

GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL

VALE of GLAMORGAN



BRO MORGANNWG



SOCIAL SERVICES

Complaints: How to Be Heard

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How to be heard

Any member of the public, including a child, who has received, or was entitled to receive a service from Social Services, may make a complaint.

You may make a complaint on behalf of someone else, where that person:

- Is a child
- Has requested you to act on their behalf
- Lacks capacity
- Has died.

We aim for high standards but sometimes things do go wrong. Unless you tell us, we will not know that you are unhappy.

This factsheet explains how, with your help and that of the staff working with you, we can sort out your complaint. Guidance from the Welsh Government tells us how we must sort out complaints.

What is a complaint?

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 a public service provider's actions or lack of action; or
- About the standard of service provided

A complaint is not:

- An initial request for a service
- A formal review or appeal against a decision or determination
- A means to seek change to legislation or a 'properly made' policy decision
- A means for lobbying groups / organisations to seek to promote a cause

Looking after your personal information

If you make a complaint, we will respect your right to confidentiality. Although we will need to share the information you give us with others who might be dealing with your complaint, we will only do this if necessary. We will not pass on any information unless we have to do so by law and will only pass on as much as is necessary. Any information provided will be handled in line with the General Data Protection Regulations which came into effect in May 2018. We have a Privacy Notice Leaflet which explains how we use personal information about you and how we protect your privacy. For a copy of this leaflet, please ring Contact One Vale on 01446 700111. You can access the Vale of Glamorgan Council Corporate Privacy Notice on our website: www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

The complaint process

A complaint should usually be made within 12 months of becoming aware of the problem. A complaint can be made in writing (letter or email) or orally (by phone or in-person). There are **two stages** to the process.

Stage 1 - Local Resolution

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within **2 working days**. In an attempt to resolve matters, we will offer to discuss your complaint with you (either face to face or by telephone). This discussion must take place within **10 working days** of the date of acknowledgement.

Following the discussion, we will write to you within **5 working days**. If you are not satisfied with our response, you can ask for it to progress to **Stage 2**.

Stage 2 - Formal Investigation

Within 5 working days of your request for your complaint to be formally investigated, the Complaints Officer will compile a formal written record of your complaint and the outcome that you would like to achieve.

The investigation will not start until we both agree on what is to be investigated.

The complaint will be investigated by an Independent Investigator (not an employee of the Vale of Glamorgan Council). An Independent Person will also be appointed for representations from Children and Young People Services.

The Independent Investigator will investigate the complaint:

- by undertaking a fact-finding exercise
- interviewing those concerned
- prepare a report for the local authority.

The local authority will consider the investigation report and determine whether or not the complaint is upheld and the action to be taken as a consequence. The Director of Social Services will then write to you.

The formal investigation must be completed within 25 working days (from the start date). If your complaint is more complex than first anticipated or if, for some other reason, the Independent Investigating Officer feels that the investigation will take longer than the specified time, they will discuss this with you. Procedure states that the investigation can be extended up to 6 months.

Can I ask someone to help me with my complaint?

You have the right to an advocate (someone who will help you state your point of view). If you are under 18, we will usually find you an advocate. If you are over 18, we will tell you where to find one.

If a citizen needs help to raise a concern, **Llais – your voice in health and social care** can help them do this. Llais is an independent body, and its free Advocacy service can provide information, advice and support to members of the public who may wish to raise a concern.

Llais can support citizens to raise a concern and give advice on the most appropriate course of action. Citizens can contact your local Llais office at the following address:

Llais – Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan
Pro Copy Business Centre (Rear), Parc Ty Glas, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF14 9DE
Telephone: 02920 750112
Email: cardiffandvaleenquiries@llaiscymru.org

What if I'm not sure who to complain to?

You may have a complaint about a service we have arranged for you with another care provider, such as a residential care home, a home care agency, or a day service. Each organisation will have its own complaints process, and we will usually direct you to send your complaint to them. If your complaint is about something we have provided jointly with another organisation, e.g. a package of care from both health and social care staff, we will look at your complaint together and usually send you one response.

To contact our complaints officer:

Vale of Glamorgan Social Services,
Ffordd Y Mileniwm, Barry, CF63 4RT
Telephone: 01446 704800
Email: socialservicescomplaints@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

To fill out our complaints form/submit a complaint, please scan this QR code:



What can I do if I'm still not happy?

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you can ask the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales to look at your complaint.

Public Service Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, Bridgend, CF35 5LJ
Telephone: 0300 790 0203 (calls charged at local rate)
Email: ask@ombudsman.wales
www.ombudsman.wales

Could I complain to anyone else?

The **Care Inspectorate Wales** (CIW) regulates all care services in Wales. You can complain directly to them about social care received from care homes and home care agencies, as well as services run by the Council.

Care Inspectorate Wales
South East Wales Regional Office
Welsh Government
Rhydycar Business Park, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 1UZ
Telephone: 0300 7900 126
www.careinspectorate.wales
Email: ciw@gov.wales

Social Care Wales regulates professional social care workers and has the power to look into allegations of misconduct.

Social Care Wales
South Gate House, Wood Street, Cardiff, CF10 1EW
Telephone: 0300 30 33 444 www.socialcare.wales Email: info@socialcare.wales

This information may also be provided, by request, in other languages, in larger print and audio version. Please contact the Performance and Information Team on Tel: 01446 704814 to make arrangements.

