

Vale of Glamorgan Council Social  
Services

# Social Services Complaints How to be Heard

How to register a complaint about  
a service received



# This leaflet tells you:

- Who can make a complaint
- What a complaint is
- How we look after your personal information
- How to make a complaint
- What happens after you make a complaint
- What to do if you are not sure who you can complain to
- What to do if you are still not happy
- If you can complain to anyone else

This information may also be provided on request in other languages, in larger print and audio version. Please contact the Social Services Complaints Team on Tel: 01446 704800 to make arrangements.

# 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. A complaint can also be made on behalf of someone else if they are a child, have asked you to act for them, lack the capacity to do so themselves, or have died.

We aim to provide high standards of service, but we recognise that things may not always go as expected. Unless you tell us when you are unhappy, we may not be aware of any issues. This factsheet explains how, with your help and the support of our staff, we can address your complaint, in line with Welsh Government guidance on handling complaints.

## What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern about a public service. It can be made by one or more members of the public, either in writing, verbally, or through another form of communication. It may relate to the actions or inaction of a service provider, or to the standard of service received.

A complaint does not include an initial request for a service, a formal review or appeal against a decision, a request to change legislation or an established policy decision, or a concern raised by a group or organisation to promote a particular 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 at: [Website Privacy Notice](#)



# How to make a complaint

A complaint should usually be made within 12 months of becoming aware of the problem. A complaint can be made by completing the online Web form: [Social Services Complaint - Vale of Glamorgan Council](#)

Alternatively, you can write to us (letter or email) or orally (by phone or in person). There are two stages to the process.

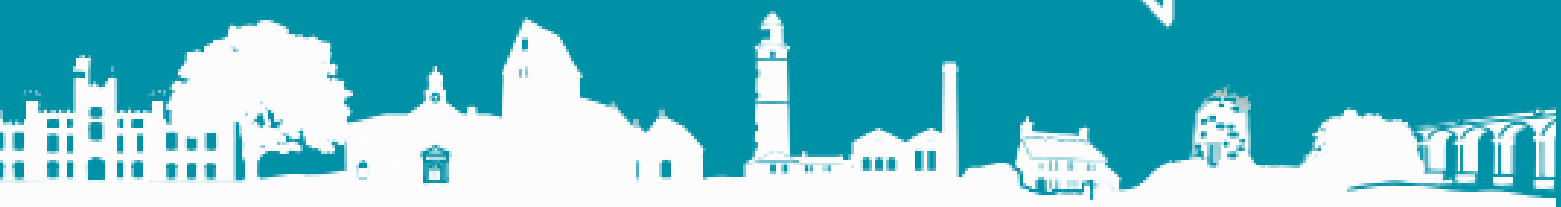
## What happens next?

### 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.

*\*Please be aware that occasionally, it may take longer than 10 working days from the date of acknowledgement for a discussion to take place due to availability of the Complainant, advocate (if required) and professionals attending.*



# Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with our response, you can ask for it to progress to 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 you to raise a concern and give advice on the most appropriate course of action.

**You can contact your local Llais office at the following address:**

**Llais – Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan**

**Crown Buildings**

**Cathays Park**

**Cardiff**

**CF10 3NQ**

**Telephone: 02920 750112**

**Email: [cardiffandvaleenquiries@llaiscymru.org](mailto:cardiffandvaleenquiries@llaiscymru.org)**

**Website: [Llais Wales](#) | [Llais](#)**



# 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 Complaints,

Civic Offices

Holton Road

Barry,

CF63 4RU

Telephone: 01446 704800

Email: [socialservicescomplaints@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:socialservicescomplaints@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

Website: [Social Services Complaints](#)

To fill out our complaints form/submit a complaint, please visit: [Social Services Complaint - Vale of Glamorgan Council](#)



# 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](mailto:ask@ombudsman.wales)

Website: [www.ombudsman.wales](http://www.ombudsman.wales)

## Can 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

Rhydyar Business Park, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 1UZ

Telephone: 0300 7900 126

Website: [www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

Email: [ciw@gov.wales](mailto: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

Website: [www.socialcare.wales](http://www.socialcare.wales)

Email: [info@socialcare.wales](mailto:info@socialcare.wales)