



NEWTOWN AND LLANLLWCHAIARN TOWN COUNCIL CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS POLICY*

1 Introduction

1.1 On 29 July 2011, the Welsh Government issued the Model Concerns and Complaints Policy and Guidance. The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales urges public service providers to adopt the policy and guidance within their organisations.

1.2 A complaint is:

- an expression of dissatisfaction or concern either written or spoken or made by any other communication method
- made by one or more members of the public
- about the council's action or lack of action
- or about the standard of service provided
- all of which require a response.

1.3 A complaint is not:

- an initial request for a service, such as reporting a faulty street light
- an appeal against a 'properly made' decision by the council
- a means to seek change to a 'properly made' policy decision
- a means for lobbying groups/organisations to seek to promote a cause.

2. The Policy

2.1 Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn Town Council is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints the public may have about our service. We aim to clarify any issues about which they are not sure. If possible, we'll put right any mistakes we may have made. We will provide any service they are entitled to which we have failed to deliver. If we got something wrong, we'll apologise and where possible and we'll try to put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

3. Informal Resolution

3.1 If possible, we believe it's 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're 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 the Town Clerks attention. If the member of staff can't help, they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

4. How to express concern or complain formally

4.1 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. See appendix 1 Concern or Complaint Form
- You can get in touch with us on telephone 01686 625544, if you want to make your complaint over the phone.
- You can use the form on our website at www.newtown.org.uk
- You can e-mail us at townclerk@newtown.org.uk
- You can write a letter to us at the following address

The Cross
Broad Street
Newtown
Powys
SY16 2BB

5. Dealing with your concern

5.1 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.

5.2 Normally, we will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within 6 months. This is because it's better to look into your concerns while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.

5.3 If you're expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we'll need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

6. Investigation

6.1 We will

- tell you who is looking after your concern or complaint

- set out your understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that we've got it right
- we will also ask you what outcome you hope for
- if there is a simple solution, like providing a service you are entitled to, we will offer to provide that service rather than investigate and produce a report
- we aim to deal with the majority of concerns within 20 working days but if your complaint is more complex we will
 - let you know within the time why it may take longer
 - let you know how long we expect it to take
 - let your know where we have reached in the investigation.
 - and give you regular updates.

7.0 Outcome

7.1 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
- explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

7.2 If we find that we got it wrong, we'll tell you what and why it happened. We'll show how the mistake affected you. 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.

8.0 Ombudsman

8.1 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.

8.2 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:

- phone: 0845 601 0987
- e-mail: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk
- the website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk
- writing to: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed CF35 5LJ

9.0 Learning Lessons

9.1 We take our concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we've made. At least annually a review of all complaints will be carried out by the Finance and General Purposes Committee (or their successors).

9.2 Where there is a need for change, we will develop an action plan setting out what changes 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.

This Council adopted this Policy for Concerns & Complaints at its Finance and General Purposes meeting on

.....13/4/15.....

Amended or Reviewed	Date	Version No	Who
Approved	13/4/15	130415/1	Phil Watkins
Reviewed	24/10/16	130415/1	Richard Edwards (Mayor)
Reviewed	23/10/17	130415/1	Sue Newham (Mayor)

Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn Town Council Concern/Complaint Form

A: Your Details

Surname:	Forename(s):	Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/if other please state:
Address and postcode:		
Your e-mail address:		
Daytime contact phone number		
Mobile number:		

Please state by which of the above you would prefer us to contact you:

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Your requirements: 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 might help you.

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. If you are filling this in on behalf of someone else, please fill in section B. Please note that before taking forward the complaint we will need to satisfy ourselves that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned.

B: Making a complaint on behalf of someone else: Their details

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

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C: About your concern/complaint (Please continue your answers to the following questions on a separate sheet(s) if necessary)

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

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

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

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

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

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

C.7 If it is more than 6 months (12 months for health concerns) since you became first aware of the problem, please give the reason why you have not complained before now.

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

Signature:

Date:

When you have completed this form, please send it to:

Town Clerk
The Cross
Broad Street
Newtown
Powys
SY16 2BB