



Northumberland FA Customer Complaints Policy

Policy Statement

Northumberland County FA Ltd is committed to delivering excellence and therefore welcomes feedback to improve its products and services. Northumberland FA wishes to ensure that any complaints we receive are used constructively to help us to continually improve.

We endeavour to solve complaints quickly, simply, and fairly. It is important for us to seek to resolve these problems in a satisfactory manner.

Procedures

In all circumstances, individuals are positively encouraged to raise their concerns with an appropriate member(s) of staff as described within these procedures:

- Stage 1: Please raise your complaint to the member of staff you are engaging with immediately, as it is important that this person is given the opportunity to resolve the complaint(s) in the first instance.
- Stage 2: If you are dissatisfied with the outcome reached by the initial investigating member of staff, or if you are unwilling or unable to approach this member of staff, please raise your issue to their line manager. The object of this first stage is to resolve problems quickly and simply with the minimum of formality.
- Stage 3: If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily by the member of staff or their line manager, please write to the Chief Executive Officer within 14 days of the issue explaining your concern(s), the reason(s) for the continued dissatisfaction and any suggested resolutions. We will endeavour to respond to each written letter of complaint within 14 working days. However, there will be occasions when it will take longer to determine a resolution to the issue(s) raised. In this instance, we will keep those raising the complaint informed of progress and next steps at each stage of the process.
- Stage 4: If you are still not satisfied that your complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily you can request that the complaint, be referred to the Board of Directors at Northumberland County FA. The matter will be considered at the next available Board meeting (second Thursday in every month) and you will receive a response no later than 14 days following the meeting.

FA Discipline

Where a complaint is about a Discipline case and you are unhappy with the outcome that the County FA have come to or are unhappy with how you feel as though the County FA has acted when investigating the matter then you can raise a complaint.

Those directly involved in the Discipline process can raise a complaint however there are some matters that cannot be raised through the Discipline complaints procedure such as complaints around Referee performance, Safeguarding concerns (unless it directly relates to a Discipline case), sanctions issued by a Discipline Commission (those sanctioned have the right to a separate appeal), if the complaint has already been dealt with through this procedure or if the complaint is more than 12 months old.



The Grassroots Discipline Complaints Process is explained in full in the document found via the following link: [Grassroots Discipline Complaints Process \(calameo.com\)](https://calameo.com). In the first instance the complaints procedure is similar to the procedure mentioned above, however where complaints in line with the above procedure can ultimately be escalated from the Chief Executive Officer to the Northumberland FA Board of Directors, complaints around Discipline matters are ultimately escalated from the County FA's Chief Executive Officer to The FA.

Discipline cases are categorised as either being Serious or Non-Serious. Their categorisation affects the rate at which the complaint is escalated. Serious Cases relate to Misconduct which involves any act of discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, any form of physical contact, assault or threatening behaviour against a Match Official, or any form of assault from one Participant towards another. A Non-Serious case relates to any other misconduct which has taken place in accordance with FA Regulations (such as violent conduct between Players, abusive/insulting comments towards Referees, or mass confrontations between teams).

Non-Serious Discipline Cases

County FA expectations: The County FA will work to acknowledge all incoming complaints within 5 working days, acknowledge all stages of the complaint within 10 working days, and work to resolve all complaints within 12 weeks of acknowledgement.

- Stage 1: The complaint will be investigated and responded to by the County FA Discipline Officer.
- Stage 2: The complainant, if they are not satisfied with the outcome reached at Stage 1, can request that their complaint is referred to the Head of Compliance & Inclusion.
- Stage 3: The complainant, if they are not satisfied with the outcome reached at Stage 2, can request that their complaint is referred to the Chief Executive Officer.
- Stage 4: The complainant, if they are not satisfied with the outcome reached at Stage 3, can refer their complaint to the County FA's Regional Discipline Manager.
- Stage 5: The complainant, if they are not satisfied with the outcome reached at Stage 4, can refer their complaint to the FA Senior Discipline Manager. This is the final stage of The FA's involvement.
- Stage 6: If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome reached at Stage 5, they can refer their complaint to the Independent Football Ombudsmen (IFO).

Serious Discipline Cases

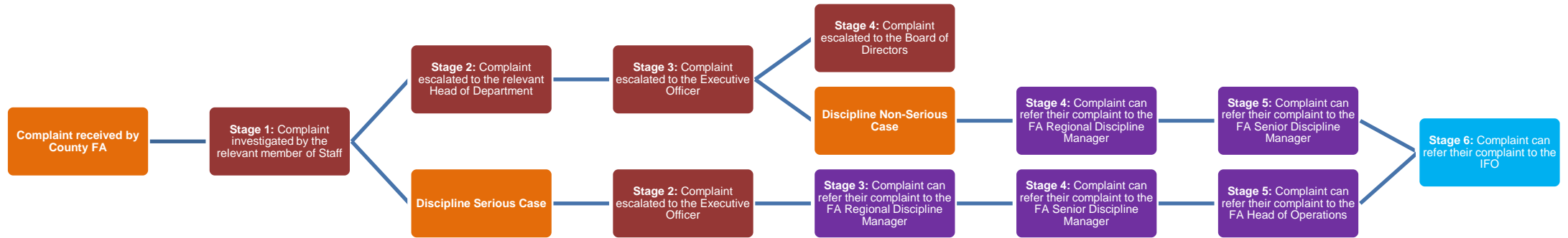
County FA expectations: The County FA will work to acknowledge all incoming complaints within 5 working days, acknowledge all stages of the complaint within 5 working days, and work to resolve all complaints within 12 weeks of acknowledgement.

- Stage 1: The complaint will be investigated and responded to by the County FA Discipline Officer.
- Stage 2: The complainant, if they are not satisfied with the outcome reached at Stage 1, can request that their complaint is referred to the Chief Executive Officer.



- Stage 3: The complainant, if they are not satisfied with the outcome reached at Stage 2, can refer their complaint to the County FA's Regional Discipline Manager.
- Stage 4: The complainant, if they are not satisfied with the outcome reached at Stage 3, can refer their complaint to the FA Senior Discipline Manager.
- Stage 5: The complainant, if they are not satisfied with the outcome reached at Stage 4, can refer their complaint to the FA Head of Operations. This is the final stage of The FA's involvement.
- Stage 6: If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome reached at Stage 5, they can refer their complaint to the Independent Football Ombudsmen (IFO).

Northumberland FA Complaints Policy Framework



Key

- Complaint dealt with by Northumberland FA
- Complaint dealt with by The FA
- Complaint dealt with by the Independent Football Ombudsmen (IFO)



Adopted 14 July 2022