

# IPSF Complaints and Disputes Policy



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## **IPSF Complaints and Disputes Policy**

1. To comply with ethical considerations, all complaints and disputes made and the procedure that follow are to be held in the highest confidence. Only those IPSF members involved in complaints, disputes or ethics panel procedures are eligible to have access to information. Depending on whether other parties may become part of an assessment or investigation, they must be reminded of the expectation that they will adhere to keeping the information confidential.
2. Any breaches of confidentiality or ethics by IPSF members will result in disciplinary action being put towards the Ethics panel.
3. If any complaint or dispute is about a person who is usually part of the complaints and disputes procedure, they are to withdraw and only become involved in accordance to ethical policy. E.g.:
  - Complaints about the President, Vice-President or panel member would mean they are under investigation as would anyone else be and therefore cannot be party to confidential information or the decision making process. They will need to be interviewed when necessary; should a committee meeting need to be held to discuss a resolution this should occur as soon as possible.
4. The IPSF complaints and disputes panel currently consists of three panel members who are impartial to the process and procedures of the IPSF.
5. One member of the panel (known as A hereafter) will be allocated to receiving complaints and conducting the initial assessment. A will pass a case to another panel member should there be a conflict of interest, e.g.:
  - A is a close friend, colleague or family member of the complainant.
  - A has previous negative history with the complainant.
  - The complaint is about A.
6. The complaint or dispute will be allocated a case number, logged in the system and an acknowledgment email will be sent to the complainant also giving time frames for the complaints procedure and information about the appeals process. Information to be logged is the case number, name of complainant, email address and date the complaint was received. Timeframes:
  - First complaint or dispute must be acknowledged with seven days.
  - Initial assessment to be taken within fourteen days and the complainant informed of the next steps.
  - If a solution is identified in the initial assessment, this must be put into practice immediately and the complainant informed. (E.g. an apology may be all that is needed etc.) The complainant may have already identified how they would like the situation resolved; if it is appropriate and within IPSF scope, this should be considered to swiftly resolve the complaint action.



- If an investigation is needed, more information collected from third parties and interviews need to be carried out, this must take place with twenty one days and the complainant should be informed of this. If more time is needed at any point, the complainant must be informed and the time frames logged with the case information.
7. A will assess the complaint or dispute and take appropriate action.
    - An apology needed from a person or the organisation; this must be discussed with the President and Vice President.
    - A resolution based on what the complainant has stated; to be put into action after a brief discussion with the panel and then the President and Vice President.
    - Further investigation needs to take place to find out more information; this must be discussed with all panel members to decide what action is needed and by whom.
  8. All parties must be kept informed of time frames and progress at all times. However, this will not include the actions the panel are taking if conducting further investigations.
  9. When the outcome has been decided, inform the complainant and all parties immediately; keeping confidence with information used, put the decision of any action to be taken in the letter. Always include details of the appeals process again even if it is unlikely to be used; appeals must be lodged with twenty one days.
  10. Follow the appeals process if necessary; good practice is to involve an independent person to go through all the documentation and give a review as well as the ethics panel giving a review as well should the complaint have an ethical issue. Should more information be required or a different decision is made, this should be voted on by complaints panel members, ethics panel members, President, Vice-President and independent person.
  11. All communication with complainants and other parties must be respectful and understanding in tone. It is courteous to apologise for the inconvenience of having to make a complaint and stating the IPSF will do everything in its power to resolve their issues swiftly when sending the first reply with case number etc.
  12. Always adhere to the timeframes given and keep all parties informed at all times.
  13. Acknowledge there will always be dissatisfied complainants and other parties; it is not nice to be interviewed about something you don't think is a problem or is unreasonable. People are vulnerable in these situations; the IPSF has a duty of care to be honest, respectful and impartial in complaints procedures.
  14. To ensure the complainant is informed when the matter is closed and no further discussions or action will be taken.
  15. In the event the complaint or dispute is unresolvable through the IPSF pathway procedure, the IPSF recognises the jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration Service for all disputes which cannot be settled amicably or through local arbitration or mediation.



## Timeframes

Action	To be completed within	Purpose
<b>Reply to complaint</b>	7 days on receipt of complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Acknowledge complaint and that an assessment is currently being undertaken.</li> <li>ii. Inform of timeframes.</li> <li>iii. Inform of appeals process.</li> </ul>
<b>Initial assessment</b>	14 days on receipt of complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Decision needed to either resolve immediately or investigate further.</li> </ul>
<b>Letter to complainant</b>	Immediately upon results of assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Inform complainant of decision; can be resolved immediately or further investigation is needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Investigation needed</b>	21 days from sending results of assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Determine all parties involved.</li> <li>ii. Organise interviews (email/live).</li> <li>iii. All panel members to review all the information and decide the outcome.</li> <li>iv. Contact Executive Committee members if necessary for decision on resolution.</li> </ul>
<b>Resolution</b>	Immediately upon results of investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Write to complainant with results of investigation and suggested resolution.</li> <li>ii. Write to all parties involved with results and resolution.</li> </ul>
<b>Appeal</b>	Must be lodged with 21 days from the resolution letter being sent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Panel to review the documentation with an independent person.</li> <li>ii. Ethics panel to review the case to ensure procedures were followed.</li> <li>iii. Discussion re outcome to be held by all above including President/Vice.</li> </ul>



## Complaints and Disputes Form

Please return your form to:  
kate.whitley@polesports.org

Name:
Address:
Email:
Telephone:

Which department does your complaint or dispute concern?

IPSF Committee                       Other                       WPSC

1) Please give details of your complaint or dispute:

2) Please tell us how you would like to see this resolved: