

## COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE

The Customer Liaison Staff are responsible for handling complaints relating to participants of all VisitScotland's Quality Assurance Schemes.

### Guiding Principles

- a) Complaints are confidential between VisitScotland and the complainant. Complaints will not be addressed specifically with the operator unless permission has been received by the complainant to release their personal details.
- b) Assessment visit reports are confidential between VisitScotland and the operator. Findings of visits by the Quality Advisors as communicated to the operators will not be made available by the Customer Liaison staff to the complainant.

### Procedure

Customer Liaison Staff will acknowledge complaints within 10 working days of receipt.

The Customer Liaison Staff will categorise complaints as one of the following: -

- |            |                      |
|------------|----------------------|
| Category 1 | Urgent Action        |
| Category 2 | Action at next visit |
| Category 3 | For reference        |

#### Category 1

- 1 Such complaints will be acted upon as soon as possible by the Customer Liaison Staff, with involvement of the Senior Quality Advisor. An appropriate Quality Advisor will be allocated to investigate the complaint as soon as is practicable.
  - 1.1 The complainant will be contacted to ask for permission for their complaint to be raised specifically. Action should take the form of an incognito overnight assessment or a spot check.
  - 1.2 The emphasis of the visit will not only be to investigate the subject of the complaint but to encourage the operator to better practice in order to meet or exceed customer expectations. The visit may or may not result in a change of award.

#### Category 2

2. Where the complainant has not written directly to the operator, copying in Visitscotland, the Customer Liaison staff will, where appropriate, request permission to copy the complaint to the operator for their comments.
  - 2.1 Where permission to copy is granted, the Customer Liaison Staff will write to the operator asking them to respond directly to the complainant, with a copy to Visitscotland within 15 working days. If no response is received to this first letter by the date requested, a reminder letter will be sent to the operator.
  - 2.2 Where permission is not granted, the correspondence will be attached to the file for the reference of the Quality Advisor at the next grading assessment visit.

- 2.3 Should there be similar complaints on file, the Customer Liaison Staff will discuss with the Senior Quality Advisor to request the annual assessment visit be brought forward, or other appropriate action taken.
- 2.4 Where necessary, the assessment will be made as soon as is practicable by a Quality Advisor and complaints will be discussed at the visit if permission has been forthcoming.

### Category 3

- 3 Those complaints in category 3 will not be forwarded to the establishment but will be filed for the Quality Advisors reference at the next grading visit.
- 3.1 The Quality Advisor will not address these complaints specifically but will keep them in mind when carrying out the annual assessment visit.
- 3.2 The complainant will receive a letter thanking them and informing them that their comments will be referred to the Quality Advisor for reference at the next visit. No further communication will be expected to take place between VisitScotland and complainant.

### Issues

#### Non-Quality Assurance Issues

Customer Liaison Staff will also respond to complaints received which relate to matters or establishments not covered by, or participating in, VisitScotland's Quality Assurance schemes.

In these cases, the complainant will be made aware that VisitScotland has no jurisdiction over the matter, and, where possible, will be advised of an alternative organisation to assist them.

#### Withdrawal from Quality Assurance

- 1 VisitScotland reserves the right to withdraw participation if 3 or more complaints are received against one property within one scheme year. If an assessment is made and the property is found not to meet all relevant criteria, the property will be withdrawn.
- 2 If the Customer Liaison Executive feels a property should be downgraded or withdrawn from scheme participation then the following procedure will apply.
  - i) Customer Liaison Executive to discuss with Quality Manager and recommend appropriate course of action. This is to be approved by the Head of Quality and Standards.
  - ii) Owner informed of decision reached and any further procedures/actions to be undertaken.