

# Complaints and Compliments Policy

**Owner:**

Director of Customer Excellence

**Accountable Lead:**

Head of Communications and Engagement

**Policy Reference:**

POL28

**Next Review Date:**

June 2029

**Version:**

V2.4

## Policy Control

|                                   |                              |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Policy Level</b>               | Operational                  |
| <b>Approved by</b>                | Leadership                   |
| <b>Related Strategy</b>           | Strategic Plan & People Plan |
| <b>Consultation</b>               | None                         |
| <b>Equality Impact Assessment</b> | <a href="#">Here</a>         |

| Version #          | Status            | Summary of Changes    | Effective date | Lead             |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <b>V2.4</b>        | <b>Live</b>       | Ofgem preparation     |                | Charlotte Davies |
| <b>V2.3</b>        | <b>Superseded</b> | Audit implementations | Feb 2025       | Charlotte Davies |
| <b>V2</b>          | <b>Superseded</b> |                       |                |                  |
| <a href="#">V1</a> |                   |                       |                |                  |

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## Concerns and Complaints Policy

Valleys to Coast Group takes your concerns and complaints seriously. Valleys to Coast Group are committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about our service. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. Where possible, we will try to deal with complaints and concerns quickly and informally.

If we have failed to deliver, we will provide any service you are entitled to in line with the Tenants' Guarantee. Where we have got something wrong, we will not be afraid to apologise and, wherever possible, we will put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Statement

Valleys to Coast Group will take a mosaic approach to EDI recognising individuality but at the same time celebrating the picture that is the sum of all the pieces. Our approach aims to embed EDI in all we do, making it part of our fabric and not just a tick box exercise.

This approach brings together ideas, thoughts and ways of working to ensure that different backgrounds, experiences and identities are represented and all voices are heard. This fosters a culture of creativity and innovation and supports better decision making which in turn benefits our customers and colleagues)

## When to use this policy

You should use this policy when you feel that Valleys to Coast Group has failed to deliver on a service and you are not satisfied when you

have raised your concern with the Valleys to Coast colleague you have been dealing with.

This policy will not apply when:

You are approaching us for a service for the first time, (e.g. reporting a repair) – You should first give us a chance to respond to your request. If you make a request for a service and then are not happy with our response, you will be able to make your concern known as we describe below.

If you are appealing a decision based on a policy or procedures that has a separate right of appeal.

Issues that are in court or already have been heard by a court or tribunal.

When a complaint has already been concluded and you have exhausted all the stages of our complaint process. If you are still not satisfied then they will need to be raised with the Ombudsman for Wales (details below).

(This policy does not apply to Freedom of Information Requests or Subject Access Requests. In these circumstances, please contact [thehub@v2c.org.uk](mailto:thehub@v2c.org.uk) and your request will be directed to the governance team.)

## Informal resolution

If possible, we believe it is best to deal with things straight away rather than try to sort them out later. If you have a concern, raise it with the person you are dealing with. He or she will try to resolve it for you there and then. If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern then the member of staff will draw them to our attention.

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome you can express your concern or complaint formally

## How to express complaint or compliment formally

You can express your concern in any of the ways below;

Contact us on 0300 123 2100 and speak to a member of The Hub. The Hub will always attempt to resolve your concern or complaints there and then if they can, however tell us if you want us to deal with your complaint formally and you will be sent a copy of the complaints form

Email us at [TheHub@v2c.org.uk](mailto:TheHub@v2c.org.uk)

Send us a direct message using our social media channels;

Facebook Valleys to Coast Housing or Twitter @valleystocoast

Using our website by choosing the live chat option, or filling in the complaints form at:

[<https://www.v2c.org.uk/media/6385/concerns-and-complaint-policy.pdf>]

Copies of this Policy and the complaint form can be made available in other languages and as audio or large print (on request).

## Recording your compliment

We learn as much from our success as our mistakes. All complaints and compliments received are saved on our systems to enable us to refer to and review them.

## Dealing with your complaint

We will log your complaint and provide a reference number within 5 working days.

We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish if you have any particular requirements: for example if you are disabled, we will put in reasonable adjustments, or if you need translation services we will provide them via Language Line.

We will formally acknowledge your complaint within 10 working days of it being logged.

We will deal with your concern/complaint in an open and honest way; treat you fairly, listen to you and use the concern/complaint as a learning opportunity.

We will make sure that your dealings with us in the future do not suffer just because you have raised a concern or made a complaint. Normally, we will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within 12 months. This is because it is better to look into your concerns while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind. We understand that sometimes this might not be possible and we will do everything we can to understand and resolve your issue, so long as there is sufficient information about the issue to allow us to consider it properly. Certain concerns/complaints may also be subject to legal limitation periods, if this is the case, we will inform you.

If you are expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we will need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

## What if there is more than one organisation or business involved?

If your concern covers more than one organisation or business (for example Valleys to Coast Group and Bridgend County Council), we will usually work with them to decide who should take a lead in dealing with your concerns.

You will then be given the name of the person responsible for communicating with you while we consider your concern. If the concern is about an organisation working on our behalf we will take the lead and investigate your concern ourselves and respond to you.

## Investigation

We will tell you who we have asked to look into your concern or complaint. If your concern is straightforward, we will usually ask somebody from Valleys to Coast Group to look into it and get back to you. If it is more serious, we may appoint an independent investigator.

We will set out to you our understanding of your concern and ask you to confirm that we have got it right. We will also ask you to tell us what outcome you are hoping for.

The person looking at your concern will usually need to see the files we hold relevant to your concerns. If you do not want this to happen it is important that you tell us.

If there is a simple solution to your problem we may ask you if you are happy to accept this. For example, where you asked for a service and we see straight away that you should have had it we will offer to provide the service rather than investigate and produce a report.

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority within 20 working days. If your concern is more complex, we will:

- let you know why we think it may take longer to investigate
- tell you how long we expect it to take
- let you know where at what stage we are at with the investigation, and



give you regular updates, including telling you whether any developments might change our original timescale to resolve.

The person who is investigating your concern will aim first to establish the facts. The extent of this investigation will depend on how complex and how serious the issues you have raised are. In complex cases, we will draw up an investigation plan. In some instances, we may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns. You have the right to be accompanied by a friend, family member, or responsible adult if needed.

Occasionally, we might suggest mediation to try to resolve disputes. We will look at relevant evidence. This could include files, notes of conversations, letters, e-mails or whatever may be relevant to your particular concern. If necessary, we will talk to the colleague or others involved and look at our policies and any legal entitlement and guidance.

## Outcome

Following the investigation of your concern, we will let you know what we have found in keeping with your preferred form of communication. This could be by letter or e-mail, for example. If necessary, we will produce a longer report.

We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we got it wrong, we will tell you what and why it happened. We will show how the mistake affected you. If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we will tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.

If we got it wrong, we will always apologise.

## Putting it right

If we did not provide a service you should have had, we will aim to provide it now, if that is possible. If we did not do something well, we will aim to put it right.

If you have lost out as a result of a mistake on our part, we will aim to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had got it right.

If you had to pay for a service yourself when you should have had one from us, we will usually aim to make good what you have lost. Once the remedial action has been established, e.g. booking in works to complete a repair, we will close the complaint.

## Ombudsman

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman can look into your complaint if you believe that you personally, or the person on whose behalf you are complaining:

has been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on the part of the body providing it

has been disadvantaged personally by maladministration or service failure.

The Ombudsman expects you to bring your concerns to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right. You can contact the Ombudsman by:

phone: 0300 790 0203

e-mail: [ask@ombudsman.wales](mailto:ask@ombudsman.wales)

the website: [www.ombudsman.wales](http://www.ombudsman.wales)

writing to: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, 1 Ffordd yr  
Hen Gae, Pencoed CF35 5LJ

There are also other organisations that consider complaints. For example, the Welsh Language Commissioner about services in Welsh or the Equality Advisory and Support Service on issues relating to equality and human rights. We can advise you about such organisations.

If your complaint is about a Heat Network and remains unresolved following our response (add short description) you may raise this dispute with The Energy Ombudsman. You can complain to The Energy Ombudsman if;

- a problem you have reported to your supplier or network operator is not fixed within eight weeks
- you receive a “deadlock letter”, stating your problem cannot be fixed
- you’re not happy with the response you have received

The Energy Ombudsman expects you to bring your concerns to our attention first, as your supplier, and give us a chance to put things right. You can contact The Energy Ombudsman by:

- phone: 0330 440 1624 (Option 3)
- email: [enquiry@energyombudsman.org](mailto:enquiry@energyombudsman.org)
- the website: [www.energyombudsman.org](http://www.energyombudsman.org)
- writing to: The Energy Ombudsman, P.O. Box 966, Warrington, WA4 9DF

## Learning lessons

We take your concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we have made.

Our senior management team and Board consider a summary of all complaints quarterly as well as details of any serious complaints. Where there is a need for change, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it. We will let you know when changes we have promised have been made.

## What if I need help?

Our staff will aim to help you make your concerns known to us. If you need extra assistance, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help. You may wish to contact Citizens Advice, Shelter Cymru (or other organisations) who may be able to assist you. If you need more information or advice around well-being, not just your health, but about where you live, how safe you feel, getting out and about and keeping in touch then visit <https://www.dewis.wales/> for things that matter to you.

## What we expect from you

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a concern or a complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined. We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, be understood and respected. However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence. We have a separate policy to

manage situations where we find that someone's actions are unacceptable.

## Concern/Complaint Form

### A. Your details:

|                        |                  |  |
|------------------------|------------------|--|
| <b>Surname:</b>        | <b>Forename:</b> | <b>Title: Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms – If other, please state:</b> |
| Address and postcode:  |                  |  |
| Email address:         |                  |  |
| Daytime contact number |                  |  |
| Mobile Number          |                  |  |

Please state by which of the above methods you would prefer us to contact you:

**Your requirements:** if our usual way of dealing with complaints makes it difficult for you to use our service, for example if English or Welsh is not your first language or you need to engage with us in a particular way, please tell us so that we can discuss how we might help you.

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. If you are filling this in on behalf of someone else, please fill in section B.

**Note: we will not release information about this person(s) until we**

receive their authorisation.

## B. Making a complaint on behalf of someone else.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Their name in full:</b>                             |  |
| <b>Their address and postcode:</b>                     |  |
| <b>What is your relationship to them?</b>              |  |
| <b>Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?</b> |  |
| <b>Your mobile number:</b>                             |  |
| <b>Their signature:</b>                                |  |

## C. About the concern/complaint.

*(Please continue your answers to the following questions on separate sheets if necessary.)*

|  |
|--|
| C.1 Name of the department/section/service the complaint is about: |
| C.2 What do you think they did wrong, or failed to do?             |

C.3 Describe how you personally have suffered or have been affected.

C.4 What do you think should be done to put things right?

C.5 When did you first become aware of the problem?

C.6 Have you already put your concern to the frontline staff responsible for delivering the service? If so, please give brief details of how and when you did so.

C.7 If it is more than 6 months since you became first aware of the problem, please give the reason why you have not complained before now.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you have any documents to support your concern/complaint, please attach them with this form.**

When you have completed this form, please send it Valleys to Coast

Housing Ltd, Tremains Business Park, Tremains Road, Bridgend. CF31  
1TZ, or email it to [thehub@v2c.org.uk](mailto:thehub@v2c.org.uk)