

The Mid & West Wales Safeguarding Board

Complaints Policy



Making a Complaint

Any individual member of the public (or someone acting on their behalf) may make a complaint about any multi-agency function of the Mid & West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board.

A Complaint is:

- An expression of dissatisfaction or concern in respect of any function, standards or actions of the Safeguarding Board
- Either written or spoken or made by any other communication method
- Made by one or more members of the public

How to make a Complaint

In the first instance, the complainant can raise or discuss their concerns with the Regional Board Manager in a number of ways.

- In person
- By telephone
- In writing
- By email

The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

Informal Complaints

It may be possible to resolve the identified issue or concern informally via a discussion. If this is the case the Board Manager will acknowledge the issues raised and outcome in writing within 5 working days of acknowledgement.

If the complaint cannot be concluded in this way it will progress into the formal complaints process.

Stage One:

- The Regional Board Manager will undertake an investigation into the identified concerns and inform the complainant of the outcome in writing within 10 working days.

- Every effort will be made to complete the investigation in a timely manner without unnecessary delays. However, depending on the nature or complexity of the issue identified, more time may be required to fully investigate the identified concerns. The need for this may be identified at any stage in the process and the Board Manager will inform the complainant in writing and a new agreed timescale for completion.
- On conclusion of Stage One, the Board Manager will inform the complainant in writing of the outcome of their investigation and any action to be taken as a result, where appropriate.

If the complainant is not satisfied with this outcome, they can ask for the complaint to be progressed to Stage Two.

Stage Two:

The complaint will be forwarded to the Chair of the Board who will acknowledge it in writing within 5 working days.

- An independent person will be appointed to investigate the complaint, usually within 20 working days.
- Every effort will be made to complete the investigation in a timely manner without unnecessary delays. However, depending on the nature and complexity of the issues identified, more time may be required to fully investigate the identified concerns. This may be identified at any stage in the process and the complainant will be informed in writing and a new timescale agreed.
- The investigation will not start until the complainant and the Board Chair agree on what is to be investigated.
- The allocated independent person will prepare a report for the Board Chair on their findings.
- On conclusion of Stage Two, the complainant will receive a written response to their complaint from the Board Chair. This will explain the outcome of the investigation and what action is to be taken as a result of the complaint, where appropriate.
- All Stage Two complaints and their outcomes will be presented to the Executive Board for consideration.

What cannot be considered as a Complaint by the Safeguarding Board

Any investigation undertaken by the Safeguarding Board cannot compromise any ongoing or completed investigation undertaken by any agency represented on the Safeguarding Board as part of its own complaints process. This includes issues or concerns raised in relation to actions or standards in respect of a service provided by an individual organisation or agency, including:

- Any ongoing investigation. For example, a complaint presently being considered as part of the statutory social care complaints process.
- Any completed investigation that has taken place. For example, a complaint that has taken place as part of the statutory social care complaints process.
- Any other ongoing investigation either in progress or completed as part of Board members and their agencies own internal complaints or professional conduct process.
- Any ongoing complaint referred to the Ombudsman or under investigation by the Ombudsman.

The Safeguarding Board cannot re-investigate any complaints that have been undertaken and concluded as part of any of the above processes.

Any complaints or concerns expressed about the professional conduct or behaviour of any member of the Safeguarding Board will be dealt with under their employer's own internal procedures in relation to conduct and performance.

Managing Vexatious Complaints

In a small number of situations it may be necessary to restrict, or in exceptional circumstances cease contact with a person or persons who are considered to be displaying unreasonable behaviour and this behaviour takes up a disproportionate amount of time and resources which adversely affects the Safeguarding Board's ability to carry out its functions and duties.

Such behaviour includes:

- Aggressive and threatening behaviour
- Making unreasonable demands
- Displaying unreasonable persistent behaviour.

Any decision to put in place such restrictions will be made by the Board Chair. Examples of such restrictions include identifying one method of communication with the Board on set agreed days and times. In exceptional circumstances cessation of contact may occur when it is considered that every aspect of a complaint has been

thoroughly investigated with no further action identified and where the complainant persistently refuses to accept the outcome of the complaint.

Examples of aggressive or threatening behaviour:

- Threats of physical violence
- Verbal abuse
- Derogatory remarks
- Rudeness

Examples of making unreasonable demands:

- Making constant phone calls, emails or enquiries
- Demanding responses in unreasonable timescales

Examples of unreasonable persistent behaviour:

- A refusal to accept the reason why a decision has been made in respect of a complaint
- Continually changing the substance of a complaint
- Continually raising new issues whilst a complaint is being investigated.

The complainant will be informed in writing why a decision has been made to restrict future contact, the restricted contact arrangements and, if relevant, the length of time these restrictions will be in place.