

Complaints Procedure



Riding Establishment:

Overview

We are committed to delivering high standards of service and to maintaining the welfare of both people and horses. While complaints about our services or facilities are rare, we recognise that concerns and constructive feedback provide valuable opportunities to correct shortcomings and improve the way we work.

This procedure sets out how complaints will be received, investigated, and resolved in a fair, transparent, and timely way. It should be read in conjunction with the our Safeguarding Policy and our Whistleblowing Policy, which together provide additional routes for raising concerns relating to the safety or well-being of children, young people, or adults at risk, or where staff or volunteers need to raise concerns confidentially and in the public interest.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all complaints raised by clients, staff, volunteers, contractors, or members of the public about the services we provide, the conduct of our staff or volunteers, or the facilities we operate.

How to Complain

Complaints should be made to:

Name:

Telephone No:

Email:

Complaints may be raised in writing, by email, by telephone, or in person. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that people with communication difficulties, disabilities, or language barriers are able to raise concerns.

Recording and Acknowledging Complaints

All complaints will be recorded, including the complainant's details, the date received, and the nature of the concern. We will acknowledge receipt within two working days and confirm how the matter will be handled.

Investigation and Response

Complaints will be investigated in a fair, proportionate, and confidential manner. Depending on the nature of the complaint, we may first meet with the complainant to clarify the issue or proceed directly to an internal investigation. We will aim to provide a response within five

working days. Where a complaint is complex or requires more time, we will keep the complainant informed of progress and provide updates until the matter is concluded.

Outcomes may include confirmation that the matter has been investigated and closed, or a referral to a competent external authority where appropriate. In some cases, we may not be able to share full details of an investigation's findings, for example where information is confidential under employment law or safeguarding regulations. However, we will always provide assurance that appropriate action has been taken.

Safeguarding Complaints

Where a complaint relates to the safety or welfare of a child, young person or adult at risk, it will be referred to the Equestrian Safeguarding Officer (ESO) without delay. If necessary, the matter will also be reported to the external authorities, reflecting our duties under the Children Act 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, and the Care Act 2014.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All complaints will be handled sensitively and in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Records will be kept securely, only shared where necessary, and retained for no longer than is legally or operationally required.

Protection for Complainants

No complainant will suffer victimisation, disadvantage, or retaliation for raising a complaint in good faith. Complaints made maliciously or in bad faith may, however, be treated as misconduct.

Appealing the Results of an Investigation

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome or the way in which a complaint has been handled, they may request a review by a senior manager or trustee who has not previously been involved in the matter. If the complainant remains unsatisfied, they may escalate the complaint externally. This may include the Association of British Riding Schools, Livery Yards and Riding Establishments (ABRS+), which will investigate serious complaints where there is evidence that a member establishment has breached ABRS+ policies or codes of conduct. Complaints may also be referred to statutory regulators such as the local Council Licensing Officer, Trading Standards, or relevant safeguarding authorities.