COMPLAINTS POLICY

South Durham Gymnastics
South Durham Gymnastics Club
Spennymoor Leisure Centre
High Street
Spennymoor
Co.Durham
DL16 6DB

Tel: 01388 811877
Email: gym@southdurhamgym.co.uk

REVIEW PERIOD	REVIEW DATE	SIGNED
Issue Date	March 2023	Management
Review Date	October 2024	Management
Review Date	September 2024	Becca Armstrong – Operations and Admin Coordinator
Review Date	March 2025	Becca Armstrong – Operations and Admin Coordinator
28.10.2026	02.11.2026	Julie Shore - Shore Safeguarding

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

SDGC is committed to providing a safe, stimulating, consistent and accessible service to its members and their parents/carers.

We always aim to provide a high standard of care in all our services. SDGC places the welfare and safety of its members as the highest priority.

Our customers' views are important to us and help to ensure our services are consistently meeting people's needs. If you are unhappy with any of our services, it is important that you let us know.

2.0 MAKING A SUGGESTION

Often people feel more comfortable about suggesting improvements rather than complaining formally. Anyone attending the club, as well as their friends/family may make a suggestion.

There is a comments/suggestion box by the window at the Main Office Should you wish to make your suggestion that way. Alternatively, you should speak to a Senior Coach or Manager within SDGC, in person (i.e. at the beginning/end of a class), or via phone/email/letter.

Phone: 01388 811877
Email: gym@southdurhamgym.co.uk
Letter: South Durham Gymnastics Club, Spennymoor Leisure Centre, High Street, Spennymoor DL16 6DB

If you are unsure on who is who, please take a look at the 'Meet the Team' board, hanging on the wall opposite the office.

3.0 MAKING A COMPLAINT

If informal discussions of a complaint/suggestion have not produced a satisfactory response, you are invited to submit a formal complaint.

We aim to handle complaints quickly, effectively and in a fair and honest way. We take all complaints seriously and use valuable information from investigating to help us improve the service we provide. We treat all complaints in confidence.

SDGC assures customers and their families that it will not withdraw or reduce services because someone makes a complaint in good faith.

Safeguarding Complaints:
Complaints or concerns relating to the safety, welfare or protection of a child, concerns about the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer towards a child, or concerns that may meet the threshold for a safeguarding allegation, will be managed in accordance with the Club's Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures.

Safeguarding concerns will be identified and considered at every stage of the complaints process and, where appropriate, referred without delay to Children's Social Care, the Police and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
Safeguarding referrals will not be delayed pending a complaint investigation, review or appeal.
Complaints relating to safeguarding will be handled separately from the standard complaints process where necessary to protect children.

Concerns about senior personnel, Welfare Officers or others involved in handling the complaint will be referred to an unconflicted senior decision-maker.
External safeguarding review may be sought where appropriate, subject to conflict checks.
Safeguarding concerns, including non-recent abuse, are not restricted by the policy's ordinary twelve-month complaint timescale.
Relevant information may be shared where necessary to safeguard children or meet legal duties, and any confidentiality will be managed in accordance with the Club's safeguarding and data protection responsibilities

Should you wish to report Welfare concern, this should be done directly to one of the following people:

Becca Armstrong / Melissa Spence / Alison Gargan	Club Welfare Officers	welfare@southdurhamgym.co.uk
Nicola Preston/Rachael Wright/Kelly Milnes	Management	parents@southdurhamgym.co.uk

4.0 WHO CAN COMPLAIN

Anyone affected by the way SDGC provides services can make a complaint.

A representative may complain on behalf of the affected person if they:
- cannot make a complaint themselves, or
- have given consent for the representative to act on their behalf

If you are not happy about making a complaint yourself and you do not know someone who can talk or write to us on your behalf, we will be happy to find someone from an independent organisation to act as an advocate for you.

5.0 HOW YOU CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT

You can complain:
- in person
- by telephone (details above)
- through a member of our staff
- through an advocate/representative (as mentioned above)
- by letter (details above)
- by email (details above)

NB: Where someone complains orally, we will make a written copy and provide a copy of it within 5 working days.

6.0 ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

We deal with anonymous complaints under the same procedure; however, it is better if you can provide contact details, so we can advise you re: the outcome of our investigation.

7.0 RESPONSIBILITY

The SDGC Directors has overall responsibility for dealing with all complaints made about their service.

8.0 HOW WE HANDLE COMPLAINTS

The Directors at South Durham Gymnastics Club may ask one of the team to investigate the complaint. That person will have enough seniority and experience to deal with the issues raised by the complaint.

We will acknowledge a complaint within 5 working days and give you the name and contact details of the person investigating it.

We will keep you informed about the progress of the investigation. We aim to resolve all complaints within 20 working days unless we agree a different time scale with you.

When we have finished investigating, we will arrange to meet with you to discuss the outcome, and write to you with:

- details of the findings;
- any action we have taken; and
- our proposals to resolve your complaint.

9.0 TIME LIMITS

You should complain as soon as you can after the date on which the event occurred or came to your notice. If you complain more than twelve months later, we may not be able to investigate properly. But we shall also consider whether you had good reason for not making the complaint sooner and whether, despite the delay, it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly.

10.0 FURTHER STEPS

Once we have dealt with your complaint, if you are not happy with the outcome you can request (via the team member initially handling your complaint) your complaint will be referred to the Club's Directors. The Directors will investigate the complaint together with the response at a specially convened meeting. The Directors may invite external parties, such as County Durham Sportor a member of Durham County Council to assist with the investigation.

As per the initial complaint process, we will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days. We will keep you informed about the progress of the investigation and aim to have all complaints finished within 20 working days unless we agree a different time scale with you.

11.0 COMPLAINTS FLOW CHART

(Please see next page)

Suggested Review Date: After significant changes, or biennially

Reviewed By:	Becca Armsrtrong
Date:	01/09/2024
Comments:	Updated NGB.
Next Suggested Review Date:	March 2026

Reviewed By:	Becca Armstrong
Date:	27/03/2025
Comments:	Small grammatical changes made to bring inline with SDG complaints policy.
Next Suggested Review Date:	March 2027

Reviewed By:	Julie Shore – Shore Safeguarding
Date:	28/10/2026
Comments:	Safeguarding Complaints section ONLY Reference to IGA also removed from policy
Next Suggested Review Date:	October 2027

Reviewed By:	
Date:	
Comments:	
Next Suggested Review Date:	

COMPLAINTS FLOW CHART

A COMPLAINT MAY BE MADE IN PERSON, OVER THE PHONE, OR IN WRITING.
YOUR FIRST CONSIDERATION IS WHETHER THE COMPLAINT SHOULD BE DEALT WITH AT:
STAGE 1 (FRONTLINE RESOLUTION), OR STAGE 2 (COMPLAINT/INVESTIGATION)

STAGE 1: FRONTLINE RESOLUTION
Informal Complaint / Making a Suggestion

Always try to resolve the complaint quickly and to the complainants satisfaction

Provide a decision on the complaints within 5 working days unless there are exceptional circumstances

Is the complainant satisfied with the decision?

NO

YES

Complaint closed, outcome recorded, and follow up steps put in place if required.

STAGE 2: COMPLAINT / INVESTIGATION
Making a Complaint

1. Investigate why the complaintant is still dissatisfied after communication of decision at Stage 1

2. Investigate where complaint received is formal, complex, or will require a detailed investigation

Send acknowledgement of complaint within 5 working days

Provide decision as soon as possible, but within 20 working days, unless a separate timeframe has been agreed with the complainant

Communicate the decision in writing

Is the complainant satisfied with the decision?

NO

Advise the complainant of further steps if they are not satisfied.

YES

Complaint closed, outcome recorded, and follow up steps put in place if required.

COMPLAINT FLAGS WELFARE/SAFEGUARDING ISSUE

Refer complaint to Club Welfare Officer immediately to follow Club Safeguarding Procedures -

Becca Armstrong - 07795095407
Melissa Spence - 07930119288
Alison Gargan - 07946163099
welfare@southdurhamgym.co.uk