



## **Complaints & Comments Policy**

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## Complaints & Comments Policy

Cadwyn 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.

### What is a complaint?

**A complaint is...** you telling us that you're unhappy about the standard of service you receive; it is about an action or lack of action; or it is about the behaviours or actions of a member of staff or board member.

A complaint will also require some form of response and is usually as a result of having reported an initial issue that hasn't been resolved in the first instance. One is reporting an incident, the other is complaining about the action taken/ not taken to resolve your incident.

For example, you wouldn't write a complaint about a repair that you were reporting for the first time or you wouldn't write a complaint to Cadwyn about anti-social behaviour that just happened. However, if Cadwyn still hadn't completed the repair within a certain promised timeframe or if you'd reported the anti-social behaviour issue twice before and you feel that this still wasn't addressed, then it would become a complaint.

### Relationships

Relationships are really important to us in Cadwyn. We work in a restorative way and always try to build on relationships to make them stronger and we strive to repair relationships where there may be some issues. In order to do this, we ask that you speak with us openly about your concerns, listen to the views of others and work with us to find solutions to the issue. Our complaints process will only help us learn if you help us to understand where things have gone wrong, and our relationships with others in dealing with complaints will help us avoid these issues happening again in future with you or other tenants.

### What you can expect from us

We will do our very best to listen and support you throughout this process. Our company values of Fairness, Honesty, Kindness and Respect are really important to us, and we are committed to supporting you to feel heard and listened to in our response to your concerns. If you need any additional support, we will try and put you in touch with someone who can help such as advocacy services or other relevant support providers.

### What we expect from you

In times of concern 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.

### **Informal Resolution**

In the first instance, we would like to work with you to quickly sort out any issues or concerns you have by talking together and finding a resolution. This would be done directly with the person or service you are unsure or unhappy about. If the issue isn't resolved to your satisfaction, we would then encourage you to make a formal complaint.

We understand that starting this initial informal process isn't always an easy task and some people may find this approach difficult, if so, please reach out to our customer services team who will support you.

The following pages explain the process and outline the policy detail.

### **Formal Complaints/ Comments Process: Basic Steps**

If you've been unable to resolve the issue informally, and would like to submit a formal complaint the following steps are then taken:

- 1/ Your complaint is submitted verbally to a member of Cadwyn staff/ in writing by post/ in writing by email
- 2/ The complaints officer records your complaint on a central database and will contact you to tell you that it has been received and logged and the complaints officer allocates the complaint to a relevant manager within 5 working days
- 3/ The relevant manager will then investigate the issue, this will usually start with a conversation with you so they are certain they've fully understood your complaint
- 4/ The relevant manager will write to you (within 20 working days) to inform you of their findings and how they came to those conclusions. If we have made a mistake, we will always apologise for it
- 5/ We will work with you to put things right
- 6 If you are still unhappy, you can appeal within Cadwyn up to Board level and we will work hard to find a resolution
- 7/ If you are still unhappy, you have the right to appeal or to complain to the Ombudsman
- 8/ Inevitably, in most complaints there will be lessons that we can learn within Cadwyn and we are committed to identifying these, training teams and avoiding the same things happening in future.

## 1. How to submit your complaint

You can express your concern in any of the following ways:

- Ask for a copy of our complaints form from the person with whom you are already in contact. Tell them that you want us to deal with your concern formally.
- Get in touch with our central customer contact point on **029 20498898** if you want to make your complaint over the phone.
- Use the form on our website at [Feedback - Cadwyn Housing Association](#)
- Email us at [feedback@cadwyn.co.uk](mailto:feedback@cadwyn.co.uk)
- Write to us at: **197 Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 1AJ**

We aim to have printed copies of our concern and complaint forms available at our Head Office and also at our supported accommodation sites. Copies of this policy and the complaint form can be made available in another language at your request as well as audio and large print.

## 2. Dealing with your concern

- The complaints officer will formally acknowledge your concern within 1- 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 large type.
- We keep a secure central record of complaints so that we can be accountable and hold each other to account and ensure that we meet our agreed deadlines to respond
- 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 concerns if you tell us about them within twelve 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 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 more than three years ago.

**Please note:** If you're expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we'll need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

## 3. The Investigation Process

Once they have received the complaint details from the complaints officer, the relevant manager will start their investigation. Usually, the investigating manager is from the relevant service area and either has overall responsibility for the service about which you are complaining or, is a more senior member of staff than the person you have raised concerns about. In serious circumstances, we may use someone externally to conduct an independent investigation.

It is likely that the investigating manager will want to speak with you as their first course of action, so they can be sure they fully understand your complaint. They may ask you at this stage what you consider to be a reasonable resolution for your complaint so that we can try and meet your expectations. Whilst this might not always be possible, we will do what we can to try and meet your expectations and when we cannot meet them, we will explain fully why.

We will always set out our understanding of your concerns in the first instance and ask you to confirm that we are correct, before we start working on the investigation. We will also ask you 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.

Sometimes, at this stage, there can be 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.

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 will 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 will talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies, any legal entitlement and guidance.

#### **4. Outcome**

When we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we find. If necessary, we will produce a report. In all circumstances, we will write to you to explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

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

If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we will 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.

## 5. Putting things right

If we didn't provide you with a service you should have had, we will aim to provide it now, if that's possible. If we didn't do something well, we will aim to put it right. If you have lost out in some way 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'd done things properly.

## 6. Appeal & Ombudsman

Whilst we will do everything we can to resolve your concerns and deal with your complaint, there might be times when we have followed all of the above stages and you still remain unsatisfied with the outcome. In such instances, you have the right to appeal. Depending on who investigated the complaint, the appeal will go to the next senior manager. If you or we feel that they are too closely connected to the issue, then your appeal will go to another senior manager or the Executive Team and ultimately to our Board. You are only able to appeal the outcome of an investigation once within Cadwyn.

If, after your appeal has been heard, you are still not satisfied with Cadwyn's response, then 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 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](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

## 7. Cadwyn's commitment to 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 quarterly and is made aware of all serious complaints.

Our tenant scrutiny group, the Cadwyn Services Improvement Team (CSIT), also considers our response to complaints at least twice a year. We share summary (anonymised) information on complaints received and complaints outcomes with them as part of our commitment to accountability and learning from complaints. This is then presented to our Board for their review and further accountability.

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've promised have been made.

## Appendix A

**Concern/Complaint form- Please fill out Sections A and C (or Sections B and C if filling in form for someone else)**

**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.

### SECTION 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:
Are there any requirements or vulnerabilities we should be aware of when dealing with your complaint?

**SECTION B: Making a complaint on behalf of someone else: Their details:**

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

Their name in full:
Address and postcode:
What is your relationship to them?
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?
Are there any requirements or vulnerabilities we should be aware of when dealing with this complaint?



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

- C.1 Name of the department/section/service you are complaining about:
- C.2 What happened?
- C.3 How has it made you think and feel?
- C.4 Describe how you, or anyone else, have suffered or have been affected:
- C.5 What do you think should be done to put things right? What do you need?
- C.6 How do we move forward?
- C.7 When did you first become aware of the problem?
- C.8 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:
- C.9 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 Officer, 197 Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 1AJ or email at [feedback@cadwyn.co.uk](mailto:feedback@cadwyn.co.uk).  
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