Grimsby Town Football Club & Foundation

Complaints Policy

Version:	1
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Policy Statement

Grimsby Town Football Club (GTFC) and Grimsby Town Foundation (GTF) are committed to the continuous improvement of the services it provides and therefore welcomes feedback to enable improvement of our services for stakeholders, fans and the wider community in which we exist.

We recognise that, occasionally, mistakes will be made or the service offered will not meet an individual's requirements or expectations. This policy provides guidance regarding the handling of complaints submitted to the club.

We are committed to handling concerns and complaints fairly, respectfully, transparently and without prejudice. Complaints are viewed as opportunities to improve services, identify learning and strengthen relationships with participants, supporters, families and stakeholders.

No person will suffer disadvantages, discrimination or detriment for raising a genuine concern or complaint.

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Club community.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the Club or Foundation's services, actions, decisions, behaviour or failure to take action, where a response or resolution is expected.

This policy does not replace procedures for staff grievances or disciplinary matters which should be addressed via the relevant HR policies and procedures and used where appropriate.

Safeguarding concerns should not ordinarily be managed solely through the Club's complaints process and should instead be referred immediately through safeguarding reporting procedures.

This policy does not cover complaints regarding the Academy, please see GTFC Academy Policy, found on the Club's Website.

Complaints should normally be raised as soon as possible and preferably within six months of the incident or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The Club may consider complaints raised outside this period where there is a reasonable explanation for the delay or where it is otherwise appropriate to do so.

Responsibilities

All Club & Foundation Staff have responsibility for acknowledging complaints, treating them seriously and dealing with them promptly where appropriate or escalating them where necessary in accordance with the procedure set out below.

Senior Managers have a responsibility for resolving and responding to complaints and leading or contributing to any relevant investigation where required.

The Chief Executive is responsible for reviewing any complaints which have not been resolved during the first two stages of the process. Any decision made by the Chief Executive is final.

The Club Board is responsible for ensuring that the complaints policy and procedure are operating effectively and may become directly involved if a complaint is directed against the Chief Executive or members of the governing body.

Complaints Procedure

The Club will make reasonable adjustments to the complaints process where required to enable individuals to raise and participate in complaints. This may include adjustments relating to disability, communication needs, language, age or other relevant circumstances.

Stage 1 – Informal resolution / initial complaint

Where complaints are made informally to a member of staff, these should ideally be resolved as soon as reasonably practicable but no longer than **5 working days** following receipt of the complaint.

Should further investigation be required, the complaint should be formally acknowledged and escalated to the relevant manager who should follow stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

Where the outcome does not result in satisfactory resolution, the complaint should be submitted in writing to: Grimsby Town Football Club, Blundell Park, Cleethorpes, DN357PY, FAO HR or via email – See below for departmental complaints.

- Fan ticketing & Retail: enquiries@gtfc.co.uk
- Matchday Feedback, Stadium & Grounds: slo@gtfc.co.uk
- Commercial & Hospitality: commercial@gtfc.co.uk
- Academy-related complaints: oliver@gtfc.co.uk
- Foundation-related complaints: office@grimsbytownfoundation.co.uk
- Safeguarding Team complaints: safeguarding@gtfc.co.uk

Anonymous complaints will be considered where sufficient information is provided to allow relevant investigation to be undertaken.

Stage 2 – Formal investigation

At this stage, the complaint should be formally acknowledged within 5 working days, and the Club or Foundation should provide the complainant with a copy of the Club's complaints policy.

A Senior Manager will be appointed to investigate the complaint. Where reasonably practicable, complaints will be investigated by an individual who was not directly involved in the matter giving rise to the complaint and who has no conflict of interest.

We will aim to provide a full response within 20 working days. Where further investigation is required, the complainant will be informed of the expected timescale and kept updated where there is likely to be a significant delay.

Following conclusion of relevant investigation, the Manager will respond in writing to the complainant, explaining the outcome and any action to be taken as a result of the complaint being made.

Where a complaint involves a member of staff, specific detail of action taken will not be made available. This is to ensure that our employees are afforded appropriate dignity at work.

Stage 3 - Review/appeal

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the response, then the matter will be referred to for review by the Chief Executive.

Any review will, where reasonably practicable, be undertaken by a person not involved in the original decision or investigation.

The decision is final and will be confirmed to the complainant within **10 working days**.
Complaints concerning the Chief Executive should be submitted to the Chair of the Club Board, who will determine the appropriate person to consider the complaint.

Complaints concerning a member of the Club Board should be submitted to the Chair of the Club Board. Where the complaint concerns the Chair, it should be submitted to another appropriate independent member of the Board or the appropriate Club governance body.

Where a complaint concerns the governing body as a whole, the Club will determine an appropriate independent route for consideration of the complaint

Where appropriate, complainants may be signposted to relevant external bodies, regulators or football authorities in accordance with their respective rules and procedures. The EFL itself cannot resolve complaints regarding conduct of Clubs or their staff, however, the EFL may be able to assist in resolving such complaints. The EFL may engage with the complainant and the Club to try and resolve the issues amicably, ensure that their safeguarding regulations and standards have

been followed and action recommendations such as further training or improvements to policies and procedures where lessons have been learnt

What the complainant can expect

Complainants can expect:

- to be treated fairly, respectfully and without discrimination;
- their complaint to be taken seriously;
- reasonable adjustments were required;
- their complaint to be considered objectively;
- appropriate confidentiality;
- to be kept informed if there are significant delays;
- a clear explanation of the outcome;
- details of how to request a review where applicable.

The Club will not normally disclose confidential information about disciplinary action or other employment-related action taken against an employee as a result of a complaint.

Safeguarding/Welfare Concerns

A concern would be classed as safeguarding when it relates to either:

- A child or adult at risk who is suffering, or is likely to suffer, abuse, neglect, exploitation or significant harm.
- A concern in relation to a member of Club staff abusing or causing harm either physically or emotionally to a child or adult at risk within their care

Where a child or adult at risk is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, concerns should be reported immediately to the Police, Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care or emergency services as appropriate.

All complaints of this nature should be made in writing and directed to a member of the safeguarding staff at the Club, who will carry out necessary investigation in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

Legislation

This policy operates in accordance with:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Children Act 1989 and 2004 (where complaints involve children)
- Care Act 2014 (where complaints involve adults at risk)

Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by HR/Safeguarding Manager, or sooner if there are legislative changes.

Sign off

Vikki Harries (Safeguarding Manager)

Signature:

Date signed:

Sam Tucker (HR Officer)

Signature:

Date signed:

Jonnathan Allan (Foundation Director)

Signature:

Date signed:

Polly Bancroft (CEO)

Signature:

Date signed:

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