

## Cheam LTC Complaints Policy

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

**Values and principles:** 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. 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.

**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.

**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, Social Services or the LTA.

### How to make a complaint?

If you have a complaint, please speak to one of the club officials (see below). They may be able to help to resolve your problem. You could also make a written complaint. The address for written complaints is at the bottom of this policy. If your complaint needs to be looked into further, you will normally be asked to put your complaint in writing. We accept anonymous complaints, but it is often very difficult to investigate these properly. It is easier for us to handle your complaint if you provide as much detail as possible.

### Who to contact to make a complaint?

Complaints will usually be handled by senior staff and officials.

- Management committee ("Committee"): you can speak to any of our officials/Committee members
- Coaches: any of the coaches can also tell you how to make a complaint
- Welfare Officer: if you are a child, or if you are worried about the safety or welfare of a child
- Anyone else involved at the club that you trust.

The address for complaint is [secretary@cheamtennisclub.co.uk](mailto:secretary@cheamtennisclub.co.uk)

### What will we do to investigate?

We will give an initial response to your complaint within five working days. If the matter is urgent, we will respond more quickly. We will investigate your complaint fairly. This means that we will discuss the complaint with all the relevant people. 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.

### **How will I know what is happening?**

You will be given the details of a person who will be your point of contact at the club. That person will make sure that you understand the process, 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 actions, outcomes, or results of my complaint?**

In many cases, we are able to resolve problems informally. The process for this will apply the following, as the situation allows:

- When a complaint is raised with the Committee, the first step should be for a senior representative of the Committee to meet with and have an informal 2-way conversation with the person who is the subject of the complaint, having gathered any relevant further information needed to do so.
- The Committee member investigating a complaint should be impartial.
- The nature of the complaint raised should be made as clear as possible to the person concerned without breaching the need for confidentiality of the person making the complaint.
- An outcome from the meeting could be any or a combination of the following in regard to the person being complained about:
  - a change in arrangements for particular activities to mitigate future issues;
  - an explanation or apology;
  - an agreement to communicate or act differently in future; or
  - an informal warning is given, which may be communicated in writing;
- , or

If an informal approach does not result in a satisfactory response or is not possible or suitable, then a small sub-committee of senior Committee members to look at the information about the case. The Committee will try to make sure that this sub-committee does not contain anyone directly involved with your complaint and that they are impartial. The sub-committee might decide to take the following action(s):

- Organise a formal meeting with the person who is the subject of the complaint.
- In advance of the formal meeting, the purpose and agenda for the meeting should be communicated to the person being complained about.
- After the formal meeting, the outputs should be communicated in writing and in confidence to the attendees. An outcome from the meeting could be any of the following individually or in combination:
  - A formal warning or disciplinary action under the rules of the club to the concerned member, staff, or service provider

- o Removal of the person from any roles they may have at the club.
- o Changes in formal contracts or arrangements put in place by the club.
- o A decision to refer the case to another organisation such as the LTA, police, or Social Services and could also be communicated to the management of Cheam Sports Club.

If the formal warning/disciplinary action does not result in a satisfactory response, the next step may be to suspend the person's membership of the club as well as potential revocation of membership depending on the continued severity and/or persistence of the matter at hand.

If the person who is the subject of a complaint is a member of the Committee, the person assigned to investigate should be someone who is independent of the Committee. The selection of such the person should be done by a senior member(s) of the Committee who is not involved in the complaint. This policy shall be followed by the person chosen to investigate the complaint.

#### **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 to play if:

- you need urgent advice about someone's safety or welfare
- you don't want to discuss the issue with someone at the place to play
- 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 the complaint directly. If you are worried about a child's welfare, you can contact the following people:

- The Welfare Officer at the County LTA
- The LTA Safeguarding Team at [safeguarding@lta.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@lta.org.uk)
- Childline, or the NSPCC advice line, local Social Services, police