



Comisiwn  
Democratiaeth a  
Ffiniau Cymru

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Democracy  
and Boundary  
Commission Cymru

## CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS POLICY

**This guide sets out what you need to do if you are dissatisfied with a service we have provided and want to make a complaint.**

June 2024

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

## **Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru Policy for Customer Complaints**

The Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) is committed to dealing effectively with any complaints you may have about our service. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible, we will put right any mistakes we may have made. We will provide any service you are entitled to and which we have failed to deliver. If we get something wrong, we will apologise and, where possible, try to put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

### **When to use this policy?**

You may use the complaint form at Appendix A to this document, email, phone or write should you wish to complain. This guide explains how to make a complaint.

You may use this policy if you are dissatisfied with a service we have provided, if you believe we have acted unfairly, refused to answer reasonable questions, failed to inform you of your rights to entitlement or we knowingly gave false or misleading information. You may also use it if we fail to tell you of your right to appeal a decision you believe to be unfair or fail to offer you a suitable solution if there is one available. This includes a service where we have delegated the delivery of that service to another party. In these cases however, we would expect you to approach them first for a resolution to your concern.

This policy does **not** apply if the matter relates to a Freedom of Information request or breach of the Data Protection Act. In this circumstance, you should contact:

The Head of Business  
Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru  
Hastings House  
Cardiff  
CF24 0BL  
Tel: 029 20464819  
e-mail: [foi@dbcc.gov.wales](mailto:foi@dbcc.gov.wales)

We have a separate policy in place relating to the Commission's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. Please see the DBCC Welsh Language Standards Complaints Policy at [www.ldbc.gov.wales](http://www.ldbc.gov.wales).

If your complaint concerns the misuse or unlawful use of public money by the Commission you can also raise it with the Auditor General for Wales or Wales Audit Office. You can contact the Auditor General for Wales or Wales Audit Office by:

writing to:            Auditor General for Wales / Wales Audit Office  
                                 1 Capital Quarter

June 2024

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

Tyndall Street  
Cardiff  
CF10 4BZ

e-mail: info@audit.wales

## **How to make a complaint**

You can make a complaint in writing, by e-mail or by using a complaint form. Receiving a complaint in writing is particularly important if the complaint is complicated and detailed. However, we may accept a verbal complaint if we consider it reasonable to do so.

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

- You can use the customer complaints form Appendix A which is at the end of this document.
- You can ask for a copy of our customer complaint form from the person with whom you are already in contact or tell them that you want your complaint dealt with formally.
- You can write a letter to us at the following address:

The Chief Executive  
Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru  
Hastings House  
Fitzalan Court  
Cardiff  
CF24 0BL

- You can telephone us on 029 20464819 (Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg)
- You can e-mail us at enquiries@dbcc.gov.wales

Complaints in the Welsh language will always be accepted. If, however, your complaint relates to our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, please see [www.ldbc.gov.wales](http://www.ldbc.gov.wales).

## **How we will try to resolve issues?**

### **Stage 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 complaint contact us by one of the methods listed below. Alternatively, if you are already dealing with the Commission, raise it with the person you are dealing with. They will try to resolve it for you there and then. Complaints that are considered under Stage 1 are usually considered and resolved quickly and if possible, within 10 working days of the complaint being raised.

If the person you are dealing with is unable to help, they will explain why and you can ask for a formal investigation.

## **Stage 2: Formal complaint**

- We will formally acknowledge your complaint within **5 working days** and let you know how we intend to deal with it. If your complaint was made in Welsh, this will not lead to a delay.
- We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any particular requirements.
- We will deal with your complaint in an open and honest way.
- We will make sure that your communication with us in the future will not be affected because you have expressed a concern or made a complaint.

Once we have determined who will consider your complaint, our aim will be for that person to see your complaint through to the end result.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your complaints if you tell us about them **within 6 months**. This is because it is better to look into your complaints while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.

We may, exceptionally, be able to look at complaints which are brought to our attention later than this. However, you will have to give us strong reasons why you have not been able to bring it to our attention earlier and we will 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 complaints about matters that took place more than three years before you raised the issue).

If you are expressing a complaint on behalf of somebody else, we will need their permission for you to act on their behalf.

### **What if there is more than one body involved?**

If your complaint covers more than one body (for example, a principal council) we will usually work with them to decide who should take a lead in dealing with your complaint. 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 a body working on our behalf, for example, external contractors, you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, if you want to express your complaint formally, we will look into this ourselves and respond to you.

### **Investigation**

We will tell you who we have asked to look into your complaint. If your complaint is straightforward, we will usually ask somebody to look into it and get back to you. If it is more serious, we may use an external investigator.

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

The person looking at your complaint will usually need to see the files we hold relevant to your complaint, and we will on occasion, need your consent to view all related information.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask if you are happy to accept this rather than investigate and produce a report.

We will aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority **within 10 working days** of receipt of a complaint at the informal stage and **within 20 working days** at the formal stage. 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 complaint will first aim 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 with you to discuss your complaint. Occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes.

We will look at the relevant evidence. This could include files, notes of conversations, letters, e-mails or whatever may be relevant to your particular complaint. If necessary, we will talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies and consider legal advice and guidance.

## **Outcome**

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know the outcome through your preferred form of communication. If necessary, we will produce a report and will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we got it wrong, we will tell you what and why it happened and explain how the mistake affected you.

If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we will tell you what it is and how we plan to make changes to help prevent the same errors from happening again. If we got it wrong, we will always apologise.

## **Further Steps**

If you consider we have not succeeded in resolving your complaint we will refer your complaint to the Welsh Government's Central Complaints Unit who will inform you of their procedures (details can be found on the Welsh Government web site at [http://wales.gov.uk/contact\\_us/makeacomplaint](http://wales.gov.uk/contact_us/makeacomplaint)).

## **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**

If you are not satisfied with the action taken by the Commission and Welsh Government to address your complaint you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman expects you to bring your complaints to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right. 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:

- has been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on the part of the body providing it;
- has been disadvantaged personally by a service failure or have been treated unfairly.

You can contact the Ombudsman by:

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

phone:                 0300 790 0203

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

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

There are other organisations that consider complaints. For further information, contact the Welsh Government Central Complaints Unit on 029 20801378.

## **Learning lessons**

We take your complaints seriously and try to learn from mistakes we have made. 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 have promised have been made.

## **What if you need help in making your complaint**

If you need extra assistance, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help. You may wish to contact a Citizens Advice Bureau in your area; alternatively you may ask specialist agencies such as Race Equality Councils, Age Concern, Law Centre or another advice agency to assist.

## **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 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.

### **When NOT to use this Policy**

#### **We cannot consider:**

- complaints about principal authorities, councillors and other elected officials or a service delivered by a principal authority. In these instances contact your principal council;
- an appeal against a 'properly made' decision by the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru;
- a service that has its own complaints process in place.

**Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru  
Customer Complaint Form**

**A: Your details**

Your full name:

Address and postcode:

e-mail address:

Contact phone number:

**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 dealing with the complaint we will need to be satisfied that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned.

**B: Making a complaint on behalf of someone else:**

Their full name:

Address and postcode:

What is your relationship to them?

Why you are making a complaint on their behalf?

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

C.1 What do you think we did wrong, or failed to do?

C.2 What do you think should be done to put things right?

C.3 When did you first become aware of the problem?

C.4 Have you already put your complaint to the frontline staff responsible for delivering the service? If so, please give brief details of how and when you did so? And what was the conclusion?

C.5 If it is more than 6 months since you became first aware of the problem, please give the reasons why you have not complained before now?

If you have any documents to support your complaint, please attach them with this form and list them here.

Signature:

Date:

When you have completed this form, please send it to:

The Chief Executive  
Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru  
Ground Floor  
Hastings House  
Fitzalan Court  
Cardiff  
CF24 0BL