



Members Handbook

2024

A Co-operative approach to safe, quality care under your control and informed by your experience.

'Together we can live life well'

Company limited by guarantee without share-holders

Registered Office: Sension House, Denton Drive, Northwich, CW9 7LU

Company No: 11676038 Care Quality Commission ID: 1-5637274181

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Our Service

Our purpose In terms of the current language in use in social care North-West Care Co-Operative (NWCC) is registered by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as a Domiciliary Care Agency (DCA) providing personal and social “care” to clients who are “in receipt of” its services.

This is not our vision. Rather than a “transactional” relationship, in which the ‘provider’ “cares for” the ‘user’, we seek a “mutual” one as a “community” with ‘members’ (be they ‘users’ or ‘providers’) who “care about”, support and enable each other. Our vision is optimistic. We see our purpose as ‘more than care’ - to enable our members “to live life well”.

We do this by operating along co-operative lines, so that “Together we can live life well”, allowing members to participate in decision making, problem solving, risk management etc. Leadership is distributed and quality assurance and regulatory compliance is not imposed by hierarchical control but achieved through mutual professional respect and shared clarity of purpose. This ‘togetherness’ is at the heart of all we do.

Our Values Over time our Members have identified the values that matter to them. There are four of them and they form the code of ‘togetherness’ that guides us. We know that if we all live by this code, we can deal with or overcome anything.

The four values are:

1. **We are kind** When others need help, we will help.
2. **We are welcoming** We make everyone comfortable enough to ask for help when needed.
3. **We are supportive** We take account of others personal challenges and make reasonable adjustment for them.
4. **We are grateful** We respect that others make adjustment for us, and do not ask for anything unreasonable.

Distributed Responsibility A key characteristic of NWCC is the distribution of leadership and responsibility across our membership. Traditional organisations have hierarchies of managers leading and directing staff through tiers of accountability, using supervision and monitoring arrangements based on vertical control and performance checking.

Whilst NWCC has a Registered Manager (RM) within our model the RM and the membership together are accountable for making sure that legal requirements are met. The RM acts as a mentor to PA Members who together function as a mutually supportive self-managed team. One impact of this is on the relationship between PA Members and Principal Members (their clients). PA Members are responsible for their relationships with Principal Members and the quality and safety of their work. The NWCC Board, the RM, and members work together to develop values; build a

positive, inclusive culture; and set mutual obligations and expectations for how the service works. Members and their wider networks become an active part of this continuous process as soon as they become involved as PA, Principal, or Supporting members.

“Care” & Support “Care” or (as we prefer to describe them) Support Plans co-produced by each Principal their relevant Personal Assistant and Supporting members set out the basis of the relationship between them and how they will work together. The co-production of the Support Plan is closely aligned with our distributed responsibility model. Support agreements are negotiated and flow from explicit shared values. They describe a person’s circumstances, what support is needed, and how it will be created. They set out the risks involved and how they will be shared and managed.

The RM works with members to co-produce policies and expectations about how care and support agreement setting is done. This is set out its Statement of Purpose and supporting protocols. Members are involved in individual agreement setting as needed by individual circumstances.

We think that good care and support agreements are not statements of deficits and time and task focused plans created by professional experts. They fully involve and can be led by people, and include a clear focus on people’s strengths, the networks of support around them, and how both can be fostered and nurtured to bolster people’s independence and dignity and the capacity of communities and networks to support themselves.

Safeguarding NWCC has a legal and professional duty to protect Members from any harm that might be caused by neglect or abuse and provide appropriate safety and protection. We are committed to Safeguarding Principal Members that receive a service from North-West Care Co Operative (NWCC) or any subsidiary or ancillary service and will do so in partnership with the Local Children and Adult Safeguarding Boards.

As well as this commitment our nature as a co-operative community creates additional protective factors by promoting ethical behaviour and providing members with a sense of being valued, listened to, and respected. Listening to the wishes and feelings of Principal Members is embedded in our culture and ensures that the outcomes they seek are at the forefront of service delivery.

Providing ‘Safety and protection’ means minimising any risk of harm to Members. Should any Member disclose a concern or plain simple curiosity about a possible risk of harm they should raise it with the RM. We have deliberately avoided creating a format for ‘reporting’ potential risks or near misses as we want to encourage an ‘open’, ‘curious’ and ‘no blame’ dialogue that is easy to initiate and co productive in nature. Together we can then discuss the risk and determine a way forward.

As consequence of any discussion NWCC has two obligations that Members must be aware of:

1. Regardless of how we decide to proceed, the RM will make a confidential record of the issue raised. This may be particularly relevant if a further concern is raised independently by another member.
2. Although the discussion will be in complete confidence, if we need to act whilst 'confidentiality' will be maintained as far as possible, it will not impede or prevent action, and this should be made clear at the time of the initial disclosure.

As part of their induction, it is explained to our PA Members that our duty to act overrides any obligation to confidentiality. Should another Member disclose 'in confidence' anything that is of 'Safeguarding' concern, **PA Members should explain that they are obliged to discuss the disclosure with the RM** and that action may result.

Risk Assessment Genuine co-production of care and support means honest, open discussions about the risks involved. These risks can be individual or organisational; relate to Principal or PA Members, to the networks around people, to the support team, or to the Co-Operative(s). The RM will keep the management of all kinds of risk under continuous review, including cultural and values-based issues around sharing, and learning from harm and near misses.

Distributed responsibility is designed to ensure that Members have a clear sense of personal responsibility for their work and manage the risks involved. Accepting and holding this sense of personal responsibility works where there is a genuine supportive learning culture where people feel safe to disclose errors and near misses rather than fear blame and reprisal. PA and Principal Members are encouraged to identify and share (with the RM) potential risks at the earliest possible stage, so that appropriate mitigation can be co-produced. Likewise, they are encouraged to share any 'near misses' so that lessons learned from these experiences can be shared with other members. **We have deliberately avoided creating a format for 'reporting' potential risks or near misses as we want to encourage an 'open', 'curious' and 'no blame' dialogue that is easy to initiate and co productive in nature.** The RM will record the outcome of this dialogue for future learning.

An open and honest approach to risk management and to learning from harm and near misses is vital. Our commitment to coproduction of care and support and distributed responsibility makes sharing and learning a hallmark of our approach.

Values Based Recruitment & Qualifications Our recruitment follows a values-based approach. This is based on our guiding co-operative principles and values about how we operate and the behaviour that we expect from members. We aim to recruit Members with personal values that are aligned with NWCC.

The law requires paid carers working for registered services to be ‘suitably qualified, competent, skilled and experienced’ (Regulation 18 of the Regulated Activities Regulations). The law is not explicit about what this means. The care certificate has done much to improve standards in many services and continues to do so. It is referenced by CQC’s guidance to providers about complying with the regulations as how they can meet this requirement. But the care certificate is not an explicit legal requirement, and we will often meet the regulation by other means, with specific reference to how PA Members will gain the knowledge and skills they need to meet the needs of individual members.

In summary the law requires that PA Members must have the knowledge and skills they need to co-produce and provide the personal care and support each Principal Members requires in the specific ways that they need and prefer. This can include pre-existing knowledge, qualifications and skills about specific conditions and circumstances. Capability can also be acquired ‘on the job’ through the active involvement and help of User Members, their networks, Supporting Members, and the Registered Manager. We must be confident that our support service as a whole:

- Can work with people to understand their care and support needs and preferences.
- Knows when it cannot meet some or all their needs and preferences.
- Can match Principal Members with Personal Assistant Members able to co-produce the support they need.
- Can support PA Members who need extra knowledge and skills to acquire them as needed.

Induction, training, knowledge acquisition and developing capability Our vision that “Together we can live life well” takes us beyond “care” and seeks to achieve personal growth and development for all our members where possible. Our approach to risk strives to create a genuine supportive learning culture where people feel safe to disclose errors in order that we can all learn from them, and our commitment to co-production of care and support and distributed responsibility, demonstrates that learning, and developing capability are hallmarks of our co-operative community.

We will support the growth and development of all Members according to their needs and circumstances and enabled by available resources and assets such as the circles of support, mentorship and buddying associated with them. We currently have a wide range of online training provided by ‘Flexibee’, and resources available to members in relation to induction, training, and development. ‘Skills for Care’ is the sector workforce development agency and offers applicable resources and support on its website. For more details members can contact trainingnwcarecoop@gmail.com

Management of Performance, Regulatory Oversight and Supervision The Care Quality Commission assumes no model for how NWCC and its community-based care and support teams, structure and manage their relationships with clients, their networks, other stakeholders, and CQC. They accept that different providers will propose, co-produce, test and develop different approaches.

However, whatever the model in use, the role of NWCC as the “Umbrella Body” and the RM remains the same and we need to show how we exercise our regulatory and other compliance responsibilities. Arrangements for basics such as ensuring appropriate care and support plans are developed, quality monitoring and improvement, receiving and managing feedback and complaints, managing safety, and safeguarding-related expectations need to be clear.

Likewise, PA Members will inevitably need cover from time to time and will also on occasion work with other PA Members in a planned way. We need to ensure that we have reliable approaches to managing absence and safe continuity of service.

And how and by whom regulatory tasks such as notifications to CQC, the Duty of Candour, updates to Statements of Purpose and responding to inspection reports will be managed and undertaken also need to be clearly understood.

‘Supervision’ has a specific meaning in academia and in social work that does not reflect how the word is always used in ordinary daily life. In ordinary terms the word is often associated with top down, traditional systems designed to manage performance and hold employees to account. In our model, the performance relationship is more horizontal involving coaching, mentoring, distributed responsibility, and a shared approach to leadership. There are no formal legal or employment law definitions for this approach, and so we have co-produced and defined our own. The contribution of our ‘PA Coaches’ and the RM in coordinating and enabling this relationship remains critical.

PA Coaching Meetings PA Members are expected to engage in a conversation about their contribution to NWCC **at least once per year**. The conversation will be with a PA Coach, who will cover the elements of the PA Members performance that are essential to delivering safe, caring responsive, effective and well led support. As a ‘coaching’ meeting the conversation is two-way with the PA Coach listening to feedback and suggestions made by the PA Member. Annual attendance at a ‘Coaching Meeting’ is a mandatory requirement, without which a PA Member will not be eligible for their Annual Training Bounty.

Records Keeping meaningful records is an inevitable requirement for a regulated service. With responsibility and leadership distributed within our model, and Principal Members living in their own homes across a wide geography, a digital means of recording, storing and, (where appropriate), sharing information relating to our support is the most suitable option. This avoids the need for any kind of paper record that to be kept up to date and secure, requires central storage that limits accessibility to a distributed membership. We use digital systems that are always accessible to all members if required, but that can allow access controls on individual records where personal data is involved. For recording we use a series of Apps supported by the 'Jotform' platform which allows 'reports to be completed via a smart phone. For storage we use a secure cloud-based system backed up by 'hard' storage.

Member's access to the system is controlled by the RM, who grants it as and where required on a case-by-case basis according to need. This allows information to be both shared and restricted where appropriate.

Daily Record of Support (DROS) Regulation 17 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 requires us to '*maintain securely an accurate, complete and contemporaneous record in respect of each service user, including a record of the care and treatment provided to the service user and of decisions taken in relation to the care and treatment provided*'.

PA Members do this by recording the support that they provide for Principal Members on a Daily Record of Support (DROS) 'App' using JOTFORM which gives us a date/time stamped 'record of support' by session.

Although we use this record to calculate the hours that PAs are paid each month, it is not a 'timesheet' that can be completed at the end of the pay month, it is how we comply with regulation that **requires records to be made 'contemporaneously'** (or as they happen).

The DROS allows photographs to be posted, and we encourage this as photographs involving the Principal Member, can give a sense of the quality of support and the Principal Member's satisfaction from the activities that they are involved in. As these 'records' can be shared safely with 'Supporting Members', eyes other than just those of the Registered Manager are able to judge whether support is 'Safe, Caring, Responsive, Effective and Well Led, which we believe leads to a safer and quality assured service.

WhatsApp Chat We also have a WhatsApp Chat group for all members that can be used for more social purposes We have established some key principles for the use of What's App as follows:

- Do not share information on either system outside of that system or group.
- Access to What's App is controlled by the Chair of the Chester Co-Operative

- Avoid Personal information on What's App where possible
- Keep posts factual (explaining what you have done) do not post to invite comment.

Cost, budgets and how support is funded In most cases our members fund our services through their Personal Health Budget, Direct Payment Budget, or Personal Contribution, but we can also be commissioned directly by a Local Authority or Clinical Commissioning Group.

We work with each member to operate within their budget. Often this is allocated by the Local Authority or Integrated Care Board on a 'time and task' basis with 'support' defined by 'hours per week' rather than by any more quality based outcomes. Based on this and taking account of any other costs required as part of their support we agree with each member the quality outcomes that we can provide within this budget over a full year and break this down into twelve monthly payments.

Members pay this (same) amount in arrears every month. Payment is by electronic bank transfer after receipt of an invoice. We operate a managed account for each member where we record 'actual' support costs against budget each month. Where 'actual' costs are below budget, we carry forward the balance to allow members to spend on additional support. 'Actual' costs are rarely above budget, and if they are there is usually a natural compensating adjustment the next month, but if they continue above budget, we agree with members to further compensating adjustments or to make additional contributions.

We retain copies of monthly invoices and ongoing statement of account enabling us to provide full documentation for audit purposes.

We send each Member via email an 'Our Support Explained' letter, that details the budget, the monthly payment and how this is calculated, and a template copy of this is at Appendix 3.

Our contract of Employment

Personal Assistants are employed by North-West Care Co-Operative (NWCC).

Co-Operative Membership Personal Assistants are “PA Members” of the Co-Operative.

All ‘Members’ must abide by the rules of the Co-Operative and as an ‘PA Member’ these rules may be in addition to NWCC terms and conditions of employment. Failure to abide by the rules of the Co-Operative, may result in the Co-Operative suspending their membership.

If a PA Member ceases to be a member of the Co-Operative, NWCC will review their membership and the impact upon their employment considered. If a PA Member’s employment with NWCC terminates, their Co-Operative membership also terminates.

Start Date Each Personal Assistants’ start date is outlined on their payslip.

Probationary Period There is a probationary period of six months for new PA Members. During this time should the PA Member or NWCC decide that they are unsuited to working together, employment may be terminated with one weeks’ notice. This arrangement allows both parties to identify and address any problems associated with their employment during this period, and if resolution is unsuccessful go their separate ways with minimum fuss. The Registered Manager will confirm the end of the probationary period in writing.

Employment PA Members are required to carry-out those duties outlined in their job description, which forms part of their contract of employment. From time to time, PA Members may be required to undertake other duties in accordance with the needs of the business. They may also be expected to participate in the general management and administration of the Co-Operative.

Place of employment A PA Members’ place of employment shall be at the Principal Member’s home or such other places as the Principal Member’s Support Plan may require.

Hours of work Each year as of 31st December, we will calculate PA Member’s ‘contracted’ hours for the forth coming leave year by taking the sum of support (not leave) hours that they have claimed since 1st January or their start date (whichever is the later) and dividing by 52. We will also calculate the ‘average length of shift’ for each PA Member. Each month thereafter PA Members will be paid these contracted hours as a minimum plus any additional hours that they have worked. Contracted hours will be reviewed periodically throughout the year and should a PA Member working consistently less than their contracted hours an adjustment may be made.

Recording Hours Worked PA Members should record the hours that they have worked or taken as leave as they complete them by using our 'Daily Record of Support' (DROS) App. The record can be edited or updated retrospectively, if necessary, but will be locked and removed after 17th of each month to process for payroll. Should a PA Member inadvertently fail to record some hours for payment that month, they can make a request via the Registered Manager for these hours to be included and if agreed an adjustment will be made to their payment for the next month. Requests made over two months after the date for which the hours are claimed will not be considered.

Overtime Over-time shall be paid at the ordinary rate of pay per hour for each hour worked over your normal full time working week.

Bank Holidays For the purposes of this guidance, where the Christmas, Boxing and/or New Year's 'celebration' day(s) fall at the weekend and compensating 'Bank Holidays' are created during the week, both the 'celebration' days and the compensating 'Bank Holidays' will be treated as 'Bank Holidays'. A list of the days that NWCC will treat as Bank Holidays in this way will be published each year at Appendix A.

NWCC recognises the wellbeing value of Bank Holidays as opportunities to spend off work with friends, family or engaged in recreational activity, and where possible PA Members are encouraged to enjoy them for these purposes. To this end we will pay PA Members the 'average length of shift' for each Bank Holiday listed at Appendix A. Where daily support is not essential, PA Members whose support falls on a Bank Holiday are encouraged to arrange with the relevant Principal Member to move their support to another day so that the PA may enjoy this paid holiday. Should a PA Member be required to work on a Bank Holiday (because the Principal Member requires support daily or is not willing/able to rearrange support to another day), they will be paid for the *actual* hours that they work in addition to the Bank Holiday payment.

Remuneration and benefits Each PA Member's rate of pay, contracted hours and average shift length is outlined in their individual PA Contract Summary (see Appendix 2) that is produced annually as of 31st December. Rates of pay are reviewed annually. NWCC is authorised to deduct any sums due to it from your salary or any other sums due to you from the co-operative.

Payment will be made by electronic bank transfer monthly in partial arrears on or about 24th of each month. You will receive written notification each pay day of the amount of your gross pay and the nature and amount of all deductions. NWCC reserves the right to vary the method of payment and will give you a suitable period of notice before doing so.

Expenses and allowances Expenses that Members incur on the co-operative's behalf, will be reimbursed provided that the expenditure has been authorised using agreed procedures.

Annual Leave and payment for Leave

The leave year runs from 1st January to 31st December. The leave entitlement is 5.6 weeks plus the Bank Holidays agreed at Appendix 1, with a 'week' being the PA Members 'contracted hours' calculated as described under 'Hours of Work' above.

PA Members may take leave only at times convenient to the co-operative. To apply they should use the 'Leave' App on Jotform. Should a PA Member not use all their annual leave by 31st December, they will be paid up to one week's worth of any leave outstanding, with payment made on the next payday 24th January. Alternatively, a PA Member may carry forward into the new leave year up to one week's leave that has not been taken. This can only be done with the written agreement of the RM and requests to carry forward leave must be made by 17th January.

Leave accrues daily, and if a PA Member leaves the employment of NWCC with some leave outstanding, they will be paid on their last day of employment the balance of their accrued pro rata but not taken. Any leave taken that exceeds their pro rata entitlement will be deducted from their final salary payment.

Pensions NEST is the designated pension scheme. NWCC will contribute up to 3% of your salary. PA Members may contribute up to 5% of their salary. They may be auto enrolled into the pension scheme at any time. NWCC reserves the right to withdraw, amend or replace pension provision at any time.

Absence due to sickness or injury If a PA Member is unable to attend work due to sickness or injury, they must advise the RM by using the relevant App of the reason for non-attendance by 9.30 am on the first working day of absence. On the PA Members return to work, PA Coaches will complete a 'Return to Work' record using an App on Jotform, with the PA Member. Sickness or injury absence exceeding seven days must be covered by a doctor's certificate/fit note. Further doctor's certificates/fit notes must be received by NWCC, covering the complete period of absence. Failure to comply with this absence procedure may result in the withdrawal of sick pay and/or disciplinary action.

Sick Pay If a PA Member is absent from work for four or more days by reason of sickness or injury, they are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). Payment thereafter will be at the discretion of NWCC. Such pay entitlement does not guarantee the continuation of your employment during this period.

NWCC will manage sickness absence with the PA Member through a series of informal conversations both during and following the period of absence. This is to understand the nature of the absence and agree how best to support the PA Member on their return to work. We want to be able ensure the PA Member is well enough to be back at work and to minimise the risk of future absences.

This also applies to ill health that hasn't yet resulted in absence. NWCC may be able to offer preventative measures that can reduce the impact of emerging ill health. If any PA Member experiences any ill-health, they should talk honestly and openly with their PA Coach so that we can support them and hopefully avoid absence in the future. Repeated absence reaching the following thresholds will be managed through a more formal process:

For Short term absence 4 *instances* of sickness in a 12-month period or 10 *days* of sickness in 12-month period

Long term absence 4 weeks of *continued sickness absence* in a 12 Month Period.

If a PA Member exceeds on of these thresholds you will be required to attend a formal meeting. This to discuss your absence, explore the reasons for it, identify any support that can be offered and set goals for improvement. The 12-month qualifying period will restart and NWCC will work with the PA Member to reach the agreed goals.

Maternity, Paternity, Adoption & Parental Leave Provisions are outlined in (appendix to follow).

Training NWCC offers a wide range of training through 'Flexibee' (an online training provider) as well as ad hoc in person training that is bespoke for PA Members supporting Principal Members with specific support needs. Each training year (1st April to 31st March) NWCC will specify around seven 'Flexibee' courses as '**mandatory**' training that must be completed by PA Members within the year to remain current and eligible to provide support. Completion of these courses together with attendance at an annual 'PA Coaching Meeting' will allow PA Members to claim an Annual Training Bounty (bonus). Failure to complete this training will restrict PA Members from providing 'regulated services' and will lead to performance management action.

Disciplinary & Grievance Procedure The Grievance Procedures is at Appendix 4

Confidentiality PA Members must not reveal to any unauthorised person or use for their own advantage any information of a confidential nature relating to the business, finances, and affairs of NWCC or their parent co-operative.

Health & Safety NWCC recognises its obligations under the Health and Safety Legislation and PA Members are expected to follow that policy. This information is provided by means of a statement displayed [on the website](#).

Trade Union NWCC does not recognise any specific trade union as the trade union representing the interests of its Personal Assistants.

Other Employment If a PA Member wishes to undertake other paid work whilst an employee of NWCC, they must seek approval from the RM.


Notice periods PA Members wishing to leave employment must give 2 weeks' notice in writing to the RM.

Once the probationary period is completed, save in cases of gross misconduct, this contract may be terminated at any time according to the following periods of notice:

1. One week for employees with continuous service from one week to two years.
2. Thereafter, one additional week's notice for each year of continuous employment (up to a maximum of 12 weeks' notice).

NWCC reserves the option to pay PA Members a payment equal to the remuneration due for the relevant period of notice rather than requiring them to work their notice period but is not obliged to do so.

NWCC reserves the right to require PA Members not to attend the workplace during their notice period. The contract of employment will remain in force during this period and Personal Assistants are not permitted to take up employment elsewhere during this period.

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Bank Holiday Arrangements 2025

There is no legal requirement for employers to treat Bank Holidays as anything other than a normal working day.


The convention amongst ethical employers is that Bank Holidays are treated as non-working days on which employees can enjoy down time. Where the needs of the business demand that employees work, they are compensated for this by being paid at an enhanced rate.

North-West Care Co-Operative adheres to this convention within the following parameters:

1. Only the days specified below are treated as Bank Holidays.
2. Where the Principal Member requires support seven days a week, Personal Assistants rostered to work on one of these specified days are entitled to their Bank Holiday payment in addition to the hours that they work.
3. Where the Principal Member does not require support seven days a week, and their routine means that support falls on one of these specified days, it should be rescheduled by mutual agreement to another day to allow the Personal Assistant(s) to enjoy the down time afforded by a Bank Holiday. No compensating payment will be made.
4. In 2025 the days that North-West Care Co-Operative will treat as Bank holidays are as follows:
 - a. 01/01/25 - New Year's Day (Celebratory Day)

- b. 18/04/25 – Good Friday (Celebratory Day)
- c. 21/04/25 – Easter Monday (Celebratory Day)
- d. 05/05/25 – Early May Bank Holiday
- e. 26/05/25 – Late May (Spring) Bank Holiday
- f. 25/08/25 – August Bank Holiday
- g. 25/12/25 – Christmas Day (Celebratory Day)
- h. 26/12/24 – Boxing Day (Celebratory Day)

Summary The purpose of a Bank holiday is to allow employees additional down time. Whilst those Personal Assistants required to work on these days will be compensated, where possible Bank Holidays should be treated as down time and work rescheduled.

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Personal Assistant Member Contract Summary for:

This summary is for the leave year **2024-25** that runs from **01/04/2024** to **31/12/2024**

You joined us on _____ and complete(d) your probation on _____

Your contracted hours are: **0** hours per week, and give you **0** hours annual leave this year

You may carry forward **0** hours from last year giving you **0** hours Annual Leave in total

During this year there are **6** Bank Holidays, and you will be paid for these as they occur

Registered Manager's signature: (on behalf of NWCC)

John Roberts

Date 01/04/2024

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Our Support Explained for: ABCDEFG

I write to outline the costs and administration of our support arrangements.

Your Budget

My understanding is that you have a budget that breaks down as follows:

You are funded for X hours per week. At a rate of Y per hour. That is a payment of Z every week or AA every four weeks, or BB per month and CC per year

Our Costs

As the employer of your Personal Assistant(s) we pay them DD per hour. As well as their support we also pay our ethical and statutory obligations (such as amounts to cover paid leave, statutory contributions etc). We also need to cover our costs as an employer, and as a 'company limited by guarantee' do so on a not-for-profit basis.

We pay Personal Assistants every month on 24th of each month - or if 24th falls on a weekend the preceding Friday. The pay month runs from 18th of one month to 17th of the next.

Your Personal Assistants record the hours that they work, as they are worked, on our 'Daily Record of Support (DROS) App'. We check that the hours & mileage claimed is consistent with our estimates for that month and then process them through payroll for payment into your Personal Assistants bank account electronically on 24th.

How You pay Us

Direct Payments are usually paid four-weekly (with thirteen payments per year), but we pay Personal Assistants and charge you monthly (with twelve larger payments per year). To assure yourself that our charges are within your budget you may wish to compare the 'four-weekly' cost given above with the income arriving in your account.

Starting from EE you can anticipate a monthly charge of BB. Remember that this is a monthly payment equivalent to AA every four weeks. So, if your four weekly Direct Payment from the Council matches or exceeds AA you will be within budget.

We will invoice you on or around 25th of each month. We ask that you pay by electronic bank transfer and our bank details are:

Bank/branch: *Intentionally left blank*
Sort Code: *Intentionally left blank*
Account Number: *Intentionally left blank*

During the year we monitor the hours and mileage that you have used and your payments as an account. If you are using less hours than your budget allows, your account will show a surplus that you can use for more support or to offset other costs (see below under expenses). If you are using more hours than your budget allows, we will ask that we adjust the amount that you pay or that you use less hours for the remainder of the year to compensate. We will discuss this with you in good time.

Expenses

We recruit Personal Assistants who are able and insured to transport members in their own vehicles as part of their support. We pay mileage at 45p per mile for these journeys. This is an additional cost to the support provided. Mileage can be shown separately and whilst you can pay us from your Direct Payment account, your Direct Payment provider may ask to recover this amount from you by means of a personal contribution.

We can management payment for other expenses such as maintenance of equipment or activities *if these are agreed within your support package* or privately funded by you.

All other expenses (cost of admission to venues or refreshment when out with members) is at your discretion and paid directly by you at the time.

Probationary & Notice Period

We operate a six-month probationary period in which either the new Member or North-West Care Co Operative (NWCC) can withdraw from the agreed support arrangement without penalty if they feel that being part of NWCC is not suitable for them.

After this period should either party wish to with-draw from the agreed support they are expected to give the other party **two months'** notice.

Based on your start date the six-month probationary period will end on GG

Hopefully, this all makes sense to you. If you have any questions, please give me a call on 01606 331853 or email to nwcarecoop@gmail.com. Otherwise, I would anticipate processing your full support costs from HH and you receiving your invoice soon after.

With best wishes

John Roberts

John Roberts

Registered Manager

North-West Care Co-Operative

 <p>North West Care Co-Operative</p>	<p><i>'A Co-operative approach to safe, quality care, under your control and informed by your experience'</i> <i>'Together we can live life well'</i></p> <p>Company limited by guarantee without share-holders Registered Office: Sension House, Denton Drive, Northwich, CW9 7LU Company No: 11676038 Care Quality Commission ID: 1-5637274181 Email: nwcarecoop@gmail.com Telephone: 01606 331853 Website: nwcarecoop.co.uk</p>
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Our Operating Agreement with You

We are a co-productive organisation that aims is to work with you 'to live life well'. With maturity and give and take on both sides we believe that there is no limit to how well we can help you to live your life.

Ask us, talk to us -about anything that you wish to do, or change or improve. We promise to respond openly and honestly. If we can do what you ask without contravening the law or regulation we will try to. In return we ask you to respect if/when we say 'No'.

Our Values

This is the code that guides all our members (Principal, Supporting and Personal Assistant). If we all live by it, we can deal with or overcome anything.

1. **We are kind** When others need help, we will help.
2. **We are welcoming** We make everyone comfortable enough to ask for help when needed.
3. **We are supportive** We take account of Member's personal challenges and make reasonable adjustment for them.
4. **We are grateful** We accept that reasonable adjustment is made to support us and do not ask for anything unreasonable.


Things that we will do

1. **We will recruit your PAs with you.** We will identify people who we think will be a good match for you, but you will have the final say before they are recruited. Likewise, if you identify people who might be suitable, we will have to agree that they meet our standards to employ them.
2. **PAs need to meet & comply with our quality standards.** We will work with any PAs that you may have previously employed to achieve this - but it is non-negotiable. If you have any specific service needs, we will try to meet them.
3. **We pay, train and insure, your PAs and manage their hours and Annual Leave** (and any associated cover requirements). We are responsible for their terms and conditions of employment. Talk to us if you need to adjust shifts at any time, but we will set rotas in agreement with you.
4. **We have a six-month probationary period** in which if you or we feel that working together is not working out, we can mutually agree to go our separate ways.
5. **We are a 'community'.** Much of what we offer depends on sharing experience, knowledge and resource with others. We are fundamentally 'social' in nature. Whilst there is no obligation for Members to socialise with each other, the greatest benefits of our community can be found from the social interaction that it offers.
6. **We will try to provide cover** If you require support 24/7, we will build a team of PAs around you large enough to give you that support and provide cover for each other for leave or sickness. If you require support for a few hours per week on different days, we will try to provide cover for your PA or PAs leave or sickness. This will often depend on how much notice we have and how long the absence is for. For a one-off absence, Members will often prefer to reschedule that day's support to another day. We encourage you to meet other PAs in our community as they may provide cover for your PA's leave or sickness.

This is why we encourage you to meet other PAs in our community as they are the ones who may provide cover for your PA's leave or sickness.

Things that we will not do

1. **We are not a 'Payroll Service'** We employ and have regulatory responsibility for your PAs. Whilst we will allow you to direct their day-to-day support for you (if your direction is legal and safe), we retain overall responsibility for them.
2. **We do not operate like a Domiciliary Care Agency (DCA).** We 'match' your PAs to you and your needs, according to their skills and availability. There is a 'mutuality' about this. If you require support 24/7, we will provide a rota of PAs able to deliver this, but when each PA works on that rota will reflect their availability. If you require support for a few hours per week on different days, we will provide a PA or PAs to deliver this at times and for a duration that is mutually agreed, but that may need to reflect the PAs availability.

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Complaints Procedure

North-West Care Co-Operatives (NWCC) complaint procedure has been created to meet general standards and requirements and complies with standard compliant handling procedures, including the Information Commissioner's Service (ICO) regulations.

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that all complaints, either written or verbal, are handled in a consistent and regulated manner and that further complaint incidents are mitigated and where possible, prevented. Where anyone has cause to complain, the complaints handling procedure will be followed in every instance and a record will be made of the complaint nature and details to help improve our services and reduce the occurrence of similar complaints.

Purpose NWCC is committed to delivering a fair, open and clear process for complaints and ensure a satisfactory outcome for anyone raising a complaint. We provide thorough staff training in our internal complaint handling procedures and support our staff in how to handle complaint situations in a face-to-face, written and/or telephone environment.

Scope This procedure applies to all NWCC members and pertains to the processing of personal information. Adherence is mandatory and non-compliance could lead to disciplinary action.

Objectives For the purposes of this policy, a complaint is defined as **any contact whereby a negative communication or outcome has occurred**. The complainant does not have to formally address their communication as an official complaint or to request a response for NWCC to treat the incident as a complaint and to follow the procedure.

Our objectives for internal complaint handling are to: -

- Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use.
- Ensure that our complaints procedure is fully accessible.
- Ensure that everyone at NWCC knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- Ensure that all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- Gather information that helps us to improve what we do and how we do it.
- Ensure that the Data Protection Officer (*or appointed person*) is involved in any complaints relating to personal data.

Our objectives for the complaint handling process are:

- Complaints are investigated and responded to within 4 weeks.
- Complainants will be sent a copy of the Complaints Procedure along with any relevant or mandatory consumer leaflet (*i.e. ICO*).
- Responses will be provided in writing (unless the complainant makes a specific request for an alternate form of communication, which will be provided in addition to the written format)
- The procedure will be available via our website as well as upon written and/or verbal request.
- Complaints will be investigated by a trained member of staff and a full outcome summary provided to the Board.
- Records will be used to revise company procedures and to improve communication and business practices where applicable.
- Complainants are advised of their rights and provided with any relevant right to refer/lodge the complaint and the applicable contact details (*i.e. the ICO*)

Raising a complaint. Anyone wishing to make a complaint will be provided a copy of the Complaints Procedure either by a link to the website or by email in a pdf format and will be asked to raise their complaint in writing as soon as possible after the incident.

NOTE: Complaints are to be raised in writing, however verbal complaints will be accepted and dealt with as per the same procedures.

If a complaint is made by telephone, we will record details of the complaint and attempt to resolve it there and then. If that is not possible the details of the complaint will be passed to the Registered Manager (RM) and the complainant given an indication of when the RM will contact them, which should be as soon as reasonably possible.

Data Protection related complaints. Where a complaint is related to the processing of personal data, this policy ensures that the Company complies with the data protection laws and notification requirements.

Every individual has the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority where they consider that the processing of personal data relating to them infringes the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) or we have breaches data protection law. All individuals using our services and those employed by us are notified of this right via our Privacy Notice, in our complaint handling procedures and in our information disclosures.

The supervisory authority with which the complaint has been lodged, is responsible for informing the complainant on the progress and the outcome of the complaint, including the possibility of a judicial remedy where the supervisory authority does not handle a complaint or does not inform the data subject within three months on the progress or outcome of the complaint lodged.

Informal complaint resolution (Stage One). NWCC considers and responds to all complaints and issues, no matter how they are raised or what they refer to. Some issues and complaints we can resolve immediately or within a 5-working day timeframe and are referred to as *informal complaints*. Such instances are where an investigation is not required because the nature of the complaint is clear, and a resolution can be obtained without further review of the facts. Where we resolve a complaint within the timeframe, the details are still logged on our complaint register, and the complainant is still informed of their rights.

NWCC takes every opportunity to resolve complaints at the first initial point of contact where feasible and possible. Informal resolution is always attempted where the issues raised are straightforward and potentially easily resolved, requiring little or no investigation. Most face to face and telephone issues can be resolved in this manner, however the complainant is always offered the option of making the complaint formal if the resolution is not to their satisfaction.

Where an informal complaint is received, it is acceptable for the point of contact or addressed employee to attempt to resolve the issue without involving the RM. However, any issue relating to data protection infringes or breaches, no matter how small or informal, are always brought to the attention of the RM in their capacity as Data Protection Officer.

Frontline staff are trained to deal with basic issues and informal complaint resolution and are aware of their obligations and the subsequent reporting lines. Such employees are equipped to attempt to resolve a complaint relevant to their area of service or expertise, wherever possible.

Timeframe for informal resolution. We aim to resolve informal complaints immediately, or at least within the first 24-hours. Such complaints and issues will have a quick, but informative response and do not need to have an investigation or enter the formal complaint process.

No matter how small or informal the complaint, if a satisfactory resolution has not been achieved within 5 working days of the complaint being raised or identified, the issue is passed to the RM to enter the formal complaint process.

Formal complaint resolution (Stage Two). Whilst we take every opportunity to resolve complaints informally at the first initial point of contact, this is not always possible, and it may be necessary to deal with complaint formally.

All employees are provided with clear guidelines of when a complaint is formal and requires an appropriate investigation by the Registered Manager. An investigation must be completed when:

- The complainant has requested such an investigation.
- The complaint involves any type of personal data issue.
- The informal complaint resolution stage failed.
- There is a conflict of interest between the complainant and an employee.
- The issues are complex and require an investigation.
- The complaint represents a high or serious risk to NWCC.
- The facts are unclear, or the complaint will require more time to resolve
- There has been any media contact or attention.
- Child protection issues are involved.
- The issues do or may affect more customers (*whether identified or not*).

Responding to a formal complaint. Where an official complaint has been received or the informal complaint was unable to be resolved at the frontline point of contact, a written acknowledgement is sent to the customer within 5 working days. The response should detail the complaint handling procedure and provide approximate timelines and expectations for the investigation and future responses.

The RM is the only staff member who should respond to customers regarding their complaints.

Investigating the formal complaint. The RM will assign an investigator who will gather all necessary documents, recordings and information to make an independent review of the incident.

If internal interviews are to be conducted, notes will be taken and a copy written up and signed by the interviewer and interviewee prior to them being added to the complaint history.

All investigations must take place with 20 days of the initial complaint being received so that a final response (*decision letter*) can be sent to the customer within our designated 28 days period.

Investigations must utilise all the facts and any previous, related information to produce an unbiased outcome and an expected course of action. A complaint reference should be assigned and all documents relevant to the complaint should have the referenced written on them for continuity.

The reference will also be added to the 'Risks, Issues & Complaints Register' so that complaint and document can be audited and traced back in the future.

Outcome Letters After the complaint has been investigated in full and an outcome and action decision has been reached, the investigator will draft a response letter for the RM to send to the complainant explaining their findings and decision regarding any action(s) to be taken. The decision letter must:

- Contain enough information to assure complainants that their complaint has been taken seriously; details must be included as far as possible of action taken to prevent a recurrence of the situation complained about.
- Inform complainants of their right to ask for a review of the investigation if they are not satisfied with the outcome. Details of how to do this must be provided.

Appeal

Complainants have a right to appeal the findings of the Formal Investigation. This is not a right to a 'second opinion' on the investigation, and for an appeal to be upheld you will have to provide evidence to indicate that:

1. The investigation has failed to consider some significant evidence and is 'unfair', or

2. The Complaints Procedure has not been adhered to.

If you wish to appeal, you must inform the RM in writing within one week or five working days (whichever is longer). They will arrange for another investigator untainted by prior knowledge of the Complaint to arrange an Appeal Meeting with you in which you can explain the grounds for your appeal. You will have the right to be accompanied by a friend, fellow employee or trade union official at this meeting.

The RM (or nominated investigator) will then consider your appeal, making any other enquiries as may be required to confirm any matters of fact.


If your appeal is not upheld, you will be informed in writing in the form of an Appeal Outcome letter as soon as reasonably possible. The outcome letter will state:

1. Whether the appeal has been upheld or denied.
2. In simple terms (a line or two) why it has been upheld or denied
3. That this decision is final and concludes the NWCC Complaints Process.

If your appeal is upheld it will be referred to the Chair of the Board of NWCC, who will review the investigation outcomes in the light of the appeal findings. If there has been a substantial breach of the Complaints Procedure or a lack of fairness they may direct a second investigation, to be carried out by someone untainted by the initial investigation.

The Board's response (including the outcome of any further investigation) will be in writing in the form of a further outcome letter signed by the Chair of the Board that we aim to send within 8 weeks of the date of the Outcome Letter that concluded the formal investigation.

Patterns and Analysis The 'Risks, Issues & Complaints Register' is reviewed regularly by the RM to identify any patterns or reoccurring issues. NWCC are committed to improving performance, services and functions and will use learning from complaint records and the investigation process to do this. Where improvements can be identified, we will implement them as soon as possible.

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Disciplinary Procedure (Misconduct and Capability/Performance) - PA Members Only

Understanding the options

Our disciplinary procedure is a formal way to deal with an employee's:

- a. 'misconduct' (unacceptable or improper behaviour)
- b. 'capability' (performance)

Before commencing with this procedure, NWCC will first explore whether the problem can be resolved in an informal way as this will often be the quickest and easiest solution. We will do this by:

1. Engaging privately with the PA Member and any others involved to listen to their point of view and agree improvements to be made.
2. If it is a capability or performance issue these improvements will be recorded as part of a training or development plan.

'Capability' or 'Performance' Although covered by this procedure, 'Capability' or 'Performance' is about a PA Members' ability to do the job and is *not* misconduct. However, should a PA Member fail to engage with a training or development plan designed to improve their performance this may constitute misconduct.

'Misconduct' This is when a PA Members behaviour breaks NWCC rules. Examples include bullying, harassment 'insubordination' and being absent without permission. Misconduct' can occur outside the workplace - for example, where a PA Member's behaviour at the Christmas party may reflect badly on NWCC. The investigation of this alleged 'misconduct' will need to evidence its negative effect on NWCC.

'Gross Misconduct' This is when the alleged 'misconduct' has serious effects. Examples include fraud, physical violence. 'gross negligence' (serious lack of care to their duties or other people) and serious insubordination, (refusing to take lawful and reasonable orders from a supervisor). For a finding of 'gross misconduct' the PA Member may be dismissed without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

'Following a fair procedure' For both 'Capability' or 'Performance' and 'Misconduct' if we have been unable to resolve the issue informally NWCC will initiate the formal procedure. We will write to the PA Member to explain this, including information about the alleged misconduct or poor performance, any need to investigate further, and the possible consequences.

Where the investigation shows that there is a case for the PA Member to answer, NWCC will write inviting them to a 'hearing' by a disciplinary panel. We will explain the alleged misconduct or performance issue, the evidence from the investigation any other information that we plan to share, the time and location of the hearing, the PA Member's right to be accompanied to the hearing by someone that they work with or a Trade Union representative, and its possible outcomes.

The 'hearing' This is the chance for both the PA Member and NWCC to state their case. NWCC, The PA Member and any companion should make every effort to attend. NWCC will explain the employee's alleged misconduct or performance issue and go through the evidence of this. The PA Member will be given the opportunity to answer any allegations and ask questions of the investigation. They may show any evidence that they have, and (with reasonable notice) may call any relevant witnesses. The PA Members companion may speak for them at the hearing - setting out their case, respond on their behalf to any points made, they may confer with them at any time, take notes for them and sum up their case at the end of the hearing. NWCC may allow the companion to answer questions on behalf of the PA Member, but we are not obliged to do so.

Once both parties have concluded their submissions the meeting will be adjourned, for the panel to deliberate on its findings. A time (and/or date) will be given for when the panel will share its findings. This might be later that day, or on another day depending upon the deliberations required. Findings will be confirmed in writing either at the time that they are shared, or (if given in person) as soon as possible afterwards.

Wellbeing Going through a disciplinary procedure can be very stressful for all parties involved and NWCC will make reasonable adjustments that take account of the wellbeing and mental health of all parties so that the process can be completed with the minimum of stress. If the PA Member is absent or off sick NWCC will pause the disciplinary procedure until they return to work. If the PA Member remains unable or unwilling to attend the hearing in person NWCC will seek video, audio or written representation that can be made without attending the hearing. If the PA Member is unable or unwilling to do this the hearing will continue using the available evidence and a decision made in the PA Member's absence.

Deciding the outcome After following a fair disciplinary procedure, NWCC will determine the outcome based on the following:

1. Findings from the investigation and hearing
2. What is fair and reasonable
3. Any precedent (what NWCC has done in any similar cases before)

Outcome other than dismissal NWCC will give the PA Member a written warning containing specific goals and timeframes for improvement. If the PA Members conduct or performance does not improve in the timeframe set, NWCC will repeat the disciplinary procedure until improvements are made or until dismissal is the only fair and reasonable option.

Outcome of 'no misconduct' or 'under-performance'. NWCC will end the disciplinary procedure. We will talk privately with the PA Member and any others involved to assure them that there is no longer anything to worry about and to allow the PA Member to get back to work as normal. We will It's a good idea for the employer to keep a note of how they carried out the procedure for future reference

Recording No matter what the outcome, NWCC will keep a confidential written record to help with any questions or similar cases in the future. When giving a reference for the PA Member NWCC may have to give information about the disciplinary outcome.

Appeal You have a right to appeal the findings of the Disciplinary Panel. This is not a right to a 'second opinion' on the investigation, and for an appeal to be upheld you will have to provide evidence to indicate that:

1. The outcome is too severe
2. Any stage of the disciplinary procedure was wrong or unfair

If you wish to appeal, you must inform the RM in writing within one week or five working days (whichever is longer). They will arrange for another investigator untainted by prior knowledge of the Misconduct to arrange an Appeal Meeting with you in which you can explain the grounds for your appeal. You will have the right to be accompanied by a friend, fellow employee or trade union official at this meeting.


The nominated investigator will then consider your appeal, making any other enquiries as may be required to confirm any matters of fact.

If your appeal is not upheld, you will be informed in writing in the form of an Appeal Outcome letter as soon as reasonably possible. The outcome letter will state:

1. Whether the appeal has been upheld or denied.
2. In simple terms (a line or two) why it has been upheld or denied
3. That this decision is final and concludes the NWCC Grievance Process.

If your appeal is upheld it will be referred to the Chair of the Board of NWCC, who will review the outcomes in the light of the appeal findings. If any of these were unfair or there was a substantial breach of the Disciplinary Procedure, they may direct that a second Disciplinary Panel convene to reassess the alleged misconduct.

The Board's response (including the outcome of any further investigation) will be in writing in the form of a further outcome letter signed by the Chair of the Board that we aim to send within 8 weeks of the date of the Outcome Letter that concluded the formal investigation.

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Grievance Procedure (PA Members Only)

This procedure aligns with the Complaints Policy with a similar three stage methodology but is specifically for PA Members.

Informal Resolution NWCC aims to be responsive to 'concerns' raised by Members and as a PA Member and if you are unhappy with something affecting you at work you are encouraged to raise this with your PA Coach (Supervisor). If your concern is about your PA Coach then you should raise your concern with the RM. If your concern is about the RM, then you should raise your concern with the CEO of Disability Positive who is an NWCC Board Member and can be contacted on 01606 331853. In all cases it is important that you raise your concerns as soon as reasonably possible. This allows us to help resolve the issue before it becomes any more of a problem to you or anyone else then it needs to be.

Within our open and co-productive culture most concerns can be dealt with quickly and informally by mutual agreement between the different parties involved. When you raise your concern part of the initial discussion will be to identify whether an informal and mutually acceptable resolution might be possible. This may not be possible for two reasons:

1. The parties involved do not or are clearly not likely to consent to such a resolution.
2. Your concern may involve potential misconduct by another Member that could require disciplinary action.

In such cases a formal investigation and resolution will be necessary.

Formal Investigation and Resolution Where an informal resolution is not appropriate or possible your 'concern' will be treated as a formal 'Grievance' and investigated and dealt with according to the following process:

1. **Outline your grievance to the RM in writing.** This only needs to include sufficient relevant information to allow the RM to consider any other action that might need to be initiated alongside the investigation (such as a Safeguarding referral or disciplinary action), who to appoint to investigate the grievance, and to have some understanding of the grievance prior to arranging the 'Grievance Meeting' at Stage 2. We aim to acknowledge receipt of your grievance and request your availability for a Grievance Meeting within 5 working days.
2. **Grievance Meeting** The RM will arrange a meeting with you so that you can discuss the issue in detail and identify how it might be resolved. You will have the right to be accompanied by a friend, fellow employee or trade union official. The purpose of the meeting is to give you the best possible opportunity to express your grievance and have an open and honest discussion about the options for resolution. As such any reasonable adjustments necessary to facilitate this will be made.
3. **Investigation** The RM (or nominated investigator) will consider what you have said during the Grievance Meeting. Where the grievance arises solely out of an issue of process (for example where a process is applied in a way that you feel is unfair), they may be able to deal with the matter immediately. Where the grievance involves an allegation against another party, this will almost inevitably require the RM (or nominated investigator) to conduct a further investigation, as 'due process' would require the allegation to be put to the other party for their response. We aim to complete the investigation and notify you in writing of its findings in the form of an 'Outcome Letter' within 28 days of the date that you raised your grievance.

Appeal

You have a right to appeal the findings of the Formal Investigation. This is not a right to a 'second opinion' on the investigation, and for an appeal to be upheld you will have to provide evidence to indicate that:

3. The investigation has failed to consider some significant evidence and is 'unfair', or
4. The Grievance Procedure has not been adhered to.

If you wish to appeal, you must inform the RM in writing within one week or five working days (whichever is longer). They will arrange for another investigator untainted by prior knowledge of the Grievance to arrange an Appeal Meeting with you in which you can explain the grounds for your appeal. You will have the right to be accompanied by a friend, fellow employee or trade union official at this meeting.

The RM (or nominated investigator) will then consider your appeal, making any other enquiries as may be required to confirm any matters of fact.

If your appeal is not upheld, you will be informed in writing in the form of an Appeal Outcome letter as soon as reasonably possible. The outcome letter will state:

1. Whether the appeal has been upheld or denied.
2. In simple terms (a line or two) why it has been upheld or denied
3. That this decision is final and concludes the NWCC Grievance Process.

If your appeal is upheld it will be referred to the Chair of the Board of NWCC, who will review the investigation outcomes in the light of the appeal findings. If there has been a substantial breach of the Grievance Procedure or a lack of fairness they may direct a second investigation, to be carried out by someone untainted by the initial investigation.

The Board's response (including the outcome of any further investigation) will be in writing in the form of a further outcome letter signed by the Chair of the Board that we aim to send within 8 weeks of the date of the Outcome Letter that concluded the formal investigation.