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# **Governance & Audit Committee – Corporate Complaints – 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023**



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- Terms of reference of the Committee is to “review and assess the authority’s ability to handle complaints effectively”.
- Complaints service was audited in Q4 2022/23 and recommendations were:
  1. Re-establishment of Corporate Complaints office meetings on a quarterly basis, to be chaired by the corporate team and where officers can learn from the complaints ‘group’ and receive peer support.
  2. Update of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) particularly around definition of a complaint – and to discuss with complaints group – to support consistent application of the policy across the Council.



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3. For all efforts to be made to get the HALO system implemented within set timescales.
4. Following the roll-out of HALO, a quality assurance system to be developed centrally on compliance and the efficiency and effectiveness of complaints handling.
5. For a briefing note to be provided to schools and their Governing Bodies at the end of each financial year, together with a termly checklist to remind them of key responsibilities.

The Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee has been provided with a copy of the audit report.



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- Annual report (along with data from the Ombudsman) details the Council's performance when handling complaints.
- Please note this is a draft report. Changes can be made in advance of Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023.
- The number of complaints recorded by Cardiff Council during 2022/23 was 3,071.
- This is an 15.5% decrease from 2021/22, when 3,633 complaints were recorded.



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# Response Times



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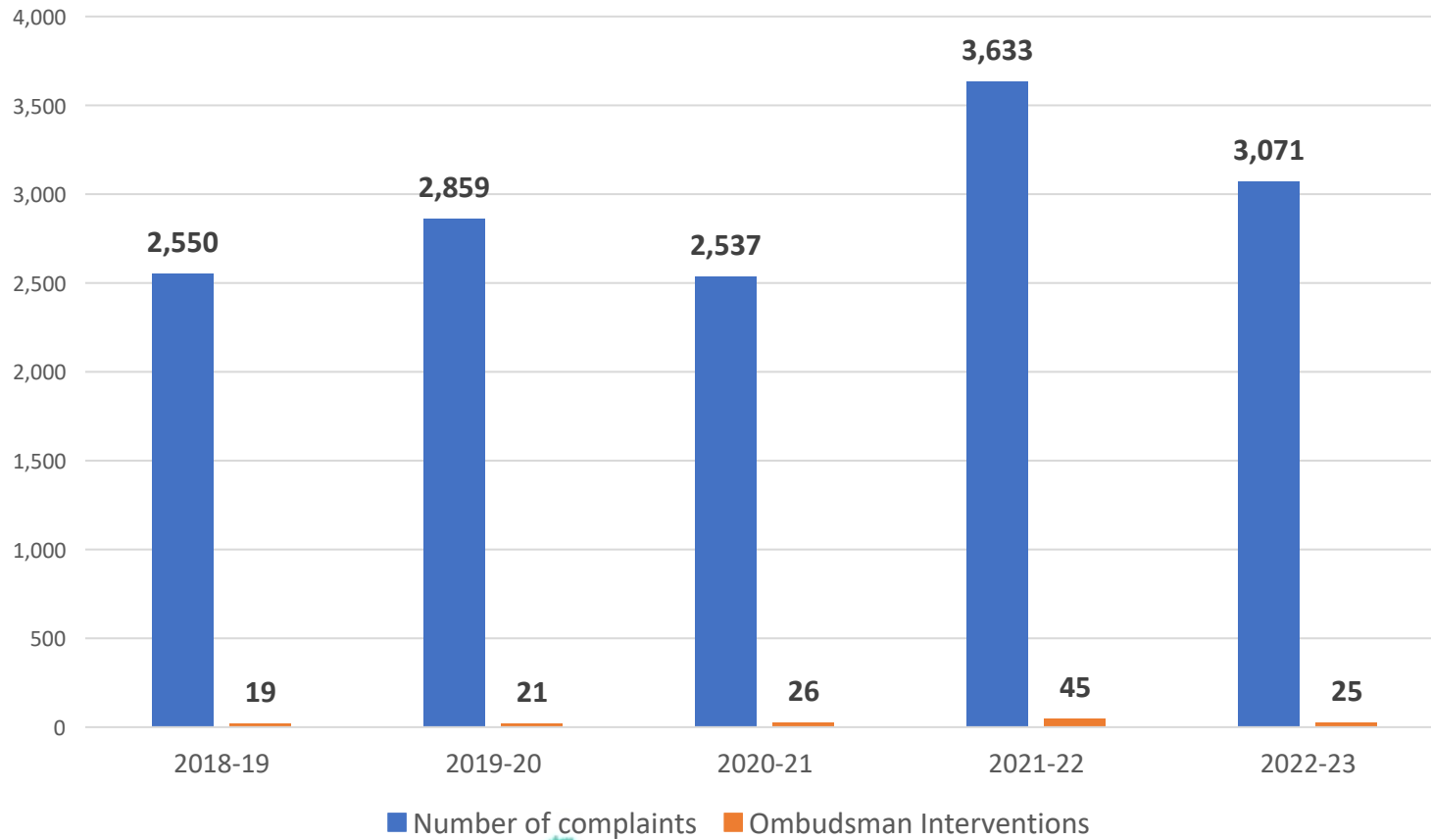


- Cardiff Council's Corporate Complaints Policy states that we will aim to respond to complaints within 20 working days.
- If we are not able to respond to complaints within this time, we need to let complainants know about this and when they can expect to receive a response.
- During 2022/23, of the 3,071 complaints recorded by Cardiff Council, 1,720 (56.0%) received a response within 20 working days. This represents a decrease from 2021/22 when 69.4% of complaints received a response within 20 working days.
- A further 681 (22.2%) complaints received a response after 20 working days but within 3 months.
- 649 complaints (21.1%) received a response after 3 months but within 6 months.



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Year	Number of complaints	Ombudsman Interventions	Ombudsman Investigations
2018-19	2,550	19	1
2019-20	2,859	21	4
2020-21	2,537	26	3
2021-22	3,633	45	6
<b>2022-23</b>	<b>3,071</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>



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# Halo - Reminder



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The new Complaints, Compliments and Cabinet & Members Enquiries Management system key aim is to create and embed a centralised, streamlined approach to the management of complaints, members, and cabinet enquiries.

The new system will improve the handling process, increase efficiency, and provide corporate oversight of enquiries across the organisation.

A key change for some service areas is the introduction of an approval process for responses by Operational and Senior Managers (which was a request from SMT and the CEX) to improve the consistency and quality of responses.



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# Halo - Benefits



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Key benefits of the new system are to:

- Provide good quality, consistent responses for all complaints & cabinet & member enquiries.
- Record good quality data and the ability to report quickly and easily on performance (note data is currently recorded in different systems in a variety of ways).
- Have a corporate overview of complaints & cabinet & members enquiries in real time.
- Respond to complaints & cabinet & member enquiries within the required SLAs.
- Improve the complaints & cabinet & member enquiries processes to enable a more joined up way of working by eliminating inefficient processes, such as multiple handovers, double keying, duplication etc. consuming valuable staff time.



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# Halo - Update



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- Cabinet and Members enquires are now live (16<sup>th</sup> August) for all service areas.
- The Complaints & Compliments instance is in progress and work building the test area will start in September and is on schedule to go live by Jan 31st, 2024.
- As part of the Cabinet and Member enquiries go live, face-to-face training has been made available for service areas to onboard to the new system and the new process for dealing with enquiries. 8 teams have attended sessions so far.
- To further support service areas, a user guide has been created and a video/s is in production – this will be more sustainable rather than delivering on going face-to-face training.



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# Training

In this section you will find several types of training for dealing with written correspondence, including Cabinet and Member Enquiries, with some courses specifically concentrating on efficient complaint handling. Anyone who is in a role where they are required to process, investigate, or respond to complaints are strongly encouraged to complete them.

Courses are bookable via your DigiGOV training calendar or the e-learning pool at Cardiff Council Academy Online. Links and contact details can be found at the bottom of the page. Classroom training is delivered by the Customer Services Trainer through MS Teams with course content created in partnership with the Public Services for Wales Ombudsman.

For questions on course content or availability, please contact Customer Services Trainer [Jodie Williams](#)

### Training Courses

Training Course	Duration	Who	Content	Delivery Method	Booking Method
Written Communication	1 Hour	Council Wide	Training covers best practice and aims to develop consistency for written skills in responding to complaints and enquiries to citizens, including how to deal with Welsh correspondence.	E-learning	Cardiff Academy
Handling Complaints	3.5 Hours	All staff	Training is in collaboration with the Ombudsman and covers what complaints are, why complaints are important and why do people complain. Includes information on the process of dealing with a complaint and the difference between a complaint/service request.	TBC	TBC
Investigation of Complaints	3.5 Hours	Responders, Approvers & Authorisers	Training is in collaboration with the Ombudsman and covers complaint handling in further detail for those who actively deal/responds to complaints. Course also includes investigation skills, evidence gathering, decision making	TBC	TBC



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- Post go live meetings have been planned with service areas to ensure that they are following the new process and to identify if they have any concerns or issues with Halo.
- Regular project updates have taken place with Operational Managers, Senior Managers (the 'approvers') regarding their responsibilities and to encourage 'buy-in'
- Project Manager has also met separately with some Operational Managers to establish certain needs.



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# Halo Update – Sharepoint site is live



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Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Members Enquiries

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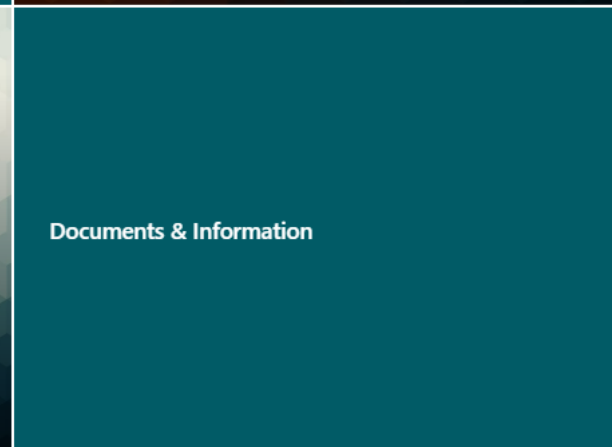
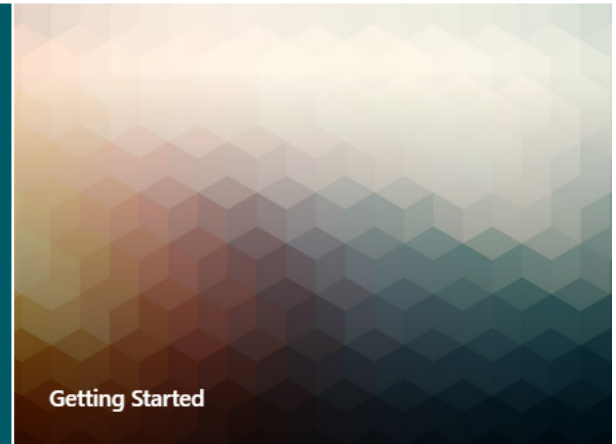
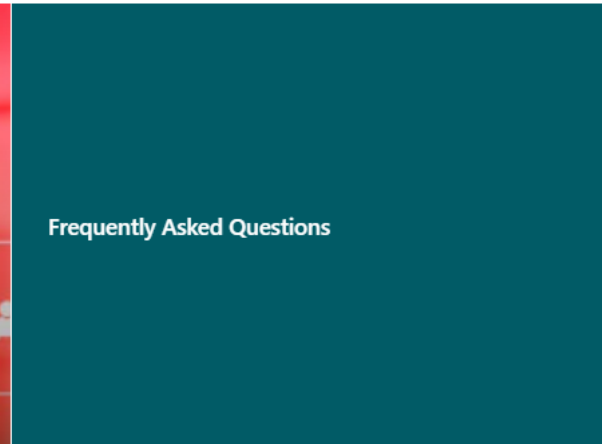
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Published 9/5/2022 ✎ Edit ↗



Welcome to the Corporate Complaints, Compliments, Cabinet and Member Enquiries site where you will find information to assist you and your team with complaints, compliments and enquiries.

## Complaints & Compliments Area

### A complaint is:

'An expression of concern or dissatisfaction made by one or more members of the public in regard to Cardiff Council's actions, or lack of action, or the standard of service it provided following an initial request for service.'

This can be expressed by any available communication method.

### A complaint is not:

- A first-time report of an occurrence that needs Cardiff Council's attention or an initial request for service
- A formal review or appeal against a decision
- A way of asking for a change to legislation or a policy decision
- A means for lobbying groups/organisations to promote a cause
- A general expression of dissatisfaction that does not relate specifically to Cardiff Council's actions, or lack of action, or the standard of service it provided.

For further information about how to deal with complaints please visit the [Standard Operating Procedure](#)

### A compliment is:

'An expression of praise to the Council or any member of Council staff. It could include an occasion where assistance given by a staff member was above and beyond the standard expected, or a service provided exceeded expectations.'

When a compliment is received the Council should record it so that it can be shared with the relevant manager and member of staff.

The **Corporate Complaints Team** (Rory Williams and Claire Lowdon) can assist with queries about complaints and compliments. Among the duties and responsibilities of the team are to:

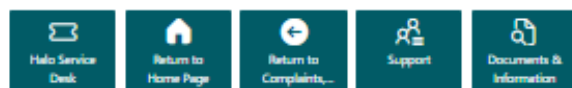
- Liaise with and advise service areas who require support when dealing with customer complaints.
- Collate, monitor and report on complaints received for the Council, and to produce the Council's Annual Complaints Report.
- Act as the point of contact for customers who have displayed 'unacceptable behaviour' as outlined in our 'Unacceptable Actions by Customers' policy (previously known as Persistent & Vexatious).
- Act as the link between the Council and Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Following the introduction of Halo, the team will look to ensure that all service areas are adhering to the Council's Complaints Policy in terms of acknowledging and responding in full within the set timescales.

Our policy states that we will formally acknowledge a complainant's concerns within 5 working days and that we aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible - expecting to deal with the vast majority within 20 working days.

If you would like further information about the Corporate Complaints Team, the Ombudsman, or complaints in general, please contact us using the e-mail address below.

### Quick Links



### Corporate Complaints & Compliments Contact email

 Corporate Complaints Team / Tim Cwynion Co...



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## Documents & Information

### Standard Operating Procedures



Corporate Complaints Standard Operating Procedure



Cabinet Correspondence Standard Operating Procedure



Member Enquiries Service (MES) Standard Operating Procedure



Ombudsman Standard Operating Procedure

### Policies



Welsh Complaints Policy



Social Services Complaints Policy and Procedure



Guide to handling complaints and representations by LA social...



Complaints Policy

### Useful Documents



Letter Privacy Disclaimers & Footers(English & Welsh) July 2022