



Complaints Policy

The Boys' Brigade is committed to dealing with any complaints fairly, effectively and in a timely fashion. This policy is aimed at BB Leaders, parents and carers, children and young people, church members and members of the public. Employed staff should use the Grievance Policy published in the staff handbook.

Any complaints / disputes should initially be dealt with at local level without recourse to the complaints policy. If you are unhappy about how something has been handled within a company, please speak or write to the company captain / chaplain before approaching headquarters. If it relates to a Battalion / District, please contact one of the local office-bearers.

1. What constitutes a complaint?

The list below sets out several issues that could be considered as complaints. Please note that the Brigade does make a distinction between complaints and safeguarding issues.

Any safeguarding issues / concerns should immediately be referred to Brigade HQ at Felden Lodge.

Examples of issues defined as complaints:

- Conflict between leaders
- Poor practice or misconduct (non- safeguarding)
- Non-compliance with BB regulations / guidance
- Discrimination or harassment experienced by a leader or parent/carer
- Parents complaining of their child receiving unfair treatment (in gaining awards, for example)
- Members of the public complaining about noise/ vandalism caused by BB
- Church officials and BB leaders in conflict
- Any breach of the Brigade's code of conduct

NB: the above list is not exhaustive.

2. Regional HQ Contacts

If you do wish to raise a complaint, please contact the Regional HQ in the first instance.

England & Wales:

The Boys' Brigade, Felden Lodge, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP3 0BL

Northern Ireland:

The Boys' Brigade, 'Newport', 117 Culcavey Road, Hillsborough, BT26 6HH

Scotland:

The Boys' Brigade, Carronvale House, Larbert, FK5 3LH

Republic of Ireland:

The Boys' Brigade, Unit C1 Nutgrove Office Park, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14

3. Complaints process

1. Complaints should be sent in writing to the appropriate Regional Director.
2. The Regional Director will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and record the date and nature of the complaint, the name and contact details of the complainant and the relationship of that person to the leader/Company involved. All Regions will use the same format to register complaints.
3. Complainants will be asked if they have tried to resolve the issue locally before escalating to the Regional Director, and if not should be encouraged to do so.
4. If a complainant is unwilling to identify themselves, it may not be possible to process their complaint. We will maintain the confidentiality of all personal information and will not disclose without permission unless legally obliged to.
5. The Regional Director will notify any BB member / leader and their company captain if a complaint has been made against them.
6. The Regional Director will decide whether to carry out a formal investigation or whether it is best to resolve the matter informally without resorting to formal investigation.
7. If an investigation is required, the Regional Director should investigate the matter in the most appropriate way and should report back to the complainant within 2 weeks. If this timescale is extended for whatever reason, the complainant should be contacted with an explanation and a revised estimate of when the matter will be concluded.
8. A record should be kept of the complaint, any actions taken and any good practice recommendations arising from the case should be passed to the Brigade Secretary. This will enable audit trails to be established if there are patterns emerging in relation to individuals or Companies. BBHQ will maintain a log of all complaints to enable the Brigade to establish trends and any need for policy development or training.

4. Outcomes

In the event of a complaint being upheld the following actions will be available to the Brigade, these include:

- A written warning may be issued to the leader involved. This will remain on their file for 5 years.
- The leader will be required to undertake appropriate training within an agreed timescale.
- Certain restrictions may be placed on the leader's registration – i.e. not to attend residential etc
- The leader's registration may be suspended for a given period.
- The leader's appointment may be cancelled.

5. What if the complainant is not satisfied?

In some cases, it may be possible for the complainant to request leave to appeal. Any request for an appeal should be made in writing to the Brigade Secretary, unless the complaint or the process involves the Brigade Secretary, in which case it would go to the Chair of Trustees. Any request for an appeal should be submitted within 28 days of receiving the outcome of an investigation.

The complainant would have to demonstrate one of the following grounds if an application to appeal was to be granted:

- Correct procedure was not followed
- Certain facts were ignored or not considered in resolving the complaint
- The outcome is not proportionate to the matter under consideration

If an appeal is granted, this will be considered by an appeal panel appointed by the Brigade Secretary or the Chair of Trustees