



Resolving Complaints

Information for members, parents, volunteers, and officials wishing to raise a complaint or problem.

The purpose of The Pony Club resolutions procedure is to ensure that complaints are taken seriously, dealt with fairly, and appropriately, and recorded accurately.

(This document seeks to clarify and update existing procedures)

The Pony Club also has a Volunteer Grievance Policy which should be invoked where the Complaints Policy is inappropriate.

What complaints are accepted?

We accept complaints about how you, whether a member, parent, volunteer, or official have been treated by The Pony Club, or, if you are a parent or carer of a Pony Club member, how that young person has been treated by The Pony Club.

We have some basic rules for the acceptance of complaints:

- Complaints must be raised within three months of you knowing the facts (we do not deal with complaints that are older).
- We do not generally investigate anonymous complaints.
- We do not accept complaints that are raised on behalf of or regarding other people (except by parents/carers about the treatment of their children aged under 18 in The Pony Club).
- We do not accept complaints that are broadly or substantively the same as a previous complaint by the same complainant.
- We do not progress complaints that we believe to be vexatious or malicious.
- Complaints and objections relating to Competitions will be dealt with by the relevant Sport Chairmen aided by their Committees.

How do I complain?

- Initially, you should try an informal approach to your District Commissioner (Branch issues) or Centre Proprietor (Centre issues), to attempt to resolve the matter. It is hoped that many complaints can be dealt with quickly and informally.
- If the initial informal approach fails to resolve the matter, then the help of the Area Representative should be enlisted, informally at first.

- If this informal approach fails to resolve the matter, then the matter may need to become a formal written complaint.
- The Area Representative may consult with the relevant Sport Committee Chairman (if appropriate) or may obtain advice from one of the Branch Operations Directors (BOD). Recording of telephone conversations or the taking of contemporaneous notes may be appropriate.

How do I make a formal written complaint?

- If the initial informal complaint process has failed to resolve the matter, you should submit a formal written complaint using the official Complaints Form as this will assist greatly in the handling of your complaint and you can send this by post or by email to resolution@pcuk.org. You will receive an acknowledgement and an indication of by whom and how your complaint will be handled.
- Your formal complaint must include: your full contact details, the Branch or Centre details, the details of the member, a concise statement of the complaint, and your desired outcome to resolve this complaint.
- A Pony Club representative may need to speak to you and others to understand your complaint fully and the circumstances surrounding your complaint in order to investigate further.
- The Pony Club representative will refer the matter to the Rules and Compliance Committee, who will make their decision and advise you of their decision in writing.

Who deals with complaints about volunteers?

- If your complaint is about a volunteer, it should initially be dealt with by the District Commissioner or the Centre Proprietor.
- If your complaint is about a Centre Proprietor or District Commissioner, then it should initially be dealt with by the Area Representative.
- If your complaint is about the Area Representative or Area Centre Coordinator your complaint will be dealt with by the Chairman of the Rules and Compliance Committee.

Who deals with complaints about Pony Club staff?

- In the first instance, complaints regarding a member of The Pony Club Staff should be addressed by email to resolution@pcuk.org where it will be passed to the relevant line manager.
- If the complaint is regarding the CEO, the complaint should be sent to the Chairman of The Pony Club by post or via email to chairman@pcuk.org

How will my complaint be dealt with?

- Your complaint will be dealt with fairly and objectively.
- We handle complaints in a positive and pro-active manner and expect resolutions and outcomes to contribute to a process of continuous improvement.
- In order to have a full understanding of your complaint, the circumstances surrounding it and how to deal with it the person(s) conducting investigations may need to speak to you, and other people, including the person about whom the complaint is made.
- Please bear in mind that the majority of those taking part in the complaint resolution process are volunteers and have other calls on their time. It may therefore take a little longer to sort out your complaint. You will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of your complaint with an acknowledgement within seven days and regular updates.

What if I am not satisfied with the outcome of my complaint?

- 1** If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint or the way in which it was handled, then you may appeal, in accordance with the following procedure.
- 2** The Appeal must be lodged in writing with the Vice Chairman of the Pony Club, within 28 days of receiving the decision of the Rules and Compliance Committee.
- 3** You must pay an Appeal Deposit to The Pony Club (as set out in the current Handbook) to The Pony Club. (£100)
- 4** You will receive an acknowledgement of your appeal within seven days.
- 5** The Vice Chairman of The Pony Club will convene an Appeal Committee consisting of at least two Area representatives and one Sport Chairman not previously connected to the case – the Appeal Committee.
- 6** The BOD will prepare the case.
- 7** In your appeal, you must clearly explain the basis on which you are making the appeal and your preferred outcome to resolve the issue.
- 8** In order to have a full understanding of your complaint, the circumstances surrounding it and how to deal with it the Appeal Committee may need to speak to you, and other people, including the person about whom the complaint is made.
- 9** The Appeal Committee will consider the process undertaken to handle and the outcome of the original complaint.
- 10** You will be kept informed of the progress of your appeal with regular updates.
- 11** You will be advised of the outcome of the Appeal Committee.
- 12** The Appeal Committee's decision is final. There is no further escalation or action to be made. The Pony Club will not consider further any action regarding the

complaint or the appeal. Appeal fees will be returned in the event of a successful appeal.

Charity Regulatory Bodies

As a charity, The Pony Club is regulated by the relevant regulatory body in each country of the United Kingdom. In very serious matters, which may include whistleblowing, the regulatory body may consider acting on a complaint made to it directly. The regulatory body will not generally become involved with a dispute between members of the charity or where a concern is about policies followed or actions taken by the Trustees within the law and the provisions of the charity's governing document.

The Pony Club complaint process should deal properly with your complaint; however, you have the right to raise a serious issue directly with:

- The Charity Commission at www.charitycommission.gov.uk for England and Wales
- The Charity Commission for N Ireland at www.charitycommissionni.org.uk
- The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) at www.oscr.org.uk

Formal Complaint Form

Area		Office use only
Branch or Centre name		
Your name		
Address		
Email address		
Telephone number		
Pony Club member's name (if applicable)		
What is the problem?		
When did the problem occur?		
Where did the problem occur?		
Who do you consider has failed you/your child?		
What is their role in The Pony Club?		
How did he/she fail you/your child?		
What would you like to happen to resolve this issue?		
Signature **		
Date		

** In signing this form, you agree to The Pony Club sharing information contained in it with anyone that The Pony Club considers it necessary to do in order to provide a satisfactory outcome to your complaint.