Grievance Policy

Purpose of Document

London Leathermen (LLM) acknowledges that there may be occasions for people to raise grievances regarding the behaviour of Club Members or Event Guests. This policy details the process for the investigation and handling of grievances, outcomes, and appeals.

The Events Policy aims to resolve all conflicts at the lowest possible level through informal action. Where this cannot be achieved, the Club will follow this agreed Grievance procedure to ensure consistency of approach and enable learning to take place.

Anyone is free to raise grievances without fear of retribution or discrimination, either from those whom they have challenged, or from the Club.

This document serves as a counterpart to our Code of Principles and Values and Three Strike Policy. **It is recommended that you read the Code before reading this policy.**

Expectations

Complainants are expected to submit a grievance in writing via LLM's Grievance Report Form at the earliest opportunity, describing the alleged issue as fully and as close to the time of incident as possible. Grievances regarding incidents at LLM events must be made within 6 months of the alleged incident.

The official LLM Grievance Report Form is the only official route to file a grievance, and as such, complainants are expected to fill it in independently to ensure impartiality.

Organisation of the Grievance Resolution Committee

The LLM Grievance Resolution Committee (GRC) is made of a pool of at least three volunteer Members who do not hold any current committee position at the Club and do not have any active strikes against them. While on this committee, the GRC members will not be able to assume any other role within LLM Leadership.

The pool of GRC Members is elected during a General Meeting by the Club Membership.

Upon formation of the GRC, one member of the pool will volunteer to be its Coordinator, who is the main point of contact for grievances. The Coordinator will handle incoming grievances, and will allocate cases to a random available GRC member, who will become the Investigator for the grievance. If a GRC member is involved or has a stake in the case, they must decline this invitation.

If any vacancies are present in the GRC, the Coordinator may accept volunteers from the full membership to fill these vacancies outside of a General Meeting.

In case a grievance is filed against the GRC coordinator, the GRC will supply a volunteer to fill in as the coordinator for the duration of that investigation.

Handling of Grievances

The identity of Complainants and the nature of their Grievances are to remain confidential from the outset. Individuals involved in an investigation should only be supplied with as much information as is absolutely relevant to each individual's role in the process. Every reasonable attempt should be made to respect a Complainant's desire to protect their anonymity, even within the process defined below.

Complete Grievance Report Forms will be received in the GRC coordinator's inbox, which is a unique inbox that only they have access to. Upon receiving a grievance, the GRC coordinator will acknowledge receipt of it in writing as soon as possible and no more than 7 calendar days from the submission.

If the grievance is within the scope of our Code of Principles and Values, an Investigator will be allocated, and they will launch an investigation into the grievance.

The GRC will aim to give its decision within 31 days of the initial grievance being made.

Investigation of Grievances

All parties to a grievance are expected to cooperate fully in all stages of the investigation, and any subsequent appeal(s).

Interviews may be conducted with both parties and/or any other relevant persons the Investigator deems appropriate. Supplemental evidence, clarifications, accounts/statements, and any other details that may assist the Investigator in their investigation process may be asked for during this time, and must be delivered within 10 days of the requested date. **Delays in receiving these details may increase the period of the investigation beyond 31 days.**

The Investigator is bound to read and review every single piece of information collected during that process.

Each party to the grievance may request the involvement of one supportive friend or advocate to assist them throughout this process. It is the parties' responsibility to find these persons, and they will be bound to the same confidentiality expectations outlined above.

Potential Outcomes

The potential outcomes for a grievance in order of gravity are as follows:

- Case Dismissal: No further action taken on the Grievance.
- Strike: At least one strike will be given to the subject of claim and result in the appropriate action as shown in the Three Strike Policy section of the Code of Principles and Values.

Results of Disciplinary Grievances will be kept confidential and restricted to those parties to the grievance and the GRC member(s) who handled the complaint.

The GRC coordinator will keep track of strikes. If a strike being awarded has led to an individual accruing a ban, event organisers will be informed. The GRC, Executive Committee and Event Hosts are not permitted to discuss strikes or disciplinary outcomes with anybody outside these groups.

The GRC will inform both complainant and subject of claim of the result. Under certain conditions, an appeal can be made to the GRC decision (See: Appeals). Whether this happens or not, both complainant and subject of claim are expected to accept the decision of the GRC.

Appeals

Should any party to a grievance wish to appeal the GRC's decision, they should do so by writing a letter of appeal to the GRC coordinator. This should be done within 7 days of being notified of the decision.

Letters of appeal must include new supplemental evidence or new information that was not included in the original complaint. Any letter not containing those will be dismissed.

Each decision can only be appealed once per involved party.

A new Investigator will be assigned who will then attempt to provide an appropriate response within approximately 14 days from the day the appeal was filed. The decision date is subject to change depending on availability of an Investigatorand acquiring of supplemental evidence and information.

The potential outcomes for an appeal in order of gravity are as follows:

- Dismissal: No further action taken on the appeal.
- Strike Amendment: The new Investigator's decision will be applied, overriding the original outcome; i.e., the subject of claim will either have their awarded strike(s) removed, or will receive at least one strike rather than the case being dismissed. In the case of new strike(s), the appropriate action shown in the Three Strike Policy section of the Code of Principles and Values will be taken.

Prevention of abuse of the system

This policy is intended for the protection of Members and Guests and to maintain the Club as a positive space. If the GRC believes the grievances process is being misused or abused by a Member, it has the power to issue Strikes as preventative measures to ensure this stops.

The GRC is encouraged to take action in the following cases:

- Vexacious grievances
- Withholding or stalling information in a way that would interfere the process of investigation
- Publicly revealing the identity of members of the investigation panel
- Deliberately spreading misinformation regarding a grievance investigation
- Any other case which the GRC deems as misuse or abuse of the system

The GRC must document specific evidence of system abuse and attempt a mediation with the party it deems to be abusing the process before taking any action against them.