



COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCESS

It is important for Essex Tennis to have a Complaints and Appeals process as this enables employees, registered clubs, volunteers, visitors etc to have an opportunity to provide feedback or to query county policies, rules, codes of conduct, actions or decisions.

The procedure described below should also be used if the complaint is about an employee, or contractor working for Essex Tennis, or anyone involved in our activities

Values and Principles concerning Complaints Handling

You have the right to complain. 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. We will take into consideration data protection and privacy in all dealings with any complaint and we will not pass on any personal information unless we receive permission from the complainant to do so. However, we may sometimes have to discuss complaints with other relevant 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.

NB if the matter concerns a safeguarding issue please read our Safeguarding Policy for information on what to do.

NOTE

If you are under 18, please speak to your parent or guardian or another responsible adult who can help you. You can also contact our County Safeguarding Officers
joanne@essextennis.org.uk mikejones@essextennis.org.uk

The Complaints Procedure

How to make a **general** complaint:

If you are unhappy about something or feel you have a complaint about Essex Tennis, our activities or anyone working, volunteering, or involved in our activities, it is often best to start by having a conversation with the person concerned, or their direct Manager. They may be able to help to resolve your problem. If this is not possible or you prefer, you should contact the County Secretary.

Any **formal** complaint should:

- be made by post or email and addressed to the County Secretary with a copy to the County Treasurer or the County Chair, within 4 days of any incident or failing that as soon as practicably possible thereafter
- in the event that the formal complaint is specifically about the County Secretary, the complaint may be sent to the County Chair together with a copy to the County Treasurer

- state the full details of the complaint giving as much detail as possible including when, what and where it occurred, who was present/involved and an indication as to the desired outcome.

The County Secretary:

- will as soon as practically possible forward the complaint to the Chair of Essex Tennis
- will let the complainant know that the complaint process has started.

Where possible the Chair (or their nominated Council member) will try to deal with the complaint directly with the complainant. If this proves to be successful, the Chair will normally confirm the outcome directly with the complainant and inform Council of what has occurred.

Where the Chair feels it is not possible/appropriate to be dealt with by one council member, a panel of 3 will be set up from members of the Essex Tennis Council.

The members of the panel will be provided with all necessary information & documents and may ask the complainant and any others involved to provide additional details. At its sole discretion the panel may hold a hearing (whether or not such a hearing is requested by any party) and ask all parties to attend it to present their case. This hearing will normally be held within 21 days of the original complaint being lodged and any decision made will normally be communicated by email/post within another 7 days.

All discussions & meetings will be noted/minuted and Council will be informed, the detail will be held on file in the County records for a period of 5 years

Where a complaint is upheld, the complaints panel will recommend to Essex Tennis Council the imposition of an appropriate penalty which **may** include one or more of the following sanctions:

- a) warn, as to future conduct.
- b) suspend, from county activities for a specified period.
- c) remove, from county activities permanently.

Appeals

Appeals may only be made after 14 days have elapsed and they must also be made within 40 days of the decision being notified to the complainant. The complainant must state the basis for any appeal, for example new evidence or lack of due process.

Any appeal to the decision must be made by email/post only to the County Secretary together with a copy to the County Treasurer or County Chair within 40 days of receipt of the decision. The County Secretary/alternate will confirm receipt of the appeal by email/post and inform the Chair who will start the appeal procedure.

The appeal will be heard by a relevant appeals panel of 3 or more, set up by the Chair including at least 3 members of the Essex Tennis Council and will not include more than one from the original complaints panel. The panel will normally meet within 21 days of the appeal being lodged and any decision made will normally be communicated by email/post within another 7 days.

The decision of the appeal panel will be final.

- Postal complaints to Essex Tennis, Redbridge Sports Centre, Forest Road Essex IG6 3HD
- Email complaints to:
 - County Secretary at steve@essextennis.org.uk
 - County Chair at essexchair@alanrayner.co.uk
 - County Treasurer at mikejones@essextennis.org.uk