## 8.3 COMPLAINTS PROCESS

## To make a complaint about any of the services offered by Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners, please write or email giving your name and address and full details of your complaint to: Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners 27 Lowther Street Whitehaven Cumbria CA28 7DN or Email to: [info@whitehavenhc.org.uk](mailto:info@whitehavenhc.org.uk) Please Note: Complaints made by telephone will not be accepted.

# 8.3.1 Complaints Policy Statement

We at Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners believe that if a customer wishes to make a complaint or register a concern, they should find it easy to do so. Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners’ policy is to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide a better service. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments by customers are taken seriously.

The policy is not designed to apportion blame, to consider the possibility of negligence or to

provide compensation. It does NOT form part of our disciplinary policy.

We at Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners believe that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will lead to an aggravation of problems, customer dissatisfaction and possible litigation. Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners supports the concept that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted out at between just the complainant and Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners.

# 8.3.2 Aim

The aim of Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners is to ensure that its complaints procedure is properly and effectively implemented, and that complainants feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.

# 8.3.3 Goals

* Customers and their representatives are aware of how to complain, and that Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners provides easy to use opportunities for them to register their complaints
* Every written complaint is acknowledged within ten working days
* Investigations into written complaints are held within 28 days
* All complaints are responded to in writing by Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners
* Complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause to both Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners and their customers.

**8.4 Complaints Procedure**

## *Written Complaints*

* When a complaint is received in writing it should be passed on to the manager of the business service concerned, who should record it in the complaints book and send an acknowledgment letter within two working days. The service manager will be the person who deals with the complaint through the process.
* If necessary, further details should be obtained from the complainant. If the complaint is not made by the customer but on the customer’s behalf, then consent of the customer, preferably in writing, must be obtained from the customer.
* A copy of the complaint’s procedure will be given to the customer.
* If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, advice should be sought from a legal advisor. If legal action is taken at this stage any investigation by Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners under the complaint’s procedure should cease immediately.
* Immediately on receipt of the complaint Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners should launch an investigation and within 28 days should be in a position to provide a full explanation to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned.
* If the issues are too complex to complete the investigation within 28 days, the complainant should be informed of any delays.
* If a meeting is arranged the complainant should be advised that they may, if they wish, bring a friend or relative or a representative such as an advocate.
* At the meeting a detailed explanation of the results of the investigation should be given and also an apology if it is deemed appropriate (apologising for what has happened need not be an admission of liability).
* Such a meeting gives Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners the opportunity to show the complainant that the matter has been taken seriously and has been thoroughly investigated.
* After the meeting, or if the complainant does not want a meeting, a written account of the investigation should be sent to the complainant.
* The outcomes of the investigation and the meeting should be recorded on appropriate documentation and any shortcomings in Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners’ procedures should be identified and acted upon.
* Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners’ complaints procedure should be audited by the manager every six months.

## *Training*

All staff should be trained in dealing with, and responding to, complaints. Complaint’s policy training should be included in the induction training for all new staff and in-house training sessions on handling complaints should be conducted at least annually and all relevant staff should attend.