Cyngor Tref Pontyclun Town Council

Complaints policy
November 2025

1. **Introduction**

The Council is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about our service. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure about. If possible, we'll put right any mistakes we may have made. We will provide any service you're entitled to which we have failed to deliver.

The Council has powers to provide many different services and must meet many governance requirements.

If we are in the wrong, we'll apologise and where possible we'll try to put things right.

We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

2. **When to use this policy**

When you express your concerns or complain to us, we will usually respond in the way we explain below.

However, sometimes you may have a right of appeal to another body, so, rather than investigate your concern, we will explain to you how you can appeal or complain.

This policy does not apply if the matter relates to a Freedom of Information or Data Protection issue. In this circumstance, you should contact the Clerk to the Council separately.

3. **Have you asked us yet?**

If you are approaching us for a service for the first time, then this policy does not apply.

Please 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 will be able to make your concern known as we describe below.

4. **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 person you're dealing with. He or she 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 the member of staff can't help, they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

5. How to express a concern or complain formally

We prefer any formal complaint to be submitted in writing.

You can express your concern in any of the ways below.

- You can ask for a copy of our form from the person with whom you are already in contact. Tell them that you want us to deal with your concern formally.

- If that person is not the Clerk to the Council, you can contact the Clerk via this address.

  clerk@pontycluntowncouncil.gov.wales or by post to

  Council Offices
  Pontyclun Community Centre
  Heol Yr Orsaf
  Pontyclun
  Cf72 9EE

- If your complaint is about the Clerk, you may wish to submit your complaint via the Chair of the Council. Full details are available on our website.

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- You can use the form on our website at www.pontyclun.net

- You can also contact us by phone on 01443 238500

6. Dealing with your concern

- We will formally acknowledge your concern within 5 working days and let you know how we intend to deal with it.

- Please tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any particular requirements, such as a relevant disability.

- We will deal with your concern in an open and honest way.

- We will 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 will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within 12 months. This is because it's better to look into your concerns while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.

- We may exceptionally be able to look at concerns which are brought to our attention later than this. However, please explain why you have not been able to bring it to our attention earlier so that we can decide.

- Complaints in Welsh will receive a reply in Welsh.

- Finally, if you are expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, please provide their written agreement to you acting on their behalf.

7. What if there is more than one body involved?

If your complaint also covers another body, we will try to work with them to decide who should take a lead in dealing with your concerns.

If the complaint is about a body working on our behalf, such as a contractor, you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, if you want to express your concern or complaint formally, we will look into this ourselves and respond to you.

8. Investigation

We will tell you who we have asked to look into your concern or complaint.

If your concern is straightforward, somebody from the Council will look into it and reply.

If it is more serious, we may ask someone from elsewhere, such as the County Council, to assist.

We will set out to you our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that we have understood the complaint. We will also ask you to tell us what outcome you're hoping for.

The person looking at your complaint may 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, where you asked for a service and we see straight away that you should have had it, we will offer to provide the service rather than investigate and produce a report.

We aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority within 20 working days.

If your complaint is more complex, we will:

- let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate.
- tell you how long we expect it to take.
- let you know where we have reached with the investigation, and
- give you regular updates, including telling you whether any developments might change our original estimate.

The person who is investigating your concerns will aim first to establish the facts.

The extent of this 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 concerns.

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 concern. If necessary, we'll talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies and any legal entitlement and guidance.

9. **Outcome**

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

If we find that we were in the wrong, we'll explain what happened. We'll show how the mistake affected you.

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

When we were wrong, we will always apologise.

10. Putting Things Right

If we didn't provide a service, you should have had, we'll aim to provide it now if that's possible. If we didn't do something well, we'll aim to put it right. If you have lost out as a result of a mistake on our part we'll try to put you back in the position you should have been in.

If you had to pay for a service yourself, when you should have had one from us, we will try to make good any loss.

11. Ombudsman

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman is independent of all government bodies and Councils 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 body providing it.

- 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: 0845 601 0987
- 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, the Welsh Language Commissioner about services in Welsh. We can advise you about such organisations.

12. Learning lessons

We take your concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we've made. Our Council considers a summary of all complaints six- monthly as well as details of any serious complaints. Our Council also considers our response to complaints at least half yearly.

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

13. What if I need help?

Our staff will aim to help you make your concerns known to us. If you need extra assistance, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help. For example, you may wish to contact Age Concern or Shelter who may be able to assist you.

You can also use this concerns and complaints policy if you are someone under the age of 18. If you need help, you can speak to someone on the Meic Helpline (phone 080880 23456, www.meiccymru.org) or contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Contact details are:

01792 765600 (South Wales)
01492 523333 (North Wales)
post@childcomwales.org.uk
https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/

South Wales Office: Oystermouth House, Phoenix Way, Llansamlet, Swansea SA8 9FS

North Wales Office: Penrhos Manor, Oak Drive, Colwyn Bay, Conwy LL29 7YW

14. 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 concern or a complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood, and respected. However, we also consider that our staff 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.

Appendix A

Model Concern/Complaint form

(This form can also be provided as a Word document)

A: Your details

Surname	Forename(s):	Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/if other please state:
Address and postcode		
Email address		
Daytime phone number		

Please state by which of the above methods you would prefer us to contact you

Your requirements

If our usual way of dealing with complaints makes it difficult for you to use our service, for example if English or Welsh is not your first language or you need to engage with us in a particular way, please tell us so that we can discuss how we might help you.

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form.

If you are filling this in on behalf of someone else, please fill in section B. Please note that before taking forward the complaint we will need to satisfy ourselves that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned.

B: Making a complaint on behalf of someone else: Their details

Their name in full	
Address and postcode	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?	
What is your relationship to them?	

C: About your concern/complaint (Please continue your answers to the following questions on a separate sheet(s) if necessary)

Describe the service you are complaining about	
What do you think we did wrong or failed to do?	
Describe how you or the person you are acting for has personally suffered or been affected.	
What do you think should be done to put things right?	
When did you first become aware of the problem?	
Have you already put your concern to the frontline staff responsible for delivering the service? If so, please give brief details of how and when you did so.	
If it is more than 12 months since you became first aware of the problem, please give the reason why you have not complained before now.	

If you have any documents to support your concern/complaint, please submit them with this form.

Full name:

Signature:

Date: