

Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy

Working collaboratively is one of Ambition North Wales's core values. We recognise the importance of listening to residents and communities across the region so we can better understand their priorities. We welcome feedback on what we do well and on how we can improve, and this policy explains the different ways you can share your views.

Ambition North Wales is committed to responding effectively to any concerns or complaints about our services. We aim to clarify anything you are unsure about and, wherever possible, correct any mistakes we may have made.

If we have done something wrong, we will apologise and, where appropriate, take steps to put things right.

Our procedure places a strong emphasis on learning from experience. This helps us understand people's concerns, improve our services, and share good practice across the organisation.

Six principles for good administration

This policy aligns with the six [principles for good administration](#) set out by the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) under section 34 of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019.

1. Getting it right.
2. Being customer focused.
3. Being open and accountable.
4. Acting fairly and proportionately.
5. Putting things right.
6. Seeking continuous improvement.

Compliments

If you would like to tell us about something we've done well, this will help us to evaluate the delivery of our services are delivered and how we can build on and share any good practice. We also welcome praise for a member of staff or team so we can recognise and celebrate their good practice. Please see below how to submit a compliment.

All compliments, comments and complaints will be logged and referred to the relevant team/staff at Ambition North Wales.

Comments

Ambition North Wales welcomes comments and suggestions around how we can improve our services or any concerns you may have about any aspect of our work.

You may submit a compliment or comment by:

- Asking for a copy of our form from the person with whom you are already in contact
- Use the form on our website: [Ambition North Wales](#)
- Email us at – feedback@ambitionnorth.wales
- Write a letter to us at: Ambition North Wales, Government Buildings, Sarn Mynach, Llandudno Junction, Conwy, LL31 9RZ

Please note we may not be able to respond to all compliments and comments.

Complaints

When to use this policy:

When you express your concerns or complain to us, we will usually respond in the way outlined under 'How to make a complaint'.

This policy applies to corporate complaints about Ambition North Wales services. It does not apply where a separate statutory, legal, contractual, HR, governance or appeal process is available or more appropriate. Where this is the case, we will aim to signpost the complainant to the correct process.

Please note this policy does not apply:

- If you have a Freedom of Information Request or a concern or complaint around Data Protection. These issues should be addressed to Ambition North Wales Data Protection Officer. You may contact them via
- E-mail: data@ambitionnorth.wales
- Or in writing: Ambition North Wales, Government Buildings, Sarn Mynach, Llandudno Junction, Conwy, LL31 9RZ.
- If you wish to express a concern or make a complaint about a North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Member or Sub-Committee member who may have breached The Conduct of Members (Principles)(Wales) Order 2001 you should submit a concern or complaint Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) More information on making a complaint can be found on the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) website: <https://www.ombudsman.wales/fact-sheets/what-we-do-when-we-get-your-complaint-about-the-conduct-of-a-local-councillor/>
- You can also contact the Public Services Ombudsman via phone: 0300 790 0203

How to make a complaint:

There are two stages to Ambition North Wales's complaints procedure.

Ambition North Wales reserves the right to escalate serious matters straight to Stage 2 should it feel this is necessary based on the nature and seriousness of the complaint raised.

Stage 1: Early resolution (informal)

If possible, we believe it's best to deal with things straight away. If you have a concern, please raise it with the person you're dealing with. They will try to resolve it for you there and then.

If the issue cannot be resolved straight away, it will be treated as a Stage 1 complaint.

Stage 1 complaints will normally be considered by the relevant team manager or other appropriate lead officer within the programme area concerned within 10 working days.

We would expect a response to an informal complaint to:

- Offer an apology where appropriate
- Advise what action is to be taken to put things right
- Identify any lessons learnt; and
- Provide information on what to do if you remain dissatisfied

If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern, the relevant team will record and draw them to our attention. If you remain dissatisfied with the response, you can then decide if you wish to make a formal concern or complaint. If you are dissatisfied with the response to the outcome of Stage 1, your complaint may be escalated to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal concern or complaint

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

- Ask for a copy of our Compliments, Comments and Complaints form from the person with whom you are already in contact. Tell them that you want us to deal with your concern formally.
- Use the Compliments, Comments and Complaints form on our website: [Ambition North Wales](https://ambitionnorth.wales)
- Email us at feedback@ambitionnorth.wales
- Write a letter to us at: Ambition North Wales, Government Buildings, Sarn Mynach, Llandudno Junction, Conwy, LL31 9RZ.

Copies of this policy and the complaint form are available in Welsh and English. For large print or braille copies or as audio please contact feedback@ambitionnorth.wales

Complaints will normally be confirmed in writing; however, we will support individuals who need assistance to submit a complaint in an alternative format.

Dealing with your concern or complaint:

- We will acknowledge your formal concern or complaint within 5 working days and let you know how we intend to deal with it.
- We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any requirements – for example, if you need documents in a different format in order for them to be accessible. We will also consider requests for written communication in a language other than Welsh or English.
- We will deal with your concern in an open and honest way.
- We can assure you that whatever concern or complaint you raise will not affect your dealings with us in the future, or our responsibilities to you.
- If you're expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we'll need their agreement in writing to you acting on their behalf.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within 6 months of the matter arising. 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, you will have to explain 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, we will not consider any concerns about matters that took place more than 12 months ago.

Investigation

We will let you know who will be looking into your concern or complaint.

Stage 2 complaints will normally be considered by an Ambition North Wales director or senior officer who has not been directly involved in the matter complained about. Where appropriate, the Chief Executive may appoint another suitable senior officer to investigate or respond.

We will set out our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that this is correct. We will also ask you to tell us what outcome you are hoping to achieve.

We may contact you to ask for clarification about your complaint during the investigation. If we don't receive a response within 28 working days, the complaint will be closed, and we will write to you to explain this.

The officer investigating your complaint will usually need to access relevant files held by Ambition North Wales. If you do not wish for this to happen, it is important that you tell us as soon as possible.

Where a simple solution is available, we may ask whether you are willing to accept this rather than proceed with a full investigation, which may take more time and resources.

We will aim to respond to Stage 2 complains as quickly as possible and we expect to deal with the majority within 20 working days. Where this is not possible, for example if your complaint is more complex, or where further investigation is reasonably required, the officer investigating your complaint will:

- Let you know within 20 working days why more time is needed and provide a revised timescale (this should be no longer than 3 months from the date of your original complaint)
- Let you know the progress of the investigation and provide you with an update if the timescale changes.

The officer investigating will first aim to establish the facts. The scope of the investigation will depend on the seriousness and complexity of the issues raised. For more complex cases, we will prepare an investigation plan.

In some circumstances, we may ask to meet with you to discuss your concerns. Occasionally, we may suggest mediation or another appropriate method to help resolve the matter.

We will consider all relevant evidence, which may include information you have provided, case files, notes of conversations, correspondence, emails or other materials relevant to your concern. Where necessary, we will also speak with staff or others involved and review our policies, guidance and any relevant legislation.

Complaint involving more than one organisation

If your complaint is directed at more than one organisation, for example, Ambition North Wales and one of its constituent Authorities, we will work with them to decide who should deal with the matter. We will let you know who will be responsible for communicating with you while your complaint is being considered and when you can expect an outcome.

If the complaint is about a body working on our behalf, for example, a company contracted by Ambition North Wales, you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, should you wish to raise the matter with us on a formal basis, we will look into the complaint and respond to you.

Outcome

If your complaint is formally investigated, we will let you know our findings. Where appropriate, we will produce a written report explaining how and why we reached our conclusions.

If we find that we have made a mistake, we will explain what happened and why. Where we identify faults in our systems or the way we work, we will tell you what those faults are and outline the steps we will take to prevent them from happening again. Where an error has occurred, we will always offer an apology.

Putting Things Right

If we did not provide a service that you were entitled to receive, we will aim to provide it as soon as possible, where this is feasible. If we didn't do something well, we will take steps to put it right and when this will happen.

If you have suffered a loss as a result of our mistake, we will seek where appropriate, to restore you to the position you would have been in had things been done correctly.

If you paid for a service that we should have provided or if you were entitled to funding you did not receive, we will seek to refund the cost or make the appropriate payment.

The Ombudsman

If your complaint is not resolved in your view, 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:

- Has been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on the part of the service provider
- Has been disadvantaged personally by a service failure or have been treated unfairly

The Ombudsman normally 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
- Email: ask@ombudsman.wales
- The website: www.ombudsman.wales
- Writing to: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed CF35 5LJ

Making a complaint about our Welsh language services

Complaints in relation to the Welsh language will follow the same procedures outlined in this policy.

If you are dissatisfied with how we respond to your complaint regarding the Welsh language or if your freedom to speak Welsh has been denied, you may complain directly to the Welsh language Commissioner:

- Phone: 0345 6033 221
- Email: post@cyg-wlc.cymru
- Website: [Complaints Form](#)

- The Welsh Language Commissioner, Caernarfon Office
Unit 2, Block C
Victoria Dock
Caernarfon
LL55 1TH

Learning lessons

We take your concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we've made. Our Senior Management Team considers a summary of all complaints and is made aware of all serious concerns or complaints which require an investigation.

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

Monitoring Compliments, Comments and Complaints

All compliments, comments and complaints which apply to this policy will be recorded by Ambition North Wales. The Senior Corporate Policy Officer will be responsible for oversight, logging and reviewing complaints.

Every six months, the Ambition North Wales Senior Leadership Team and Governance and Audit Sub-Committee will consider a summary of all complaints received. This will include details of any serious complaints with recommendations where service improvements have been identified.

What we expect from you

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