

Investigation Procedure

Inverclyde Darts Hub • Official Documentation
(Version 1.0)



Notice: All policies, codes of conduct, and procedures are formally established under Inverclyde Darts Hub.
Website: inverclydedartshub.com

Investigation Procedure

This procedure outlines the essential decisions and actions that Inverclyde Darts Hub must and should make when deciding to conduct an investigation. It also provides important information divided into manageable steps for anyone who has been appointed to conduct investigations.

The order of steps 3 and 4 may change depending on the facts and information required and how an investigator thinks the matter should be approached. However, considering the relevance of each step to the matter being investigated will help an investigator to complete a thorough and fair process.

What is an investigation?

An investigation is a fact-finding exercise to collect all the relevant information on a matter. A properly conducted investigation can enable Inverclyde Darts Hub to fully consider the matter and then make an informed decision on it.

The role of an investigator

The role of an investigator is to be fair and objective so that they can establish the essential facts of the matter and reach a conclusion on what did or did not happen. An investigator should do this by looking for evidence that supports the allegation and evidence that contradicts it. In potential disciplinary matters, it is not an investigator's role to prove the guilt of any party but to investigate if there is a case to answer.

Step 1 - Preparation

Incidents and issues will arise and ensuring that they are dealt with fairly and consistently may mean that they need to be investigated. In the first instance, Inverclyde Darts Hub should consider whether a quiet word or informal action may be all that is required to resolve a matter. Most problems that arise can be settled quickly and without undue process.

Where informal resolution is not practical or possible there are a number of considerations that Inverclyde Darts Hub will bear in mind when deciding if an investigation is necessary.

Considerations before making a decision

- Do any policies or procedures require an investigation? The policies and procedures of an organisation may obligate them to conduct a formal investigation on the matter under consideration.
- Does the matter warrant further action? If Inverclyde Darts Hub is not obligated to investigate the matter, whether one is necessary will often come down to the seriousness of the matter and what type of action may be warranted.
- Will a preliminary investigation help? Where it is uncertain whether a full investigation is necessary or appropriate, Inverclyde Darts Hub may benefit from trying to find this out first. Usually this would be limited to gathering appropriate evidence on the matter.

Conducting investigations

If an investigation is necessary, then Inverclyde Darts Hub should act promptly. Unnecessary delay may cause memories to fade or give the perception of an unfair process. Importantly, an informal resolution of the matter should still be considered as an option at any stage of the process.

What is to be investigated?

When instigating an investigation, Inverclyde Darts Hub should decide what the precise purpose and scope of the investigation will be. Terms of reference should be created that clearly explain what the investigator's role and responsibilities are for this investigation. The terms of reference should spell out:

- What the investigation is required to examine
- Whether a recommendation is required
- How their findings should be presented

How long may an investigation take?

Inverclyde Darts Hub should consult their policies and procedures to see if they contain suggested or required timescales for the investigation to follow. If no timescale is specified, Inverclyde Darts Hub should provide a provisional timeframe within which the investigation should be completed. A complicated matter may take several weeks to conduct properly. A relatively simple matter may only require a small amount of investigation for it to be reasonable.

Providing a provisional time-frame is helpful but an investigator will not be restricted by a set completion date. An investigator may find that the time-frame needs to be modified to enable them to investigate the matter properly. While an investigation should be completed as quickly as is practical, it also needs to be sufficiently thorough to be fair and reasonable.

If new issues come to light...

If a new matter comes to light during an investigation, the investigator and the person they report to may need to agree changes to the terms of reference or to authorise a further investigation. It will usually be preferable to incorporate any new matters into the existing investigation unless it will make an investigation overly burdensome or unduly complicated.

Deciding who will deal with the matter

Inverclyde Darts Hub will appoint a competent investigator depending on the complexity, severity and detail of the investigation.

Keeping the matter confidential

An investigation should usually be kept confidential. Even if it becomes known that one is being conducted, the details of the investigation should be kept confidential wherever possible. Keeping the matter confidential can:

- Reduce any negative impact to a party involved in the matter
- Help to ensure that volunteer morale is not unnecessarily affected
- Reduce the risk of witnesses discussing or agreeing what their evidence should be

Possible temporary measures

Many investigations may be conducted without removing a person from Inverclyde Darts Hub events. On occasion, Inverclyde Darts Hub may need to consider taking a temporary measure while an investigation is conducted.

Suspension

In certain situations, Inverclyde Darts Hub may decide that suspension is necessary while the investigation is carried out. This may include where:

- Working relationships have broken down
- The person could tamper with evidence
- There is a health and safety risk
- Property or the organisation may be damaged

Suspension should only be used after careful consideration, as a last resort and should be reviewed to ensure it is not unnecessarily drawn out. It should be made clear that the suspension is temporary, not an assumption of guilt and not a disciplinary sanction.

Criminal proceedings

Some matters might also warrant a criminal investigation. Usually, Inverclyde Darts Hub may need to decide whether or not to involve the police.

If criminal proceedings do commence, Inverclyde Darts Hub may decide to put their investigation on hold until the criminal proceedings have concluded.

Step 2 - An investigator's preparation

- Draft an investigation plan: Provides a structured approach focusing on what facts need to be established, what evidence needs to be collected, and completing the work within the provisional time-frame.
- Check policies and procedures: Re-read relevant policies to refresh knowledge and ensure correct procedures are followed.
- Identify possible sources of evidence: Consider terms of reference, available sources, collection methods, and time constraints. Remember to conduct a reasonable investigation without chasing every minor detail.

- Identify possible parties relevant to the investigation: Interview relevant witnesses. If accounts are consistent, interviewing everyone is unnecessary.

Step 3: Conducting interviews and meetings

Arranging meetings in a private room without interruptions is essential. Interviewees should receive advance written notice including date/time, role of the investigator, reason for meeting, confidentiality requirements, and accompaniment rights (under 18s must be accompanied by an adult).

An investigation meeting is strictly a fact-finding interview and never a disciplinary meeting. Notes should record dates, attendees, key points, refusals, and start/finish times.

Reluctant witnesses should be reassured, and anonymity should only be used in exceptional circumstances involving genuine fear of reprisals.

Step 4: Gathering evidence

Investigators must consider both supporting and contradicting evidence. Objective analysis includes evaluating credibility, reliability, and consistency.

- **Witness Statements:** Signed copies of interview notes. Interviewees must be given the opportunity to check, sign, and amend statements.
- **Written Records & Documents:** Collect relevant paperwork and electronic files to corroborate or contradict testimony.
- **Physical Evidence:** Secure CCTV, phone, or computer records lawfully, documenting what was collected and how.

Step 5: Writing an investigation report

Once facts are established, produce an investigation report reflecting objective conclusions. The report should include an Introduction (terms of reference, methodology, witness list), Findings (summarized witness statements and documents, established vs unestablished facts), and Conclusions (recommendations based on evidence).

Conclusions are evaluated on the balance of probabilities; determining whether an incident is more likely to have occurred than not, rather than requiring proof beyond all reasonable doubt.