**Concerns, Complaints and Compliments Policy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Last Review Date** | August 2023 |
| **Next Review Date** | August 2026 |
| **Responsibility** | Chief Executive |
| **Area of Operation** | Group |

**Introduction**

This policy applies to everyone regardless of age, disability, sex and gender identity (including same and different gender partners), marital status, pregnancy and maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion, or belief.

Newydd Housing Association is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about our services. We aim to clarify any issues you may be unsure about. If possible, we will put right any mistakes we may have made. We will provide any service you are entitled to which we have failed to deliver. If we do something wrong, we will apologise and, where possible, try to put things right for you. We aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain from complaints to improve our services.

**When to use this policy**

Unfortunately, sometimes things do go wrong, and this policy sets out how customers can inform us when they feel dissatisfied with the service they have received. When things go wrong, we will respond quickly and honestly to your comment or complaint.

We welcome your views and opinions on ways to improve our services together with praise when our team members do things well. Your feedback provides the organisation with an opportunity to learn and understand how we can improve the services we deliver. It also allows the organisation to understand the expectations and needs of our customers.

You might be concerned about matters that are not covered by this policy, we will advise you how to make your concerns known.

This policy does not apply to ‘data access’ issues. Please email complaints@newydd.co.uk for further details.

**Definitions**

**Comment:** “A suggestion or idea from a customer (or a group of customers) about how we can improve our services.”

**Compliment:** “Unsolicited feedback from a customer (or a group of customers) about how we exceeded their expectations when delivering a service.”

**Complaint**: A complaint is:

• An expression of dissatisfaction or concern.

• Written or spoken or made by any other communication method.

• About Newydd’s action or lack of action or the standard of service provided.

• Something which requires a response. It can be about Newydd, a person, body, or contractor acting on its behalf.

**How can customers give feedback, compliments, or make a complaint?**

We want to make giving feedback as easy as we can, so you can give comments or compliments, or make a complaint, by:

* Getting in touch with us on 0300 040 1998 if you want to discuss over the phone.
* Email us at complaints@newydd.co.uk
* Write to us at: Newydd Housing Association, Unit 5, Village Way, Tongwynlais, Cardiff CF15 7NE
* Contact us via social media [www.facebook.com/Newydd](http://www.facebook.com/Newydd)
* Raise an issue in person with any staff member

**Asking us to provide a service?**

If you are approaching us to request a service, [e.g., reporting a repair, or requesting an appointment] this policy doesn’t apply. If you make a request for a service and then are not happy with our response, you will be able to make your concern known as we describe below.

**Stage 1 Resolution**

If possible, we believe it’s best to deal with things straight away. If you have a concern, please raise it with the person you are dealing with. They will try to resolve it for you there and then or hand it over to their manager. If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern, the member of staff will draw them to our attention. If the member of staff can’t help, they will explain why, and you can then ask for a Stage 2 Formal Complaint investigation.

**Stage 2 Formal Complaint**

You can escalate your concerns to stage 2 by contacting us using any of the communication methods noted above.

**Dealing with your complaint at stage 2**

* We will formally acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days and let you know how we intend to deal with it.
* We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any particular requirements – for example, if you need documents in a larger font.
* We will deal with your concern in an open and honest way.
* We will make sure that your dealings with us in the future do not suffer just because you have expressed a concern or made a complaint.
* If you are expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we will need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within 6 months. This is because it’s better to investigate your concerns while the issues are still fresh in everyone’s mind. We may exceptionally be able to look at concerns which are brought to our attention later than this. However, you will have to explain why you have not been able to bring it to our attention earlier and we will need to have sufficient information about the issue to allow us to consider it properly. In any event, we will not consider any concerns about matters that took place longer than three years ago.

We will not re-investigate complaints which have already been responded to by us through our formal complaints process, within the last 12 months.

# What if there is more than one body involved?

If your complaint covers more than one body [e.g., Housing Association and Council re: noise nuisance] we will usually work with them to decide who should take the lead in dealing with your concerns. You will then be given the name of the person responsible for communicating with you while we consider your complaint.

If the complaint is about a body working on our behalf [e.g., specialist repair contractors], you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, if you want to express your concern or complaint formally, we will investigate this ourselves and respond to you.

# Investigation

We will tell you who we have asked to look into your concern or complaint. If your concern is straightforward, we will usually ask somebody from the relevant service area to look into it and respond to you. If it is more serious, we may use someone from elsewhere within Newydd, and can appoint an independent investigator.

We will set out our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that we are right. We will also ask you to tell us what outcome you are hoping for.

The person looking at your complaint will usually need to see the files we hold relevant to your complaint. If you don’t want this to happen, it’s important that you tell us.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you’re happy to accept this. For example, where you asked for a service and we see straight away that you should have had it, we will offer to provide the service rather than investigate and produce a report.

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority within 10 working days. If your complaint is more complex, we will:

* Let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate.
* Tell you how long we expect it to take.
* Let you know where we have reached with the investigation, and
* Give you regular updates, including telling you whether any developments might change our original estimate.

The person who is investigating your concerns will firstly aim to establish the facts. The extent of the investigation will depend upon how complex and how serious the issues you have raised are. In complex cases, we will draw up an investigation plan.

In some instances, we may ask to meet with you to discuss your concerns. Occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes.

We’ll look at relevant evidence. This could include information you have provided, our case files, notes of conversations, letters, emails or whatever may be relevant to your particular concern. If necessary, we’ll talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies, any legal entitlement and guidance.

# Outcome

If we investigate your complaint at Stage 2 Formal Complaint, we will let you know what we find. If necessary, we will produce a report. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we made a mistake, we’ll tell you what happened and why.

If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we’ll tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.

If we make a mistake, we will always apologise for it.

**Putting Things Right**

If we didn’t provide you with a service, you should have had, we’ll aim to provide it now, if that’s possible. If we didn’t do something well, we’ll aim to put it right. If you have lost out as a result of a mistake on our part, we will try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had done things properly.

If you had to pay for a service yourself, when we should have provided it for you, we will try to refund the cost.

# Ombudsman referral

If we fail to resolve your complaint, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman is independent of all government bodies and can investigate your complaint if you believe that you personally, or the person on whose behalf you are complaining:

* Have been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on the part of the service provider.
* Have been disadvantaged personally by a service failure or have been treated unfairly.

The Ombudsman normally expects you to bring your concerns to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right. You can contact the Ombudsman by:

* Phone: 0300 790 0203
* Email: ask@ombudsman.wales
* The website: [www.ombudsman.wales](http://www.ombudsman.wales/)
* Writing to: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales,

1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed CF35 5LJ

There are also other organisations that consider complaints. For example, the Welsh Language Commissioner’s Office deals with complaints about services in Welsh. We can advise you about such organisations.

**Learning lessons**

We take your concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we’ve made. Our senior management team considers a summary of all complaints on a quarterly basis and are made aware of all serious complaints. Our Board also considers our response to complaints annually. We share a summary (anonymised) of information on complaints received and complaints outcomes with the Ombudsman as part of our commitment to accountability and learning from complaints.

Where there is a need for significant change, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it. We will let you know when changes we have promised have been made.

We are also committed to getting tenants’ views and feedback on how we deal with complaints. If you are interested in getting involved with this work or would like any further information, please email complaints@newydd.co.uk or call 0303 040 1998.

**What if you need help?**

Our staff will aim to help you make your concerns known to us. If you need extra assistance, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help. You may also wish to contact advocacy services, Age Cymru, Meic or the Children’s Commissioner for Wales who may be able to assist you.

You can also use this concerns, complaints and compliments policy if you are under the age of 18.

**Age Cymru:**

Website: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/gwent/>

Telephone: 01633 76333

**Meic Helpline:**

Telephone: 0808 802 3456

Website: [www.meiccymru.org](http://www.meiccymru.org)

**Children’s Commissioner for Wales:**

Telephone: 0808 801 1000

Email: post@childcomwales.org.uk

Website: www.childcom.org.u

**What we expect from you**

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a concern or a complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected.

However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We therefore expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence. We have a separate policy to manage situations when we find that someone’s actions are unacceptable.

**Appendix A - Concern/Complaint form**

Please Note:

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. If you are filling this in on behalf of someone else, please fill in Section B.

A: Your details

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Surname: | Forenames(s): | Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/ if other please state |
| Address and postcode: |  |
| Your email address: |  |
| Daytime contact phone number: |  |

Please state how you would prefer us to contact you:

Your requirements: if our usual way of dealing with complaints makes it difficult for you to use our service, for example if English or Welsh is not your first language or you need to engage with us in a particular way, please tell us so that we can discuss how we might help you.

**B: Making a complaint on behalf of someone else:**

Please note: We must be satisfied that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person who has experienced the problem.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Your name in full: |  |
| Their name in full: |  |
| Their Address and postcode: |  |
| Your email address |  |
| Your daytime contact phone number: |  |
| What is your relationship to them? |  |
| Why are you making a complaint on their behalf? |  |

C: About your concern/complaint (Please continue your answers to the following questions on a separate sheet(s) if necessary)

* Name of the department/section/service you are complaining about:
* What do you think they did wrong, or failed to do?
* Describe how you personally have suffered or have been affected:
* What do you think should be done to put things right?
* When did you first become aware of the problem?
* Have you already put your concern to the frontline staff responsible for delivering the service? If so, please give brief details of how and when you did so:
* If it is more than six months since you first became aware of the problem, please say why you have not complained before now:
* If you have any documents to support your concern/complaint, please attach them with this form.

Signature:

Date:

When you have completed this form, please send it to: complaints@newydd.co.uk or

Governance Officer, Newydd Housing Association, Unit 5 Village Way, Tongwynlais, Cardiff, CF15 7NE