



**Complaints and Appeals
Policy**

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1. Introduction

Blackpool FC Community Trust (BFCCT) has policies and procedures in place to ensure the highest quality provision for staff, stakeholders and customers. In the event that these policies and procedures fail, a complaint or appeal may be made.

For ease of reference the term service user's is inclusive of staff, stakeholders and customers.

1.1. Scope of the policy

- To enable services users to raise complaints if they are dissatisfied with their involvement with BFCCT.
- To enable service users to enquire, question or appeal against a decision.
- To attempt to reach an agreement with a complainant at the earliest opportunity.
- To standardise and record any appeal to ensure openness and fairness.
- To escalate a complaint or appeal to the relevant authorities, where appropriate.
- To protect the interest of all service users and BFCCT programmes, no service user bringing a complaint under this procedure will be treated less favourably whether successful or otherwise.

In order to do this BFCCT will:

- Inform all service users of the Complaints and Appeals Policy and procedure.
- Have a staged appeals procedure and take appropriate actions to protect the integrity of any service users undergoing an appeal and the integrity of BFCCT programmes.
- Record, track and validate any appeal. Any records of appeal will be kept for two years.
- Forward the appeal to the relevant persons and/or authorities if the complainant considers that a decision continues to disadvantage them after an internal appeals process has been exhausted.
- Monitor appeals to inform quality improvement and policy reviews.

2. Key principles

2.1. Monitoring and Record Keeping

- 2.1.1. The Complaint and Appeals Policy is regularly monitored and reviewed with a report submitted to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis.
- 2.1.2. Where the complaint is of a high level the chair of the Board will be informed immediately and a decision made as to whether to call a board meeting.
- 2.1.3. Records will be kept in relation the nature and outcome of the complaint and in line with the BFCCT Data Protection Policy.
- 2.1.4. If BFCCT feels that the complaint made under this policy is better suited to an alternative policy, BFCCT reserve the right deal with the matter under another policy. In all cases 'the complainant' will be notified.

2.2. Confidentiality

- 2.2.1. All records will remain confidential in line with the BFCCT Data Protection Policy. If the complaint requires disclosure and escalation to other organisations, then this will be done so in line with data protection procedures and other relevant policies.

3. Complaints and Appeals Procedure

3.1. Complaints (Appendix 1, Complaints Procedure)

- 3.1.1. A complaint is defined as an oral or written expression of dissatisfaction about an aspect of a service user's experience of BFCCT. Complaints may cover experience of attending BFCCT programmes or staff issues.
- 3.1.2. Where possible BFCCT will endeavour to resolve a complaint with a stage 1 'frontline resolution', in that an issue is resolved through a discussion with the service user and the decision of the complaint is provided and recorded within five working days.
- 3.1.3. If an investigation is required to resolve a complaint (stage 2) the complaint will be acknowledged within three working days and a decision made within 21 working days.
- 3.1.4. Separate procedures exist for allegations made against staff and volunteers (Managing allegations against staff and volunteer's policy) and for disciplinary issues (Disciplinary policy and procedures). Where a complaint includes an allegation of poor practice BFCCT will follow the relevant policies and procedures.
- 3.1.5. If a service user has a complaint or grievance about any matter, they are encouraged to raise the matter at an early stage with an appropriate member of staff. If the matter is not resolved at this stage, the complainant may report the complaint to the Head of Education or Head of Sport.
- 3.1.6. BFCCT advice the following procedures:
 - Staff are encouraged to approach the person/people in question for an informal discussion and to inform their line managers. Where a complaint includes an allegation against staff, BFCCT will adhere to the process in the Managing Allegations against staff and volunteer's policy.
 - Stakeholders and customers are encouraged to speak with the member of staff in charge and are encouraged to write a letter stating the problem to BFCCT Head of Education or Head of Sport.
 - The letter will be discussed at a Senior Management meeting and a written response will be set within 30 working days.
- 3.1.7. Where a member of staff is under investigation, Peninsula HR will provide advice to both BFCCT and the staff member under investigation.

3.2. Appeals (Appendix 2, Appeals Procedure)

- 3.2.1. An appeal is a formal request by a service user that BFCCT undertake as an investigation to arrive at a decision/outcome.
- 3.2.2. If a service user is dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint and considers themselves to have grounds, they can make a formal appeal. To make an appeal the service user must write to the BFCCT chief Executive Officer within 30 days of the date or the decision/response of their query.
- 3.2.3. The letter should explain the grounds for appeal and attached any information or correspondence considered relevant and in support of the appeal.
- 3.2.4. Where a member of staff is appealing, Peninsula HR will provide advice to both BFCCT and the staff member under investigation.
- 3.2.5. BFCCT will acknowledge an appeal in writing within 7 days of receipt. The Chief Executive Officer will consider the appeal and look at:
 - Whether there are grounds for appeal

- Whether the decision was taken fairly and correctly in line with BFCCT's policy and procedures.
- Whether the appropriate information was taken into account.

3.3. Rights and Responsibilities

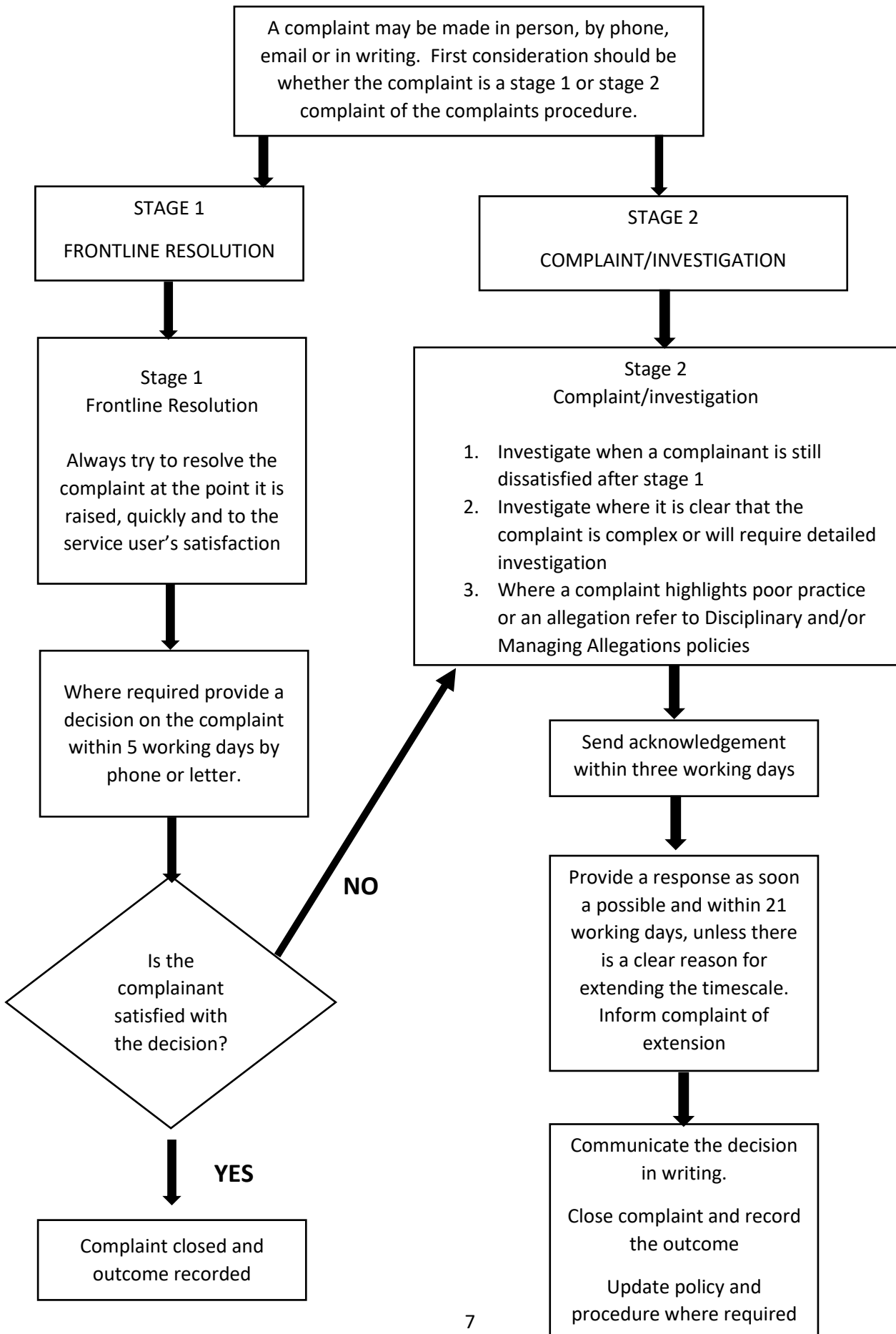
3.3.1. BFCCT will:

- Make sure all the points raised are properly and impartially considered, with no potential conflict of interest.
- Explain the outcome clearly, and ensure the service user appealing know what further steps are open to them.
- Allow a friend to accompany an appellant to any hearings.
- Respect confidentiality by disclosing only the information that is necessary to consider and respond to an appeal, and only to the staff or organisations who need it for those purposes.

3.3.2. Following the outcome of your appeal, if a service user remains dissatisfied they can contact the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees to review the case.

APPENDICES

Blackpool FC Community Trust Complaints Procedure



Appeals Procedure Flowchart

