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Rotherham Allotment Alliance Ltd

Complaints and Appeals Policy

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Complaints introduction

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about the actions or omissions of Rotherham Allotment Alliance, any of the Allotment Societies managing an Allotment site or dissatisfaction against another allotment tenant or member of the RAA. Complaints require a response.

The aims and objectives of the RAA are that complaints about allotment matters should be dealt with:

- Impartially
- Objectively
- Expeditiously
- Complainants will be treated with respect and will not receive adverse treatment because they have made a complaint

Our complaints policy:

We are committed to providing a high-quality service and environment to all our members. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it.

This will help us to improve our standards. If you have a complaint please contact us with full details. See form below, copies can be obtained from your Allotment Society (self-managed sites) or direct from RAA (directly managed sites should email admin@rotherhamallotments.org.uk)

The process

- We strive to handle any complaints quickly and satisfactorily
- We will review the process where initial decision/outcome does not meet your expectations

Our procedure and making a complaint

- Our preference is for complaints to be made in writing using the RAA standard complaint form and submitted by letter or email.
- However, complaints made in person or by telephone may also be accepted.
- Day to day issues on Society managed sites should be reported in the first instance to the Society representative for attention. If the matter is not resolved a formal complaint could then be considered.

What will happen next?

Complaints received will be categorised as follows:

- Complaints relating to on site issues should be referred to the society responsible for the site in question – who will then deal with the complaint. (The form below can be used for this purpose and forwarded to the Allotment Society responsible for your site.
- Complaints about a society or where RAA manages the allotment site directly will be investigated by the RAA.
- Any complaint concerning the Chair of the RAA will be forwarded to the RMBC Cabinet Board Member for attention.
- All complaints will be investigated using the following criteria:
 - You will receive acknowledgement of your complaint within 15 working days by either letter or email;
 - Each Society should agree at its AGM the panel for dealing with complaints.
 - The RAA will agree a panel of Board members to deal with each complaint. This panel will consist of either the Secretary, Treasurer or Vice-chair of the RAA along with two



other Directors (these will be selected to ensure impartiality and equality taking into account site location of the complainant, nature of the complaint and any other relevant details).

- The complainant may be invited to a meeting (either in person or via zoom) to determine the full facts and answer questions of the panel).
- The outcome of the investigation will be given in writing, by either letter or email within 30 working days.
- If the outcome is less than expected the complainant will be referred to our appeals process.

Appeals Process

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation into the original complaint an appeal can be lodged. The following details this process:

Original complaint dealt with by allotment society

- If the original complaint has been dealt with by the Allotment Society the appeal should be lodged in the first instance with the Society. You must detail the reasons that you disagree with the outcome of the initial investigation and request that the matter be further considered.
- An appeal lodged with a Society can be dealt with directly by the Society reconsidering the original outcome with a different panel of committee members. If no resolution can be found by the Society the matter can be referred to the RAA.
- If an appeal is referred to the RAA all the original complaint information and investigation results must be passed to the RAA utilizing the 'complaints form.
- The appeal will be then considered by the RAA (as detailed above).

Original complaint dealt with by the RAA

- If an appeal is to be made to a decision made by the RAA in the first instance the appeal should be lodged with Chair of the RAA Board of Directors – admin@rotherhamallotments.org.uk
- The Chair will form a panel of two Directors, not involved in the first complaint, who will again be selected to ensure impartiality and equality, to consider the appeal.

In both cases

- The decision of this panel of RAA Directors will be final.



When won't we uphold a complaint?

We take all complaints seriously and strive to address them fairly and transparently. However, it's essential to distinguish between genuine concerns and those made with malicious intent or vexatious behaviour. This section outlines our approach to handling such complaints.

Presumption of Good Faith

We presume that every complaint is made in good faith. Each complaint will be evaluated independently. Past vexatious or malicious complaints will not automatically affect our perception of subsequent complaints from the same individual.

Identifying Vexatious Complaints

Definition: A vexatious complaint is pursued solely to harass, annoy, or subdue someone. It lacks merit, is unreasonable, frivolous, repetitive, burdensome, or unwarranted.

Distinguishing Factors:

- Repetitive Pursuit: Persistently pursuing a complaint already investigated without providing new information.
- Changing Substance: Continually altering the complaint's substance during the investigation.
- Lack of Clarity: Failing to clearly identify the complaint's substance despite reasonable assistance.
- Trivial Matters: Complaining disproportionately about trivial issues.
- Excessive Contact: Imposing unreasonable demands or excessive contact with RAA representatives.

What Constitutes a Malicious Complaint?

Definition: A malicious complaint is made with the intention of causing harm.

Examples include:

- Defamation: Deliberately defaming an employee, volunteer, tenant or other person.
- Falsehood: Lying about an issue or incident.
- Baseless Rumours: Basing a complaint on gossip with harmful intent.

What if we determine your complaint is Vexatious and Malicious?

We will make a fair assessment, focusing on the merits of the case and address your complaint to notify you of our decision.



Rotherham Allotment Alliance Complaints Form

Please submit this form to either the Allotment Society responsible for your site or direct to RAA (as detailed below)

Post to - RAA, PO Box 819, Rotherham S60 9NR

Email to - admin@rotherhamallotments.org.uk

Alternatively submit an electronic form via the RAA website rotherhamallotments.org.uk

Your Allotment Site

Your Plot Number

First name

Surname

Full Address

Postcode

Telephone number

Email address

Please give full details of your complaint

Date

Signature
