



# Academy Complaints Policy

NEWPORT COUNTY AFC

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## 1. Policy Statement

Newport County Association Football Club welcomes feedback from players, parents and carers, and all stakeholders, to improve the overall experience in every area of our Academy's activities.

This policy and procedure is designed to provide clear and transparent guidance on the way in which the Academy receive and handle complaints and positive feedback, relating to its provision, services, partners, and employees.

The policy supports our overarching commitment to excellence, fairness, transparency, and continuous improvement; however, we recognise that, on occasion, the provision may not meet an individual's requirements or expectations.

All complaints will be:

- Treated seriously and in an open manner
- Acknowledged within 3 working days unless extenuating circumstances exist
- Investigated proportionately
- Resolved, wherever it is reasonably practicable, within 13 working weeks
- Used as feedback to improve the service that the Academy offers
- Investigated with a reassurance that no complainant bringing a complaint under this procedure will be treated less favourably by any member of staff. If there is evidence of the contrary, the staff member may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

## 2. Scope

The policy applies to all Academy employees including volunteers, but does not replace procedures for staff grievances, disciplinary action, or safeguarding children' or adults at Risk.' The specific procedures relating to those areas will be used where appropriate.

## 3. Responsibilities

3.1 All full time Academy Staff have a responsibility for receiving complaints, treating them seriously and dealing with them promptly and courteously, in accordance with the procedure set out below.

3.2 The Head of Academy Operations will be responsible for assessing the nature and extent of each specific complaint and preparing an appropriate response to the complainant within the agreed timescale. A proportionate plan of action will be agreed with the Academy Manager and implemented.

3.3 Senior Managers (including the Academy Manager) have a responsibility for resolving a complaint, and leading or contributing to an investigation into a complaint when this is

considered appropriate.

3.4 The Head of Football Operations / Club Secretary is responsible for resolving complaints which have not been resolved during the previous two stages. The decision made by the Chief Operating Officer is final.

3.5 The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that the complaints policy and procedure are operating effectively and may become directly involved if a complaint is directed against the Chief Operating Officer.

3.6 The English Football League (EFL) will receive any referral from the Academy in relation to any matter that remains unresolved following the internal processes (Stages One to Four)

#### 4. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

All complaints handled by the Club's Academy will be considered in accordance with the following legislation and statutory regulations:

- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- EFL Youth Development Rules

#### 5. Complaint Handling Process

Newport County Association Football Club's Academy defines a complaint as:

“an expression of dissatisfaction made to the company, relating to its products or services, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response is explicitly or implicitly, expected.”

5.1 Any person or organisation ('the complainant'), who is dissatisfied with Academy service or facilities, or the complaints handling process itself, may contact the Newport County Academy to complain.

5.2 Where possible, complaints should be made in writing to ensure the details of the complaint are clear and concise.

5.3 When making a complaint, the complainant should explain their concern and/or experience, in as much detail as possible, including whether any action has been taken prior to making a formal complaint.

#### 5.4 Complaints must be made no later than:

- Six months after the date on which the matter, subject of the complaint, occurred, or
- Six months after the date on which the complaint came to the notice of the complainant.

If there are extenuating circumstances which impact on this set of time scales and it is still possible and proportionate to investigate the complaint, the Academy will make the appropriate consideration.

#### Stage One

The Academy aim for all complaints to resolved informally wherever possible and an action plan is formulated and agreed by all parties.

Complaints can be made via the following methods:

- In person directly to a full time member of Academy staff
- By email directly into the Academy: [academy.admin@newport-county.co.uk](mailto:academy.admin@newport-county.co.uk)
- By post: Newport County AFC Academy, University of South Wales Sport Park, CF37 5UP

A record of the complaint should be made by the person receiving the complaint.

#### Stage Two

All correspondence received will be assessed by the Head of Academy Operations as to its nature and extent, and an appropriate response will be communicated within three working days of receipt, unless extenuating circumstances exist. If a complaint requires additional investigation, the reporting person will be informed.

Where the complaint involves a member of Academy staff, specific details of any action taken may not be made available for reasons of confidentiality. This matter will also be referred to Human Resources.

If the complaint requires further investigation, an appropriate member of staff will be allocated that responsibility. That person will keep the complainant updated and will communicate an anticipated timescale for the response to be provided.

If the complaint involves a senior member of Academy staff, it may be appropriate for the Club to appoint an appropriate member of the Senior Management Team to investigate the complaint.

#### Stage Three

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the allocated staff member's response, the complaint will be forwarded to the appropriate member of the Club's Senior Management Team to resolve. They will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and respond to the complainant

within two working weeks, and a final reply will be completed within eight working weeks to allow time for any further information gathering and investigations to be undertaken.

#### Stage Four

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the response, then the matter will be referred to the Head of Football Operations / Club Secretary. The relevant person will respond within three weeks, and their decision is final.

#### Complaints against the Head of Football Operations / Club Secretary

Complaints against the Head of Football Operations or Club Secretary should be addressed in writing to the  
Chair of Board of Directors at:

Newport County Association Football Club  
Rodney Parade Stadium  
Newport  
NP19 0UU

The complaints procedure should be finalised in no more than 13 working weeks unless there are exceptional circumstances, in which case the complainant will be kept informed of progress.

#### External Referral - EFL

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with any decision or outcome reached, they can refer the matter to the English Football League using the following email addresses:

- EFL Enquiries – [enquiries@efl.com](mailto:enquiries@efl.com)
- EFL Youth Development – [YouthDevelopment@efl.com](mailto:YouthDevelopment@efl.com)

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