

Barnsley FC

Complaints Policy & Procedure



Complaints

A 'concern' may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. A complaint may be generally defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'. It is in everyone's interest at BFC that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage.

Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures. BFC will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. There are occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. In those cases, BFC's formal procedure should be invoked through the stages outlined within the BFC procedure:

- (a) BFC must ensure that they comply with their obligations under the Equality Act 2010. It is common practice to ask for complaints to be made by using a complaint form within this document or in writing, however the complainant may have communication preferences due to particular needs and BFC must allow alternative methods of contact;
- (b) a complaint may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing;
- (c) in order to prevent any later challenge or disagreement over what was said, brief notes of meetings and telephone calls should be kept and a copy of any written response added to the record;
- (d) where there are communication difficulties, BFC may wish to use recording devices to ensure the complainant is able to access and review the discussions at a later point;
- (e) BFC must record the progress of the complaint and the final outcome;
- (f) A designated BFC staff member will be initially responsible for these records and hold them centrally working alongside the BFC secretary;
- (g) BFC is aware that complainants have a right to copies of these records under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection and GDPR Acts

Complaints need to be considered and resolved as quickly, and efficiently as possible, therefore the following is considered:

- a) Set realistic and reasonable time limits for each action within each stage (where further investigations are necessary, set new time limits, send the complainant details of the new deadline and give an explanation for the delay);
- b) Understand that BFC does not consider excessive time limits to be reasonable or acceptable, except in extenuating circumstances;
- c) Expect complaints to be made as soon as possible after an incident arises (although two months is generally considered to be an acceptable time frame in which to lodge a complaint);

d) Ensure that, if the policy includes a cut-off timeframe, BFC will consider exceptions and that the complaint procedure reflects this.

For those receiving complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded and transferred to the complaints form (see below complaints form).

The person who receives a phone call or in-person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Barnsley FC (i.e. BFC player, parent)
- Inform the complainant of the BFC complaints procedure
- Inform the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

Confidentiality: All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Two stages are put in place to support procedural actions, for example, the BFC Management Team will initially oversee or redirect as below:

Stage 1: In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to senior BFC management. On receiving the complaint, it will be recorded in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, management will delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond. Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within 7 days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply.

A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage 2: If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, they can **Appeal:**

1. They may write to the Chief Executive within ten working days of the date of the decision under Stage 1, exercising their right of appeal.
2. Appeals will be considered by a more senior manager (Executive Board Members) Those initially involved will have had no prior involvement in the case. The Chief Executive may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so.
3. Where the appeal involves other persons, the person(s) named in the complaint will be informed of the appeal and the outcome.
4. The decision may be given verbally at the appeal hearing and will in any event be conveyed or confirmed in writing within ten working days of the hearing. Any recommendations for further action will be clearly stated within the letter.
5. The decision following the appeal is final and there will be no further right of appeal, although:
6. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution, for example, the English Football League or Football Association.

Right to be accompanied - All employees who are the subject of this procedure will have the right to be accompanied at any formal meetings held under this procedure by a trade union representative or work colleague.

Responsibility: Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with The Executive Board. This policy is to be reviewed annually and/or when required as required.

Adopted on: 01 August 2016

Review Date: January 2020

COMPLAINTS FORM



Name of person making complaint: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Address: _____

Nature of complaint: _____

Results of investigation: _____

Action taken: _____

Date complainant contacted with the results of the investigation and action taken:

Name of person investigating complaint:

Practical Guidance for Staff dealing with Verbal Complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen and allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words.
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry or showing signs of distress
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings although staying neutral within the conversation
- If you feel that an apology is required on behalf of the BFC, then an apology can be given
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve (or seek advice on this matter)
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met at this stage of the inquiry/complaint
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available processes and of review or appeal

Complaint Tracking

It is necessary for BFC to log, track and record the number of complaints received, and any actions and/or outcomes from investigating complaints. Senior management take responsibility for this action.

Date	Complainant	Action	Outcome