

Complaints Policy and Procedure
--

Review

Date of Last Review:	February 2022
Last Reviewed By:	Lindsay Cordery-Bruce - CEO
Frequency of Review:	2 years
Date of Next Review:	February 2024
Person Designated to Carry out Next Review:	Gareth Corbin - Director of Risk and Compliance
Primary Directorate Responsible for Document:	Risk and Compliance

Authorisation

Level of Authorisation Required:	Chief Executive's Office
Date of Authorisation Meeting:	[dd/mm/yyyy]
Details of Authorising Signatory (required):	
Name:	
Position / Role:	
Signature:	
Date:	[dd/mm/yyyy]

Acceptance

This Controlled Document has been identified as requiring all staff and volunteers to have read and accepted it in CIPHR. Please go to the Policy Acceptance Section of CIPHR to complete the acceptance process.

Associated Documents

The documents listed below have been identified as being useful in the application and understanding of the context of this document:

- Compliments Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy

Version Control

Original Authors:	
--------------------------	--

Date Adopted:	April 2011
Version No.	Please list the changes you have made to this version below.
[Increase by whole number if reviewed or indicate minor changes by adding decimal, for example: 1.1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Procedure' added to title• 6.1.5 and 11. Updated to included Housing Support Grant.• Procedure updated and expanded to include new management structure• Re-wording for clarity and consistency with new structures and values• Requirement for all complaints to be recorded on In-Form.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Wallich is continually striving to achieve the highest standards in service delivery to provide high quality and relevant services to homeless people, potentially homeless people and people in need of advice and/or support according to the criteria for each specific project/service.
- 1.2. To help us achieve this aim we welcome any feedback from those who commission, use or are partners in any part of the services we provide and are willing to listen and respond to any comments, compliments or complaints about the service.
- 1.3. We acknowledge that we can always learn more about our services from listening to others and will try to use any comments to continue to improve what we do.
- 1.4. All comments and suggestions are valued and are recorded to help us improve what we do.

2. Our Commitment

- 2.1. It is our commitment to ensure that:
 - 2.1.1. Individuals find it easy to make any comment/feedback on our services.
 - 2.1.2. We respond quickly, fairly, and politely, taking any relevant comments seriously.
 - 2.1.3. We respond appropriately e.g. with an apology when things have gone wrong or provide the necessary information or explanation.
 - 2.1.4. We monitor all complaints to evaluate and improve our services.
 - 2.1.5. Treat all complaints as confidential, where possible.
 - 2.1.6. Investigate any complaint fully, objectively and within defined time limits.
 - 2.1.7. Inform the complainant of our findings and any right of appeal, if necessary.
 - 2.1.8. Manage, store and record all complaints accurately and in line with GDPR.
 - 2.1.9. Record and report on the number of complaints received outcomes of any investigation and actions implemented.

3. Definition of a Complaint

- 3.1. A complaint is where an individual, commissioner or partner organisation expresses dissatisfaction with the service they have received from the Wallich, whether that dissatisfaction is justified or not.
- 3.2. This dissatisfaction could have arisen from:
 - 3.2.1. The Wallich failing to provide a service
 - 3.2.2. Providing an unsatisfactory standard of service
 - 3.2.3. Unacceptable delay in providing the service
 - 3.2.4. Providing an unfair service
 - 3.2.5. Making a mistake in delivery of the service

4. Anonymous Complaints

- 4.1. Whilst any complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, further action for a complaint, including giving a response, may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

5. Information for Clients Regarding the Complaint's Procedure

- 5.1. Concise and more accessible information (attached as Appendix 1) on the complaints process should be given to clients during the induction process in residential projects, at the initial appointment for floating support services or at the earliest opportunity.

5.2. Complainants wanting to make a complaint regarding ancillary activities or the governance of the organisation, such as recruitment or maintenance should also be provided with a complete copy of this Policy and Procedure.

6. Making a Complaint

6.1.1. Stage 1:

- The complaint should be discussed with the member of staff the complainant is in contact with e.g. a support worker.
- Complainants should also be provided with a copy of this Policy and Procedure including details of the appropriate service or line manager should they wish to progress the complaint to Stage 2.
- The aim is to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant through discussion and any necessary action within 24 hours.

6.1.2. Stage 2:

- If the complainant is not happy with the first response, then they can take this complaint to the Manager identified in Stage 1, who will instigate an appropriate level of investigation.
- The complaint should be written and submitted within 5 working days of the incident or response from the initial stage above.
- A response to the complaint will be made within 10 working days.
- If it is found that more time is required to fully investigate and respond we will keep the complainant regularly informed of the progress of the complaint.

6.1.3. Stage 3:

- If the complainant finds the response unsatisfactory, they can submit a request for a review of the complaint, to the Area Manager or Head of Department within 5 days of receiving the response from Stage 2.
- The Area Manager or Head of Department will review all the documents and responses and a written response will be sent within 10 working days.

6.1.4. Stage 4:

- If the complainant finds the response unsatisfactory, they can submit a request for a review of the complaint, to the appropriate Strategic Operational Lead or Director within 5 days of receiving the response from Stage 3.
- The Strategic Operational Lead or Director will review all the documents and responses and a written response will be sent within 10 working days.

6.1.5. Stage 5: Appeals Process

- If the complainant is still not satisfied, they can make a written appeal submission to the CEO within 5 working days of the Stage 4 response.

- The CEO will convene an Independent Review Panel made up of people who have not been involved in the previous stages of the complaint.
- The complainant may be invited to present their complaint in person to the panel.
- The panel will give a final written response within 10 working days.
- The decision of the Independent Review Panel is final.

6.1.6. If a complaint is raised against the CEO, the complainant may make a request to review the complaint to the Wallich Trustees who will respond within 10 working days.

7. Complaints Regarding Housing Support Grant Funded Services

7.1. If the complainant is receiving a service from a Housing Support Grant funded service, they can take their complaint to their Local Authority's Housing Support Grant Manager at any time.

7.2. The Housing Support Grant Manager's contact details are available from support workers or can be found in the relevant local authority directory of services under Housing Support Grant.

7.1. If the complainant is receiving support from a project funded by, or under contract with, a Local Authority, including Housing Support Grant funded services, they can also take their complaint to the Welsh Assembly Government Ombudsman.

8. Type of Complaints

8.1. If the complaint is about the Wallich, or the way a particular department or project has delivered a service; whether it is from the individual receiving the service or another source; the complaint will be dealt with under this Policy and Procedure.

8.2. Where a complaint is deemed not to be about the service provided by the Wallich but appears to be another individual receiving a service from us, this will be seen as a tenancy management issue and will be dealt with under the Housing Management procedures specific for that project.

8.3. If the complainant is requesting some form of compensation this may be a matter requiring legal intervention or support and must be forwarded to the Chief Executive via the relevant Strategic Operational Lead or Director. The Strategic Operational Lead or Director will hold responsibility to ensure a full investigation is carried out and report to the CEO.

8.4. If the complaint is of a serious nature or has legal implications e.g. Safeguarding investigation, the Chief Executive must be informed via the relevant Strategic Operational Lead or Director. The Strategic Operational Lead or Director will hold responsibility to ensure a full investigation is carried out and report to the CEO.

9. Data Protection

9.1. In order to process a complaint, it will be necessary for us to collect personal information from the complainant and any others who give responses during the investigation of that complaint.

9.2. The Wallich will hold this information securely and ensure it is used for the purpose of completing the investigation only and the identity of the complainant will be revealed only to those involved in the processing of the complaint.

9.3. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality if there are relevant legal aspects to consider or allegations which involve the conduct of third parties. The complainant will be kept informed at all stages of the complaint process of any actions taken.

10. Using Information for Publicity or Training

10.1. Using “live” examples of experiences, including complaints is useful to support our work or help train our staff in a better understanding of their role and how to deal with unexpected occurrences.

10.2. In most case we would anonymise any data to ensure confidentiality is kept but if we wish to use actual quotes or cases we will contact the relevant people involved to obtain permission to use personal information.

11. Recording

11.1. All complaints are to be recorded as accurately as possible on In-Form in line with the requirements of the system.

11.2. The complaints recorded on In-Form creates a log of all complaints received, retains a copy of the details of the complaint and helps to monitor if the procedure was followed to conclusion/resolution.

12. Reporting and Monitoring

12.1. Projects and other organisational teams should discuss any complaints in their monthly team meeting or at least quarterly.

12.2. Details of the complaints received should be discussed by the Service Managers with their Area Managers at least quarterly.

12.3. Complaints received should be discussed by the Area Managers or Head of Department with their Strategic Operational Lead or Director at least every six months.

12.4. Complaint data should be collated by the CEO and taken to the Trustees meeting annually.

12.5. All Housing Support Grant funded projects are required to collate data on complaints at least annually.

Appendix 1 - Concise and More Accessible Information for Clients Regarding the Complaint's Procedure

Making a Complaint

If you feel unhappy about any of the decisions that are made by The Wallich, or the services you receive from us, you should follow the procedure outlined below to try and resolve the matter. If you need any assistance please do not hesitate to ask us for help.

You are entitled at any time to have a friend or representative with you if you attend a meeting about your complaint. You may also wish to obtain independent advice from a Citizen's Advice Bureau (www.citizenadvice.org.uk), local advice centre, solicitor, local Councillor, Assembly Member (AM) or Member of Parliament (MP).

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

If you feel able to do so, please discuss your complaint with a Wallich member of staff.

Stage 2

If you are uncomfortable about doing this, or if you are not satisfied with their response, then contact the Service Manager who will respond to your complaint within ten (10) working days.

Stage 3

If you are still unhappy with the response you can contact the Area Manager. If necessary, a member of staff can help you to contact the Area Manager.

(Please complete with contact details before providing to Complainant)

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Stage 4

If you are still unhappy with the response you can ask the Area Manager to take the matter to the Strategic Operational Lead or Director of Services and Support who will respond to your complaint within ten (10) working days.

(Please complete with contact details before providing to Complainant)

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Stage 5

If you remain unhappy with the decision you can appeal against the decision within 5 working days of the outcome of Stage 4 by asking the Strategic Operational Lead to take the matter to the Chief Executive of The Wallich.

The Chief Executive will set up an Independent Review Panel to review your appeal made up of people who are not involved with your complaint. The Chief Executive will respond to your complaint within ten (10) working days from the date of the panel meeting. The decision of the Independent Review Panel is final.

Taking your Complaint Further - If you are still unhappy with our response you are entitled to take your complaint to your Local Authority Housing Support Grant Manager or the Welsh Assembly Government Ombudsman.