



COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS
POLICY AND PROCEDURE
MAY 2022
REVISION 6





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Table of Contents:

1. Policy Statement	1
2. Who does this policy apply to?	1
3. Aim of the Policy.....	2
4. Foyer Procedure	2
5. Responding to Compliments and Comments.....	4
6. Responding to Complaints	5
7. Foyer’s Appeals Procedure	10
8. Time Limit for Making a Complaint.....	12
9. Anonymous Complaints	12
10. Recording.....	13
11. Evaluation, Monitoring and Improvement	13
12. HR Contact Details	14
13. Related Policies (but not limited to):	14

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 We therefore encourage and seek to 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.
- 1.3 Where people do have a complaint about our work, we will respond to and deal with issues raised swiftly, thoroughly and fairly.

2. Who does this policy apply to?

- 2.1 This policy applies to all people working on behalf of the Foyer including employees, agency workers, consultants, volunteers, student placements, interns and trustees.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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.

3. Aim of the Policy

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.

4. Foyer Procedure

- 4.1 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
- 4.2 Contact points for any client (or their mandated representative) to provide feedback to us include:

- Talking to your keyworker
- Visit the local Foyer site and speak to a member of staff
- Call us on 01224 373800
- Email us at HR@aberdeenfoyer.com
- Write to us at Aberdeen Foyer HR, Sir Ian Wood House, Hareness Road, Aberdeen AB12 3LE

4.3 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.

4.4 The Foyer promotes equality of access and will also make sure, when requested, to:

- Provide assistance to people who have difficulty with spoken or written 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

4.5 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 Foyer's Youth Housing Tenant's Handbook.

4.6 In addition, clients engaging with our counselling services will also receive information on COSCA's Complaints Procedure as well as delivery staff and volunteers.

4.7 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.

5. Responding to Compliments and Comments

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 A copy of the Compliments/Comments Form can be found at the end of this policy. Alternatively, these are available at all Foyer locations and/or can be requested by email from HR.
- 5.4 All Compliments/Comments Forms should be returned to HR, whose details are listed in section 2.5.2 above.
- 5.5 Where a compliment/comment is received, feedback will be provided to the staff member or service and Foyer Board as appropriate.
- 5.6 When we review our Policies, we take into consideration any comments made that may relate to the contents of a Policy.

6. Responding to Complaints

PLEASE NOTE: If at any point while handling a complaint, abuse is suspected, you must immediately follow the Aberdeen Foyer Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

6.1 Our Approach to Dealing with Complaints

6.1.1 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 quickly and inclusively 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 go through a formal process unnecessarily

6.1.2 For people requiring assistance to make a complaint they will be offered support 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.

6.1.3 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. The complainant will be required to give permission for confidential information, pertinent to the complaint, to all those involved in handling the complaint. The limitation to confidentiality would be if a strong belief exists that there is a serious risk of harm to any individual.

6.1.4 Everyone working on behalf of the Foyer will receive appropriate instruction and/or training to address and resolve difficulties locally, if they arise, and managers will receive coaching in investigating complaints objectively and fairly.

6.1.5 The Foyer reserves the right to suspend or cease the investigation of a complaint if legal proceedings are commenced by the complainant against the organisation.

6.1.6 The process of dealing with a complaint may be adjourned (e.g. due to external events such as a pandemic) as long as it is restarted at the point it was stopped with a reasonable time period.

6.2 Receiving a Complaint:

- 6.2.1 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.
- 6.2.2 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 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 line manager of the worker or volunteer about whom the complaint has been made as appropriate to the situation and needs of the complainant. The contact details and communication needs of the complainant should be identified and noted. This should usually take place within one working day and no more than two working days.
- 6.2.3 Emailed and written complaints should be passed directly to the appropriate manager but the person handling the complaint should respond to the complainant as soon as is practicable and within 2 working days 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).
- 6.2.4 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.
- 6.2.5 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.
- 6.2.6 Where a complaint is received feedback will be provided to the staff member or service and Foyer Board referred to in the complaint as appropriate.
- 6.2.7 At any point in the process Aberdeen Foyer retains the right to seek legal or other specialist advice as appropriate.
- 6.2.8 A copy of the Complaints Form is available at the end of this policy. Alternatively, these are available at all Foyer locations or by emailing HR@aberdeenfoyer.com

6.3 Acknowledging the Complaint

- 6.3.1 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 12.

6.4 Investigating a Complaint

Stage One – Informal

- 6.4.1 The Complaint Manager should always contact the complainant thanking them for their complaint and seeking further information and evidence, and clarification about the issues and resolution being sought listening carefully, respectfully and non-judgementally. They will be met in a safe, confidential space which may also include digital options, on a 1:1 basis and they may be accompanied, but not represented by a supportive person of their choice if they wish.
- 6.4.2 It is the responsibility of the Complaints Manager to ensure the complainant feels safe and confident that their complaint is considered fully. This meeting will be offered to take place within one working day and no more than two working days of the Complaint Manager receiving the complaint, bearing in mind the complainant's availability. It will also help establish whether, and to what extent, the issue can be resolved informally without a fuller, more intensive investigation. Where appropriate the Complaints Manager will discuss with the Complainant any support required to use the complaints process, which might, in some instances, include advocacy support.
- 6.4.3 At any point during the meeting the Complaints Manager or the complainant can request to adjourn the meeting, e.g. for health, security and/ or clarification purposes.
- 6.4.4 During any informal stage/mediation, the complainant and the complained against, and/ or their representative, will not come into contact at any time during the investigation.
- 6.4.5 Should a satisfactory resolution to the complaint raised be reached with the complainant, the Complaints Manager will record any resulting actions on the Foyer's Complaints Log held by HR and the matter will be treated as resolved.

Stage Two – Formal

- 6.4.6 Should a satisfactory resolution not be reached through the informal stage and/or the complainant wishes to escalate the complaint, a formal complaint stage will be followed.
- 6.4.7 During any formal stage/mediation, the complainant and the complained against, and/ or their representative, will not come into contact at any time during the investigation.
- 6.4.8 The Complaint Manager should thank the Complainant for their complaint and reassure them of our intention to listen carefully and objectively to their concern. They will be met in a safe, confidential space which may also include digital options, on a 1:1 basis. They may be accompanied, but not represented, by a supportive person of their choice if they wish which should be checked when arranging the meeting.
- 6.4.9 At any point during the meeting the Complaints Manager or the complainant can request to adjourn the meeting, e.g. for health, security and/ or clarification purposes.
- 6.4.10 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, and/or for example correspondence and notes.
- 6.4.11 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. 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.
- 6.4.12 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.
- 6.4.13 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.

- 6.4.14 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 7 below.
- 6.4.15 The presumption should be that a complaint is made in good faith. However, if the manager becomes aware that the complaint is made with vexatious or malicious intent, they may make a decision and recommendations for further action on this basis.
- 6.4.16 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.
- 6.4.17 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 within one month of concluding the complaints proceedings. COSCA will publish upheld complaints and their sanctions regarding any COSCA Individual Members or Member Organisations.

6.5 Complaints Received about Someone Working on Behalf of the Foyer

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- 6.5.1 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.
 - 6.5.2 The person who raised the complaint will be advised that the matter will be taken forward by the person's line manager.
 - 6.5.3 The complainant is entitled to know if their complaint has resulted in action or sanctions which could include an apology, further training, changes to policies and procedures. Sanctions may be applied by the Complaint Handler.
 - 6.5.4 The complainant is not entitled to know the nature of any disciplinary or capability action taken or the outcome of it. Sanctions may be applied by the Disciplinary panel as part of the Disciplinary process as appropriate and could include for staff involved suspension or dismissal from their work. For further examples of potential sanctions, who and how they are imposed and removed please refer to Aberdeen Foyer's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
 - 6.5.5 If a complaint is received against a member of staff who has left the Foyer's employment an investigation will be conducted for the learning of the organisation. Wherever possible the complained against is offered the opportunity to represent their own interest.
 - 6.5.6 If the complaint relates to our counselling service and the member of staff or volunteer has left the Foyer, the outcome report will be sent to COSCA. If the former worker/volunteer is still a member of COSCA, COSCA may investigate under their system for dealing with information about members.

7. Foyer's Appeals Procedure

- 7.1 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.

- 7.2 An Appeals Officer, who will be senior to the person who undertook the original complaint investigation and will have no previous involvement, will consider the appeal.

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- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 Outcomes following the appeal might include:
- the initial complaint response is upheld
 - the initial complaint response is overruled and new findings or decisions are reached or new recommendations are made
 - the complaint is re-investigated, and the original findings, decisions and recommendations are affirmed or replaced by new or different ones.
- 7.5 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.
- 7.6 The Appeals Officer's decision is final other than in exceptional cases detailed below.
- 7.7 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.
- 7.8 In certain circumstances the Complainant may be able to complain further to a third party depending on the nature of the complaint.
- Aberdeen Foyer is registered with the Care Inspectorate as a housing support provider <http://www.careinspectorate.com/>.
 - 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.
 - Aberdeen Foyer is a registered Charity with OSCR the regulatory body for charities in Scotland <http://www.oscr.org.uk/contact-oscr>.
 - Our Counselling services aim to meet the standards set down by COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland) www.cosca.org.uk
- 7.9 If the content of the appeal is in relation to our Counselling service, the Complaint Manager will ensure that Complainant is provided with all details and support required to follow COSCA's Complaints Procedure if they are

dissatisfied with the outcome of the proceedings. This includes the ability of COSCA to conduct a procedural review if the complaint is received within one month on receipt of outcome. If within timescale, COSCA may choose to verify that the Foyer's complaints procedure has been followed and the outcome was lawful, reasonable and properly explained.

8. Time Limit for Making a Complaint

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 For making a formal complaint the time limit is normally six months from the date of the event which triggered the complaint.
- 8.3 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. COSCA's Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice
 - d. any other relevant factors
- 8.4 A complaint may be discontinued if:
- a. the complainant fails or refuses to participate at any stage of the complaint procedure without good reason
 - b. or the complainant formally withdraws the complaint

Both parties will be informed.

9. Anonymous Complaints

- 9.1 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.

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- 9.2 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.

10. Recording

- 10.1 A copy of all compliments, comments and complaints plus responses will be stored confidentially within the HR department.
- 10.2 This will be dated and held in accordance with data protection legislation in line with our Data Protection Policy.
- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 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.

11. Evaluation, Monitoring and Improvement

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 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.
- 11.3 CEO will monitor and review the implementation of this policy annually.

- 11.4 Foyer Leadership Team will review this policy and monitor any complaints made against the organisation and its services reporting to Aberdeen Foyer Board.

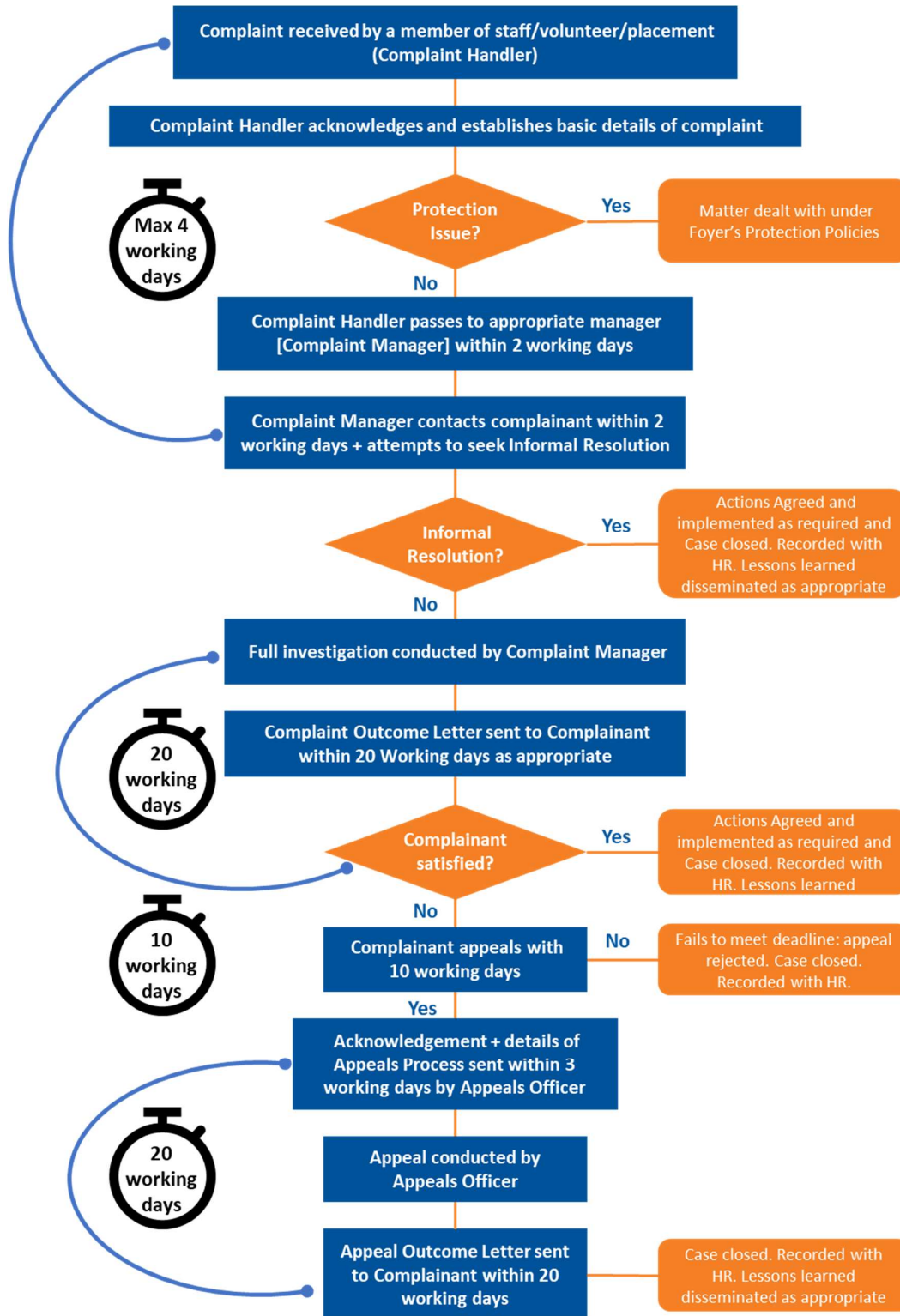
12. HR Contact Details

HR Adviser
Aberdeen Foyer
Sir Ian Wood House
Hareness Road
Altens
Aberdeen
AB12 3LE
HR@aberdeenfoyer.com

13. 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

A.1 Complaint Flowchart



A.2 Compliments Form

COMPLIMENTS FORM					foyer aberdeen	
<p>The Foyer welcomes compliments as a means of continuously improving the quality of service we provide.</p>						
Team		Location		Date		
Details of person giving compliment						
Name				Tel no		
Address						
Description of compliment:						
Signature (written or typed)						
How was the compliment received?						
<small>(If form not completed by person providing the compliment)</small>						
Letter	Verbal	Telephone	E-mail	other (please state)		
Received by				Title		
Team				Tel no		
<p>Compliments should be forwarded to HR at the following address who will pass them on to the appropriate staff member:</p> <p>HR Adviser, Aberdeen Foyer, Sir Ian Wood House, Hareness Road, Altens, Aberdeen AB12 3LE. HR@aberdeenfoyer.com</p>						
<p>ABERDEEN FOYER POLICY AND PROCEDURES COMPLIMENTS FORM</p>						

A.3 Complaints Form

COMPLAINTS FORM



Statement here as per the Compliments Form?			
Full name		Tel no	
Date & time of problem or issue of concern:			
E-mail			
Address			
<p>Please write your complaint below. If you need more space or require assistance with the completion of this form, please ask a member of staff</p>			
<p>Complaints will be dealt with confidentially and can be submitted to service staff or be forwarded to the HR department to forward to the appropriate manager at the following address:</p> <p>FAO HR Adviser, Aberdeen Foyer, Sir Ian Wood House, Hareness Road, Altens, Aberdeen AB12 3LE. HR@aberdeenfoyer.com</p>			

ABERDEEN FOYER POLICY AND PROCEDURES
COMPLAINTS FORM