



Education Achievement Service
Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg

Concerns and Complaints (Customer Care) Policy

Education Achievement Service (EAS)

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1. Introduction

1.1 The EAS is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about our service. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible, we will put right any mistakes we may have made. We will provide any service you are entitled to which we have failed to deliver. If we have made a mistake, we will apologise and wherever possible we will try to put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

2. When to use this policy

2.1 When you express your concerns or complain to us about the services provided to you, we will usually respond in the way we explain below. Sometimes you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by us. In this case we will advise you about how to make your concerns known.

2.2 Where it is more appropriate for your complaint to be dealt with by your local authority or school, we will:

- let you know that we will refer the complaint to the complaints officer in that local authority, or if related to a school the headteacher / chair of governors (as appropriate);
- forward your complaint to the relevant local authority, or headteacher / chair of governors (as appropriate). We will provide you with the email and/or address of where the complaint has been sent

2.3 Your complaint will then follow the complaints procedure of that local authority / school.

Freedom of Information (FOI) – Subject Access Request (SAR)

2.4 This policy does not apply if the matter relates to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, Subject Access Request (SAR) or Data Protection issue. In this circumstance, you should contact the Service Area Lead (Business Intelligence and Governance), EAS (learning.intelligence@sewaleseas.org.uk, Tredomen Gateway Centre, Ystrad Mynach, Hengoed, CF82 7EH. Our relevant procedures for dealing with such matters, in compliance with all relevant legislation will then apply.

3. Informal resolution

3.1 If possible, we believe it is best to deal with things straight away. If you have a concern, raise it with the person you are dealing with. They will try to resolve it for you, as soon as possible. If the member of staff cannot help, they will explain why and then if you are not satisfied with their response, then you can then ask for a formal investigation, following this policy.

4. How to express concern or complain formally

4.1 You can express your concern in any of the ways below.

- You can get in touch with us on telephone 01443 864963
- You can use the form (Appendix A) of this policy, found at www.sewaleseas.org.uk
- You can e-mail us at corporatecomplaints@sewaleseas.org.uk
- You can write a letter to us at:

Corporate Complaints
EAS
Tredomen Gateway
Ystrad Mynach
Hengoed
CF82 7EH

4.2 Copies of this policy and the complaint form are available in Welsh and as audio or large print.

5. Dealing with your concern

5.1 We will formally acknowledge your concern within five working days and let you know how we intend to deal with it.

5.2 We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any requirements – for example, if you have a disability.

5.3 We will deal with your concern in an open and honest way.

5.4 We will make sure that your dealings with us in the future do not suffer just because you have expressed a concern or made a complaint.

5.5 Where we feel that your complaint can be addressed more effectively by discussing with our partners (such as local authorities and schools) we will ask you whether you are happy for us to share information with them.

6. When to raise your concerns or complaints

6.1 To allow us to consider whether we need to take any steps to put things right it is best to notify us of any concerns or complaints you may have as soon as is reasonably possible.

- 6.2 Therefore, normally, we will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within 12 months. This is because it is better to investigate your concerns while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.
- 6.3 We may exceptionally be able to look at concerns which are brought to our attention later than this. However, you will have to give us strong reasons why you have not been able to bring it to our attention earlier and we will need to have sufficient information about the issue to allow us to consider it properly.
- 6.4 If you are expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we will need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

7. What if there is more than one body involved?

- 7.1 If your complaint covers more than one body e.g. a school or local authority we will usually work with them to decide who should take a lead in dealing with your concerns. You will then be given the name of the person responsible for communicating with you while we consider your complaint.

8. Investigation

- 8.1 We will tell you who we have asked to investigate your concern or complaint. If your concern is straightforward, we will usually ask somebody from the service to investigate it and get back to you. If it is more serious, we may use someone from a separate section of the EAS or in certain cases we may appoint an independent investigator.
- 8.2 We will set out to you our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that we have got it right. We will also ask you to tell us what outcome you are hoping for. The person looking at your complaint will usually need to see any information we hold relevant to your complaint. They will normally also want to meet with you to hear from you about your concerns directly.
- 8.3 If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you are happy to accept this. For example, where you asked for a service and we see straight away that you should have had it, we will offer to provide the service rather than investigate and produce a report.
- 8.4 We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the majority within 20 working days. If your complaint is more complex, we will:
- let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate
 - tell you how long we expect it to take
 - keep you updated on progress or any delays.

- 8.5 The person who is investigating your concerns will first aim to establish the facts and determine the scope of any investigation. The extent will depend on how complex and how serious the issues you have raised are. In complex cases, we will draw up an investigation plan.
- 8.6 We will look at relevant evidence. This could include files, notes of conversations, letters, e-mails or whatever may be relevant to your particular concern. If necessary, we will talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies and any legal entitlement and guidance.

9. Outcome

- 9.1 If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we have found in keeping with your preferred form of communication. This could be by letter or e-mail, for example. If necessary, we will produce a longer report. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.
- 9.2 If we find that we have made mistakes, we will explain to you what these are, why, why they occurred and our planned actions to prevent reoccurrence.
- 9.3 Where we have made mistakes, we will always apologise.

10. Appeals

- 10.1 In the event of you not being satisfied with the outcome of your complaint or how it has been dealt with the matter will be referred to our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to review the complaint with the investigating officer.

11. Learning lessons

- 11.1 We take your concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we have made.
- 11.2 Where there is a need for change, we will develop an action plan to implement improvements.

12. What if I need help?

- 12.1 Our staff will aim to help you make your concerns known to us. If you need extra assistance, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help.
- 12.2 You can also use this policy if you are someone under the age of 18. If you need help, you can:

- Speak to someone on the Meic Helpline:

Tel: 08088 023456
Website: www.meiccymru.org

- Contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales:

Tel: 01792 765600

Website: www.childcomwales.org.uk

13. What we expect from you

- 13.1 In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a concern or a complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.
- 13.2 We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

Appendix A: Concern / Complaint Form

A: Your details:

Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/ <i>if other please state</i>	
Forename(s):	
Surname:	
Address and Postcode:	
Email address:	
Daytime contact number:	
Mobile number:	

Please state by which of the above methods you would prefer us to contact you:

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Your requirements: if our usual way of dealing with complaints makes it difficult for you to use our service, for example if English or Welsh is not your first language or you need to engage with us in a particular way, please tell us so that we can discuss how we might help you.

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. **If you are filling this in on behalf of someone else, please fill in section B.** Please note that before taking forward the complaint we will need to satisfy ourselves that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned.

B: Making a complaint on behalf of someone else: their details

Name in Full:	
Address and postcode:	
What is your relationship to them?	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?	

C: About your concern / complaint:

(Please continue your answers to the following questions on a separate sheet(s) if necessary)

C.1: Name of the department / section / service you are complaining about:

C.2: What do you think they did wrong, or failed to do?

C.3: Describe how you personally have suffered or have been affected:

C.4: What do you think should be done to put things right?

C.5: When did you first become aware of the problem?

C.6: Have you already put your concern to the frontline staff responsible for delivering the service? If so, please give brief details of how and when you did so.

C.7: If it is more than 12 months since you first became aware of the problem, please give the reason why you have not complained before now.

(If you have any documents to support your concern/complaint, please attach them with this form.)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

When you have completed this form, please send it to the following address:

Corporate Complaints
EAS
Tredomen Gateway
Ystrad Mynach
Hengoed
CF82 7EH

Or by email: corporatecomplaints@sewaleseas.org.uk