



COMPLAINTS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Lincolnshire FA are committed to managing any complaints in a fair, prompt and effective way. This policy has been developed to provide comprehensive and transparent guidance for how complaints will be managed, and how the policy will be issued to any individuals or organisations making a complaint. Individuals are encouraged to raise their concerns and those making complaints will not be discriminated against and will be supported by the Lincolnshire FA.

For the purpose of this policy, a complaint can be defined as a statement of dissatisfaction, provided in writing, from a person or company, about the provision of, or failure to provide a service. For the avoidance of doubt, this policy does not extend to complaints related to disciplinary sanctions which are addressed in line with FA regulations.

Initially, the member of staff with who the concern or dissatisfaction is raised with may be able to offer a resolution. If the individual or organisation with the concern is not satisfied by the response received by the member of staff, or if they are unwilling to report the concern to that member of staff initially, they should request that the matter is referred to the relevant Head of Service, namely the Football Services Manager or Football Development Manager. If the individual or organisation is not satisfied with how the Head of Service has managed or resolved the concern, they have the option of making a formal complaint to take the matter further.

PROCESS

Stage 1

Formal complaints should be sent in writing to the Business Support Officer. The nature of the complaint should be detailed along with examples of perceived poor practice and any specific incidents, along with supporting evidence such as email conversations or letters.

On receipt of the Complaint, the Business Support Officer will within three working days acknowledge the complaint and state that it will be investigated, providing a copy of this policy. Lincolnshire FA aims to offer a resolution to all complaints within 10 working days. However, if a resolution is not possible within this time frame, an update will be provided on the tenth working day and then on a weekly basis as to the status of the investigation until a resolution is possible.

The Business Support Officer will manage the complaint going forward and liaise with both the complainant and the relevant department(s) to clarify the complaint, identify areas of agreement between parties, clarify any misunderstandings, and encourage complainants to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem. This may happen over email, by telephone, or by arranging a meeting. Should a meeting be arranged, minutes will be taken by the Business Support Officer and later circulated to all those present as a record of the discussions and outcomes of that meeting. Requests for reasonable amendments will be accepted.

If the Business Support Officer is unavailable, or should the complaint involve them, the complaint will be managed and investigated by the Chief Executive. If the complaint involves the Chief Executive the Business Support Officer will liaise with the Chair of the Association.



Once the investigation has been completed, the County will send an outcome letter to the complainant. This response will acknowledge the complaint and state the outcomes of the investigation. If the investigation highlights poor practice by the County or a member of County staff, the complainant may be offered some or all the following:

- An apology
- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have or should have been handled differently
- An explanation of steps that have been taken or will be taken to ensure it does not reoccur again
- An undertaking to review County policies and staff training as a result of the complaint.

All correspondence related to the complaint will be retained securely, and all complaints and the handling of them are reviewed. This is in order to ascertain that the complaint was handled in the most appropriate way, and whether there are any learning points from the complaint which could aid the organisation to improve policies and procedures going forward.

Stage 2

In the event that the complainant is not satisfied with the way the Business Support Officer has handled or resolved their complaint as detailed in the final outcome letter, they have the right to appeal within ten working days of their receipt of the letter.

Appeals should be sent in writing to the Chief Executive. If the original complaint was in relation to the Chief Executive, then the appeal should be sent to the Chair of the Lincolnshire Football Association. The Chief Executive or Chair will acknowledge the complaint, assess all the information, and ascertain whether the subsequent investigation and complaint outcome was fair, prompt, and effective.

The Chief Executive or Chair will aim within ten working days to either confirm in writing that the handling of the complaint and actions taken were in line with the County's policies and procedures, or whether further actions are to be taken. In the event that this cannot be concluded in this timeframe, an update will be provided while the investigation is ongoing.

In the event that a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome letter from the Chief Executive they have the right to escalate their complaint to the Chairman of the Association. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome letter from the Chair in relation to their complaint re: the Chief Executive they have the right to escalate their complaint to the Football Association.

SAFEGUARDING COMPLAINTS

If the complaint is related to a safeguarding concern, the County's policy for managing safeguarding concerns will also be followed and the County Welfare Officer will investigate the complaint along with the Senior Safeguarding Lead.

POLICY OWNER

This policy is owned and maintained by the Chief Executive Officer.

POLICY REVIEW DATE

Date last reviewed: February 2021



Complaints Flowchart

