

# Complaints and Compliments Policy

|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>Version:</b>                               | 8                           |
| <b>Name &amp; job title of policy owner</b>   | Julia Ward, Quality Manager |
| <b>Date approved by Nathan Singleton, CEO</b> | July 2020                   |
| <b>Next review date:</b>                      | July 2021                   |

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction .....  | 3  |
| 2. Complaints Policy .....                                       | 3  |
| 2.1 Purpose .....  | 3  |
| 2.2 Confidentiality .....  | 3  |
| 2.3 Principles of how we deal with complaints .....              | 3  |
| 2.4 Contact Details for Complaints .....                         | 4  |
| 3. Complaints Procedure .....                                    | 4  |
| 3.1 Actions Taken on Receipt of a Complaint .....                | 4  |
| 3.2 Stage 1: Informal Complaints Procedure .....                 | 5  |
| 3.3 Stage 2: Formal Complaints Procedure .....                   | 5  |
| 3.4 Stage 3: Appeals .....                                       | 5  |
| 3.5 Third Party Recourse.....                                    | 6  |
| 4. Recording and Monitoring Complaints .....                     | 6  |
| 5. Compliments Procedure.....                                    | 7  |
| 5.1 How can a Compliment be given? .....                         | 7  |
| 6. Responsibilities .....  | 7  |
| 6.1 Chief Executive Officer .....                                | 7  |
| 6.2 Directors.....   | 7  |
| 6.3 Quality Manager .....  | 7  |
| 6.4 Managers.....  | 7  |
| 6.5 Staff .....  | 8  |
| 7. Specialist and competent person advice .....                  | 8  |
| 8. Implementation and monitoring .....                           | 8  |
| 8.1 Implementation .....   | 8  |
| 8.2 Process for monitoring implementation and effectiveness..... | 8  |
| 9. Dissemination of and access to the policy .....               | 8  |
| 10. Review, updating and archiving of the policy .....           | 8  |
| 11. References .....   | 8  |
| 12. Related documents.....                                       | 8  |
| 13. Definitions .....  | 8  |
| Formal complaint.....  | 9  |
| 14. Version Control Sheet .....                                  | 9  |
| Appendix A - Complaints Log .....                                | 10 |
| Appendix B – Complaint Action Plan .....                         | 11 |

# 1. Introduction

Lifeline Projects (Lifeline) is committed to providing an excellent service to its beneficiaries and other stakeholders, working in open and accountable ways that build trust and respect.

The Complaints and Compliments policy details our approach to dealing with complaints, and includes the Complaints procedure which provides clear information about how complaints will be handled as well as how we share compliments.

The policy is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible, resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, and provide a way of sharing compliments with staff.

## 2. Complaints Policy

### 2.1 Purpose

Lifeline improves its services by listening and responding to the views of beneficiaries and other stakeholders, by responding positively to complaints and by putting mistakes right. We are committed to dealing with complaints fairly, impartially and quickly. To ensure we meet this commitment we will:

- Ensure the process for making a complaint is as easy as possible.
- Treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response.
- Treat complaints of discrimination and prejudice seriously; they will never be accepted, excused or dismissed.
- Deal with complaints promptly, politely and confidentially.
- Aim to keep complainants informed about progress and the results of any investigation.
- Respond to complaints in the correct way e.g. with an explanation, an apology and/or information on any action taken e.g. changes made to a service following a complaint.
- Set timescales for responding to complaints and monitor our responsiveness against these timescales.
- Learn from complaints and use them to improve the services we offer.
- Advise our beneficiaries of their right to complain to a third party, if applicable.

Lifeline recognises that many concerns raised will be informal, and we aim to deal with these quickly. In the first instance we would expect any complaint to be raised directly with the member of staff concerned. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Complaints not covered by this policy are:

- Employment issues which are covered by staff grievance procedures.
- Any matter that is subject to legal action.
- Any complaint that is deemed to be vexatious or malicious following investigation.

### 2.2 Confidentiality

Every attempt will be made to ensure both the complainant (or where relevant the complainant's advocate) and Lifeline maintain confidentiality. However, sometimes it is not possible to maintain confidentiality and where this is the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

### 2.3 Principles of how we deal with complaints

- Lifeline's Complaints policy is based on the principles of a three-stage process (as detailed in the Complaints Procedure).
- The Complaints policy will apply to all services delivered by Lifeline.
- If at any time during the investigation of a complaint, matters arise that warrant investigation under the disciplinary procedure, or criminal investigation, the complaints procedure will be suspended until those investigations are concluded. Similarly, the complaints procedure will be suspended if a complainant is actively seeking legal redress.
- The relevant Director will be informed when a formal written complaint is received.
- Where a complaint is against a member of staff, they should be informed of the support available to them.
- A complete record of the entire process will be kept, including copies of all reports, transcripts of interviews and other relevant information.
- Lifeline may, at any stage of the formal complaints procedure, review a complaint and give a decision without a formal investigation.

- When appealing against a previous decision, the complainant will be asked to state why they are dissatisfied with how their complaint was handled.

## 2.4 Contact Details for Complaints

Complaints can be made verbally in person, by telephone, email or letter.

The table below details the contact details of the services delivered by LifeLine:

| Programme                 | Job title       | Contact name for complaint | Address   | Email address  | Telephone number |
|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---|--|------------------|
| Little Learners Elm Park  | Nursery Manager | Rebecca Clements           | 15 St Nicholas Avenue<br>Elm Park<br>Essex<br>RM12 4PT                                  | <a href="mailto:rebeccaclements@lifelineprojects.co.uk">rebeccaclements@lifelineprojects.co.uk</a> | 01708 450 781    |
| Lifeline Nurseries Ilford | Nursery Manager | Karen Collier              | 2 Axon Place<br>Ilford<br>Essex<br>IG1 1NL  | <a href="mailto:irenadaskevic@lifelineprojects.co.uk">irenadaskevic@lifelineprojects.co.uk</a>     | 020 8478 6999    |
| All other complaints      | Quality Manager | Julia Ward                 | Lifeline Projects<br>Lifeline House<br>25 Neville Road<br>Dagenham<br>Essex<br>RM8 3QS. | <a href="mailto:juliaward@lifelineprojects.co.uk">juliaward@lifelineprojects.co.uk</a>             | 020 8597 2900    |

Where a complaint cannot be resolved by the member of staff indicated in the table above, or where individuals shown above are the source of the complaint, the following staff should be contacted:

| Job title                         | Contact name for complaint | Email address  | Telephone number |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------|
| National Director of Faith Action | Daniel Singleton           | <a href="mailto:danielsingleton@lifelineprojects.co.uk">danielsingleton@lifelineprojects.co.uk</a> | 020 8597 2900    |
| CEO                               | Nathan Singleton           | <a href="mailto:nathansingleton@lifelineprojects.co.uk">nathansingleton@lifelineprojects.co.uk</a> | 020 8597 2900    |

The contact address for the staff listed above is:

Lifeline Projects  
Lifeline House  
25 Neville Road  
Dagenham  
Essex  
RM8 3QS.

## 3. Complaints Procedure

There are three main stages to the complaints procedures; informal complaints, formal complaints and appeals.

### 3.1 Actions Taken on Receipt of a Complaint

a) On receipt of an informal complaint, the relevant member of staff will verbally inform complainants on the same day:

- The name of the member of staff dealing with the complaint
- What will happen next and how long it will take.

A copy of the Complaints and Compliments policy will be made available to complainants if required.

b) On receipt of a formal complaint, the relevant member of staff will inform complainants in writing within two working days:

- The name of the member of staff dealing with the complaint
- What will happen next and how long it will take.

A copy of the Complaints and Compliments policy will be sent when writing to acknowledge receipt of the complaint.

Where appropriate, complainants will be asked to send a written account by post or email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

- c) On receipt of a complaint from an external organisation such as the Information Commissioner's Office, Ofsted or a local authority, the relevant LifeLine director will be informed immediately and will lead on, or nominate a member of staff, to investigate the complaint and liaise with the external organisation as required. The investigation will include gathering evidence to enable LifeLine to respond to the complaint, containment and recovery actions and informing individuals where applicable. This information will be filed in a separate file, ready for inspection, or, in preparation of providing a formal written response to the external organisation. LifeLine will fully co-operate with the complainant to ensure a satisfactory conclusion.

### **3.2 Stage 1: Informal Complaints Procedure**

- a) Informal complaints will normally involve a discussion directly between the complainant and the relevant member(s) of staff, or with a manager. LifeLine aims to resolve informal complaints as soon as possible by establishing with the complainant the cause of the complaint and what action they think needs to be taken to resolve concerns. This could be by way of providing an apology, a service, further information, or an acceptable explanation. Agreed resolution actions will be undertaken where complaints can be resolved immediately.
- b) In most instances informal complaints will not receive a formal written response.
- c) Where no resolution can be achieved within five working days of the initial complaint being raised, the complainant may choose to make a formal complaint.

### **3.3 Stage 2: Formal Complaints Procedure**

- a) Staff who receive a formal complaint (verbally or in writing) must, wherever possible, pass the complaint to the relevant manager on the day of receipt together with any additional information they may hold about the complaint. This provides the greatest opportunity for the complaint to be actioned and may help to speed up the response time.
- b) Where complaints are received from an advocate on behalf of a customer, staff must ensure they ask for written confirmation that the advocate is acting on the complainant's behalf.
- c) Formal complaints will normally involve a discussion directly between the complainant and the relevant manager. LifeLine aims to resolve formal complaints as soon as possible by establishing with the complainant the cause of the complaint and what action they think needs to be taken to resolve concerns.
- d) Agreed resolution actions will be undertaken where complaints can be resolved immediately.
- e) Following resolution, a formal letter of response will be sent to the complainant/nominated advocate. The letter will provide, where applicable, an apology, further information, or an acceptable explanation. LifeLine Project's aims to resolve formal complaints within 10 working days from receipt of the complaint.

### **3.4 Stage 3: Appeals**

- a. A complainant/nominated advocate who remains unsatisfied with the response or outcome of a formal complaint has 10 working days from the date of the formal letter of response in which to submit an appeal.
- b. The reason for the appeal must be clearly stated in writing (letter or email) and sent to the manager who sent the formal letter of response. The address for appeals is:

LifeLine Projects  
 LifeLine House  
 25 Neville Road  
 Dagenham

Essex  
RM8 3QS.

- c. The manager dealing with the appeal will send the complainant/nominated advocate an acknowledgement letter within two working days of receipt of the appeal letter.
- d. The appeal letter will be passed to the relevant Director who will review and/or investigate the original complaint.
- e. If the appeal cannot be resolved within 10 working days of the appeal, the relevant director will send a pending letter to the appellant within 5 working days from the receipt of the appeal letter.
- f. A second response letter that details the outcome of the appeal will be sent to the appellant/nominated advocate within 10 working days from the receipt of the appeal letter.

The decision at the end of this stage is final.

### 3.5 Third Party Recourse

If LifeLine cannot settle a complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant then, where one exists, a complaint may be referred to a third party, as detailed in the table below:

| Type of complaint                      | Third party organisation to complain to | Contact address/telephone number   |
|--|---|--|
| Complaints relating to data protection | Information Commissioner's Office       | Wycliffe House<br>Water Lane<br>Wilmslow<br>Cheshire<br>SK9 5AF.<br>Telephone: 0303 123 1113<br>You can also email – see information of the following link:<br><a href="https://ico.org.uk/concerns/complaints-and-compliments-about-us/complain-about-us/">https://ico.org.uk/concerns/complaints-and-compliments-about-us/complain-about-us/</a> |
| Unresolved complaints                  | Independent Case Examiner               | <b>The Independent Case Examiner</b><br>PO Box 209<br>Bootle<br>L20 7WA<br>Email <a href="mailto:ice@dwp.gsi.gov.uk">ice@dwp.gsi.gov.uk</a><br><br>Telephone 0345 606 0777<br>Fax 0151 221 6601<br>Telephone from outside the UK +44 151 221 6500<br>Text Relay – if you call from a textphone 18001 0345 606 0777                                 |
| Little Learners Nursery and Pre-School | Ofsted                                  | Telephone number: 03001231231<br><br>Online complaints form:<br><a href="https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/onlinecomplaintsofsted">https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/onlinecomplaintsofsted</a>  |

## 4. Recording and Monitoring Complaints

All complaints received within the scope of this policy must be notified to relevant manager where appropriate, and to the manager's line manager within two days of receipt.

The relevant member of staff/manager will record details of the complaint in the complaints Log (see Appendix C) including details of how the complaint was resolved and the impact of lessons learned e.g. changes made to policy or processes, together with a copy of the complaints action plan if completed and any other documentation associated with the complaint. The log will be filed in the relevant folder on the 'S' drive.

## 5. Compliments Procedure

The purpose of this Compliments procedure is to ensure that compliments received from students, young people, parents/carers, local authorities, staff and others are properly recorded, acknowledged (where appropriate) and conveyed to the individuals being thanked, and to all other staff.

Compliments and expressions of appreciation are valuable in monitoring the effectiveness of our services and can provide useful examples of good practice which can be shared throughout the organisation motivate and encourage our staff to continue to provide and improve on delivering excellent services.

We are committed to providing the best possible service that we can and we encourage positive feedback from the people who use our services. We have developed this procedure to explain our approach to handling compliments.

### 5.1 How can a Compliment be given?

An individual wishing to make a compliment can do so:

- By making the compliment in person when visiting LifeLine services
- By phone or email
- In writing to:

LifeLine Projects  
LifeLine House  
25 Neville Road  
Dagenham, Essex  
RM8 3QS.

Compliments will be passed on to the relevant member of staff and their line manager within three working days.

## 6. Responsibilities

### 6.1 Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for implementing LifeLine Project's strategy and policies and processes throughout the organisation, including the complaints management system.

### 6.2 Directors

Directors are responsible for:

- Developing and encouraging good customer care practice within their teams.
- Ensuring staff under their management are clear about their responsibilities under the Complaints policy and procedures.
- Leading on the complaints appeals process.

### 6.3 Quality Manager

Is responsible for:

- Ensuring complaints are recorded in the complaints log that is filed on the 'S' drive.
- Raising any risks associated with complaints with the CEO.
- Identifying and sharing good practice.

### 6.4 Managers

Managers are responsible for:

- Developing and encouraging good customer care practice within their teams.
- Ensuring staff under their management are clear about their responsibilities under the Complaints policy and procedures.
- Promptly responding to complaints, informal and formal.
- Informing the relevant Director of any formal complaints and appeals received.

- Providing feedback to staff on compliments received and, where identified, sharing best practice across the staff team/LifeLine.

## 6.5 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Practising good customer care in their day to day work with beneficiaries.
- Assisting beneficiaries by providing details of how to make a complaint.
- Promptly responding to informal complaints.
- Informing the relevant Manager of formal complaints received.
- Implementing best practice.

## 7. Specialist and competent person advice

None required for this policy.

## 8. Implementation and monitoring

### 8.1 Implementation

All staff will have access to this policy on SharePoint.

### 8.2 Process for monitoring implementation and effectiveness

For this policy, the following monitoring processes are in place.

| Standard  | Monitoring process                     |
|---|--|
| Review of complaints received at relevant meetings e.g. scorecard meetings, team meetings | Complaints log on 'S' drive completed. |
| Compliments shared at staff meetings, scorecard meetings                                  | Minutes of meetings.                   |

### 9. Dissemination of and access to the policy

Once approved, this policy will be available on SharePoint and the previous versions of the policy and associated documents removed. The Quality Manager will keep a record of this.

### 10. Review, updating and archiving of the policy

LifeLine maintains an electronic archive of all policy documents; these can be accessed via the Quality Manager.

### 11. References

None.

### 12. Related documents

- Little Learners Complaints Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

## 13. Definitions

The following list is a description of the meaning of key terms used in this policy.

| Term     | Description of Term   |
|----------|---|
| Advocate | An advocate seeks to ensure that people, particularly those who are most vulnerable in society, are able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have their voice heard on issues that are important to them.</li> <li>• Defend and safeguard their rights.</li> </ul> |



|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
|                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives.</li> </ul>   |
| Customer           | An individual who engages with, or receives a service delivered by LifeLine.  |
| Complaint          | A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction received either informally or formally about the standard of service, actions, or lack of actions, by LifeLine (or our partners) affecting an individual customer, group of beneficiaries or other stakeholders.  |
| Complainant        | A customer, or any of the following acting on behalf of a customer, who is receiving or has received services of any kind from LifeLine, or our partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ person (or nominated advocate)</li> <li>○ organisation</li> <li>○ institution/authority/professional body</li> <li>○ elected member (MP etc).</li> </ul> |
| Complaints log     | A database that tracks the key elements of complaints received, and their resolution, in order to identify potential trends or concerns and to produce reports.   |
| Formal complaint   | A formal complaint can occur where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of an informal complaint and expressly requests to raise a formal complaint (this can still be done verbally)</li> <li>• a written complaint is received.</li> </ul>   |
| Informal complaint | A complaint made verbally.  |

## 14. Version Control Sheet

| Version | Date       | Author(s)  | Status            | Comment  |
|---------|------------|------------|-------------------|--|
| 1 to 3  | N/A        | N/A        | Approved          | Historic issues 2006 to 2012   |
| 4       | 28/05/2012 | N/A        | Approved          | Initial issue of new format  |
| 5       | 10/02/2013 | N/A        | Approved          | Updated to show monitoring procedure   |
| 6       | 07/12/2015 | Julia Ward | Approved          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General rewrite of policy</li> <li>• Merged clients complaints procedure (Work Programme) and Customer Complaints Procedure, both dated January 2013 into this once policy</li> </ul> |
| 7       | 04/01/2017 | Julia Ward | Awaiting approval | Annual update and inclusion of compliments procedure   |
| 8       | 28/07/2020 | Julia Ward | Approved          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated ICO details</li> <li>• Paragraph added about how to deal with complaints from external organisations</li> <li>• Overall policy update.</li> </ul>                             |

## Appendix A - Complaints Log

| Section 1         |             |                   |                     |                                     |                 |          |           |            |          |               | Section 2          |     |    |                                |     |    |                                   |                  |                 |  |                 |  |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|---------------|--------------------|-----|----|--------------------------------|-----|----|-----------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------|--|
| Complaint Details |             |                   |                     | Nature of complaint (see key below) |                 |          |           |            |          |               | Resolution         |     |    | Compliant within LL timeframe? |     |    | Impact                            |                  |                 |  |                 |  |
| Complaint No:     | Directorate | Lead staff member | Name of complainant | Date of complaint                   | Informal/Formal | *Quality | *Delivery | *Decisions | *Conduct | Brief Outline | Date of completion | Yes | No | If No, why not                 | Yes | No | How many days/weeks/months delay? | Reason for delay | Lessons learned | Changes made (to policy/procedure/other) | Recompense made |  |
|                   |             |                   |                     |                                     |                 |          |           |            |          |               |                    |     |    |                                |     |    |                                   |                  |                 |  |                 |  |
|                   |             |                   |                     |                                     |                 |          |           |            |          |               |                    |     |    |                                |     |    |                                   |                  |                 |  |                 |  |
|                   |             |                   |                     |                                     |                 |          |           |            |          |               |                    |     |    |                                |     |    |                                   |                  |                 |  |                 |  |

### Key to nature of complaint:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Quality</b>   | Complaints about:<br>1. The alleged failure to carry out a service to an appropriate standard.<br>2. The quality of a resource (e.g. building/equipment) that do not fall into a health and safety category dealt with elsewhere. |
| <b>Delivery</b>  | Complaints about LifeLine's provision and/or arrangements made for delivery of a service.   |
| <b>Decisions</b> | Complaints about how decisions on the provision of a service are made as well as those expressing disagreement with the outcome.  |
| <b>Conduct</b>   | Complaints about the alleged failure of staff to adhere to appropriate standards of behaviour and to follow relevant policies and procedures.   |

## Appendix B – Complaint Action Plan

| Name of Programme/Support Service  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------|------------------|--|
| Complaints: These should where appropriate be shared with teams and actions addressed in relevant policies |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
| Action to address area(s) for improvement  | Intended outcomes | Resources required | Target completion date | Monitoring activities (including review dates) | Person(s) responsible | Progress to date | Where relevant, added to QIP (yes/no)? |
|  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
|  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
|  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
|  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
|  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
|  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
|  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
|  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
|  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
|  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
|  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
|  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |
|  |                   |                    |                        |  |                       |                  |  |