**Aberdeen Foyer/Foyer Enterprise/Roadwise Driver Training CIC**

**Compliments, Comments and Complaints**

**Policy and Procedure**

## Document Owner : Leona McDermid – Executive Director

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1 Policy Statement

* + 1. The Foyer is committed to delivering strengths based, effective and high quality services for everyone we work with. Feedback from those we work with, on our services and on the performance of our staff and volunteers, is essential in helping us to improve both what we do and how we do it. We want to enhance our client’s experience so that we inspire them to achieve their potential.
    2. We therefore encourage and learn from all types of feedback from people who use our services and all other relevant stakeholders, whether a complaint, a comment or a compliment.
    3. Where people do have a complaint about our work, we will respond to and deal with issues raised swiftly, thoroughly and fairly.
  1. Who does this policy apply to?
     1. This policy applies to all people working on behalf of the Foyer including employees, agency workers, consultants, volunteers, student placements, interns and trustees.
     2. It covers all feedback received by the Foyer about any subject and in any form. Feedback can be given by anyone that has used the Foyer services or who is affected by the organisation and its decisions including third parties and/or representatives of clients. It also applies to people who may have been refused a service by the Foyer.
     3. For the purposes of this Policy the following words and phrases are defined as:

“**The Foyer**” means Aberdeen Foyer, Foyer Enterprise and Roadwise Driver Training CIC

“**HR**” means Human Resources

“**Client**”means any individual or organisation that uses the services of the Foyer, including tenants, students, volunteers and customers

“**Compliment**” is positive recognition from clients for a job well done by individual employees or the way the services are delivered, e.g. I would like to thank my key worker for all the support they gave me

“**Comment**” is normally a personal opinion or belief, feedback or remark expressed by client which can be positive or negative in nature, e.g. I don’t like the new referral process; or I found it easy to find information on the Foyer’s website

“**Complaint**” is an expression of dissatisfaction by a client about the Foyer’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by the Foyer.

* + 1. **Aim of the Policy**
       1. The Foyer puts clients at the centre of how we design, develop and deliver services. We value feedback and view this as part of our ongoing process to learn lessons and drive forward improvements.
       2. The aim of this policy is to ensure that: Comments are valued, clearly understood and acted upon, Complaints are dealt with quickly, effectively and in a transparent way, Responses are fair, proportionate and handled in a consistent manner and that the process is client centred and accessible.
       3. This document sets out how we manage and respond to compliments, comments and complaints. It complies with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman guidance and COSCA standards for complaints procedures and draws on National Care Standards.
  1. Foyer Procedure
     1. Everyone that works on behalf of the Foyer is encouraged to seek feedback from the people that they are working with, or other stakeholders they meet or engage with during the normal course of their work. Feedback can be provided to the Foyer via anyone within the organisation and through any of the following routes:
* Orally through telephone calls, during or after meetings (including web based meetings), at events or during ad hoc conversations with stakeholders including people we work with
* in writing through emails, letters, texts, webchat, social media, cards, completed feedback forms (Compliments/Comments form and Complaints form can be found at the end of this policy)
* Surveys including telephone interviews and completed questionnaire
* Other meetings with stakeholders including focus groups, peer researchers, consultations, tender interviews, commissioners, networking, partnership working
* Evaluation of Foyer services, website, publications

3.2 Contact points for any client (or their mandated representative) to provide feedback to us include:

* Talking to your keyworker
* Visit the [local Foyer site](http://www.aberdeenfoyer.com/contact-us/) and speak to a member of staff
* Call us on 01224 373800
* Email us at [HR@aberdeenfoyer.com](mailto:HR@aberdeenfoyer.com)
* Write to us at Aberdeen Foyer HR, Sir Ian Wood House, Hareness Road, Aberdeen AB12 3LE

3.3 Should you need assistance in submitting your compliment, comment or complaint or are unsure how to do so please request the assistance of a member of staff.

* + 1. The Foyer promotes equality of access and will also make sure, when requested, to:
* Provide assistance to people who have difficulty with spoken English or whose first language is not English
* Provide support for visually impaired clients
* Arrange sign language interpretation where appropriate
* Make sure that the Compliments and Comment/Complaints forms are available in other formats on request
* Accept and respond to correspondence in alternative formats (e.g. large print, audio, Braille)
* Assist the client by writing the complaint for them and read it back to them to ensure an accurate record of the compliment, comment or complaint has been taken
  + 1. We will always explain our Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy when commencing work with anyone using our services for the first time and to other stakeholders. Notices are displayed at all sites setting out the guidelines for providing feedback and are also contained in the Tenant’s Handbook.
    2. In addition, clients engaging with our counselling services will also receive information on COSCA’s Complaints Procedure as well as delivery staff and volunteers.
    3. When there is a suggestion or declaration of criticism or concern, the person receiving the feedback should always explore with the person how they wish their feedback to be treated and their concerns resolved. This should include ensuring that they are aware that they can make a complaint.
  1. Responding to Compliments and Comments
     1. All compliments are welcomed and help us to understand what we are doing well, as well as how we can improve further. A compliment will be recorded centrally with HR, who will share with the service/or member of staff it relates to.
     2. All comments will be taken seriously, as they also help us to reflect on what we do, and how we might develop and improve our services further. All comments will be recorded centrally and the relevant manager will be notified to enable them to take any action if necessary.
     3. A copy of the Compliments/Comments Form can be found at the end of this policy. Alternatively, these are available at all Foyer sites and/or can be requested by email from HR.
     4. All Compliments/Comments Forms should be returned to HR, whose details are listed in section 2.5.2 above.
     5. Where a compliment/comment is received feedback will be provided to the staff member or service and Foyer Board as appropriate.
     6. When we review our Policies, we take into consideration any comments made about a Policy
  2. Responding to Complaints

**PLEASE NOTE:** If at any point while handling a complaint, abuse is suspected, you must immediately follow the Foyer Protection for Children and Young People at Risk of Harm and/or Protection of Adults at risk of Harm policies and procedures.

* + 1. **Our Approach to Dealing with Complaints**
       1. When people complain to the Foyer our aim is to:
* Clearly understand the person’s concerns and the issues they are raising
* Clearly understand the resolution sought
* Address the concerns by understanding the facts of the situation and identify a solution as quickly as possible and as close to the root of the problem as possible
* Resolve issues informally wherever the complainant wishes us to and wherever appropriate so that people who have concerns do not have to do through a formal process
  + - 1. For people requiring assistance in order to make a complaint they will be offered help to explain their concerns and issues and the resolution they are seeking. This will be documented and taken through the normal procedure. Help may be provided by advocates within the team currently supporting them, by Foyer advocates from another team or with support from advocates from another advocacy provider.
      2. The Foyer is committed to investigating complaints objectively, fairly and thoroughly in a positive solution focused manner, in line with our complaints timetable and ensuring confidentiality is maintained at all times
      3. Everyone working on behalf of the Foyer will receive appropriate instruction and/or training to address and resolve difficulties locally, is they arise, and managers will receive coaching in investigating complaints objectively and fairly.
      4. The Foyer reserves the right to suspend or cease the investigation of a complaint if legal proceeding are commenced by the complainant against the organisation.
    1. **Receiving a Complaint**
       1. Complaints can be received (or handled) by any member of staff or volunteer (**referred to as the Complaint Handler**) but should be dealt with by a manager.
       2. In the event that anyone working on behalf of the Foyer receives a complaint orally, they should courteously and as quickly as possible explain that they will take all necessary details but then refer the matter directly and immediately to the appropriate manager (**referred to as the Complaints Manager**). The appropriate manager will usually be the manager of the service about which the complaint has been made, or the manager of the worker or volunteer about whom the complaint has been made. The contact details and communication needs of the complainant should be ascertained. This should usually take place within one working day and no more than two working days.
       3. Emailed and written complaints should be passed directly to the appropriate manager but the person handling the complaint should respond to the complainant immediately explaining that the complaint has been received, and that it has been passed on to a manager (whose name and contact details should be provided).
       4. Where the appropriate manager is unavailable (due to leave or sickness), the complaint should be passed to another manager operating at the same level as the appropriate manager, who will take responsibility for that complaint until either the appropriate manager returns and/or a senior manager determines otherwise. The decision as to who should act as Complaint Manager rests with the appropriate manager’s line manager.
       5. Where a complaint is received about a manager, it should be dealt with by that person’s line manager and forwarded accordingly with immediate effect.
       6. A copy of the Complaints Form is available at the end of this policy. Alternatively, these are available at all Foyer sites or by emailing [HR@aberdeenfoyer.com](mailto:HR@aberdeenfoyer.com)

**5.3 Acknowledging the Complaint**

We aim to acknowledge all complaints within two working days of receipt detailing the usual timescale within which we aim to resolve complaints and the name of the person investigating the complaint. All parties involved in the complaint can, where relevant, declare a conflict of interest to the Foyer’s HR Manager, contact details at Section 11.

**5.4 Investigating a Complaint**

5.4.1 The Complaint Manager should always contact the complainant for further information and evidence and to seek clarification about the issues and resolution being sought. This should usually take place within one working day and no more than two working days of the Complaint Manager receiving the complaint. It will also help establish whether, and to what extent, the issue can be resolved informally without a fuller, more time consuming and costly investigation. Where appropriate we will discuss with the Complainant any support required to use the complaints process, which might, in some instances, include advocacy support.

5.4.2 The Complaint Manager should thank the Complainant for their complaint and reassure them of our intention to listen carefully and objectively to their concern. The Complaint Manager should make careful notes, and take any evidence that the complainant has offered into account, checking at every stage that the complainant is happy with our understanding of the issues. This may be in addition to the information already received or the process can be used to simply clarify information received to date. Where appropriate, the Complaint Manager should investigate other sources of data e.g. statements from staff and from other professionals as necessary, correspondence and notes.

5.4.3 The Complaint Manager should produce a clear record of the investigation, detailing clearly the Complainant’s issues, the research undertaken, and what was found in the course of the investigation using the Complaints Form template. The Complaint Manager should come to an impartial view on each issue and be confident that the evidence justifies the conclusion. If it doesn’t the Complaint Manager should judge whether further investigatory work is required. This record should be written out as a letter to the Complainant, clearly and in a format that the Complainant can understand and follow.

5.4.4 Our aim is to provide a Complaint Outcome Letter within 20 working days of receiving the formal complaint. If, for any reason, we cannot do this, the Complaint Manager will let the complainant know when they can expect to receive a response. In any event we would endeavour to respond within a calendar month.

5.4.5 If we have upheld the complaint or any of the issues within the complaint, the Complaint Manager should acknowledge this, apologise, and advise the Complainant on how we will put things right, by explaining what actions we plan to take as a result of the complaint.

5.4.6 If the Complaint Manager believes the concerns to be unfounded, she or he will also explain their response clearly, providing the Complainant with the option to appeal detailed in Section 6 below.

5.4.7 The Complaint Manager will ensure an accurate record of the Complaint Outcome is stored centrally with HR and where there is evident learning from the complaint this will be discussed with the appropriate individuals and teams.

5.4.8 If the complaint is in relation to the Foyer’s counselling service the Complaint Manager will ensure an accurate record of the Complaint Outcome is submitted to COSCA at the conclusion of complaints proceedings.

5.4.9 If the complaint is in relation to any aspect of an SQA regulated qualification and the complainant is unhappy with The Foyer’s decision they must be made aware of the ability to take the complaint further to SQA directly or indeed Ofqual if necessary.

5.4.10 If the complaint is in relation to any aspect of an SQA regulated qualification and the complainant is still unhappy and has exhausted both The Foyer’s and SQA’s procedures they must be made aware of the ability to take the complaint further to SQA Accreditations or indeed Ofqual if necessary.

**5.5 Complaints Received about Someone Working on Behalf of the Foyer**

5.5.1 If a complaint is received about someone who is working on behalf of the Foyer, or the investigation of a complaint reveals concerns about someone who works on behalf of the Foyer, the person receiving/investigating the complaint should notify the employee’s line manager who will, where appropriate, consider whether or not action is required, including action under the Disciplinary Procedures.

5.5.2 The person who raised the complaint will be advised that the matter will be taken forward by the person’s line manager.

5.5.3 The complainant is not entitled to know whether any disciplinary or capability action is taken or the outcome of it.

**6. Foyer’s Appeals Procedure**

6.1 All Complaint Outcome letters must inform the complainant:

a) of their right to appeal the outcome of their complaint should they be dissatisfied

b) to whom they should address that appeal

c) that they have up to 10 working days in which to submit an appeal, which should include the grounds and evidence for the appeal.

6.2 An Appeals Officer, who will usually be senior to the person who undertook the original complaint investigation, will consider the appeal.

6.3 Details of the Appeals process and the Appeals Officer will be communicated to the complainant, in writing, within five working days of their appeal being received. The Complainant may be offered a meeting as a part of the consideration of the appeal.

6.4 Outcomes following the appeal might include:

a) the initial complaint response is upheld

b) the initial complaint response is overruled and new findings or decisions are reached or new recommendations are made

c) the complaint is re-investigated and the original findings, decisions and recommendations are affirmed or replaced by new or different ones.

6.5 The Appeals Officer will aim to provide a full response in an Appeal Outcome letter as soon as practicable and in any case within 20 working days of the date of the appeal being submitted. The Appeals Officer will inform the complainant if this is not possible together with the expected date for conclusion.

6.6 The Appeals Officer’s decision is final other than in exceptional cases detailed below.

6.7 If your complaint relates to the Aberdeen Foyer’s Chief Executive, you should contact the HR department who will provide you with the contact details of the Chair of Aberdeen Foyer’s Board.

6.8 In certain circumstances the Complainant may be able to complain further to a third party depending on the nature of the complaint.

1. Aberdeen Foyer is registered with the Care Inspectorate as a housing support provider <http://www.careinspectorate.com/>.
2. In many circumstances, including where the Foyer service complained about is commissioned by a Local Authority or NHS organisation, the complainant can also complain to the Commissioner of that service. This will be explained to the Complainant in the response to their appeal, or at a prior stage where appropriate to any arrangements made with the Commissioners of that service.
3. Aberdeen Foyer is a registered Charity with OSCR the regulatory body for charities in Scotland <http://www.oscr.org.uk/contact-oscr>.
4. Our Counselling services aim to meet the standards set down by COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland) [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk)
5. Our accredited Learning services aim to meet the standards set down by each accrediting body including Scottish Qualifications Authority [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)
   1. Time Limit for Making a Complaint
      1. Our aim is to put things right as quickly as possible when we have caused concern, so we encourage people to make complaints as soon as issues arise. This allows the Foyer to investigate while the issues are fresh in people’s minds and have the greatest chance of being addressed and resolved.
      2. For making a formal complaint the time limit is normally six months from the date of the event which triggered the complaint.
      3. The time limit may be extended, at the absolute discretion of the Foyer. The decision on extending the time limit will be made considering factors including:

a) whether it is still possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly

b) issues which may have made it difficult or impossible for the complaint to have been raised earlier

c) any other relevant factors.

* 1. Anonymous Complaints
     1. If complaints are received anonymously we will consider them where there is enough information in the complaint to enable us to make further enquiries. Any decision not to pursue an anonymous complaint will be authorised by a senior member of staff in the Leadership Team. If anonymous complaints make serious allegations, this will be referred to the Leadership Team immediately.
     2. Where a client has expressed dissatisfaction in line with our definition of a complaint but does not want to complain, we will encourage them to submit their complaint. However, if they still do not wish to complain we will record the issue as an anonymous complaint.

**9. Recording**

9.1 A copy of all compliments, comments and complaints plus responses will be stored within the HR department.

9.2 This will be dated and held in accordance with data protection legislation in line with our Data Protection Policy.

9.3 The person with responsibility for responding to a complaint is also responsible for recording all casework, correspondence, reports and evidence relating to that complaint and ensuring this information is submitted to HR for storing centrally. Details of the complaint should be recorded as carefully and as fully as possible as this enables us to monitor the number and type of complaints we receive and helps us to improve our services.

PLEASE NOTE: For the sake of clarity, the date on which the complainant confirms their intention to complain is Day One for the purposes of calculating subsequent complaints management timelines.

10. Evaluation, Monitoring and Improvement

10.1 We will use the information gathered from compliments, comments and complaints to assist with improvements to our services. We will keep a central record within HR of all feedback received and ensure that full records are kept of the nature and treatment of every complaint. Particular attention will be paid to the lessons learnt, nature of complaints and trends, the timeliness of responses and resolutions.

10.2 Every quarter, HR will provide an anonymised summary report to the Leadership Team which details the nature and number of compliments, comments and complaints and the responses. This will include any resulting changes to service delivery as part of Aberdeen Foyer’s commitment to continuous improvement.

10.3 CEO will monitor and review the implementation of this policy

10.4 The Service Review Committee on behalf of Aberdeen Foyer Board will review this policy and monitor any complaints made against the organisation and its services

11. HR Contact Details

HR Manager, Aberdeen Foyer, Sir Ian Wood House, Hareness Road, Altens, Aberdeen AB12 3LE. [HR@aberdeenfoyer.com](mailto:HR@aberdeenfoyer.com)

12. Related Policies (but not limited to):

Appraisal & Supervision Grievance Internal verification policy

Data Protection Information Sharing

Disciplinary Quality Assurance

Equal Opportunities Whistleblowing Malpractice Policy

Protection Children and Young People at Risk of Harm

Protection Adults at Risk of Harm

**Name:** Leona McDermid – Executive Director

**Date Reviewed**: July 2017

**Date to be Reviewed**: June 2019

**Appendix One - Complaint Flowchart**

Complaint received by a member of staff/volunteer/placement

**{COMPLAINT HANDLER}**

**Complaint Handler** acknowledges and establishes basic details of complaint

**Max 4 working days**

**Yes**

**Protection Issue?**

Matter dealt with under Foyer’s Protection Policies

**No  
No**

**Complaint Handler** passes to appropriate manager **[Complaint Manager]** within 2 working days

**Complaint Manager** contacts complainant within **2 working days** + attempts to seek Informal Resolution

**Yes**

Case closed. Recorded with HR. Lessons learned disseminated as appropriate

**Informal Resolution?**

**No  
No**

Full investigation conducted by **Complaint Manager**

**20 working days**

Complaint Outcome Letter sent to Complainant within **20** Working days

Case closed. Recorded with HR. Lessons learned disseminated as appropriate

**Complainant satisfied?**

**Yes**

**10 working days**

**No  
No**

**No  
No**

Fails to meet deadline: appeal rejected. Case closed. Recorded with HR.

Complainant appeals with **10 working days**

**Yes**

**20 working days**

Acknowledgement + details of Appeals Process sent within **3** working days by **Appeals Officer**

Appeal conducted by **Appeals Officer**

Case closed. Recorded with HR. Lessons learned disseminated as appropriate

Appeal Outcome Letter sent to Complainant within **20** working days

**Foyer**

**COMPLIMENTS FORM**

**The Foyer welcomes compliments as a means of continuously improving the quality of service we provide.**

**Team …………………… Location ………………….……. Date …………………**

**Name & Address of Person ……………………………………………………….**

**Giving Compliment**

**……………………………………………………….**

**……………………………………………………….**

**Telephone…………………………**

**Description of Compliment**

**…………………………………………………………………………………………………..**

**…………………………………………………………………………………………………**

**…………………………………………………………………………………………………**

**Signature ……………………………………**

**How compliment was received** Letter/verbal/telephone/email/other*(please state)*

*(if not completed by person providing compliment)*

**Received by ……………………………… Title ………………………………**

**Team …………………………… Tel No ………………………………**

Compliments should be forwarded to HR at the following address who will pass them on to the appropriate staff member:

HR Manager, Aberdeen Foyer, Sir Ian Wood House, Hareness Road, Altens, Aberdeen AB12 3LE. [HR@aberdeenfoyer.com](mailto:HR@aberdeenfoyer.com)

**Foyer**

**COMPLAINTS FORM**

**Full Name:**

**Contact Address:**

**Tel No:**

1. Date of problem or issue of concern ……../......../……..
2. Time this took place ………………….am/pm
3. Please write your complaint below. If you need more paper or require assistance with the completion of this form, please ask a member of staff.

Complaints should be forwarded to one of the HR department at the following address:

HR Manager, Aberdeen Foyer, Sir Ian Wood House, Hareness Road, Altens, Aberdeen AB12 3LE. [HR@aberdeenfoyer.com](mailto:HR@aberdeenfoyer.com)