

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

BRACKLEY & DISTRICT ALLOTMENT & GARDEN HOLDERS ASSOCIATION LTD



This policy advises you of how to make a complaint to Brackley & District Allotment and Garden Holders Association, hereafter referred to as BAA. This is the policy that we will follow if your complaint is about someone's conduct or behavior. This could be because you think that someone has behaved in a way that is unprofessional, discriminatory, offensive or intimidating. It may be because you believe that someone has broken important rules or policies.

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

You have the right to complain: we take complaints seriously.

You should not be harassed, bullied or put at a disadvantage because of making a complaint.

Equality: you should receive a proper response to your complaint, regardless of your age, gender, disability, race, religion, nationality, social status, sexual orientation or political persuasion.

Fairness: we believe that complaints should be dealt with fairly and openly.

Confidentiality: we treat complaints as confidentially as possible.

PROCEDURE

We hope that most issues that arise on or about the allotment sites can be resolved through informal discussion to the satisfaction of all parties. The following complaints procedure exists for the infrequent occasions when this has not been able to take place.

- **Stage 1: Informal Discussion to Formal Complaint**

The complainant should discuss the matter with their site representative/Committee member, who should reply either verbally or in writing within 7 days. If the complainant is not satisfied with the reply, they should put the matter in writing to the Committee, by contacting the Secretary/Chair, within 14 days, stating the reasons why the decision requires further discussion.

- **Stage 2: Committee Meeting**

The Committee will consider the matter within 28 days of the letter and the decision of the Committee will be communicated in writing to the complainant within 7 days. If the complaint directly relates to a member of the Committee, they should not be included in the discussions relating to the matter.

When the Committee deems the matter brought forward to be of a disciplinary nature or has a potential to escalate to a gross detrimental impact, the committee may enact the suspension of the relevant persons and call for the urgent committee meeting to take place.

- **Stage 3: Appeal - Independent Adjudicator**

If the complainant believes that the decision of the Committee requires further consideration, they may appeal against the decision. They must state their reasons why they believe the decision should be reviewed, in writing, within 14 days of the Committee's decision letter.

There is no obligation for the Committee to disclose the exact wording of the complainant's statement to the person the complaint is brought against, however, the summary/a précis of witness statements will be given when requested.

The complaint will be put to an **Independent Appeals Adjudicator**.

The Independent Appeals Adjudicator will be someone who is appointed only to deal with complaints under this procedure, they cannot be a member of BAA.

The Independent Adjudicator will decide if the correct procedures have been adhered to. They will hear each party present their case (or alternatively consider written submissions), they will scrutinize any evidence and then make a final decision in private. S/he will then communicate their decision to all parties concerned within 7 days of the meeting.

The decision of the Independent Adjudicator will be final.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OR RESULTS OF A COMPLAINT

Below is a list of the most likely possible outcomes for complaints but this list should not be considered exhaustive.

- A change in arrangements for particular activities;
- An explanation or apology;
- An agreement to communicate or act differently in the future;
- Suspension/Removal from the Committee, if the complaint is made and upheld against a member of that Committee;
- Notice to a tenant to quit their allotment, where the complaint is against a tenant; or
- Closure of the complaint without action.

POLICY REVIEW

The Committee will review this policy regularly as required.

Policy adopted: 17/02/2020

Adapted from the NSALG
complaints policy document.

**Independent Adjudicator 2022:
The National Allotment Society**

Chair – Jon Sessions
Secretary – Georgina Garner