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# Community and Town Councils

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## Introduction

This Fact sheet explains how you can complain about Community and Town Councils. It should be read together with our [‘How to Complain’](#) webpage, available under the ‘Making A Complaint’ tab. You may also wish to read our additional Factsheets covering a range of specific public service areas.

There are 735 Community and Town Councils in Wales representing the tier of government closest to the people. The communities served by these Councils range from small rural settlements to large towns, and each Council’s budget varies accordingly. However, all Councils have common aims to serve their communities and improve the quality of life in their locality. Community and Town Councils can be established or disbanded at the wishes of the community.

In addition to acting in a representative role Community and Town Councils are often responsible for delivering a wide range of services to the communities they serve such as:

- Maintenance and management of community halls
- Bus shelters
- Play grounds
- Allotments
- Public spaces

Community and Town Councils are made up of elected members, or, in some cases, co-opted members.

Community and Town Councils operate in accordance with statutory powers and duties. Each council's decision-making procedures are often governed by a series of standing orders; copies of these can usually be obtained from the Clerk to a council and/or a council's website.

## **What we can do**

If you think that a Community or Town Council has not followed the law, regulations or its own procedures, we may be able to help you. In view of the extensive range of community functions performed by Community and Town Councils, the types of complaints received by us in relation to these Councils can be wide-ranging. Some examples of the types of complaints we may consider are as follows:

- Decisions or actions taken by a Council in relation the services it provides
- Procedures adopted by a Council at its meetings
- Recruitment practices

We will only investigate a complaint where an individual (or, in some cases, a group of individuals) have suffered personal injustice or hardship because of the action or lack of action on behalf of the Community or Town Council. The complaint must usually be brought by the person who has suffered this injustice, hardship or loss (or their representative).

## **What we cannot do**

We cannot:

- Change a properly-made decision taken by a council;
- Normally look at a complaint where there is, or was, a right of appeal available;
- Normally look at a complaint where there is a legal remedy available.

## **Issues to bear in mind**

- Complaints which relate to the conduct or behaviour of individual members of a Community or Town Council are considered under a different process. Please refer to our Code of Conduct – General Information factsheet for further information.
- Complaints which relate to decisions or actions taken by a Community or Town Council should usually be raised initially

with the Clerk to a council. A copy of a council's complaints policy should be available on its website or from the Clerk.

- You do not need to make your complaint to us using a solicitor or any other advocate.

## Further information

You can get free, independent legal advice about the provision of services by your Council from your **local Citizens Advice**:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) .

Your Council's own website may also contain information about the provision of services in your local area and procedures.

Alternatively, you can contact the **Clerk to a council**. Information concerning Community and Town Councils may also be obtained from One Voice Wales, the organisation that represents and provides support services to Community and Town Councils in Wales: [www.onevoicewales.org.uk](http://www.onevoicewales.org.uk) .

We are independent and impartial; we cannot order public bodies to do what we recommend – but, in practice, they almost always do. Examples of cases that we have looked at can be found on our website, [on the 'Publications' tab under 'Our Findings'](#).

## Contact us

If you are unsure whether we would be able to look into your complaint, please [contact us](#) on 0300 790 0203.

Also available in Welsh.

# Easy Read

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