



Welsh Language Concerns and Complaints Procedure

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg
This document is also available in large print and other formats upon request.

About this procedure

This procedure applies to members of the public receiving or seeking a service in Welsh from the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about the Welsh language services we provide.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 established a legal framework to impose duties on certain organisations to comply with standards in relation to the Welsh language by way of sub-legislation (Welsh Language Regulation Standards).

The Welsh Language Commissioner issued a legal Compliance Notice to all Councils which specifies how we must provide and improve services for Welsh speakers. You can read our Compliance notice [here](#).

Information relating to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's implementation of the standards and annual reports can be viewed on [our website](#).

When to use this procedure

Use this procedure if you have a complaint or concern regarding services provided in Welsh or how the Council has operated through the medium of Welsh or matters relating to the Council's implementation of the Welsh Language Standards.

Complaints or concerns regarding the Welsh Language will follow the timeframes and steps highlighted in the Council's [Corporate Concerns and Complaints Policy](#). You can find this and more information about complaints on the Council's website [here](#).

We deal with complaints regarding the Welsh language, Social Services, schools, and councillors separately to other complaints. We have created this separate procedure to explain how we deal with Welsh language complaints.

How to complain or express concern

- Call Contact One Vale on 01446 70011 to make your complaint by phone
- Email contactonevale@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk with your complaint
- Email the Welsh Language Officer directly on ehannah@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
- Write to us at: Welsh Language Complaints, Welsh Language Officer, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry, CF63 4RU

We will pass complaints about how we have used the Welsh language or about Welsh language services made via the corporate complaint portal to the Welsh Language Officer to deal with.

The Welsh Language Officer must be made aware of any complaints relating to the Welsh language. Teams and services may be able to deal with the complaint themselves and inform the Welsh Language Officer of the complaint and outcome; consult with the Welsh Language Officer; or if appropriate, ask the Welsh Language Officer to deal with the complaint. This will all depend on the nature of the complaint.

Please include your full name and contact details, including email address.

Please also let us know if you have any requirements, for example if you have a disability.

You have the right to have your concern or complaint dealt with in Welsh. You can submit your concern or complaint in Welsh or English. Please let us know if you would rather communicate with us in Welsh.

Resolution

We will aim to resolve complaints relating to compliance with the Welsh Language Standards in line with the times and steps described in the Council's Corporate Concerns and Complaints Policy.

We will make sure that the investigating officers consult with any relevant legislation before determining whether the authority or service area has acted in accordance with legislative requirements or in line with approved policies and procedures.

We ask that the Welsh Language Officer deals with complaints relating to compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. However, if this is not possible or if a complaint covers more than one area, we request staff closely consult with the Welsh Language Officer to ensure that all necessary steps are followed and details are recorded correctly.

Complaints received through the corporate complaints' portal are assigned to the Welsh Language Officer.

Complaints received directly by other departments may be dealt with by that department, depending on the nature of the complaint. Notify the Welsh Language Officer of any complaints that relate to the Welsh language so that we can accurately report in line with our compliance notice and ensure that we rectify issues raised.

Stage 1 – Informal

We will aim to resolve a Welsh language complaint quickly and informally with the relevant service area.

We will aim to respond within five working days.

Sometimes the specific issues in a complaint may need clarification. In these circumstances, we may write to you to check the issues identified are correct or to ask for further information.

Stage 2 – Investigation/Formal

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible.

We will aim to respond within five working days and hope to resolve most concerns within twenty working days.

If your complaint is complex, we will:

- let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate;
- tell you how long we expect it to take;
- let you know where we have reached with the investigation, and
- give you regular updates, including telling you if our original timescale will change.

We may need to take further steps to investigate your concerns or complaint. The extent of this investigation will depend on how complex and serious the issues are.

Sometimes we may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns. We may write to you for more detail about your concern or complaint.

We will look at relevant evidence. This may include files, notes of conversations, letters, emails, or anything else of relevance to your particular concern.

There may be rare occasions where the requirement to comply with a particular standard has been postponed via a challenge or appeal. In such cases, we will let you know and provide further advice. This may impact on resolution timescales.

Outcome

We will let you know what we have found. This will usually be by email but could be by post if this is your preferred method of contact. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we made a mistake, we will tell you what and why it happened. We will aim to show how the mistake affected you.

If we find there is a fault in our systems or how we do things, we will tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.

Welsh Language Commissioner

There are other organisations that consider complaints.

If you have a concern or complaint about the Welsh language or services in Welsh, you can contact the Welsh Language Commissioner:

- phone: 0845 6033 221

- email: post@cyg-wlc.wales
- post: The Welsh Language Commissioner, Market Chambers, 5-7 St Mary Street, Cardiff, CF10 1AT
- website: <https://www.welshlanguagecommissioner.wales/>

We receive concerns and complaints directly from the Welsh Language Commissioner. These can be following contact from a member of the public or following their own investigation. We aim to deal with these concerns and complaints in the same manner and timescales as detailed in this policy.

We log and report on concerns and complaints reported by the Welsh Language Commissioner in the same way as those made by members of the public.

The Welsh Language Officer deals with concerns and complaints reported by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

What we expect from you

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a concern or a complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood, and respected. However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We therefore expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands, or unreasonable persistence. We will not tolerate discriminatory behaviour on account of someone's actual or perceived protected characteristics including racist, homophobic, transphobic, or biphobic language or actions. We have a separate policy to manage situations where we find that someone's actions towards us are unacceptable.

Learning lessons

We take your concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we have made. The number of Welsh language complaints is reported in the Council's annual Welsh language monitoring report which can be viewed on our [website](#). Our Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees also consider our responses to Welsh language complaints on an annual basis.

When there is a need for change, we will set out what we will do, who will do it, and our plan of action to implement change.

Staff training and awareness

We promote use of the Welsh language and provide training. We provide advice, guidance, and resources to staff regarding the Welsh language, courses, and standards.

We periodically run campaigns and remind users of our duties and obligations under the Welsh Language Standards. We circulate this information through emails and staff newsletters.

We have a section of the staff intranet dedicated to the Welsh language, the Hyb. This includes a dedicated page with details of how to comply with the Welsh Language Standards.

The Hyb contains information for staff about complaints relating to the Welsh language as well as a guidance document for staff.

We arranged for this procedure and the guidance to be shared with staff across the Council who deal with complaints.

What we do

We check and monitor that the Council operates and delivers services in line with our duties and obligations under the Welsh Language Standards.

We log all Welsh language complaints received by the Council against the relevant category of standards i.e. service delivery, policy making, or operational standards.

We review all Welsh language complaints received directly by the Council, the Welsh Language Officer, and from the Welsh Language Commissioner, and we report on all Welsh language complaints in the Council's annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report.