

## Concerns and Complaints Policy

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| Policy Owner     | Emma Morgan, Head of Housing & Support |
| Date of Policy   | 01 <sup>st</sup> November 2025         |
| Next Review Date | 01 <sup>st</sup> November 2028         |
| Version          | 2                                      |
| Approved by      | Caredig Board of Management            |

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| Version Control                             |
| Version 1 - 01 <sup>st</sup> September 2022 |
| Version 2 - 01 <sup>st</sup> November 2025  |

| Changes Made  | Section    | Date       |
|---|------------|------------|
| Reference to compliments is removed   | Throughout | 01/11/2025 |
| Language altered to be in line with Public Services Ombudsman for Wales model complaints policy | Throughout | 01/11/2025 |
| Concern stage 1 and formal investigation Stage 2  |            | 01/11/2025 |

## **Introduction**

Caredig 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 did 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.

## **The Purpose of the Policy**

This policy sets out our approach to providing resolutions where concerns and complaints have been raised.

This policy also sets out how we will learn from the complaints we receive.

## **Our Values**

In applying this policy/strategy, we will be guided by our values. Our values determine how we behave towards our customers, our colleagues, our partners and our work: -

**Kind** - We recognise that relationships are at the heart of everything we do, at the heart of good relationships is kindness

**Innovative** - we continuously strive to be the best we can whilst seeking creative ideas to improve and grow

**Trusting** - We trust people to do the right thing, because good relationships are built on mutual trust and respect

**Accountable** - we accept the responsibilities of our role and are accountable for our actions and for doing what is right.

## **Accountability - Roles, Responsibilities & Monitoring Performance**

- All staff and representatives of Caredig are responsible for reporting services complaints on behalf of tenants or their representatives.
- Operational Managers oversee complaint case management and may delegate investigations to team members.
- Heads of Service ensure proper complaint handling and monitor compliance within their service areas
- The Head of Housing & Support is responsible for reporting to tenants, external bodies, including the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales on a quarterly basis and to senior management including to the Board on a six-monthly basis

## **When to use this Policy**

When you express your concerns or complain to us, we will usually respond in the way we explain below.

Sometimes, depending on the cause of your query, you may have a statutory right of appeal so, rather than investigate your concern, we will explain to you how you can appeal.

Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are not covered by this policy (for example, you have a safeguarding concern) and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known.

This policy does not cover Freedom of Information or data access requests.

It also does not apply to service requests (e.g. reporting anti-social behaviour or repairs). However, if you are dissatisfied with the response to a service request, you may raise a concern as outlined in this policy.

## **How to express concern or complaint formally**

We do not require anyone to write formally to us to raise their concerns or complaint, but we appreciate that for many, this is a preferred choice. Here you will find a range of ways that you or someone on your behalf can contact us:

- Speak to any Caredig staff
- Phone our Housing Services team on 01792 460192
- Email us at [info@caredig.co.uk](mailto:info@caredig.co.uk)
- Via the Caredig MyHome 24/7 App (tenants only)
- Ask for a paper copy of our form Registering a Concern or Complaint from the person with whom you are already in contact. Tell them that you want us to deal with your concern formally.
- Complete the digital Registering a Concern or Complaint form on our website at [www.caredig.co.uk](http://www.caredig.co.uk)
- Write to us at: 43 Walter Road, Swansea SA1 5PN
- Social Media: via the Caredig Facebook account

Complaints can also be received from third parties such as an advocate, MP, MS, local Councillor or the Ombudsman. If you're expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we'll need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

## **What to expect once you make a report**

Below are a set of service standards you can expect:

- We will formally acknowledge your concern within five working days and let you know how we intend to deal with it, including confirming who your assigned investigating officer is.

- 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 font.
- We will deal with your concern in an open and honest way.
- We will make sure that your dealings with Caredig 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 six months. This is because it is better to investigate 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.
- In some cases, we are unable to reach the complainant to discuss their concerns. After all reasonable attempts to make contact, we may close the complaint if there’s no response within a reasonable timeframe. All complaints are reviewed and appropriate actions taken, even without direct contact, and we will notify the complainant of the actions that we have taken in writing where possible.

### **Stage 1 - Informal resolution of concerns**

We believe it is best to deal with things straight away where possible. If you have a concern, please raise it with the person you are dealing with. They will try to resolve it for you there and then or connect you with the right person to do so.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you are 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 written response to you. We aim to have a resolution in place for concerns of this nature within 10 working days.

If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern, the member of staff will escalate to management for their attention.

After we have looked into your concern, we will explain how and why we came to our conclusions. If we find that we made a mistake, we’ll tell you what happened and why. If your complaint is not upheld, we will explain how we came to that decision.

If you are unhappy with the response, you can ask for a formal investigation known as a Stage 2 to be held.

In line with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales model Policy requirements, if a resolution cannot be provided within 10 working days, the Stage 1 investigation will automatically be registered as a Stage 2 Formal Complaint.

## **Stage 2 Investigating formal complaints**

If your concern is not resolved satisfactorily through the informal Stage 1 process, or if the nature of the issue requires immediate formal investigation, it will be handled under our formal complaints procedure—referred to as a Stage 2 Investigation.

Within five working days, we will confirm who will be investigating your complaint. This will typically be someone from the relevant service area although depending on the nature and severity of the complaint, a manager from another department may be appointed. In certain cases, for instance complaints regarding aspects of provision of Care & Support, we may appoint an independent investigator.

We will set out our understanding of your complaint and ask you to confirm that we are right. We will also ask you to tell us 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 is important that you tell us.

Our aim is to resolve complaints 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.
- Give you regular updates, including telling you whether any developments might change our original estimate.

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 complex cases, we will draw up an investigation plan.

In some instances, we may ask to meet with you in person 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 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.

If your complaint covers more than one body e.g. includes a Local Authority, we will usually work with them to decide who should lead on 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 another company working on our behalf e.g. contractors completing building and maintenance work, Caredig will lead the investigation and provide a response to all parties involved.

## **Complaint investigation outcome**

After we have formally investigated your complaint, we will summarise our findings to you in writing. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld. If we find that we made a mistake, we'll 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.

## **Putting things right & learning lessons**

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.

In line with our Compensation Policy, if you have lost out because of a mistake on our part, we'll try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had done things properly.

We take your concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we have made. Our senior management team considers a summary of all complaints quarterly and is made aware of all serious complaints. Our Board also considers our response to complaints at least twice a year.

We share summary (anonymised) information on complaints received and complaints outcomes with the Ombudsman quarterly as part of our commitment to accountability and learning from complaints.

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.

## **Equal opportunities**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and as a result, we have taken steps to ensure we take account of individual circumstances both in term of how we communicate and manage cases. This policy reflects the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and show due regard for an individual's medical condition and vulnerability such as mental health issues and learning disabilities and takes account of the rights of staff under the same Act.

Copies of this policy and the supporting documents are available in a range of languages and formats.

## **Help & support available**

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 also wish to contact advocacy services, Age Cymru and Shelter Cymru. Staff can assist with contact details. You can also use this concerns and complaints policy if you are under the age of 18. If you need help, you can speak to someone on the Meic Helpline:

- Phone 0808 802 3456
- Website [www.meiccymru.org](http://www.meiccymru.org)

You can also contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Contact details are:

- Phone 0808 801 1000
- Email [post@childcomwales.org.uk](mailto:post@childcomwales.org.uk)
- Website [www.childcom.org.uk](http://www.childcom.org.uk)

## **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 'Managing Unacceptable Behaviours' to manage situations when we find that someone's actions are unacceptable.

## **The Public Services Ombudsman of Wales**

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 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

There are also other organisations that consider complaints. For example, the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office deals with complaints about services in Welsh.

### **Complaints about the Care & Support provided by Caredig**

You can complain about the Supported Living and Domiciliary Care services directly to the Local Authority's Supporting People Team or to Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) if you prefer:

- Phone: 0300 7900 126
- Email: [ciw@gov.wales](mailto:ciw@gov.wales)
- Website: [www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)
- In writing: Welsh Government office, Sarn Mynach, Llandudno Junction, LL31 9RZ

### **References to other relevant policies and Procedures**

- Compensation
- Repairs Scope of Service
- Damp & Mould
- Allocations
- Disrepair
- Anti-Social Behaviour & Community Safety
- Managing Unacceptable Behaviours

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Registering a Concern or Complaint

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.

#### A: Your Details

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Title:                                  |  |
| Full name                               |  |
| Full address                            |  |
| Preferred daytime phone number:         |  |
| Preferred email address:                |  |
| How would you prefer us to contact you? |  |

**Your requirements:** if our usual way of dealing with complaints makes it difficult for you to use our service, for example if English or Welsh is not your first language or you need to engage with us in a particular way, please tell us so that we can discuss how we might help you.

#### 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

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Full name                                      |  |
| Full address                                   |  |
| What is your relationship to them?             |  |
| Why are you making a complaint on their behalf |  |
| Best contact details                           |  |

**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 do you think they did wrong, or failed to do?**

**C.3 Describe how you personally have suffered or have been affected:**

**C.4 What do you think should be done to put things right?**

**C.5 When did you first become aware of the problem?**

**C.6 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.7 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 43 Walter Road, Swansea SA1 5PN

Help to complete this form is available by visiting the offices or calling 01792 460192