



Portsmouth & District Beekeeping Association



Concerns & Complaints Policy

www.portsmouthbeekeepers.co.uk

The Skep, Bastion 3, Military Road, Portsmouth



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This Policy

Portsmouth and District Beekeeping Association (PDBKA) aims to uphold the highest standards at all times. However we recognise that on occasion mistakes and misunderstandings can occur, and standards may fall below what should be expected. It is essential that if this happens, there is a formal process by which complaints and concerns can be raised with the association, investigated and, if upheld, agreed actions applied.

The PDBKA Committee may determine its own additional procedures from time to time whereby regulatory or good charity governance is updated and in the overriding requirement of fairness. Where this policy and procedures document prescribe a time limit by which a person must act or after which they may not act, the Committee (or its Chair) may, upon application, vary that time limit if satisfied that in all circumstances it is reasonable to do so.

Who can raise a concern or complaint

Anyone can raise a concern with us about a member of the PDBKA or those acting on behalf of PDBKA at a PDBKA event

Complaints/concerns can be made individuals or organisations, including members of the public, fellow PDBKA members, those attending training events, talks or shows, employers, retailers, buyers, local authorities and the police.

The individual/organising raising the concern or complaint will be referred to as the Complainant. The member who is subject of the concern/complaint will be referred to as the Relevant Person.



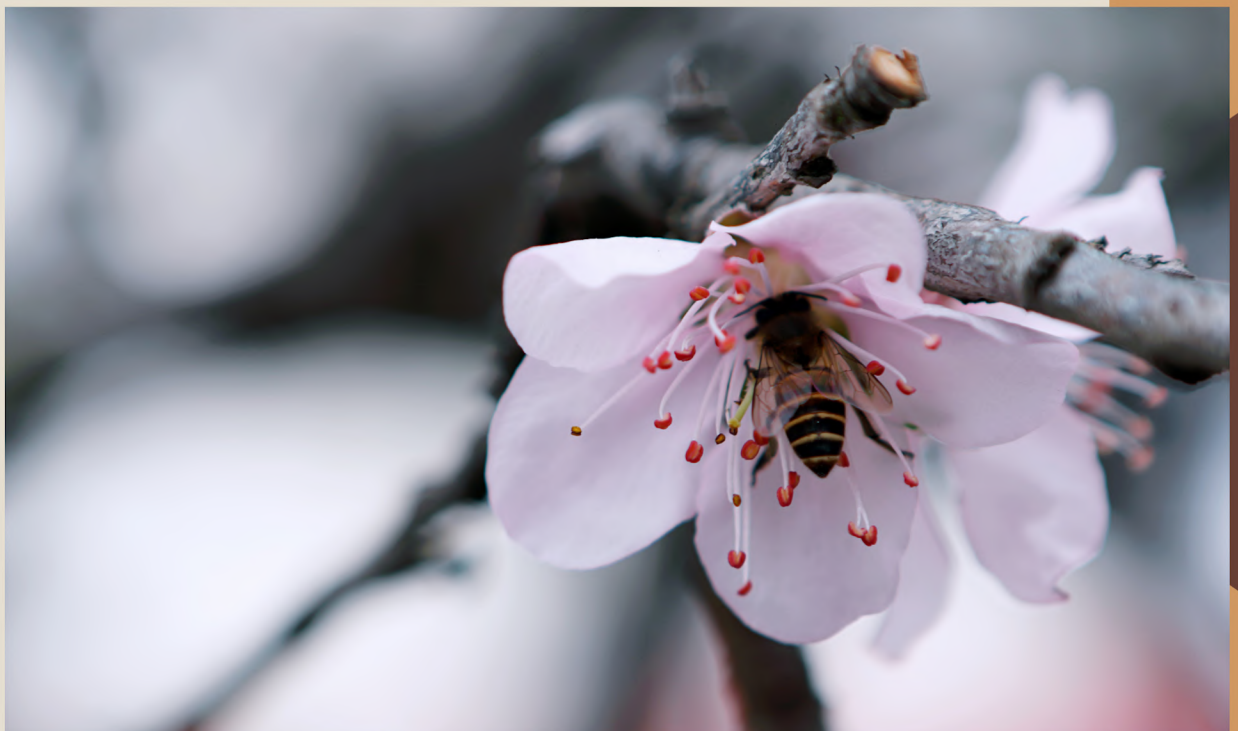
What we can investigate

- Complaints made within twelve months of when the complainant reasonably knew enough facts to be able to report the issue.
- The complaint/concern is raised in good faith
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs when volunteering for the association
- Dishonesty, fraud or abuse of trust or position
- Poor behaviour, including discriminatory or inappropriate language, bullying, violence, sexual misconduct or indecent behaviour
- Putting others at risk, particular through reckless or harmful acts
- Breaches of confidentiality or data protection requirements



What we can't investigate or do

- We cannot investigate someone who is not a member of the PDBKA
- We cannot make someone say 'sorry'
- We cannot arrange refunds or compensation
- We cannot stop someone selling their produce to/via a retailer
- We cannot get involved in the fees charged for honey products, talks or training activities
- We cannot answer questions about the law
- We cannot get involved in matters decided by the local authority or court
- We cannot investigate malicious or vexatious complaints





How to raise a concern or complaint

Most complaints can be resolved informally and directly with the Relevant Person(s). This can often be the quickest and best way to deal with an issue when there aren't any concerns about safety or behaviour regarding children or vulnerable persons.

When an issue cannot, or has failed to, be resolved informally, a formal concern/complaint can be raised with the association.

A concern/complaint can be raised in writing or verbally to any committee member or via the contact form on the PDBKA website.

What information we need

- Your name and contact details
- How the complainant would like to be contacted in relation to the complaint.
- Name or a detailed description of the Relevant Person
- A clear description of the incident, including the date/time period of incident and providing enough information for us to be able to understand the nature of your concern and for the Relevant Person to be able to respond.
- Clear and concise statements of what you would like to be investigated.
- Details of any informal resolution that has been taken so far to try to resolve the issue.
- Details of what would be seen as an acceptable outcome.
- In urgent cases where you believe public safety is at risk you should make a referral to us immediately, even if you do not have all the information available to you.





What we do when a concern or complaint is raised

When you submit a concern/complaint, or one is raised about you, we will follow the procedure set out below:

- The concern/complaint will be acknowledged by a Committee Member.
- A Committee Member who is not involved in the incident, a relative or close friend of either the Complainant(s) or Relevant Person(s) will be allocated as the Investigating Officer.
- The Relevant Person will be informed that a concern/complaint has been made against them and will be offered the opportunity to provide a response to the Investigating Officer within 14-days.

- The Investigating Officer will review all the evidence and the Relevant Person response(s).
- The Investigating Officer will either inform the Complainant that they are closing the case if there is insufficient evidence of wrongdoing / they conclude the issue is outside the remit of what can be investigated, or they will refer the case to a Complaints Panel Hearing.
- If referred, a Panel will be established comprising of three Committee Members who have not been involved in the incident, are relatives or close friends of either the Complainant(s) or Relevant Person(s).
- The Panel will be provided a report from the Investigating Officer, the initial submission, evidence and response. The Complainant(s) and Relevant Person(s) will be invited to present to the Panel.
- The Panel will make a collective decision on whether to uphold the concern/complaint and if upheld, what sanction is to be applied.
- The decision of the Panel will be reported to the Complainant(s), Relevant Person(s) and Committee.



Possible outcomes

Once our investigation is complete, we will do one of the following:

- Close the case with no further action
- Issue guidance or a formal warning
- Require supervision/mentoring when undertaking volunteer activities
- Suspend the Relevant Person from undertaking the volunteer role/responsibility for either a set period of time or until detailed training undertaken
- Remove the volunteer role/responsibility from the Relevant Person
- Suspend membership for a set period of time
- Remove membership with no ability to rejoin

When it is determined that there is a case to be answered and the Relevant Person's actions have fallen below the standard which should be able to be expected of a PDBKA member (or those acting on PDBKA's behalf), a proportionate sanction may be applied.



Appeals

An appeal by either the Relevant Person or the Complainant may be made within 14 days of receipt of the Concern/Complaint findings.

The appeal must be lodged in writing to the Committee Secretary, stating the grounds for appeal.

The Secretary will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 7 days, and the details of the complaint will then be considered by an Appeal Panel.

The Appeal Panel will comprise of three Committee Members not involved in the initial assessment or investigation and who are not involved in the incident, a relative or close friend of either the Complainant(s) or Relevant Person(s)

The Appeals Panel will review the Complaints Panel Report and evidence and decide to uphold, overturn or amend the Concern/Complaint findings or sanctions.

The Appeal Panel's decision are final.

