



PADDLE
CYMRU

Complaints Policy

www.paddlecymru.org.uk

Complaints Policy

Last Review:	February 2026
Next Review:	February 2029

Purpose

We strive to deliver a positive experience for everyone who interacts with Paddle Cymru. If something has not gone as expected, we encourage you to tell us. Every complaint helps us understand where we can strengthen our services and improve how we support our community.

Reporting a Complaint

Before submitting a complaint, please review the guidance below so that your concern can be directed to the most appropriate Paddle Cymru team member (e.g., Safeguarding, Governance/CEO, or Operations) and handled as efficiently as possible.

Complaints should be raised within three months of the issue occurring, or within three months of the point at which you first became aware of the matter.

Complaints relating to Paddle Cymru Events and Competitions

Where a complaint concerns the enforcement or interpretation of competition or event rules, the matter should be referred to the relevant discipline committee. These committees hold responsibility for rule administration and will determine any actions required.

Complaints relating to Paddle Cymru Staff

If your complaint relates to a Paddle Cymru employee, it will be reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer, who oversees all staffing matters and ensures the correct procedures are used. Should your complaint involve the CEO, it will be considered by the Chair of the Board to ensure fairness and independence.

1. Purpose of This Policy

Paddle Cymru is committed to providing excellent service to members, clubs, volunteers, providers, partners, and the public. We recognise that, at times, individuals may wish to raise concerns or make a complaint about our services, decisions, conduct, or the conduct of those acting on our behalf.

This policy explains:

- How to raise a complaint
- What Paddle Cymru will do on receipt of a complaint
- The standards you can expect from us
- How we record, track, and learn from complaints
- How and when complaints may be escalated

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Members of Paddle Cymru
- Parents, carers, and guardians of junior members
- Providers, coaches, clubs, and volunteers acting on behalf of Paddle Cymru
- General public contacting us regarding our activities

This policy does not cover:

- Staff grievances (see the Staff Handbook)
- Whistleblowing concerns (see Whistleblowing Policy)
- Safeguarding concerns (refer these directly to the Lead Safeguarding Officer)
- Disciplinary matters (see Disciplinary Regulations)
- Subject Access Requests (see Data Protection Policies)

Where a complaint crosses into one of these areas, Paddle Cymru will direct it into the correct process.

3. Definition of a Complaint

A *complaint* is an expression of dissatisfaction about:

- A service, programme, or decision
- Conduct of a staff member, volunteer, provider, or representative
- Delays, unfair treatment, or failure to follow policy
- Safety, equity, inclusion, or welfare issues
- Data protection or privacy concerns
- Behaviour or service provided by a club or affiliated organisation

A complaint is **not**:

- A request for general information
- A disagreement with policy that does not involve wrongdoing
- A safeguarding allegation (these follow specific safeguarding procedures)

4. Complaints We Cannot Investigate

Paddle Cymru may not be able to investigate complaints that relate to:

- Matters outside our jurisdiction (e.g., Sport Wales, another NGB, landowners)
- Legal disputes, insurance claims, or issues under police investigation
- Anonymous complaints without enough information to proceed

Where possible, we will signpost individuals to the correct organisation.

4.1 Independent Review (Final Stage)

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation and request a further review:

Your complaint will be reviewed by one or more people who have not been involved in the original consideration.

This could be:

- A member of staff not previously connected to the matter
- An external individual appointed for independence
- A panel of two or more individuals selected by Paddle Cymru to ensure fairness

This reviewer or panel will aim to provide you with a final response within four weeks of the referral. Please note that this decision will be final.

5. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints should be submitted using one of the following routes:

5.1 Online Submission

Via the website: www.paddlecymru.org.uk/contact-us

5.2 Email

Send to: admin@paddlecymru.org.uk. Marked clearly as: **Formal Complaint**

5.3 Post

Paddle Cymru
National White Water Centre
Frongoch
Bala
Gwynedd LL23 7NU

A complaint should include:

- Your name and contact details
- Details of what happened and when
- Who was involved
- Any evidence you wish to provide
- The outcome you are seeking

6. Our Complaints Process

Stage 1 – Acknowledgement (within 5 working days)

We will:

- Confirm we have received your complaint
- Provide a named point of contact
- Log the complaint in the central Complaints Log

Stage 2 – Triage & Allocation (within 5–10 working days)

Your complaint will be categorised:

- Service/Operational
- Behaviour/Conduct
- Membership dispute
- Equity & Fairness
- Health & Safety
- Data Protection / SAR-related
- Safeguarding (redirected to Safeguarding Lead)
- Vexatious (if applicable)

An investigating officer will be assigned.

Stage 3 – Investigation

The investigating officer may:

- Interview relevant individuals
- Review evidence and documentation
- Consult specialist staff (e.g., Safeguarding Lead, DPO)
- Liaise with clubs, providers, or external bodies where relevant

Most complaints are resolved within **20 working days**. If not, a revised timeline will be provided.

Stage 4 – Outcome

You will receive a written response that includes:

- Findings
- Any actions taken
- Any recommendations or improvements
- Whether the complaint is:
 - **Upheld, Partially Upheld, or Not Upheld**

Stage 5 – Escalation

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may escalate the matter to the: **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

The CEO will review the process and outcome and respond within **15 working days**. If you remain dissatisfied, you may escalate to the: **Chair of the Board**

The Board's decision is final.

7. Vexatious or Persistent Complaints

In rare cases where a complainant behaves unreasonably or persistently, Paddle Cymru may apply measures outlined in the **Vexatious Complaints Policy**, including:

- Restricting communication to a single contact
- Limiting communication to set times or formats
- Advising that further contact on a closed matter will not receive a response

These measures are applied proportionately and reviewed regularly.

8. Confidentiality & Data Protection

- All complaints are treated confidentially and only shared on a **need-to-know** basis.
- Information is processed in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Policy.
- Complaints logs are retained securely for a minimum of **3 years** unless safeguarding or legal requirements specify otherwise.

9. Record-Keeping and Learning

Paddle Cymru maintains a central **Complaints Log** that records:

- Category
- Dates of receipt, acknowledgement, and resolution
- Actions taken
- Outcomes
- Any follow up measures

Quarterly reviews identify themes, risks, and learning opportunities. Annual summaries may be reported to the Board.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every **three years**, or earlier if:

- There is a significant organisational change
- Legislation changes
- Trends in complaints indicate the policy needs improvement

11. Contact for Queries

If you have questions about this policy or require support making a complaint, contact:
admin@paddlecymru.org.uk **01678 521199 (10am–3pm)**