



## **North Wales Housing Complaints Procedure**

North Wales Housing (NWH) is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about our service. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible, we'll put right any mistakes we may have made. We will provide any service you're entitled to which we have failed to deliver. If we got something wrong, we'll apologise and where possible we'll try to put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services. Our procedure is based on the guidance given to public bodies by the Complaints Standards Authority.

### **What is a Complaint?**

A complaint is:

- An expression of dissatisfaction or concern
- Written or spoken or made by any other communication method
- Made by one or more members of the public (someone or a group in receipt of or denied a service to which they are entitled by NWH)
- About NWH's action or lack of action or the standard of service provided
- Something which requires a response

A complaint is not:

- An initial request for a service, such as reporting a repair
- An appeal against a 'properly made' decision
- Issues regarding anti-social behaviour (We have a separate policy and procedure for ASB which can be found here <https://www.nwha.org.uk/your-home/compliments-and-complaints/anti-social-behaviour-asb/> ).

### **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 contact you within 10 working days with a proposed resolution and response. 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 your complaint is more serious, or if you're unhappy with how your complaint has been dealt with informally you can make a formal complaint. Your complaint will then be investigated by a Senior Manager to see what's happened and what we can do to put things right.

We will acknowledge your formal complaint within 2 working days.

We aim to resolve complaints within 20 working days. If we need more time to investigate your complaint, we will let you know.

The staff member investigating and providing a response at Stage 2 will aim to offer to arrange a face to face meeting with you as part of the investigation.

### **How to make a complaint?**

A complaint may be made by letter, email, verbally in person, or verbally over the phone.

A complaint should be made within 6 months of the relevant occurrence. However, there can be exceptions to this if there is a good reason.

You may ask an advocate to act on your behalf providing we have written consent from you or the parties involved, or where there are documents that allow advocates to act on behalf of an individual who lacks capacity (as defined by the Mental Capacity Act 2005)

### **Outcome**

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we have found in keeping with your preferred form of communication. This could be by letter or email, for example. If necessary, we will produce a longer report. We'll explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we got it wrong, we'll tell you what and why it happened.

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 got it wrong, we will always apologise.

All complainants should receive a customer satisfaction survey.

### **Putting Things Right**

If we didn't provide 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'll try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we'd got it right.

If you had to pay for a service yourself, when you should have had one from us, we will usually aim to make good what you have lost.

### **Ombudsman**

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman is independent of all government bodies and 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 bad 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: 0845 601 0987
- e-mail: [ask@ombudsman.wales](mailto: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

### **What if I 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 wish to contact the Citizens Advice Buearau, Age Concern, Shelter etc who may be able to assist you.

You can also use our complaints procedure if you are someone under the age of 18. If you need help, you can speak to someone on the Meic Helpline (phone 080880 23456, [www.meiccymru.org](http://www.meiccymru.org)) or contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Contact details are:

- 0808 801 1000
- [post@childcomwales.org.uk](mailto:post@childcomwales.org.uk)
- [www.childcom.org.uk](http://www.childcom.org.uk)
- writing to: Children's Commissioner for Wales Llewellyn House, Harbourside Business Park, Harbourside Road, Port Talbot SA13 1SB

### **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 where we find that someone's actions are unacceptable.