

Our policy on

Service User Complaints

(For Service Users)

Policy Applicable: All Cardiff Women's Aid staff, volunteers & trustees

Policy Owner: Operations Manager

Last Updated: 05/2023

Version: 4.0

Next review date: 05/2024

Policy Status: This policy is non contractual and may be updated or changed by the organisation at any time.

Statement

The aim of this Service User Complaints Policy is to affirm Cardiff Women's Aid's commitment to delivering a high level of quality in the way we work and the services that we deliver. Survivors' voices are integral to ensuring that the quality-of-service provision is maintained and as part of our strategy for continuous service improvement, we encourage service users to share suggestions, concerns and complaints.

As someone who uses our services we want you to be happy with the services we provide. One way of us finding out about ways of improving our services is for you to tell us. If you are unhappy with something or have an idea about improving how we do things, then we want to know about it.

Do you have an idea or suggestion?

Please tell a staff member, or if you are a resident leave a note in the Refuge.

Make sure the date and your name is recorded and we will make certain you get a reply or further discussion within 5 working days.

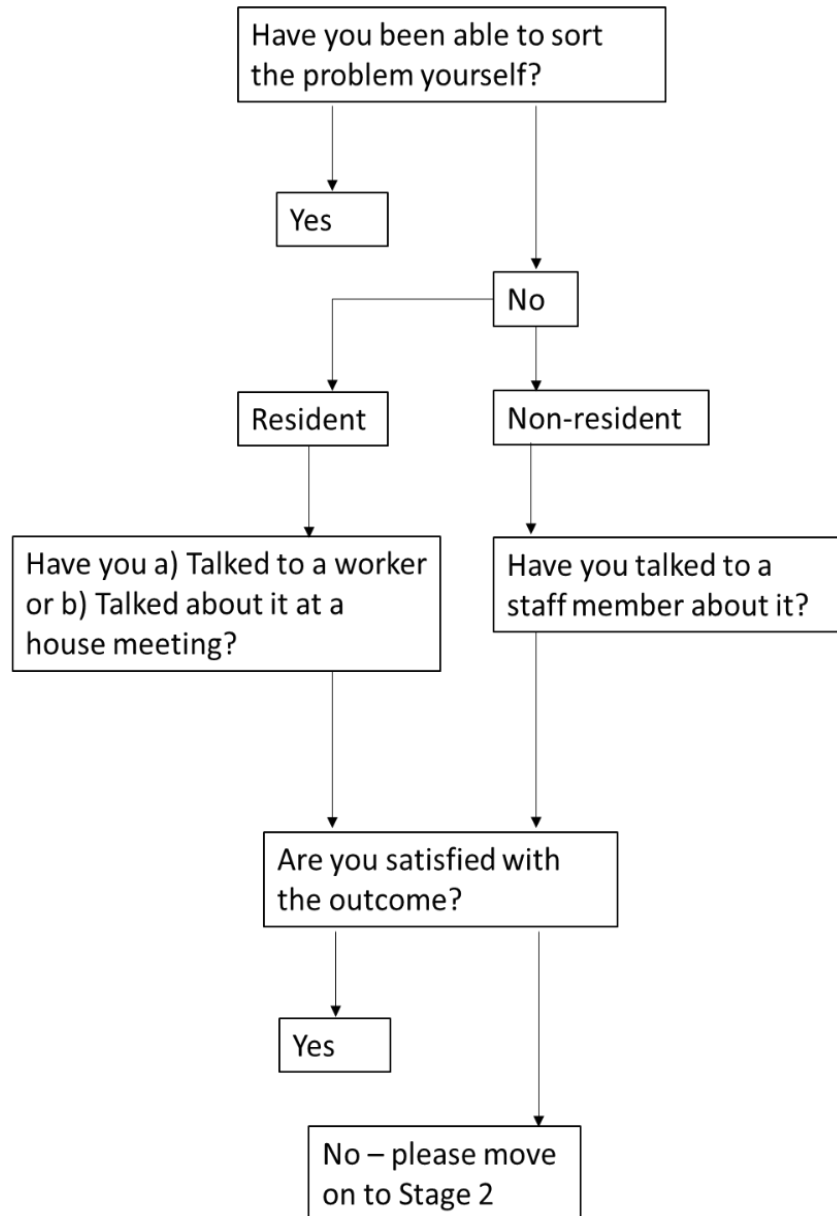
Do you wish to make a complaint?

If you are unhappy with the way you have been dealt with, you have the right to complain (please remember you can ask any staff member to help you with any part of this process)

The Complaints Procedure

If you have a worry, a complaint, or you are feeling unhappy about the way you are being treated, please follow the procedure below.

Stage 1



Stage 2 - complaint

If the concern is not resolved, the service user can raise a complaint. They can do this either by:

- Using the **Stage 2 Complaints Form (Appendix 2)** or
- Asking to speak to one of the managers to tell them about it.

The manager will acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and if they need to meet with the service user, they will do so within 5 working days of receiving the written complaint. We aim for the complaint to be fully investigated, and a written response to be provided by the investigator to the complainant within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint.

Investigations may take longer, particularly if the complaint is complex. Should this be the case a holding letter will be sent after 5 working days and a final date will be given for a conclusion to be reached.

Any recommendations/remedies planned, such as reviewing of policies, staff development and training or appropriate improvement to our services will be fed back to the service user.

Where the complaint is upheld, an apology should be offered.

If an individual remains dissatisfied with the outcome from Stage 2 they can appeal within two weeks of the date of the outcome and progress to Stage 3.

Stage 3 - appeal

If the service user is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint, they should contact the Director or CEO. They will either help out the service user to sort out the matter or appoint someone neutral to help them. The Director or CEO will acknowledge receipt of the appeal request within 5 working days. They will review the Stage 2 investigation with the aim to conclude and provide recommendations within 10 working days. Their recommendations can include the following two options:

- Uphold the action taken at Stage 2
- Make changes to the Stage 2 recommendations/actions

The service user should be informed in writing of the outcome of stage three. If they are still unsatisfied with the outcome, they should move to stage 4.

- Emailing her at hr@cardiffwomensaid.org.uk
- Fill out a **Stage 3 Complaints Form (Appendix 3)**

Stage 4

If the service user is still not happy with the outcome of the complaint, they should contact the Board of Trustees within two weeks of receiving the decision of their appeal. They can do this either in writing or by telling the Services Director who can also appoint somebody to help them out, should they need support. The Board of Trustees will then make a **FINAL** decision, which will be explained to them in writing within 10 days.

Cardiff Women's Aid is committed to resolving complaints in a timely manner at every stage of the complaint's process. However, we acknowledge that in order to provide the best response to survivors, we may need to allocate additional time to investigations and exceed the timescales outlined in this policy. Should this happen, we will communicate with service users about the reasons for this and the anticipated timescales for a conclusion.

External Complaints

Cardiff Women's Aid holds Welsh Women's Aid's National Quality Service Standards (NQSS). These are made up of benchmarks for what holistic, high quality, needs-led, strength-based and gender-responsive services should look like. If a service user has exhausted all of the above stages of the complaint's process and feels that their complaint relates to one of the seven quality standards below, they can contact the NQSS Panel by emailing: membership@welshwomensaid.org.uk or calling 02920 541551. They will undertake an independent investigation to ensure that quality of service provision remains of the highest standard.

STANDARD 1: SAFETY, SECURITY AND DIGNITY - Service users rights to life, liberty and dignity are upheld.

STANDARD 2: RIGHTS AND ACCESS - Equal access to their rights and entitlements is ensured for all and barriers to equality are addressed.

STANDARD 3: PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH - Service users rights to the highest attainable standards of health are upheld promoting long term recovery and well-being.

STANDARD 4: STABILITY RESILIENCE AND AUTONOMY - Service users are supported to achieve long-term stability, independence and freedom from abuse.

STANDARD 5: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE- The rights of children and young people to safety, education and family life are upheld.

STANDARD 6: LEADERSHIP AND PREVENTION - Women and girls' voices lead the development of strategic responses to violence against women and girls.

STANDARD 7: GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY - The organisation demonstrates women's leadership of services and is accountable to service users and communities.

Finally, if the service user has been through the above four stages and an investigation has been concluded by Welsh Women's Aid but the complaint still remains unresolved to their satisfaction, they may wish to contact a relevant external organisation for assistance.

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales can look into complaints about public bodies. They will normally expect that the individual has first complained to the organisation concerned so that it may have an opportunity to respond to their concerns. The complaint must be put in writing their website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk) or by phone on 0845 601 0987.

Staff may also wish to advise the service user that they can approach an independent advice centre for advice/support to make a complaint, e.g.

- Race Equality First: 02920 224097
- Speakeasy Advice Centre: 02920 453111
- Riverside Advice Centre: 02920 341577
- Citizens Advice Centre: 02920346090
- Shelter Cymru: 0845 075 5005

Anonymous Complaints

Complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

Monitoring

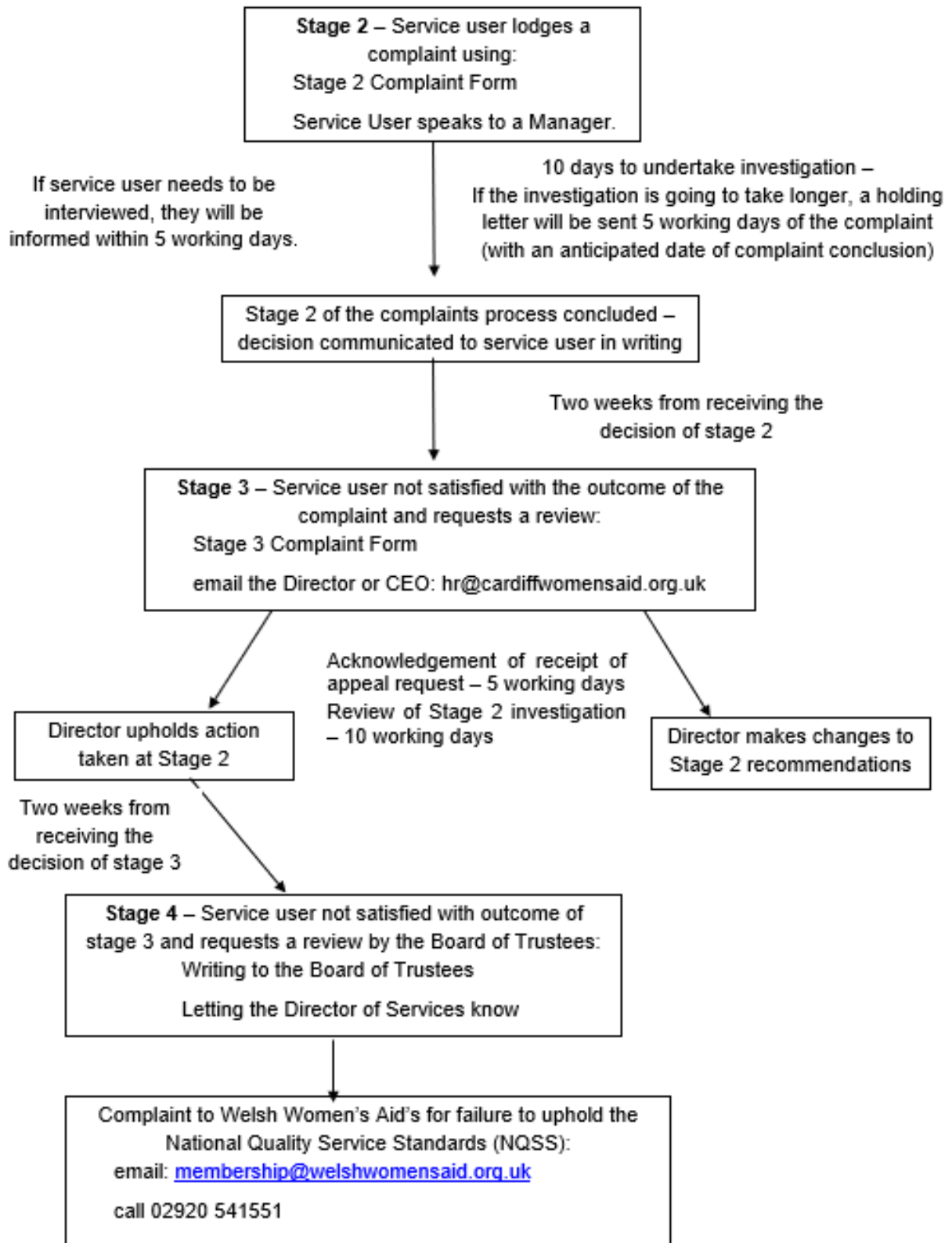
All complaints will be recorded on a register that will be updated, and any pending complaints flagged so they are followed up.

Complaints are an important tool which, alongside data provided collected through our quality assurance processes will allow Cardiff Women's Aid to learn about the services we provide. They provide a useful source of information about how individuals see our services and how we are serving them. To ensure we can learn from complaints the following data will be collected:

- Name and address
- Name of person dealing with the complaint
- Date of complaint and response
- Nature of complaint
- Action(s) taken/recommendations made in response to the complaint Lessons Learnt.

Complaints information will also be reviewed by the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis to provide oversight and promote continuous improvement.

Service User Complaint Diagram



Appendix 1

Service User Complaints Procedure

As someone who uses our services we want you to be happy with the services we provide. One way of us finding out about ways of improving our services is for you to tell us. If you are unhappy with something or have an idea about improving how we do things, then we want to know about it.

DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA OR SUGGESTION?

Please tell a staff member, or if you are a resident leave a note in the Refuge. Make sure the date and your name is recorded and we will make certain you get a reply or further discussion within 5 working days.

DO YOU WISH TO MAKE A COMPLAINT?

If you are unhappy with the way you have been dealt with, you have the right to complain (please remember you can ask any staff member to help you with any part of this process)



Appendix 2

Service User Complaint Form: Stage 2

To the Manager

- Not happy about something we do?
- Not happy about a decision we've made?
- Not happy with someone from CWA?
- Tried to work it out yourself, but still need help?

Tell us about it

Please tick one of the boxes below to indicate who your complaint is about. Then put your name, address and telephone number on the form and hand it to Reception, or email a digital copy to reception@rise-cardiff.cymru. We will make sure your complaint is dealt with quickly and confidentially.

Your worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repairs and Maintenance in refuge	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone at CWA	<input type="checkbox"/>	A decision we've made	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another tenant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Something else	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tell us what the problem is

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(Please continue on the back page if you need to)

Name:

Address:

Email address:

Tel: **Date:**

We promise to respond to you on this matter within 5 working days.

Appendix 3

Service User Complaint Form: Stage 3

To the Services Director

- You have tried to solve your complaint yourself and you are still unhappy.
- You want the Services Director to hear your complaint.

Tell us about it

Please tick one of the boxes below to indicate who your complaint is about. Then put your name, address and telephone number on the form and hand it to Reception, or email a digital copy to reception@rise-cardiff.cymru. We will make sure your complaint is dealt with quickly and confidentially.

Your worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repairs and Maintenance in refuge	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone at Cardiff Women's Aid	<input type="checkbox"/>	A decision we've made	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another tenant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Something else	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tell us what the problem is

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(Please continue on the back page if you need to)

Name:

Address:

Email address:

Tel: **Date:**

We promise to respond to you on this matter within 5 working days.