



SAETHU CYMRU
WELSH SHOOTING

Complaints Policy and Procedures

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Document Overview	
Purpose	• To set out Welsh Shooting's approach to receiving, handling, and resolving complaints • To ensure complaints are managed fairly, consistently, and transparently • To support continuous improvement through feedback • To protect the integrity and reputation of Welsh Shooting
Applies to:	This policy applies to complaints from member associations, participants, volunteers, staff, and external individuals or organisations who have a legitimate interest in Welsh Shooting.
Related policies and documents:	Safeguarding Policy, Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and any other relevant policy Code of Conduct

1. Purpose and Principles

Welsh Shooting is committed to providing a fair, transparent, and accessible process for handling complaints. We recognise that complaints are an important source of feedback and an opportunity to learn, improve services, and rebuild trust where things have gone wrong.

All complaints will be handled in line with the following principles:

- Fairness and impartiality in decision-making
- Transparency and clear communication
- Timely handling and resolution
- Respect for confidentiality
- Accessibility and inclusivity
- Assurance that individuals will not be disadvantaged for raising a concern
- A commitment to learning and continuous improvement

Welsh Shooting will make reasonable adjustments wherever possible to ensure the complaints process is accessible to all individuals.

Welsh Shooting aims to resolve complaints at the earliest appropriate stage and to keep complainants informed throughout the process.

2. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Welsh Shooting's activities. This includes, but is not limited to, coaching, events, administration, governance, or the conduct of individuals representing Welsh Shooting.

3. Scope

This policy applies to complaints relating to the activities, services, decisions, governance, events, programmes, representatives, or operations of Welsh Shooting.

A complaint may be made where an individual believes that:

- Welsh Shooting has failed to meet an expected standard of service or conduct;
- a decision or action taken by Welsh Shooting has adversely affected them;
- Welsh Shooting has failed to follow its own policies, procedures, or governing requirements;
- or
- the conduct of a representative acting on behalf of Welsh Shooting has fallen below expected standards.

It operates alongside other policies, including safeguarding, disciplinary, and whistleblowing procedures. Where a complaint overlaps with another policy area, Welsh Shooting will determine the most appropriate process to follow and inform the complainant accordingly.

The following matters are normally **outside** the scope of this policy:

- matters that fall wholly within the jurisdiction of a Member Association;
- disputes between individuals that do not involve Welsh Shooting or its activities;
- issues arising entirely outside shooting-related activities;
- employment grievances, disciplinary matters, or workplace disputes addressed through separate procedures;
- safeguarding concerns that are managed under Welsh Shooting's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures;
- whistleblowing disclosures managed under the Whistleblowing Policy; and
- complaints that are the responsibility of another organisation, regulator, governing body, or statutory agency.

Where a complaint appears to relate wholly or partly to matters outside the scope of this policy, Welsh Shooting may:

- decline to investigate the complaint;
- refer the complainant to a more appropriate organisation, process, or procedure; or
- consider only those elements of the complaint that fall within Welsh Shooting's remit.

4. Time Limits

Complaints should be raised as soon as reasonably practicable after the matter giving rise to the complaint.

To ensure that complaints can be investigated fairly and effectively whilst evidence remains available and recollections are reasonably clear, complaints will normally be expected within six months of the relevant event or issue.

Welsh Shooting reserves the right to consider complaints submitted outside this timeframe where there are exceptional circumstances or where it is still possible to investigate the matter fairly.

5. Accessibility and Support

Welsh Shooting aims to ensure that the complaints process is as inclusive and straightforward as possible. Complaints may be made in writing, by email, verbally, or by telephone.

Where an individual is unable to make a complaint themselves, a representative may act on their behalf, provided appropriate consent is given. Assistance will also be offered where required, for example to address language barriers or accessibility needs.

6. Informal Resolution

Welsh Shooting encourages concerns to be raised and resolved informally wherever appropriate. Many issues can be addressed quickly through direct communication without the need for a formal investigation.

Individuals may raise informal concerns with an appropriate representative of Welsh Shooting. However, there is no requirement to pursue informal resolution, and complainants may choose to submit a formal complaint at any stage.

7. Formal Complaints Procedure

Formal complaints should ideally be submitted in writing to allow for clarity and accurate record keeping, although support will be provided where this is not possible.

A complaint should include:

- The complainant's name and contact details (where possible)
- A clear description of the issue, including relevant dates and circumstances
- Details of any steps already taken to resolve the matter
- The outcome the complainant is seeking

Complaints should be submitted via the online [Welsh Shooting Complaints Form](#). Complaints made via the online form are received by the Governance and Safeguarding Manager and allocated to the appropriate person or process for investigation and resolution.

While concise submissions are encouraged, Welsh Shooting will not reject a complaint based solely on its length.

Anonymous complaints will be considered where sufficient information is provided, although this may limit the ability to investigate fully.

8. Acknowledgement and Initial Assessment

Welsh Shooting aims to acknowledge all formal complaints within five working days of receipt. The acknowledgement will confirm that the complaint has been received and outline the next steps in the process.

Welsh Shooting will normally undertake an initial assessment within ten working days of receipt of the complaint. The purpose of the initial assessment is to:

- Confirm whether the complaint falls within the scope of this policy.
- Identify any related policies, procedures, or processes that may apply.

- Determine whether further investigation is required and, where appropriate, appoint a suitable investigator.
- Consider any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

If, following the initial assessment, a complaint is found to fall outside the scope of this policy, the complainant will be informed and, where reasonably practicable, directed to an alternative route for consideration.

The timescales set out above are indicative and may be extended where the complexity of the complaint, the availability of relevant information or individuals, or other exceptional circumstances make this necessary. Where a delay is anticipated, Welsh Shooting will keep the complainant informed of progress and any revised timescales.

9. Conflict of Interest

Welsh Shooting is committed to ensuring that all complaints are handled fairly, impartially, and independently. Any individual involved in receiving, investigating, considering, determining, or reviewing a complaint must be free from any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest.

Where a conflict of interest arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise, an alternative individual will be appointed to ensure the complaint is managed fairly and independently. Where independence cannot be assured internally, Welsh Shooting may appoint an external individual.

Any concerns regarding the impartiality, independence, or conduct of an individual involved in handling a complaint should be raised as soon as reasonably practicable. Welsh Shooting will consider such concerns and may appoint an alternative individual where appropriate.

10. Investigation

Investigations will be conducted in a fair, proportionate, and evidence-based manner. The complexity and seriousness of the complaint will determine the scope of the investigation.

Complaints will initially be reviewed by the Governance and Safeguarding Manager, who will determine whether the complaint falls within the scope of this policy and whether further investigation is required.

Where an investigation is required, an Investigator will be appointed by the Chief Operating Officer or, where appropriate, another suitably authorised individual.

Any Investigator appointed must:

- be independent of the matters under consideration;
- have no actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest; and
- possess the knowledge, skills, and experience appropriate to the nature of the complaint.

Where independence cannot be assured internally, Welsh Shooting may appoint an external Investigator.

As part of the process, the investigator may:

- Request additional information from the complainant
- Speak with relevant individuals
- Review documents, records, or other evidence

All investigations will be appropriately documented to ensure transparency and accountability.

The findings of any investigation will be reviewed by an appropriately constituted decision-making panel or designated Board representatives who have not been involved in the matter.

Any concerns regarding the conduct, impartiality, or suitability of an Investigator may be raised with the Chief Operating Officer or Chair of the Board, who may appoint an alternative Investigator where appropriate.

11. Timescales

Welsh Shooting aims to deal with complaints as promptly as possible and will seek to meet the timescales set out below wherever reasonably practicable.

These timescales are indicative rather than mandatory and may be extended where the complexity of the complaint, availability of evidence or witnesses, involvement of external organisations, or other exceptional circumstances make this necessary.

- Straightforward complaints should be resolved within 20 working days
- More complex cases may take up to 40 working days

Where significant delays occur, the complainant will be kept informed of progress and the reasons for any revised timescales.

12. Outcomes

Once an investigation is complete, a decision will be reached. Complaints may be:

- Not upheld
- Partially upheld
- Upheld

Where appropriate, Welsh Shooting may take actions such as:

- Issuing an apology
- Reviewing or amending procedures

- Providing training or guidance
- Taking disciplinary action under relevant policies

13. Safeguarding and Serious Concerns

If a complaint raises safeguarding concerns or indicates potential illegal activity, it will be escalated immediately in accordance with relevant safeguarding procedures and legal obligations. In such cases, this policy may be paused while appropriate action is taken.

14. Communication of Outcome

The complainant will receive a written response setting out:

- A summary of the complaint
- The findings of the investigation
- The outcome and rationale
- Any actions that will be taken
- Details of how to appeal the decision

15. Appeals

Complainants have the right to appeal the outcome of their complaint where they reasonably believe that the process was not followed correctly, relevant evidence was not considered, a conflict of interest affected the decision, or the outcome was not supported by the available evidence.

Appeals must be submitted within 15 working days of receiving the outcome and must clearly set out the grounds for appeal. Grounds for appeal may include:

- New evidence becoming available that could reasonably affect the outcome.
- Concerns that this policy or associated procedures were not followed correctly.
- A conflict of interest that may have affected the handling or outcome of the complaint.
- A belief that the outcome was unreasonable or not supported by the available evidence.

An appeal is not a rehearing of the original complaint and will focus only on the grounds of appeal submitted by the complainant.

Appeals will be reviewed by an independent person or panel who has had no prior involvement in the complaint or its investigation and who has no actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest.

The appeal reviewer or panel members will be appointed by an appropriately authorised individual who has had no prior involvement in the matter and has no actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. Where independence cannot be assured internally, Welsh Shooting may appoint an external reviewer.

Welsh Shooting aims to conclude appeal reviews within 20 working days of receipt. Where this is not reasonably practicable due to the complexity of the matter, the availability of relevant information or individuals, or other exceptional circumstances, the appellant will be informed of the reasons for the delay and any revised timescales.

The decision reached at the appeal stage will be final and will conclude Welsh Shooting's complaints process.

16. Vexatious or Malicious Complaints

Welsh Shooting recognises that the vast majority of complaints are raised in good faith and will always be considered carefully and fairly.

A complaint will not be considered vexatious or malicious solely because it is unsubstantiated, unfounded, or not upheld.

Welsh Shooting recognises that, in rare cases, complaints may be submitted without reasonable grounds or with the intention of causing disruption.

Where a complaint is considered vexatious or malicious:

- The decision will be made at a senior level
- The rationale will be clearly documented
- The complainant will be informed

Complainants retain the right to challenge this decision through the appeals process.

17. Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled sensitively. Information will only be shared with those who need it to properly investigate and resolve the matter.

While Welsh Shooting will aim to respect confidentiality, there may be circumstances where information must be disclosed, for example where required by law or in relation to safeguarding concerns.

18. Record Keeping and Data Protection

Welsh Shooting will maintain accurate records of all complaints. These will be stored securely and processed in line with data protection legislation, including GDPR.

Records will generally be retained for up to six years, unless there is a justified reason to retain them for longer.

19. Learning and Continuous Improvement

Welsh Shooting is committed to learning from complaints. Information will be reviewed regularly to identify patterns, improve procedures, and enhance overall performance.

Anonymised summaries of complaints and outcomes may be reported to the Board to support oversight and accountability.

20. Process Overview

The complaints process typically follows five stages:

- Informal resolution (where appropriate)
- Submission of a formal complaint
- Investigation
- Communication of outcome
- Appeal (if required)

Appendix A: Welsh Shooting – Complaints Process (Summary Guide)

Our Commitment

Welsh Shooting is committed to handling complaints fairly, transparently, and promptly. We value feedback and use it to improve our services and how we work.

What is a Complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about Welsh Shooting, including:

- Events, coaching, or services
- Administration or governance
- The conduct of individuals representing Welsh Shooting

Who Can Complain?

Anyone with a legitimate interest in Welsh Shooting can raise a complaint, including:

- Members and participants
- Volunteers and staff
- Clubs, associations, and external stakeholders

How to Make a Complaint

Step 1 – Informal Resolution (Optional)

Where appropriate, raise the issue directly with a Welsh Shooting representative. Many concerns can be resolved quickly this way.

Step 2 – Formal Complaint

You can submit a formal complaint online: [Welsh Shooting Complaints Form](#).

Please include:

- What happened (with dates if possible)
- Any actions already taken
- What outcome you are seeking

If you need support (e.g. accessibility or language), Welsh Shooting will assist you.

What Happens Next?

Acknowledgement

- You will receive confirmation within 5 working days

Initial Review

- Within 10 working days, we will:
 - Confirm if your complaint is within scope
 - Appoint an investigator
 - Identify any conflicts of interest

Investigation

- A fair and proportionate investigation will be carried out
- You may be contacted for further information

Timescales

- Most complaints: resolved within 20 working days
- Complex cases: up to 40 working days
- You will receive updates if there are delays

Possible Outcomes

Your complaint may be:

- **Not upheld**
- **Partially upheld**
- **Upheld**

Actions may include:

- An apology
- Changes to processes or policies
- Training or further action where appropriate

Safeguarding or Serious Concerns

If your complaint involves safeguarding or potential illegal activity, it will be escalated immediately and handled under appropriate procedures.

Appeals

If you are unhappy with the outcome, you can request an appeal:

- Submit within 15 working days
- Must include reasons (e.g. new evidence or concerns about the process)
- Reviewed independently

You will receive a final response within 20 working days (where possible).

Confidentiality

Your complaint will be handled sensitively. Information will only be shared where necessary, or if required by law or safeguarding responsibilities.

Need Help?

If you need assistance making a complaint or require adjustments, Welsh Shooting will support you.

Full policy available on request or via the Welsh Shooting website