

## **CHAPTER 6: NWIFCA Complaints Procedure**

Our aim is to give all members of the public a good service at all times, but if you do have a complaint we will try to deal with this.

Complaints should be made promptly, and we will not deal with complaints which fall outside a twelve-month time limit from the date of the act or omission about which you are complaining.

Complaints can only be investigated if they are of a specific nature and properly documented with full details of the complaint including dates of the occurrence and names of any staff involved where possible. Anonymous complaints cannot be accepted, and you will need to supply your name, address and telephone number, so that we can contact you to conduct our investigation.

Complaints against other bodies or members of the public cannot be investigated by NWIFCA.

### **Initial Complaint**

1. You may make a complaint by telephone or in writing. This should initially be to the Office Manager at either the Carnforth or Whitehaven offices.
2. They will initially discuss the issue with you by telephone and try to resolve the problem informally. You are asked to be polite, calm and brief when making a telephone complaint, or staff may have to terminate the call. If the matter is resolved to your satisfaction, they will record the outcome, check that you are satisfied with the outcome and record that you are satisfied. You may also wish to make a note of the telephone discussion in writing.
3. If your complaint cannot be resolved by a telephone discussion, or if the Office Manager decides that it is best dealt with by a written complaint then they will request you to make it in writing within a week. Your complaint will normally be acknowledged in writing within 10 working days and you will be advised that the complaint is being investigated.
4. The Office Manager will investigate and consider all aspects of the complaint, obtaining further details from you and NWIFCA staff as necessary. The investigation will aim to understand what has led to the complaint being made and how this can be avoided in the future.
5. The outcome of the investigation will be recorded and you will receive a response in writing notifying you of the result, normally within 20 further working days of acknowledgment of the complaint in writing. You will be advised of any action to be taken by NWIFCA as a result of your complaint.
6. If this does not provide a resolution to the matter, then the complaint will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer.

### **Written complaint to Chief Executive Officer**

1. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you should notify the Chief Executive Officer in writing within 20 working days of the date you were notified

of the outcome. The Chief Executive Officer will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint with 10 working days. Please include the following details:

- Your name and address;
  - Any dates when the subject matter of the complaint occurred
  - The detail of the complaint and why you are not satisfied with the initial outcome; and
  - What you would like to be done about it.
2. Please address your letter to:
- Chief Executive Officer, NWIFCA, 1 Preston Street, Carnforth LA6 1BX
3. If your complaint is against the Chief Executive, or for other reasons it is inappropriate for him to investigate the complaint, the Chairman of NWIFCA will investigate the complaint.
4. The Chief Executive Officer or Chairman of the NWIFCA will normally respond to your complaint in writing within 20 further working days of acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint in writing. They will set out
- The nature and scope of the investigation
  - The conclusion on each complaint and the basis for that conclusion
  - If it is found that you are justified in your complaint, you will be notified of proposals for resolving the complaint

### **Help with complaints**

If you need help to make a complaint you can ask a friend, relative or local Councillor to help you. Or you may wish to be assisted by someone from an organisation such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau. Anyone acting for you has the same rights as you have.

### **Notification of insurers**

Any complaint that involves negligence or a potential claim against professional indemnity insurance is brought to the attention of the insurers as soon as possible by NWIFCA

### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

All conversations and documents relating to the complaint will be treated as confidential and will be disclosed only to the extent that is necessary for the investigation or for legal or insurance purposes. The information you provide will only be held for the purposes of investigation, administration and processing and will not be passed on to third parties except where necessary for legal or insurance purposes.

### **NWIFCA Policy**

As part of our commitment to public accountability we will make a written record of any complaint and retain all documents and correspondence generated by the complaint for a period of six years.

### **If you are still not satisfied**

If you are still unhappy with the outcome of your complaint then you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. You should do this within 12 months of when you first knew about the matter you are complaining about. Write to: Local Government Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH; Tel: 0845 602 1983, email: [advice@lgo.org.uk](mailto:advice@lgo.org.uk)

If your complaint relates to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 or the Data Protection Act 1998, please contact: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF