opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example an investigation has not been fully completed a progress report should be sent with in indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is upheld 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. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution/mediation through an organisation such as Just Sport Ireland.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

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

Complaints Procedure of Ulster Hockey - Process B

Process B applies to complaints received by Ulster Hockey about the action or behaviour of a third party associated with Ulster Hockey such as:

- An opposing team during an Ulster Hockey League or Cup game;
- A specific player or players;
- An umpire/umpires;
- Spectators;
- A coach/coaches not acting on behalf of Ulster Hockey;

1.2: How is a Complaint made?

Ulster Hockey would encourage clubs and schools to address any complaints they have directly with the club or school concerned as the issue may be more appropriately and swiftly resolved at the time and by the individuals who are responsible for/witnessed/been part of the issue being complained about.

Ulster Hockey recommends that each Club and School should also have its own policy and process to deal with complaints in place.

If an affiliated club or school wishes to bring a complaint about a third party involved in the sport to Ulster Hockey the complaint must be in writing from the **Head Teacher/ Principal of the School** or from the **Chairperson or Secretary** of the Club. Generally complaints will not be accepted through anyone else.

Using the **Complaints Document (Appendix 1)** all complaints must be directed to the Administration Officer of Ulster Hockey within **forty eight hours, unless, by the nature of the complaint this is not possible**. One of the following methods should be used:-

- I) Email to admin@ulsterhockey.com
- II) Post to **The Administration Officer, The Ulster Hockey Union, Unit 5G, Stirling House, 478 Castlereagh Road, Belfast BT5 6BQ.**

Please note that a payment of £150 should accompany the complaint – this will be returned to the complainant should the complaint be upheld.

On receipt of a complaint, an acknowledgement receipt will be sent in writing by email or letter within **three** working days. The Administration Officer, upon receipt of the complaint and having logged the details will either forward to the Chair of the Complaints Committee depending on the nature of the complaint.

1.4: How is a Complaint tracked?

On receipt of a complaint it must be recorded on the Ulster Hockey Complaints Log by the Administrative Officer.

The following information will be necessary to ensure that the complaint is handled within the appropriate timescales:-

- Complaint Number. This should be the next sequential number in the series. To distinguish between **Club** and **School**, it should have the appropriate prefix e.g. **C01, C02, S03, S04**
- Date of receipt (date to be stamped on document, if received by letter)
- Received from. Name of School or Club and also Name of person sending letter/email
- Nature of complaint in brief
- Date acknowledgement sent
- Date forwarded to Complaints Committee
- Date resolved.
- Date complainant informed of resolution
- Outcome & Initials
- Case closed

The task of updating the spreadsheet will normally be undertaken by the Administration Officer.

It is the responsibility of the Administration Officer to forward the complaint to the Chair of the Complaints Committee.

1.3: Investigating a Complaint.

The Complaints Committee and Procedures should not be confused with the Disciplinary Committee and Procedures which are used to address on pitch and match problems including yellow/red cards.

2.0: Investigating a Complaint

A Chair of the Complaints Committee will be appointed by the Management Board each season. Other members will then be selected by the Complaints Chairperson who will comply with all the rules as stated.

The Complaints Committee shall consist of a minimum of **three** people. Members should not serve on any other Committee or the Management Board within Ulster or Irish hockey and should not have any connection with any other Committee. The Committee will comprise of both male and female members.

For each complaint considered under this process a panel of 3 members of the Complaints Committee will be set up and a Chair will be agreed by the panel for the duration of the complaint investigation. The Panel should comprise of both male and female members unless this is not possible due to conflicts of interest.

All serious complaint investigations should be undertaken with an open mind and it may be necessary to contact an independent third party to clarify some facts regarding the investigation. It may also be necessary to contact other individuals who may have witnessed the incident(s). For the purposes of information the Panel may need to consult with the Executive Manager, other parties and/or seek legal guidance. Any Sanctions will be agreed by the Complaints Panel and, depending on the nature of the complaint, can

range from referral to the Disciplinary Committee, fines or letters regarding behaviour. This list is not exhaustive. It is the responsibility of the Administration Officer to handle correspondence, as required from the Complaints Committee and to ensure outcomes are reported to the Management Board and parties involved

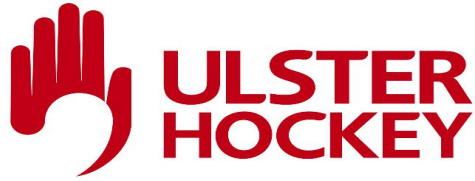
A complaint investigation should be completed within 2-3 weeks, where possible. A Complaint Investigation Form (Appendix 2) will be completed by the Complaints Committee and returned to the Administration Officer with all documentation on the outcome of the investigation.

The findings will be retained by the Administration Officer and a letter sent to the Complainant detailing the outcome. All information will remain confidential, where appropriate.

Right of Appeal

An appeal must be consistent with Rule 21 of the current UHU Constitution.

Appendix 1



Club/School Complaint Document

This document should only be completed in full by the Chair/Secretary of the Club or the Principal/Head Teacher/Head of PE at the School.

Section 1

Name of Complainant Club/School (please print all details)

Match and Venue (If applicable)

Name of Complainant and position in Club /School/Committee

Date and time of Game (If applicable)

=====

Section 2

Nature of Complaint (this section should be factual regarding the incident/s)

Signed: _____ **Date** _____

Appendix 2



Ulster Hockey Union

Club/School Complaint Investigation Form

Date Received _____ **Complaint Number (S or C)** _____

Club/School/Complainant-

Brief Nature of Complaint

Investigation

Outcome

Signed by

Date
