

# Gateshead Football Club Foundation



# Complaints Handling Policy

Version 1.0



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## Overview

As required by the Charity Commission, Gateshead Football Club Foundation must have, in writing, a complaint’s handling procedure, and all members must be aware of the procedures and act in accordance with them at all times.

## Definition of Complaint

A complaint is defined as ‘any expression of dissatisfaction, whether oral or written, and whether justified or not, from or on behalf of a client about the charities provision of, or failure to provide a service’.

### Who is responsible for recording a complaint?

Anyone who has taken a call from an end client over the telephone is responsible for ensuring this is forwarded to the relevant Trustee responsible for handling complaints. It's important to gather as much information as possible such as the client name, contact details and the nature of the complaint.

### Obligations to our clients

A copy of the complaint's procedure is required to be given to any client on request and to all complainants with the acknowledgement letter.

### Understanding our obligations

It is important for you to understand that all complaints (oral or written) must be forwarded immediately to the person responsible for handling complaints, as Gateshead Football Club Foundation is required to send a prompt written acknowledgement providing early reassurance that it has received the complaint and is dealing with it.

NB: If you are unsure whether an oral or written statement by a client is a complaint, you should always ensure that you pass this information on to the relevant person so that they can decide whether it is a complaint.

### Complaints relating to third parties

If we receive a complaint that is not about us, or our services, and assuming that we can identify the third party to whom the complaint should be addressed, we will carry out the following action:

- We will write to the third party concerned, explaining that we believe the complaint to be theirs, and suggesting that they contact the client directly.
- We will enclose a copy of the original complaint letter.
- We will write to the client, giving contact details of the third party, and invite them to get in touch. We will also enclose a copy of the letter we send to the firm.
- We will copy the third party in on this letter as well.

### Complaints Register

Once a complaint has been received it will be logged on the Complaints Register immediately, denoting the date of receipt. The register will be updated accordingly as the investigation progresses.

### Initial Acknowledgement letter

All written complaints must be acknowledged promptly in writing, this will generally be within 3 business days.

In respect of oral complaints, this still needs to be acknowledged promptly and will be treated as if received in writing, but the acknowledgement will also set out the Gateshead Football Club Foundation's understanding of the complaint and ask the client to confirm in writing if this understanding is inaccurate.

Assuming an investigation has not been completed, the acknowledgement letter will confirm:

- The date of complaint;
- That an investigation will be undertaken;
- (For oral complaints) the firm's understanding of the complaint and request confirmation of the accuracy of the Gateshead Football Club Foundation's understanding;
- That Gateshead Football Club Foundation will keep the client informed of developments with the investigation of the complaint;
- That if the investigation is not completed within 8 weeks of the receipt of the complaint, a further letter will be sent, informing why Gateshead Football Club Foundation is not yet in a position to resolve the complaint and give an indication of what action can then be taken;
- That on completion of the investigation the Gateshead Football Club Foundation shall write to inform of the outcome of the investigation; and
- Who should be contacted, should there be any further queries at this stage.

It is necessary for a copy of the complaints procedure to be enclosed with the initial acknowledgement letter.

### Subsequent Investigation

All complaints must be thoroughly investigated. Where necessary to contact third parties to obtain further information. If the person responsible for handling complaints is subject to the complaint, the investigation will be passed onto another senior person within Gateshead Football Club Foundation.

When the investigation is completed the client will be notified of the outcome of the investigation, and that if the client is not satisfied with the outcome that they may refer the matter to the Charity Commission. The letter will incorporate the name; address and telephone number of the Charity Commission.

### 4 Week Holding Letter

We will aim to resolve a complaint within 4 weeks of the initial complaint. If the investigation is still ongoing and the complaint cannot be resolved within 4 weeks, we will issue a 4-week holding letter to the client explaining that more time is required.

### Information

Gateshead Football Club Foundation will keep the client informed after the issue of the acknowledgement letter of the progress of the measures being taken for the complaint's resolution.

### Investigation not complete within 8 weeks

If after 8 weeks the investigation is still not concluded, the client will be notified in writing, highlighting the reasons for the delay and if the client is not satisfied with the progress to date.

### When will Gateshead Football Club Foundation deem the complaint to be closed?

If there has been no confirmation from the complainant within 8 weeks of Gateshead Football Club Foundation's most recent letter, the complaint will be considered closed.

### Review

Our Complaints Handling Policy is reviewed on a regular basis and at least on an annual basis.