

Have Your Say

Customer Complaints and Compliments Procedure



If you would like this information in large print, Braille or on audiotape please phone **01267 234567**

If you would like more detailed information about any part of the complaints process please contact the Complaints and Compliments Team on **01267 224488**, who will be happy to help.

You can find information about services provided by Carmarthenshire County Council on our website at: **www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk**

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Your feedback is important to us

We want the services we provide to be the best possible and that's why your feedback is important to us.

You may feel unhappy with the service you receive or you may want to make a suggestion that helps us improve it. We also hope that there are times when we do something well.

Complaints

We recognise that everyone has a right to make a complaint and we can learn valuable lessons from them. Your complaint may well improve things for everyone.

Compliments

We would like to know when you have been impressed or pleased with our service. We can use these examples to thank our staff who gave the good service, and share best practice amongst our staff.

How to make your complaint or compliment

You can make a complaint or compliment in a number of ways. You can:

Telephone: 01267 234567

E-mail:

complaints@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

compliments@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Visit any of our Customer Service Centres at:

- Ty Elwyn, Llanelli
- 3 Spilman Street, Carmarthen
- Town Hall, Ammanford

You can use the form on our website

www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/complaintsandcompliments

Complete the pre-printed form (within this booklet)

Write a letter to:

Complaints and Compliments Team, Chief Executive's Department, Carmarthenshire County Council, County Hall, Carmarthen SA31 1JP

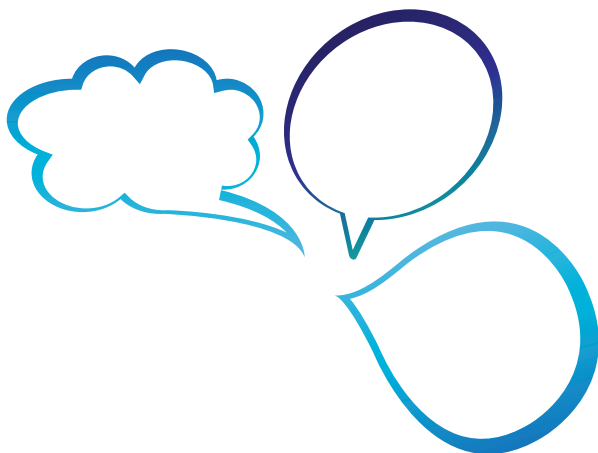
Speak to your local County Councillor. For a list of councillors contact the Democratic Services Unit on **01267 224208** or visit the Council website www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk

You can **ask any member of staff** to record your complaint or compliment

By **fax** on **01267 224636**

By **textphone** on **01267 228659**

If you have any special requirements to assist you to make a complaint or compliment please contact **01267 234567**.



When to use this procedure

When you express your concerns or complain to us, we will usually respond in the way we explain in this booklet. However, sometimes you may have a statutory right of appeal (e.g. against a refusal to grant you planning permission) so, rather than investigate your concern, we will explain to you how you can appeal.

We have a separate leaflet that explains our **Social Services Department's** procedures for handling complaints. If you would like a copy of the leaflet, please contact the Complaints and Compliments Team on the details listed in this booklet.

Have you asked us yet?

If you are approaching us for a service for the first time, (e.g. reporting a faulty street light, requesting an appointment etc) then this policy doesn't apply. You should first give us a chance to respond to your request, please telephone **01267 234567**.

Time Limit for receipt of complaints

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.

We may exceptionally be able to look at concerns which are brought to our attention later than this. However, you will have to give us strong reasons 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 allow us to consider it properly.

Authorisation

If you would like a representative other than your local county councillor, solicitor, Assembly Member (AM), Member of Parliament (MP) or Member of European Parliament (MEP) to act on your behalf, the Council will require confirmation that you have given permission to deal with your affairs.

What if there is more than one body involved?

If your complaint covers more than one body (e.g. Housing Association and Council regarding noise nuisance) we will usually work with them to decide who should take a lead in dealing with your concerns.

If the complaint is about an organisation working on behalf of the Council you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, if you want to express your concern or complaint formally, we will look into this ourselves and respond to you.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

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 or contact the Council as soon as possible. We will look into the matter and try to resolve it for you. If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern then the member of staff will draw them to the Complaints Team's attention. If the member of staff can't help, they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

Stage 2: Formal Investigation

If you were not happy with the response given at stage 1, you should either request to the member of staff you are in contact with to progress the complaint to stage 2, or you should contact the Complaints Team.

If it is likely that a full response will be made within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint it will not be acknowledged.

If it is unlikely that a full response will be made within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint, the Complaints Team will get back to you within 3 working days with the name of the Independent Senior Manager who will investigate your complaint at stage 2.

If your concern is straightforward, we'll 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 organisation.

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the majority within 10 working days. If your complaint is more complex, we will let you know within 10 working days why we think it may take longer to investigate and tell you how long we expect it to take.

The person who is investigating your concerns will firstly aim 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.

Outcome

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we have found. We'll explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we got it wrong, we'll tell you what 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 didn't do something well, we'll aim to put it right.

How to contact the Ombudsman

We hope that our complaints system will help you to sort out any problems quickly and successfully. However, if we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman expects you to bring your concerns to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right. The Ombudsman is independent of all government bodies.

The contact details for the Ombudsman are below:

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae
Pencoed
Bridgend
CF35 5LJ

Tel.No. **(01656) 641150**
E-mail: **ask@ombudsman-wales.org**
Website: **www.ombudsman-wales.org**

There are also other organisations that consider complaints. For example, the Welsh Language Board about services in Welsh. We can advise you about such organisations.

Learning lessons

We take your concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we've made. Where there is a need for change, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it by.

Complaint / Comment / Compliment Form

Customer

Title:Name:

Address:

.....

.....

..... Post code:

Phone no:

E-mail:

Representative (If applicable)

Title:Name:

Address:

.....

.....

..... Post code:

Phone no:

E-mail:

Which is the best method of communicating with you?

Letter / email / phone (please circle one)

Nature of correspondence

Complaint / Compliment / Comment (please circle one)

Name of the department/division/service area:

.....

Date:

Your complaint, compliment or comment is:

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(Please continue on separate sheet if necessary)

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

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Have you raised this concern before? Yes/No

If yes, brief details of how, when & complaint number?

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We value your feedback and are happy to respond to you, however, if you do not wish to receive a response, please tick here:

Please send form to:

Freepost RRZH – HXZC – AGLE, Chief Executive’s
Department, Carmarthenshire County Council, County Hall
Carmarthen SA31 1JP **(You do not need a stamp).**