



CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL

Concerns and Complaints Policy

Information Leaflet

Commitment Statement: People will find it easy to complain and get things put right when the service they receive is not good enough

Concerns and Complaints Policy

The Isle of Anglesey County Council is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about our services. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure and learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

When to use this policy

When you express a concern or a complaint, we'll usually respond in the way we explain below. However, sometimes you may have a statutory right of appeal e.g. against a refusal to grant planning permission or the decision not to give your child a place in a particular school so, rather than investigate your complaint, we'll explain to you how you can appeal. Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that aren't decided by us and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known.

This policy only applies to complaints relating to Social Services when these are made by non-service users. Social Service complaints by service users are dealt with under a Separate Policy. Neither does this policy apply to complaints made against schools as there is a separate policy for these also.

This policy applies to any complaints relating to compliance with the Welsh Language Standards or failure by the Council to provide a bilingual service.

This policy doesn't apply if you have a concern or complaint relating to Data Protection, Freedom of Information or Environmental Information Regulations. In these instances, you should write, giving full details of your complaint, to the Corporate Information & Complaints Officer, Legal Section, Isle of Anglesey County Council, Council Offices, Llangefni, LL77 7TW or send an e-mail to the following e-mail address:

- infogov@anglesey.gov.uk

Have you asked us yet?

If you're approaching us for a service for the first time e.g. reporting a faulty street light, a missed bin collection or a housing repair, then this policy doesn't apply. You should first give us a chance to respond to your request. If you make a request for a service and then are not happy with our response, you'll be able to make your complaint known as we describe below.

What is a Complaint?

Whether about the Council itself, a person acting on its behalf, or a partnership, a complaint is:

- An expression of dissatisfaction or concern;
- Either written or spoken or made by any other communication method;
- Made by one or more members of the public;
- About the Council's action or lack of action or;
- About the standard of service provided.

A complaint is not:

- An initial request for a service, such as reporting a missed bin collection;
- An appeal against a properly made decision;
- A means to seek change to legislation or a properly made policy decision;
- A means for lobbying groups/organisations to seek to promote a cause.

Step 1 - Informal Resolution

If possible, we believe it's best to deal with things straight away rather than try to sort them out later. If you have a concern, raise it with the service you're dealing with and the member of staff will try to resolve it for you there and then. If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern then the member of staff will draw them to our

attention. If it's not possible to resolve the matter there and then they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

You can express your complaint in any of the following ways:

- You can ask for a copy of our concerns and complaint form from the person with whom you are already in contact.
- You can get in touch with our Customer Care Officer:

e-mail: complaints@anglesey.gov.uk

the website: <https://www.anglesey.gov.uk/en/Get-involved/Official-complaints/MaMaking-an-official-complaint.aspx>

phone: 01248 752588

writing to: The Corporate Information & Complaints Officer, Legal Section,
Isle of Anglesey County Council, Council Offices, Llangefni,
Anglesey, LI77 7TW.

Copies of this policy are available in Welsh, but should you need the policy in another language or any other format, please contact us.

You also have the right to directly refer any complaints relating to the Welsh language to the Welsh Language Commissioner. You can contact the Welsh Language Commissioner by:

Phone: 0345 6033 221

e-mail: post@welshlanguagecommissioner.wales

Website: www.comisiynyddygyymraeg.cymru/English

Writing to: Welsh Language Commissioner, Market Chambers,
5-7 St Mary's Street, Cardiff CF10 1AT

Dealing with your concern

- We'll formally acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days from receipt and let you know how we intend to deal with it.
- If you have not already told us, we'll ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you e.g. by e-mail or telephone, your language preference and if you have any particular requirements e.g. if you have a disability.
- We'll deal with your complaint in an open and honest way.
- We'll make sure that your dealings with us in the future do not suffer just because you have expressed a concern or made a complaint.

Normally, we'll only be able to look at your complaint if you tell us about it within 6 months from when the problem occurred. This is because it's better to look into your complaint while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.

There may be exceptions where we may be able to look at complaints which are brought to our attention later than this. However, you must give us strong reasons why you have not been able to bring it to our attention earlier and we'll need to have sufficient information about the issue to allow us to consider it properly. (In any event, regardless of the circumstances, we will not consider any concerns or complaints about matters that took place more than three years ago).

If you're expressing a concern or complaint on behalf of somebody else, we'll need their written agreement for you to act on their behalf, as we may share personal sensitive information with you.

What if there is more than one organisation involved?

If your complaint covers more than one organisation e.g. a Housing Association and the Council, we'll usually work with them to decide who should take a lead in dealing with your complaint. We'll tell you if we need to speak to another organisation and how long

this will take. You will then be given the name of the person responsible for communicating with you while we consider your complaint.

If the complaint is about an organisation working on our behalf e.g. housing repair contractors, you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, if you want to express your concerns to us, we'll look into this ourselves and respond to you.

What if I am dissatisfied with the response I receive?

Step 2 - Investigation

If you're not satisfied with the response you receive from us when you first complain, you can ask for your complaint to be formally investigated.

We will tell you the name of the officer asked to look into your complaint. We'll set out to you our understanding of your complaint and ask you to confirm that we've got it right. We'll also ask you to tell us what outcome you're hoping for, if you haven't already done so.

The officer looking at your complaint will usually need to see the files we hold relevant to your complaint. If you don't want this to happen, it's important that you tell us.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you're happy to accept this. For example, if you failed to receive a service you requested and we see straight away that you should have had it; we'll offer to provide the service.

We'll aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority of Step 2 complaints within 20 working days from receipt. If your complaint is more complex, we'll:

- Let you know within 20 working days why we think it may take longer to consider;
- Tell you how long we expect resolution to take;
- Give you regular updates and tell you whether any developments might change our original estimate.

The officer considering your complaint will aim firstly to establish the facts. The extent of an investigation will depend on how complex and how serious the issues you have raised are. In some instances, we may ask to meet you to discuss your complaint. Occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes. We'll look at relevant evidence. This could include files, notes of conversations, letters, e-mails or whatever may be relevant to your particular complaint. If necessary, we'll talk to employees or others involved and apply our policies and any legal entitlement and guidance.

Outcome

We'll let you know what we have found in your preferred form of communication and in your preferred language. This could be by letter or e-mail, for example. If necessary, we'll produce a report. We'll explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we got something wrong, we'll tell you what and why it happened. We'll show how the mistake affected you, and where possible rectify the mistake.

If we find there is a fault in our systems or with the way we do things, we'll tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.

If we got something wrong, we will apologise.

Putting things right

If we didn't provide a service you should have received, we'll aim to provide it straight away if that's possible. If we haven't done something well, we'll aim to do it better. If you've lost out as a result of a mistake on our part we'll try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had got it right first time.

If you had to pay for a specific service yourself, when you should have received the service from us, or if you were entitled to funding which you did not receive, we will usually aim to make good what you have lost.

Step 3

Ombudsman

If we're unable to resolve your complaint, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman is independent of all government bodies and can look into your complaint if you believe that you personally, or the person on whose behalf you are complaining:

- Have been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on the part of the Council;
- Have been disadvantaged personally by a service failure or have been treated unfairly.

The Ombudsman expects you to bring your concerns to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right. You can contact the Ombudsman by:

phone: 0300 790 0203

e-mail: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

the website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk

writing to: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae,
Pencoed CF35 5LJ.

There are also other organisations that consider complaints. For example, as noted previously, you also have the right to directly refer any complaints relating to the Welsh Language to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Learning lessons

We take your concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we've made.

Where there is a need for change, we'll develop an action plan setting out what we'll do, who will do it and a timescale of when we plan to do it. We'll let you know when any changes we have promised have been made.

If you need help

Our employees will aim to help you make your concerns or complaint known to us. If you need extra assistance, we'll try to put you in touch with someone who can help.

Please see a list of other organisations that you can contact at the end of this leaflet

You can also use this policy if you are someone under the age of 18. If you need help, you can speak to someone on the Meic Helpline by phone 080880 23456 and further information can be found on their website at www.meiccymru.org

You can also contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales by phone 01492 523333 or by e-mail post@childcomwales.org.uk and further information can be found on their website at www.childcom.org.uk

What we expect from you

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a complaint. We don't view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.

We believe that all customers have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, we also consider that our employees have the same rights. We, therefore,

expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

We have a separate policy to manage situations where we find that someone's actions are unacceptable – please see our “Managing Contact - Unacceptable Actions by Customers Policy”.

Compliments

If you feel that have received a good service or if you have any constructive suggestions on how to improve our services, please let us know.

Age Cymru Gwynedd & Anglesey,

Phone: 01286 677711

Email: info@acgm.co.uk

www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/gwyneddmon

Taran Disability Forum Ltd

Phone: 01407 721933

www.tarandisability.co.uk

North Wales Advice & Advocacy Service

Phone: 01286 670852

www.nwaaa.co.uk

Carers Outreach (Gwynedd, Conwy & Anglesey)

Phone: 01248 370797

Fax: 01248 371302

www.carersoutreach.co.uk

RNIB Cymru – supporting blind and partially sighted people

Phone: 0303 123 999

www.rnib.org.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau

Phone: 08444 772020

Fax: 01407 769300

www.ynysmoncab.org.uk

‘Centre of Sign Sight Sound’

Ffôn: 01492 530013

Ffôn symudol: 07719 410355

Ffacs: 01492 532615

Ffôn testun: 01492 524983

Ebost: info@signsightsound.org.uk

www.centreofsignsightsound.org.uk