ESSU Complaints Policy

SEPTEMBER 2026

This Document: V1.3
Document Owner: ESSU Safeguarding Team
Document approved by: ESSU Committee
Date Policy approved: 1 September 2026
Next review Date: 1 September 2029

Policy Statement

ESSU takes all complaints regarding conduct, behaviour, service standards, safeguarding, integrity and governance seriously. We are committed to ensuring that complaints are handled fairly, consistently, confidentially and within reasonable timescales. We aim to resolve concerns promptly and encourage constructive and respectful dialogue wherever possible.

All complainants have the right to be treated fairly regardless of:

- Age
- Sex
- Disability
- Race or ethnicity
- Nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Socio-economic background

ESSU will always prioritise complaints where an individual's safety, wellbeing or welfare may be at risk. While every effort will be made to investigate and resolve complaints, there may be circumstances where ESSU determines that it is unable to investigate or take further action. If this occurs, the reasons for the decision will be clearly communicated.

ESSU also reserves the right to:

- Refer matters to an appropriate external agency.
- Use mediation or independent investigation processes.
- Refer cases to the Sport Integrity Service where appropriate.
- Discontinue an investigation where sufficient grounds exist.

Safeguarding Concerns

If your concern relates to behaviour that may place someone at risk, including behaviour that is:

- Unsafe
- Abusive

- Bullying
- Harassing
- Discriminatory
- Intimidating
- Criminal

You should report the concern immediately to safeguarding@englandshooting.org.uk in line with ESSU safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding concerns will always take priority over the standard complaints process.

Scope of This Policy

This policy applies to complaints concerning:

- ESSU programmes and activities
- Competitions and events
- Officials, volunteers and staff
- Coaches and support personnel
- Participants and athletes
- Governance and organisational matters
- Behaviour contrary to ESSU policies or codes of conduct

This policy does not replace any specific appeals procedures that may exist for selection, competition outcomes or disciplinary matters.

Informal Resolution

ESSU encourages concerns to be resolved informally wherever appropriate.

If you have a complaint, you should first raise the issue with:

- The individual concerned;
- The organiser of the activity or event; or
- A coach, team manager, official or volunteer involved.

Where suitable, constructive discussion and mediation may be used to help resolve concerns at an early stage. Many issues can be resolved quickly and positively through open communication.

Key Principle

Everyone involved in the ESSU has the right to have concerns listened to, investigated fairly and resolved through a transparent, respectful and timely complaints process.

Formal Complaint Procedure

If informal resolution is not appropriate, or the matter remains unresolved, a formal complaint should be submitted in writing to secretary@englandshooting.org.uk

A complaint should include:

- Your name and contact details
- A clear description of the complaint
- Relevant dates, times and locations
- Names of individuals involved
- Any supporting evidence
- Details of any actions already taken

Initial Investigation

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, ESSU will endeavour to:

Within 5 Working Days

☑ Acknowledge receipt of the complaint.

☑ Confirm who will manage the investigation.

☑ Advise on the anticipated timescale.

Investigation Process

The investigating officer may:

- Gather relevant information.
- Request written statements.
- Interview those involved.
- Review supporting evidence.
- Seek independent advice where required.

Outcome Timescale

ESSU aims to conclude straightforward complaints within:

4 weeks

More complex complaints may require additional time. Where delays occur, updates will be provided.

Investigation Outcome

Following investigation, ESSU will:

- Explain the findings.
- Confirm whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.
- Outline any actions to be taken.

Escalation to Formal Review

If you believe the complaint has not been appropriately resolved, you may request a formal review.

A written request should be submitted to:

The Chair of the ESSU Committee
chair@englandshooting.org.uk

If the Chair has previously been involved in the matter, the complaint should be addressed to:

The Secretary of the ESSU Committee
secretary@englandshooting.org.uk

All correspondence should be clearly marked:

"Private and Confidential"

Complaints Committee Investigation

Where a complaint progresses to formal review:

- The complaint will be referred to a nominated member of the formed Complaints Committee.
- An independent review of the complaint will be conducted.
- All parties will have the opportunity to submit evidence.
- Written and verbal representations may be requested.

Investigation Standards

The Complaints Committee representative will ensure:

- Fairness
- Impartiality
- Independence
- Natural justice

A full record will be kept of:

- Evidence received
- Meetings conducted
- Decisions made
- Actions taken

Timescale

ESSU aims to complete Complaints Committee investigations within:

8 weeks

If additional time is needed, all parties will be informed.

Potential Outcomes

Where a complaint is upheld, outcomes may include:

- Advice and guidance
- Informal resolution
- Mediation
- Training or education
- Policy review
- Formal warning
- Disciplinary action
- Suspension from ESSU activities
- Removal from an ESSU role
- Referral to external organisations or authorities

The severity of any action taken will be proportionate to the circumstances and evidence available.

Sport Integrity Service Referrals

ESSU may refer matters to the Sport Integrity Service where the complaint relates to:

- Serious misconduct
- Integrity concerns
- Bullying, harassment or discrimination
- High-performance programme matters
- Behaviour falling within Sport Integrity jurisdiction

Where a referral is made, relevant individuals may be required to cooperate fully with any investigation conducted under Sport Integrity Service procedures.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled as confidentially as possible.

Information will only be shared with individuals who need to be involved in:

- Investigating the complaint
- Making decisions
- Implementing outcomes

However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where:

- Someone is at risk of harm.
- A safeguarding concern is identified.
- Criminal activity is suspected.
- External agencies need to be involved.

ESSU may seek advice from:

- Police
- Children's Services
- Adult Social Care
- National Governing Bodies
- Other relevant agencies

Malicious or Vexatious Complaints

ESSU encourages individuals to raise genuine concerns without fear of repercussions.

However, where a complaint is found to be:

- Deliberately false;
- Malicious;
- Misleading; or
- Made in bad faith,

ESSU reserves the right to take appropriate action against the complainant.

Publication of Findings

In exceptional circumstances, ESSU may determine that publishing the outcome of a complaint is in the best interests of:

- The organisation;
- Participants;
- The wider sport; or
- Public confidence.

Where publication is considered, ESSU will carefully balance:

- Transparency;
- Privacy rights;
- Confidentiality obligations; and
- Data protection requirements.

Where appropriate, findings may be anonymised.

Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

ESSU will monitor complaints across all areas of the organisation to:

- Identify trends.
- Improve participant experience.
- Strengthen governance and safeguarding arrangements.
- Review organisational practices.

Anonymous statistical information may be reviewed and reported to the Board and relevant committees to support ongoing improvement.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- ESSU Code of Conduct
- ESSU Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
- ESSU Bullying and Harassment Policy
- ESSU Equality Policy
- ESSU Privacy Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- As required following legislative or organisational changes.
- Following significant incidents or lessons learned.
- At least once every three years.