



Notts County Football Club

Meadow Lane, Nottingham, NG2 3HJ

0115 952 9000

office@nottscountyfc.co.uk



Notts County Football Club Complaints Policy



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Purpose

Notts County Football Club has set out within this policy a range of processes and outcomes to ensure the integrity of Notts County Football Club can be upheld. This policy details the expectations of Notts County Football Club with regards to its employees, Board members, volunteers, members and all involved with the sport. If you are unhappy with any aspect of your experience, this policy explains the steps taken to ensure a fair and transparent outcome for all involved.

Service standards

Notts County Football Club aims to provide first class services. In working toward this, we aim to provide a professional and responsive service to our players, parents, affiliated partners and the public.

We will:

- Ensure you receive timely and knowledgeable advice
- Be courteous and respectful
- Make sure your experience is a positive one
- Inform you of significant changes to the way we operate
- Operate a no tolerance approach to abuse, harassment and discrimination ➤ Reflect upon feedback from members, clubs, partners and the public

The service standards we set are for guidance, rather than being absolute and we trust that you will take this into consideration when judging our performance.

Service commitment

Notts County Football Club staff and volunteers will conduct themselves in a courteous and responsive manner, listening to your requests and concerns and advising you of what can be provided and in what manner.

Where we are not able to meet your request, we will let you know why and attempt to signpost you to the most appropriate place for you to direct your request. We will treat all people with respect and without discrimination, making any necessary adjustments to accommodate reasonable needs, wherever practicable.

Correspondence

We have a dedicated email address which is office@nottscountyfc.co.uk which is continuously monitored. Any complaints, once received, will be forwarded to an appropriate line manager who will contact the complainant.

www.nottscountyfc.co.uk

Notts County Football Club Limited
VAT No. 828477978 | Company No. 04789632



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We aim to acknowledge all communications within 5 working days, and we aim to provide a full response in 30 working days.

Any complaints sent to an individual at Notts County Football Club will be forwarded to the Commercial & Fan Engagement Executive for recording and forwarding to the appropriate line manager.

At times it may be necessary to request that communications to Notts County Football Club are sent in a specified format. On these rare circumstances, we reserve the right to not communicate in response if the correct format is not submitted.

Complaints & Whistleblowing

In striving to be the best we can, Notts County Football Club is seeking to continuously improve the service we deliver and to learn from any complaints. For this purpose, we record all complaints and any resulting learning and service improvements, and these are reported to the Chief Executive and the Board on a regular basis.

Complaints Relating to Notts County Football Club

A complaint is considered to be an expression of dissatisfaction with the policies, decisions, service provision or the behaviour of a Notts County Football Club employee or volunteer, including Board Members.

Complaints can be made verbally or in writing, though formal complaints should be made in writing wherever possible or the person making the complaint verbally must expressly state that it is a complaint. The complainant will decide whether they are making an informal or formal complaint.

Complaints Relating to Individuals, Groups or Organisations

Notts County Football Club is responsible for upholding fair play, respect and consistency and transparency within the club. As a result, it may be required for Notts County Football Club to investigate to bring matters to a close and ensure an objective investigation can be concluded.

Notts County Football Club consider the following to be matters for complaint.

- Disciplinary cases
- Misconduct of Committee Players, Coaches, Staff, Board Directors and Volunteers
- Actions of a Criminal Nature (e.g. Safeguarding, Discrimination, Harassment, Fraudulent Activity, Violent or Threatening Behaviour)
- Any other action or behaviour that may be deemed to bring Notts County Football Club into disrepute (e.g. doping, malicious or threatening conduct)

Actions or behaviours that fall outside of this will be referred back to the appropriate line manager.

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Informal Complaints

An informal complaint is more of a comment, recommendation or smaller issue that does not require a formal response, e.g. someone just wants to air a concern and ensure that a member of staff is aware of the issue.

Notts County Football Club will try to resolve a complaint as quickly as possible. Where suitable, this shall be done when the complaint is first received. In most instances, this will probably be more achievable where the complaint is an informal one. No investigation or disciplinary action should be taken as a result of an informal complaint. Rather, a no-blame, conciliatory approach should be used to assist the individuals in reaching an outcome that will ensure appropriate conduct in the future. The main focus is to address the individuals' concerns and address them, without further interruption.

Although this may result in an acceptable resolution for the complainant, the person who has handled the complaint should make a written note of the date of the complaint; who has made it; what it was about and how it was dealt with.

The Club's Commercial & Fan Engagement Executive is responsible for keeping a record of all complaints in accordance with our Privacy Policy, a copy of which can be accessed at <https://www.nottscountyfc.co.uk/website-privacy-policy/>.

Formal Complaints

A formal complaint is when a person has a dissatisfaction that they want investigated and a formal response made to them.

All formal complaints should be addressed directly to office@nottscountyfc.co.uk in the first instance.

Notts County Football Club has Codes of Conduct which set out behavioural expectations for our

- Players and Academy Players
- Volunteers
- Coaches
- Staff
- Board Members

These Codes of Conduct do not apply to Notts County Football Club employees who fall under the remit of the Club's formal HR policies and procedures.

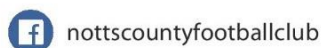
Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is defined as wrongdoing, in the public interest, which is usually something you have seen at work or relating to a workplace. Notts County Football Club strives at all times to conduct its business with the highest standards of integrity and honesty. It expects all employees to maintain the same standards in everything they do. You are therefore encouraged to report any wrongdoing by Notts County Football Club or its employees that falls short of these business principles.

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The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1988 protects employees who report wrongdoing within the workplace, but it is the aim of this policy to ensure that as far as possible you are able to tell us about any wrongdoing involving Notts County Football Club staff which you believe has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur. You are protected by law if you complain about any of the following:

- a criminal offence, e.g. fraud
- someone's health and safety is in danger
- risk or actual damage to the environment
- a miscarriage of justice
- the company is breaking the law, e.g. does not have the right insurance
- you believe someone is covering up wrongdoing

We recognise that people may not always feel comfortable about discussing their concerns, especially if they believe that Notts County Football Club itself is responsible for wrongdoing. The aim of this policy is to ensure that you are confident that you can raise any matter with Notts County Football Club that concerns you in the knowledge that it will be taken seriously, treated as confidential and that no action will be taken against you.

An informal approach will be treated as completely confidential.

If the matter requires further investigation, such an investigation will be carried out and you will be informed of the outcome and what, if any, action has been taken.

If you remain unhappy about the speed or conduct of the investigation or the way in which the matter has been resolved, you should refer the matter to the President. When your complaint has been investigated, you will be informed of the result and what, if any, action has been taken.

Notts County Football Club undertakes that no person who makes a bona fide report under this procedure will be subjected to any detriment as a result, in accordance with Section 47B of the Employment Rights Act 1996. In the event that you believe you are being subjected to a detriment by any person within Notts County Football Club as a result of your decision to invoke the procedure, you must inform the Notts County Football Club immediately and appropriate action will be taken to protect you from any reprisals.

If it should become clear that the procedure has not been invoked in good faith, for example for malicious reasons or to pursue a personal grudge against an employee, this will constitute misconduct.

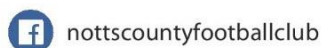
Notts County Football Club is keen to hear of any concerns that you may have about wrongdoing at work and encourages you to use the procedure described above wherever possible.

Notts County Football Club recognises there may be matters that cannot be dealt with internally and external authorities may need to become involved. Where this is necessary Notts County Football Club reserves the right to make such a referral without your consent.

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What this Policy Does Not Cover

Notts County Football Club will endeavour to resolve your complaint to a satisfactory outcome. However, there are some complaints that Notts County Football Club cannot investigate, such as:

- Personal disputes not related Notts County Football Club
- Online/social media comments *unless bringing the club into disrepute or of a criminal nature and will be passed to Police
- Matters relating to the normal business of club
- Issues relating to events delivered by third parties
- Appeals in relation to Notts County Football Club events (e.g. sanctions and penalties)

We will refer any matters such as this back to a local/club or regional level and the correct process must be followed.

How a Complaint will be Addressed

A formal complaint must be made in writing to office@nottscountyfc.co.uk and will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days, with a summary of what the issue is understood to be. Where possible, it is advisable to use the template form enclosed within this policy.

In this acknowledgement letter/email, the complainant will be notified of how the matter will be progressed and who will be taking responsibility for investigating the matter. In some instances, this will be the line manager responsible for the area of operation which the complaint relates to.

Where the complaint is about the policies, decisions or practices of Notts County Football Club itself, a member of the senior management team will be the person who investigates and responds. The Commercial & Fan Engagement Executive will oversee the handling of the complaint and ensure that the processes and timeframes are appropriate.

As part of any investigation into a complaint, in addition to evidence provided in a formal complaint, it may be required to obtain further written statements, or interview the complainant and other relevant witnesses.

Where a formal response is required and upon investigation, a breach of policy, rules or Codes of Conduct appears to have occurred, Notts County Football Club will convene a meeting to review the details of the complaint. This will involve members of staff who have not been involved in any investigation and will independently review the details of the complaint and the group will come to a decision (by majority vote if necessary) on any necessary outcome or sanctions.

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The investigating manager will consider the following, including but not limited to:

- The nature of the actions and the manner in which the breach occurred
- The existence of provocation and whether the Party acted in retaliation and/or self- defence
- The effect on the victim, including any injury caused
- The vulnerability of the victim
- The effect of any actions on Notts County Football Club or the community
- The level of premeditation
- Absence or lack of remorse
- Status as a persistent offender
- Prolongation of the incident
- The continued use of offensive, abusive and insulting language and/or behaviour
- Calling an official's integrity into question
- Failure to comply with an official's or Staff Member's requests
- Aggressive behaviour towards anyone within the Notts County Football Club community
- The need for a deterrent to combat the particular pattern of offending
- Whether the complaint refers to behaviour of a discriminatory nature
- Any element of physical violence
- Whether the complaint refers to more than one breach of policies, rules or Code of Conduct
- A good disciplinary record
- Good character
- Conduct of the subject of the complaint during any investigation
- Any mitigating factors

Where possible, complaints will be investigated, and a proposed resolution made within 30 working days of its acknowledgement.

Potential outcomes of a complaint

A complaint, if found to be valid, will be responded to with one or more of the below:

- An apology
- A proposed remedy for the complainant
- An indication of what service improvement will be made to prevent the problem occurring again
- Progression to a disciplinary case if the investigation discloses a potential breach of a Code of Conduct or a wider Notts County Football Club policy, for a volunteer or member; or if it discloses a potential disciplinary matter against a member of staff. Whilst the Complainant may be advised that this is how a matter may be progressed, they will not be entitled to any details of the charges or the outcome of the disciplinary procedure

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Notts County Football Club staff may be subject to the Human Resources Disciplinary Procedure, which may result in verbal or written warnings, suspension or termination of their employment with Notts County Football Club, with the right to appeal, should a complaint be upheld.

Complaints found to be frivolous, vexatious or malicious the complainant may be subject to disciplinary proceedings if they are a member or connected participant, or human resources

procedures if they are a member of staff. Repeated frivolous or vexatious complaints may lead to the withdrawal of services or communications by Notts County Football Club, to that individual.

It may be necessary to deal with some complaints under the Safeguarding Children Policy or Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy.

These policies can be viewed via the Notts County Football Club website and you will be informed if your complaint is dealt with under either of these policies.

Appeal

Where the complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome or conduct of their complaint, there will be a right of appeal. Appeals should be forwarded to the investigating manager, in writing, detailing the reasons why the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome or conduct of their complaint. The Commercial & Fan Engagement Executive will either deal with the appeal or appoint another individual, independent of the original investigation, which may be external to Notts County Football Club.

Jurisdiction

Notts County Football Club works with the Notts County Football in the Community and potentially other businesses or organisations associated with the Notts County Football Club name. Being part of the Notts County Football Club brand, each of these organisations are required to adopt and abide by Notts County Football Club's policies and regulations. However, they are not required to adopt this Customer Charter and Complaints Policy although it is strongly recommended that they develop their own Customer Charter and Complaints Policy and suggest that they use this Policy as a guide. Any autonomous bodies, as well as clubs and other connected participants are accountable for their own affairs and this policy does not impart accountability on the part of Notts County Football Club for any of those autonomous bodies. Notts County Football Club may appoint an external, independent body to investigate, mediate or arbitrate on any appeal cases; this may be an independent panel convened by Notts County Football Club or an external body such as Sport Resolutions.

Confidentiality

Notts County Football Club is committed to keeping the details of your complaint confidential.

Where it is necessary to investigate a complaint and speak to the subject(s) of your complaint or witnesses, we will inform you that we are doing so. We will also inform these parties that the details of the complaint remain confidential.

Where disciplinary cases are pursued, again, we would anticipate that all details remain confidential and only those investigating and involved in the investigation are aware of the complaint.

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In certain circumstances, we cannot guarantee that the details of your complaint will remain within Notts County Football Club. Where an allegation is made of a potentially criminal nature, external agencies such as the police have to be notified, who may request details held on the allegation by Notts County Football Club.

Where details of complaints are not kept confidential, such as disclosing personal information, sharing details of investigations with members, the general public or posting details online/social media, this may result in disciplinary action commencing. For more information about how Notts County Football Club will use your data, please see our Privacy Policy.

Contact Details

office@nottscountyfc.co.uk

Dan.Leivers@nottscountyfc.co.uk – Academy Manager

Josh.bradshaw@nottscountyfc.co.uk – Academy Head of Safeguarding (DSO)

Jake.Henry@nottscountyfc.co.uk - Head of Coaching

Your Questions Answered

Notts County Football Club is committed to providing a great participant experience. We hope that most problems, concerns or areas of dissatisfaction can be resolved informally at the time they occur.

However, should that not be possible or appropriate, we take complaints about our policies, decisions and service provision seriously, and are committed to investigating all valid complaints, with a view to establishing what went wrong and whether there are service improvements or lessons to be learnt to ensure we are the best we can be.

The questions and answers below should assist you in making a complaint and ensure the process is understood.

Can I talk through my grievance through with someone and resolve it informally instead of making a formal complaint?

Yes, grievances can often be sorted out on an informal basis, which is often quicker and less onerous. Don't be afraid to speak to a relevant member of staff or volunteer to see if they might be able to resolve the misunderstanding. Ask to talk to a member of staff who will be able to advise you or put you in touch with someone who can help.

No investigation or disciplinary action will be taken as the result of an informal complaint unless of a potentially criminal nature and this will be referred to external agencies.

How do I make a complaint about the behaviour of a member of Notts County Football Club?

If your complaint is about the actions or behaviour of a person who is participating, working or volunteering for Notts County Football Club (including Directors of Notts County Football Club) then please refer to Notts County Football Club's Complaints Policy

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What are your Codes of Conduct?

Notts County Football Club have a number of areas governed by specific Codes of Conduct these include:

- Parents and Carers
- Coaches
- U18 Players
- Senior Players
- Volunteers

How to I make a complaint about an element of practice or delivery, a policy, decision or service?

If you would like to submit a complaint to Notts County Football Club, you can put it in writing and send it to office@nottscountyfc.co.uk.

Where possible, initial contact regarding any query or complaint should, in the first instance, be made to the email address above. However, complaints can also be addressed to:

dan.leivers@nottscountyfc.co.uk

Academy Manager

Notts County FC, Meadow Lane Stadium, Meadow Lane, Nottingham, NG2 3HJ

Telephone number 0115 955 7241

Can I make my complaint anonymously?

We would encourage everyone to identify themselves when they put in their complaint but understand that sometimes there are valid reasons for not wanting to put your name to an issue. In order to ensure that serious issues of concern are raised and addressed, we have a Whistleblowing Policy which allows all participants to raise issues without fear of any victimisation or reprisal.

We would also encourage you to raise such issues internally, through a complaint to the responsible line manager, but recognise the importance of being able to take concerns to an outside body. We have identified the usual agencies which have a responsibility to consider allegations of serious misconduct, for example Health and Safety issues or financial mismanagement.

What will happen to my complaint?

If your complaint is formal, you will receive an acknowledgement in writing within 5 working days, with a summary of what the complaint is understood to be. You will also be told how the matter will be progressed and who is responsible for investigating the matter. Wherever possible, complaints will be investigated, and a proposed resolution made within a maximum of 30 working days.

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Who will deal with my complaint?

Working with partners means Notts County Football Club may not be the right people to look at your complaint. Separately registered businesses or organisations may have their own policies, although they use the Notts County Football Club name and they are responsible for the services they deliver.

If the investigation discloses potential breach of the disciplinary policy this will be referred to the appropriate authority and you will be advised of this.

Within Notts County Football Club, your complaint will be dealt with by the person responsible for the area of operation to which the complaint relates. If your complaint is related to the behaviours of a member of staff it may be forwarded to the HR Director to ensure that appropriate disciplinary procedures are applied. The Commercial & Fan Engagement Executive will oversee the handling of the complaint and ensure that the processes and timeframes are appropriate.

At the conclusion of the matter, the person handling your complaint will make a record of it, how it was dealt with and the resolution before sending it to the Commercial & Fan Engagement Executive for a record to be kept in accordance with our Data Protection and GDPR Policies.

What are the potential outcomes of my complaint?

If your complaint is upheld, you will be responded to with

- An apology
- A proposed remedy
- An indication of what service improvement will be made, or
- Progression to a Disciplinary Charge if the investigation discloses a breach of Notts County Football Club's Codes of Conduct or the Disciplinary Policy.

Do I have a right to appeal if I am not happy with the result of my complaint?

Yes, you do have a right to appeal.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the investigating line manager, detailing why you are unhappy with the outcome or conduct of the complaint. The investigating line manager responsible will refer your appeal to an appropriate manager who has had no previous involvement with your complaint. The person conducting the appeal will write to you with their decision.

There is no further right of appeal.

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Can I keep complaining?

You may not be happy with the outcome of your complaint or any appeal you have made, but provided the proper process has been followed, we are unable to take any further action. Repeat complaints about the same issue will not alter this and at times complaints can become vexatious and/or persistent, causing undue stress for staff, volunteers and members as well as resulting in a disproportionate use of Notts County Football Club's resources.

In dealing with such situations the Academy management team will ensure the complaints procedure has been correctly implemented and that no material element of the complaint has been overlooked or inadequately addressed.

Where a wider complaint is deemed to be vexatious, persistent, is considered to have no basis or genuine substance, Notts County Football Club reserves the right not to investigate.

In this situation, Notts County Football Club will notify the complainant within 21 working days. In extreme cases of vexatious and/or persistent complaints Notts County Football Club may take other formal steps and actions against members and connected participants.

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