



# How to make a complaint, compliment or comment

## How to make a Complaint, Compliment or Comment about the Discretionary Assistance Fund

We aim to constantly improve services delivered in the administration of the Discretionary Assistance Fund in Wales. So, if you have an idea, a compliment, a problem or a complaint we'd like you to tell us. We receive letters of appreciation and suggestions as well as complaints. These help us to provide services that meet your needs and reflect your views wherever possible.

### What you need to do

You can submit your compliment, comment or make a complaint in the language of your choice by:

- E-mailing [DAF.Feedback@northgateps.com](mailto:DAF.Feedback@northgateps.com)
- Writing to Discretionary Assistance Fund, PO Box 2377, WREXHAM, LL11 0LG
- Telephoning the DAF number on 0800 859 5924

You can ask someone else or an organisation such as Citizen's Advice Bureau to make a compliment, comment or complaint on your behalf.

### Complaints

Unfortunately, mistakes can happen. Sometimes our service, or the way we respond to you may fall short of our promises or your expectations. If this happens, we need you to tell us. Please give us the opportunity to put things right and to prevent them from happening again. If you are unhappy with the service you receive you have a right to complain.

### What is a Complaint?

We define a complaint as:

*“Any expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided, in relation to the administration of the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF). This dissatisfaction might arise from the actions of a member of staff, the processing of an application and the outcome of that application or from any area of work related to the DAF.”*

### When you should complain?

In line with our definition given above, complaints can be made if you are unhappy with our service or the way in which staff have treated you, for example because:

- you felt staff were discourteous or unhelpful
- you believe information you have been given is misleading or inaccurate
- you felt staff failed to follow policies, rules of procedures

However, a complaint is not for example, dissatisfaction with the decision outcome of an application to the Discretionary Assistance Fund. If you are unhappy with the outcome decision of your application as you do not feel that the correct decision was made, you should request a review of that decision under the *“Discretionary Assistance Fund Wales - Review Process”*.

## **Making a Complaint**

If you are making a complaint, in order for us to resolve it for you as quickly as possible we will need to know:

- Your name
- Where we can contact you (your postal and/or e-mail address and a telephone number) and how you would prefer to be contacted
- If you need any help in making the complaint (such as someone to act on your behalf or an interpreter)
- The details of your complaint - what you think we did wrong or failed to do
- When you become aware of the problem and/or the date of the incident you are complaining about
- If you have already put your concern or complaint to a staff member
- What you would like us to do to put things right for you

## **The Complaints Process**

There are three stages in our complaints process:

**Stage 1: Informal Resolution** - Our first priority is to try and resolve your complaint - to put things right as quickly as possible where we can. This will be done by the staff member you are dealing with. If it cannot be resolved quickly, or you do not feel this Stage is appropriate, you can ask to go straight to Stage 2.

**Stage 2: Investigation** - If Stage 1 does not resolve the complaint to your satisfaction it can be more formally investigated. In this stage, we will write to you within 5 working days of receiving the complaint and look to investigate and write to you with our findings within 20 working days of receiving the complaint.

**Stage 3: Reviewing the Complaint** - If you are still unhappy after we have investigated your complaint, you can request that the complaint is reviewed by the Operations Manager. This request must be made in writing within 15 days of you receiving our findings in Stage 2. The Operations Manager will then review the handling and decision made in relation to your complaint and respond to you in writing within 20 working days.

Making a complaint about our service will not affect any future contact you may have with us or any future decisions made by us about applications you may make to the Discretionary Assistance Fund.

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which your complaint is dealt with, or with the outcome, you can refer the matter to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales via:

- Telephone: 0300 790 0203 or fax: (01685) 641199
- E-mail: [ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk](mailto:ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk)
- Website: [www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk)
- By writing to:

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales,  
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae,  
Pencoed  
CF35 5LJ

### **Looking after your personal information**

The person looking at your complaint will usually need to see all relevant records that we hold relevant about you, which could include recordings of telephone conversations relating to a DAF application, notes of conversations, letters, e-mails or whatever may be relevant to your particular concern. If you don't want this to happen, it's important that you tell us. Refusal to let us look at all relevant information and evidence may however affect our ability to investigate and resolve your complaint.

If you make a complaint, we will respect your right to confidentiality. Although we will need to share the information you give us with others who might be dealing with your complaint, we will only do this if necessary. We will not pass on any information unless we have to do so by law, and will only pass on as much as is necessary.

**PLEASE NOTE: This information is available in Welsh, large print and can be made available in other formats (Braille and disk, and other languages)**