

Complaints Procedure

The Gloucestershire FA (GFA) takes all complaints seriously and commits to ensuring that complaints, concerns, and issues raised by stakeholders are properly investigated in an unbiased, non-judgmental, transparent, timely and appropriate manner.

In order to ensure our procedures are fit for purpose and to continually improve our processes, we formally review this procedure every 12 months to consider changing circumstances that require us to adapt and update the way we respond to complaints.

Before making a complaint to the GFA about a Club, League or a volunteer, it is important that you have already made a formal complaint to the relevant Club or League and that they have been given the opportunity to deal with your complaint via their own complaints' procedures.

If you have not done so, we will refer you to the appropriate person in the Club/League. If you are not satisfied with their response you can then make a formal complaint to the GFA, following the Complaints Procedure as detailed below.

If your concern relates to the football disciplinary process, it will be resolved via the FA Grassroots Discipline Complaints Process. Please refer to Section 1 below to initiate a complaint and view the FA's online documentation [here](#) or via the link below.

<https://en.calameo.com/read/001230235d9eb481aa0ac>

Section 1 - Who to contact to make a complaint.

Complaints may be submitted in writing to the Head of Football Services (Chris Lucker) via email (Support@GloucestershireFA.com) or by post to Gloucestershire FA, Oaklands Park Stadium, Gloucester Road, Almondsbury, Bristol. BS32 4AG. If you wish to make us aware verbally of your intentions to make a complaint or are seeking clarity on the process you should contact the Head of Football Services on 01454 615888.

If the Head of Football Services has a conflict of interest (perceived or otherwise), the complaint will be referred to Head of Strategy & Development (Matt Boucher).

If the complaint relates to a Gloucestershire FA Director, it will be referred to the Chair of the Association or Senior Independent Director to arrange for an investigation to be conducted by an independent person. Where possible, the timescales below will be maintained, and the escalation options set out at Stages 4 and 5 of this complaints process will still apply.

Section 2 - Do I need to complete a form to make a complaint?

Complaints will be accepted via post, email or online on the official complaints form provided by the Association. It is important to note that social media is not an appropriate method for reporting your concerns and Gloucestershire FA will not review concerns submitted via social media.

Section 3- When receiving complaints, we will:

- Acknowledge your complaint in writing within 48 hours of receipt.
- Advise if we require information from a third party and seek your written agreement to do so.

- Indicate to you the timescales involved in resolving your complaint.
- Gloucestershire FA reserves the right to refuse the complaint on the grounds that the Association is not the appropriate body to deal with the concern, for example a different County FA or Club.
- Request that complainant responds to any request for observations, evidence, or any additional statements within 7 days of request.

Section 4 - How will we resolve complaints?

Stage 1 - Internal Resolution

In many cases, a complaint may best be resolved by the person who is responsible for the issue being complained about. The Head of Football Services will in the first instance respond within 7 days and liaise with both parties in order to seek a swift resolution.

Stage 2

The Head of Football Services will, upon receipt of all information, form a 'Complaints Working Group' (CWG) with a minimum of 3 members. The Head of Football Services may be a panel member and/or Chair the CWG or may instead, delegate responsibility to the panel and seek to appoint a Director of the Association as Chair to address the complaint.

Gloucestershire FA aim to resolve all complaints within 30 days of acknowledgement. Where this is not practical (e.g., due to the level of investigation required), the Complainant will be provided with an update on the progress made and given an indication as to when a full reply can be expected.

The reply to the Complainant will include a summary of the investigation undertaken, the findings of those investigations, the conclusions of the panel, and any action taken as a result of the complaint. Details of the Stage 3 escalation procedure will be provided at this stage.

Stage 3

If the Complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1 or Stage 2 they can refer their complaint to David Neale (Chief Executive Officer) via email David.Neale@GloucestershireFA.com or by post (see Section 1). The summary provided at Stage 2, together with the conclusions of the Panel will be reviewed in conjunction with the Chair of the Board or Senior Independent Director. The reply to the Complainant will include a final determination of the complaint, together with details of the Stage 4 escalation procedure.

Stage 4

If the Complainant believes the issue raised has not been managed satisfactorily, the complaint can be referred direct to The Football Association via Senior Lead (County FAs) Paul.Dolan@thefa.com. The FA will check that due process has been followed, and, where necessary, check that the process was a reasonable one – for example, the timeliness of response and whether it was dealt with in accordance with the County FA's complaints procedure. If necessary, the FA can make recommendations back to the County FA. It is important to note that the Stage 4 review is not a re-investigation of the complaint

Stage 5

The final option is for the Complainant to refer their complaint to the Independent Football Ombudsman which has a clear remit to receive and adjudicate on complaints from football supporters and participants which have not been resolved by the football authorities. To find out more visit <https://www.theifo.co.uk/complaints.html>