



COMPLAINTS POLICY

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Introduction

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) is the professional development body for the UK's sports and physical activity workforce. CIMSPA's role is to support, develop and enable all CIMSPA members and partners to succeed in the sport and physical activity sector, ensuring that members receive exceptional education and training to facilitate a fulfilling and rewarding career within the sector. As the champion of professionalism and integrity, CIMSPA is committed to upholding the highest standards in all its activities and services. Complaints provide CIMSPA, its members and partners with the opportunity to learn, improve and rectify any errors, to ensure that members, partners, customers, and the public (referred to as stakeholders) continue to experience a level of service that meets both the stakeholders' and CIMSPA's expectations.

Purpose

This policy aims to outline the process for raising a complaint with CIMSPA and shall clarify the actions that will be taken when a complaint has been submitted to CIMSPA.

CIMSPA ensures that all complaints received will be handled with the utmost sensitivity and professionalism. CIMSPA is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of complaints; however, in extenuating circumstances, CIMSPA will engage with the appropriate authorities where legally required. CIMSPA's primary goal is to resolve complaints in a timely, fair, and transparent manner.

CIMSPA recognises that each complaint can be of varying severity and therefore adopts a tiered approach to help manage the complaints and disciplinary process. More information can be found below.

Throughout this document, reference to working days shall mean Monday-Friday (excluding bank holidays and CIMSPA staff training days)



CIMSPA's Remit

CIMSPA will address all complaints received in accordance with its delegated powers as the sector's Chartered Institute. This will include complaints about its members, partners and CIMSPA itself where it is deemed that the standards, behaviour or conduct are contrary to the expectations described and agreed to in the relevant CIMSPA Code of Conduct and the appropriate CIMSPA policies such as, the [Malpractice and Maladministration policy](#). The CIMSPA member code of conduct can be accessed [here](#). The CIMSPA partner code of conduct can be accessed [here](#).

In accordance with its Charter and Statutes, where the nature and content of a complaint are deemed beyond the remit of which CIMSPA are empowered to investigate, CIMSPA reserves the right to refer the complaint to other agencies or authorities. This may be due to issues relating to legal jurisdiction, safeguarding concerns, or suspected criminal behaviour.

CIMSPA may also make recommendations to external third parties by way of further support or additional means to assist a complainant, but any subsequent activity such as this does not constitute part of CIMSPA's own responsibilities or the formal resolution of the original complaint.

CIMSPA cannot implement a full and thorough investigation into complaints about organisations or individuals who do not hold a CIMSPA Membership, CIMSPA Partnership, or is not an individual recognised by CIMSPA as operating on the institute's behalf.

Within the context of the CIMSPA complaints policy, the following definitions apply:

CIMSPA Members – Inclusive of all CIMSPA membership categories. As a condition of membership and therefore professional recognition by CIMSPA, members must demonstrate consistently high-quality conduct and service provision to all their stakeholders in accordance with the CIMSPA Member Code of Conduct. Complaints relating to individuals will be fully investigated if they relate to a current member, or a lapsed member if the complaint relates to a point in time in which they were in membership.

CIMSPA Partners – Inclusive of all CIMSPA partnership types. Organisations in partnership with CIMSPA must demonstrate high quality and consistent conduct to all their stakeholders in accordance with CIMSPA's Partner Code of Conduct. Complaints relating to organisations will be fully investigated if they relate to a current partner, or a lapsed partner if the complaint relates to a point in time in which they were in partnership.

CIMSPA – Inclusive of all CIMSPA's people (executive, non-executive, contractors, and volunteers), its products or its services. CIMSPA strives to deliver excellent service delivery to its customers, members, and partners. Where CIMSPA fails to meet a high level of service delivery and does not meet the standards expected of its customers, members, or partners, they are encouraged to use the complaints procedure detailed below to allow us to rectify errors and make improvements in the future.

CIMSPA's Complaints Process

1 Submitting a complaint

All complaints must be submitted through the CIMSPA complaints form. To access the form and make a complaint please click [here](#). You will be asked for the following information, so please make sure you provide as much detail and evidence as possible to allow for an effective and efficient experience:

- Your full name
- A description of your complaint including:
 - Date(s)
 - Time(s)
 - Location
 - County
- Complaint details including, where possible, the associated breach in CIMSPA's Member or Partner Code of Conduct, malpractice or maladministration policy, or the

specific breach by CIMSPA of its own service standards, policies, procedures, or agreement.

- Copies of related evidence such as correspondence or other material which may aid CIMSPA's understanding of the complaint.
- Any other relevant information which you feel is pertinent to CIMSPA's understanding of the case.
- Your contact details (we will want to keep you updated on progress, or may need to contact you to seek further details or clarifications)

2 Complaints about CIMSPA partners

Where a complaint is submitted against a CIMSPA Partner, CIMSPA reserves the right to refer the complainant, where appropriate, to follow the complaints process of the Partner or their Regulator (if applicable) to allow organisations to have a fair opportunity to address the complaint directly. This will be communicated within five working days from the date that the complaint is acknowledged. However, if there is an alleged breach of the CIMSPA Partner Code of Conduct, CIMSPA will begin the investigative process and proceed with the complaint process as outlined in this policy.

3 Anonymity

CIMSPA recognises that sometimes a complainant may wish to remain anonymous. CIMSPA will undertake the necessary precautions to accommodate all reasonable requests for anonymity. The complainee has the right to be made aware of the specific details, content and evidence provided in the complaint to allow the right of response to any allegation. The complainant's identity may become obvious by deduction therefore, whilst CIMSPA will respect requests for anonymity as far as possible, it cannot guarantee this.

4 Acknowledging the Complaint

CIMSPA will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within two working days and assign a lead investigator, who will be the complainant's main point of contact during the complaints process.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

What is the role of the Lead Investigator?

The role of a lead investigator is to oversee and manage the investigation of each complaint received. They will conduct the investigation in an impartial and thorough manner and will oversee the gathering and analysis of evidence, where required.

The lead investigator will also be responsible for communicating with all parties involved, keeping them informed about the progress of the investigation and addressing any questions or concerns they may have.

Where required, the lead investigator will be responsible for writing the investigation report, consisting of the findings which will be provided to the complainee detailing the outcome. Please note due to our responsibilities relating to the protection of personal data and potentially sensitive commercial details, the investigation report cannot be shared with the complainant.

6 Reviewing the Complaint

The complaint will be reviewed by the lead investigator within five working days of the complaint acknowledgement. The lead investigator will communicate with the complainant and confirm if an investigation has commenced or if further information to determine the scope of the investigation is required. In the event of a request for further information, a timeframe will be provided for when the additional information must be

submitted to allow the complaint to progress in a timely manner. If the information requested is not provided within the timeframe, CIMSPA will review the complaint based upon the information available at the time.

7 Complaint Investigation

CIMSPA's lead investigator will conduct a thorough investigation into the evidence provided throughout the complaints process, and through other channels deemed necessary and appropriate to support the investigative process. The lead investigator may, for example, contact the complainant, complainee or other key witnesses who are referred to in the information submitted, or contact partner organisations for validation of statements made.

7.1 Complaint timescales

CIMSPA aims to complete the investigative process within 20 working days from confirmation that the complaint will be investigated. In circumstances where CIMSPA does not have the information required to effectively continue with an investigation, the investigation timescale will be paused until such a time when the necessary supporting information has been obtained. Therefore, there may be instances due to circumstances arising from the investigation or unforeseen events, where the investigation takes longer than the intended 20 working days, however, the lead investigator will keep the complainant and complainee updated at regular intervals.

7.2 Further information

When CIMSPA receives a complaint and the lead investigator requires additional information to conduct a thorough investigation, the investigator will reach out to the complainant via email to request the necessary details. The complainant will be given five working days to provide the requested information. The lead investigator may extend this timescale by an additional five working days if there has been no response, or an extension of time has been requested. If the information is not provided within this timeframe, the lead investigator will proceed with the investigation based on the available information at that point. It is important to note that in certain cases, where there is

insufficient or no information, the complaint may be deemed inconclusive and closed with “**no outcome**”. The complainant will be duly informed via email in these instances.

8 Complaint against Partners/Members

8.1 Tiered Approach to Complaints

CIMSPA acknowledges the diverse nature of complaints and, as a result, have adopted a tiered approach to effectively oversee the complaints and disciplinary procedures to ensure that each outcome aligns with the severity of the situation.

Should a breach in the Member/Partner Code of Conduct be identified upon the initial review of the complaint, it will be managed through one of the following tiers:

8.1.1 Tier One Complaints:

- Will be managed by the lead investigator.
- Will be concluded via an email response after an investigation by the lead investigator.
- All parties will be informed of the outcomes.
- No sanctions will be applied however, if the complaint is upheld, appropriate actions, where identified, **may be advised** to the complainee.

8.1.2 Tier Two Complaints:

- Will be managed by the lead investigator.
- Will be concluded via an email response after an investigation by the lead investigator.
- All parties will be informed of the outcomes.
- No sanctions will be applied however, if the complaint is upheld, appropriate actions, where necessary, **will be required to be fulfilled** by the complainee based on the complaint outcome.

8.1.3 Tier Three Complaints:

- Will be managed by the lead investigator.
- An investigation report will be prepared by the lead investigator detailing the findings.
- All parties will be informed of the outcomes.

If upheld:

- The complaint will proceed to a meeting with CIMSPA's Head of Governance & Compliance and an additional member of the Senior Management Team.
- The meeting will provide an opportunity for both CIMSPA and the complainee to address the complaint outcomes and any related concerns.
- CIMSPA may apply appropriate sanctions listed within the sanctions policy, based on the outcome of the meeting.

CIMSPA embraces a culture of transparency in all meetings and views them as an opportunity for all participants to work together effectively to ensure a fair outcome.

Along with the investigation report, the complainee will receive a notice of outcome based on the meeting with CIMSPA's Executive Team.

To find out more about CIMSPA's Disciplinary policy and process, click [here](#).

8.1.4 Tier Four Complaints:

- Will be managed by the lead investigator.
- An investigation report will be prepared by the lead investigator detailing the findings.
- All parties will be informed of the outcomes.

If upheld:

- The complaint will be escalated to a formal disciplinary hearing whereby the disciplinary panel (which comprises of three members of CIMSPA's Disciplinary Committee), will convene to hear the information obtained throughout the investigation.
- The disciplinary hearing will provide an opportunity for both CIMSPA and the complainee to present their evidence, to allow for cross-examination by the panel and the complainee.

- The disciplinary panel may apply any of the sanctions listed within the sanctions policy, as deemed appropriate, based on the outcome of the hearing.

To find out more about CIMSPA's Disciplinary policy and process, click [here](#).

9 Complaint Outcomes

Once the complaint investigation has been completed, one of the following outcomes will be confirmed:

- **Not Upheld:** If CIMSPA find no breaches of the Code of Conduct and confirms an outcome of '**not upheld**' against the complaint, no further action will be taken against the complainee.
- **Upheld/Partially Upheld:** If breach(es) of the Code of Conduct have been identified and proved, CIMSPA confirms an outcome of '**upheld**' or '**partially upheld**' against the complaint. CIMSPA retains the right to apply sanctions against the complainee, dependant on the Tier under which the complaint is managed.
- **Referred:** If CIMSPA confirms an outcome of '**referred**' against the complaint, CIMSPA will provide the necessary advice to enable the complainant to refer their concerns to the relevant organisations as appropriate.
- **No Outcome:** If breaches of the Code of Conduct cannot be identified due to the lack of information or no response from the complainant, CIMSPA will apply a '**no outcome**' against the complaint. No further action will be taken.

Please note that the specific sanctions applied for each level of the complaint can be found in our Sanctions policy [here](#).

10 Escalation/De-escalation of a Complaint

CIMSPA reserves the right to reassess individual complaints on a case-by-case basis and reassign the tier under which the complaint is managed, based on new information or evidence provided by the complainant or complainee. CIMSPA also reserves the right to reassess the tier under which the complaint is managed based on internal information relating to prior complaints. Should the lead investigator reassign the tier under which a

complaint is managed following the review of any new information or evidence, all parties will be informed of the decision and the complaint process will progress accordingly.

For the avoidance of doubt, if CIMSPA receives more than one complaint that is upheld relating to a single CIMSPA Member or Partner, CIMSPA reserves the right to escalate the Tier in which the complaint is managed, in order to determine the appropriate course of action.

CIMSPA will keep a record of all complaints in keeping with our data retention policy which can be accessed [here](#).

11 Reactivation of a complaint

CIMSPA will consider reactivating a closed complaint for further investigation within three months of its original resolution date.

CIMSPA retain the right to keep the complaint closed if the information submitted closely aligns with or is identical to the information previously provided during the time of the original complaint investigation. The complainant will be duly notified within five working days of the reactivation request.

Reactivation of a closed complaint is considered when evidence is submitted via email, that aligns with the breaches and issues raised in the original complaint, providing it is received within three months of the original complaint resolution date. This may include:

- Evidence which was requested by CIMSPA but not submitted as per the timescales of the original complaint, resulting in a **'no outcome'** resolution.

or

- The new evidence submitted, which had not been considered during the time of the original complaint investigation process.

And

- The submitted evidence aligns with the breaches and issues provided in the original complaint investigation.

CIMSPA will respond to the complainant within five working days of receipt of their email to confirm if their complaint meets the criteria for reactivation. If the requirements are met, CIMSPA will also confirm the assigned tier under which the complaint will be managed. At this point, the lead investigator will notify the complainee that the complaint has been reactivated.

The outcome of the investigation will be confirmed to all parties within 20 working days of the email confirming reactivation.

If the evidence or supplementary information submitted is deemed insufficient to bring the complaint to a formal resolution, this will also be communicated to the complainant at this stage.

If the evidence submitted relates to the original issue raised and additional breaches of the code of conduct are identified, these will also be investigated upon reactivation of the complaint.

If further issues are raised that were not submitted within the original complaint, a new complaint will be raised on your behalf which will be investigated separately.

Should evidence or information be submitted beyond the three-month timeframe of the original complaint resolution date, it will be managed as a new complaint and the original complaint will not be reactivated. However, the original complaint and evidence may be referred to within the new complaint investigation. The lead investigator will inform the complainant within five working days of receiving the new information.

12 Statement of Agreed Facts

In exceptional circumstances involving complaints that are managed and investigated under the tier three and tier four process, the complainee may be presented with an alternative resolution for consideration in the form of a Statement of Agreed Facts. This occurs when both CIMSPA and the complainee reach a mutual agreement regarding the factual details and outcome of the complaint. CIMSPA may include actions that are required to be fulfilled by the complainee which will be outlined in the Statement of Agreed

Facts. The complainee will also have an opportunity to contribute towards the Statement of Agreed Facts. Once the document has been agreed and signed by both CIMSPA and the complainee, it will be conclusive and binding.

In the event that the complainee does not agree to the Statement of Agreed Facts process as outlined above, the next relevant steps relating to the tier in which the complaint was managed, will commence.

13 Duty to Report

All CIMSPA members and partners are required to report any issues or concerns to CIMSPA to uphold our commitment to ensure that we create a safe and respected environment. Please be aware that CIMSPA will investigate concerns only when they are brought forward by a member or partner and involve another party within CIMSPA membership.

CIMSPA retains the right to address Duty to Report concerns through the same process as the complaint procedure. However, individuals submitting concerns will only receive an acknowledgement email to confirm CIMSPA's receipt of their submission.

In instances where the individual submitting the Duty to Report is not a CIMSPA member or partner, they will be duly notified via email within five working days.

14 Safeguarding Concerns

All safeguarding concerns must be submitted through the CIMSPA safeguarding form. To access the form and submit a concern please [click here](#). You will be asked to include all relevant information, so please make sure you provide as much detail as possible to enable CIMSPA to address the concern promptly.

CIMSPA will acknowledge receipt of the form within two working days and inform you of the next steps. Safeguarding concerns are managed in line with CIMSPA's Safeguarding policies which can be found [here](#).

15 Appeals Process

If the complainant is not satisfied with the handling of the complaint by CIMSPA, in line with the terms outlined in this policy, the complainant may submit an appeal on these grounds to CIMSPA. Appeals will only be considered if received within five working days of the complaint outcome. You can access CIMSPA's appeals policy and process [here](#).

16 Conflict of Interest

To ensure impartiality and avoid a conflict of interest, the lead investigator assigned to each complaint will not hold a position within CIMSPA that involves direct responsibilities or influence within the area under investigation.

17 Data Retention and Disclosure of Personal Data

CIMSPA will retain all information pertaining to complaints in line with our privacy notice and data retention schedule, which you are able to view and access [here](#).

CIMSPA follow the guidelines set by the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) for [sharing personal data](#) to safeguard adults and [children](#).

Information obtained throughout the investigation process will be handled sensitively, in accordance with applicable laws and CIMSPA's data retention schedule, whilst acknowledging that it may be necessary to inform relevant CIMSPA personnel and other third parties, including [competent authorities](#), who need to be made aware of investigations or their outcomes.

Review

The Complaints Policy will be reviewed in May 2027 unless changes in policy, governance or other circumstances require a review prior to this date. It will then be reviewed at least every three years.



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Incorporated by Royal Charter.
Charity Registration Number: 1144545.