



Complaints Procedure

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Status	Approved	Date Approved	October 2024
Period of Approval	2 Years	Review Date	October 2026

1. PURPOSE OF THE PROCEDURE

- 1.1 This procedure has been prepared to clarify how a “third party” might raise a complain with North Wales Science (NWS) and outlines how it will be dealt with.
- 1.2 NWS is committed to ensuring that individuals who may have contact with the organisation, and are dissatisfied with that interaction, have the opportunity to have their complaint dealt with as close as possible through fair investigations so that, as appropriate, evidence-based decisions on the facts of each individual case can be made. Where NWS finds a complaint justified this mechanism also provides the opportunity for NWS to respond and, where possible, offer a resolution.
- 1.3 For holiday clubs, NWS wants children and their parents to be confident that their complaints will be listened to, taken seriously and acted on. This is aligned to the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare and procedural guidelines from Care Inspectorate Wales.

2. SCOPE OF THE PROCEDURE

- 2.1 A “third party” is defined for the purposes of this procedure as an individual who is not a paid employee, nor a person or company contracted to undertake work on behalf of NWS.
- 2.1.1 – This procedure is not applicable to past employees or contractors who wish to raise a complaint in relation to their term of employment or work offered/completed.
- 2.2 Examples of instances where an individual might use this procedure include:
- a) Where a person may have a suspicion of unlawful or unethical employment practices being undertaken within NWS;
 - b) Where a person has reason to believe that NWS or a member of staff or contractor for NWS has breached the general data protection regulations;
 - c) Where a visitor, school or community group feels there is cause for complaint about NWS facilities or services offered/delivered;
 - d) Where a parent, carer, or other person with duty of care for a child or young person feels there is cause for complaint about the out-of-school care provision.
- 2.3 The complainant, or person acting on behalf of the complainant, is expected to submit their complaint to NWS as soon as possible and certainly within 6 months of becoming aware of the alleged issue.

3. STAGE ONE PROCEDURE: INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- 3.1 Third parties who wish to make a complaint are asked to speak with NWS staff and contractors without undue formality, either in person, by telephone or in writing. It may be appropriate on occasions for someone to accompany or act on behalf of the third party or NWS.

- 3.2 Complainants are informed that they have the right at any time to also raise their complaint to Care Inspectorate Wales.
- 3.3 NWS has a responsibility to safeguard individuals in its care and to ensure that personal information is protected in compliance with the Data Protection and the General Data Protection Regulations. Staff therefore may be unable to discuss details relating to specific individuals with complainants.
- 3.4 All parties must be aware of the need for confidentiality at this stage, so that the procedure is not compromised. Staff / contractors will discuss matters with their line manager. Third parties are asked not to discuss the matter with a wider audience.
- 3.5 A preliminary discussion will clarify if a question or expression of an opinion from the third party is also a complaint and needs to be taken further. If the person first contacted cannot deal with the matter that day, they should make a firm arrangement to deal with it at a future date or refer the matter to their line manager. In either case, the concern will be recorded by the first person contacted.
- 3.6 Most complaints are straightforward and can be resolved amicably and to the full satisfaction of those involved if they are raised at an early stage. Most cases can normally be resolved by an explanation, apology, or immediate remedial action. Informal resolutions are to be made within ten working days from the date of the complaint being raised.
- 3.7 The complainant must be notified, in writing, of the outcome of the investigation within 14 days of the complaint being received.
- 3.8 It is the Senior Management Team at NWS who hold responsibility to ensure that staff have guidelines about when to refer a matter on and when not.
- 3.9 If the concern/complaint relates to the member of staff / contractor and the third party feels unable to raise it with them, they are advised to contact the Senior Management Team at NWS.
- 3.10 Details of the complaint, the outcome and action taken may be recorded and used for service improvement.
- 3.11 Accurate and detailed written record of all complaints must be kept, including the following information:
Name of complainant
Nature of complaint
Date and time of complaint
Action taken in response to the complaint
Result of complaint investigation
Information given to the complainant, including the date of response.

- 3.12 If no satisfactory solution has been found, the third party should be informed about how they should proceed if they wish to take the matter further and make a formal complaint. They should be informed of any advice and support that may be available to them.

4. STAGE TWO PROCEDURE: FORMAL INVESTIGATION

Stage 2 is used for:

- Complaints which cannot be resolved informally at stage 1
- Complaints deemed by NWS to be serious, complex or about matters that are high risk i.e. safeguarding
- Safety and wellbeing matters which may have significant legal, financial, or reputational ramifications.

4.1 Third Parties who wish to pursue a formal complaint at Stage 2 should be asked to put their complaint and their desired outcome in writing to the person assigned to their complaint. This person should acknowledge the complaint orally or in writing within 3 working days of receipt, giving a brief explanation of the complaint's procedures and a target date for providing a response (no longer than 30 working days).

4.2 NWS will investigate and normally respond within 30 working days. If it is not possible to deal with the matter in this time, the complainant should be informed of when it is likely to be concluded. Complainants will receive notification in writing of the decision by NWS and the underpinning rationale, as well as any right to appeal (normally only permitted where there is additional evidence against the decision that was not available when the complaint was made).

4.3 Full investigations will normally be led by NWS (with input from Human Resources at Wrexham University and other services as needed); complaints deemed to be high risk or relating to staff within NWS Senior Management Team will normally be handled by Wrexham University senior colleagues. The investigator should normally have had no prior involvement in the complaints. Written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation will be made and kept in line with the confidentiality policy.

4.4 The complainant should, if they wish, be allowed to be accompanied by a friend or relative who can speak on their behalf. Interpreting facilities should be made available if required.

4.5 If necessary, investigator should interview any witnesses and take statements from those involved. If the complaint centres around a child or young person, they should also be interviewed, normally with their parent or guardian present. In some circumstances, this may not be possible or appropriate and a senior member of staff with whom the child feels comfortable should attend with them. If a member of staff is complained against, the needs of that person should be borne in mind.

5. APPEALS

5.1 Complainants who are dissatisfied with the response to a stage two complaint may make an appeal asking NWS to review its decision.

5.2 The Complainant should write to the Vice-Chancellor's office at Wrexham University (for which NWS is a wholly owned subsidiary) and state the grounds on which they wish to appeal the decision and enclose any other information that may be useful in considering the matter further.

5.3 Appeals will normally only be permitted where additional, materially relevant information is supplied that was not available when the complaint was made. Where any appeal is granted, consideration will normally be led by a senior member of Wrexham University who has had no prior involvement in the formal investigation.

5.4 The University's decision at the appeal stage is final.

6. CONCURRENT COMPLAINTS

6.1 If a complaint is classified as a 'concurrent investigation' because it triggers a safeguarding investigation, court proceedings or would interfere with an in-process complaint, then the new complaint will be placed on hold. If these circumstances apply, then the complainant must be informed immediately.

6.2 The complainant has the right to resubmit their complaint for consideration once the concurrent consideration is discontinued or completed.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Complainant

The complainant is responsible for:

- Providing full, clear, and accurate information about the issue and engaging with NWS to find an effective resolution; and
- Behaving in a reasonable manner. Unreasonable behaviour includes: making vexatious complaints, harassing or otherwise behaving inappropriately towards NWS staff, failing to cooperate with the investigation, making unreasonable levels of contact or being unreasonably persistent. Unreasonable behaviour may lead to the complaint investigation being suspended or terminated.

7.2 The University

The University is responsible for:

- Investigating the complaint in a comprehensive and open minded manner;
- Treating all those involved in the investigation fairly;
- Ensuring that any personal information is handled appropriately;

- Keeping all those involved appropriately apprised of the investigations progress and outcome;
- Proactively using the upheld complaints to improve its working practices; and
- Acting on any areas of gross misconduct through its internal policies and processes

7.3 Care Inspectorate Wales

CIW is responsible for:

- Investigating any complaints taken to it about a concern with a registered service;
- Following its own complaints procedure.

8. COMPLIANCE

NWS monitors the numbers and outcomes of complaints sent to it; key information is then sent to NWS board of trustees and Wrexham University management to enable them to improve working and service practices and identify trends and areas for improvement.

9. SIGNPOSTING TO OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

9.1 This procedure relates to individuals who have no other recourse within existing policies and procedures to settle any concern that they have following their involvement with NWS.

9.2 There are already procedures in place for:

- Staff to seek resolution of issues through the relevant grievance procedure operated by the Human Resources Department;
- Staff or anyone contracted to work for NWS through Wrexham University who have recourse to the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy (details available from the University website) in the event that there is reason to suspect that the University or any of its staff or students are engaged in inappropriate or illegal activities.
- Individuals who have concerns about members of staff or students who are vulnerable to the risk of being drawn into violent extremism, based on the information they have received or behaviour they or another individual have observed, where concerns can be raised through the University's Vulnerable People Information Sharing Protocol within the University's Prevent Policy (available on the University's website or the Prevent Co-ordinator).

10. CONTACT INFORMATION

Centre Manager, North Wales Science, Xplore! 17 Henblas Steet, Wrexham, LL13 8AE. Email: info@xplorescience.co.uk

Vice-Chancellor's Office, Wrexham University, Plas Coch Campus, Mold Road, Wrexham, LL11 2AW. E-mail: compliance@wrexham.ac.uk

Care Inspectorate Wales office: CIW Connect Team 0300 7900 126 ciw.complaints@gov.wales

APPENDIX 1

Personal Details

Please be aware that NWS may contact you for additional information.

First Name	
Surname	
Address	
Email	
Telephone Number	

Complaint Details

Nature of Complaint	
Date(s) Occurred – single or range	
Staff member(s), contractor(s) or other people involved (in applicable and known)	
Summary of complaint, including details of the issue or any incidents	
Please identify any actions you have taken to resolve the complaint to date	
What would the ideal	

resolution to the complaint be?	
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