

# Safety at Sports Grounds - Dispute resolution process



## 1 | Introduction

**Coventry City Council recognises its statutory duty for the safety certification of sports grounds under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 (as amended) (the 1975 Act) and the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 (the 1987 Act) and its responsibilities for the safety of all those present at events within all sports grounds in its boundary.**

**This document should be read in conjunction with the following policies to provide a full understanding of the Safety at Sports Ground role carried out by Coventry City Council:**

- Safety at Sports Ground Enforcement Policy,
- Policy on the Issue and Review of General Safety Certificates,
- Terms of Reference for the Sports Ground Safety Advisory Group (SAG); and
- Safety at Sports Grounds Monitoring and Inspection Policy.

## 2 | Application

The dispute resolution process set out in this document will apply to the following sports grounds::

- The Ricoh Arena.
- The Butts Park Arena.

## 3 | Scope

It is recognised that the sports grounds in the City to which this process applies have an excellent working relationship with all agencies involved in advising on the safety of spectators and others in the venues.

On rare occasions however, where agreements cannot be found, a dispute may arise and this process aims to address that.

The process is to be followed when there is a dispute between the certificate holder and any of the statutory Category One responders (interested parties) as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

This process is not to be used to resolve any financial disputes that may have arisen but is limited to the attendance or non-attendance of the relevant body or authority at an event that is being held at the venue and at which the conditions of the general safety certificate shall be in force.

This process is not to be used where there are contractual issues between the certificate holder and any commercial supplier.

The dispute resolution process is intended to create a space and environment in which the views of the relevant bodies and stakeholders can be discussed with the certifying authority in a timely manner to enable the certifying authority to consider the issues raised and where necessary, to take relevant proportionate enforcement action.

It is recognised that the process as outlined below is most likely to be engaged where there is a dispute between venue management/certificate holder and the police regarding the quantum and need for the presence of the police at an event.

## 4 | Dispute procedure and timeline

Step	When (time until event)	Action
1	-28 days	Either the certificate holder or the interested party is to inform the local (certifying) authority in writing of the concerns relating to the presence or non-attendance at the event.
2	-26 days	The local authority will convene a meeting of the relevant parties to discuss the issues relating to the dispute.  In the event agreement cannot be reached the local authority should consider following the process.
3	-26 days	The local authority will consider convening an extraordinary safety advisory group meeting to be held at the earliest possible date.
4	-24 days	Extraordinary safety advisory group meeting.  It may be necessary for officers of the local authority to escalate any decision to senior management team and or elected members.
5	-21 days	The local authority may wish to consider imposing revised or additional conditions through the safety certificate or undertaking enforcement action against the certificate holder following previous discussions at the safety advisory group meeting.  Revised and or additional safety certificate conditions are to be drafted.  Enforcement action is to be considered and activated upon advice from the local authority legal services.
6	-14 days	Local authority to review the position of the parties that are in dispute and to reaffirm any enforcement action, or revised conditions within the safety certificate. Revised and/or additional conditions are included within an updated safety certificate.
7	-7 days	Local authority to review the position of the parties that are in dispute and to reaffirm any enforcement action, or revised conditions within the safety certificate.
8		Opportunity should be given to the certificate holder and interested party to continue to have dialogue and to seek agreement without the need for action on the part of the local authority.

Should a dispute arise closer to an event, the local authority will fast track the above timeline and convene meetings and / or extraordinary safety advisory group meetings as soon as is reasonably practicable.

## 5 | Impartiality

To ensure fairness to all parties involved, should it be required, the local authority may seek the views of an impartial third party e.g. another certifying authority with equivalent specialist experience, to assist in resolving the dispute.

## 6 | Review and revisions to this document

This policy and procedures will be reviewed at intervals not exceeding 12 months and amended at any stage to reflect any changes that may occur in operation procedure or to current legislation.

Following any amendment a complete replacement will be distributed.

Date of Issue

**December 2019**

Date of last review

Reviewed by

