

RICHMOND UPON THAMES PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL

Complaints Policy and Procedure

The festival is committed to delivering and maintaining high standards across all areas of our work. We believe in operating openly and accountably, in ways that build trust and respect. We welcome all constructive feedback and are committed to continually improving the festival experience.

What Counts as a Complaint

A complaint is a concern about:

- the conduct or decisions of an adjudicator
- the behaviour of a participant, volunteer, or audience member
- the organisation or running of the festival
- any action that you believe breaches festival rules, fairness, or expected standards

General queries, suggestions, or routine questions should be directed to the Festival Administrator rather than through the complaints process.

Behaviour Expectations

To protect the wellbeing of our volunteers, performers, and audience members, we ask that all concerns are raised respectfully. Shouting, aggressive behaviour, or rudeness towards volunteers or other participants will not be tolerated. Anyone behaving in this way may be asked to leave the competition and may be barred from entering in the future.

Adjudicators must not be approached directly with complaints. They are not permitted to discuss or revisit decisions with competitors, supporters, or teachers.

How to Submit a Complaint

If you have a complaint about an adjudicator or are concerned about how the festival is being run, please speak first to the Section Secretary. They will record your concern and guide you through the next steps.

All complaints must be communicated calmly and respectfully. Aggressive or confrontational behaviour may result in the complaint not being processed.

Information to Provide

To help us address your concern efficiently, please provide:

- what happened

- when and where it occurred
- who was involved
- any relevant programme numbers or names
- any steps already taken to resolve the issue
- any supporting evidence (if applicable)

Response Time

Most concerns can be addressed on the same day. However, some complaints may require additional time for investigation. In these cases, you will receive an initial acknowledgement within 24 hours, and a full response as soon as reasonably possible.

Complaints About Adjudicators

If your complaint relates to one of our Adjudicators who is a member of the British and International Federation of Festivals for Music, Dance and Speech (BIFF), it will be considered alongside BIFF's current *Code of Practice for Adjudicators and Festivals* to assess whether any breaches have occurred.

Receiving a Response

You will receive a response either verbally or in writing, depending on the nature of the complaint. Where a resolution is not possible immediately, you will be informed of the next steps and expected timeframes.

Escalation

If you believe your complaint has not been handled appropriately, you may request that it be reviewed by the Chair of the Festival, Hilary Dodman, at RichmondFestival.Chair@gmail.com. Their decision will be final.