

1. Background

The Information Team based in Legal Services 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 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**

The policy is a national policy required by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Policy was last reviewed in July 2024.

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 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 April 2024 to 1 April 2025, the number of informal complaints received against each category together with the numbers of those complaints closed against each outcome was as follows

	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/withdraw	Still Ongoing
Adult Social Care	0	0	0	0	0
Benefits Administration	4	2	2	0	0
Children's Social	2	1	1	0	0
Community Facilities (including Recreation & Leisure)	3	1	1	1	0
Complaints handling	2	2	0	0	0
Education	3	2	1	0	0
Environment & Environmental Health	2	2	0	0	0
Finance & Council Tax	16	14	2	0	0
Housing	5	4	1	0	0
Planning & Building Control	5	3	1	1	0
Roads & Transport	9	9	0	0	0
Various/Other	7	3	4	0	0
Waste & Refuse	24	11	13	0	0
Total	82	54	26	2	0

2.3 The Corporate Complaints team have only recently commenced the collation of Bridgend County borough Council Ward for informal complaints. It is therefore intended to provide this to the Governance & Audit Committee and Cabinet going forward.

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.
- 3.2 The Information Team has received, logged, acknowledged and referred a total of 37 formal complaints for the period from 1 April 2024 to 1 April 2025. The breakdown for the period is as follows:

	1 April 2024 to 1 April 2025
No. of Complaints Received	37
No. acknowledged in 5 working days	24
No. acknowledged outside 5 working days	13

- 3.3 The table below sets out the number of formal complaints the Council has received the financial half year 1 April 2024 to 1 April 2025 and the previous two financial years:

Financial Year	Number of Complaints Received
1 April 2022 to 1 April 2023	53
1 April 2023 to 1 April 2024	67
1 April 2024 to 1 April 2025	37

- 3.4 The Information Team endeavour to ensure that all complaints (both informal and formal) are acknowledged within 5 working days. However, during the reporting period, some delays were experienced due to temporary staff shortages. This impacted the timely completion of certain tasks and deliverables. At the time of this report, the team is now fully staffed and any backlog resulting from the delays has been addressed or is currently being resolved.
- 3.5 For the period from 1 April 2024 to 1 April 2025, the number of formal complaints received against each of the Public Services Ombudsman's criteria together with the numbers of those complaints closed against each outcome was as follows:

	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	Still ongoing
Adult Social Care	0	0	0	0	0
Benefits Administration	1	0	1	0	0
Children's Social Services	0	0	0	0	0
Community Facilities (including Recreation & Leisure)	2	2	0	0	0
Complaints Handling	2	0	2	0	0
Education	5	5	0	0	0
Environment & Environmental Health	0	0	0	0	0
Finance & Council Tax	3	2	1	0	0
Housing	4	4	0	0	0
Planning & Building Control	4	4	0	0	0
Roads & Transport	5	4	1	0	0
Various/Other	9	9	0	0	0
Waste & Refuse	1	1	0	0	0
Total	36	31	5	0	0

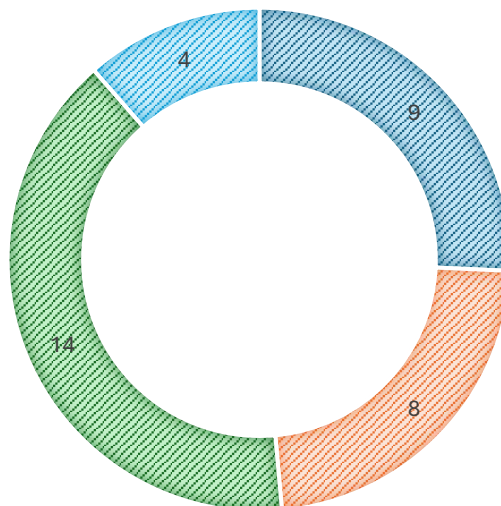
3.6 The following information sets out the breakdown of formal complaints received by County Borough Council Ward:

Ward	No. of complaints
Brackla East & Coychurch Lower	2
Brackla West Central	2
Bridgend Central	1
Bryntirion, Laleston & Merthyr Mawr	1
Caerau	1
Cornelly	2
Garw Valley	1
Maesteg West	2
Nottage	1
Pencoed & Penprysg	1
Rest Bay	1
St Brides Minor & Ynysawdre	1
Unknown/By e-mail	21

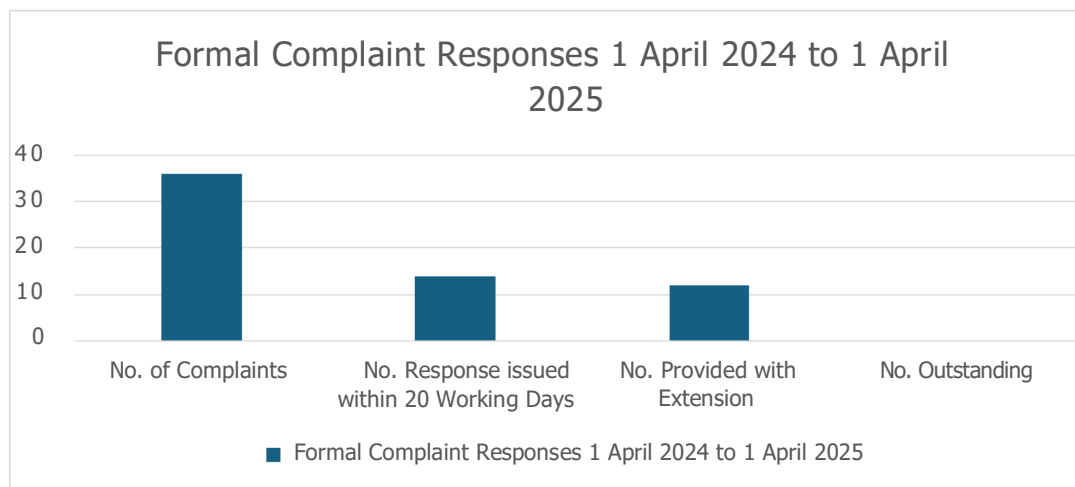
3.7 For the period from 1 April 2024 to 1 April 2025, the number of formal complaints received by each Directorate

NO. OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS FROM 1 APRIL 2024 TO 1 APRIL 2025

■ Chief Executive ■ Finance, Housing & Change ■ Communities ■ Education



- 3.8 For the period 1 April 2024 to 1 April 2025, no complaints were received by the Welsh Language Commissioner about a service provided by the Authority.
- 3.9 As required by the Equalities Strategy, a voluntary equalities monitoring questionnaire has been developed to accompany the Corporate Complaints Form. The information collected informs the Strategic Equality Plan.
- 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.



- 3.11 In order that the Committee can be provided with a Lessons Learned Section the Corporate Complaints team request departments to provide them with a note of any system or process changes the service has made as a result of a complaint.

At the time of reporting, the Team have not received any feedback from Services with regard to Lessons Learned.