

Policy Title:	COMPLAINTS POLICY
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Version

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Approval

Approval Level	Who	When
Head of Governance	Helen Jones	28/07/26

Implementation Date

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Next Review Date

Review Date	July 2028
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1. **Policy Statement**

We are committed to providing high quality services and ensuring that all individuals are treated with fairness, dignity and respect. We recognise that, despite our best efforts, concerns or complaints may arise. We view complaints as a valuable source of feedback that helps us understand the experiences of those who use our services and identify opportunities for improvement.

We are committed to handling all complaints promptly, fairly, consistently and transparently. We will ensure that complaints are taken seriously, investigated appropriately, and resolved wherever possible. No individual will be disadvantaged or treated less favourably for raising a genuine concern or complaint.

We encourage anyone who is dissatisfied with our services, decisions or actions to bring their concerns to our attention so that we have the opportunity to address them and improve the services we provide.

2. **Purpose**

This policy sets out our approach to receiving, managing and responding to complaints, ensuring that all complainants have access to a clear and accessible process. It also supports our commitment to learning from feedback, improving service delivery and maintaining public confidence in our organisation.

3. **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is when someone tells us they are unhappy with the service they have received, or with something we have done or failed to do. It is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents. It is something that requires a response. A complaint may relate to something we did or did not do, poor service, unreasonable delays, mistakes, or the conduct of a member of staff or contractor acting on our behalf. It may arise where someone feels that the service provided has fallen below expected standards and wishes the matter to be investigated and addressed.

What is not a complaint? (for the purpose of this policy)

- An initial request for a service such as reporting a repair (which should be done via the Cyswllt Cynefin Team)
- Matters that have already been considered fully under Grŵp Cynefin's Policy and a final / Stage 2 response has been provided.
- Matters that have already been considered by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
- Matters which are the subject of civil or criminal court proceedings.
- Matters relating to Freedom of Information / Data Protection matters.
- Complaints from staff about Grŵp Cynefin.
- Anonymous complaints – Grŵp Cynefin will act on the information provided but will be unable to advise on the action taken to deal with the issue.

4. When to use this policy?

Whenever someone expresses dissatisfaction, Grŵp Cynefin must give them the choice to make a complaint. If you have a complaint, we will respond in the way in which we explain below.

Sometimes, we will not be able to respond, if we were not responsible, or if we didn't have the right to respond. If this was the case, we will suggest other ways in which to deal with the matter, and signpost you to the right place.

5. Making a Complaint

A formal complaint can be made in your preferred language of choice using any of the following methods:

- You can tell any member of staff that you want to make a complaint.
- You can contact Cyswllt Cynefin on 0300 111 2122 if you wish to make a complaint over the telephone
- Discuss your issues directly with a member of staff e.g Housing Officer
- Through the Tenant's App (ApCynefin)
- Use the form on our website on www.grwpcynefin.org
- Send an email to cwynion@grwpcynefin.org
- Write a letter to the attention of the Senior Complaints Officer to any one of the following offices:

Grwp Cynefin, 54 Stryd y Dyffryn, Dinbych, LL16 3BW

Grwp Cynefin, Ty Silyn, Penygroes, Caernarfon, LL54 6LY

6. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

We recognise the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in drafting correspondence. While complainants are free to choose how they draft, review and submit information to us, we highlight that AI-generated content may sometimes include inaccurate, misleading or unsupported information.

We ask that any AI-generated content is carefully checked before submission to ensure it accurately reflects the issues being raised and is factually correct. Providing inaccurate, misleading or excessive information may delay the handling of a complaint, as we may need to seek clarification before progressing our investigation.

7. Dealing with your complaint

We will formally acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of receiving your complaint and let you know how we intend to deal with it.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your complaint if you tell us about them within 6

months, and this is because it's better to look into your complaint while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.

We may be able to look at complaints 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 complaints about matters that took place more than three years ago.

8. What if I'm complaining about more than one body?

If your complaint is about more than one organisation, 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. repair contractors, you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, if you want to express your complaint formally, we will investigate this ourselves and respond to you.

9. The complaints process

Stage 1

If possible, we believe it's best to deal with things straight away rather than try to sort them out later. If you have a concern, raise it with the person you're dealing with. He or she will try **to resolve it for you there and then**. If it is not possible for the issue to be resolved immediately; we will investigate the matter and provide a full written response within **10 working days of the acknowledgement**.

We will also tell you how you can escalate your complaint to Stage 2 if you are not satisfied with the response or proposed solution. The staff member investigating and providing a response at Stage 1 will aim to contact you by telephone as part of the investigation.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Stage 1 outcome, you may appeal, and ask that we consider escalating the complaint further, to the Stage 2 process. You will need to explain why you're dissatisfied, and the Senior Complaints Officer will consider your reasons. We may not investigate if the reason you wish to appeal is because you have not had the outcome you had hoped for, and or if it is clear that a stage 2 investigation would not change the findings or outcomes of the Stage 1 response.

Within 5 working days you will be sent a letter confirming that your complaint has been escalated to Stage 2 and explain what happens next. The Senior Complaints Officer will typically carry out Stage 2 investigations. However, if this is not possible, we will inform you of who will undertake the investigation in their absence.

We will set out our understanding of your appeal and ask you to confirm that we have understood correctly. We'll also ask you to tell us what outcome you're hoping for.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you're happy to accept this.

We will aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and provide, where possible, a full written response within **20 working days** of the escalation being acknowledged.

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
- Provide regular updates, keeping you informed of any developments that may affect our original timeframe.

The person who is investigating your complaint 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 some instances, we may ask to meet with you to discuss your complaint. 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.

10. Complaints Made on Behalf of Others

If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else, we will need their permission before we can discuss their complaint or share any personal information with you. This is to ensure we comply with data protection requirements and protect the privacy of our residents. We may ask for written consent from the resident, or other appropriate evidence showing that you have the authority to act on their behalf.

11. The Outcome

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we find. If necessary, we will produce a detailed written report together with a letter explaining the outcome.

We'll explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we made a mistake, we'll always apologise and explain 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.

12. Putting things right

If we have not provided a service you were entitled to, we will aim to deliver it now, where possible.

If we have not met the expected standard, we will work to put things right.

If you have suffered a loss as a result of our error, we will seek to restore you to the position you would have been in had we acted correctly.

13. The Ombudsman

If we fail in resolving your complaint, you have a right to complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman is independent of all government bodies, including Housing Associations. The Ombudsman can look into your complaint if you believe that you personally, or the person on whose behalf you are complaining:

- have been treated unfairly or received a poor service through some failure on the part of the body providing it
- have been disadvantaged personally by a service failure or have been treated unfairly.

The Ombudsman 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
- e-mail: ask@ombudsman.wales
- the website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk
- writing to: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales at 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, CF35 5LJ

There are also other organisations that consider complaints. For example, the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office investigates complaints, from people who were unable to access services in Welsh or feel an organisation has not complied with the Welsh language standards; the Energy Ombudsman, deals with unresolved complaints between consumers and energy companies and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the independent regulator for data protection and information rights. We will advise you about such organisations and provide relevant contact information.

14. Learning Lessons

We take complaints seriously and aim to learn from any mistakes we make. Our internal

arrangements for monitoring complaints include:

- Ongoing oversight of complaints handling, including regular meetings between the Senior Complaints Officer and relevant service managers.
- Monthly reports to the Executive Leadership Team, summarising all complaints and highlighting any serious cases.
- Discussion of anonymised complaint case studies with our Complaints & Compliments Group to identify good practice and the lessons learned.
- Annual Report to our Management Board and relevant Committees on our complaints handling performance.
- Submission of detailed quarterly data to the Ombudsman.

15. What if I need help?

Our staff will try to help you make your concerns known to us. If you need extra assistance, we will put you in touch with someone who can help. You may wish to contact advocacy services, Age Concern, Shelter etc. who may be able to help you.

You may also raise the matters via your Councillor, Member of the Senedd, Member of Parliament or Solicitor.

16. What we expect from you

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. 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 procedure to manage situations where we find that someone's actions are unacceptable.

17. Your Feedback Matters

Following the closure of your complaint, we will ask for your feedback on your experience of our complaints procedure by inviting you to complete a short questionnaire. Your feedback will help us understand your experience and identify opportunities to improve both our services and our complaints process in the future.

18. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring

We are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in our complaints handling. Where we already hold relevant EDI information on our systems, we will use this data to better understand who is accessing our service, identify any potential barriers or disparities in outcomes, and ensure that all customers are treated fairly. Any information collected will be handled confidentially and used in an anonymised and aggregated way to monitor performance, identify trends, and inform service improvements.

19. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years to ensure it remains accurate, relevant, and up to date. It may also be reviewed earlier where necessary, for example in response to internal changes, regulatory updates, or other external developments.