

## **The SACU Concerns Policy and Process**

### **Preamble**

The SACU Concerns Policy now forms part of the wider reaching SACU Communications Policy.

### **Concerns and Complaints Policy**

#### **Introduction**

The SACU is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and we encourage Members, Licence holders and others working with us to raise any concerns about any aspect of our work or areas of responsibility to come forward with their concerns.

#### **Aim & Scope**

This Policy aims to reassure individuals that their concerns will be addressed and acted upon. The following outlines the options for raising a concern with the SACU and how the concern will be processed.

#### **Policy**

Concerns can be about anything but may fall under the following general descriptions:

- Conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
- Conduct that has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur the result of which means that the SACU fails to comply with a legal obligation or breaches any part of the SACU group of Policies.
- Disclosures related to past, current or likely miscarriages of justice
- Past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public
- Past, current or likely damage to the environment

Concerns about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of SACU Directors, staff, Members or Licence holders or others acting on behalf of the SACU.

This may be about something that you feel uncomfortable about in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards described throughout the SACU policy:

- Falls below established standards of practice
- Considered to be improper conduct.

#### **Confidentiality**

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if this is your wish, however, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if you are required to come forward as a witness.

#### **Anonymous Allegations**

Whenever possible you should put your name to your allegation as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful than those attributed to a named individual, however, anonymous allegations will be considered for investigation but only at the SACU's discretion.

In exercising their discretion, some factors that will be taken into account are:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from alternative sources.

## **Untrue Allegations**

If you make an allegation in good faith that is not subsequently confirmed by an investigation, no action will be taken.

**Disciplinary action may be taken against individuals who knowingly make false, malicious or vexatious allegations.**

## **Concerns Process**

### **How to Raise a Concern**

Concerns in all but extreme cases must be formal and in writing addressed to the SACU office (email or letter or fax), or a currently serving Director of the SACU. Contact details are available on the website or from the SACU Office. If you are at all limited or restricted in communicating a concern in this manner then get a friend to do it for you or ask a Director or the SACU office to put your concerns in writing for you.

A concern raised in writing should:

- Set out the background and history of the concern, giving as much information as possible
- Give the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation
- If applicable, outline what you consider to be an appropriate outcome

The earlier a concern is raised the easier it is to take action. Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation beyond doubt, you need to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for your concern.

- Concerns specific to one of our sporting disciplines will typically be referred to the specific Discipline Committee
- Concerns about a specific Discipline Committee will be referred to the SACU Board
- All other concerns will be referred to the SACU Board

Concerns should be sent to the office so that they can be registered and forwarded for action as appropriate and then progress monitored. The exception being that any concerns about the office should be submitted via a Director.

CURRENT CONTACTS Office; 01506 858354 / [office@sacu.co.uk](mailto:office@sacu.co.uk)

Directors: Contact details available from the office

### **How the SACU will respond**

You will be written to / emailed within ten working days:

- Acknowledging that the concern has been received
- Indicating how the SACU propose to deal with the matter
- Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- Informing you if any initial enquiries have been made
- Whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not

What action is taken will depend on the nature of the concern. It may:

- Be investigated internally by Management, Internal Audit or through the disciplinary or other internal process
- Be referred to the Police
- Be referred to the External Auditor or Arbitrator
- Form the subject of an independent inquiry.

In order to protect individuals and the SACU, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific policy will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required, this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

### **Contact**

The amount of contact between the officers considering the issues and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought.

### **Attending Meetings**

You have the right to be accompanied at any meeting that is arranged to address the concern.

### **Support**

The SACU will take steps to minimise any difficulties you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the SACU will advise or arrange for you to have advice about the procedure.

The SACU will not tolerate harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take action to protect individuals who raise a concern in good faith.

The SACU accepts that you need to be assured that concerns will be properly addressed and, subject to legal constraints, will provide information about the outcomes of any investigations.

### **How the matter can be taken further**

This procedure is intended to provide individuals with an avenue to raise concerns within the SACU. If you are not satisfied, and feel it is right to take the matter further, the following are possible contact points:

- **sportscotland**
- Audit Commission 020 7630 1019
- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- A solicitor
- The Police

If a matter is taken outside the SACU, you must take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidential or privileged information is not disclosed. If in doubt, check with the named SACU contacts.

### **Concerns Aired on Social Media or in the Public Domain**

Concerns raised in a manner other than defined above will be regarded as informal and will not be considered or responded to by the SACU even if they are aware of them. The SACU will however respond to activity consider libellous or slanderous and support those affected.

Social media is very valuable in that it allows a lot of people to stay in contact, to air their views and state an opinion. If a valid concern is raised in such circumstances, then the SACU would encourage those involved to make a formal submission to the SACU.

NB; The SACU is a democratic organisation representing its Members. No individual SACU officer or staff member can respond to or contribute to a social media topic other than as an individual. Any SACU response or comment must be considered and formal and come from SACU Management. This is why the SACU policy requires all and any concerns be raised in a formal and considered manner and as detailed above.