

The British Dance Council's Complaints Procedure



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Introduction

We are committed to ensuring the compliance of all our Licensees with the Rules contained in our Rulebook. The Rules govern all of the Council's competitive dancing competitions and championships in Great Britain.

In particular, we seek to foster a culture of commitment and adherence to our Equity Rule, which prohibits unlawful discrimination against Licensees on the grounds of a range of protected characteristics, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sex or sexual orientation.

In order to do this, we need you to tell us when we or any of our Licensees get things wrong.

We want to help resolve your complaint as quickly as possible. We listen to your complaints, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our service.

Making a Complaint

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to a breach of the Council's Rules, whether justified or not.

Who may a complaint be made against?

Complaints may be made against the Council and any of its Licensees.

How should complaints be made?

If you wish to make a complaint, you may do so by e-mail or letter using the Council's Complaints Procedure Form at Appendix 1.

In order to be considered, the complaint must:

- be in writing;
- be signed by each of the complainants; and
- have a postal and / or e-mail address provided in the appropriate field.

Our contact details are in the "Contacting us" section below. Please address all correspondence to Mrs Margaret Harris, our Company Secretary.

If you are disabled, and need a reasonable adjustment to ensure you can register your complaint, you can contact us alternatively by telephone (one of our officers will help you by writing out your complaint) or fax.

If you require different adjustments, let us know and we will try and put those arrangements in place where we can.

Is there a time limit for making a complaint?

Yes. If you wish to make a complaint, you must do so within 6 months of the date of the act giving rise to the complaint. Once this final date has passed, you will be too late to complain.

Complaints may be considered after 6 months only in exceptional circumstances, where there is good reason for the delay and where the Board considers it would be just and equitable to extend time.

Confidentiality

Your complaint will be dealt with confidentially. Its contents will be disclosed only where necessary.

Our Response

Overview

We have a three-stage complaints procedure. At each stage, it will help us to resolve your complaint quickly if you can give us as much clarity and detail as possible, including providing any documents and correspondence. If we do not have all the details required to deal with the complaint, we may contact you and ask you for further information.

Our Company Secretary, Mrs Margaret Harris, is responsible for managing the handling of complaints, including notifying you of the outcome.

Stage one

This is the first opportunity for us to resolve your dissatisfaction. We expect the majority of complaints to be resolved at this stage.

What happens when the Council receives my complaint?

Within 7 working days of receipt of your complaint, the Board (or the person to whom this role is delegated) will appoint an individual investigating officer and ask him or her to investigate your complaint.

Who may be appointed as an investigating officer?

The investigating officer may be any member of the Board or Licensee of the Council, save that the investigating officer:

- must not to be a complainant, or be any person named in the complaint;
- must not have had any involvement in the matters forming part of the complaint; and

- if the complaint relates to a breach of the Council's Equity Rule, must have received appropriate equality and diversity training, which included training in the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, within the 24 months prior to the date on which the investigating officer was appointed to investigate the complaint.

What steps will the investigating officer take?

Once appointed, the investigating officer will take the following steps:

- i. The investigating officer will acknowledge your complaint by letter within 7 working days of being appointed. The letter will set out the timescale for the determination of the complaint and invite you to submit any further documentary evidence on which you wish to rely.
- ii. The investigating officer will offer to meet you and allow you to make oral representations.
- iii. The investigating officer will notify any person complained about of the fact and the content of the complaint. He or she will invite representations and / or any relevant documentary material to be produced and will further offer to hold a meeting with the person complained about.
- iv. The investigating officer may also contact any other person whom he or she considers may have relevant evidence in respect of the complaint.
- v. The investigating officer will consider all of the material and set out his or her findings in a written report. The report will clearly set out whether the complaint, or any part of it, is upheld, and will provide summary reasons for that conclusion.
- vi. If the investigating officer considers that the complaint, or any part of it, should be upheld, he or she will make recommendations as to what steps (including, where appropriate, what sanctions) the Council ought to impose.
- vii. The investigating officer will send copies of the report to the complainant, the person complained about and the Chairman of the Board.

The procedure outlined above should take place within 6 weeks of the investigating officer being appointed.

What happens next?

Either the complainant, or any person complained about, has the right to ask for the complaint to be considered by the Board at stage two. If neither the complainant nor any person complained about makes such a request, the investigating officer's decision is binding on the parties and on the Council.

Do I have the right to bring someone with me to any meeting held with the investigating officer?

Yes. You, or any person mentioned in the complaint, may be accompanied at any meetings held with the investigating officer. However, it is at the discretion

of the investigating officer whether the person accompanying you or the person mentioned in the complaint can include a legal representative.

Stage two

If, having followed the first stage of our Complaints Procedure, you remain dissatisfied, you can ask to have your complaint reviewed by the Board. The same right is accorded to any person complained about. Either party must submit their request within 14 days of being notified of the investigating officer's decision.

Who will carry out the review at stage two?

The complaint will be considered by the Board, or by a committee of members of the Board (comprising no fewer than three members) to whom this function has been delegated.

Any Board member participating in the decision-making process at stage two:

- must not have been the investigating officer at stage one;
- must not have been the complainant, or be any person named in the complaint;
- must not have had any involvement in the matters forming part of the complaint; and
- if the complaint relates to a breach of the Council's Equity Rule, must have received appropriate equality and diversity training, which included training in the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, within the 24 months prior to the date on which the Board being notified of the request for review at stage two.

How do I request a review at stage two?

If you wish to ask the Board to carry out a review, you may do so by e-mail or letter.

Our contact details are in the "Contacting us" section below.

What steps will the Board take?

Once notified, the Board (or the committee to which this role is delegated) will take the following steps:

- i. The Board will acknowledge the request for review within 7 working days of receipt.
- ii. The Board will invite written representations by the involved parties on the independent officer's report.
- iii. The Board may hold a hearing where it considers it necessary to determine the matters raised in the complaint, but is under no obligation to do so. If the person complained about is invited to a hearing, the

complainant will be afforded an equivalent right to make representations in person to the Board.

- iv. The Board will then make a report in writing, indicating whether the findings of the independent officer at stage one are to be upheld, outlining any steps to be taken and / or sanctions to be imposed and providing summary reasons for its decision.

The procedure outlined above should take place within 6 weeks of the Board being notified of the request for review at stage two.

What happens next?

Either the complainant, or any person complained about, has the right to ask for the complaint to be considered at stage three. If neither the complainant nor any person complained about makes such a request, the Board's decision is binding on the parties and on the Council.

Stage three

If, having followed the first two stages of our Complaints Procedure, you remain dissatisfied, you can ask to have your complaint reviewed by an independent person appointed by the Board. The same right is accorded to any person complained about. Either party must submit their request within 14 days of being notified of the Board's decision.

How do I request a review at stage three?

If you wish to have your complaint considered at stage three, you may do so by e-mail or letter.

Our contact details are in the "Contacting us" section below.

Who may be appointed as an independent person?

The independent person who will carry out the review of the complaint at stage three:

- must not have been a member of the Council and must not have participated in or been an organiser of a competition or championship under the Council's Rules;
- must not be a complainant, the person named in the complaint, or have had any involvement in the matters forming part of the complaint; and
- if the complaint relates to a breach of the Council's Equity Rule, must have received appropriate equality and diversity training, which included training in the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, within the 24 months prior to the date on which he or she was appointed to determine the complaint.

What steps will the independent person take?

Once appointed, the independent person will take the following steps:

- i. The independent person will acknowledge the request for review within 7 working days of receipt.
- ii. The independent person will review the complaint and the outcome of stages one and two. The procedure by which the independent person will do so is entirely a matter for him or her. Ordinarily, stage three will be completed on the existing papers.
- iii. The independent person will then complete a report in writing, indicating whether the findings of the Board at stage two are to be upheld, outlining any steps to be taken and / or sanctions to be imposed and providing summary reasons for his or her decision.

The procedure outlined above should take place within 4 weeks of the Council being notified of the request for review at stage three.

What happens next?

The decision of the independent person is final and binding on all parties to the complaint, including the Council.

Extending time limits

We aim to complete our investigation into all complaints received within the timescales set out above. However, in a limited number of cases - for example, if a complaint is very complex or requires further breakdown – it may be necessary to extend the time limit to ensure we have all the information necessary to deal with it. If this is the case, we will keep you informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and notify you of next steps.

Sanctions / Remedies

When we get things wrong, we will act to:

- accept responsibility and apologise;
- explain what went wrong and why;
- put things right by making any changes required; and
- learn lessons from mistakes and change policies and practices where proportionate and sensible to do so.

Equally, where one of our Licensees are found to have got things wrong, we will not hesitate to apply appropriate sanctions.

The sanction applied needs to be proportionate and appropriate to the breach of the Rule that occurred, and take into account what redress people seek when they complain. An apology is generally the most appropriate action, but other measures may also be necessary in some circumstances. Sanctions may include

a reprimand, a fine, the temporary or permanent withdrawal of a licence or any combination thereof.

Vexatious Complaints

We sometimes receive complaints that can be deemed “vexatious” or “frivolous”. These complaints can be costly to handle; or responding to them may be a disproportionate use of our staff’s time.

Accordingly, where a complaint can fairly be seen as obsessive, obnoxious or harassing in nature, designed to cause disruption or annoyance or lacking any serious purpose or value, the Board may decline to determine it.

Contacting Us

All complaints and requests for review under our Complaints Procedure should be sent as follows:

By post: **Mrs Margaret Harris, Company Secretary**
British Dance Council
Terpsichore House
240 Merton Road
South Wimbledon
London SW19 1EQ

By e-mail: secretary@british-dance-council.org

If you are unable to contact us in writing as above, and require a reasonable adjustment because you are a disabled person, you may contact us as follows:

Telephone: 020 8545 0085

Fax: 020 8545 0225

British Dance Council

Limited by Guarantee / Registered in England No. 502695 / Established in 1929
Registered Office: Terpsichore House, 240 Merton Road, South Wimbledon, London SW19 1EQ
Telephone: 020 8545 0085 / Fax: 020 8545 0225
E-mail: secretary@british-dance-council.org
www.british-dance-council.org

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FORM

1. Personal details

Full name: _____

Address (including postcode): _____

E-mail address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Dance school (if applicable): _____

Status (e.g., professional, teacher, competitor, organiser, adjudicator / scrutineer, parent, guardian, spectator): _____

Are you disabled? (please circle as appropriate) Yes / No

If you have indicated that you are disabled, do you require any adjustments to be made to engage with the Complaints Procedure?

2. Complaint details

What is the Rule you say has been breached?

Name of person(s) complained about:

When and where did the event(s) complained of take place?

Please provide a description of the event(s) complained of. (You may expand on a separate sheet if necessary.)

What would you like done about your complaint?

If the breach complained of relates to the Council's Equity Rule, please answer the following, additional questions:

What are the grounds on which you say you have been discriminated against?

What is the protected characteristic said to be relevant?

3. Signature

Complainant (please print name): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____