



If you have a Complaint

British Waterways Marinas Ltd (BWML) is committed to providing excellent levels of service. We are constantly striving to meet the rising expectations of our customers and visitors, and we welcome feedback on where our services and facilities can be improved or where expectations have not been met.

Issues of concern to customers can usually be resolved by talking them through with one of our staff, either face-to-face or by telephone. However, we recognise that sometimes this may not be appropriate, or you may feel your concerns have not been properly addressed after talking them through with us.

We actively encourage customers to use our Complaints Procedure so that issues and concerns can be raised with BWML's senior management and addressed appropriately. Here we explain how our Complaints Procedure works, what you need to do and what you can expect. There are two levels - Local and Group.

Local Level (1st Level)

If after local discussions and dealings we haven't reasonably met your expectations and you wish to make an official complaint relating to services or facilities provided at one of our marinas, you should write in the first instance to:-

The Managing Director
BWML HQ
Sawley Marina
Sawley
Long Eaton
Nottinghamshire
NG10 3AE.

In expressing concerns it is helpful to include all relevant details such as location(s), date(s), people contacted and the other circumstances relating to your complaint. It also helps if you explain what remedial action you feel we should take. This helps us to quickly and fully understand the nature of your complaint and begin our investigations.

Once we have received your complaint the Managing Director or one of his colleagues will acknowledge receipt of your letter in writing within 5 working days. You can normally expect a full written response within 15 working days of this acknowledgement. Our aim is to resolve the complaint to your complete satisfaction at the Local Level.

Group Level (2nd Level)

If, after receiving our response at the Managing Director Local Level, you feel that your concerns have not been fully addressed, you can ask for your complaint to be referred to the Group Level of our Complaints Procedure.

Please contact the Customer Services Manager, British Waterways, 64 Clarendon Road, Watford, WD17 1DA, or email enquiries.hq@britishwaterways.co.uk and request that your complaint be referred to the Group Level. They will acknowledge your request and pass your correspondence, with any other supporting evidence, to a British Waterways appointed Senior Manager or Executive Director who does not have direct line management responsibility for the area of your complaint. This helps to ensure that a fresh look is taken at your concerns.

You can normally expect a full written response to your complaint within 15 working days of our acknowledgement of the complaint reaching the Group Level. It may be necessary for the Senior Manager or Executive Director without day-to-day knowledge of the area of your complaint to request further information from local employees or from parties with an external relationship to BWML. When this is necessary, and we feel it may not be possible to respond to your complaint within 15 working days, we will contact you again. We will explain our reasons for asking for a time extension and seek your approval. You may refuse this request.

NB - at the Local and Group Levels of the Complaints Procedure you can expect a written response within 15 working days of our acknowledgement of your complaint. You can request that the complaint be moved to the next level of the complaints process should BWML fail to meet this commitment.

The Waterways Ombudsman

Clearly, we always want to resolve any concerns or complaints internally. However, if after our responses, you still feel dissatisfied with our proposed resolution you may wish to refer your complaint to the Waterways Ombudsman for consideration. The Ombudsman is independent of BWML and impartial. The Ombudsman does not make or influence BWML's policy, and can only investigate specific complaints which have recently completed the Complaints Procedure. There is no charge for using the services of the Ombudsman. If you need to know more please refer to the Ombudsman scheme's own website at www.waterways-ombudsman.org or contact the Ombudsman at:-

The Waterways Ombudsman
PO Box 35
York
YO60 6WW

Tel: 01347 879075

What can be investigated?

Complaints from people who believe that they have suffered injustice because of maladministration or unfair treatment by BWML. Maladministration includes:

- doing something the wrong way
- doing something that should not have been done
- failing to do something that should have been done

Disagreeing with a decision taken by BWML is not in itself evidence of maladministration, though failure to consider a decision properly can be.

The Ombudsman can consider most complaints which:

- are referred to her within six months of the completion of the Complaints Procedure; and
- concern things that came to the attention of the complainant no more than a year before the complaint was made to BWML.

Exceptions

The Ombudsman cannot investigate personnel matters or cases that have been, or are being, considered by a court and generally she cannot consider complaints made by businesses with an annual turnover of more than £1m.

How to complain to the Waterways Ombudsman

You should send the Ombudsman full details of your complaint and, if possible, copies of all correspondence between you and BWML. If you need help or advice to make your complaint to her, please contact the Ombudsman. You can ask someone such as a friend or solicitor to make a complaint on your behalf. However, you would have to pay any costs involved.

The Ombudsman process

The Ombudsman will first let you know whether or not the complaint can be considered and then how far she believes it should be investigated. The Ombudsman may try to sort out the problem between you and BWML without undertaking a formal investigation.

The Ombudsman will obtain from BWML copies of any relevant letters and papers she requires. Both you and BWML may also be asked to provide further information.

At the end of an investigation, the Ombudsman will write to you and BWML with her decision. If the Ombudsman upholds your complaint and recommends action to put things right, BWML must act on her recommendations.

An Annual Report on the Ombudsman's work will be published, but will not include the names of complainants.

This report will be sent to the Inland Waterways Advisory Council and the Ministers responsible for BWML. The report is available on the Ombudsman's website.

You can also get a copy of the Ombudsman's Annual Report from BW's Customer Services and local waterway offices, from the Customer Services Manager or direct from the Ombudsman.

Seeking additional help and information

Further advice about using BWML's Complaints Procedure and about contacting the Waterways Ombudsman can be sought from our Customer Services Centre, the Customer Services Manager or from the Ombudsman herself.