



Complaints & Resolution Policy

1) Purpose and ethos

GYC is committed to a safe, supportive and inclusive environment. We encourage timely, fair and proportionate resolution of concerns, with a strong emphasis on informal problem-solving wherever possible and appropriate. This policy explains how to raise concerns or complaints about GYC as a club, our activities, services or facilities, or about a GYC member or volunteer, and how those concerns will be handled.

This policy is designed to work in combination with the Code of Conduct, Disciplinary and other policies (which define some terms used below), and is aligned with the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) guidance on disputes and disciplinary matters.

2) Informal Early Resolution

For grievances not related to safety, safeguarding or serious breaches of Club rules and policies, members are expected to make reasonable efforts to resolve differences and disagreements informally. Members should not expect to get on with everyone at the club and Club volunteers cannot get involved in every minor disagreement.

Minor disagreements

- Most differences of opinion, mistakes or failings do not need to be taken through a formal and time consuming complaints process – or involve club volunteers at all.
- If someone says something that upsets you, keep in mind that offence can sometimes be unintentional and it might not seem as upsetting after you ‘sleep on it’.
- It might also be healthy and appropriate to simply avoid contact with the person.
- If problems repeat and you cannot reasonably avoid contact, you might consider talking to the person one to one if you feel able (and safe) to do so. Please try and stay open to their perspective and keep in mind the possibility that you may also have contributed to the problem.
- If the disagreement is with a club volunteer – consider offering constructive feedback in private - volunteers need and deserve feedback and often this will make the difference you seek.

More persistent problems

If the problems repeat or you have already tried the above suggestions, or feel unable to engage in one to one discussions for whatever reason, the Club might be able to help with informal early resolution:

- Talk to the Membership Secretary or Welfare Officers, who may be able to offer informal support or advice.

- You might also consider an informal conversation with the appropriate Flag Officer (Vice Commodore for water-side activities and Rear Commodore for shore-side).
- If the complaint is related to participation in an activity at the club, talk to the lead volunteer (for example: cruiser captain if the issue is related to a cruiser event) and explain the problem.
- The Membership Secretary or Welfare Officer or Flag officer might also be able to arrange informal but neutral facilitation or mediation, led by them or another Club Volunteer.
- If you have made a sincere effort to resolve the problem informally but this has not worked, it might be appropriate to use the formal process outlined below.

When you speak to any of these Club volunteers (see Appendix 1 for contact details.), please try and point to the specific byelaw or breach of policy that is of concern.

The most serious allegations (such as safeguarding - or gross misconduct as defined in the Disciplinary Policy) may not be appropriate for Informal Early Resolution at all and should jump straight to the process set out below.

3) Scope

This procedure applies to:

- Concerns or complaints about the conduct of members or volunteers which breach Club rules (conduct complaints).
- Concerns or complaints about GYC's operations, services, facilities, communications, or governance (operational complaints).

This procedure does not apply to:

- Racing Rules (such as protests/Rule 69) which are handled under the RRS processes as organised by Fleet Captains.

If a member believes an incident is a criminal matter, they should contact the police. If there is an immediate risk of serious harm, dial 999 (or VHF Channel 16 for on water incidents). In the event of any conflict between this procedure and the Club's Articles of Association, Rules or Byelaws, those governing documents prevail.

4) Principles

- Encourage early, informal resolution wherever safe and appropriate.
- Timely handling (“without undue delay”) with clear service standards.
- Fairness, natural justice and proportionality.
- Independence and avoidance of conflicts of interest.
- Confidentiality, data protection and appropriate record keeping.
- Accessibility: we will assist anyone who needs help to set out their complaint.

- Non-retaliation: no-one will be victimised for raising a complaint in good faith.

5) Responsibilities

GYC will make reasonable efforts to:

- Acknowledge complaints promptly and route the matter to the correct process.
- Deal reasonably, sensitively and proportionately with the matters raised.
- Keep you informed of progress and outcome (subject to confidentiality).
- Learn from complaints to improve policies, procedures and communications.

Complainants will make reasonable efforts to:

- Use informal routes first where safe and appropriate.
- Put formal complaints in writing.
- Allow reasonable time for investigation and handling.
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond the Club's control, or subject to legal/confidentiality constraints on what we can share.

GYC is a member run club and cannot promise to meet every timescale or procedural step set out in this policy. The Club may adjust this process (and inform the Parties) where this is necessary and proportionate - and where this does not make the process materially unfair.

6) Single point of contact and triage (the “front door”)

Concerns and complaints should be sent to the Honorary Secretary¹, setting out what happened, when it happened, who was involved, relevant policy/byelaw references, the impact on you, and what you would like to see happen. This should be emailed to the Honorary Secretary, posted or put in the post-box by the pedestrian gate. See Appendix 1.

On receipt, the Hon. Sec will conduct an initial ‘triage’ to decide how to respond; seeking advice from the Commodore if the course of action is not obvious. **Within 7 days of receipt** the Hon. Sec will inform you which of the following approaches the Club proposes to take.

- a) If the Hon. Sec believes the complaint has insufficient detail to conduct this triage, they may ask the complainant to provide further detail and **resubmit**.
- b) If the Hon. Sec. believes that **Informal Early Resolution** would be appropriate and has not yet been fully explored, they may ask you to try that first.
- c) If the Hon. Sec. and Commodore agree that the complaint is frivolous, vexatious, malicious, abusive, repetitive or unreasonably persistent, they may **dismiss the complaint**.

¹ If the complaint is about the Honorary Secretary (or they have a conflict of interest in this matter), send to the Commodore. Where the Commodore is mentioned in this policy, if the Commodore has a conflict of interest in the matter, the Vice Commodore will take on the responsibility referred to. If both are conflicted other officers will fulfil the roles.

- d) If the matter is an **Operational Complaint** (service, facilities, communications, and governance matters) it will be handled under section 7 below.
- e) If the matter is a **Conduct Complaint** (about a member/volunteer): it will be handled under the **Disciplinary Policy**.
- f) If the matter is about **Safeguarding** (children or vulnerable adults): it will be referred immediately to the Welfare Officer and handled under the **Safeguarding Policy**.
Informal steps may be bypassed for safeguarding matters. The matter may also be handled by the **Disciplinary Policy**.
- g) If the matter is about the conduct of a member on the Club social media, the issue will usually be passed to and handled by the social media lead and moderators, under the **Social Media Community Standards and Enforcement Policy**. Repeated or serious breaches of that policy may be taken forward as a Conduct Complaint and handled through the **Disciplinary Policy**.

Conduct reasonably considered to be gross misconduct (see examples in Appendix 1 of the Disciplinary Policy) should usually be taken forward using the Disciplinary Policy.

Anonymous complaints may be considered where there is sufficient detail to act, particularly if safety or safeguarding may be affected. The absence of contact details may limit what the Club can do or what we can communicate back.

If you disagree with how your complaint has been triaged, write to the Commodore within seven days explaining why you disagree. The Membership secretary will appoint a panel of two members of Council to review the decision. Their decision is final.

Where there matter is handled by more than one approach, the Honorary Secretary will coordinate sequencing to avoid duplication and protect fairness and confidentiality.

7) Formal Operational Complaints (not about an individual's conduct)

If your complaint is about GYC operations (service, facilities, communications or governance) rather than an individual's conduct:

Process and timelines

- Acknowledgement: aimed to be within 7 days after receipt.
- Appointment: an appropriate Flag Officer or independent Council member will be appointed to investigate.
- Response target: we aim to complete the investigation and provide a written response within 28 days. If more time is needed, we will send interim updates at least every 14 days and set a new target date.

Review (operational complaints only)

- If you remain dissatisfied, you may request a review by Council within 14 days of our response, stating your reasons and any additional relevant information.
- The Hon. Sec. will appoint a panel of three members of Council (not involved in the process to date) to review the matter. The Commodore will write to you with the outcome, normally within 21 days of your request for a review.
- The Council's review decision is final for operational complaints.

Note: Where a complaint about operations also discloses potential misconduct by an individual, the "conduct" elements will be routed to the Disciplinary Procedure. The operational aspects may continue in parallel only where this does not prejudice disciplinary fairness or confidentiality.

8) Confidentiality, records and data protection

- We will handle complaints confidentially and limit information sharing to those who need to know to address the matter and within the Club Data Privacy policy.
- If a complaint is about an individual's conduct, information will necessarily be shared with that person so they can understand the case and respond.
- Committee minutes will record that a complaint was considered; detailed records will be kept separately and confidentially.
- Records are retained securely and only for as long as necessary in line with UK GDPR and the Club's data retention policy. Where a complaint leads to disciplinary action, retention will align with the Disciplinary Procedure. Operational complaint records will normally be retained for a period consistent with those benchmarks and legal requirements.

Appendix 1 – Contacts and Post

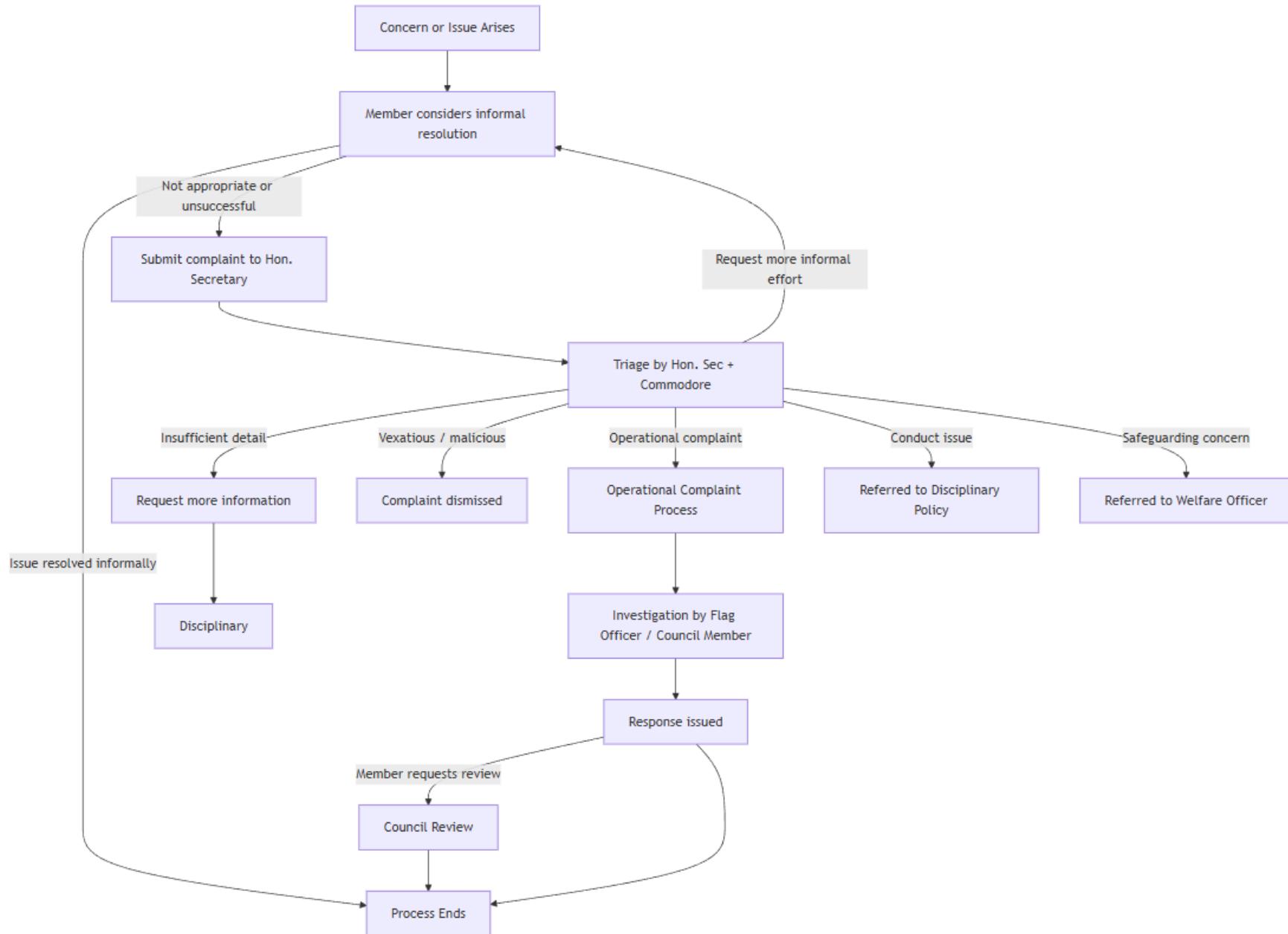
Email is the preferred means of correspondence

Hon. Secretary	secretary@greenwichyachtclub.co.uk
Welfare Officers	welfare@greenwichyachtclub.co.uk
Membership Secretary	membership@greenwichyachtclub.co.uk
Commodore	commodore@greenwichyachtclub.co.uk
Vice Commodore	vice@greenwichyachtclub.co.uk
Rear Commodore	rear@greenwichyachtclub.co.uk

Written correspondence can be sent by post to the club address or put in the post-box by the pedestrian gate. Email is preferred and will result in fewer delays.

Honorary Secretary
Greenwich Yacht Club
Peartree Wharf
1 Peartree Way
Greenwich
London
SE10 0BW

Appendix 2 – Flowchart Summary



Appendix 3 - Change Control

As of 2026, This Policy is subject to biannual review.

Approval Date / Version	Reason for Revision	Change Made
19/03/2022	New Policy	New version / nothing prior
31/01/2026	Major revision needed	Significant improvements to clarity and purpose