



## **Birmingham County Football Association (BCFA) Complaints Procedure**

*Ensuring Transparency, Fairness, and Accountability across the business and in grassroots football*

**Prior to making a formal complaint, to Birmingham County FA (BCFA) regarding a Club or League or employee, representative, Director, volunteer or participant, we ask that you (the complainant) has already followed and completed the formal complaints process with the relevant individual, club and/or league or football entity and attempted to resolve the complaint to your satisfaction.**

**It's imperative and an integral part of this and any full complaints procedure that the individual or relevant organisation (e.g. club or league), etc that the complaint is directed at the correct entity who has been given the opportunity to hear, and deal with your complaint via their own complaint's procedure prior to escalating your concerns to BCFA. BCFA may ask the complainant to evidence that this process has been followed along with notes and any outcomes which may, in turn, be used as evidence for any further formal complaint as outlined below.**

**Thereafter, if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your initial complaint, you can then make a formal complaint to BCFA by following the procedure below.**

**Please note: any discipline or safeguarding complaints should be directed to the relevant email address below and only via your Club or League Secretary:**

**[discipline@birminghamfa.com](mailto:discipline@birminghamfa.com)**

**[safeguarding@birminghamfa.com](mailto:safeguarding@birminghamfa.com)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

At Birmingham County Football Association (BCFA), we are dedicated to upholding the highest standards of conduct and integrity in football. We value feedback and are committed to addressing any concerns promptly and fairly. This Complaints Procedure outlines the steps for raising and resolving complaints, ensuring transparency and accountability and fairness to all parties.

### **2. SCOPE**

This procedure applies to all participants, including players, coaches, match officials, volunteers, and spectators involved in football activities under the jurisdiction of BCFA. However, please note, BCFA does not accept or acknowledge complaints via any social media platform or similar.

### **3. HOW TO RAISE A COMPLAINT**

#### **3.1 Informal Resolution**

Before initiating a formal complaint, we encourage attempting to resolve the issue informally by discussing it directly with the parties involved. Often, open communication can lead to a swift and amicable resolution with notes and actions taken at the time as a record of any such meetings and any agreed actions.

#### **3.2 Formal Complaint**

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, a formal complaint can be submitted to BCFA. Complaints should be made in writing (email/letter) and include:

- **Complainant's Details:** Full name, contact information, and affiliation (e.g., club, team).
- **Details of the Complaint:** A clear and concise description of the issue, including relevant dates, times, locations, and individuals involved and any witnesses.
- **Supporting Evidence:** Any factual documents, correspondence, or materials pertinent to the complaint.



#### Submission Methods:

- **Email:** [support@birminghamfa.com](mailto:support@birminghamfa.com) – with 'COMPLAINT' in the subject line
- **Post:** Birmingham County FA, Ray Hall Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 6JF

#### 4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, BCFA will:

- **Acknowledge Receipt:** Within three (3) working days, confirming the complaint has been received.
- **Initial Assessment:** Review the complaint to determine its validity and whether it falls within BCFA's jurisdiction.

If we deem the complaint not valid or it is for others to deal with, especially if the initial complaints procedure has not been followed, then you will be notified of this within five (5) working days.

#### 5. INVESTIGATION PROCESS

If the complaint is deemed valid:

- **Appointment of Investigator:** within five (5) working days: An investigator (Line Manager) will be assigned to examine the complaint. In some cases, an independent internal investigator will be appointed (SLT).
- **Gathering Information:** within an additional five (5) working days: This may involve emails or phone calls or online (TEAMS) meeting, interviewing relevant parties, reviewing documents, and collecting evidence. This may take longer depending on the complexity of any complaint.
- **Confidentiality:** All information will be handled confidentially, sharing details only with individuals directly involved in the investigation including relevant Line Managers.

**PLEASE NOTE:** if any requested information or additional evidence is not received within ten working days then the complaint may be closed. If you are having problems with gathering information or evidence, then you must let us know within the stipulated ten days.

#### 6. RESOLUTION AND OUTCOME

Upon concluding the investigation:

- We aim to conclude any complaint within 14 working days from receipt. However, depending on the complexity of the complaint, then the timeframe may be extended.
- **Decision:** BCFA will determine the outcome based on the findings.
- **Notification:** The complainant and relevant parties will be informed of the decision in writing, outlining any suggestions or actions to be taken within 14 working days from receipt.
- **Appeal:** If dissatisfied with the outcome, the complainant may appeal within five (5) working days and, at the same time, providing grounds for the appeal.

Any appeals must be sent to the following email address with 'FORMAL APPEAL' in the subject line to: [support@birminghamfa.com](mailto:support@birminghamfa.com)

Any appeal will be dealt with by an independent member of SLT or the CEO or a nominated BCFA Director. We will look to conclude any appeals within a further 14 working days from receipt of the appeal.

**PLEASE NOTE:** if any requested information or additional evidence is not received within ten working days then the appeal may be closed. If you are having problems with gathering information or evidence, then you must let us know within the ten days.



## OUTCOME

In some instances, and if found proven, it may be that internal discipline procedures are then conducted and/or an FA charge raised against the individual(s) involved. You will be notified of this at the time but will not be notified of the outcome of any BCFA or FA discipline process.

## 7. ESCALATION TO THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (THE FA)

If the complainant remains unsatisfied after the appeal process, they may escalate the complaint to The FA. Details on how to do this can be found on The FA's official website: [www.thefa.com](http://www.thefa.com) or:

- **Customer Relations, The Football Association, Wembley Stadium, PO Box 1966, London, SW1P 9EQ**
- **Tel: 0800 389 0699 (9am-5pm – Monday to Friday)**

## 8. FURTHER ESCALATION TO THE INDEPENDENT FOOTBALL OMBUDSMAN

Should the issue remain unresolved after contacting The FA, the complainant has the right to refer the matter to the Independent Football Ombudsman (IFO). The IFO acts as an independent and impartial body to adjudicate on unresolved football complaints which have not been resolved by the football authorities.

- **Contact Information:**
  - **Website:** [www.theifo.co.uk](http://www.theifo.co.uk)
  - **Email:** [contact@theifo.co.uk](mailto:contact@theifo.co.uk)
  - **Post:** The Independent Football Ombudsman, Suit 49, 33 Great George Street, Leeds, LS1 3AJ
  - **Tel:** 0800 588 4066

**In some instances, a financial charge may be requested before they investigate certain complaints.**

## 9. MONITORING AND REVIEW

BCFA will regularly review this Complaints Procedure and outcomes to ensure its effectiveness and make improvements to the procedure and policy and internal systems as deemed necessary.

## 10. CONTACT US

For any queries regarding this procedure, please contact:

- **Email:** [support@birminghamfa.com](mailto:support@birminghamfa.com)
- **Address:** Birmingham County FA, Ray Hall Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 6JF

*BCFA is committed to fostering a positive and respectful football environment. We appreciate your cooperation in following this procedure to address any concerns constructively and welcome any constructive feedback about the process.*