

COMPLAINTS POLICY, FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS

At Crescent Lawn Tennis Club we aim to ensure that we provide our services right, efficiently and to a high standard at all times. We would like to hear about what we are doing well and areas where we can improve.

We understand there are times you may not always be happy with our club. Therefore, your feedback is very important to us to ensure we continue to provide an excellent service.

This policy covers how you can make a complaint and the process that will be followed and also can provide feedback and suggestions on any aspect of the club's services.

1. COMPLAINTS

The Club takes complaints about conduct and behaviour very seriously and works in line with the LTA's processes and procedures to respond to concerns.

This policy tells you how to make a complaint at *Crescent 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 also be because someone has broken important rules or policies.

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.

Values and principles

We base our complaints policy on the following values and principles which are in line with the club's **Constitution, Club Rules, Welfare Policy and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**. These policies can be found on the Club's website www.crescenttennisclub.co.uk

- 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. If your complaint is regarding any of these issues please see our **Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**.
- 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 please see our **Welfare Policy** for raising concerns of issues regarding safeguarding or welfare of children.
- 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, the Local Authority, 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, in confidence, with someone from within the club. This can be arranged as a verbal conversation or in person. You can also write to the relevant person below if it's easier. Depending on the nature of your complaint, you should contact the following individuals initially:

- Coaching matters/general tennis/club matters – Committee Chair - Nick Baker 07544258166 or chairman@crescenttennisclub.co.uk
- Welfare matters – Welfare officer – Sophie Wintle 07968710173
- or welfare@crescenttennisclub.co.uk

To help us deal with your complaint or concern fully we would ask you to provide us with as much information as possible, such as:

- 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; and
- an indication as to the desired outcome.

What will we do to investigate?

- We will record receipt of your complaint and we acknowledge its receipt within three working days. If the matter is urgent, we will respond more quickly.
- It is our aim to respond to complaints within 21 working days. However, if this is not possible we will inform you and the reasons for any delay.
- The contact may ask someone else on the committee or coaching team who manages a specific area of the club's operations to look into the complaint, this will be confirmed in your acknowledgement.
- We will investigate your complaint fairly. This means that we will discuss the complaint with all of the relevant people involved. We will try to gather any information that may be relevant to handling your complaint.
- 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.

- We will take into consideration data protection and privacy in all dealings with any complaint and therefore we will not pass on any personal information unless we receive permission from the complainant to do so.

The Club will take reasonable steps to conduct a thorough investigation and will always give priority to someone's safety and well-being. It is important to recognise that whilst we aim to resolve all complaints, in some situations we may decide we cannot investigate or take further action (i.e. this might be due to lack of information or detail). The Club reserves the right to end any investigation or refer it to the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) if required. If this happens you will be given the reasons for the club's decision.

How will I know what is happening?

You will be given the details of a person who will be your point of contact for the duration of the investigation. That person will make sure that you understand the process involved, 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 are able to resolve problems informally. This might include:

- 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, then either an individual at the Club or a small committee of Club 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 complaint. They might decide to take the following action:

- Formal action under the rules of the Club Rules of the Club.
- Changes in formal contracts or arrangements put in place by Club.
- Recommend that an individual(s) step down from any post or position they hold in 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 place of play if:

- 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 certain complaints directly.

If you are worried about a child or vulnerable adult's welfare, you can contact the following people:

- **Crescent Tennis Club Welfare/Safeguarding Officer** - Sophie Wintle 07968710173 or welfare@crescenttennisclub.co.uk
- **LTA Safe and Inclusive Tennis Team** 020 8487 7000 / safeandinclusive@lta.org.uk (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)
- **NSPCC** – 080 8800 5000
- **The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** 020 8303 7777
- **Local Authority Adult Social Care Services** - 020 8303 7777

Persistent, vexatious complainants or abusive behaviour

The Club considers that all complainants have the right to have their concerns examined in line with our procedures. In most cases, dealing with complaints will be a straightforward process; however, in a minority of cases, the complainant may act in a manner that is deemed unacceptable.

Examples of unreasonably persistent, vexatious or abusive behaviour include (this not an exhaustive list, nor does one characteristic on its own imply that a complaint is overly persistent, vexatious or unreasonable).

- Refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of assistance.
- Refusing to cooperate with the complaints process.
- Refusing to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of any investigation.
- Insisting that the complaint is undertaken in ways that are not compatible with the Clubs procedure or processes.
- Changing the basis of the complaint as the process proceeds.
- Making unjustified complaints about others who are trying to deal with the complaint and seeking replacements.
- Submitting false documents from themselves or others
- Making excessive demands on time or resources – including lengthy emails, calls.
- Submitting repeated complaints with minor additions/variations which the complainant deems a new complaint.
- Refusing to accept the decision, repeatedly arguing points with no new evidence.
- Swearing, either verbally or in writing despite being asked to refrain from doing so.
- Using threatening language towards Club members or those investigating the complaint.
- Repeatedly contacting the Club regarding the same matter which has already been addressed.

In the event of unreasonable behaviour the Club may take the following action:

- When the complaint tries to reopen an issue that has already been through the Club's complaint procedure, they will be informed in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is now closed.
- When a decision on the complaint has been made, the complaint should be informed that future correspondence will be read and placed on file, but not acknowledged, unless there is new information.
- Limiting the complaint to one type of contact (e.g. phone, email, letter etc.)
- Following any abusive behaviour to inform the complaint that contact may be ended or restricted (although the complaint may still be processed).

Before taking such action the Club will consider if it knows that the complaint has any special need then it will consider offering an independent advocate who may assist the complainant with their communication with the Club.

Any new complaint received by the complainant will be treated on its merits – the Club will listen to genuine complaints and not refuse them simply because a restriction may have been opposed upon that complainant.

2. FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS

We welcome all feedback and suggestions on the workings of the Club. This can include your feedback on the club's services, such as membership, coaching, tournaments or facilities and also suggestions on how we can improve things and make additions to our services.

- We urge as many members as possible to get involved in the Club and one way is to provide feedback and suggestions. The Club recommends that if you have some feedback or a suggestion that it is sent to the Committee Chair in the first instance or by emailing chairman@crescenttennisclub.co.uk

What will happen with my feedback/suggestion?

- Once we have your comment, a member of the Club's Committee will aim to respond with a thank-you within five working days.
- If that is the case, then it may be up to 3-4 weeks before a complete response is received.
- The response will determine what will happen to the feedback / suggestion and the person who posed the suggestion will receive a full update on their comment.
- All feedback and suggestions will be centrally logged to ensure continuity.
- The person who made the initial feedback / suggestion will have an opportunity to respond if they don't feel the comment has been taken on board or dealt with satisfactorily.

Date approved: June 2024

Review date: June 2026

Schedule of updates and amendments

Date of update/amendments	Update /amendment:
Policy reviewed	June 2024 Change of contact details