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# Complaints Policy and Procedure

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Cwmpas is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, number 24287R.

We welcome correspondence in English or Welsh and aim to provide an equal standard of service in both languages.

## Purpose statement

- 1.1 Cwmpas is committed to providing the best possible service to our clients and customers. Our customers are our members, the organisations we support and those agencies and individuals who are stakeholders in the services we provide. We recognise that feedback is important to service improvement.
- 1.2 While we strive to get things right first time, all of the time, we acknowledge that sometimes things can go wrong, and in these cases it is necessary to have a clear complaints procedure. If customers are not happy, we need to know, so we can either put things right or make changes to stop it happening again.
- 1.3 When a complaint is made, we will try to deal with it quickly and effectively.
- 1.4 This document details the process and administrative arrangements for receiving, investigating and handling complaints.
- 1.5 The purpose of this procedure is to ensure:
  - That complaints are recorded.
  - That complainants are kept informed throughout the process.
  - That complaints are investigated promptly, thoroughly and fairly, and confidentially when appropriate; and that there is a provision for review.
  - That where the service has fallen below an acceptable standard, redress can be made and mistakes learned.
  - Any patterns are identified and actions taken to address performance in those areas.

## Scope

- 2.1 This document applies to complaints about service from Cwmpas, whether project based or otherwise, and covers complaints made about advisers/consultants appointed by and paid for under Cwmpas's contracts. It also applies to complaints which are raised with Cwmpas via third parties.
- 2.2 Some matters would need to be dealt with outside of the Complaints procedure, such as data protection issues, staff grievances, whistleblowing or legal matters.

## Procedure

### Informal Resolution

- 3.1 Cwmpas aims to resolve complaints simply and quickly wherever possible.
- 3.2 Where an individual or organisation is unhappy with the service they have received, they should in the first instance contact the member of staff they have been dealing with. This should be done within 6 months of the matter occurring. It would be

useful if the complainant could provide a summary of what has happened and what outcome they seek in order to resolve the matter.

- 3.3 Where input from other staff is required in order to achieve a resolution, this will be sought at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.4 Once the necessary steps have been taken to achieve resolution, a representative from Cwmpas will contact the person making the complaint to ensure that they are satisfied with this.
- 3.5 If no resolution can be reached informally, or if the matter is too serious to be dealt with informally, then the formal resolution procedure will be invoked.

## Formal Resolution

### Recording and record handling

- 3.6 Formal complaints can be raised by telephone (0300 111 5050) or in writing via email to [info@cwmpas.coop](mailto:info@cwmpas.coop) or by post to Cwmpas, Spark, Maindy Road, CF24 4HQ. The template complaint form provided in Appendix 1 may be used, although this is not compulsory.
- 3.7 In order that any relevant investigations may be carried out, formal complaints must be raised within 6 months of the matter occurring.
- 3.8 Any complaints received will, in the first instance, be passed to the Complaint Co-ordinator, where it will be centrally logged. The Complaint Co-ordinator will identify the service area named in the complaint and will advise the relevant Director of the complaint.
- 3.9 The Complaint Co-ordinator will acknowledge the complaint in writing (letter or email) within five working days of receipt. This acknowledgement will advise the complainant that their complaint has been received, who will be dealing with it and what will happen next.
- 3.10 The relevant Director will be responsible for nominating a person to lead and investigate the complaint process. This person will be known as the "Complaint Investigator".
- 3.11 The Complaint Investigator will not be otherwise named or involved in the complaint. Where the complaint is about a Director, the Complaint Investigator will be the Chief Executive. Where the complaint is about the Chief Executive, the Chair of the Board will nominate one or more members of the Board to be the Complaint Investigator(s).

- 3.12 The Complaint Investigator should have the capacity to investigate promptly and thoroughly. The Director may take on the role of Complaint Investigator personally, if this is appropriate.

#### Investigation

- 3.13 The Complaint Investigator should investigate the complaint as soon as possible. In normal circumstances this will involve as a minimum talking to the complainant and the employee(s) concerned and reviewing any relevant paperwork.
- 3.14 It would ordinarily be expected that a complainant should be informed of the outcome within twenty working days of receiving the complaint.
- 3.15 If the early stages of the investigation suggest that it will take longer than twenty working days, the Complaint Investigator should send a holding response setting out a revised timetable.
- 3.16 Where the complaint suggests misconduct (as opposed to poor performance) by an employee, advice should be taken from HR at the earliest possible opportunity. HR procedures will take precedence over the timeliness requirements of the Complaints procedure in these circumstances.

#### Decision and Resolution

- 3.17 When the investigation is complete, the Complaint Investigator should review the findings and reach a decision about the complaint.
- 3.18 The Complaint Investigator should then write to the complainant setting out their findings.
- 3.19 Where complaints are substantiated, wholly or in part, the letter from the Complaint Investigator must also set out an apology, and indicate what Cwmpas will do to put things right, and/or ensure that the same problem doesn't happen again.
- 3.20 All documentation relating to the complaint must be saved in the "Complaints" file on Sharepoint "(Management > SLT > SLT > Governance > Complaints)".

#### Review

- 3.21 If the complainant is unhappy with this response, (s)he must advise the Complaint Co-ordinator, within ten working days of the receipt of the response, that they would like the outcome decision reviewed.
- 3.22 The Complaint Co-ordinator will acknowledge the review request within five working days of receipt.
- 3.23 The Chief Executive will review all of the action taken so far and may then:-

- confirm the original findings and action proposed
  - confirm the original findings, but propose a different response
  - require a further investigation
- 3.24 The Chief Executive will write to the complainant within twenty working days of receipt of the request for review, setting out the outcome of the review.
- 3.25 Where the complaint is about a Director, the review will be carried out by one or more members of the Board, or the Chair of the Board. Where the complaint is about the Chief Executive, the review will be carried out by one or more members or the Chair of the Board.
- 3.26 If a further investigation should be required, the process reverts back to the beginning of the Formal Resolution procedure and the same timescales apply for corresponding with the complainant.
- 3.27 All documentation relating to the complaint must be saved in the "Complaints" file on Sharepoint "(Management > SLT > SLT > Governance > Complaints)".
- 3.28 Once the complaint has been resolved, SLT will review the case in full in order to consider any potential lessons for the future.
- 3.29 The Chief Executive will notify the Board of all complaints and their resolution via the Chief Executive's report.

### Mediation

- 3.30 In some circumstances, an independent third party or mediator can help to resolve issues more amicably and at an early stage.
- 3.31 Mediation is a voluntary process. If both parties agree to mediation, then the complaints procedure (whether at the informal or formal stage) can be suspended in an attempt to resolve the issue via that route. If mediation is not successful, then the complaint can continue in line with this procedure.

### Persistent or Vexatious Complaints

- 3.32 A very small number of individuals may raise "persistent" or "vexatious" complaints. Examples might include repeatedly making the same complaint, or complaints with minor differences; persistently seeking an unrealistic outcome relative to the issue raised; or failing to accept the outcome of an investigation into a complaint. Cwmpas is under no obligation to address persistent or vexatious complaints.

## Review

- 4.1 This policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis by the Head of People and Culture, or earlier in the event of relevant legislative changes.
- 4.2 The next date for review is April 2025.

## Appendix 1



## Complaint Form

**Your Details**

Your name	
Your address	
Your telephone number	
Your email address	

**Details of your complaint**

Name of individual (if known)	
Date of incident (if appropriate)	
Location of incident (if appropriate)	

Please provide a summary of your complaint below:

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What outcome would you like to see following your complaint?

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**Declaration**

I understand that by signing and dating this form I:

- a) declare that the contents of this form are true and;
- b) give Cwmpas permission to contact the person complained about and show them the contents of this form and any supporting evidence and;
- c) give Cwmpas permission to contact anyone else necessary in order to consider my complaint

**Signature:**

**Date:**

Please send this form for the attention of the Complaint Co-ordinator via email to [info@cwmpas.coop](mailto:info@cwmpas.coop) or via post to Cwmpas, Spark, Maindy Road, CF24 4HQ