

Content:

The aim of this policy is to provide a clear and transparent way for anyone within or connected to Table Tennis England to raise genuine concerns about acts of wrongdoing or malpractice in the organisation. It also aims to ensure that any concerns are dealt with effectively and in a timely fashion.

Detail:

The policy enables those people authorised to deal with allegations within Table Tennis England the means to ensure that staff and volunteers are not penalised for raising genuine concerns, even if those concerns prove to be unfounded. It also provides the means for taking disciplinary action against anyone who is found to have raised false concerns with malicious intent.

The procedure does not apply to child protection concerns or allegations about a member of staff or volunteer. Concerns or allegations of this nature should be dealt with following the relevant safeguarding processes nevertheless anyone reporting a concern or allegation relating to child protection will be afforded the same protections as described in this policy.

What to do if you wish to raise a concern

Speak to your manager or another colleague if you are a member of staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. If your concern relates to your manager then speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Your manager or the DSL / DDSL will arrange to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. The meeting should take place within 7 days of the report being received and may take place away from the office if necessary, particularly if the person reporting the concern is a volunteer.

You will be told either at the meeting or as soon as possible afterwards what, if any, action will be taken to address your concern or allegation. It may not always be possible to tell you the full outcome at this point particularly if an investigation has to take place which involves statutory agencies. If no action is to be taken you will be informed of the reasons why this decision has been reached.

If you do not want the person you have concerns about to know your identity, you should make this clear to the responsible manager at the earliest opportunity. Every effort will be made to respect your wishes, but it cannot be guaranteed that your identity will not be disclosed. If this is the case, you will be informed and any issues you may have about this will be discussed with you.

If members of staff feel that they need support in raising their concern, then they may bring a trade union representative to the meeting with the responsible manager. Anyone reporting a concern may bring a colleague with them to the meeting with the responsible manager.

What to do if someone raises a concern with you

If someone tells you they are concerned about the actions of another staff member or volunteer, you should arrange to meet them within 7 days of the initial conversation. If you are not the person's manager, you should establish why they have chosen to discuss the concern with you. You may suggest that the person speaks to another responsible manager if you wish but should not refuse to hear what the person has to say.

You should approach the situation sensitively, recognising the discomfort that the person may feel. Offer to meet them away from the office if they wish particularly in the case of a volunteer and allow them to bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting. You should also remind the person with the concern about other sources of support available to them. Some are listed at the end of this document.

If the person reporting the concern wants their identity to be kept confidential, you should explain that this will be done if possible, but that it may not be achievable.

Make notes of your discussions with the individual and check the accuracy of your notes with them.

Deciding what action to take

Once you have established the nature of the concern, it may be of a relatively minor nature and you may decide to resolve it informally.

If the concern appears more serious, you must consider first whether any immediate action is needed to protect children or a vulnerable adult. If so, you should report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or directly on to the statutory agencies in line with Table Tennis England's Safeguarding Procedures.

If you are not the manager of the person who is the subject of the concern, you should refer the matter to the person's manager, who will decide what action to take.

Conducting an investigation

Unless the matter is relatively minor and can be dealt with informally, the responsible manager should arrange for an investigation to be completed following Table Tennis England's normal processes as set out in the Safeguarding Guidelines and the Disciplinary Regulations.

The scope of the investigation will be determined by the nature of the concern. Witnesses may need to be interviewed and records may need to be scrutinised. It is also possible that advice may be needed from someone with specialist knowledge in human resources.

Once the investigation is completed, a report will be produced in line with Table Tennis England's normal process summarising the nature of the concern, the investigation process, and the outcome, including specific recommendations. Measures will be taken to preserve the anonymity of the person who raised the concern if this has been their wish. If the concerns are not upheld, this should also be made clear.

If the concern is upheld and the person at the centre of it is found to have been culpable or remiss in some way, the report's recommendations should be carried out using a clear plan of action. The plan may include the use of disciplinary action, training, coaching, counselling, the implementation of new policies or procedures for the whole workforce, or a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

If it becomes apparent during the course of the investigation that a criminal offence may have been committed, the police will be informed in which case the Table Tennis England investigation may have to be suspended pending the outcome of any police investigation.

The person who raised the concern will be informed of the outcome, but not the details of any disciplinary action. Appropriate support or counselling will be offered to that person.

If the concern is unfounded and the person who raised it is found, through the process of investigation, to have acted maliciously or out of a desire for personal gain then disciplinary action may be taken against them.