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# CHARLTONATHLETIC

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**Charlton Athletic Football Club**

## **Complaints Policy**






## Version Control

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## Document Review

<b>Last Review</b>	<b>By</b>

## Version History

Version	Date Released	Originator	Authorised	Comments
1.0	January 2025	Dean Jarman		First Release



## Introduction

Charlton Athletic Football Club, ("the Club") welcomes comments and complaints from all members of the Club's community. We use this process to improve our commitment to the players and staff (including volunteers) so we can provide a safe and enjoyable environment in which people can develop. The Club is committed to the continuous improvement of the services it provides. We recognise that, occasionally, mistakes may be made, and this will not always meet the individual's requirements or expectations. For these reasons it is the Club's policy that all complaints should be:

- Received positively, treated seriously, and in an open manner;
- Acknowledged immediately, preferably in writing;
- Investigated;
- Resolved, wherever that is reasonably practical, within no longer than 13 working weeks;
- A source of learning with feedback used to ensure continuous improvement of the environment which the Club offers.

No complainant bringing a complaint under this procedure will be treated less favourably by any member of staff. If there is evidence to the contrary, the member of staff may be subject to disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.

## Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Club's community and anyone who engages with the Club, but does not replace procedures for, staff grievances and disciplinary action: those procedures should be used where appropriate. Any complaints or concerns raised which relate to an individual's conduct or behaviour and has potential safeguarding implications for any individual (child, adult, or vulnerable person) will be assessed initially by a Safeguarding Lead. Where appropriate, these concerns will then be escalated to the Senior Safeguarding Manager (SSM) and managed through the Club's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. Where relevant, a referral may be made to HR.

## Responsibilities

**All Club Staff** have a responsibility for receiving complaints, treating them seriously and dealing with them promptly and courteously in accordance with procedure set out below.

The **Club's HR Department** has a responsibility for resolving a complaint and initiating an investigation into a complaint when this is considered appropriate. Complaints relating to a safeguarding issue will be dealt with by a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The **SSM** and/or the **HR Manager** is responsible for resolving complaints which have not been resolved during the previous two stages. The outcome of this stage is final.

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, then the fourth stage following the English Football League's (EFL) Complaints Procedure should be followed.

The **Club Board** is responsible for ensuring the Complaint's Policy and Procedure are operating effectively and may become directly involved if a complaint is directed against the HR Manager or the SSM.

## Implementation and Development of Policy

### Stage One

The Club expects complaints to be made informally to a member of staff in the first instance. The complaint should be recorded by the member of staff on MyConcern and advice sought immediately from HR or a Designated Safeguarding Officer if any safeguarding concerns are suspected or



apparent. It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved at this level and any agreed action is captured in a record that is agreed by all parties.

### **Stage Two**

Where it is not possible to address issues informally with an appropriate manager or initial staff responses do not result in satisfactory resolutions, the complaint should be submitted in writing to [HR@cafc.com](mailto:HR@cafc.com) or if relating to a safeguarding concern to [safeguarding@cafc.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@cafc.co.uk).

The Club usually expects complaints to be made by the person concerned. The Club will, however, always consider complaints made by a parent or advocate as it is acknowledged that there are many reasons (including imbalances of power) that block people from making a complaint themselves.

It is very difficult to investigate anonymous complaints as there will always be information that cannot be gathered or clarified. Any complaints relating to potential safeguarding risks will however be taken seriously, including those which fall under the umbrella of the Club's Whistleblowing Policy and procedures.

The HR Department or the Safeguarding Team will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 7 days. They will then ensure that an independent member of staff is identified to investigate the complaint who has neither been directly involved with the complaint or personal interest in the case member.

The allocated independent staff member will respond in writing within 7 days explaining what has happened since receipt of the complaint and a result, if this is possible. Where this involves a member of staff, specific details of action taken will not be made available. This is to ensure that the Club's employees are afforded appropriate confidentiality and respect for their dignity at work.

If the complaint requires further investigation that cannot be carried out within the 7-day period, the investigating staff member shall keep the complainant informed and indicate the expected timescale for a response to be provided.

### **Stage Three**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the relevant investigating staff member's response, then the complaint will be forwarded to the HR Manager or Senior Safeguarding Manager to resolve as appropriate. The member of Senior Management will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and respond to the complainant within 8 working weeks to allow time for any further information gathering and investigations to be undertaken.

### **Stage Four**

If the complainant is still dissatisfied, they have the right to follow the English Football League (EFL) complaints procedure. Complaints should be made in writing and may be submitted by post to:

The Independent Football Ombudsman ("IFO")

By post: Suite 49, 33 Great George Street, Leeds, LS1 3AJ

By e-mail: [contact@theifo.co.uk](mailto:contact@theifo.co.uk)

Via the website: [www.theifo.co.uk](http://www.theifo.co.uk)

By telephone: 0800 588 4066

### **Complaints against the Senior Safeguarding Manager or Head of HR**

Complaints against the SSM or Head of HR should be addressed to the CEO, and sent by post to: The Valley, Floyd Road, Charlton, London, SE7 8BL for his urgent attention.



## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Club will maintain a confidential record of all complaints, appeals, and outcomes and consider the lessons learned from issues raised in order to assess what action if any would create a more positive experience and environment for those involved in participating in or providing club activities and to promote a safer environment. Themes and issues arising during each season will be collated and fed back to the Board to inform planning and priorities for the following season.