

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>

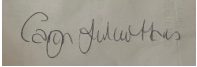

Collaboration - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions	✓		The PSOW has worked to bring complaints practices into broad alignment across Wales – providing basic standards, a common language and a set of principles to underpin how complaints are handled 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	

--

	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