



# **ANGLING TRUST**

**Disciplinary and Appeals policy  
guidance: Clubs, Fisheries, federations  
etc**

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## 1. PURPOSE OF GUIDANCE

The Angling Trust as a National Governing Body has its own Disciplinary and Appeals policy for members that should be read in conjunction with the AT Code of Conduct. These documents together outline the expected behaviour and conduct that Angling Trust members should adhere to and the process that will be followed if an individual member's conduct is called into question. However, clubs, fisheries and federations should be prepared to appropriately respond to concerns around their own individual members conduct and have policies that clearly outline what these processes are.

There may be occasions where an individual's conduct within an organization requires a referral to Angling Trust's safeguarding team and each referral will be assessed as to whether the concerns meet a statutory agency threshold and or advice given as to how to follow up these concerns. However, while the safeguarding team will fulfill its role as an NGB by following up these concerns and potentially referring them onto to statutory agencies, the Angling Trust's jurisdiction ends if these concerns are not deemed to meet the threshold for police, social care or LADO involvement and or if the person is not an individual member of the Angling Trust. It would then fall to the club, fishery or federation to be able to follow their own Code of Conduct and Disciplinary and Appeals process.

This document is intended to give best practice guidance to angling clubs, fisheries and federations within England for disciplinary procedures so that organizations can respond effectively to concerns. Organizations are free to utilize the Angling Trust Code of Conduct and this best practice guide as their own to make this process easier, provided this is made clear within policies and procedures.

## 2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Whilst every organization (both within angling and outside of angling) will have varying disciplinary procedures, there are some guiding principles clubs, fisheries and federations should follow in the creation of their own.

- Even if an individual has broken a code of conduct or behaved in a way that isn't acceptable, they have an entitlement to a fair and reasonable process that is undertaken by impartial parties (or as impartial as is reasonably practicable).
- The individual is informed of the conduct under question and notified of both of the process and the outcome in a timely manner.
- Procedures must be clear, consistent and transparent for every individual and readily available (published on website or provided to members).
- The process cannot imitate or replace a court of law; therefore, disciplinary procedures should not take place if statutory agencies are investigating as this may affect these investigations.
- The individual should where applicable be given the right to appeal disciplinary outcomes.
- Without a clear set of policies and procedures outlining expected conduct, a fair and reasonable disciplinary procedure is impossible to achieve

It should be noted clubs, fisheries and federations are able to subscribe to adhering to Angling Trusts policies and procedures providing this is made clear in policies and on websites. This could include various safeguarding policies and the Code of Conduct. This document can also be utilized as a best practice guide for organisations.

### 3. THE PROCEDURE

Upon receipt of a complaint or other indication of actions, behaviour or conduct that falls below the standards your organisation may expect of members, an organization should take the necessary steps to ascertain the nature of the complaint and gather information in this regard. This should include:

1. Asking any complainant to provide evidence of the alleged complaint. Upon receipt the organisation should determine whether there are sufficient grounds for the member to be invited to explain their conduct. If it is decided there are not sufficient grounds the matter will not proceed any further.
2. Where it appears there are sufficient grounds to seek the member's explanations, they should be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the complaint or behaviour. At least 24 hours' notice of this meeting should be provided, unless the member waives this timeframe. The member should be informed in the invitation of the conduct that is under question (this directly referencing the code of conduct). A panel should consist of an odd number of named individuals from the organization, possibly committee members and someone to chair the panel. The Angling Trust uses 3 staff members from various positions within the company. If this is regarding a safeguarding concern, clubs, fisheries and federations can invite the Angling Trust's Safeguarding Lead to be part of this panel.
3. Subject to the nature of the complaint, the organization can temporarily suspend the member from organization activities or the organization itself until the process is concluded. This could be for example, for a safeguarding concern or potential crime. As above, this would need to be outlined in the Code of Conduct (or the organization can subscribe to adhere to Angling Trust's). The Angling Trust Safeguarding Lead can provide advice and guidance on this.
4. After the member has been able to provide their explanations, the panel should consider all the facts and make a determination of the outcome. If necessary the panel should seek further information from the complainant, the member or other parties before forming their conclusion. Mitigating and risk factors should be considered in considering the outcome.
5. The panel could decide on any of the following outcomes:
  - To dismiss the complaint and close the matter.
  - To apply a sanction against the member. In all instances, any sanction will be proportionate to the conduct.
6. Sanctions could include:
  - Removal from specific roles
  - Exclusion from events for a stated period
  - Issue a warning in respect of the conduct
  - Temporary suspension of membership for a stated period

- Termination of membership
7. The Chair of the panel should notify the member of the outcome in writing/by email in all cases. Where the panel consider the conduct merits a sanction the notification should explain the basis of the decision and will inform the member of the route of appeal.
  8. Where a sanction is imposed this should come into effect after a set amount of time that is deemed reasonable, unless the matter relates to serious conduct in which case the sanction should apply with immediate effect.
  9. Appeals by the member should be submitted in writing within 7 days of the notification of the panel's decision. Where an appeal is received, other than in cases of serious misconduct, the sanction will be placed on hold until the appeal is concluded.

If a club, fishery or federation decides to suspend a member or exclude a member from a fee-paying activity, the organization should decide what happens to the funds paid by the individual during the period the suspension/exclusions lasts for. The Angling Trust would suggest these are directly refunded.

Where the organisation decides to terminate membership the member's subscription fees should be forfeited and no refund should be provided.

### **3.1 Appeals**

Any appeal should be in writing, setting out the grounds for the appeal. The member should be invited to attend an Appeal Hearing and should take all reasonable steps to attend. A decision should be given within seven working days of the Appeal Hearing. Any appeal against termination of membership should be heard by a committee nominated by the relevant panel chair and should be lodged with the panel chair within seven days of the date of the termination of membership. The decision of the Appeal should be final. There should be no further right of internal appeal.

### **3.2 Records**

Clear records should be kept at each stage of the disciplinary or appeal procedure and all parties involved should be given the opportunity to check their accuracy. These records must be kept confidential and retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

## **4. THE RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED AT ANY DISCIPLINARY OR APPEAL MEETINGS**

Members should be entitled to be accompanied to any disciplinary or appeal meeting by another organisation member or friend. Their role is to provide support to the member, not to answer questions on their behalf.

## **5. SUPPORT FROM ANGLING TRUST**

The Angling Trust acknowledges that some organizations may need support in how best to respond to some conduct or concerns and the resulting disciplinary procedure. Therefore, the Angling Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead is available to support with responding to safeguarding concerns or certain elements of conduct and behaviour if these relate to safeguarding.

If deemed appropriate, the DSL can be invited to sit on the disciplinary panel for clubs, fisheries or federations as an impartial professional and to give advice and guidance.

Please email [safeguarding@anglingtrust.net](mailto:safeguarding@anglingtrust.net) if your club requires any advice, guidance or require the DSL to sit on your disciplinary panel.