



Ambition North Wales Complaints Policy

Ambition North Wales is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about our services. We aim to clarify any issues you may be unsure about. If possible, we'll put right any mistakes we may have made.

If we did something wrong, we'll apologise and, where possible, try to put things right for you. We aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain from complaints to improve our services.

We have developed this as a complaints procedure that puts an emphasis on learning lessons to help us identify the concerns of the people within the region and improve our services.

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 please note that this policy does not apply to 'Freedom of Information' or data access issues. For these matters please contact: Operations and Resources Manager, info@ambitionnorth.wales

1. Informal resolution

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 there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern, 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.

We will strive to respond to concerns and complaints on an informal basis within 20 working days of notification.

2. Formal concern or complaint

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

- 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.
- Use the form on our website
- Email us at info@ambitionnorth.wales
- Write to us at: Ambition North Wales, Government Buildings, Sarn Mynach, Llandudno Junction, 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 info@ambitionnorth.wales.

We can only process concerns and complaints in writing.



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.

We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any particular requirements – for example, if you need documents in large type.

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.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within six 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 twelve months ago. If you're expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we'll need their agreement in writing to you acting on their behalf.

Investigation

We will tell you who we have asked to look into your concern or complaint. If your concern is straightforward, we'll usually ask somebody from the relevant service area to look into it and respond to you. If it is more serious, we may use someone else from within Ambition North Wales.

We will set out our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm if our understanding is right. 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. 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 rather than commit to the expense and time of a full investigation.

We will 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 firstly aim to establish the facts. The extent of the investigation will depend upon how complex and how serious the issues you have raised are. In complex cases, we will draw up an investigation plan. In some instances, we may ask to meet with you to discuss your concerns. Occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes. We will look at all the relevant evidence. This could include information you have provided, our case files, notes of conversations, letters, emails 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, any guidance and legislation.

Outcome

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we find. If necessary, we will produce a report. We'll explain how and why we came to our conclusions. If we find that we made a mistake, we'll tell you what happened and why. 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. If we make a mistake, we will always apologise for it.

Putting Things Right

If we didn't provide you with 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 would have been in if we'd done things properly.

If you had to pay for a service yourself, when we should have provided it for you, or if you were entitled to funding you did not receive we will try to refund the cost.

The 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 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 service provider
- Have 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**

There are also other organisations that consider complaints. For example, the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office deals with complaints about services in Welsh. Please contact us and we can advise you about such organisations.

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 complaints.



Our Governance & Audit Sub-Committee reviews complaints received and reports to Ambition North Wales as necessary. We share summary (anonymised) information on complaints received and complaints outcomes with the Ombudsman as part of our commitment to accountability and learning from complaints.

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 changes we've promised have been made.

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 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 when we find that someone's actions are unacceptable.