



# SA POLE SPORTS FEDERATION

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

The purpose of Complaints Policy is to ensure that complaints process is flexible and responsive to the needs of individual complaints. In addition, it emphasises the need to communicate effectively with complainants and involve them in the decisions concerning the handling of their complaint. Users who are dissatisfied with the service they have received are able to raise their concerns and have them thoroughly and effectively investigated. This policy also sets out the timeframes for responding to complaints, individuals' roles in the process and the reporting structure for complaints information.

The policy seeks to ensure that:

- Users who complain are listened to and treated with courtesy and empathy
- Users who complain are not disadvantaged as a result of making a complaint
- Complaints are investigated promptly, thoroughly, honestly and openly
- Complainants are kept informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation
- Apologies are given as appropriate
- Action to rectify the cause of the complaint is identified, implemented and evaluated
- Learning from complaints informs service development and improvement
- Complaints handling complies with confidentiality and data protection policies is transparent
- Staff involved in complaints are given support

### **Roles and responsibilities:**

The SAPSF Directors/Staff/Volunteers must:

- Ensure that they take time to listen and ensure they fully understand the concerns, this may mean asking for clarification where elements are unclear.
- Reassure the user that complaints are welcome as a means of enabling the service to improve.
- All complaints must be given equal consideration and be investigated.
- Respond to the issues raised or refer the complainant to someone who can assist them further.
- The manner used to respond to concerns must never be perfunctory, curt or negative. Care must be taken over the messages sent out in the first interaction as this will set the tone and influence the likelihood of dealing with the issue and looking to repair the relationship.
- It is the responsibility of the person receiving the complaint to record the details and follow up the issue until it is resolved, or handed to another more qualified/appropriate SAPSF director/staff member.

Complaints can be received in writing via email, SMS/Whatsapp, letter, Social Media. Or, verbally in person, or on the telephone.

The complaint must be acknowledged within 48 hours. An SAPSF director can acknowledge the complaint by a phone call to the complainant, or by email. The complainant must be informed of how their complaint will be dealt with. The complainant must be informed that if they are not happy with the outcome of their complaint, they can raise the issue further. The outcome of the complaint must be responded to within 20 working days.

### **The response:**

The response to a complainant must include a summary of the investigation findings and any actions taken to resolve the problems. The response will include the contact details for complainants to contact us should they remain dissatisfied and wish to escalate.

If it is likely that a complaint will be overdue and the complainant has not agreed to an extension, a telephone call must be made to discuss this with the complainant. The letter must explain the reasons



for the delay and give an indication of when a response will be available. Regular contact must be maintained with the complainant.



**Monitoring the effectiveness of the Complaints Policy:**

The SAPSF directors must monitor the agreed timescales, the quality of the investigations and responses and the implementation of recommendations arising from complaints.

**Handling complaints procedure:**

1. Complaint is received and logged. Complainant is acknowledged within 48 hours.
2. Within 20 working days the complaint is responded to in writing. Phone call to follow up as well, if the complaint was made verbally.
3. If the complainant reports to be unsatisfied with the first outcome, the complaint can be reviewed by the SAPSF. Within 10 days of requesting a review, a response must be made to the complainant in writing.
4. If the complainant is still dissatisfied, the issue can be escalated to the IPSF for further review. The response of this complaint review can take up to 20 more working days. In some cases longer, if the complaint is more complex.

