

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Introduction

1. The Football Foundation (“**the Charity**”) and the Football Stadia Improvement Fund (“**the Company**”) are always committed to working in an open and accountable way to provide a high quality and professional service. Despite this commitment, we recognise that there are occasions where an individual, applicant or club may not be completely happy with their interaction with us, or our operational partners. If you are dissatisfied in any way, we want to know about it. We aim to respond positively and courteously to any complaint, and by putting right our mistakes, improve our processes.
2. In this Policy, the abbreviation “Foundation” will refer to both the Charity and the Company. All references to “we” and “us” will also mean both the Charity and the Company.

Scope

3. This is the policy and procedure for dealing with external complaints against the Foundation, its staff, and its operational partners.
4. The Foundation is committed to ensuring all complaints are fully investigated and dealt with in the appropriate manner. If you raise a complaint, you will always be treated fairly before, during and after the conclusion of the process. Any complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.
5. This policy and procedure should not be used in relation to action taken in the context of an appeal against a decision to reject a funding bid. The appropriate process for this is the Foundation’s Appeals Policy.

Type of complaint

6. A complaint might relate to:
 - Standards of communication with the Foundation;
 - Quality of support given by Foundation employees;
 - A specific incident relating to a member of staff;
 - A third party complaining against a grant recipient; and/or
 - Equal opportunities.
7. This list is not exhaustive and there may be other reasons for making a complaint.

Responsibility

8. The Foundation’s Director of Business Services is responsible for managing all formal complaints in accordance with this policy.



Attempts to resolve the matter informally

9. In the first instance, attempts should be made to resolve any matters informally through discussion or correspondence. This will involve an appropriate member of the Foundation team responding to any matters raised, and where necessary, providing explanations and answers to questions that have been raised.
10. A record will be made detailing the nature of any complaints raised and the Foundation's response.
11. **Please note that all attempts should be made to resolve matters informally, before moving to the formal procedure.**

Making a formal complaint

12. If attempts to resolve the matter informally have not been successful, a formal complaint can be made. To do this you need to set out your complaint in writing, by letter or email, explaining the details behind the cause of your dissatisfaction and stating clearly that you are making a formal complaint. This will help to clarify the issue and to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding or misinterpretation. The complaint should be addressed to the Director of Business Services and sent to enquiries@footballfoundation.org.uk or sent to Football Foundation, 10 Eastbourne Terrace, London, W2 6LG.

Formal complaints procedure: Stage one - consideration of your complaint

13. You will receive an acknowledgement to your complaint within three working days and a written response within ten working days. In considering your complaint, the Director of Business Services will:
 - Investigate your concerns and the attempts to resolve the matter informally. They will then respond in writing to you with their assessment of the matter, or their decision where appropriate.
 - Where further details are needed, you may be asked to provide the necessary information or to participate in a telephone call to talk through the details. In some circumstances, we may ask you to attend a meeting at a mutually agreed venue to discuss matters.
 - Please note that the Director of Business Services may communicate with you more than once in attempting to resolve the matter.
 - Within five working days of the receipt of any further information, the Director of Business Services will respond in writing to you with their decision.
14. We ask that you take all reasonable steps to provide the information needed and participate in a telephone call, or meeting, where required. If you fail to provide the appropriate information or to attend any meeting or call on a second occasion without good reason, the Foundation will be entitled to continue with the process and make a



decision based on the information available. This decision will then be communicated in writing.

Formal complaints procedure: Stage two - making an appeal

15. Following the review of your complaint, if you remain dissatisfied you may appeal by giving written notice to the Director of Business Services within five working days of the date of our decision under stage one. A Head of Department not previously involved with the issue will undertake a fresh review of your complaint. You may be asked to provide additional information, so your case can be comprehensively assessed.
16. A member of the Foundation's Senior Management Team will then decide on the complaint and deliver a decision, in writing, within five working days of your appeal request, or following receipt of additional information. Their decision will be final.

Complaints from a third party against a grant recipient

17. If you are making a complaint against a grant recipient, you should write to the Director of Business Services detailing your complaint and stating clearly that you are making a formal complaint. An acknowledgement will be sent within three working days.
18. The content of your complaint will be considered, taking into account any Foundation monitoring process that is in place to assess the progress and performance of the funded project.
19. The Director of Business Services will then reply to you within ten working days of receiving the complaint. The letter will outline the processes the Foundation has in place for awarding funding, it will ensure that grant recipients are adhering to their terms and conditions and the ongoing monitoring of the project.

Complaints from a third party against a Foundation employee:

20. If you are making a complaint against a Foundation employee you should write to the Director of Business Services, detailing your complaint and stating clearly that you are making a formal complaint. An acknowledgement will be sent within three working days, and a written response within ten working days.
21. In considering your complaint, the Director of Business Services will:
 - Investigate your concerns and the attempts to resolve the matter informally.
 - Where further details are needed, you may be invited to provide the necessary information or to participate in a telephone call. In some circumstances, we may ask you to attend a meeting at a mutually agreed venue to discuss matters.
 - Within five working days of the receipt of any further information, the Director of Business Services will respond in writing to you.



22. If it is agreed that there is a case to answer against a Foundation employee, this will then become an internal and private affair for the Foundation to deal with in accordance with our own internal policies and procedures. No third party will be put into any sort of difficult working situation with a Foundation employee during or after the complaint process, as far as is possible.

Our records

23. At all stages of the process, written records will be kept showing:

- The nature of the complaint raised;
- The Foundation's response; and
- Any action taken and the reason for the action.

24. These records will be kept for a minimum of six years.

25. The case information will be shared internally as required to manage your complaint. It may also be shared with external organisations when they are helping us to deal with a complaint, for example, the relevant County FA, the related construction partner or supplier, or our funding partners.

26. There may also be certain circumstances where we would need to share your information or the case information, for example, where we are required to do so by law, for safeguarding purposes or in emergency situations.

27. Contact details provided through the process will not be used for any other purpose.

Additional information

28. The timescales referred to will be adhered to wherever possible. If it is not possible for the Foundation to respond within the timescales given, the Director of Business Services will provide an explanation of the reasons for the delay, and a timescale by which a full reply will be received.

29. In the absence of the Director of Business Services, another member of our Senior Management Team will be assigned to deliver the process.

30. The Foundation reserves the right to seek assistance from external facilitators at any stage in the procedure, in the interest of seeking a satisfactory outcome for all concerned.

31. If a complaint concerns an alleged wrongdoing or criminal offence by persons within the Foundation, you should raise your concern immediately with the Director of Business Services who will refer it to the Chief Executive.



Policy review

32. The Foundation is committed to keeping this Policy current and relevant. It will be monitored and reviewed every two years and may also be amended from time to time to reflect any changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or internal policy decisions.

33. This Policy is approved by the Foundation Board of Trustees every two years and in between times if significant revision is required.