

Standing Orders for Party Discipline as of Autumn Conference 2021

1. Party bodies and personnel responsible for Party Discipline

1.1 It is expected that all members of GPEW are aware of the Constitution, that they are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and that their behaviour can reflect on the reputation of the Party. Any member who has a concern about the behaviour of another member should follow the Disputes and Complaints Process¹ available on the members website. The Complaints Process¹ shall be reviewed annually by GPRC. Complaints and disputes should be managed and resolved at the lowest possible level within the Party. To this end, Wales Green Party, each Regional Party and each Local Party is expected to have its own Disputes, Complaints and Disciplinary policy and procedure (DCDPP) that is compliant with the Constitution of GPEW. GPRC shall provide model DCDPPs, available in the GPRC Handbook and on the members website, for adoption by any constituted group that does not have an agreed DCDPP in place which is compliant with the Constitution of GPEW. Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee (ADRC) can be asked by members or groups within GPEW to provide mediation for members who are in dispute in accordance with ADRC Standing Orders

1.2 The GPEW shall have a Disciplinary Committee known hereinafter as the "Committee". The Committee will handle all complaints of a disciplinary nature which have not been resolved at Regional, Local Party or other party group level and which have been brought on one of the following grounds:

- i) that a member has contravened the Constitution of the Party as interpreted by Standing Orders Committee (SOC);
- ii) that a member has made a breach of one or more of the number of Standards in the Party's Code of Conduct.

1.3 There shall be a Complaints Manager² who will receive all complaints sent to the national party and who is responsible for managing them according to the Disputes and Complaints Process published on the member's website and these Standing Orders. The Complaints Manager shall be the senior manager whose job description specifies the processing of complaints.

1.4 The Complaints Manager may delegate administration of the management of complaints to the staff member³ whose job description specifies that role. The Complaints Manager is responsible for managing the confidentiality surrounding a complaint with respect to who may need to be informed to minimise potential reputational or other recognised risks.

1.5 There shall be a Disputes and Complaints Referral Group hereinafter known as the 'the Referral Group'. The Referral Group shall be made up of the Chair of the Committee (or their Deputy), a Co-Chair of GPRC and a nominated member of GPRC (or their nominated deputy) GPRC Standing Orders will specify the nomination process for the GPRC nominated members of the Referral Group.

1.6 The Referral Group will consider whether a complaint has been brought on one of the grounds specified in 1.2 and decide on this basis whether it should be referred to the Committee, to another appropriate body or be dismissed. The referral group should also consider, with consultation with the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee if necessary, whether a complaint is better managed via mediation, or other alternative dispute resolution.

1.7 GPRC shall have a subcommittee acting as the appeals body, entitled the GPRC Appeals Subcommittee hereinafter known as the 'Appeals Committee'.

1.8 It is a requirement that the Complaints Manager, the Governance Assistant, the Minuting Secretary, members of the Referral Group, the Committee and the Appeals Committee observe appropriate confidentiality in relation to the consideration of and communications concerning all complaints with respect to who may need to be informed to minimise potential reputational or other recognised risks.

1.9 It is a requirement that the Complaints Manager, the Governance Assistant, the members of the Referral Group, the Committee and the Appeals Committee shall receive training in discrimination law, bias and unconscious bias, and Safe Spaces.

1.10 If the Complaints Manager, the Governance Assistant or any member of the Referral Group, the Committee or the Appeals Committee has prior knowledge of a particular complaint, complainant or respondent then they must declare the existence of potential interest to their line manager, the group or committee. In such circumstances the member should give due consideration as to whether they can remain fair and impartial in considering the case, using guidance available within the party. If they decide that they are unable to make a fair and impartial decision, they must recuse themselves from any further decisions regarding the case.

1.11 Officers and staff of the Party should be aware of their duty of care should they become aware of breaches of the Code of Conduct and associated policies. In this case, they should in the first instance signpost affected members to the complaints policy. Members who require support in making a complaint should be signposted to and approach the Governance Administrator for reasonable support in doing so. Officers and staff will be able to make a complaint even if they have not been personally disadvantaged, though it is good practice to obtain consent from the parties before doing so. Exceptions to this include situations where there is an immediate risk of harm to personal safety or safeguarding policy infringements (see the Safeguarding Policy and below).

2. Composition and Meetings of the Committee

2.1. The Committee shall consist of eleven members of the Party who are not members of the Green Party Executive (GPEX), the Green Party Regional Council (GPRC), Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee (ADRC) or Standing Orders Committee (SOC).

2.2 The members of the Committee are elected to serve for a two year period.

i) Each GPEW region and the nation of Wales should elect one member to the Committee. In the event of a member leaving the Committee, the relevant Regional Committee or Wales Green Party Committee should hold an election as soon as possible for a full two-year term.

ii) Annual Conference should elect one member to the Committee.

2.3 The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee shall be elected annually by the members of the Committee from amongst their number. The Deputy Chair will act in place of the Chair in the Chair's absence or in the event of the Chair recusing themselves.

2.4 Complaints presented to the Committee under Standing Order 3.12 are reviewed by the Chair or Deputy Chair and allocated to Investigators within a reasonably practicable timeframe.

2.5 "The Committee shall meet at least six times in a calendar year via Zoom to hear complaints that have been investigated. Business meetings and hearings may be held on the last Saturday of the month except in August and December. Hearings may be held on weekday evenings.

2.6 "The Committee Chair shall ensure that action minutes are taken at each meeting by a Minuting Secretary who is not a member of the Committee, and that the minutes are available within a reasonable timeframe. Redacted minutes should be published on the Members' Website, ensuring confidential information and identifying details of members are removed."

3. Complaints Procedure

3.1 The person making a complaint is known as the Complainant. On receipt of a complaint, submitted on the official complaint form⁴, the Complaints Manager shall

- i) acknowledge receipt of the complaint
- ii) forward the complaint to the members of the Referral Group within two working days.
- iii) log the complaint in the confidential section of the Governance folder.

3.2 Legal advice should be sought in instances of uncertainty throughout the process.

3.3 If a complaint is received with a request for an immediate No-Fault Suspension⁶, the Complaints Manager will pass the complaint to both the Referral Group, and within two working days of receipt to GPRC. As soon as practically possible, GPRC should consider whether there is evidence of an immediate risk to the party or to bodies or individuals unless a No-Fault Suspension is activated, in accordance with the GPRC Standing Orders, and communicate this to the necessary parties as a matter of urgency. A request for a No-Fault Suspension should ideally take no more than three working days from receipt to notification of that suspension.

3.4 Members of the Referral Group shall each consider whether the complaint should be dismissed, be referred to the Committee or to another appropriate body within or outside the party. If a complaint is made against more than one member, the referral group must confer and agree how the complaint shall be managed. The Referral Group will reach its decisions by consensus. If there is not immediate consensus, then the members shall enter into a discussion, consulting with their respective deputies if appropriate. A final decision must be made within one week of the complaint being sent to the Referral Group. Members of the Referral Group shall inform the Complaints Manager of their considered decision within three working days. If the Referral Group consider there is potential for an early resolution, then it can ask the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee to make an initial contact, in confidence, with the complainant to discuss this, and for the ADRC to notify the Complaint Manager of the outcome within the agreed timeframe. It should be noted that mediation is always voluntary and when a member declines to participate from the outset, or withdraws from an on-going mediation, this should never be judged negatively by the Committee.

3.5 If a complaint is dismissed, the members of the Referral Group shall be required to notify the Complaints Manager of the reason for their decision. The member against whom the complaint has been made (hereinafter referred to as the Respondent) will be informed by the Complaints Manager that a complaint has been made against them, that it has been dismissed and the reasons for that decision. They shall be provided with an outline detail of the complaint which includes the substance of the complaint but not the names of the Complainant or witnesses. Consideration shall however be given to the possibility that the complaint itself is part of a pattern of harassment of the Respondent, and avoid routinely passing on complaints to Respondents in such instances until proper consideration has been given as to whether this will be contributing to such harassment. The Complaints Manager will also notify the Complainant of this information.

3.6 "If the complaint concerns a criminal offence of the nature which poses a threat to the well-being of the party or its members, the Complaints Manager should signpost external bodies or sources of information to the Complainant. The Committee will also refer the complaint to the Co-Chairs of GPRC to consider an immediate No-Fault Suspension of the Respondent, for the duration of any investigation (as per 3.3). The Committee should seek legal advice if necessary."

3.7 If the complaint is being referred to another party body, the Respondent will be informed by the Complaints Manager that a complaint has been made against them and the body to which it is being referred. They shall be provided with an outline detail of the complaint which includes the substance of the complaint but not the names of the Complainant or witnesses. The Complaints Manager will then pass the complaint form on to the relevant body within five working days with a request to be kept informed of how the complaint is progressed. The Complaints Manager will also notify the Complainant of this information.

3.8 If the complaint is being referred to the Committee, the Respondent will be informed by the Complaints Manager that a complaint has been made against them and that it is being referred to the Committee. They will be forwarded the appropriately redacted complaint form, a copy of these Standing Orders and given the probable date of the next Committee meeting when the complaint will be considered. If information is available that indicates that consideration should be taken of any possible impact on the Respondent of receiving the complaint, then the Complaints Manager shall liaise with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee in this consideration. The Complaints Manager will also notify the Complainant of this information. The Complainant's personal details should not be shared with the Respondent without the Complainant's explicit consent. The name of the complainant should be disclosed to the respondent unless the complainant has requested anonymity, with reasons. The Referral group shall consider and determine any request for anonymity.

3.9 In the case of 3.7 and 3.8 the Respondent shall be asked to review the alleged breaches and be offered the opportunity to correct their action(s) and/or recognise that their behaviour was inappropriate, and then apologise to the Complainant and any other relevant parties to the complaint. DC will consider if this is sufficient to remedy the complaint and, if so, will close the complaint.

3.10 In the case of 3.7 and 3.8 the Complainant and the Respondent shall be asked whether they consider that they need any adjustments to be made to the disputes and complaints process for reasons of disability and if so what these adjustments should be. The Complaints Manager will liaise with the Chair of the Committee to make any adjustments that are considered reasonable. The Investigators shall be

informed of any adjustments that will need to be made during the investigation. The respondent shall be offered the option to submit a provisional response to the complaint and the Complaints Manager will seek to ensure that this response is available to Disciplinary Committee (or any other body receiving the complaint) at the same time as the complaint form

3.11 The Committee shall consider complaints presented to it from the Complaints Manager which must contain a proposal that the Committee should consider disciplinary measures against the Respondent on one or more of the grounds listed in clause 1.2 of these Standing Orders.

3.12 Complaints submitted by the Complaints Manager must be presented in a written format to the Committee and must at a minimum specify:

i) The ground on which they propose that the Committee should consider taking disciplinary measures

ii) and

a) In the case of ground 1.2 i), the clause of the Constitution that the member is alleged to have breached or contravened and the manner and circumstances in which they are alleged to have done so;

b) In the case of ground 1.2 ii), the clause(s) of the Code of Conduct that the member is alleged to have breached and the manner and circumstances in which they are alleged to have done so;

3.13 The GPRC handbook shall provide examples of what constitutes "bringing the party into disrepute", in order to provide guidance to those involved in the disputes and complaints process. The handbook shall also provide examples of what constitutes a breach of the Code of Conduct to be investigated by the Disciplinary Committee as opposed to a minor infringement which may be dealt with via other channels, in order to provide guidance to those involved in the disputes and complaints process. This information shall also be made accessible to members on the relevant complaints section of the members site.

3.14 The Committee shall not consider a complaint that lacks the minimum specifications detailed in 3.12.

3.15 Where the complaint is submitted by a GPEW region, local party or recognised special interest group, it will be expected that it will be accompanied by a case file. The case file should include as a minimum:

i) a summary of the case against the Respondent(s)

ii) the date(s) of alleged breaches

iii) the name(s) and local party(s) of the Respondent(s)

iv) names and contact details of Witnesses

4. Investigation of a Complaint

4.1 When a complaint is presented by the Complaints Manager to the Committee, the Committee shall consider whether or not there is a need to appoint investigators. In cases where GPRC have imposed a No-Fault Suspension, the case will be prioritised.

4.2 The Committee may decide that it has been provided with sufficient evidence in the complaint to make a decision without the need for an investigation. The Committee shall decide to hold a formal hearing of the case at the next reasonably practicable date. The Complaints Manager will inform both the Complainant and the Respondent of the decision and of the date, time and venue of the Committee meeting when the case will be heard. The Respondent will be sent the complaint form and any necessary evidence appropriately redacted.

4.3 The Complaints Manager will notify the Complainant and the Respondent in writing of the decision to investigate. They will be informed that they will be given at least three weeks' notice of the date, time and place for the Committee to convene to hear and rule on the complaint.

4.4 If the Committee decides that an investigation is necessary it shall appoint investigators (hereinafter referred to as the Investigators) to carry out the investigation in accordance with the agreed procedures⁷, and compile a report containing the evidence and circumstances behind the complaint.

4.5 The Investigators shall be informed by the Complaints Manager, and take account of any reasonable adjustments that need to be made during the investigation as notified under 3.10.

4.6 The Investigators must make themselves known to the Complainant and Respondent directly and make arrangements, if necessary, to meet them or talk to them at a mutually convenient time and place. To contact the Respondent the investigators may use the email, phone and postal address of the Respondent held by the Green Party membership database. The Investigators will make two more attempts to contact the Respondent and if there is no reply the investigators are to report back to the Committee that no reply has been received. Investigators are not expected to track down Respondents who have moved or changed contact details without notifying GPEW.

4.7 The Investigators should also make themselves known to any witnesses that they may wish to take evidence from, indicating the form in which they intend that the evidence will be taken. The Investigators should give an opportunity for the witnesses to direct this process if appropriate and be shown the written record of their evidence to confirm its accuracy and tone prior to inclusion in the investigator's report.

4.8 In considering a complaint about conduct stemming from holding a political belief that is not in accordance with that of the GPEW, it shall be made explicitly clear that it is the conduct that may result in a sanction and not the holding of such a belief per se.

4.9 As far as is practicable, the investigation report should be completed within two months of the Committee's decision to investigate. If the investigators are unable to meet this timescale, they should keep the complainant and respondent informed about progress. The report and copies of any evidence and documents gathered in the course of the investigation will be sent to the Complaints Manager. Any new evidence after the finalisation of the report will not be admissible at the disciplinary hearing.

4.10 At least two weeks prior to the Committee meeting, the Complaints Manager will simultaneously send a copy of the Investigator's report to members of the Committee and to the Respondent and Complainant, together with copies of the written complaint, the original case file and of all the other evidence gathered in the

course of the investigation, except where the need for anonymity is considered to be an overriding concern. Redaction⁵ of some details should also be considered.

4.11 The investigation report shall then be presented by the Investigators at the Committee's hearing of the complaint.

4.12 Any response received from the Complainant and/or the Respondent shall be presented at the Committee's hearing of the complaint.

4.13 If the investigation has not been progressed or completed in time for it to be heard at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee, then the Investigators will give a verbal update about progress on the investigation.

5. Arrangements for Hearing of the Complaint by the Committee

5.1 The Complaints Manager must liaise with the Committee Chair or Deputy Chair to arrange the date, time and place for the Committee to convene to consider the complaint. The venue (in person or on Zoom) for the Committee meeting must meet the accessibility⁸ and any other additional needs of Committee members, Complainants, Respondents and any supporting members.

5.2 The date should be no later than one month from completion of the Investigation Report. The Complaints Manager will send at least three weeks' prior notification of the date, time and place of the meeting to the Complainant and the Respondent.

5.3 Both the Complainant and the Respondent will be invited to submit a written response to the report to the Complaints Manager by 5pm three working days before the date on which the Committee meets to consider the complaint. This written response can be in email form.

5.4 Whether or not the Complainant and/or the Respondent submits a written response, they may attend in person on the date and at the place where the Committee meets to hear the complaint made against them.

5.5 Both the Respondent and the Complainant may be accompanied by another Party member to assist them in explaining their position to the Committee. The Committee will consider any reasonable request from the Respondent or Complainant to not be present at the hearing at the same time as the other party.

5.6 The Complaints Manager must provide a copy of the notification mentioned in clause 5.2 to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee.

6. Process for Hearing of a complaint by the Committee

6.1 The quorum for Committee meetings is four excluding the Investigators. The Investigators will not be allowed to take part in the deliberation.

6.2 The Committee must take account of any response submitted by the Complainant and/or Respondent by the deadline specified in 5.3.

6.3 If the Respondent attends the hearing, the Committee will hear them in person and any evidence they may bring as part of the consideration of the complaint, however no new evidence will be admissible. If the Respondent has brought another member of the Party, to assist them in presenting their case to the Committee, that other member will be permitted to assist the Respondent under the same principles that pertain with a McKenzie friend⁹. The Respondent may be asked questions by any member of the Committee taking part in the hearing.

6.4 If the Complainant attends the hearing, the Committee will hear them in person as part of the consideration of the complaint, however no new evidence will be admissible. If the Complainant has brought another member of the Party to assist them that other member will be permitted to assist them under the same principles that pertain with a McKenzie friend⁹. The Complainant may be asked questions by any member of the committee taking part in the hearing.

6.5 Witnesses may also be asked to attend and will be informed in advance of the format of the hearing.

6.6 The Complainant shall not be entitled to ask questions of the Respondent, who will not themselves be entitled to ask questions of the Complainant.

6.7 If the Committee so wishes, the Complaints Manager may be asked to be present in an advisory capacity. However they will not take part in the deliberations at the hearing of the complaint.

6.8 Where the complaint brought by the Complaints Manager has originated in information being brought to their attention by another member (the Complainant), the Chair of the Committee may invite the Complainant to also attend the meeting at which the complaint is considered and give evidence to that meeting.

6.9 The Committee will normally reach its decisions by consensus through debating the evidence. However, in the event of failure to arrive at consensus majority voting shall apply. The Chair has a casting vote.

6.10 To reach a decision on the complaint, the Committee needs to be persuaded on the balance of probabilities whether the ground of the complaint is established. If the Committee finds the ground of the complaint to not be established it shall dismiss the complaint.

6.11 If the Committee finds the ground of the complaint to be established it shall use the principle of proportionality when determining whether and which sanction should be imposed. The Committee must consider whether behaviour could be reasonably known to be the consequence of a disability, and ensure that action from the Committee in such cases must only be taken if it is a proportional means of achieving a legitimate aim. Taking reasonable account of all the circumstances, the Committee shall impose one or more of the disciplinary measures listed in paragraph 6.12

6.12 The sanctions or disciplinary measures available to the Committee are as follows:

- censure
- required to do training in the subject
- required to apologise
- exclusion from all party activities for a fixed period
- expulsion
- excluding the respondent from participation in any specified meeting/meetings or activity of GPEW for a fixed period; (the scope of the exclusion may have national, regional or local reach;)
- imposition of conditions on the respondent's participation in GPEW for a fixed period, for example an instruction not to approach a specified complainant in

meetings (if appropriate, a set of conditions may be set out in a formal agreement);

- removing the respondent from any elected position in GPEW;
- disqualification of the respondent from election or co-option to any office in GPEW, for a fixed period;
- deselection of the respondent from any candidacy for public office;
- disqualification of the respondent from seeking GPEW nomination for election to any public office, for a fixed period;
- withdrawal of Green Party designation from a respondent who holds public office (e.g. a councillor), for a fixed period.

The Committee may, at its discretion, impose a sanction which is suspended from immediate effect, to expire after a fixed period. In the event of any further complaint against the respondent being received within that period and subsequently upheld, the Committee may impose the suspended sanction in addition to any sanction awarded for the further complaint.

In circumstances where the Committee does not consider it would be fair to impose any disciplinary measure it may discharge the upheld complaint with no sanction.

6.13 If appropriate the Committee will offer additional advice and/or guidance as to future behaviour.

6.14 How the decision is taken by the Committee shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting as well as the decision. Redacted minutes should be published on the Members' Website, ensuring confidential information and identifying details of members are removed.

6.15 The Committee's decision as regards any disciplinary measure shall have immediate effect (subject to any deferral direction in the case of suspension) and be final and binding subject only to the Respondent's right of appeal to GPRC.

6.16 The Committee Chair shall report the decision to the Complaints Manager who shall notify both the Complainant and the Respondent of the Committee's decision within five working days of the hearing. The Complainant and the Respondent shall be advised that they have the right of appeal to the Appeals Committee, the grounds on which an appeal may be sought (see 7.3), and that they may exercise the right to appeal by giving written notification to the Complaints Manager of their intention to do so in the form of an appeal statement within three weeks. An appeal statement should set out any relevant information on the respects in which the member considers the Committee's decision to have breached the grounds set out in clause 7.3.

6.17 Any decision of suspension or expulsion of the member shall have the effect of suspending their membership of, or expelling them from, any Party group of which they are a member. It is the Complaints Manager's responsibility to inform the membership secretary and the Co-ordinator and/or Secretary of all relevant groups of the decision to exclude or expel the Respondent and its effect.

6.18 The Complaints Manager shall report all decisions of censure, suspension and expulsion to the next meeting of GPRC and to the next National Conference.

7. Appeals

7.1 The Appeals Committee shall be elected at the GPRC AGM each year and shall consist of five GPRC councillors, none of whom can be a GPRC Co-Chair. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will be elected at the GPRC AGM by the GPRC membership. In the event of a casual vacancy, GPRC may elect a replacement.

7.2 The quorum for the GPRC Appeals Subcommittee shall be three. In the event that a quorate panel cannot be convened, GPRC may elect a temporary replacement member.

7.3 Appeals may only be pursued on one or more of the following grounds:

i) That from the information presented before the Committee it was unreasonable for the Committee to find the ground of the complaint to be established or dismissed.

ii) That there is relevant, reliable, and significant information that was not been presented before the Committee and which would have been likely to cause the Committee to find that the ground of the complaint was or was not established.

iii) That the Committee's consideration of the complaint was procedurally unfair to the member.

iv) That from the information presented before the Committee it was unreasonable for the Committee to award the sanction or sanctions it has imposed, or that the sanction(s) was (were) disproportionate.

7.4 On receipt of the appeal statement the Complaints Manager shall refer it to the Appeals Committee for determination as regards to whether the appeal statement constitutes a valid appeal. All of the case file will be forwarded together with the relevant section of the Committee minutes when the decision was made.

7.5 The Complaints Manager will notify the Chair of the Committee that an appeal has been lodged. The Committee may ask one of its members to attend the Appeal hearing to be available to explain how the decision was made by the Committee and to answer any questions from the Appeals Committee or the Respondent and Complainant.

7.6 Thereafter, the Chair of the Appeals Committee shall communicate with the Respondent and Complainant through the Complaints Manager as regards the arrangements for the Appeals Committee meeting at which the appeal will be heard and for the prior exchanging of documents and lists of witnesses intended to be brought to the meeting. The Respondent and Complainant shall be entitled to bring another member of the Party to the meeting to assist them in the appeal under the same principles that pertain with a McKenzie friend⁹ and shall be advised of that right in the communications regarding the arrangements for the meeting.

7.7 The Chair of the Appeals Committee will convene a meeting of the Appeals Committee to consider the appeal. This is subject to both the Respondent and Complainant and the Complaints Manager receiving at least two weeks' notice of the date, time and place of the meeting and of the Respondent's and Complainant's right to attend and bring relevant documents and witnesses.

7.8 If no ground of appeal is upheld by the Appeals Committee, it shall be dismissed. If new information is found to be relevant, reliable, and significant or if there were procedural errors then the case may be referred back to the Committee to be re-heard.

7.9 If the appeal is upheld by the Appeals Committee, then the Committee's decision will be overruled and either the original complaint dismissed or an appropriate disciplinary measure imposed. This shall follow the same process in considering proportionality as in 6.12.

7.10 The Appeals Committee appeal decision shall be final and binding and not subject to further appeal. The Appeals Committee should give reasons for its decision. They shall remind the Respondent and Complainant of their rights of Whistleblowing under the GPEW Policy on Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination.

7.11 The Appeals Committee Chair shall arrange for the decision and the reasons for the decision, to be reported to the Complaints Manager, the Respondent, the Complainant and the Committee.

7.12 Any Party group of which the Respondent is a member, shall be informed by the Complaints Manager of the decision of the Appeals Committee to uphold the appeal.

7.13 An Appeals Committee decision that itself imposes suspension or expulsion on a member shall have the effect of suspending or expelling their membership from any Party group of which they are a member and it is the Complaints Manager's responsibility to inform the Coordinator and Secretary of the relevant groups of a decision to suspend or expel and its effect.

7.14 It shall be the responsibility of the Complaints Manager to formally report all appeal decisions to the next National Conference.

8. Review and Revision of Standing Orders

8.1 These Standing Orders and the Disputes and Complaints Process on the member's website shall be reviewed annually by the Committee Standing Orders Subcommittee. Any proposed revisions shall be considered and agreed by a majority vote of the full Committee. They will then be presented to the GPEW Annual Conference by the Chair of the Committee for approval.

8.2 At the end of their dealing with the disputes and complaints process, Complainants and Respondents shall be provided with an anonymous feedback survey by the Governance Assistant, who will collect responses (these may alternatively be returned to the Co-Chairs of GPRC or the Chair of GPEX if preferred by the survey respondent). The survey should include questions on protected characteristics of the survey respondents (with the option not to declare).

Footnotes

1 Link to <https://members.greenparty.org.uk/complaints>

2 Currently the Party CEO

3 Currently the Governance Officer

4 The complaint form can be downloaded here:
<https://members.greenparty.org.uk/complaints>

5 Redaction. If the complaint contains a derogatory, abusive or discriminatory description of the Respondent this shall be redacted before being forwarded to the Respondent, with an indication that it has been redacted and why. The personal contact details of the Complainant and the names and personal details of any other

parties to the complaint shall also be redacted prior to the complaint form being sent to the Respondent.

6 A No-Fault Suspension means that the suspended member is not able to volunteer for the local or regional party, nor any national party body; is not able to attend any local, regional or national events, including Conference; and access to the members website will be removed.

Chairs/convenors/coordinators of the relevant local and regional parties and national party bodies will be informed on a confidential basis.

7 Investigators shall follow the recommended procedure for carrying out the investigation.

8 Reasonable adjustments for accessibility may include: wheelchair access, hearing loop, policies and other documents available in large print and Braille, adjustments for travel arrangements

9 A McKenzie friend must be a member of the party. They may attend a hearing and/or appeal to offer support and guidance. While time will be given for them to provide advice, they may not speak to the Committee or the other party.

10 Proportionality requires not going further than is necessary to achieve the stated aim of any given decision. Therefore the Committee and Appeals Committee should ask themselves the following questions in determining whether or not to impose, or uphold, a sanction:

- a) Is the sanction a legitimate exercise of the Committee's powers?
- b) Is it a suitable means of achieving the aim of upholding the reputation of the GPEW and ensuring good conduct by members?
- c) Is it the least restrictive means of attaining that aim?
- d) Is it proportionate in the strict sense, striking a proper balance between the requirements of the GPEW and the rights of the member?

When the Committee decides on a sanction it should start with the least punitive sanction and if they decide it is not sufficient to achieve the aim of the decision being made, to record why and then to move on to the next most serious sanction, i.e. to approach the sanctions in ascending order of seriousness.