



# COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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## **Policy Statement**

If you are an employee, volunteer or working for the organisation in another capacity, please see the relevant policy and procedure for your feedback. The Foyer Federation is committed to providing a quality service for its members and working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our stakeholders. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our members and stakeholders, and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

This Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy & Procedure applies to anyone not working for the organisation.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- young people
- funders
- parents and caregivers
- members of the public
- other organisations.

## **Types of Feedback**

### **Compliments**

We strive to improve what we do, not only by making improvements when things go wrong but by building on our success. Therefore, hearing what we are doing well benefits individuals as well as the organisation. Compliments about the organisation help us to understand what is valuable and working well so that we can build on that success. We ensure any specific feedback reaches staff or volunteers so they can hear what you found great too.

### **Complaints**

We define a complaint as: “an expression of dissatisfaction about our service, actions taken, or a lack of action taken, by or on behalf of the organisation”.

Complaints may include but are not limited to:

- concerns about the quality, inconsistency or standard of service
- financial mis-management or inappropriate fundraising methods
- inappropriate behaviour, poor treatment or poor attitude by someone working on behalf of the organisation
- non-compliance by the organisation to follow an appropriate policy or procedure, or a general dissatisfaction with them

## **Comments**

We welcome any other thoughts, comments or feedback you have about what we do and the people who are doing it with us. Our organisation exists to make a difference and hearing what you think about what we do and how we do it, helps us continue to develop.

## **Anonymous Feedback**

We encourage all feedback to be sent by a named person so that we can share thanks, follow up with you or share an outcome. However, anonymous feedback will be read and treated with the same level of appreciation and seriousness, although it may not result in the most comprehensive action.

## **Timeframe to Raise Your Feedback**

### **Compliments and Comments**

You can compliment us or give general feedback at any time.

### **Complaints**

We encourage all complaints to be made as soon after an incident as possible. This helps us to act on your complaints in the most comprehensive way. If you are unable to do so immediately we ask that a complaint be made up to 8 weeks of either:

- the date the matter which is the subject of a complaint is about occurred, or
- if it was later, the date on which the complainant became aware of the matter.

The time limit will not apply if we are satisfied that there was a good reason for the complaint not being made within the time limit. Any complaints made beyond this time frame that are upheld will be considered historical complaints. Historical complaints will still be taken seriously. In instances of historical complaints, we may be more limited in the information we can access during an investigation. However, we will still pursue a historical complaint if it is possible to investigate the complaint effectively and fairly.

## **Process for Actioning Your Feedback**

### **Compliments and Comments**

We will always do our best to acknowledge your comments and compliments. However, if we have been unable to, they are always appreciated and we strive for them to be passed on to any relevant parties internally.

### **Complaints**

We aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- we respond in the right way – for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc;
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly;
- keep matters low-key;
- enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

**The Foyer Federation's responsibility will be to:**

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- take action where appropriate.

**A complainant's responsibility is to:**

- bring their complaint, in writing, to the Foyer Federation's attention, normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff in the Foyer Federation, or in the event the complaint is about the Chief Executive to raise this with the Chair of the Board of Trustees, who can be contacted via the Executive Assistant & Company Secretary
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow the Federation a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond the Federation's control.

**Responsibility for Action:** All Staff and Trustees of the Foyer Federation.

**Confidentiality:** Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and the Federation maintain confidentiality. However the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

**Monitoring and Reporting:** Trustees of the Foyer Federation will receive annually an anonymised report of complaints made and their resolution and complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Foyer Federation's Privacy Policy.

## **Formal Complaints Procedure**

### **Stage 1**

In the first instance, if you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to the member of staff who dealt with you, or their manager, so that he or she has a chance to put things right. If your complaint concerns the Chief Executive, you should write to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Executive Assistant & Company Secretary can put you in contact. If your complaint concerns a Trustee of the Federation, rather than a member of staff, you should write formally to the individual concerned. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 4 working days of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within 15 working days and if this is not possible we will write to advise when you will hear from us further.

Our contact details can be found on our home page: <https://foyer.net>

### **Stage 2**

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to a complaint then you can write to the Foyer Federation's Chief Executive and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. You can expect the Chief Executive to acknowledge your request within 4 working days of receipt and a response within 15 working days. If your complaint is about the Chief Executive you can expect an acknowledgement of your request within 4 working days of receipt, wherever possible, and response within 15 working days. If this is not possible we will write to advise when you will hear from us further.

The Federation's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

### **Final Stage**

If you are not satisfied with the subsequent reply from the Federation's Chief Executive, then you have the option of writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, stating the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You must do this within 10 days of receiving the written response from the Federation's Chief Executive.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees (or their nominee) will respond normally within 10 working days to inform you of the action which will be taken to investigate your complaint,

and when you can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation. If this is not possible we will write to advise when you will hear from us further.

If your original complaint was about the Chief Executive and made to the Chair of the Board of Trustees and you are not satisfied with the subsequent reply from the Chair, then the final stage will be handled by the Vice Chair of the Foyer Federation.

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### **Managing Your Information and Confidentiality**

All written complaints will be logged in as much detail as is necessary. This includes the personal information of the person making the complaint. Information about individual complaints will only be shared with those who need access for a legitimate purpose. This includes staff investigating and responding to the complaint. Steps will be taken to maintain your confidentiality, beyond the people who need to look into your complaint. On occasion your information may be shared with others internally as well as externally when we are legally required to do so. Your data will be handled in line with the Data Protection Act (2018).

### **How to Share Your Feedback**

#### How to Contact Us

We encourage all feedback to be in written form, whether email or letter. If feedback is given orally we encourage it to be followed up in writing, particularly for complaints. This ensures the feedback is received in its truest form.

#### Who to Contact

Whether you have a complaint, compliment or comment we always encourage you to speak directly to the team or person involved first.

If you have been unable to give feedback directly, below are the contact details for who to contact whether your feedback is about someone working on behalf of the organisation, the organisation and its services, or the CEO, trustee or senior leader.

Joel Lewis - Chief Executive - [joel@foyer.net](mailto:joel@foyer.net)

Rachel Middleton - Executive Assistant & Company Secretary - [rachel.middleton@foyer.net](mailto:rachel.middleton@foyer.net)

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