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# Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure

**Introduction**

The Larder West Lothian (The Larder)is committed to providing a quality service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our trainees, customers, partners and stakeholders, and in particular by responding positively to complaints and learning from our mistakes.

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

* we welcome compliments, feedback and suggestions
* making a compliment or 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.

This policy ensures that we welcome compliments and provide guidelines for dealing with complaints from members of the public about our services, facilities, staff and volunteers.

**Definitions**

**Compliment** - A compliment is an expression of satisfaction about the standard of service we provide.

**Complaint** - A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction, however, it is expressed. This would include complaints expressed face to face, via a phone call, in writing, via email, social media or any other method. All staff should have sufficient knowledge to be able to identify an “expression of dissatisfaction” even when the word “complain” or “complaint” is not used.

**Compliments**

We are always glad to hear from people who are satisfied with the services we offer. All compliments are recorded, acknowledged, and a copy is sent to the relevant manager to provide feedback to the member of staff, volunteer, trainee or team.

**Complaints**

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 Larders responsibility is to:

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

A complainant's responsibility is to:

* bring their complaint, in writing, to The Larder’s attention as soon as possible
* raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff at The Larder
* explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
* allow The Larder a reasonable time to deal with the matter, and
* recognise that some circumstances may be beyond The Larder’s control.

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and The Larder 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 facts). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

**Complaints Procedure:**

Written records must be made by The Larder at each stage of the procedure and stored appropriately.

**Stage 1 – Informal Complaint**

In the first instance, the member of staff receiving the complaint will share with their Line Manager immediately and must not share the information with any other staff members. Line Managers will then establish the seriousness of the complaint, the course of action to be taken and if an informal approach can be taken.

If concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure below should be followed.

**Stage 2 – Formal Complaints**

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the member of the public should be advised, by the Line Manager, that a formal complaint may be made and the following procedure should be explained to them.

* A formal complaint can be made either verbally or in writing. If in writing the attached form should be used. If verbally, a statement should be taken by a member of the Management Team.
* In all cases, the complaint must be passed on to the Business Manager. In the event of a complaint about the Business Manager the complaint should be passed to the CEO and if the complaint is about the CEO this must be passed on to the Chairperson of the Board.
* The Business Manager depending on the nature of the complaint, must acknowledge the complaint in writing within one week of receiving it.
* The Business Manager will investigate the complaint. Any conclusions reached should be discussed with the Line Manager who initially responded to the complaint.
* The person making the complaint will receive a response based on the investigation within one week of the complaint being received. If this is not possible then a letter will be sent to the complainant explaining why and a further date for response.

**Stage 3 – Unsatisfied with Response**

* If the complainant is not satisfied with the above decision, they can raise this in writing to the CEO, if they are not satisfied with response from the CEO then this can be escalated to the Chairperson of the Board.
* At all stages of the complaint the complainant will be kept informed of steps being taken and timescales for completion.

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**COMPLAINTS FORM**

You may use this form to make a suggestion or to make a complaint about The Larder.

We would like you to return this form as soon as possible.

**Your Name** …………………………………………………………………………..

**Address** …………………………………………………………………………...

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**Telephone** …………………………………………………………………………..

**Date of incident:**

**Approximate time of incident:**

**Suggestion / Complaint:**

**What action would you like to be taken?**

**What times are convenient for you to have an appointment to discuss this?**