

RBFRS Policy Document



Part 1

Policy Name	Complaints Policy and Procedure
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Owner	Business Support Team
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Policy Statement	Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is committed to resolving complaints in a positive, thorough and fair manner, in order to protect our reputation and improve our service.
Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that complaints are logged, processed and investigated with due care and that complaints and their outcomes are logged for monitoring purposes.
Scope	This policy applies to all complaints received from members of the public or organisations. Separate procedures are in place for internal complaints.
Supporting Guidance	

Authorisation	
CMT Member's Name and Signature	
FA Member's Name and Signature (if required)	

Further details are provided in Part 2 over the page

Part 2

Details of Policy

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy

The objective of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is to provide consistent quality services, thus making complaints unnecessary. However, every complaint that is made will provide valuable information and give the Service the potential to improve.

Every member of the Service must know the complaints procedure and be ready to act positively towards anyone seeking to complain. To assist this, every complaint must be readily accepted and the information diligently gathered using the [complaints form](#) as a record of the event.

A poster explaining the procedure for [comments, compliments or complaints](#) must be displayed in RBFRS premises areas that are generally used by members of the public. Details of the complaints procedure must be provided to anyone seeking them.

If the person receiving the complaint cannot resolve the complaint immediately, they should advise the Complainant that their complaint will be investigated and that they will be contacted within 7 days. If a full response is not possible within 7 days, they will be advised when a response is likely to be given.

During Office Hours, every complaint must be notified as soon as possible to the Business Support Team, attaching the [complaints form](#) with appropriate sections completed. Where the complaint has not been resolved by the person receiving the complaint, the Business Support Team will forward the relevant details to the appropriate Head of Service or Senior Manager as well as the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO). The Head of Service or Senior Manager will be responsible for allocating an appropriate Officer or Manager to investigate the complaint.

Out of hours, the Duty Officer must be notified as soon as possible. If the person receiving the complaint has been unable to resolve the complaint satisfactorily, the Duty Officer will be responsible for allocating an officer to investigate the complaint. The Business Support Team and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, must be informed via [complaints form](#), for monitoring and recording purposes.

The investigating officer will be responsible for dealing with the investigation, liaising with the complainant (where appropriate) and informing the Business Support Team and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer of the outcome, via email and the [complaints form](#).

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they have the right to appeal to the Chief Fire Officer (CFO).

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the CFO's response, they may appeal to the Fire Authority.

In the event they are not satisfied with the Fire Authority decision, as a final resort, they can refer the complaint to the Ombudsman. The details are available from the following hyperlink.

www.lgo.org.uk

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer will make an analysis of complaints, with an annual report made to the Fire Authority.

Procedure

At all times personnel should be polite to people making complaints regardless of the attitude of the complainant or the nature of the complaint.

COMPLAINTS DO NOT HAVE TO BE MADE IN WRITING

Where possible, endeavour to resolve the complaint immediately.

When receiving any complaint, the following action should be taken:

1. The person receiving the complaint must always give their name and designation.
2. All complaints must be recorded on the [complaints form](#) ensuring that all sections are fully completed. If the complaint is in writing, the complaints form must be attached to it.
3. During office hours (Monday to Friday 09:00-17:00), notify the Business Support Team via email (BusinessSupportTeam@rbfrs.co.uk), with a copy of the complaints form.

For out of hours complaints, the Duty Officer must be notified as soon as possible. If you have been unable to resolve the complaint satisfactorily, the Duty Officer will be responsible for allocating an officer to investigate the complaint.

The Investigating Officer (where applicable), Business Support Team and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer must be provided with all the details along with the complaints form via email.

Forward any paper/hard copies directly to the Business Support Team under confidential cover.

4. When the complaint has been investigated the Investigating Officer must record:
 - Details of the investigation (including correspondence, witness statements and notes of telephone conversations).
 - The action taken.
 - The date of the response to Complainant.
 - Whether the Complainant is satisfied or not.

All correspondence, witness statements and telephone notes etc to be emailed, along with the complaint form, to the Business Support Team and copied to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. All correspondence (electronic and paper/hard copy) must be kept securely during the course of the investigation and deleted/destroyed within 1 month of close of investigation.

The Business Support Team will retain complaint files for 3 years after close. Records may be retained for a further period if they have on-going business value or if there is specific legislation which requires the information to be held for a further period.

Display Notice

A copy of the [comment, compliment or complaint display notice](#) must be displayed in RBFRS premises areas that are generally used by members of the public.