



## **SERVICE STANDARDS, COMPLAINTS & FEEDBACK**

### **MIDAYE SOMALI DEVELOPMENT NETWORK**

Version: **SSCF23.01**

Accepted: Jan 2025

Signature:

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Date of next review: **February 2027**

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. It is the aim of Midaye Somali Development Network (“Midaye”) is to be recognised for high levels of service delivery standards and good service user relations.
- 1.2. Midaye values its service users and recognises the value of their contribution to the design, delivery and evaluation of its services.
- 1.3. Midaye acknowledges that maintaining high levels of service user care is necessary in order to ensure that we live up to our values and pursue our mission.
- 1.4. Midaye will always strive to uphold the principles of its Equality & Diversity Policy and, to that end, will treat all people with fairness and respect and will demonstrate sensitivity to the individual needs and circumstances of service users.
- 1.5. In the course of its work, Midaye acknowledges that instances of error, disagreement, negligence or wrongdoing may occur. This policy is intended to provide the structure and procedures to be followed to deal with such circumstances quickly and effectively to ensure that disruption to services and the organisation are kept to a minimum and any negative consequences of such incidences are mitigated as far as possible.

## 2. PURPOSE

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to
  - 2.1.1. ...
  - 2.1.2. provide overall guidance and direction to members, staff and volunteers regarding the response to, management and resolution of external complaints and the rights and responsibilities of employees and volunteers and the organisation in such circumstances;
  - 2.1.3. ensure that service user feedback of all natures is valued and used effectively to
    - 2.1.3.1. attain and uphold high standards of service delivery;
    - 2.1.3.2. prevent discrimination, abuse or neglect;
    - 2.1.3.3. attain and maintain high levels of service effectiveness.

- 2.2. This policy is an internal management guidance document and does not constitute a binding contractual or personnel agreement.

### **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1. The Board of Trustees have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- 3.2. The management team shall be responsible for the day to day ...

### **4. APPLICATION, AVAILABILITY & REVIEW**

- 4.1. This policy applies to everyone employed directly or indirectly by Midaye Somali Development Network and includes Trustees, staff and volunteers as well as external stakeholders such as service users, funders and partner organisations.
- 4.2. This policy will be made directly available to all staff and volunteers. It will also be made available to other stakeholders and interested parties on request. It will also be made publicly available as a downloadable file on our website.
- 4.3. This policy must be reviewed, approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees every two years.

### **5. DEFINITIONS**

- 5.1. In the context of customer care, the notion of a “customer” shall include all stakeholders with whom Midaye or it’s representatives may interact, including:
  - 5.1.1. Service users
  - 5.1.2. Voluntary and community organisations
  - 5.1.3. Emerging or informal voluntary groups
  - 5.1.4. Partnership and network organisations and their members
  - 5.1.5. Statutory & funding bodies
  - 5.1.6. Service providers
- 5.2. When referring to the wider group of stakeholders defined in 3.1 above this policy will use the term “stakeholder/s”.

- 5.3. When referring specifically to persons who interact with Midaye in order to access the services which Midaye offers this policy shall use the term “service users”.

## **6. PRINCIPLES**

- 6.1. Midaye shall deliver services in accordance with the following principles:
  - 6.1.1. All Midaye’s stakeholders may expect:
    - 6.1.1.1. To be given kind and willing attention;
    - 6.1.1.2. To be treated with courtesy and respect;
    - 6.1.1.3. That their personal information will be treated carefully and confidentially;
    - 6.1.1.4. To be treated openly and fairly with transparency and honesty;
    - 6.1.1.5. To receive clear and timely communication and feedback about what can and cannot be achieved;
    - 6.1.1.6. To receive assistance and support of a reasonably consistent standard;
    - 6.1.1.7. To be able to raise a complaint in an effective manner;
    - 6.1.1.8. To be able to provide feedback on their experiences.
  - 6.1.2. Midaye will regularly assess and review their service standards.

## **7. STANDARDS IN GENERAL COMMUNICATION**

- 7.1. Midaye will set out information about our services clearly and simply so that all our customers can understand it.
  - 7.1.1. We will promote the use of plain language for communication medium.
  - 7.1.2. We will strive to answer all correspondence including letters, phone calls and emails in a professional, timely and efficient manner.
- 7.2. Service users and all other persons trying to reach Midaye can do so via the office landline during office hours (9.30am to 5.30pm) or via the general enquiries email address. Service users may also visit the office between 10am and 4pm, Mondays to Thursdays.
- 7.3. The landline number will have a monitored voice mail service available for any calls made after office hours.
- 7.4. Where appropriate, staff will actively use the auto response option on their email inbox when out of office for more than two working days,

providing the contact details of alternative colleagues for urgent enquires, when applicable.

- 7.5. Staff will include information on which days they work in their email signatures.
- 7.6. Enquires received by voice mail message will receive a response within one working day of the message being left.
- 7.7. Email and letter enquiries will be responded to within one working day.
- 7.8. When responding to an enquiry, staff will:
  - 7.8.1. If making contact by phone, call from a charity-owned telephone, in order to preserve confidentiality as the charity phones withhold caller ID.
  - 7.8.2. Observe all protocols regarding obtaining consent and maintaining confidentiality.
  - 7.8.3. The following time constraints shall apply to the handling enquiries:
    - 7.8.3.1. Midday staff will aim to resolve all non-emergency enquiries within three working days. However, the staff reserve the right to take up to eight working days. If it appears as though an enquiry will take more than eight working days to resolve, the enquirer will be provided with an update by the same means through which the enquiry was received i.e. email, telephone, etc.
    - 7.8.3.2. Enquiries that cannot be answered immediately will be left in the central enquiries folder for later allocation by the Programme Co-ordinator or Programme Manager. These shall be allocated within one working day of having been received.
  - 7.8.4. Responsibility for responding to enquiries will be established as follows:
    - 7.8.4.1. All enquiries will be initially allocated by nature of the preferred language of the enquirer to the first staff member with the appropriate language skills.
    - 7.8.4.2. Simple enquiries e.g. phone numbers, organisations to contact etc. will be dealt with and answered by the person first allocated.
  - 7.8.5. For more complex enquiries:

- 7.8.5.1. the staff member to whom the enquiry has been allocated must check whether the service user is already known to Midaye and whether he/she has any open cases. The enquiry may be passed to the staff member currently dealing with the client's open cases.
- 7.8.5.2. If the service user has no current open cases the enquiry should be handled by the staff member to whom it was initially allocated although it may require the involvement of other staff members with more relevant experience and/or knowledge of the subject and/or service user. However, the staff member to whom the enquiry was initially allocated will remain the primary interface with the enquirer.
- 7.8.5.3. If an enquiry is allocated to a staff member who is not present due to their working arrangement or because of absence from work a message will be left for the staff member with the Programme Manager or Programme Coordinator. The message should clearly identify the nature of the message, date and staff member who left it.
- 7.8.5.4. If a staff member is on sick leave or does not attend work at the expected time (for whatever reason) the Manager will ensure that their work load and open cases are checked and where applicable, work is reallocated or apologies are made.
- 7.8.6. The Programme Co-ordinator and Programme Manager shall have discretion over the allocation of enquiries and all disputes or complexities shall be referred to them.
  - 7.8.6.1. Record in the case notes how the service user wishes to be kept updated on the progress of their enquiry, eg: by telephone, email, in writing or face to face
  - 7.8.6.2. Maintain thorough, clear case notes on Midaye's database.
- 7.9. Inform their manager if they have an excess of 10 new but not yet dealt with enquiries.

## **8. STANDARDS FOR SERVICE USER ENQUIRIES & CASES**

- 8.1. Requests for support from service users may be dealt with in one or more of a number of ways:

- 8.1.1. a general enquiry response;
- 8.1.2. via the Advice and Information service;
- 8.1.3. through referral to the One-to-One Casework Team;
- 8.1.4. through referral to one of Midaye's group activities or events;
- 8.1.5. through referral to another organisation or service.

## **General enquiries**

8.2.

## **Advice & Information**

- 8.3. Service user requests for advice and information will be dealt with by the Midaye Advice & Information service which operates on a by-appointment basis only. Appointments may be booked by contacting the Midaye office as per section 7 above.
  - 8.3.1. Advice and Information appointments are one hour in duration (or slightly longer if necessary). Queries which may take longer than one hour to resolve may require an additional appointment.
  - 8.3.2. The Advice and Information service offered by Midaye is not an emergency service and may not be able to assist service users facing extreme difficulties or facing tight deadlines.
  - 8.3.3. Advice and Information queries which are highly complex or which take more than three appointments to resolve shall be referred to the One-to-One Casework Team at Midaye for more intensive, long-term support.
  - 8.3.4. The Advice & Information service is intended to provide general, non-specialised advice on issues such as:
    - 8.3.4.1. Housing;
    - 8.3.4.2. Benefits;
    - 8.3.4.3. Difficulties with utility and other service providers;
    - 8.3.4.4. Access to healthcare and other statutory services;
    - 8.3.4.5. Advocacy with third parties;
    - 8.3.4.6. Form filling;
    - 8.3.4.7. Local authority matters;
    - 8.3.4.8. Referral to specialist organisations and services.

- 8.3.5. The Advice & Information service is not a specialist service and cannot provide direct support with:
- 8.3.5.1. Immigration enquiries;
  - 8.3.5.2. Criminal or court matters;
  - 8.3.5.3. Complex tax or revenue matters;
  - 8.3.5.4. Medical diagnosis or advice;
  - 8.3.5.5. ...
- 8.3.6. Service users who access the Advice & Information service with a query which falls outside of the remit of the service shall be referred, if possible, to a more suitable support service.
- 8.3.7. Midaye's Community Advisors (CA) who provide the Advice & Information service may refuse to complete any task which they feel unqualified to confidently accomplish or which, should a mistake or error be made, may have an immediate and/or difficult to resolve negative consequence for the service user or any other person. In such a case the CA should refer the service user to a service or organisation better qualified to undertake the task on behalf of the service user.

### **One-to-One Casework**

- 8.4. A

### **Internal referrals (outgoing)**

- 8.5. A

### **External referrals (outgoing)**

- 8.6. A

### **Case notes, key dates and future actions**

- 8.7. Midaye's Community Advisors (CA) must keep case notes for every service user supported. Such notes must include:
- 8.7.1. The nature of the query;
  - 8.7.2. The actions taken during the appointment;
  - 8.7.3. Details of important dates applicable to the query such as deadlines;

- 8.7.4. Details of future actions required on the part of the CA and on the part of the service user and the dates by which these actions need to be accomplished.
- 8.8. Case notes must be kept on Midaye's database. Any notes not made directly on the database must be added to the database at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.9. If there are future actions required on the part of the CA handling a particular enquiry:
  - 8.9.1. The CA must allocate time for themselves to complete the future action by making an entry in their personal work calendar. The entry must include the service user's name, the nature of the action required and details of any deadline to which the action may be subject to.
  - 8.9.2. Future actions must be allocated a key date by the CA. The key date shall be prior to any deadline to which the action may be subject or one working week for urgent enquiries or three working weeks for non-urgent enquiries, whichever is the soonest.
  - 8.9.3. If a key date is missed or is expected to be missed, or a future action cannot be accomplished then the service user must be informed, and the fact and the reason why must be recorded in the case notes. A new key date and/or future action must then be prescribed.
  - 8.9.4. Open cases on will not be closed until future actions and key dates have been satisfactorily dealt with or met.
  - 8.9.5. All CAs must check their personal work calendars and open cases daily for key dates and actions due.

### **Communicating with clients with open cases**

- 8.10. The service user should be kept up to date on the progress of his/her enquiry at regular intervals.
- 8.11. Any additional information or development of significance should be relayed to the service user at the earliest opportunity and within 2 working days wherever possible.
- 8.12. All attempts to contact or update a service user will be recorded in the case notes on Midaye's database.

- 8.13. The management team may require a staff member to provide a formal written response to a service user if information of particular significance needs to be relayed or confirmed. Copies of client correspondence will be stored securely.
- 8.14. Whenever applicable, the person making the enquiry reserves the right to ask for a response to be made in writing.

### **Closing cases**

- 8.15. Service users who are no longer engaged in active cases at Midaye may have their cases closed if any of the following criteria are met:
  - 8.15.1. The service user fails to engage with the service despite multiple (more than 3) attempts to facilitate engagement.
  - 8.15.2. The service user chooses to terminate service.
  - 8.15.3. The service user relocates outside of service area.
  - 8.15.4. Midaye terminates the relationship.
  - 8.15.5. By mutual agreement.
  - 8.15.6. The service user is no longer in need of service.
  - 8.15.7. The objectives of the case have been satisfied within the remit of the service managing the case.
  - 8.15.8. The service user is no longer eligible.
  - 8.15.9. The service user is referred to a program that provides better suited services.
- 8.16. When a case is closed, the service user's case information will be closed on Midaye's Lamplight database and any physical copies of the client's information will be destroyed.

### **Reviewing case files**

- 8.17. The Programme Manager will ensure that independent file reviews are carried out during monthly supervision sessions as follows:
  - 8.17.1. Staff members with less than 6 months experience: 6 randomly selected files per month.
  - 8.17.2. Staff members with between 6 months and 2 years' experience: 4 randomly selected files per month.
  - 8.17.3. Staff members with 2 or more years of experience: 2 randomly selected files monthly.

- 8.18. Individual Supervision Record Sheets will be used during supervision sessions. The supervisor will:
- 8.18.1. Use the Lamplight database and other records to check all substantive and procedural issues have been adhered to.
  - 8.18.2. Record client ID numbers and any omissions or issues that need to be dealt with.
  - 8.18.3. The sheets are then signed by both the adviser and supervisor and filed in the supervision folders. The staff member will be provided a copy of the completed record sheet.

## **9. COMPLAINTS**

- 9.1. In order to provide appropriate and high standard of support, Midaye will encourage service users and other stakeholders to provide feedback – complaints, suggestions and compliments, letting us know when we get things right and when we get it wrong.
- 9.2. Midaye will not tolerate abuse or harassment of its staff. Complaints and concerns must be made as per the procedure outlined below and any abuse or harassment of staff, volunteers or representatives accompanying, preceding or following a complaint may prejudice a complainant's submission.
- 9.3. Midaye considers a complaint to be any expression of dissatisfaction with our services which calls for a response. A complaint is considered an expression of stakeholder dissatisfaction, whether justified or not and may concern:
- 9.3.1. the standard of service we provide.
  - 9.3.2. the behaviour of our staff.
  - 9.3.3. any action or lack of action by Midaye trustees, staff or volunteers negatively affecting an individual or group.
- 9.4. Matters which are not considered complaints and which are not subject to this policy include:
- 9.4.1. comments about Midaye policy decisions;
  - 9.4.2. dissatisfaction with our policies or decisions about individual cases;
  - 9.4.3. matters that have already been fully investigated;
  - 9.4.4. anonymous complaints.

## **Principles**

- 9.5. All complaints will be handled according to the following principles:
  - 9.5.1. All complaints will be treated with respect and fairness.
  - 9.5.2. Complainants will be allowed the opportunity to express their concerns clearly and effectively. Midaye will provide service users with language support, if necessary, so that they can effectively communicate their feedback.
  - 9.5.3. All complainants will be treated fairly and equally regardless of their:
    - 9.5.3.1. Sex (including gender reassignment);
    - 9.5.3.2. Marital status or family status;
    - 9.5.3.3. Sexual orientation;
    - 9.5.3.4. Colour or race: this includes ethnic or national origin or nationality;
    - 9.5.3.5. Disability;
    - 9.5.3.6. Religious or political beliefs, or trade union affiliation;
    - 9.5.3.7. Other unjustifiable factors, for example language difficulties or age.
  - 9.5.4. Midaye will endeavour to deal with every complaint promptly.
    - 9.5.4.1. Written complaints will receive a response within five working days and a full reply will be issued within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint.
    - 9.5.4.2. If a full reply cannot be sent within 20 working days of receipt, Midaye will communicate with the complainant to inform them of the reason why and provide a new deadline for a full response.
  - 9.5.5. Complaints will be treated sensitively and in confidence within Midaye.

## **Making a complaint**

- 9.6. Complaints may be made in the following ways:
  - 9.6.1. In person or by telephone: the service user should approach a member of staff or Director or call 02089697456 and express their

dissatisfaction in courteous manner drawing attention to the complaint's procedure. Complaints should not be made to volunteers. The staff member must take notes and verify details carefully with complainant.

- 9.6.2. By email: by sending a detailed e-mail to philip@midaye.org.uk marked COMPLAINT in the subject line of the message.
- 9.6.3. In writing: by sending a letter, addressed to the relevant members of staff or Director, to Midaye Somali Development Network, Office 6, 7 Thorpe Close, London W10 5XL
- 9.6.4. If the complaint includes concerns about the Director or one of Midaye's Trustees, it should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- 9.6.5. If the complaint includes concerns about the Chair of the Board of Trustees, it should be addressed to the Secretary of the Board.
- 9.7. To ensure that complaints are resolved as quickly as possible, the complainant should provide as much clear detail as possible, including dates, names of any witnesses, and any relevant documents and correspondence.

### **Handling complaints**

- 9.8. Upon receipt of a complaint, Midaye will contact the relevant responsible employee and ask them to deal with your complaint. They will do so in writing within the specified time frame.
- 9.9. The Programme Manager will respond to complaints on behalf of volunteers.
- 9.10. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the first response, they may request that it is reviewed by the Director (or Chair if the complaint involves the Director).
- 9.11. If the complainant is still dissatisfied after a review, he/she may write to the Chair to have their complaint considered at the next board meeting. Such a request will be acknowledged in writing within five working days and the complainant will be informed of the date of the board meeting at which the complaint will be considered.

- 9.12. If a complainant is still not happy that matters have been dealt with even after consideration from the board, they should be encouraged to contact and independent third-party regulator or authority:
- 9.12.1. Complaints about fundraising: Contact the Fundraising regulator who investigates complaints about poor fundraising practice by visiting: <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/more-from-us/resources/complaints-process>
  - 9.12.2. Complaints about advertising: Contact the Advertising Standard Authority who investigates complaints about an advertising campaign that may be offensive, deceptive or inaccurate by visiting: <https://www.asa.org.uk/make-a-complaint.html>
  - 9.12.3. Complaints about charity governance, management or operations: Contact the Charity Commission who investigates all other complaints about a charity organization. You can do this by visiting <https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/>

### **Recording and reviewing complaints**

- 9.13. The management team will maintain a central record of all complaints received, in all mediums, which will be saved in a secure location and reviewed on an annual, or 'as necessary' basis. The central record of complaints must be reviewed at least annually to identify trends and to determine whether action can be taken as a result to improve the service being delivered. The result of this review (or of at least one review if more than one is carried out a year) must be documented.
- 9.14. In many circumstances, a constructive discussion between a client-facing staff member or a member of the management team and the service user with a complaint will result in a positive outcome for the service user. However, if this does not suffice, service users may invoke a more substantial response.

### **Comments, feedback & suggestions**

- 9.15. As well as learning from complaints Midaye must also welcome other ideas and comments from service users and other stakeholders.

- 9.16. Comments may be made in person, by telephoning or writing to any members of our staff, or by e-mail.
- 9.17. Midaye will acknowledge feedback and will use comments to help improve our services and the way we do things.

## **10. OTHER DOCUMENTS**

Other policy documents which apply to volunteers and in conjunction with which is this policy should be read include Midaye's Health & Safety Policy, Consent, Confidentiality & Privacy Policy, Staff Appraisal, Development, Supervision and Training Policy, and Midaye's Complaints, Grievances and Whistleblowing Policy.

**Revised:** February 2025

**Next revision date:** February 2027