

BERRIEW COMMUNITY COUNCIL / CYNGOR CYMUNED ABERRIW

Concerns and Complaints Policy

Adopted on 13TH of April 2017

The Policy

Berriew Community Council is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about our service. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible, we'll put right any mistakes we may have made. We will provide any service you're entitled to which we have failed to deliver. If we got something wrong, we'll apologise and where possible we'll try to put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

When to use this policy

This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.

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 action or lack of action
- or about the standard of service provided
- which requires a response

A complaint is not:

- an initial request for a service, such as reporting a faulty street light
- an appeal against a "properly made" decision by a public body
- 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.

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. He or she will try to resolve it for you there and then. If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern, then the member of staff will draw them to our attention. If the member of staff can't help, they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation.

How to express concern or complain formally

You can express your concern in any of the ways below.

- You can ask for a copy of our form from the person with whom you are already in contact. Tell them that you want us to deal with your concern formally.
- You can get in touch with the Clerk on 01686 668182 if you want to make your complaint over the phone.

- You can use the form on page 4 & 5 on the website berriew.com
- You can e-mail us at berriewcommunitycouncil@hotmail.co.uk
- You can write a letter to us at the following address:
K Jones Clerk
Dol-Hafren
5 Caerhowel Meadows
Montgomery
Powys
SY15 6JF

Dealing with your concern

We will formally acknowledge your concern within **5 working days** and let you know how we intend to deal with it.

- We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any particular requirements – for example, if you have a disability.
- We will deal with your concern in an open and honest way.
- We will make sure that your dealings with us in the future do not suffer just because you have expressed a concern or made a complaint.

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. (In any event, regardless of the circumstances, we will not consider any concerns about matters that took place more than three years ago).

If you're expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we'll need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

Investigation

We will:

- tell you who is looking into your concern or complaint
- Let you know if your concern is straightforward
- set out to you our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that we've got it right.
- Ask you to tell us what outcome you're hoping for

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you're happy to accept this. For example, where you asked for a service and we see straight away that you should have had it, we will offer to provide the service rather than investigate and produce a report.

We will aim to resolve the majority of concerns/complaints within 20 working days. If your complaint is more 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

Outcome

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we have found in keeping with your preferred form of communication. This could be by letter or e-mail, for example. If necessary, we will produce a longer report. 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. We'll show how the mistake affected you.

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 got it wrong, we will always apologise.

Ombudsman

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman is independent to all government bodies and can look into your complaint if you believe that you personally, or the person on whose behalf you are complaining:

- have been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on the part of the body providing it
- have been disadvantaged personally by a service failure or have been treated unfairly

The Ombudsman expects you to bring your concerns to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right. You can contact the Ombudsman by:

- phone: 0845 601 0987
- e-mail: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk
- the website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk
- writing to: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales - 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed CF35 5LJ

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. Berriew Community Council will consider a summary of all complaints quarterly as well as details of any serious complaints.

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. We will let you know when changes we've promised have been made.

Berriew Community Council / Cyngor Cymuned Aberriw

Model Concern/Complaint form

a) Your Details

Surname:	Forenames(s):	Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/if other please state:
Address and postcode		
Your e-mail address		
Daytime contact phone number		
Mobile number		

Please state by which of the above methods you would prefer us to contact you

Your requirements: if our usual way of dealing with complaints makes it difficult for you to use our service, for example if English or Welsh is not your first language or you need to engage with us in a particular way, please tell us so that we can discuss how we might help you.

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. If you are filling this in on behalf of someone else, please fill in section B. Please note that before taking forward the complaint we will need to satisfy ourselves that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned.

b) Making a complaint on behalf of someone else: Their details:

Address and postcode:	
What is your relationship to them?	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?	

c) About your concern/complaint (Please continue your answers to the following questions on a separate sheet (s) if necessary)

C.1 Name of the department/section/service you are complaining about:

C.2 What do you think they did wrong, or failed to do?

C.3 Describe how you personally have suffered or have been affected.

C.4 What do you think should be done to put things right?

C.5 When did you first become aware of the problem?

C.6 Have you already put your concern to the frontline staff responsible for delivering the service? If so, please give brief details of how and when you did so.

C.7 If it is more than 6 months (12 months for health concerns) since you became first aware of the problem, please give the reason why you have not complained before now

If you have any documents to support your concern/complaint, please attach them with this form.

Signature:

Date:

When you have completed this form, please send it to:

Mrs K Jones (Clerk)
Dol-Hafren
5 Caerhowel Meadows
Montgomery
Powys
SY15 6JF

Email: berriewcommunitycouncil@hotmail.co.uk