



Complaints procedure

Here you will find the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) complaints procedure.

Our aim

We aim to provide a quality and helpful service to our users. If you are unhappy with the service we provide, please let us know, you can do this by following the procedure outlined below. Complaints can be addressed to either the President or me as Secretary of the Tribunal.

If it would help to discuss your concerns, please do feel free to contact me by telephone or e-mail as follows.

Ann Owen
Business Manager/Secretary to the Tribunal
Telephone: 01597 829800
E-mail: sentw@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Receiving a complaint

When we receive a complaint we:

- treat it seriously
- deal with it promptly and politely
- respond by making a full explanation, an apology where we have got things wrong and details of action we have taken to avoid getting things wrong in future
- try to learn from complaints and use them to improve our operations
- keep a record of complaints and publish information on them in our annual report.

Making a complaint

Tribunal users can make complaints to the Tribunal:

- by telephone
- in person
- in writing
- by fax
- by e-mail.

We will normally reply in writing but if you send an e-mail and wish to have the response also sent by e-mail, please let us know. You can make a complaint in either English or Welsh, and we will respond in whichever language you write to us in.

You can make a complaint about any of the aspects of our work. However, you cannot use this complaints procedure to have a Tribunal decision changed. If you disagree with a Tribunal decision, in certain circumstances you can appeal to the Upper Tribunal or ask the tribunal to review its decision. There are strict time limits on when you can appeal – please contact the Tribunal Helpline for more details on 01597 829800.

Who should I complain to?

If you have a complaint about the way the Tribunal handled your hearing, but are not asking the Tribunal to change its decision because of that, you should write to the President of the Tribunal at:

SENTW
Government Buildings, Spa Road East
Llandindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5HA

If you are unhappy with the way your hearing was arranged, or with any other part of our service, you should write to the Secretary to the Tribunal at the same address (you can also send your complaint, marked 'COMPLAINT', by e-mail to SENTW@wales.gsi.gov.uk).

In either case, it is helpful if you:

- make clear what you are complaining about;
- give specific details; and
- let us know how you think we could have dealt with things differently.

You can complain about the way we are handling your appeal or claim at any time during the process. Making a complaint will not normally delay the appeal or claim.

If you are not happy with our service, before or on the day of the hearing, you should let the Tribunal Clerk know. The Clerk will try to sort out your complaint there and then.

What happens after I've made a complaint?

We will deal with your complaint promptly and fairly. Once we have received your complaint, it will be acknowledged within three working days.

We will normally send you a full reply within 15 working days of receiving it. If we are unable to reply within 15 working days, if, for example, a longer investigation is needed, we will explain what steps are being taken to deal with your complaint and when you can expect a full reply.

If we have made a mistake, we will apologise. We will tell you what went wrong and how we intend to put the service right.

What happens if the complaint is outside the jurisdiction of the Tribunal?

The Tribunal can only deal with complaints relating to an appeal or claim. If the complaint is about a school or local authority acting unreasonably, or failing to carry out their duties, it should be addressed to the:

National Assembly for Wales:
Support for Learners Division
Welsh Government
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

If the complaint is about something that the Tribunal cannot deal with, you may have grounds to appeal to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. His address is:

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae
Pencoed
Bridgend
CF35 5LJ
Tel: 0845 601 0987
Fax: 01656 641199
Website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Your local AM or MP may also be able to help you with a complaint. Your local Citizens' Advice Bureau can give you the name and address of your local AM or MP, or you can write to your AM at:

National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

You can write to your MP at:

House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA