



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
**MERTHYR TUDFUL**  
**MERTHYR TYDFIL**  
County Borough Council

# **Social Services, Complaints Policy**

Version 1.0  
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## **Complaints 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 or 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.

## To contact our Complaints office

**Complaints Officer, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Castle Street, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8AN.**

**Telephone: 01685 725000**

**Email: [mtcbccomplaints@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:mtcbccomplaints@merthyr.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). We will endeavour to do this within **10 working days** of the date of acknowledgement. We will endeavour to write to you within **15 working days**.

If you are not satisfied with our response, you can ask for it to progress to **Stage 2**.

### Stage 2- Formal Investigation

We will compile a formal written record of your complaint and the outcome that you would like to achieve within 5 working days.

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 Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council). An Independent Person will also be appointed for representations from Children Services.

The Independent Investigator will investigate the complaint:

- by undertaking a fact finding exercise
- interviewing those concerned
- preparing a report for the Local Authority.

The Local Authority will consider the investigation report and the action to be taken as a consequence. The Director of Social Services will then write to you.

We aim to respond to your complaint within 25 working days (from the start date). If this is not possible we will inform you. In any event, a response will be provided within 6 months.

Whilst it is recommended that you try to resolve your complaint informally at first, you have the right to ask for a complaint to be considered at this stage from the outset.

### **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) /**

**Fax: 01656 641199 Email: [ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk](mailto:ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk)**

### **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 endeavour to signpost you where to find one.

#### **Advocacy for Children and Young People**

**TGP, Voluntary Action Centre, 89-90 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil CF47**

**8UH Telephone: 01545 571865**

### **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 send your complaint to them and make sure they deal with it. We will tell you exactly what we are doing.

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 usually look at your complaint together and usually send you one response.

### **Could I complain to any one else?**

The **Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW)** 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 Standards Inspectorate Wales, South East Wales Regional Office,**

**Welsh Government Rhydycar Business Park, Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1UZ**

**Telephone: 0300 062 8888, Fax: 0300 062 8548, [www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk)**

**Email: [cssiw.southeast@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cssiw.southeast@wales.gsi.gov.uk)**

The **Care Council for Wales** regulates professional social care workers and has the power to look into allegations of misconduct.

Care Council for Wales, South Gate House, Wood Street,  
Cardiff CF10 1EW Telephone: 0300 303 3444, Fax: 029 2038  
4764, [www.ccwales.org.uk](http://www.ccwales.org.uk)

Email: [info@ccwales.org.uk](mailto:info@ccwales.org.uk)

The **Children's Commissioner for Wales** can support and advise children and young people on their rights.

**Children's Commissioner for Wales, Oystermouth House,  
Charter Court Phoenix Way, Llansamlet, Swansea SA7 FS**

Telephone: 0179 276 5600, Email: [post@childcomwales.org.uk](mailto:post@childcomwales.org.uk)

[www.childcomwales.org.uk](http://www.childcomwales.org.uk)

**Can I get advice or help?**

The following organisations may be able to help you in making a complaint. .

#### **General Advice**

**Merthyr Tydfil Citizens Advice Bureaux,**

**Tramroadside North, Merthyr Tydfil CF47 OAP**

Telephone: 01685 358111

#### **Mental Health**

**Advocacy Support Cymru, Brook House, 2 Lime Tree**

**Court, Mulberry Drive Cardiff Gate Business Park, Cardiff**

**CF23 8AB, Telephone: 02920 540444 Email:**

**[info@ascymru.org.uk](mailto:info@ascymru.org.uk)**

#### **Older People**

**Age Cymru , Ty John Pathy, 13/14 Neptune Court, Vanguard Way, Cardiff CF24 5PJ**

*This leaflet is can be made available in other formats upon request.*

*For more information please contact the Complaints Office on 01685 725000*