

Aim

This policy provides clarity on how complaints are handled and demonstrates our compliance in accordance with the criteria and targets set by Welsh Government and Ombudsman.

Customer Impact

We want all our customers to be able to contact us at any point regarding the quality of service they receive, whether this is a compliment or a complaint.

What is a complaint

A complaint is defined by Hafod as an expression of dissatisfaction or concern. If you are not satisfied with the service you receive from us please let us know.

This can be in many formats

- Written or spoken or made by any other communication method.
- Made by one or more members of the public (someone or a group in receipt of or denied a service to which they are entitled from us).
- About our action or lack of action or the standard of service provided.
- Something which requires a response. It can be about us, a person, body or contractor acting on our behalf.

Policy

- Hafod is committed to dealing effectively with any complaints about our services. We aim to clarify any issues you may be unsure about.
- We will provide any service you're entitled to which we have failed to deliver.
- If we did something wrong, we'll apologise and, where possible, try to put things right for you.
- You will not receive the withdrawal or reduction of service as a result of a complaint, unless of your choosing.
- We aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information from complaints to improve our services.

Context Statement

A complaint can be about our action, lack of action or the standard of service provided. It could be directed at us as an organisation, a service provision, a person, or contractor acting on our behalf.

We consider that all complaints require a response, and all parties should have opportunity to express their case. We will set out our understanding of your complaint and aim to establish the facts. The extent of the investigation will depend upon how complex and how serious the issues raised are.

Informal resolution

If possible, we believe it's best to deal with things straight away. If you have a complaint, please raise it with the person you're dealing with. They will try to resolve it for you there and then. If they can't help, they will explain why. If you are not happy with this outcome you can then ask for a formal complaint investigation.

Putting things right

If we didn't provide you with a service you should have had, we'll aim to provide it now, if that's possible. If we didn't do something well, we'll aim to put it right. If you have lost out as a result of a mistake on our part, we'll try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we'd done things properly. If you had to pay for a service yourself, when we should have provided it for you, we will try to refund the cost (in line with our Compensation Policy).

Mission Links

Getting the Basics Right; We do not always get it right. But we are committed to continuous learning and evolving all that we do.

Connect with You; We will listen to your concerns and seek to understand, and resolve, your complaint situation.

Invest in the Future; We will develop our processes and actions through learning from our previous experiences to improve our services in the future.

Equality

Everyone has the right to always be treated with dignity and respect. We stand together in our belief that discrimination, of any form, has no place in our organisation and will not be tolerated. Our fundamental value of inclusivity applies to our customers and communities, as well as to our colleagues, and our services.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to provide services in a fair and equitable manner. Copies of this policy, procedure and the complaints form will be made available in different formats / languages on request.

Compliance Information

Name of Policy	Complaints Policy
Policy Owner	Customer Experience Manager
Reviewed by	Policy Group
Approved by	Hendre Board
Date Approved	October 2024
Date of next review	October 2026
YOU MAY WISH TO READ THESE RELATED POLICIES: Customer Engagement Policy Unreasonable Complainants Policy Compensation policy	

OUR POLICIES APPLY TO:

- All activities carried out by the Hendre Group
- All Hendre Group colleagues, unless agreed otherwise between Hendre and the appropriate member.
- For the purposes of this policy all Group members will be referred to collectively as "the Hendre Group."
- This policy does not form part of any colleague's contract of employment.
- Colleagues should refer to their individual contract of employment for details of their contractual benefits.
- In the event of any inconsistency between the policy and any provisions in your contract of employment, the terms of the contract will prevail.
- It is the responsibility of colleagues to comply with this Policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.
- Where a colleague has questions about any aspect of this policy, they should check with their line manager or HR team.
- Where required, training will be provided in the policy and procedure to ensure knowledge, compliance, and best practice across the organisation.
- Policies are reviewed regularly to ensure the organisation's practices remain effective, up to date with legislative and regulatory changes, reflect good practice and support the organisation's objectives.

Hafod's Complaints Procedure

What is a complaint

A complaint is defined by Hafod as an expression of dissatisfaction or concern. If you are not satisfied with the service you receive from us please let us know.

This can be in many formats

- Written or spoken or made by any other communication method.
- Made by one or more members of the public (someone or a group in receipt of or denied a service to which they are entitled from us).
- About our action or lack of action or the standard of service provided.
- Something which requires a response. It can be about us, a person, body or contractor acting on our behalf.

How to express concern or complain formally

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

- Directly to any employee of Hafod.
- Get in touch with our Customer Experience Team on 0800 024 8968
- Use the form on our website at hafod.org.uk
- Email us at enquiries@hafod.org.uk
- Report the complaint through our self-service app - Hafod 24/7
- Write to us at: St Hilary Court, Copthorne Way, Culverhouse Cross, Cardiff, CF5 6ES

Copies of this policy, procedure and the complaints form will be made available in different formats / languages on request.

Informal resolution

If possible, we believe it's best to deal with things straight away. If you have a complaint, please raise it with the person you're dealing with. They will try to resolve it for you there and then. If they can't help, they will explain why. If you are not happy with this outcome you can then ask for a formal complaint investigation.

Dealing with your concern

- We will log your complaint, and any information you share with us, on our housing management system.
- We will formally acknowledge your complaint within 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 will deal with your complaint 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 made a complaint. Normally, we will only be able to look at your complaint if you tell us about them within 6 months. This is because it's better to look into your complaint while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.
- We may be able to look at complaints 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 complaints about matters that took place more than three years ago.

- If you're expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we'll need their agreement to enable you to act on their behalf.

What if there is more than one body involved?

If your complaint covers more than one body (e.g. us and local authority) we will usually work with them to decide who should take the lead in dealing with your complaint. 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 a body working on our behalf (e.g. property repair contractor), you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, if you want to express your complaint formally, we will look into this and respond to you.

We have a duty of care to escalate any safeguarding concerns to the relevant safeguarding body should we feel the need to do so for your, or others, protection.

Investigation

We will tell you who we have asked to look into your complaint. If your complaint is straightforward, we'll usually ask somebody from the relevant service area to look into it and respond to you.

We will set out our understanding of your complaint and ask you to confirm that we are right. 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 to discuss your complaint.

We'll also ask you to tell us what outcome you're 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.

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 offer to provide the service rather than investigate and produce a report.

We will aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority within 20 working days. Our Complaints Coordinator keeps a review of any live formal complaints, their status and responses.

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.

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 complaint. If necessary, we'll talk to the Hafod colleagues or others involved and look at our policies, any legal entitlement and guidance.

Outcome

We will update you on our findings. If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we find in writing. If necessary, we will produce a report. We'll 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 we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we'll 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

If we didn't provide you with a service you should have had, we'll aim to provide it now, if that's possible. If we didn't do something well, we'll aim to put it right. If you have lost out as a result of a mistake on our part, we'll try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we'd done things properly. If you had to pay for a service yourself, when we should have provided it for you, we will try to refund the cost (in line with our Compensation Policy).

The Ombudsman

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint to your satisfaction, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman is independent of all public 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 complaint to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right. If you are still not satisfied you can contact the Ombudsman by:

- Phone: 0300 790 0203
- Email: ask@ombudsman.wales
- The website: 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.

We can advise you about such organisations.

Our Customer Experience Manager is Hafod's contact for the Ombudsman.

Learning lessons

We take your concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we've made. We retain records of our complaints to maintain good governance and

ensure we can refer back to understand our experiences. Our Executive Team considers a summary of all complaints quarterly and is made aware of all serious complaints.

Hafod's Board also considers our response to complaints quarterly. We share summary (anonymised) information on complaints received and complaints outcomes with the Ombudsman 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.

When this policy does not apply

Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are related to complaints but not covered by this policy. For example, you may wish to make an insurance claim for losses incurred as a result of our actions. Please contact us and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known.

This policy does not apply to subject access requests. Please contact our Information Governance Team on 0800 024 8968 or email data.protection@hafod.org.uk if your query is about a subject access request.

If you are approaching us to request a service, e.g. reporting a repair, or requesting an appointment, in relation to a complaint, this policy doesn't apply. Please raise this request via our reporting repair channels or with your direct contact.

What if you need help?

Hafod colleagues will aim to help you make your complaint known to us. If you need extra assistance, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help. You may wish to contact another service provider such as advocacy services, Age Cymru, Shelter etc. who may be able to assist you.

You can also use this 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
- or contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Contact details are:
- Phone 0808 801 1000
 - Email post@childcomwales.org.uk
 - Website 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 Hafod colleagues 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 or vexatious.

Equality of opportunity

Individuals will be treated fairly irrespective of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity, in line with the Association's Equality Strategy.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to provide services in a fair and equitable manner, with customers' preferred formats and languages used for correspondence wherever practicable.

Hafod operates a zero tolerance approach to discrimination, and will treat evidence of discriminatory behaviour as a disciplinary matter or breach of tenancy, as appropriate.