

# Sale Walking & Activity Group (SWAG) Complaints Procedure

## Why are complaints procedures necessary?

Complaints procedures provide a clear and transparent framework to deal with difficulties which may arise. They are necessary to ensure that everybody is treated in the same way in similar circumstances and that issues are dealt with fairly and reasonably.

However, personal differences and disputes and personality clashes are not to be included, since these are often open to interpretation, unfairness and personal bias. It has to be accepted that in a large group such as SWAG there will be differences of opinion and personality. The complaints procedure is intended only to deal with relatively serious issues.

Procedures are needed:

- to provide individuals with a course of action should they have a complaint which they are unable to resolve through regular communication with group members;
- to provide points of contact and timescales to resolve issues of concern;
- to try to resolve matters amicably;
- to provide guidance in an attempt to prevent further problems.

## Complaints procedure and practice

### Stages of the process

- A complaint is made to a committee member within seven days of the issue.
- A completely confidential, full and fair investigation is carried out by an independent person who is not involved in the issue and has the respect of all parties to the dispute in order to determine the facts and to decide if further action is necessary.
- The findings are conveyed to the committee.
- The committee implements an outcome, fully informing the members involved.
- If the decision is not accepted by any of the members involved, an appeal is held (see the Constitution).

*Note:* Meticulous records (minutes of meetings, emails, attendance notes, notes of telephone calls, copies of correspondence, etc.) are to be kept of all stages of the above process.

### Potential outcomes

**No action:** it is agreed to try to resolve the issue through discussion and monitoring with follow-up assessments to determine the need for further investigation.

**Exclusion:** the committee implements this as appropriate and timescale reviews are held in conjunction with event organisers.

**Suspension:** the committee implements this as necessary, usually pending an appeal.

**Expulsion:** this is used for more grave offences which may constitute gross misconduct and which include theft, fighting, malicious action and persistent misconduct.

*Note:* The information in this document is offered in good faith but no liability can be accepted for any errors or omissions.