

Foróige Feedback and Complaints Policy & Guidance HSE Funded Projects

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Policy

It is the policy of Foróige that all parties including any young person, family member or related person who is accessing Foróige services; volunteers in Foróige (including student placements, interns and those on employment schemes); members of the wider community and those providing services to the Foróige organisation will be encouraged and supported to speak up about issues concerning them regarding Foróige.

All feedback and complaints will be managed in a standardised, systematic, planned, controlled, fair and transparent manner. All feedback and complaints received (whether written or verbal) will be taken seriously and acted on without prejudice. Feedback and complaints will be managed in a sensitive, respectful and confidential manner¹.

Those providing feedback or complaints will not be victimised or suffer any retribution nor preferential treatment in any aspect of their involvement in Foróige. Information will be widely available to throughout the organisation on how to provide feedback or make a complaint and how these will be managed. Communication will be maintained at all times and within the appropriate timeframes with all parties involved in the process.

This policy is framed within Foróige's philosophy which has its core the fundamental dignity of the human person. Foróige is committed to ensuring that all young people, family members or related persons who are accessing Foróige services; volunteers in Foróige (including student placements, interns and those on employment schemes); members of the wider community and those providing services to the Foróige organisation are treated with dignity and respect. In doing so it will usually be possible to resolve any worries or anxieties before a complaint is deemed necessary.

Foróige's Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedures should be read in conjunction with Foróige's Equality Policy, Foróige's Data Protection Policy and Foróige's Child Protection Policy, as an issue raised as a complaint may need to be dealt with under child protection procedures **which will take precedence.**

¹ With exceptions of Foróige's obligations under Child Protection Guidance and Data Protection

Context

Foróige welcomes feedback from all sources and it is recognised that feedback (both positive and negative) and complaints assist Foróige to identify mistakes, improve services and reinforce the need for particular services/activities. Foróige is committed to the positive resolution of conflict to enable effective organisational growth and change.

However, it must be understood that Foróige's Child Protection Policy and Procedures take precedence over the complaints policy. Further, as per Foróige's obligations under the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 confidentiality may not be guaranteed.

Scope

These procedures relate (but are not limited) to feedback and complaints about:

- Services provided by Foróige
- Use of the facilities or resources
- Matters concerning the management of the organisation
- A Foróige employee
- A Foróige volunteer
- A member of a Foróige Project Management Advisory Committee or the Management Advisory Committee in its entirety
- A student on placement with Foróige, an intern with Foróige and those on employment schemes placed in Foróige
- A young person (club member/project participant)
- Non-Foróige employees but those individuals or companies contracted by the organisation to provide services e.g., consultants and contract workers

Providing Feedback

Feedback is information that will help to maintain or improve Foróige. It differs from a complaint in that no further process will be entered into.

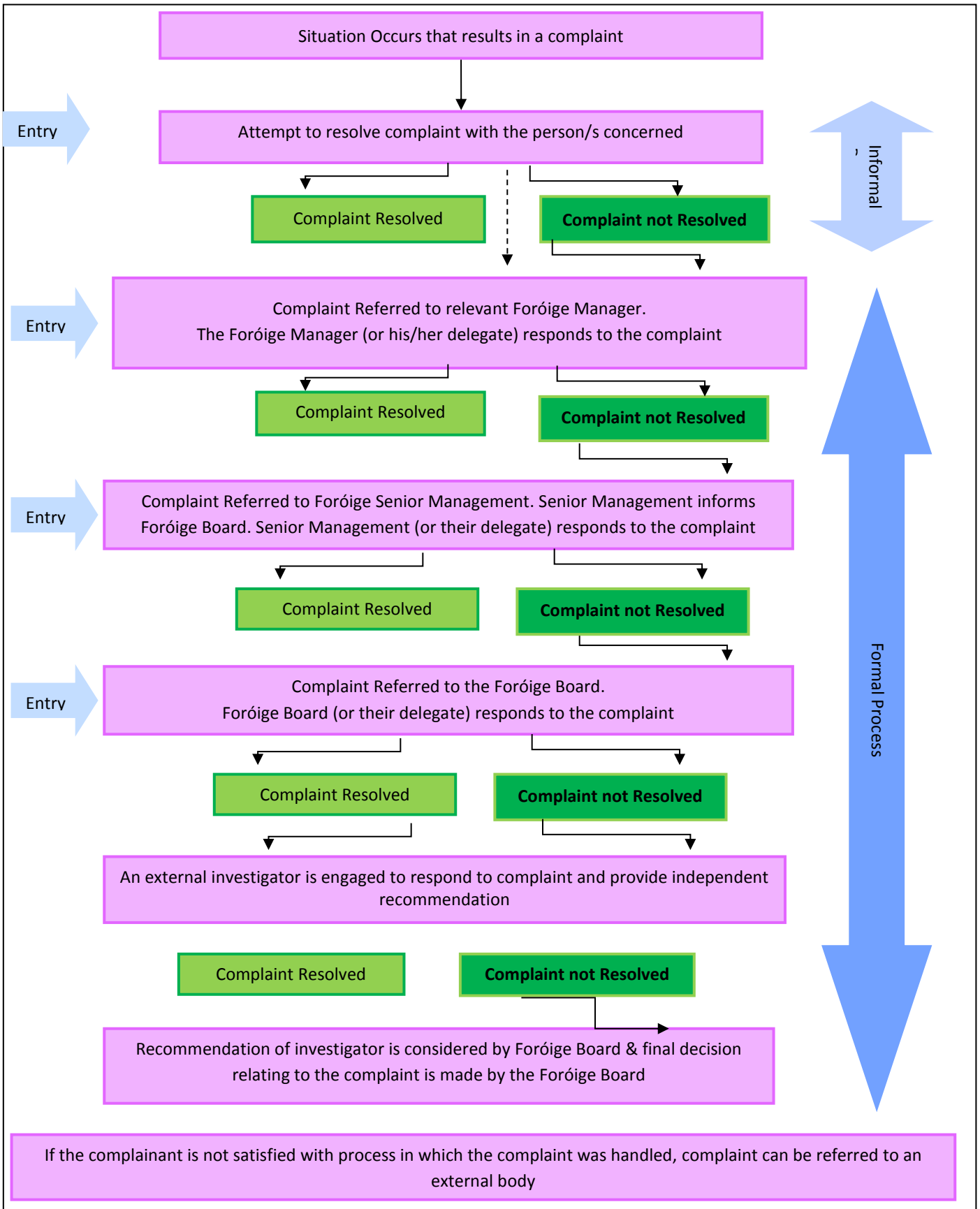
Feedback is encouraged about all Foróige activities, events and personnel. Often feedback can reinforce the need for a particular project in an area

How to Provide Feedback

Feedback may be provided either verbally to a staff member or volunteer or in writing using the Feedback Form and returning it to either the local Foróige office or to Foróige Head Office (info@foroige.ie).

Written feedback will be acknowledged and used to inform future developments in Foróige. However, no further action will be taken in relation to feedback.

The Complaints Process



3.1 Who can make a complaint?

All parties including any young person, family member or related person who is accessing Foróige services; volunteers in Foróige (including student placements, interns and those on employment schemes); members of the wider community and those providing services to the Foróige organisation

3.2 What can complaints be about?

Complaints can be made about any action or lack of action by Foróige that is considered unfair and has negatively affected the person making the complaints. It includes actions that are believed to have been:

- Taken without proper permission or authority
- Taken for unnecessary reasons
- The result of carelessness or negligence
- Based on wrong or incomplete information
- Discriminatory
- Based on bad administrative practice

3.3 What Complaints are outside the scope of this policy?

- A matter that is or has been the subject of legal proceedings before a court or tribunal
- A matter relating to the recruitment or appointment of an employee by Foróige
- A matter relating to a contract of employment that Foróige proposes to enter into
- A matter that could prejudice an investigation by An Garda Síochána
- A matter that has been brought before any other complaints procedure established by law
- Matters that give rise to child protection or welfare concerns

3.4 How to make an informal complaint

- Please raise informal complaints directly with the parties concerned. We encourage complaints to be resolved at this level in as far as possible. However, Foróige reserves the right to escalate the informal complaint to a formal complaint depending on the issues raised.
- Young people and volunteers have the option to use an advocate to support them in the process – please discuss this with your Foróige youth officer.
- If the person making the complaint does not wish to discuss the issue with the other party, they are encouraged to contact their youth officer or relevant Foróige manager

3.5 Informal Complaints Process

- It is strongly recommended to try to resolve the complaint directly with the parties involved
- Foróige staff have the authority to discuss and resolve informal complaints directly with young people, volunteers and members of the community in consultation with their line manager.
- Your Foróige Youth Officer will provide assistance in the resolution of the complaint
- A record will be kept of the details of the complaint; parties involved, desired resolution, actions taken to achieve the resolution and the outcome of the complaint.
- If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, information will be provided to all parties in relation to the next level of action for making a formal complaint or other external options.

Please bear in mind that due to obligations under the Data Protection Acts confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

3.6 How to make a formal complaint

- If the informal complaint process has proven to be unsuccessful the formal complaints process may be initiated
- Formal Complaints must be made in writing
- Please request a copy of the Foróige Complaints Form from your Foróige youth officer or from info@foroige.ie
- Complete the Foróige Complaints Form with as much detail as possible, clearly outlining the areas of complaint
- Return the completed Foróige Complaints Form to your Foróige Youth Officer or to info@foroige.ie.
- You will receive acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint within 10 working days
- A member of Foróige staff will contact you within ten (10) working days so that a process for resolving the complaint can be developed and agreed to by all those involved in the complaint.
- Formal Complaints made in writing other than on a Foróige Complaints Form will be asked to complete a Foróige Complaints Form.²
- Assistance will be provided to anybody who requests it to complete a Foróige Complaints form.

3.7 Timeframe for making a Formal Complaint

- Formal complaints must be made in writing, not later than twelve (12) months after the incident/issue arises. Complaints made outside this time frame shall not be accepted

3.8 Formal Complaints Process

- Relevant personnel, as determined by the line manager/or a delegated senior management team representative will be notified that a process is being undertaken and any questions or input should be directed to the nominated person. This may not occur if there are serious or potentially criminal matters reported, or the matter requires a work performance investigation.
- Time limits for addressing the complaint will be set and agreed to by all parties. This shall not exceed a 12 month period
- An independent mediator may be appointed with the agreement of all parties
- A Foróige representative is responsible for contacting an external mediation service. Mutual agreement shall be sought in regards to the employment of a mediator.
- A maximum of two (2), two (2) hour sessions shall constitute an external review process and may be paid for by Foróige.
- If the complaint remains unresolved:
 - The complaint may be referred to the National Council.
 - The National Council or nominated representatives will review the process undertaken to date and discuss options for further investigation including external review.
 - This process should be completed within sixty (60) working days, unless the all parties agree otherwise.

Please bear in mind that due obligations under the Data Protection Acts confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

3.9 HSE Funded Projects – Review process

- The complainant may seek a review of the outcome of the process by the HSE.

² This is to ensure that complaints are received in a standardised manner and contain the required information to determine how best to proceed

- All requests for a HSE Review should be forwarded to Director of Advocacy, Health Service Executive, Oak House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare

3.10 Complaints from Young People

- Young people are able to ask a family member, friend or advocate to help them make their complaint.
- Where a young person has a complaint regarding a staff member, volunteer, student, programme or decision made by any of these, the young person is encouraged in the first instance to resolve the issue directly with the person concerned
- If the young person feels that this is not possible, or this does not result in a resolution, they are to approach another staff member to record the complaint
- The staff member receiving the complaint and complainant (the young person) are to complete a “Complaints Record Form” together
- The process for dealing with the complaint is then the same as for described above at 3.5

3.11 Complaints specific to Foróige Employees

- If the complaint is in relation to a Foróige manager and has not been resolved satisfactorily through the informal process, the complainant should take their complaint to the Assistant CEO.
- If the complaint is in relation to the Senior Management Team the complainant can take their complaint directly to the Chair of the Foróige Board

3.12 External Reviews

- When complaints can't be resolved internally to the satisfaction of all parties involved, an external review process may be implemented as negotiated between the parties.
- This process will include the involvement of an independent external reviewer.
- Mutual agreement shall be sought in regards to the appointment of a reviewer.
- Young people under 18 years of age may choose to go to the Ombudsman for Children³ to seek advice and support regarding a complaint.
- If the matter is still not resolved the National Council shall consider the recommendations put forward by the external reviewing body and have final say in resolving the dispute.
- The matter should be completed within sixty (60) working days, unless the complainant agrees otherwise.

3.13 HSE Funded Projects

Foróige shall in each year, at such time and such manner as the HSE may determine, provide the HSE with a general report of the complaints received by Foróige projects funded by the HSE during the previous year indicating

- a) the total number of complaints received
- b) the nature of the complaints
- c) the number of complaints resolved by informal means
- d) the outcome of any investigations into the complaints

3.14 Withdrawing a Formal Complaint

- Please complete the Complaints Withdrawal Form and return to info@foroige.ie

³ Ombudsman for Children’s Office, Millennium House, 52-56 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1; www.oco.ie; Freephone: 1800 20 20

3.15 Complaints Concerning Violence and Harassment

- In the event of receiving a complaint concerning violence or inappropriate interactions with a young person perpetrated by a staff member or volunteer Foróige Child Protection Policy applies.
- All complaints in relation to violence or harassment will be treated as a formal complaint and immediately referred to the Assistant CEO.
- Young people making complaints of this nature must be informed of the limits in regards to confidentiality as described in Foróige Child Protection Policy

Appendix 1 Definitions

- **Accessibility:** People have the right to voice their feedback or complaint regarding Foróige and have the right to access a dispute resolution process. Young people, family members or related persons who are accessing Foróige services; volunteers in Foróige (including student placements); members of the wider community and those providing services to the Foróige organisation shall be informed of the procedure and if needed, assisted in accessing it.
- **Timeliness:** Disputes or complaints shall be resolved as quickly as possible, but without undue haste. All those involved will receive feedback in relation to actions taken to resolve a complaint.
- **Efficiency:** Foróige shall adopt a dispute resolution process that avoids the unnecessary use of resources including people's time and money. Processes utilised for addressing complaints will be simple and easily understood.
- **Transparency:** All individuals involved in a dispute resolution process shall have access to adequate information regarding decision making processes and outcomes.
- **Accountability:** Procedures shall be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure the effectiveness of Foróige Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedures Feedback Sheet (see Appendix)
- **Confidentiality:** Foróige is committed to keeping private and confidential any information given when providing feedback, compliments or making a complaint. This is governed by the relevant Data Protection Acts and Child Welfare Acts. Details of feedback and complaints will be seen only by relevant personnel and only for purposes of investigation. However, and with due regard to confidentiality, the nature of feedback, compliments and complaints and its resolution may be public within the organisation so that maximum learning and processing of situations can occur.
- **Complaint:** "Complaint" means a complaint made about any action of Foróige that
 - a) It is claimed, does not accord with fair or sound administrative practice and
 - b) Adversely affects the person by whom or on whose behalf the complaint is made (as per the Health Act, 2004)