

*For information*

**Annual Reports 2018-19: Complaints against HEFCW and complaints about institutions regulated by HEFCW**

Agenda: 25  
**HEFCW/19/69**

Disclosable

**11/07/2019**

**1 Issue**

- 1.1 This paper provides for information an annual report of complaints received against HEFCW, and complaints received about institutions, during financial year (FY) 2018-19.

**2 Corporate Planning Implications / Rationale for paper**

- 2.1 The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Council receive an annual report on the number of complaints received against HEFCW, and against institutions funded by HEFCW, in the previous financial year.

**3 Recommendations**

- 3.1 To note that:
- i. There were no complaints against HEFCW received in FY 2018-19.
  - ii. Four complaints were received by HEFCW under the Complaints about institutions procedure, with information sought from the institution concerned in respect of two of these complaints.

**4 Timing for decisions**

- 4.1 No decisions required. This report is received annually for information by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and by the Council.

**5 Further information**

- 5.1 Contact: Dale Hall (029 2085 9665; [dale.hall@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:dale.hall@hefcw.ac.uk)) or Ewen Brierley (029 2085 9713; [ewen.brierley@hefcw.ac.uk](mailto:ewen.brierley@hefcw.ac.uk)).

## 6 Complaints about HEFCW in 2018-19

- 6.1 The *HEFCW Complaints Policy* sets out how we will deal with any concerns or complaints about our services. The Policy is based on the model Concerns and Complaint Policy produced by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales in 2011 (and which remains extant), and was approved by Council at its meeting on 11 May 2012. The *Policy* is available on the HEFCW website:  
[www.hefcw.ac.uk/about\\_us/our\\_responsibilities/complaints\\_about\\_hefcw.aspx](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/about_us/our_responsibilities/complaints_about_hefcw.aspx)).

***The Council is invited to note that no complaints about HEFCW were received during FY 2018-19.***

## 7 Complaints against institutions in 2018-19

- 7.1 HEFCW's procedures for handling complaints about institutions can be found on the HEFCW website:  
[www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/working\\_with\\_he\\_providers/institutional\\_assurance/HEFCW%20Complaints%20against%20HEIs%20procedure%20English.pdf](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/working_with_he_providers/institutional_assurance/HEFCW%20Complaints%20against%20HEIs%20procedure%20English.pdf)
- 7.2 Under these procedures, four complaints have been received by HEFCW, with information sought from the institution concerned, in respect of two of these complaints.
- 7.3 In respect of one of these complaints, a very minor issue of misallocation of programme funds was identified. This was immediately rectified by the institution, with funds repaid to the programme, and the complainant informed that a satisfactory outcome had been reached.
- 7.4 At the time of writing discussions were still ongoing with one institution and it cannot yet be determined if this complaint warrants progression or a full investigation. It should be noted however, that the institution involved is engaging constructively in the process.
- 7.5 The remaining complaints were not progressed as the institutions' own relevant complaints procedures needed to be completed prior to HEFCW involvement.

***The Council is invited to note that four complaints were received by HEFCW under the Complaints about institutions procedure, with information sought from the institution concerned in respect of two of these complaints.***

## 8 Financial implications

- 8.1 There were no financial costs incurred during the year in relation to complaints and allegations.

## 9 Communications implications

- 9.1 There are no specific communication implications arising from this paper. The *HEFCW Complaints Policy* and the *Complaints about institutions* procedure are available on the HEFCW website in English and Welsh.

## 10 Diversity and Equal Opportunities implications

- 10.1 There are no specific diversity and equality implications arising from this paper. HEFCW Complaints Policy was subject to an Equality Impact Assessment screening in April 2012 prior to its approval by Council in May 2012.

## 11 Risk Assessment

Risk	Action to address risk
Complaint or allegation against HEIs not managed in accordance with the procedures, or incorrect decision made.	Complaints against HEFCW that cannot be dealt with informally are co-ordinated by the Council Secretary.  Complaints received about institutions co-ordinated by the Head of Sustainability and Assurance.  Periodic reminders to staff about complaints and allegations procedures.
Complaints against HEFCW not in line with public body guidance and Complaint Chair recommendations	Audit and Risk Committee and Panel Chair recommendations addressed.  Public Services Ombudsman for Wales guidance used as the basis for HEFCW's revised Complaints Policy in 2012.  Revised Complaints Policy was Equality Impact Assessed.