Compliments and Complaints Policy

1. Purpose

At Arden Foodbank we believe everyone who comes into contact with our foodbank — whether as a client, volunteer, partner, donor or visitor — should receive a warm welcome and be treated with dignity, respect and compassion.

This policy explains how people can:

- Share compliments, appreciation of positive experiences; and
- Make complaints if something has gone wrong or they feel unhappy about how they were treated.

Compliments help us to recognise great work within our volunteer teams, and complaints help us to learn and improve.

2. Scope

This policy covers compliments and complaints or concerns raised by volunteers, clients, partners, donors and members of the public.

3. Our Commitments

We will:

- Welcome feedback of all kinds.
- Treat every compliment or complaint seriously.
- Handle complaints fairly, sensitively and confidentially.
- Aim to resolve complaints quickly where possible.
- Share compliments appropriately so volunteers feel valued and recognised.
- Use all feedback to strengthen our foodbank and uphold our values of dignity and respect.

No one will be treated unfairly for raising a complaint in good faith.

4. What is a compliment?

Any positive comment, thank-you message, or expression of appreciation about:

- A volunteer's kindness or helpfulness.
- A positive experience at the foodbank.
- Something that worked well or made a difference.

Compliments help us celebrate and encourage good practice.

5. What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about the foodbank's service, volunteers, communications, or how someone was treated.
Examples include:

- Feeling spoken to or treated disrespectfully.
- Feeling unfairly treated.
- Concerns about volunteer behaviour.
- Issues with the service received.
- Disagreements about parcel contents or processes.

6. Who can give a compliment or make a complaint?

- Clients and visitors.
- Volunteers.
- Referral agencies and partners.
- Members of the public.
- Donors and supporters.

7. How to give a compliment

Compliments can be made:

- In person to any volunteer.
- By email : manager.ardenfoodbank@gmail.com.
- By phone : 07733 551926.
- In writing to Arden Foodbank, c/o Globe House, The Priory, Alcester, B49 5DZ.

8. How compliments are handled

Compliments will be shared (with permission) with the volunteer team and noted at the next Trustee meeting so achievements can be recognised.

9. How to make a complaint

Complaints can be made:

- In person to any volunteer.
- By email : manager.ardenfoodbank@gmail.com.
- By phone : 07733 551926.
- In writing to The Foodbank Manager, Arden Foodbank, c/o Globe House, The Priory, Alcester, B49 5DZ.

If the complaint is about the Foodbank Manager, then it should be made by email to arden.trustee1@gmail.com.

When making a complaint include:

- What happened and when.
- Who was involved.
- How it affected you or others.
- What action you are hoping for.

If someone finds it difficult to write a complaint, we will help them record it verbally.

Anonymous complaints will be reviewed where possible, although they may be harder to investigate.

10. How complaints are handled

Step1: Informal resolution

Where possible we will try to resolve complaints quickly and informally through discussion, clarification or an apology.

Step 2: Formal review

If the issue is more serious, or cannot be resolved informally, the Foodbank Manager, or Trustee will:

- Acknowledge the complaint within 7 days.
- Listen to all involved, gather information, and keep a confidential written record.
- Provide a response within 28 days, wherever possible.

Depending on the situation, outcomes may include:

- An explanation or apology.
- Agreement on actions to prevent recurrence
- Mediation or a facilitated discussion.
- Changes to a process or practice.
- A reminder or retraining for a volunteer.
- In rare cases, ending a volunteer role, for serious or repeated issues.

The Foodbank Manager, or Trustee, will decide what is fair and proportionate based on the circumstances.

Step 3: Appeal

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, a request for a review can be made to the Chair of Trustees within 14 days of receipt of the decision.
- The review will focus on whether the process was fair and properly followed.
- The Chair of Trustees will inform the complainant of the decision within 10 working days, unless the complaint is particularly complex, in which case the complainant will be informed of the progress of the investigation and notified of the anticipated completion date.

The decision after review will be final.

11. Confidentiality and records

- All complaints will be handled confidentially.
- There may however be occasions when we cannot provide absolute confidentiality for example, in circumstances where a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of serious harm.
- Where a complaint relates to services involving our partners, for example a referral agency or Trussell, then we may need to share information with a third party.
- Information will only be shared with those directly involved in resolving the issue.
- The Foodbank Manager will keep a short record of complaints received, and how they were resolved, to help identify any patterns or improvements needed.
- We use personal information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 to process a complaint. We have a legitimate interest in holding this information in order to be able to monitor and improve.
- If the complaint is upheld, we keep this information for 3 years after the complaint was closed. If it is not upheld, we keep this information for 1 year after the complaint was closed. After this time the data will be aggregated and anonymised.

12. Learning and Improvement

Complaints help us improve. The Board of Trustees will review any recurring themes or suggestions from complaints during its regular meetings and use them to strengthen the foodbank's operations and volunteer experience.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if a serious complaint highlights the need for change.

Approved by Chair of Trustees:

Christine Lewington

Date: 21 November 2025

Review date: 21 November 2026