



# Complaints Policy

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## Purpose

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This policy sets out Aelwyd Housing's approach to dealing with a complaint you may have about a service you have received or were entitled to from us. This policy applies if you are not happy with our response.

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## Policy Statement and Principles

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Aelwyd Housing is committed to dealing fairly, openly, honestly, and effectively with complaints. If we make mistakes, we will acknowledge this, apologise and, where possible, put things right. We are committed to learning from our mistakes and improving services and service delivery.

Normally, we will only look at complaints raised about issues which have taken place within the last 12 months.

### Informal Resolution

Where possible, we want to deal with things straight away. For most issues this means we will try to resolve them there and then. We will record these incidents and where appropriate, learn any lessons. If we can't help we will explain why, and if necessary deal with it formally.

### How to express concern or make a complaint

Anyone can contact us in the following ways:

- Phone: 029 2048 1203
- E-mail: [enquiries@aelwyd.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@aelwyd.co.uk)
- Our website: [www.aelwyd.co.uk](http://www.aelwyd.co.uk)
- In writing: 9 Ty Nant Court, Morganstown, Cardiff, CF15 8LW
- Speak to any Aelwyd Housing employee

Copies of this policy are available from our staff, our website or our office

### Investigating complaints



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Where we have been unable to resolve a complaint informally or it is of a serious nature then it will be dealt with under our formal process. During an investigation we will look at files, notes of conversations, letters, e-mails and any other relevant information. In most cases we will talk to the people involved, look at our policies and any legal guidance. We will always try to discuss complaints in person as well as confirming our findings in writing.

## **Formal resolution**

- We will acknowledge your concern and let you know who will be investigating your complaint.
- We will ask you what you want us to do to remedy the problem.
- We will aim to investigate and respond to you within 20 working days (but we may need to extend this if it's a complex matter, further explanation is given later on).
- We will keep you informed about what's going on; the level of contact will be based upon the issue itself.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within 12 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 us to consider it properly. If you're expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we'll need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

## **What if there is more than one department involved?**

If your complaint covers more than one issue (e.g. repairs and noise nuisance) we will usually work as part of a team to deal with your concerns. If the complaint is about a body working on our behalf (e.g. repair contractors) you should still make the complaint to us and we will look into this ourselves.

## **Investigation**

The person looking at your complaint will establish the facts and usually need to see any data that is relevant to your complaint. We will look at relevant evidence such as notes of conversations, letters, emails or whatever may be relevant to your concern. If necessary, we will talk to the staff or others involved and refer to our policies.

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 plan to provide the service as soon as possible.

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.



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- let you know where we have reached with the investigation, and
- give you regular updates

In some instances, it may help to meet with you to discuss your concerns.

## **Outcome**

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we have found in keeping with your preferred form of communication. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions. If we find that we got it wrong, we will give you an explanation of what happened, show how the problem affected you and what we will do to put it right. If we got it wrong, we will 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. We take your complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we've made. If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things we will tell you how we will build it into future planning, to stop it happening again.

## **Ombudsman**

If we are not able to resolve a complaint, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman is independent and can look into complaints where someone believes that they:

- have been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on the part of the body providing it
- have been disadvantaged personally or have been treated unfairly.

The Ombudsman usually expects you to bring your concerns to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right.

You can contact them by:

- Phone: 0300 790 0203
- E-mail: [ask@ombudsman.wales](mailto:ask@ombudsman.wales)
- Their website: [www.ombudsman.wales](http://www.ombudsman.wales)
- In writing: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed CF35 5LJ

## **What we expect from you**

We expect our staff to always be polite and courteous to you. However, we also expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, demands that are unreasonable or unreasonable persistence, or where residents:

- use foul, abusive, intimidating, or inappropriate language face to face, on the phone, in emails or letters



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- make an unreasonable number of contacts with us for example leaving multiple voicemails, multiple emails
- refuse to co-operate with the complaint investigation process
- make groundless complaints about staff
- electronically record meetings or calls without our prior knowledge
- refuse to accept the outcome of the complaint process after its conclusion, repeatedly arguing the point, complaining about the outcome and/or denying an adequate response has been given
- make the same complaint repeatedly, with minor difference after the investigation has been concluded asking that these new differences be considered through a new investigation
- complain about an issue based on a historic decision or incident
- combine some or all of these features

We will define these complaints as ‘unreasonably persistent/abusive’ and impose restrictions on contact. We define unreasonably persistent as:

*complainants who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with us, hinder our consideration of their or other people’s complaints.*

We will consider each case on an individual basis. In the first instance, an appropriate member of staff will contact the complainant to explain why this behaviour is causing concern and ask them to change this behaviour. They will explain the actions we might take if this behaviour does not change.

If this disruptive behaviour continues, we may be able to apply restrictions on contact, for example, making contact by phone or email and only allow correspondence by letter. We may also tell the complainant they can only contact one named member of staff and that we will not reply or acknowledge any contact from them on the specific topic of that complaint. Restrictions will apply for a minimum of 3 months but can be extended.

However, we will always ensure that we investigate/examine every complaint that comes to us to ensure investigation of genuine service requests in our usual way. If you have any concerns or issues, please contact us

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## Measuring Performance

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This is how we will measure our performance when dealing with complaints

- Number of complaints received
- How many complaints are resolved
- Learning outcomes



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- Identify trends
- Report complaints performance to Board on a quarterly basis

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## Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

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Aelwyd Housing is fully committed to all principles of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion and takes an approach which recognises the importance of the nine Protected Characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 (Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Sex, Sexual Orientation). As a demonstration of our commitment, this policy has had an Equality Impact Assessment undertaken on it to ensure we offer a service and employment that is inclusive for all.