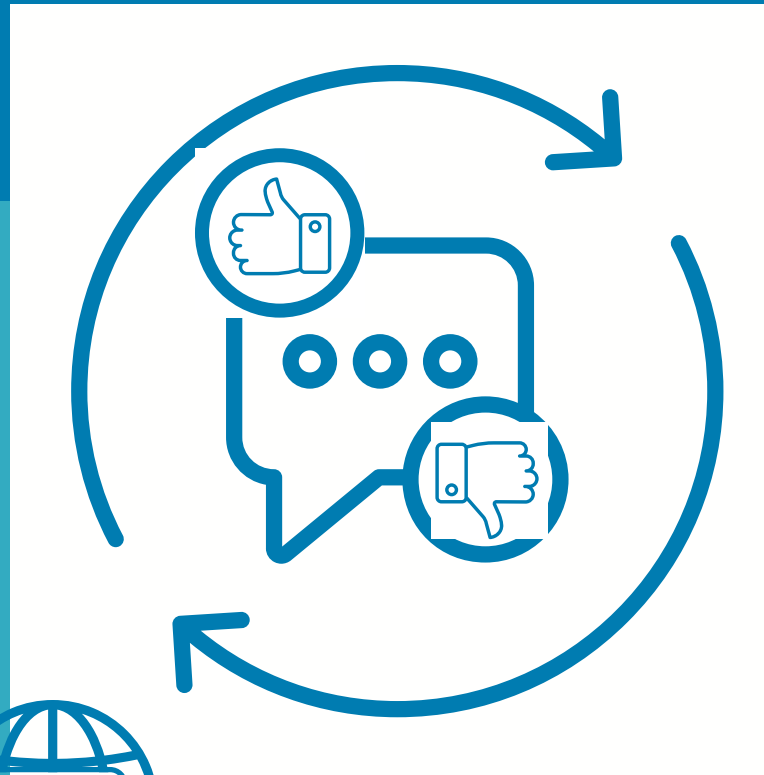




Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Complaints and Compliments Policy



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Introduction

Neath Port Talbot Council is committed to dealing effectively with any complaints you may have about our services. We aim to clarify any issues you may be unsure about. 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 did something wrong, we'll apologise and, where possible, try to put things right for you. We aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain from complaints, compliments and comments to improve our services.

Neath Port Talbot Council considers all complaints, compliments and comments, received as an invaluable source of information about the services we provide.

Our aims are:

- to make it easy to complain when a service has not been good enough
- to resolve complaints fairly and promptly wherever reasonably possible, and to provide a clear explanation when this cannot be achieved
- to learn from complaints, compliments and comments to help identify improvements and provide better practice in service delivery; and
- to use complaints, compliments and comments information to monitor the effectiveness of the council's policies.

When to use this policy

Neath Port Talbot Council is committed to dealing effectively with any complaints about our services.

This section details the difference between complaints and service requests.

A complaint is:

- ✓ An expression of **dissatisfaction**
- ✓ Written or spoken or made by any other communication method
 - *Please note that some council staff may not have the means necessary to record or deal with a complaint in person. If this is the case, you will be supported to make the complaint through other methods detailed on [page 6](#).*
- ✓ Made by one or more members of the public (someone or a group in receipt of or denied a service to which they are entitled by the service provider).
- ✓ About a public service provider's i.e. the council's, action or lack of action or the standard of service provided.
- ✓ Something which requires a response.

Please note: A complaint should meet all the above 5 points and can be made by any form of communication

A complaint is not:

- ✗ an initial request for a service.
See examples of service requests, [page 18](#).
- ✗ formal review or appeal against a decision or determination, the procedure for which is set out in legislation or regulations.
- ✗ means to seek change to legislation or a "properly made" policy decision.
- ✗ means for lobbying groups/organisations to seek to promote a cause. For more information view our [Neath Port Talbot's Public Participation Strategy](#).

Complaints Process

When processing a complaint, officers will take into consideration the following :

- If the issue raised is clearly a request for a service (e.g. reporting a missed bin collection or requesting a repair), it will be directed to the appropriate service team to remedy rather than processed as a complaint.
- If the complaint relates to actions the council is required to take under legislation, statutory duties, or established policy decision - such as building regulations, planning decisions, or environmental standards (e.g., noise levels - we will still acknowledge your complaint. However, these rules are set by law or policy, which means we may not be able to change the outcome. In these cases, we will explain the relevant policy or legal framework clearly and ensure you understand why the decision was made or if you have the right to appeal a decision. We value this feedback because it helps us monitor whether certain policies or statutory duties are generating high levels of complaints.

The complaints flow shown on **page 8** outlines a clear, staged process for handling complaints.

Examples of complaints may include:



How to make a complaint



Website: [Complaints and Compliments - Neath Port Talbot Council](#)



Online Form



Phone: 01639 686868 / **Welsh Language Line:** 01639 686869



Write us a letter / fill in the complaints form and post to:

Neath Port Talbot Council,
Civic Centre,
Port Talbot
SA13 1PJ



Via MyNPT:

- [Sign in](#) to your account
- [How to create your myNPT residents account](#) via YouTube



Complaints Form:

- You can request a copy of our complaints form from the person you are currently dealing with (where possible). Alternatively, the form is available at the end of this Complaints and Compliments policy document.
- Complaints forms are available at all Neath Port Talbot Council public offices.
- Copies of the Complaints and Compliments Policy and forms are available in English and Welsh and can also be made available in other languages.
- Formats such as audio, Braille or large print will also be provided if required
- We welcome complaints in Welsh and will deal with Welsh and English complaints to the same standards and timescales.

Dealing With Your Complaint

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

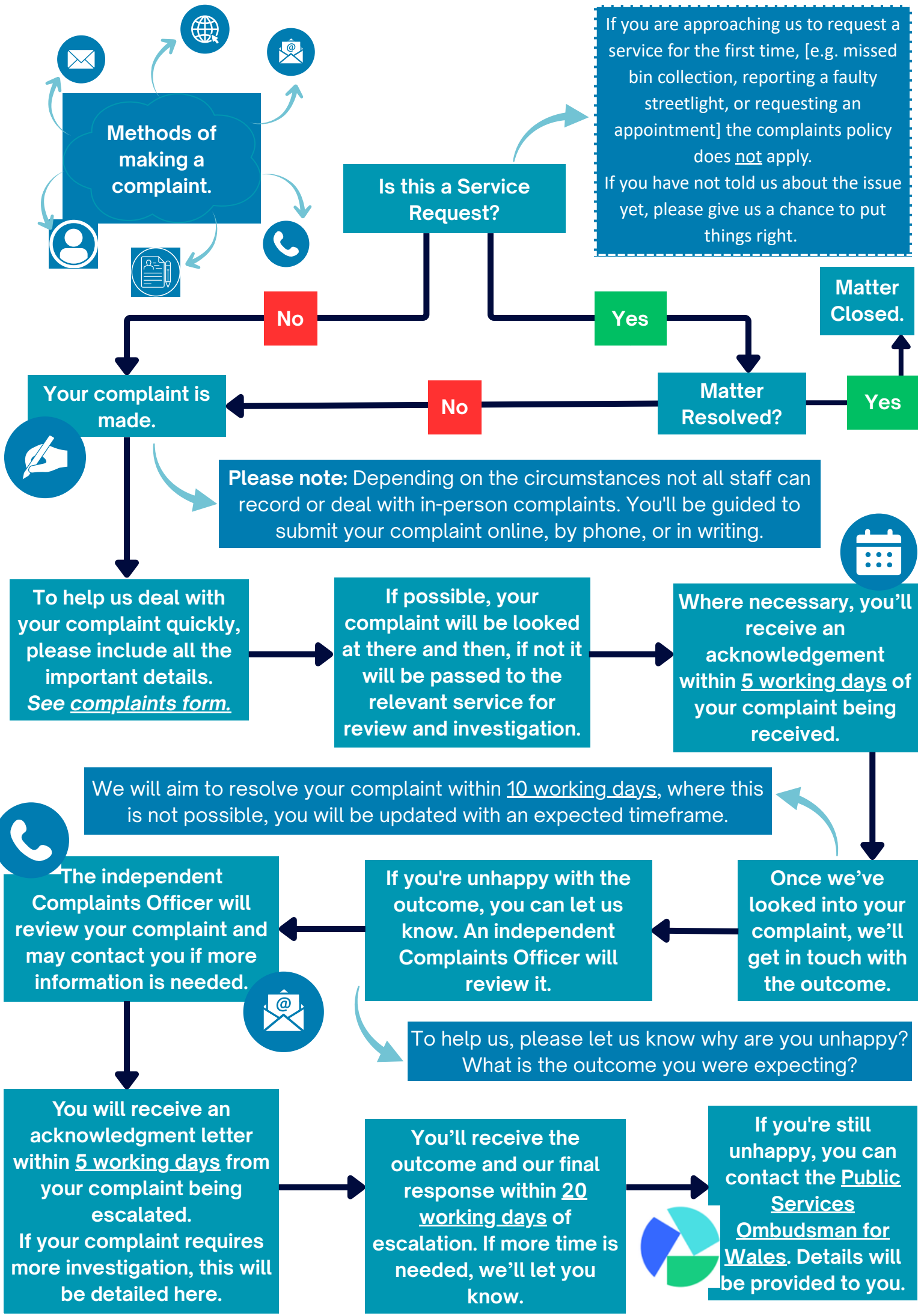
Openness and Honesty: We will handle your complaint in an open and honest way.

Setting Expectations: We will explain the expected timeframes for resolving your complaint. If the investigation takes longer than expected, we will keep you informed.

No Detriment: Raising a complaint will not affect how you are treated in the future.

Time Limits: Normally, we can only look at complaints raised within 6 months of the issue occurring, as it is easier to investigate while the details are still fresh.

In exceptional circumstances, we may consider complaints made after 6 months if you explain the delay and we have enough information to investigate. However, we cannot consider complaints about matters that took place more than three years ago.



Methods of making a complaint.

Is this a Service Request?

If you are approaching us to request a service for the first time, [e.g. missed bin collection, reporting a faulty streetlight, or requesting an appointment] the complaints policy does not apply. If you have not told us about the issue yet, please give us a chance to put things right.

No

Yes

Matter Closed.

Your complaint is made.

No

Matter Resolved?

Yes

Please note: Depending on the circumstances not all staff can record or deal with in-person complaints. You'll be guided to submit your complaint online, by phone, or in writing.

To help us deal with your complaint quickly, please include all the important details. See complaints form.

If possible, your complaint will be looked at there and then, if not it will be passed to the relevant service for review and investigation.

Where necessary, you'll receive an acknowledgement within 5 working days of your complaint being received.

We will aim to resolve your complaint within 10 working days, where this is not possible, you will be updated with an expected timeframe.

The independent Complaints Officer will review your complaint and may contact you if more information is needed.

If you're unhappy with the outcome, you can let us know. An independent Complaints Officer will review it.

Once we've looked into your complaint, we'll get in touch with the outcome.

To help us, please let us know why are you unhappy? What is the outcome you were expecting?

You will receive an acknowledgment letter within 5 working days from your complaint being escalated. If your complaint requires more investigation, this will be detailed here.

You'll receive the outcome and our final response within 20 working days of escalation. If more time is needed, we'll let you know.

If you're still unhappy, you can contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. Details will be provided to you.

Our complaints process: what to expect

Early Resolution (Stage 1):

Wherever possible, we believe it's best to deal with things straight away rather than try to sort them out later. If you have a complaint, raise it with the officer or service you are or have been dealing with.

The staff member will do their best to sort things out straight away.

If the staff member is unable to resolve your complaint in person, they will direct you to the appropriate channels, see [page 6](#), which will enable the appropriate officer to look at your complaint.

For complaints that have been submitted through our complaints channels, we will send an acknowledgement letter within 5 working days and let you know how we intend to deal with it. We will aim to resolve such complaints as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the majority within 10 working days.

If your complaint needs more time, 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
- To let you know how far we have progressed with the investigation
- Give you updates, including telling you whether any developments might change our original estimate.

If required, the person who is investigating your complaint will firstly aim to establish the facts. The extent of the investigation will depend upon how complex and how serious the issues you have raised are.

In some instances, we may contact you to discuss your complaint. Occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes.

Escalation (Stage 2):

If we fail in resolving your complaint in accordance with this policy, if there are still points which you initially raised which have not been answered or addressed or you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may ask the officer who investigated to escalate your complaint.

We will ask you for more information, to fully understand what has happened, what you expect and what was not addressed at early resolution (stage 1). We will ask you to tell us why you are dissatisfied with the response you have received or what element of the policy you feel the council has not complied with and what outcome you are hoping for.

We will look at relevant evidence. This could include information you have provided, our case files, notes of conversations, letters, emails or whatever may be relevant to your particular complaint. If necessary, we will talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies, any legal entitlement and guidance.

We will tell you who we have asked to investigate your complaint, and we will aim to respond within 20 working days. If your complaint needs more time, 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 updates, including telling you whether any developments might change our original estimate.

In some cases, involving Social Services, we will appoint an independent investigator.

If we escalate your complaint, we will let you know what we find and whether your complaint is upheld (the complaint is accepted) or not upheld (no fault by the council was found). After the complaint's escalation investigation, we will produce a report. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

Sharing the outcome of your complaint

- If your complaint has been investigated through our complaint's channels, we will share our findings with you. This is not possible for those complaints resolved in person
- After a complaint is escalated to Stage 2, we will provide a report explaining how and why we reached our conclusions
- If we discover that a mistake was made, we will explain what happened and why
- If we identify a fault in our systems or processes, we will tell you what it is and how we plan to prevent it from happening again
- Whenever we make a mistake, we will apologise

Learning lessons

We take your complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we've made. A summary of all complaints is considered quarterly, and a detailed complaints report is produced on an annual basis. The council's Cabinet also considers our response to complaints at least twice a year.

We share summary (anonymised) information on complaints received and complaints outcomes with the Ombudsman as part of our commitment to accountability and learning from complaints.

Where there is a need for significant change, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it. We will let you know when changes have been made.

Social media complaints

The council is committed to using technology and innovation to improve how we deliver services and communicate with our communities. Social media is an important tool that helps us engage with residents.

We take all complaints seriously, including those raised through council-managed social media accounts.

To help us respond effectively, we encourage individuals to use our formal complaints process to ensure your complaint is properly recorded and addressed. You can find a link to our complaints page on the 'About Us' section on our social media platforms.

Third party complaints - What if there is more than one body involved?

If your complaint covers more than one body, for example, a Housing Association and the council regarding the handling of a noise nuisance issue, we will usually work with them to decide who should take the lead in dealing with your concerns. You will then be given the name of the person responsible for communicating with you while we consider your complaint.

If the complaint is about a body working on our behalf, for example, building contractors or a town centre public convenience, you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, if you want to make your complaint formally, we will look into this ourselves and respond to you.

Privacy and data protection in complaints

When you submit a complaint, we may need to collect and use personal information to investigate and respond appropriately. To understand how we handle your data, including how long we keep it,

please visit our website to view the council's Privacy Notice and Data Retention Policy - [Privacy Notice - Complaints - Neath Port Talbot Council](#)

Welsh language complaints

Complaints relating to the Welsh language or compliance with the Welsh language service delivery and policy standards, as applied to the council,

will be dealt with in the same way as any other complaints received and will be responded to in accordance with the Welsh language standards.

AI Complaints

We are aware that many complainants are submitting information assisted by Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI). While complainants are entitled to choose how they submit, review and respond to our correspondence, we would like to advise that AI-generated content can sometimes include false or unsupported claims.

To maintain the integrity and reliability of communications with us, we advise that any AI generated material is verified before including it in your responses. This will help to avoid any potential misinterpretations or the inclusion of incorrect information.

What you can expect from us and what we expect from you

What you expect from <u>us</u>
We aim to clarify any issues you may be unsure about.
If we did something wrong, we'll apologise and, where possible, try to put things right for you.
We will provide any service you're entitled to which we have failed to deliver.
We aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain from complaints, compliments and comments to improve our services.
If you have lost out because of a mistake on our part, we'll try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had done things properly.
If you had to pay for a service that we should have provided, or missed out on funding you were entitled to, we will do our best to refund the cost where appropriate.

The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales

If you have progressed through the council's complaints process and we fail to resolve your complaint, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Ombudsman is independent of all public bodies and can investigate your complaint if you believe that you, 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 service provider.
- Have been disadvantaged personally by a service failure or have been treated unfairly.

The Ombudsman normally expects you to bring your complaints to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right.



Website: www.ombudsman.wales



Online complaint form



Phone: 0300 790 0203



Post: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae,
Pencoed
CF35 5LJ

There are also other organisations that consider complaints. We can advise you about such organisations.

When this policy does not apply

If you are approaching us to request/provide a service, [e.g. reporting a faulty streetlight, or requesting an appointment] this policy doesn't apply and is explained further below on **page 17**.

If you receive a service or make a request for a service and are unhappy with the outcome, you can make a complaint using the process outlined in this policy.

Our complaints and compliments policy cannot be used where you have a statutory right of appeal. For example, if your planning application is refused or your child is not offered a place at a particular school, these decisions have their own appeal processes. In such cases, rather than investigating under the complaint's procedure, we will explain how you can appeal.

Additionally, you might be concerned about matters that are not covered by this policy, and we will advise you about how to make your concerns known, examples include:

Matters dealt with within the council:

- [Submit FOI request - Neath Port Talbot Council](#)
- [Claims against the Council - NPT Council](#)
- [Parking Penalty Charge notices](#)
- [School complaints](#)
- [Social Services complaints - NPT Council](#)
- Safeguarding concerns


Matters dealt with outside the council:

- [Complaints about Councillors who have breached the code of conduct](#)

Requesting / asking us to provide a service

If you are approaching Neath Port Talbot Council to request a service or to request a service for the first time, this policy **does not** apply.

If you have not told us about the issue yet, please give us a chance to put things right by using the 'service request form' on the **myNPT platform**

 **Website:** [Neath Port Talbot Council](#)

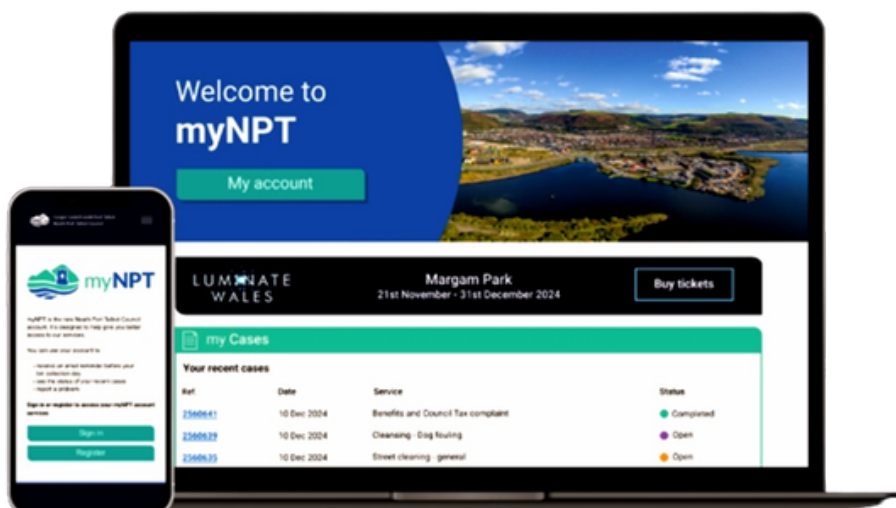
 **Online Form**

 **Phone:** 01639 686868


Welsh Language Line: 01639 686869



Log in



[How to create your myNPT residents account via YouTube](#)



Examples of Service Requests may include:



Please do not use the complaint form if you:

Need to tell us about a fault or ask us to do something.

For example:

- Reporting a problem on a road or pavement
- A problem with waste and recycling
- Need to ask us for information or an explanation of the council's policies or decisions
- Want to comment on the council's policy decisions
- Want to lobby or seek legislative change
- View [Neath Port Talbot's Public Participation Strategy](#) to discover the different ways you can get involved in local decision-making

However, if you have made a request for a service - or multiple requests about the same issue - and you are not satisfied with our response, you can make a formal complaint. Details of how to do this are provided in the Complaints section, on [page 6](#).

What to do if you need help?

Our staff will aim to help you make your complaint known to us.

If you need extra assistance, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help. The organisations listed below may be able to help you.

Advocacy services:

Llais:

[Contact us](#) | [Llais](#)

MIND:

[Contact us](#) | [Mind](#)

Age Cymru:

[Age Cymru](#) | [Contact Age Cymru](#)

Shelter Cymru

[Shelter Cymru - Home is everything](#)

You can also use this complaints and compliments policy if you are under the age of 18. If you need help, you can speak to someone on the Meic Helpline:

 **Phone:** 0808 802 3456

 **Website:** www.meiccymru.org

Or contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

 **Phone:** 0808 801 1000

 **Email:** post@childcomwales.org.uk





 **Website:** <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/>

Sharing your compliments and comments

We **welcome and value** your compliments and comments - they help us understand how we're doing and where we're making a positive impact.

Compliments let us know when we've done something well - either a member of staff or as a service, celebrate good practice and help boost staff morale. Your comments are important for improving our customer care, service quality, the way we work and how we make meaningful improvements.

If you want to share a compliment and/or comment, here's what you can do:

-  Share it with the council staff member you are dealing with
-  Or complete a copy of the **online form** on our website, which will be sent to the relevant team.
-  Fill in the Compliments and Comments form included on **page 24** in this policy document and hand in to either Neath or Port Talbot Civic Centre receptions, The Quays reception
-  Post to (for the attention of the service/service area concerned):
Neath Port Talbot Council,
Civic Centre,
Port Talbot.
SA13 1PJ

Complaint Form

Please Note: The person making the complaint should normally fill in this form. If you are filling this in on behalf of someone else, please fill in **Section B**.

Complaint Form	
Section A – Your Details	
Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms (if other please state)	
Forenames(s):	
Surname:	
Address:	
Post Code:	
Your email address:	
Daytime contact phone number:	
Please state how you would prefer us to contact you e.g. <i>phone, email, post</i>:	
<p>Need support to make a complaint? If our usual process doesn't work for you—for example, if English or Welsh isn't your first language or you need to communicate in a different way—just let us know. We'll do our best to help, please provide details below.</p>	

Section B – Complaining on behalf of someone else

Please ensure a **Representative Authorisation form** has been filled out by both parties.
Please find a copy of this form on **page 25**.

Their name in full:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
What is your relationship to them?	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?	

Section C – Complaint Details

(Please continue your answers to the following questions on a separate sheet(s) if necessary)

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

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

Describe how you personally have suffered or have been affected:

What do you think should be done to put things right?	
When did you first become aware of the problem. If possible, provide a date	
Have you already put your complaint to the frontline staff responsible for delivering the service? If so, please give brief details of how and when you did so:	
If it is more than six months since you first became aware of the problem, please explain why you have not complained before now:	
Signature:	Date:
If you have any documents to support your complaint, please attach them with this form.	

Compliments and Comments Form

Thank you for taking the time to share your positive feedback. This form is intended for members of the public to submit compliments about services, teams, or individuals at Neath Port Talbot Council. Your feedback helps us recognise and celebrate excellent service.

Compliments and Comments Form	
Name of person giving the compliment/comment:	
Contact details (optional):	
Date:	
Service/team/staff member:	
Do you consent to us publishing your compliment/comment anonymously? <i>Please tick where appropriate</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details of the compliment:	

Representative Authorisation Form

Subject: Formal Authorisation to Act on My Behalf

Dear _____ *[Recipient's Name]*

I am writing to provide formal authorisation for *[Authorised Person's Full Name]*
to act on my behalf in connection with *[insert brief information about complaint]*

This authorisation grants them permission to:

- Communicate with you directly regarding my case or account.
- Receive and provide information relevant to the matter.
- Sign and submit any necessary documents on my behalf, where appropriate.

For your records, please note the following details:

My full name ***[Your Details]*** : _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Date of birth: _____

Authorised person's name ***[Their Details]*** : _____

Authorised person's address: _____

Relationship to me *[e.g., friend, solicitor, family member]* : _____

This authorisation will remain in effect until *[end date, or further notice]*
_____ unless I notify you in writing to withdraw it.

Should you require any additional information, supporting documents, or proof of identity to process this request, please let me know at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards,

Version Control Table

Version	Reviewer / Authoriser	Date	Updates / Changes
Version 1	Corporate Performance Officer	March 2026	Revised Policy