

# Complaints

## Mission Statement

Complaints are not an interruption to our work. They are a core part of delivering fair, transparent, and accountable public service.

Responding on time and with care is everyone's responsibility. The quality and timeliness of our complaint handling reflects the integrity of our entire organisation.

## Complaints Are a Must Do, Not a Nice to Do

Handling complaints properly and within timescales is not optional. It is a statutory responsibility. Every complaint we receive from a resident must be acknowledged, investigated, and responded to within the timescales set out in the Model Concerns and Complaints Policy for Public Services in Wales.

Stage 1: Local Resolution. A response should normally be provided within ten working days.

Stage 2: Formal Investigation. A full written response should be issued within twenty working days, or the complainant must be updated if more time is required.

Failing to meet these expectations does not only reflect poorly on our service. It can lead to formal scrutiny by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

## Consequences from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

If complaints are not handled properly or on time, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales may take the following actions.

- The Ombudsman may uphold complaints against the local authority and identify maladministration or service failure.
- The Ombudsman may issue public reports that name the authority and outline the failings. This damages our reputation and reduces public confidence.
- The Ombudsman may recommend apologies, financial redress, or mandatory service improvements, all of which require significant time and resources.
- The Ombudsman may monitor repeated failings and escalate concerns, which can lead to a systemic review or compliance follow up.
- The Ombudsman may notify senior leadership or elected members of ongoing issues, which increases internal and external scrutiny.
- The Ombudsman expects local authorities to have strong governance, quality assurance processes, and learning mechanisms around complaint handling. If they find that we are not learning from complaints, this becomes a serious compliance concern.

## Our Shared Responsibility

Every member of staff has a duty of care to residents and a responsibility to handle complaints promptly, accurately, and with empathy.

Timeliness demonstrates respect for the resident's experience.

Quality responses demonstrate accountability, transparency, and professionalism.

Empathy and thoroughness rebuild trust and reduce the likelihood of escalation to the Ombudsman.

Delays or poorly written responses cause unnecessary frustration, damage relationships, and increase the risk of formal criticism from the Ombudsman.