

Customer Charter and Complaints Guide

Dear Customer,

Our commitment to you as a customer is that we want to ensure that you are treated promptly, fairly, equally and with courtesy across the wide range of activities in which we engage. We believe that you have the right to expect good quality accessible services and advice and we will do our best to ensure that this is delivered.

Our Customer Charter and Complaints Guide has been produced to make you aware of the service standards that you can expect from all colleagues at the British Equestrian.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Eyre', with a small dot at the end.

Jim Eyre
Chief Executive
info@bef.co.uk

CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

British Equestrian (“BEF”) is focused on continually improving our service to individuals and partner organisations. Below are the service standards which you can expect from colleagues in the British Equestrian team. If you have any issues with these or have further comments to make then please complete the feedback form.

Our employees mean a lot to us and are entitled to a safe working environment. To ensure this, we ask that customers or members do not threaten, bully or harass our employees, including swearing or shouting at them. This is very rare, but if it happens, we reserve the right to limit contact with British Equestrian and in some cases to cease all further communication.

We aim to:

- Ensure all enquiries and issues are dealt with promptly, efficiently and treated fairly, courteously and with respect and equality.
- Publicise and review regularly our Customer Charter and Complaints Guide as part of our ongoing improvement plan.
- Ensure our staff have the appropriate skills, knowledge and training to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently.
- Provide an effective formal complaints procedure.

Our current key standards

- Be professional, prompt and courteous in all our engagements.
- Treat all of our customers in a consistent and fair manner.
- Unless on leave, British Equestrian staff will be contactable Monday to Friday during normal office hours. An alternative contact will be offered in case an urgent response is required.
- Switchboard number 02476 698871 to be answered promptly otherwise a message can be left and we will get back to you.
- We will endeavour to acknowledge all general and email enquiries within five working days of receipt and to provide a response within 10 working days, unless an out of office message is displayed.
- Respond to Data Protection enquiries within the published time limits.
- Take any concerns about the quality of our service seriously.

How you can help us

- Treat BEF staff with respect and courtesy
- Provide accurate and detailed information to enable us to deal with your query quickly and efficiently
- Ask us to explain anything you are not sure about
- If you do not get a response to your email within the designated timeframes please contact that person again.
- Notify BEF immediately if you experience a problem

Feedback and Complaints:

If we at the BEF office do something well, please tell us about it, or if you have an issue or suggestion for improvement please email us direct on info@bef.co.uk or use our feedback form on the attached link www.britishequestrian.org.uk/

Complaints Guide

The BEF engages in a wide range of activities. Your first point of call if you have a complaint is to use the specific complaints procedure provided to cover that particular activity. This will be set out either in the formal agreement which you have signed or in the terms and conditions which govern your relationship with us.

If you are having difficulty in finding the relevant procedure, please contact us directly at complaints@bef.co.uk and we will point you in the right direction.

Any complaints of a generic nature not covered by a specific procedure should be sent either to the email address to complaints@bef.co.uk or to our postal address and the generic complaints procedure set out below will then apply.

Complaints Procedure

1. British Equestrian aims to ensure that complaints are resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible.
2. In order to achieve this, it is intended that the complaints procedures should be easily accessible, that all complaints are fully and fairly investigated, and that the complaints process should provide an effective response and appropriate redress.
3. British Equestrian will use the feedback provided from complaints to ensure that its systems and services are improved if so required.
4. This Complaints Procedure is designed to provide a means of complaint where no specific complaints procedure is provided to cover the specific

BEF activity in question. Complaints relating to the activities of a BEF member body should be addressed to the member body in question.

5. This document explains how to proceed with a complaint where no specific complaints procedure applies.

Procedure

6. A complaint should be made in writing, by letter or email, addressed to the Chief Executive of British Equestrian. If the complaint concerns the Chief Executive, it should be addressed to the Chairman of British Equestrian who will stand in for the Chief Executive for the purposes of the complaint in question.
7. Complaints should be notified as soon as possible after occurrence of the events giving rise to the complaint and normally no more than thirty days after that date. Delay may hamper proper investigation of a complaint.
8. Where appropriate, the Chief Executive will seek to resolve the matter informally within 21 days.
9. Complaints which fall outside the jurisdiction of British Equestrian, or are more appropriately dealt with by another supervisory body, may be referred to that body for their consideration. Complaints regarding the protection of children or vulnerable adults may be referred to the police or social services as will complaints alleging criminal activity. British Equestrian may also take action if a complaint is found to be malicious or vexatious.
10. Where informal resolution by the Chief Executive is not possible, they will identify a person suitably qualified to investigate and adjudicate upon the complaint in question. They will appoint this person as the Complaints Adjudicator (CA) who will follow the procedure set out below.
11. The CA will investigate the circumstances of the complaint in whatever way considered appropriate to that complaint. The CA will have the power to co-opt where necessary additional persons with specific skills or experience relevant to the complaint in question to provide advice..
12. The CA will report their findings to the Chief Executive who will notify these to the parties involved in the complaint within 28 days of the CA's appointment. If there is any delay in this timetable the Chief Executive will ensure that the complainant is aware of the reasons for the delay.
13. If this process resolves the matter to the satisfaction of the complainant, the Chief Executive will take whatever steps may be necessary to give effect to the CA's conclusions.
14. If the complainant, or any other party involved, is not satisfied, the Chief Executive will, after discussion with the parties, either arrange to have the matter re-investigated in its entirety or refer the matter to the Board of British Equestrian. In this event, arrangements, including a timetable, will be made for the complainant to submit their complaint in full to the Board whether in writing or orally, or both, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Vexatious Complaints

British Equestrian is committed to ensuring all complaints are dealt with in a fair, effective, and timely manner. Occasionally complainants may focus on their own concerns to the extent that persistent and vexatious complaints can place a strain on time and resources of staff or volunteers who have to deal with them.

All staff are expected to deal with individuals respectfully and in a professional manner, however there are times when nothing more can reasonably be done to address a real or perceived concern.

British Equestrian expects its employees, contractors and volunteers to be treated with courtesy and respect at all times and will protect them from unacceptable behaviour by complainants. Unacceptable behaviour may include:

- abusive, threatening or inappropriate language, either verbally or in writing;
- sending multiple emails, especially over a short timescale;
- making multiple calls / leaving multiple voicemails; or
- otherwise unreasonably pursuing a complaint.

Where an individual is raising a legitimate query or criticism of a complaints procedure as it progresses, such as time scales not being met, this would not normally, on its own, be regarded as vexatious or unreasonable. A vexatious complainant is an individual who: i) is raising a complaint contentiously, without reasonable grounds or with little merit or substance, and with the purpose of causing annoyance or disruption; or ii) is pursuing a complaint to an unreasonable degree or after appropriate procedures have been followed and exhausted. Examples of unreasonably persistent / vexatious complainants:

1. refusing to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
2. refusing to follow the correct procedure at the correct level, for example not exhausting a Member Body's processes before escalating;
3. refusing to accept that issues do not come within British Equestrian's Complaints Procedure, despite having been provided with information about the scope of the policy and procedure;
4. refusing to accept that issues are not within the power of British Equestrian to investigate, change or influence;
5. insistence on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with British Equestrian's Complaints Procedure and/or good practice;
6. making what appear to be groundless complaints about the person dealing with the complaint(s) and seeking to have them dismissed or replaced;
7. making an unreasonable number of contacts by any means in relation to a specific complaint or complaints;

8. making persistent and unreasonable demands or expectations of staff and/or the complaints process after the unreasonableness has been explained to the complainant (an example of this could be a complainant who insists on immediate responses to numerous, frequent and/or complex letters, faxes, telephone calls or emails);
9. raising numerous subsidiary or new issues whilst a complaint is being addressed that were not part of the complaint at the start of the complaint process;
10. adopting a 'scattergun approach' such as pursuing a complaint or complaints not only with British Equestrian, but at the same time with Sport England, the Government, a Member of Parliament, their local council, elected councilors, the police, solicitors and/or any other body;
11. refusing to accept the outcome of the complaint process after its conclusion and attempting to escalate it.

Process for declaring a complaint to be vexatious

If a member of staff is concerned about a complaint potentially being vexatious, the matter should be referred to their line manager and/or the CEO with a note explaining the staff member's concerns and attaching any relevant emails/documents.

Where the complaint concerned relates to the CEO, the CEO shall refer the matter to the Board, which shall appoint a Board Director to deal with it.

The line manager/CEO/Board Director should consider the matter including all the documents and decide whether the complaint comes within the above definition of vexatious. Where a line manager/the CEO/ Board Director has decided that a complaint is vexatious, the course of action will be as follows:

1. the line manager/CEO will record the decision in writing giving brief reasons;
2. the line manager/CEO will ensure that any outstanding steps under the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure are completed;
3. the line manager/CEO will contact the complainant in writing to inform them that a decision has been taken that this procedure will apply to their complaint henceforth and enclosing a copy of this policy. The letter will set out the preferred method of communication for all parties involved and the way the matter will be dealt with going forward;
4. once the letter has been sent, contact with the complainant will be restricted to specific individuals and by specific method/s, usually in writing, subject to paragraph 5 below;
5. where the Complaints Procedure has been exhausted and the concern cannot be taken any further, the complainant will be notified in writing their concern has been fully responded to, there is nothing further to add, and

continuing contact will serve no useful purpose. Further correspondence will be acknowledged but not answered;

6. in extreme circumstances it may be necessary to instruct external lawyers to deter the individual from further contact;

Confidentiality

British Equestrian will respect a complainant's desire for confidentiality which will be preserved as far as is practicable. Proper investigation of a complaint is likely to involve enquiry of third parties, including any person named in a complaint, and it will normally be necessary for these people to be given information about the complaint.

Independence

British Equestrian will ensure that all persons concerned in the investigation of a complaint are independent of that complaint

How to contact the British Equestrian Office
--

Our office is open from Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm

British Equestrian Equestrian House Abbey Park Kenilworth Warwickshire CV8 2RH	Switchboard Number: 02476 698871 Email: info@bef.co.uk	Web site: www.britishequestrian.org.uk/
---	--	---