

1. Background

The Information Team based in Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy is responsible for processing all formal complaints in line with the Authority's Corporate Complaints Procedure.

Complaints

The Complaints and Concerns Policy was approved by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 17 November 2020, to take effect from 23 November 2020.

The Policy sets out a two stage process as follows:

- **Informal Complaint Stage**
- **Formal Complaint Stage**

This Policy replaces the previous policy which was approved in 2013. The policy is a national policy required by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

2. Informal Complaints (Stage 1)

- 2.1 The Policy recognises that complaints should be dealt with as quickly as possible and where possible informally as part of the normal working of the Authority. It advises customers to contact the office or officer responsible for the service to provide an opportunity to solve the problem. All informal complaints should be logged in the Corporate Complaints office as the Council is now required to report on these every quarter to the Public Services Ombudsman.
- 2.2 The Public Services Ombudsman now sets criteria for complaint types to be logged. For the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023, the number of informal complaints received against each category together with the numbers of those complaints closed against each outcome was as follows:

Appendix 1

	Total number of informal complaints received	Number resolved by frontline staff/not upheld	Number Upheld	Number where investigation discontinued /investigation not merited/complaint about a service not provided by the Council/withdrawn
Adult Social Care	0	0	0	0
Benefits Administration	2	2	0	0
Children's Social Services	2	2	0	0
Community Facilities (including Recreation & Leisure)	2	1	0	0
Complaints handling	0	0	0	0
Education	7	6	0	1
Environment & Environmental Health	0	0	0	0
Finance & Council Tax	14	10	4	0
Housing	6	2	3	0
Planning & Building Control	2	1	0	0
Roads & Transport	11	10	0	1
Various/Other	9	6	1	0
Waste & Refuse	19	12	4	3

3. Formal Complaints (Stage 2)

3.1 Formal complaints are received by email, telephone, letter or online complaint form. All formal corporate complaints with the exception of schools and social services (which have their own statutory procedures) are received, logged and acknowledged centrally by the Information Team within 5 working days. These complaints are sent to the relevant Head of Service who appoints a senior officer within the service to investigate the complaint and respond directly within 20 working days. The Information Team is provided with a copy of the response. If an investigation is more complex and more time may be needed, the complainant is advised of the likely timescale and kept informed of progress.

Appendix 1

- 3.2 The Information Team has received, logged, acknowledged and referred a total of 13 formal complaints for the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023. The breakdown for the period is as follows:

	1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023
No. of Complaints Received	13
No. acknowledged in 5 working days	13
No. acknowledged outside 5 working days	0

- 3.3 The table below sets out the number of formal complaints the Council has received in the financial quarter 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023 and the previous three financial quarters:

Year	Number of Complaints Received
1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022	9
1 July 2022 to 30 September 2022	17
1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022	13
1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023	13

- 3.4 The Information Team endeavour to ensure that all complaints (both informal and formal) are acknowledged within 5 working days. However in some circumstances this is not always possible.
- 3.5 For the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023, the number of formal complaints received against each of the Public Services Ombudman criteria together with the numbers of those complaints closed against each outcome was as follows:

Appendix 1

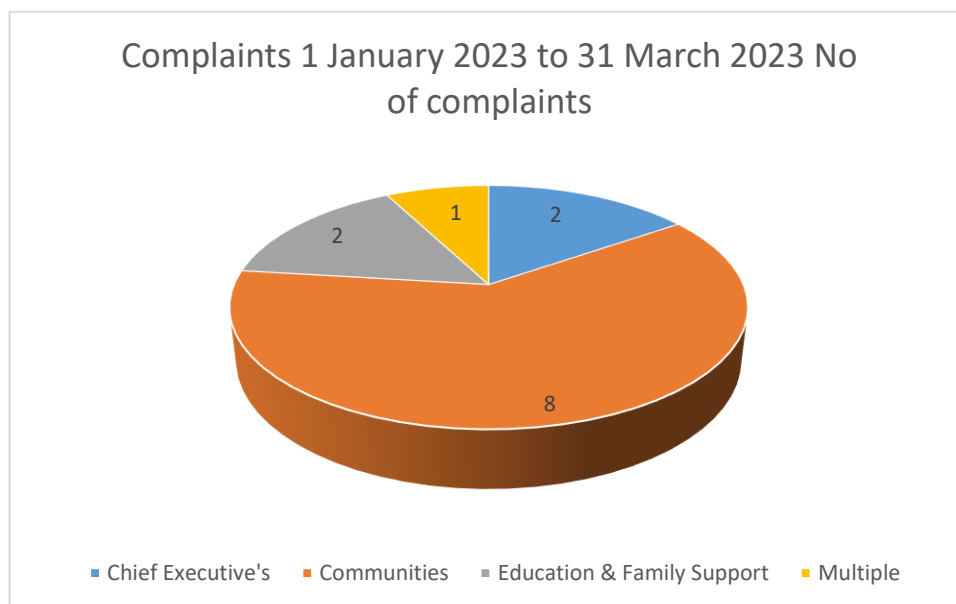
	Total number of formal complaints received	Number resolved by frontline staff/not upheld	Number Upheld	Number where investigation discontinued/investigation not merited/complaint about a service not provided by the Council/withdrawn
Adult Social Care	0	0	0	0
Benefits Administration	0	0	0	0
Children's Social Services	0	0	0	0
Community Facilities (including Recreation & Leisure)	1	0	0	0
Complaints Handling	0	0	0	0
Education	2	2	0	0
Environment & Environmental Health	0	0	0	0
Finance & Council Tax	1	1	0	0
Housing	0	0	0	0
Planning & Building Control	1	1	0	0
Roads & Transport	5	4	0	0
Various/Other	2	2	0	0
Waste & Refuse	1	0	0	1

Appendix 1

3.6 The following information sets out the breakdown of formal complaints received by County Borough Council Ward:

Ward	No. of complaints
Brackla East & Coychurch Lower	1
Maesteg West	1
Unknown/by e-mail	11

3.7 For the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023, the number of formal complaints received by each Directorate was as follows:



3.8 For the period 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023 no complaints were received from the Welsh Language commissioner about a service provided by the Authority.

3.9 As required by the Equalities Strategy, an equalities monitoring questionnaire has been developed to accompany the Corporate Complaints Form. The information collected informs the Strategic Equality Plan.

Appendix 1

3.10 The chart below provides a breakdown of the number of formal Complaints received, those responded to within 20 working days, those for which it was necessary to request an extension to the response deadline, those that remain outstanding and those complaints currently under investigation within the respective 20 working days.

