



Concerns and Complaints Policy

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Cadwyn Housing Association is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaint 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.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern which:

- Is either written or spoken;
- Is made by one or more tenants, applicants, member of the public, stakeholders or partners;
- Is about a level of service; action or lack of action or the behaviour of a staff member or board member;
- Requires a response

It is NOT an initial request for services e.g. repairs or meetings

Or an appeal against a "properly made" decision

Or about Anti-Social behaviour.

Have you asked us yet?

If you are approaching us for a service for the first time (e.g. reporting a repair; requesting an appointment etc) then this policy doesn't apply. You should first give us a chance to respond to your request. 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.

Informal resolution

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 e.g. your neighbourhood officer, property management officer. He or she will try to resolve it for you there and then. If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern then the member of staff will draw them to their manager's attention. If the member of staff can't help, they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

How to express concern or complain formally

You can express your concern in any of the ways below

- You can ask for a copy of our form from the person with whom you are already in contact. Tell them that you want us to deal with your concern formally.
- You can get in touch with our central complaint contact point on 029 2043 4435 if you want to make your complaint over the phone.
- You can use the form on our website at www.cadwyn.co.uk
- You can email us at leynie.pearn@cadwyn.co.uk
- You can write a letter to us at the following address: Complaints Co-ordinator, Cadwyn Housing Association, 197 Newport Road, Cardiff, CF24 1AJ.

We aim to have concern and complaint forms available at all of our public areas.

Copies of this policy and the complaint form can be made available in audio, large print, in another language etc

Dealing with your concern

- We will formally acknowledge your concern within 3 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 have a disability.
- 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.

Normally we will only be able to look at your concern if you tell us about them within 6 months. This is because it's better to look into 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 give us strong reasons 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 you to consider it properly.

If you're expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we'll need their agreement that you are acting on their behalf.

Anonymous complaints of whatever nature will be noted but not formally investigated by Cadwyn.

What if there is more than one body involved?

If your complaint covers more than one body we will usually work with them to decide who should take a lead in dealing with your concerns.

If the complaint is about a body working on our behalf you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However if you want to express your concern or complaint formally, we will look into this ourselves and respond to you.

Investigation

We will tell you who we have asked to look into your concern or complaint. We will set out to you our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that we've got it right. We'll 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. 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 20 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.

We will ask to meet 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 files, notes of conversations, letters, e-mails 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 and any legal entitlement and guidance.

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 by email, for example.

If we find that we got it wrong, we'll tell you what and why it happened. We'll show how the mistake affected you.

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.

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.

Appealing a decision on a complaint

For complaints regarding housing & community services, technical services, tenancy support Nightingale House, Calon / TA, Realise Your Potential, corporate services/HR:

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, in the first instance of a formal complaint you can appeal to our Board. Cadwyn will arrange for a panel of three Board Members to discuss your complaint with you and the members of staff who have been investigating your complaint. A decision or response will then be sent to you within 10 working days.

Should you still be unhappy, 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
Email: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk
The website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk
Writing to: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, CF35 5LJ.

There are also other organisations that consider complaint. For example, the Welsh Language Board about services in Welsh. We can advise you about such organisations.

For complaints regarding CanDo Lettings:

CanDo Lettings are ARLA accredited, as such they have their own Ombudsman to help resolve disputes with landlords. If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you can appeal our decision to The Property Ombudsman.

You can contact the Property Ombudsman:

The Property Ombudsman, Milford House, 43-55 Milford Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2BP

Tel: 01722 333306

Fax: 01722 332296 Website: http://www.tpos.co.uk/make_complaint_rents.htm

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 six monthly basis. Our Board also considers our response to complaints on an annual basis.

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

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 can also use this concerns and complaints policy if you are someone under the age of 18. If you need help, you can speak to someone on the Meic Helpline (phone 0808 8022 3456, www.meiccymru.org) or contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Contact details are:

01792 765 600
post@childcomwales.org.uk
www.childcom.org.uk

Oystermouth House
Phoenix Way
Llansamlet
Swansea
SA7 9FS.

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.