

National Assembly for Wales Complaints Policy

July 2016



National Assembly for Wales
Assembly Commission

The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

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www.assembly.wales

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National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Online: **www.assembly.wales**
Email: **Contact@assembly.wales**
Tel: **0300 200 6565**

We welcome calls via the Text Relay Service.

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Complaints Policy

The National Assembly for Wales 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. If possible, we will put right any mistakes we may have made. We will provide any service you are entitled to which we have failed to deliver. If we got something wrong, we will apologise and where possible we will 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

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 statutory right of appeal so, rather than investigate your concern, we will explain to you how you can appeal. Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by us and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known.

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

Assembly-accessstoinformation@Assembly.Wales or

Access to Information Adviser
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Informal resolution

If possible, we believe it is 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 are 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 cannot help, they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

How to express concern or complain formally

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 you want to make your complaint over the phone please call 0300 200 6565.
- You can use the [form](#) on our website.
- You can e-mail us at contact@assembly.wales

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 have a 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.

Investigation

We will tell you who we have asked to look into your concern or complaint. If your concern is straightforward, we will usually ask somebody from the service to look into it and get back to you. If it is more serious, we may use someone from elsewhere in the Assembly or in certain cases we may appoint an independent investigator.

We will set out to you our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that we have got it 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 do not want this to happen, it is important that you tell us.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you are 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 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 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 will 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 will talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies and any legal entitlement and guidance.

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 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. We will show 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 change things to stop it happening again.
- If we got it wrong, we will always apologise.

Putting Things Right

If we did not provide a service you should have had, we will aim to provide it now if that is possible. If we did not do something well, we will aim to put it right. If you have lost out as a result of a mistake on our part we will try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had got it right.

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 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:

- Telephone - 0845 601 0987
- E-mail - ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk
- Website - www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk
- In writing to - Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed CF35 5LJ

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.

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.