

### **Sources of Assurance for the Cardiff Council Governance and Audit Committee on handling complaints**

Background: the Governance and Audit Committee is required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, section 115 to “review and assess the authority’s ability to handle complaints effectively”. This table summarises the assurances available to the Committee.

<b>1st Line of Assurance (Business Operations – day to day)</b>	<b>2nd Line of Assurance (Oversight functions, e.g. finance, HR, Quality and Risk Mgt – set direction, define policy and provide assurance)</b>	<b>3rd Line of Assurance (Independent assurance, e.g., Internal &amp; External Audit and independent assurance providers)</b>
Corporate Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy includes defined compliant procedures for Directorates to follow.	Corporate Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy approved and based on Public Service Ombudsman for Wales model.	Ombudsman deemed during 2021 the Council’s corporate complaints system as compliant with the Ombudsman’s principles and model complaint handling Policy
Corporate Complaints team provision of advice and support.	Council’s Annual Complaints report	<p>Complaints and Compliments internal audit report issued October 2022, with an opinion of ‘effective with opportunity for improvement’.</p> <p>From the sample selected, the auditor did not identify any particular concerns in processes being followed for handling complaints, but it was noted that there was not a central register / repository (e.g. SharePoint), and directorates were recording data within a variety of systems.</p> <p>It was recommended that to support the consistent application of the Comments, Complaints and Compliments Policy, a guidance document should be produced for officers to set out processes be followed, with consideration given to:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining how complaints and compliments should be identified, recognised, recorded and reported for corporate consistency.</li> <li>The creation of a central repository of all complaints for corporate visibility.</li> </ul>
Quarterly Update to the Ombudsman	Dip Sampling of closed files by Corporate Complaints Team on Directorate Cases	
Maintained Schools		
Governing Bodies required by Education Act 2002 to establish procedures for dealing with Complaints. Procedures have been confirmed as in place in all 127 maintained schools in Cardiff. 119 of the 127 schools currently publicise their procedures on their school websites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education Governor Services Team periodically undertakes checks to ensure that schools have complaints procedures in place and that they are being followed in specific cases</li> <li>Governor Services Team also provides practical advice, support and training on school complaints procedures.</li> <li>Legal Services also provides advice on more complex complaints and support for schools in dealing with difficult or persistent complainants.</li> <li>Education Officers will carry out assurance exercises to ensure that schools have complaints procedures and have acted in accordance with them. This may involve a review of the procedures followed. It does not include a rehearing of the complaint.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ombudsman may consider complaints about the Council's assurance role (detailed above) in relation to the operation of an individual school's complaints procedure, however it does not consider the issues originally raised in the complaint.</li> <li>Estyn may look at how schools handle complaints during an inspection of a school, if they feel they need to progress this as a line of enquiry.</li> </ul>