



Cyngor Dinas Llanellwy St Asaph City Council

Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 St Asaph City Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in the city or are visitors to the area. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council, or are unhappy about an action of lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we will try to resolve your complaint.
- 1.2 This complaints procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with concerns.
- 1.3 Complaints must be raised within three months of the incident from which the complaint arose. In the case of a pattern of behaviour, or a series of incidents, this timescale shall run from the most recent incident.

2. Scope of the Policy

- 2.1 This complaints procedure does not apply to:
 - a) Complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as an employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
 - b) Complaints against councillors. These are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council. If a complaint against a councillor is received by the council, the complainant will be referred to the Monitoring Officer at Denbighshire County Council.
 - c) The Council receives queries, problems and comments as part of its day to day running, and these are not regarded as complaints. These are routine and expected and are generally resolved quickly to the customer's satisfaction. If someone is dissatisfied with the original service or response they received and wishes to take the matter further, then the issue will be recognised as a complaint.

3. Influencing Decision-making

- 3.1 The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of the Council meetings.
- 3.2 If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary. The process outlined in the Standing Orders is followed.

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4. Stage One

- 4.1 You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Clerk.
- 4.2 If you do not wish to make your complaint to the Clerk, you can write to the Mayor.
- 4.3 Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will acknowledge your complaint within ten working days.
- 4.4 The Clerk will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff and members of the Council.

5. Stage Two

- 5.1 If your complaint is not resolved, the Clerk or the Mayor will ask you to make your complaint in writing.
- 5.2 The Clerk or the Mayor will report any unresolved complaints to the Council at the next Full Council meeting.
- 5.3 The Council will consider whether the public and press should be excluded while the complaint is being discussed.
- 5.4 The Clerk or the Mayor will notify you within twenty working days following the Council meeting of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. In exceptional circumstances the thirty working days timescale may have to be extended. If this is the case, you will be informed.
- 5.5 The Council's decision is final.
- 5.6 The Council will endeavour to respond to complaints within three months of receipt in writing by the Clerk. Where we are unable to fully respond within this timescale, the complainant will be advised of the reason and the expected revised deadline.

6. Vexatious or Abusive Complaints

- 6.1 Most complainants behave in reasonable and legitimate ways. However a minority of complainants persist, although the Council has taken all reasonable steps to resolve the complaint.
- 6.2 A vexatious complaint is where the complainant:
 - I. Persists in pursuing a complaint where the Council's Complaints Procedure or the Freedom of Information Procedure has been fully implemented and exhausted.
 - II. Persistently changes the substance of the complaint or continually raises new issues and seeks to prolong contact by continually raising further concerns or questions on receipt of a response.
 - III. Is repeatedly unwilling to accept evidence given as being factual or deny receipt of an adequate response in spite of correspondence specifically answering their questions or does not accept that some information is not contained in the Council's records.
 - IV. Have threatened or used physical violence against Council staff or members.
 - V. Have harassed or been verbally abusive towards Council staff or members.
- 6.3 If a complaint is deemed to be vexatious or abusive, the Council may:

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- a) Decline contact with the complainant, either in person, by telephone, e-mail or any combination of these, provided that one form of contact is maintained which will usually be by post (letter).
- b) Notify the complainant in writing that the Council has responded to the points raised and has tried to resolve the complaint/grievance but that there is nothing more to add and continuing contact on the matter will serve no useful purpose. The complainant will also be notified that the Council does not intend to engage in further correspondence on this complaint.

6.4 If the complainant persists, the Council will seek legal advice.

7. Letters of Complaint may be sent to:

Mrs Jill Ellison
City Clerk
PO Box 224
Llanfairfechan
LL57 9EQ

e-mail: clerk@stasaphcitycouncil.gov.uk

<i>Policy Adopted:</i>	<i>December 2020</i>
<i>Last Review:</i>	<i>May 2025</i>
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