

Version	2
Date	Jun 2025
Owner	HR
Review Date	Jun 2027

PERSISTENT OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS POLICY

PURPOSE

England Athletics is committed to providing excellent service in all interactions with its stakeholders and dealing with complaints equitably, comprehensively, and in a timely manner.

We have a process for handling complaints and we treat any expressions of dissatisfaction seriously.

In making complaints most people act entirely reasonably. Occasionally, we receive complaints that are vexatious in that they cause disruption to our work, disproportionate cost and time to handle and impact on the wellbeing of our employees.

This policy sets out England Athletics approach to dealing with persistent or vexatious complaints.

SCOPE

All employees are required to uphold and promote this policy. All managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

What are Persistent and Vexatious Complaints?

Features of the type of complaint and behaviour that this policy covers can include the following (the list is not exhaustive, nor does one single feature on its own necessarily imply that the person will be considered as being in this category):

- Persisting in a complaint after being advised that there are insufficient or no grounds for their complaint.
- Refusing to co-operate with the complaints process whilst still wanting their complaint to be resolved, including a failure or refusal to specify the grounds of the complaint despite offers of assistance, changing the basis of the complaint or introducing trivial or irrelevant new information and expecting this to be considered and commented on.

Version	2
Date	Jun 2025
Owner	HR
Review Date	Jun 2027

- Submitting repeat complaints, after the complaints procedure has been completed, essentially about the same issues, with additions/variations which the complainant insists on being treated as new complaints and put through the complete complaints procedure again.
- Refusing to accept the outcome of the complaint procedure after its conclusion, repeatedly arguing the point, complaining about the outcome, and/or denying that an adequate response has been given.
- Harassing or otherwise seeking to intimidate employees dealing with their complaint or correspondence, by using inappropriate language or behaviour, by use of racist or offensive language and/ or making what would appear to be groundless complaints about our employees.
- Making an unreasonable number of contacts with us, by any means, in relation to a specific complaint or correspondence including making persistent and unreasonable demands or expectations of employees and/or the procedure after the unreasonableness has been explained (such as insistence on immediate responses to numerous, frequent and/or complex letters, telephone calls or emails).
- Recording meetings and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of the other person involved.

Handling Persistent or Vexatious Complaints

Managing vexatious complaints can be very time consuming. England Athletics is not obliged to meet a complainant's unreasonable demands, for example, by answering every single point in an unreasonable letter. However, England Athletics believes in devoting time to dealing with and resolving complaints at an early stage.

The most difficult vexatious complaints to deal with are those where the complaint is slightly different from the original complaint, but about the same broad area of activity. A careful decision will have to be made as to whether or not the matters are sufficiently different to justify being considered as a new complaint.

Equally if the complainant keeps making complaints about different matters, each complaint should be considered in the usual manner unless they are about entirely trivial matters.

In the event that the complaint is considered persistent or vexatious, the complainant will be informed of the decision in writing and advised that England Athletics will not enter into any further correspondence on the matter.

Version	2
Date	Jun 2025
Owner	HR
Review Date	Jun 2027

Equality

We will ensure that we meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled customers.

In some circumstances disabled people may have difficulty in expressing themselves or cannot communicate appropriately in a clear and concise manner. Where we consider that there may be an indication that this is the case, we will consider the needs and circumstances of the individual in the first instance and then use this information to make an informed decision.

NB. The contents of this policy will be subject to revision from time to time.