

Blackwood Town Council

Complaints Policy and Procedure

The Town Council is committed to doing its best for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area, or who are visitors to the town. However occasionally things do go wrong and if you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from the Town Council, or unhappy about an action or lack of action, the complaints procedure sets out how you may complain and how the Town Council will try and resolve your complaint. Scope of the Policy

A complaint is

"An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Town Council's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service, whether the action was taken, or the service provided by the Town Council itself, or a person or body acting on behalf of the Town Council."

The policy applies to complaints about administration and procedures and may include complaints about how Town Council employees have dealt with your concerns. The policy does not cover complaints by employees about another employee or the Town Council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the disciplinary and grievance procedures. Complaints against Town Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct.

The Town Council will:

- Take complaints seriously
- All parties will be treated equitably and fairly
- Follow its complaints procedure where a formal complaint has been made
- Accept complaints on the complaints form, or in person, by phone, or email (note the information requested on the complaints form will be required in all cases)
- Comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018
- Give due consideration to its various obligations as a local authority, public body, employer, service provider, and landowner, where these are relevant, and in the case of any conflicts seek appropriate advice
- Dismiss any complaints it deems to be vexatious or unreasonable
- Not consider anonymous complaints
- Learn from complaints where this can improve the Town Councils procedures

Complaints Procedure

Making a Complaint

When a member of the public contacts the Town Council to make a complaint, they will be directed to this policy and procedure, and complaint form. Where the complainant chooses not to use the form, they will still be required to provide the information that is required on the form to enable the complaint to be investigated. All complaints should be directed to the Town Clerk. Where the complaint is concerning the Town Clerk the complaint form should be used and sent directly to the Mayor of the Town Council in an envelope marked "private and confidential"

Responding to a complaint

The Town Clerk will acknowledge the complaint, normally within five working days,

The Town Clerk will investigate the complaint and, if appropriate, interview the parties involved. The complainant will be given a response within 28 days of receipt of the complaint. In exceptional cases the 28 days' timescale may have to be extended. If this is necessary, the complainant will be kept informed. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Town Clerk's investigation a request may be made for the complaint to be referred to the Town Council.

The Town Clerk will notify the complainant of the date of the Town Council. The Town Clerk will provide the Town Council with a written report of the investigation undertaken and the findings together with any recommendations. The complainant will be offered the opportunity to explain the nature of the complaint to the meeting and why the outcome of the Town Clerk's investigation is not satisfactory. The Town Clerk will consult with the Mayor to consider whether the complaint warrants discussion at the Town Council in the absence of the press and public. Following the Town Council, the Town Clerk will formally notify the complainant within 14 days the outcome of the Town Council's consideration and the action, if any, the Town Council proposes to take.

If the complainant is still dissatisfied, they may refer the complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

If the complaint is made against the actions of the Town Clerk, the Mayor will present the complaint to the Town Council for consideration at a meeting held in the absence of the press and public.

Unreasonable and Vexatious Complaints

(In circumstances where the Town Clerk considers:

- The complaint has no reasonable basis
- The Town Council has already taken reasonable action in response
- Some other procedure should or has been taken
- The complaint has been repeatedly or obsessively pursued no further

action will be taken.

Recording of complaints

A record of all complaints received will be kept by the Town Clerk and retained in accordance with the Town Council's data retention policy

**If your complaint covers more than one body e.g., your local Authority (Caerphilly County Borough Council) Health Authority (Aneurin Bevan University Health Board) we will usually work with them to decide who should take a lead in dealing with your concerns. **

Contacts

Town Clerk

Blackwood Town Council

Heddfan 12 Aspen Avenue

Blackwood NP12 1WW

Tel No 01495 224 636

Email: john.hold1@gmail.com

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae

Pencoed

CF35 5LJ

Tel No: 03007900203

Email: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
COMPLAINT FORM

NAME	
ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE NO	
EMAIL	
Details of your complaint (continue on separate sheet if necessary) Please be factual concise and objective as possible	
What action would you like the Town Council to take to put things right?	

Blackwood Town Council will hold your personal information for the sole purpose of dealing with your complaint. Information will be held in line with our privacy policy and data retention policy.