



CABINET

**IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 16TH MARCH 2021**

REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

**ALL MOBILE TELEPHONES TO BE SWITCHED TO SILENT FOR THE
DURATION OF THE MEETING**

Part 1

1. Appointment of Chairperson
2. Welcome and Roll Call
3. Chairpersons Announcement/s
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy 2024
(Pages 3 - 32)
6. Urgent Items
Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100b (4)(B) of the Local Government Act 1972
7. Access to Meetings
To resolve to exclude the public for the following item/s of business pursuant to Regulation 4 (3) and (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No.2290 and the undermentioned exempt Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Part 2

8. The Centre of Rail Excellence in Wales
(Exempt Under Paragraph 14) (*Pages 33 - 42*)

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Wednesday, 10 March 2021

Cabinet Members:

Councillors. C.Clement-Williams, D.Jones, E.V.Latham,
A.R.Lockyer, P.A.Rees, P.D.Richards, A.Wingrave and L.Jones

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

16th March 2021

Report of the Head of Human and Organisational Development - S Rees

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title: Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy 2021

Purpose of Report

1. To present a revised Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy for Neath Port Talbot Council, based on a model complaints handling procedure for public service providers in Wales.

Executive Summary

2. The Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019 makes provision about the functions of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. Under Section 38 of the Act, the Ombudsman may specify a model complaints handling procedure for listed authorities in Wales. The Council's current Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy (last updated September 2020) has been reviewed by the Council's Complaints Officers Group to ensure compliance with the model that has been specified by the Ombudsman and to ensure a consistent approach and understanding of the handling of comments, compliments and complaints across the Council.

Background

3. The Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019 received Royal Assent on 22 May, 2019. The Act makes provision about the functions of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. Under Section 38 of the Act the Ombudsman may specify a model complaints handling procedure for listed authorities in Wales.

4. On 30th September 2020, the Ombudsman shared the following documentation with local authorities across Wales.
 - Concerns & Complaints Model Policy for Public Service Providers in Wales
 - Guidance for Public Service Providers on Implementing the Concerns and Complaints Policy
 - Complaint Handling Process – Statement of Principles
5. The Concerns and Complaints Model Policy is designed for public service providers and represents a minimum standard of complaint handling in Wales. The Council was asked to ensure its local procedures comply with the Model and is required to submit its revised complaints policy to the Ombudsman's office by 31 March 2021.
6. The Council's Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy has been in place since guidance was issued by Welsh Government in 2011 (updated in September 2020) and since that time the Ombudsman has noted that a diverse range of complaints practices has emerged across Wales. The Ombudsman's new guidance aims to bring practices back into broad alignment – providing basic standards, a common language and a set of principles to underpin how complaints are handled throughout public services.
7. The Council's current Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy has been reviewed by the Council's Complaints Officers Group to ensure compliance with the above Model and to ensure a consistent approach and understanding of the handling of comments, compliments and complaints across the Council.
8. Overall, there is no significant change to the process for how to make a comment, compliment or complaint. The two-step approach to complaint handling remains.
9. The most significant change, following the review, was the removal of the officer guidance content which will be transferred into an internal officer guidance note. The removal of this content has made the Policy a simpler document enabling the public to clearly understand how to make a comment, compliment or complaint.

10. In addition to the model complaints handling procedure, the Ombudsman also shared the following set of principles of an effective complaints handling process which form the basis of the Council's revised Policy and will be published on the Council's website to complement the revised Policy:
 - Complainant Focused
 - Simple
 - Fair & Objective
 - Timely & Effective
 - Accountable
 - Committed to Continuous Improvement
11. The Council's revised Policy has been shared with the Head of Complaints Standards (Complaints Standards Authority - PSOW) who provided a few points of feedback which have been taken into consideration when finalising the revised Policy.

Monitoring and Review

12. Comparisons across sectors in Wales are part of the requirements of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019 and since July 2020, quarterly complaints data from public bodies has been provided to the Complaints Standards Authority for Wales team in the PSOW to enable the compilation of statistics and identification of complaints handling trends across all Welsh Councils. During 2021/2022, the data will be published on the PSWO website and will be used to inform the PSOW annual letters and reports.
13. In addition to the above, Section 114 of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 sets out a new name and functions of Audit Committees. A report will be prepared shortly to Council to amend the Terms and Reference of the Audit Committee which will include the following additional functions:
 - to review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively; and
 - to make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively

Financial Impact:

14. There is no financial impact associated with this report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

15. A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment, attached at Appendix 2, has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below.

The Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy was reviewed to ensure compliance with the model that has been specified by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and to ensure a consistent approach and understanding of the handling of comments, compliments and complaints across the Council.

The changes the review necessitated have not been significant and consequently impacts identified have been minimal. Positive impacts in relation to age and disability as well as in relation to the Welsh language have been strengthened but not to significant levels to justify a full assessment.

Valleys Communities Impact:

16. There are no impacts associated with this report.

Workforce Impact

17. The Complaints Officers Group have co-produced the revised Policy.

Legal Impact

18. The revised Policy has been developed to ensure the Council's practices and procedures for handling complaints is in accordance with the PSOW's Model Complaint Handling Process and Guidance issued by the Ombudsman for Wales under Section 38 of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019.

Risk Management

19. There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

Consultation

20. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item. The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales undertook extensive consultation prior to issuing the model complaints handling procedure for listed authorities in Wales. The Complaints Standards Authority (PSOW) has been consulted on the Council's revised Policy.

Recommendations

21. Having had due regard to the first stage Integrated Impact Assessment, Members are asked to approve the revised Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy attached at Appendix 1.

Reason for Proposed Decision

22. To ensure the Council has a consistent approach for the handling of comments, compliments and complaints and to ensure the Council's practices and procedures for handling complaints is in accordance with the PSOW's Model Complaint Handling Process and Guidance issued by the Ombudsman for Wales under Section 38 of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019.

Implementation of Decision

23. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in.

Appendices

24. Appendix 1 – Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy 2021

25. Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Assessment – first stage

List of Background Papers

26. Complaints Standards Authority – Wales – Concerns & Complaints Policy for Public Service Provider in Wales

27. Complaints Standards Authority – Wales – Guidance for Public Service Providers on Implementing the Concerns and Complaints Policy
28. Complaints Standards Authority – Wales –Complaint Handling Process – Statement of Principles

Officer Contact

29. Mrs Sheenagh Rees, Head of Human and Organisational Development Tel: 01639 763315 or e-mail s.rees5@npt.gov.uk
30. Mrs Caryn Furlow-Harris, Strategic Manager – Policy & Executive Support Tel: 01639 763242 or email c.furlow@npt.gov.uk

Comments Compliments and Complaints Policy

March 2021

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Introduction

Neath Port Talbot Council considers all comments, compliments and complaints received as an invaluable source of information about the services we provide.

Our aims are:

- to make it easy to complain when a service has not been good enough
- to settle complaints to the satisfaction of the public wherever reasonably possible and to fully explain the reasons for the situation where it isn't
- to learn from comments, compliments and complaints to help identify improvements and provide better practice in service delivery; and
- to use comments, compliments and complaints information to monitor the effectiveness of the Council's policies.

Comments and Compliments

Comments and compliments are welcomed and appreciated as they provide an indication of how we are performing. Additionally, suggestions and ideas you provide are important in terms of improving customer care, service quality and staff morale.

Comments may be suggestions as to how services could be improved and these should be considered by the service concerned. They may be views or representations, perhaps adverse, about the Council's policy and provision.

Compliments are particularly appreciated as they provide confirmation that the Council and its employees provide services which meet or exceed expectations.

If you would like to provide any comments or compliments, please use Section E of the Comments, Compliments and Complaints form or email us at contactus@npt.gov.uk

Complaints

Neath Port Talbot Council is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints about our services. In this policy the term "complaint" refers to a concern or a complaint.

We aim to clarify any issues you may be unsure about. If possible, we'll put right any mistakes we may have made. We will provide any service you're entitled to which we have failed to deliver. 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.

Defining a Complaint

If you are approaching us to request a service for the first time (e.g. reporting a faulty street light, or requesting an appointment) this policy doesn't apply.

You should first give the relevant service a chance to respond to your request for service.

When to use this policy

If you receive a service or make a request for a service and then are not happy with our response, you will be able to make your complaint known as described below.

Sometimes you may have a statutory right of appeal e.g. against a refusal to grant you planning permission or the decision not to give your child a place in a particular school, so, rather than investigate your complaint, we will explain to you how you can appeal.

Additionally you might be concerned about matters that are not covered by this policy and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known, examples include:

- [Freedom of Information requests](#)
- [Complaints about Councillors who have breached the code of conduct](#)
- [Insurance matters](#)
- [Parking Penalty Charge notices](#)
- [School complaints](#)
- [Social Services complaints](#)

This policy does not apply to data access issues.

How to complain

You can make a complaint in any of the following ways:

- Website: www.npt.gov.uk/1454
- Email: contactus@npt.gov.uk
- Post: Neath Port Talbot Council,
Civic Centre,
Port Talbot
SA12 1PJ
- Phone: 01639 686868 - ask to be transferred to the service your complaint relates to
- Ask for a copy of our [complaints form](#) from the person you are already dealing with. Tell them that you want us to deal with your complaint formally.
- Write us a letter

You can make a complaint in whatever format (large print, Braille, on tape or disc) or language you wish.

We welcome complaints in Welsh and will deal with Welsh and English complaints to the same standards and timescales.

Complaints forms will be available at all Neath Port Talbot Council public offices. Copies of the Comments Compliments and Complaints Policy and forms are available in English and Welsh and can also be made available in other languages. Formats such as audio, Braille or large print also be provided if required.

Stage 1 Complaint: Informal resolution

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 person you're dealing with will draw them to the attention of the relevant complaints officer.

If the person you're dealing with can't help, they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

In most cases, the service / service area will provide a response to your complaint within 10 working days. Where this is not possible before the response deadline, you will be informed in writing of the reason for the delay, together with the date you can expect to receive a full response.

If you are dissatisfied with the service / service area response, you can then ask for a formal investigation.

The Council has the discretion to go straight to a Stage 2 Complaint: Formal Investigation and you will be advised at the earliest opportunity.

Stage 2 Complaint: Formal Investigation

A Stage 2 investigation can be undertaken if you have not received a response at Stage 1, are not happy with the response received or think your complaint has not been considered properly.

At Stage 2 it would be helpful if you could provide some information on the issues with which you remain unhappy, the reasons why you think these issues were not properly addressed at Stage 1 as well as any details of the outcome you are hoping for.

You will receive an acknowledgment of your Stage 2 complaint within 5 working days.

The relevant complaints officer for the service / service area will undertake the investigation which will include a review of all relevant correspondence and often incorporate discussions with yourself and relevant officers from the service /service area concerned to enable a fuller response to be provided.

Usually a response to your complaint will be provided within 20 working days. Where this is not possible you will be informed in writing of the reason for the delay before the response deadline, together with the date you can expect to receive a full response.

When you receive the outcome you will also receive an equalities monitoring form which we ask you to complete and return to us to help us to make sure that no-one is discriminated against when accessing our services and to ensure everyone is treated fairly and equally.

Welsh Language Complaints

Complaints relating to the Welsh language or to compliance with the Welsh language service delivery and policy standards, as applied to the Council, will be dealt with in the same way as any other complaints received and will be responded to in accordance with the Welsh language standards.

Staff are aware of the requirements of the standards with training sessions provided as part of the induction process and periodic awareness raising campaigns.

Complaints relating to the receipt of an unsatisfactory service, where it is considered the Council has treated the Welsh language less favourably than the English language or where there is a claim of interference with your freedom to use Welsh can also be directed to the Welsh Language Commissioner:

Welsh Language Commissioner
Market Chambers
5–7 St Mary Street
Cardiff
CF10 1AT

Phone: 0345 6033 221

E-mail: post@welshlanguagecommissioner.wales

Complaints received via the Welsh Language Commissioner will be dealt in accordance with the Commissioner's own complaints process.

Dealing with your complaint (Stage 2)

We will respond to you in the same way as you communicated with us (e.g. if you complained by email in Welsh, we would respond to you by email in Welsh) unless you inform us that you have particular requirements.

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 complaint in an open and honest way and we will make sure that your dealings with us in the future do not suffer just because you have made a complaint.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your complaint if you tell us about it within 6 months. This is because it's better to look into a complaint while the

issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.

In exceptional circumstances, we may look at complaints which are brought to our attention later than this. However, you will have to let us know 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 enable us to consider it properly.

If you are making a complaint on behalf of somebody else, we will need their agreement for you to act on their behalf. This can be done by completing the ['Representative Authorisation'](#) Section which is part of the Comments Compliments and Complaints Form

Investigation of Complaints

Your complaint will be looked into by the relevant complaints officer for the service / service area and if your complaint is straightforward, the complaints officer will respond to you. However, in certain cases we may appoint an independent investigator.

The person who is investigating your complaint will firstly aim to establish the facts. The extent of the investigation will depend on the complexity of the issues you have raised. 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'll look at relevant evidence which could include files, notes of conversations, letters, emails or whatever may be relevant to your particular complaint. If necessary, we'll talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies, any legal entitlement and guidance.

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 is important that you tell us. Where it is necessary to disclose your identity to another person in order to investigate the complaint then it is important that you tell us if you do not want this to happen. Depending on the nature of your complaint it may be necessary to obtain your permission to access your personal records. If permission is not provided then we will explain that this will have an effect on the ability to conduct a thorough investigation.

We will set out our understanding of your complaint and ask you to confirm that we are right. It would be helpful if you could tell us what outcome you're hoping for.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you're 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.

We will aim to resolve complaints 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.

What if there is more than one body involved

If your complaint involves more than one body (e.g. a housing association and the Council regarding a noise nuisance) we will work with them to decide who should take the lead in dealing with your complaint and you will then be given the name of that person.

If the complaint is about a body working on our behalf (e.g. a company contracted by the Council), you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, if you want to complain formally, we will look into this ourselves and respond to you.

Outcome of your complaint

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we find using the communication method agreed. If necessary, we will produce a longer report. We'll explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that the service department got it wrong, we'll tell you what went wrong and why it happened.

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 got it wrong, 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 as soon as practicable if that is 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 will usually aim to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had got it right.

Learning lessons

We take your complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we've made. Our Senior Management Team and Cabinet/Cabinet Boards consider a summary of all complaints quarterly and a detailed annual complaints report.

We share summary (anonymised) information on complaints received and outcomes with the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales as part of our commitment to accountability and learning.

Where there is a need for significant change, the service / service area will develop an action plan setting out what they will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it.

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.

We have a separate policy to manage situations when we find that someone's actions are unacceptable.

If you need further help

Our staff will aim to help you make your concerns known. If you need extra assistance, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help.

If you have a disability which may make it difficult for you to communicate with us please let us know what would help us overcome any barriers you may

face (e.g. large font, more time to respond, different coloured paper)

This complaints policy can be used by everyone but if you are under the age of 18 and need help you can contact the Meic helpline

- Phone 0808 802 3456
- Website www.meiccymru.org

or the Children's Commissioner for Wales:

- Phone 0808 801 1000
- Email post@childcomwales.org.uk
- Website www.childcom.org.uk

The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales

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 public bodies and can look into your complaint if you believe that you, 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
- Website: www.ombudsman.wales
- Post: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae,
Pencoed CF35 5LJ

There are also other organisations that consider complaints. We can advise you about such organisations.

Comments Compliment and Complaints Form

Please Note:

If you are filling this form in on behalf of someone else, please also complete Section B. The person you are complaining on behalf of should complete the Representative Authorisation form (Section C) to confirm that you have the authority to act their behalf.

Section A: Your details

Name of the department/section/service/person the complaint is about:

Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms (if other please state)	
Last name:	
Forename(s):	
Please indicate which of the following is your preferred method of communication	
Address and postcode:	
Daytime contact number:	
Mobile contact number:	
Email address:	

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 can help you.

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

Their name in full:	
Their address and postcode:	
What is your relationship to them?	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?	

Section C: Representative Authorisation

I (please insert full name of complainant)

of.....(please insert full address of complainant)

Confirm that I have authorised:

..... (please insert the full name of the person who is submitting a complaint on your behalf)

to submit a complaint with the Council about

.....
.....
.....

and understand that my representative may receive personal information relating to my complaint as part of the Council's response.

Signed.....

Date.....

Section D: About your complaint

(Please continue your answers to the following questions on a separate sheet(s) if necessary).

1. Name of the department/section/service you are complaining about:

2. What do you think they did wrong, or failed to do?

3. Describe how you personally have suffered or have been affected:

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

5. When did you first become aware of the problem?

6. Have you already put your concern to the staff responsible for delivering the service? If so, please give brief details of how and when you did so:

7. If it is more than six months since you first became aware of the problem, please say why you have not complained before now:

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

Signature:

Date:

Section E: Comment and Compliment Form

Please provide details of your compliment or comment below

Thank you for providing this information.

When completed, please:

- hand in to either Neath or Port Talbot Civic Centre
- post to (for the attention of the service / service area concerned):
Neath Port Talbot Council
Civic Centre
Port Talbot
SA13 1PJ
- e-mail it back to the officer who sent the information to you.

Impact Assessment - First Stage

1. Details of the initiative

Initiative description and summary: Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy – Revised 2021

The Policy was revised to take into account new guidance from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales which aims to bring practices back into broad alignment – providing basic standards, a common language and a set of principles to underpin how complaints are handled throughout public services.

The Policy will ensure compliance with a model complaints handling procedure for public service providers in Wales (issued by PSOW) and will ensure a consistent approach and understanding of the handling of comments, compliments and complaints across the Council.

Service Area: Corporate Policy & Performance Management

Directorate: Chief Executive's Office

2. Does the initiative affect:

	Yes	No
Service users	✓	
Staff	✓	
Wider community	✓	
Internal administrative process only		

3. Does the initiative impact on people because of their:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't Know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence)/How might it impact?
Age			✓			The revision of the policy reframes the process of making comments compliments or complaints. As a result it is anticipated that the impact will be negligible for many who share protected characteristics. Some positive impacts are likely particularly with the inclusion of details on obtaining further assistance, for those under 18. This will help ensure that the Council hears from anyone, regardless of age, who is aggrieved/ complimentary as well as ensuring the process is as accessible as possible.
Disability			✓			As stated above there will be little or no impact for those who share this characteristic. However, the reframing of the policy does provide a clearer focus on placing the complainant and their needs at the forefront of the process; determining the most appropriate method of communication and if there are any particular requirements. This will help ensure the process is as accessible as possible.
Gender Reassignment			✓			The revision of the policy reframes the process of making comments compliments or complaints. As a result it is anticipated that the impact will be negligible for many who share protected characteristics.
Marriage/Civil Partnership			✓			The revision of the policy reframes the process of making comments compliments or complaints. As a result it is anticipated that the impact will be negligible for many who share protected characteristics.
Pregnancy/Maternity			✓			The revision of the policy reframes the process of making comments compliments or complaints. As a result it is anticipated that the impact will be negligible for many who share protected characteristics.

Race			✓			The revision of the policy reframes the process of making comments compliments or complaints. As a result it is anticipated that the impact will be negligible for many who share protected characteristics.
Religion/Belief			✓			The revision of the policy reframes the process of making comments compliments or complaints. As a result it is anticipated that the impact will be negligible for many who share protected characteristics.
Sex			✓			The revision of the policy reframes the process of making comments compliments or complaints. As a result it is anticipated that the impact will be negligible for many who share protected characteristics.
Sexual orientation			✓			The revision of the policy reframes the process of making comments compliments or complaints. As a result it is anticipated that the impact will be negligible for many who share protected characteristics.

4. Does the initiative impact on:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence used) / How might it impact?
People's opportunities to use the Welsh language	✓					<p>Communication be it in Welsh or English is welcomed and contacting the Council as part of this policy is no different. Comments, compliments and complaints are welcomed in any language and will be dealt with within the same timescales.</p> <p>Complaints relating to the Welsh language can be directed to the Council and will be dealt with in accordance with the policy. However, where a complainant refers the matter to the</p>

						Welsh Language Commissioner the complaint will be dealt with under the Commissioner's own complaints policy.
Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English	✓					In accordance with the Welsh language standards as applied to the Council 'we welcome correspondence in Welsh and will deal with Welsh and English correspondence to the same standards and timescales.'

5. Does the initiative impact on biodiversity:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity		✓				It is not anticipated that the policy will have an impact on the maintenance or enhancement of biodiversity
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.		✓				It is not anticipated that the policy will have an impact on the resilience of eco systems.

6. Does the initiative embrace the sustainable development principle (5 ways of working):

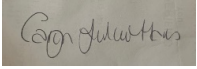

	Yes	No	Details
Long term - how the initiative supports the long term well-being of people	✓		<p>The Ombudsman’s new guidance aims to bring practices back into broad alignment – providing basic standards, a common language and a set of principles to underpin how complaints are handled throughout public services.</p> <p>The Council’s revised policy is a simpler document enabling the public to clearly understand how to make a comment, compliment or complaint, thereby ensuring it remains fit for purpose for the future.</p>
Integration - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives	✓		<p>The policy underpins our wellbeing objectives by ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to address any concerns/complaints that relate to the provision of services. Monitoring of the policy will ensure that we learn from our mistakes and where appropriate revise our services which will in turn help ensure we continue to meet our objectives.</p> <p>The policy, along with our other governance policies, helps ensure that members of our communities are able to access services, be as independent as possible and ensure that they are able to participate.</p>
Involvement - how people have been involved in developing the initiative	✓		<p>The policy was reviewed by the Council’s Complaints Officers Group to ensure compliance with the above model policy and to ensure a consistent approach and understanding of the handling of comments, compliments and complaints across the Council.</p> <p>The policy was shared with the Head of the Complaints Standards (Complaints Standards Authority – Public Services Ombudsman for Wales) and the feedback received was taken into account when finalising the revised policy.</p> <p>More generally the PSOW undertook extensive consultation prior to issuing the model complaints handling procedure for listed authorities in Wales.</p>

Collaboration - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions	✓		The PSOW has worked to bring complaints practices into broad alignment across Wales – providing basic standards, a common language and a set of principles to underpin how complaints are handled throughout public services. As a result this underpinning policy will be contribute to the Council’s wellbeing objectives and will ensure that a similar approach is taken by all public services across Wales.
Prevention - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse	✓		Ensuring we learn any lessons as a consequence of comments, compliments or complaints received we will ensure that processes and procedures are put in place to avoid issues reoccurring or getting worse.

7. Declaration - based on above assessment (tick as appropriate):

A full impact assessment (second stage) is not required	✓
Reasons for this conclusion	
<p>The Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy was reviewed to ensure compliance with the model that has been specified by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and to ensure a consistent approach and understanding of the handling of comments, compliments and complaints across the Council.</p> <p>The changes the review necessitated have not been significant and consequently impacts identified have been minimal. Positive impacts in relation to age and disability as well as in relation to the Welsh language have been strengthened but not to significant levels to justify a full assessment.</p>	
A full impact assessment (second stage) is required	
Reasons for this conclusion	

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	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Caryn Furlow-Harris	Strategic Manager – Policy & Executive Support		2nd March 2021
Signed off by	Sheenagh Rees	Head of Service/Director		10th March 2021

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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