

Compliments and Complaints Policy

This Compliments and Complaints Policy does not cover:

- complaints made against an individual on an Organisational Member, Training Centres and/or Recognised Training Centres where own internal processes must be followed in the first instance;
- an assessment outcome or a qualification that you are or have been taking with an Organisational Member, Training Centre and/or Recognised Training Centre that you are looking to make an appeal against: please refer to the Athena Herd Foundation Enquiry on Results Policy and Procedure and Athena Herd Foundation Appeals Policy;
- the provision of a service or an assessment that has been delivered and/or conducted by an Organisational Member, Training Centre and/or Recognised Training Centre where you suspect malpractice or maladministration: please refer to the Athena Herd Foundation Malpractice and Maladministration Policy;

This Compliments and Complaints Policy does cover:

- direct complaints against individuals on the Accredited Practitioner Register™ where the client or service user does not feel that they can directly approach the individual, there has been a significant breach of professional conduct or ethical standards, or there is a deemed to be a wider public interest issue
- where appropriate, the individual on the Organisational Member, Training Centres and/or Recognised Training Centre internal processes should be exhausted before a complaint is raised directly with the Athena Herd Foundation;
- where the compliments and complaints policies of the individual on the Accredited Practitioner Register™, Organisational Member, Training Centres and/or Recognised Training Centre, has been exhausted, or failed to reach a satisfactory outcome;
- direct provision of services by the Athena Herd Foundation.

The Athena Herd Foundation:

- strives under the governance of the Accredited Practitioner Register™ to:
 - i. create and maintain professional ethics and standards that prioritise the health and wellbeing of clients and public and protects them from harm or injury;
 - ii. promote and maintain client confidence and public credibility in the benefits of Equine Interactions and the delivery thereof;
 - iii. provide a clear definition of professional standards required to support the delivery of Equine Interactions;
 - iv. maintain ongoing compliance with these standards by all registered Practitioners.
- strives to provide excellent Service and Training;
- values and encourages any concerns to be raised as early as possible with an individual on the Accredited Practitioner Register™, Organisational Member, Training Centres and/or Recognised Training Centre in accordance with their complaint's policy;
- takes all Compliments and Complaints seriously and reaches out to all parties involved;



- values the time taken to bring Compliments and/or Complaints to our attention and uses such Compliments and Complaints and feedback as a mechanism for continuous improvement;
- is committed to carrying out a thorough investigation and working through amicable solutions;
- records and maintains a record of all Compliments and Complaints;
- Executive Committee shall receive quarterly Compliments and Complaints reports and may recommend additional action to be taken, especially if any particular trends are identified.

Making a Compliment

If you wish to formally Compliment the Athena Herd Foundation on any aspect, please contact any Athena Herd Foundation member in writing either by post or email. All Compliments are passed over and recorded by the Customer Services Manager.

Making a Complaint – Accredited Practitioner Register™

We work with Practitioners to establish and maintain professional standards however we recognise that there may times be those Practitioners who do not meet the standards expected.

Where possible we encourage services users and members of the public to resolve their concerns directly with practitioners under their own processes. That said, we recognise that there are often circumstances where clients, the public and other Practitioners need to bring complaints about poor or unethical practice directly to our attention so we can take appropriate action.

We provide clear instruction and outline on the Register's website as to how public complaints can be raised and how they will be handled.

Making a Complaint – Organisational Member, Training Centres and/or Recognised Training Centres

- ensure that you have first gone through and exhausted the individual on the Accredited Practitioner Register™, Organisational Member, Training Centres and/or Recognised Training Centre complaint process before bringing the matter to the Athena Herd Foundation;
- contact the Athena Herd Foundation directly only in very exceptional circumstances *i.e. a significant breach by an individual or Organisational Member, Training Centres and/or Recognised Training Centre*;
- duly complete the Compliments and Complaints Form and submit to the Athena Herd Foundation for the attention of the Customer Services Manager or appropriate other person in the case that anything raised is in relation to the same either by email or post (see below);
- this must be done **within one (1) calendar month** of the date of the event that the complaint relates to;
- we will look to acknowledge your Complaint as soon as is reasonably possible and in any event **within five (5) working days from receipt of the same**;
- we will keep you informed at each stage of the Complaints process;



- the duration of the Complaints process is dependent on the nature and complexity of the Complaint and the availability of associated documentation. Having said this, a Complaint will normally be either responded to or a progress update given at **10 working day intervals** thereafter until the Complaint has reached a satisfactory conclusion. In cases where a complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, **the final decision will rest with the Athena Herd Foundation's CEO;**
- we do not charge any fees to cover the administrative and member costs involved in dealing with Complaints.

Contact us:

Please send the Athena Herd Foundation your duly completed Compliments and Complaints Form marked for the attention of the Customer Services Manager either by:

Post: High Lees Farmhouse, Wagon Lane, Paddock Wood, TN12 6PT

Email: info@athenaherd.org

Please note that Athena Herd Foundation will not accept anonymous complaints.

Legal Advice:

If, at any point, any of the parties involved wish to place the matter in the hands of their solicitors, the Athena Herd Foundation will only continue to communicate through the respective solicitors. This does not prevent any of the parties seeking legal advice.

Feedback or Opportunity to Improve

The Athena Herd Foundation is committed to ensuring all our members, learners, service users have a positive experience with us. However, we recognise that there may be an occasion where you consider there is some feedback or an opportunity for the Athena Herd Foundation to improve and wish to bring this to our attention. We welcome all feedback which will help us improve our service.

Please contact the Customer Services Manager through the email address info@athenaherd.org with your feedback.

Handling of Your Personal Data

Please note that our Data Protection Policy can be found at athenaherd.org and our Awarding and Learning Privacy Notice outline how we use and protect this information.