



Durham Women FC Complaints Policy

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This policy is in place to cover all aspects of Durham Women Football Club inclusive of Professional Games Academy, Durham Cestria and ETC Centres.

Durham Women Football Club welcomes your views and comments and therefore, encourages you to contact us should you feel it necessary.

In this policy, the club endeavours to make a distinction between concerns and complaints as follows:

A concern is an expression of worry or doubt over an issue for which reassurances are sought;

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction concerning action taken, lack of action or the way in which a matter has been handled.

Usually concerns can be resolved informally, therefore please feel free to come and discuss any concerns you may have with us so that they do not progress to a complaint.

Where a concern cannot be resolved informally and therefore develops into a complaint, the concern should follow the processes set out in this policy. Complaints may be made openly or anonymously by any person with a legitimate interest in the Club. Please note, anonymous complaints will be left to the discretion of the Club and its Management. It is in everyone's best interests that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The Club want to ensure that any complaint made is fully considered to ensure that a satisfactory resolution has been reached. We therefore aim to resolve concerns informally, through reasoned discussion in order to avoid the formal procedures outlined in this Policy.

In the event that you would like to take a more formal approach, this policy describes formal steps that can be taken should you feel our attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful. Please note that this Policy will be followed where a complaint is lodged concerning a child, but which does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Therefore, any concerns of a safeguarding nature should be raised directly through the Club Head of Safeguarding (Marc McPhillips, marc.mcphillips@durhamwfc.co.uk).

Where a complaint is registered, the process set out below should be followed and regard should be had to the following:

1. Raising a concern or making a complaint should not affect any relationship that the complainant may have with the Club;
2. All conversations and correspondence will be handled with discretion however, some information which a complainant has provided may have to be shared with others to ensure the effective handling of the complaint;



3. All complaints will be investigated fully;

4. When investigating a complaint that involves a Club player, the Club may need to talk to the player together with any witnesses, including other players in order to resolve the complaint efficiently

Where a concern cannot be resolved informally and the complainant wishes to lodge a formal complaint, this should be put in writing so that a full investigation can be carried out.

1. Informal Stage In the first instance, the complainant should raise their concern with the person whose actions or behaviour it is about or directly with a senior member of club staff.

The parents/carers of Academy players may wish to raise their concerns with the member of staff they feel most comfortable approaching; this may be the age group coach. If this does not result in a satisfactory resolution, or if the complainant is not comfortable in doing this, the concern should be raised with the Head of Academy (Bob Wilkinson, bob.wilkinson@durhamwfc.co.uk). The Head of Academy will make a record of the concern and will ensure that it is dealt with by the most appropriate member of staff at the Academy. If after discussions and/or a meeting with the Head of Academy the complainant is not satisfied with the Academy's response, further attempts may be made to resolve the issue informally. If this is felt to be unsuitable then, at this stage, the complainant should be advised of the avenues available to enable the concern to be escalated and resolved formally.

2. Formal Stage If the informal process has not resolved the concern then a formal complaint should be put in writing and sent to the Club (by post or by email), addressed to General Manager Lee Sanders (lee.sanders@durhamwfc.co.uk).

Should the complaint be regarding the General Manager Lee Sanders then it should be escalated directly to the club HR department (Emma Hughes) using the following email address emma@shrewd-hr.co.uk

Those dealing with the complaint will consider if an internal investigation is required and will liaise with the relevant Club departments in relation to this. It may be necessary for the person dealing with the complaint to seek input from other senior members of staff at the Club. The Club will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days. Further investigation may be required, and meetings may be convened with the relevant parties to discuss the matter further. Due to the nature and potential confidentiality of some processes it may not always be possible to share the outcome of the investigation with all parties; however, please note that all concerns and complaints are fully investigated.

3. Appeal if complainants remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation; they should be advised that they have the right to make a formal appeal to the General Manager Lee Sanders. Any appeals should be made in writing within 5 working days of the date of receipt of the outcome. A response will be provided to the complainant within 5 working days, following which a formal meeting will be arranged.

All Complaints will be taken seriously and be dealt with confidentially.