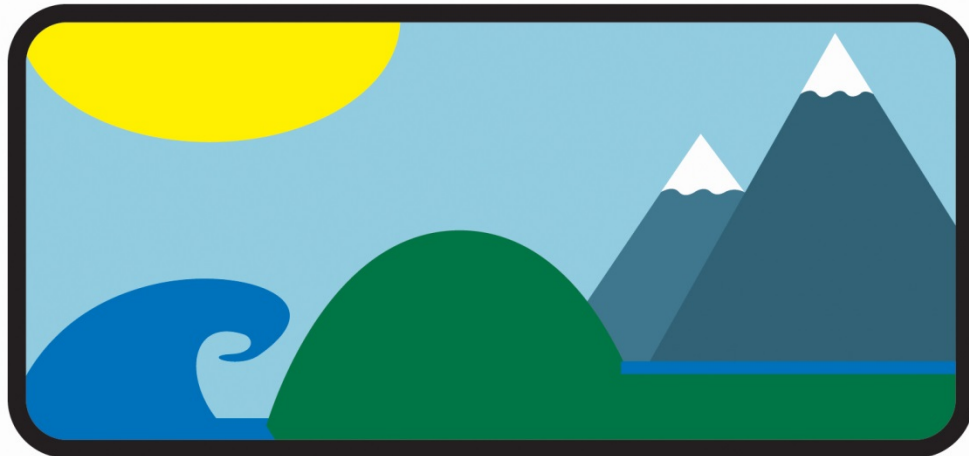


# Complaints Procedure

**PARTNERIAETH AWYR-AGORED**

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**OUTDOOR PARTNERSHIP**

February 2021

This procedure is for service users who wish to complain about an Outdoor Partnership employee or Trustee, or the service that they have received from the Outdoor Partnership (TOP). Any member of TOP staff wishing to make a complaint should use the Grievance Procedure in the staff handbook as the appropriate mechanism for resolving their concerns.

TOP seeks to maintain an excellent standard of service for all service users but recognises that in any organisation things can sometimes go wrong. Where you are not satisfied with the service you have received it may be helpful to discuss it informally with the appropriate member of staff or their manager to see if your concerns can be resolved informally. If this is not possible then the next step is to lodge a formal complaint.

### **Initial Step**

At the earliest possible stage, where somebody has notified a member of TOP staff that they wish to make a complaint, or are considering making a complaint they will be given a copy of this complaints procedure in order to assist them with the process.

### **Step one**

The first step in making a formal complaint is to write to the Chief Executive Officer, Tracey Evans at Bwthyn Carnedd, Plas y Brenin, Capel Curig, Conwy, LL24 0ET, marking the envelope 'personal and confidential'. Alternatively the complaint can be made by telephoning Tracey Evans on 07921 700 521 or by sending an email to [tracey.evans@outdoorpartnership.co.uk](mailto:tracey.evans@outdoorpartnership.co.uk) making it clear that you wish the matter to be dealt with as a formal complaint. You can make your complaint in either Welsh or English.

In lodging the complaint, you should provide as much detail as necessary about the nature of your complaint, what efforts have been made to resolve the complaint and why you are not happy with the service you have received and what you would consider a reasonable resolution to be and what action has already taken place to resolve the complaint. The CEO will aim to acknowledge the receipt of your complaint in writing or by email within three working days but may wish to discuss your concerns with you, and to speak to any members of TOP staff or Trustee involved, before responding formally to you. The CEO will seek to send you a formal response to your complaint within 15 working days of receipt.

### **Step two**

If you are still not happy with the outcome you can ask for the matter to be considered by a Trustee. You should do this in writing, addressing your letter to 'The Chair of the

Trustee Board' c/o Bwthyn Carnedd, Plas y Brenin, Capel Curig, Conwy, LL24 0ET marking the envelope 'personal and confidential' or by sending an email to Paul Airey (pwairey@gmail.com).

The Chair of Trustees will identify an appropriate member of the Trustee Board to investigate the complaint and will notify you in writing as to who this will be and will try to acknowledge your letter within 3 working days. The Chair may undertake to do the investigation personally. The Trustee undertaking the investigation may wish to speak with you to discuss the complaint and will also interview the members of TOP staff or Trustee concerned, including the CEO. They will seek to respond to your complaint within twenty working days.

### **Step three**

If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome, or if your complaint is about the CEO, you may ask for the matter to be considered by the TOP Trustee Board. You should write to 'The Chair of Trustees' c/o Bwthyn Carnedd, Plas y Brenin, Capel Curig, Conwy, LL24 0ET marking your letter 'personal and confidential' or by sending an email to Paul Airey (pwairey@gmail.com). Acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint will be given in 3 working days at which point you will be notified of the intended timescale for the complaint to be considered although the Board will consider your complaint at the earliest opportunity.

The Trustee who investigated your complaint at the previous stage may take part in the discussion at the Board meeting but will not participate in any ensuing vote on the matter. The Board may invite you to the meeting to make representations about your complaint.

The complaint will be considered at the first Board meeting following the receipt of your letter by the Chair of Trustees (provided this is received at least five working days before the date of the meeting) and you will be informed in writing of the outcome within five working days of the meeting.

### **The Board's decision at this stage will be final.**

If your complaint is upheld at any stage TOP will seek to remedy the unsatisfactory service that you have received in the most appropriate way. This may simply be by way of an apology or it may invoke or review the organisations systems and procedures.

TOP hopes that, at the end of the process, whatever the outcome, you will feel that your complaint has been taken very seriously and that you have received fair and appropriate treatment.

TOP will maintain a record of all complaints received, the procedure followed, and the outcome, and this will be considered by the TOP Trustee Board on an annual basis.

### **Malicious and/or Persistent Complaints**

TOP is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We do not, however, expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening. This extends to malicious and / or persistent complaints.

There is no one single feature of malicious and / or / persistent complaints, however TOP considers the following to constitute such behaviours:

- Persist in pursuing a complaint when the procedures have been fully and properly implemented and exhausted.
- Do not clearly identify the precise issues that they wish to be investigated, despite reasonable efforts by staff, and where appropriate, the relevant independent advocacy services could assist to help them specify their complaint.
- Continually make unreasonable or excessive demands in terms of process and fail to accept that these may be unreasonable e.g. insist on responses to complaints being provided more urgently than is reasonable or is recognised practice.
- Continue to focus on a 'trivial' matter to an extent that it is out of proportion to its significance. It is recognised that defining 'trivial' is subjective and careful judgment will be applied and recorded.
- Change the substance of a complaint or seek to prolong contact by continually raising further issues in relation to the original complaint. Care will be taken not to discard new issues that are significantly different from the original issue.
- Consume a disproportionate amount of time and resources.
- Threaten or use actual physical violence towards staff.
- Have harassed or been personally abusive or verbally aggressive (this may include written abuse e.g. emails).
- Repeatedly focus on conspiracy theories and/or will not accept documented evidence as being factual.
- Make excessive telephone calls or send excessive numbers of emails or letters to staff.
- Any other actions regarded as malicious and / or persistent following discussion by TOP Board, either in session or via correspondence.

**What happens when a complaint is considered to be unreasonable or unreasonably persistent?**

- The policy and reasoning will be explained to the complainant. The organisation may choose to put limits on contact from the complainant and will set out the timescale and nature of these.
- The organisation will set out what it will and will not consider under its complaints process and how future complaints with the same content or theme will be responded to.
- In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing.

**Procedure reviewed:** March 2021

**Next review scheduled for:** March 2024