



COMPLAINTS POLICY

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1. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out how we will deal with concerns and complaints. Beacon Cymru Group is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints made by anyone that receives a service from us.

We aim to be fair, open and honest with concerns or complaints raised about the services we provide. If we make mistakes, we will acknowledge this, apologise and, where possible, put things right.

This policy considers complaints received from anyone that receives a service, or is entitled to receive a service, from Beacon Cymru Group. It applies when someone requests a service and is not happy with the response.

Any concerns raised by parties not in receipt of services from Beacon will be dealt with according to the individual circumstances.

2. What Matters

What matters is that we deliver high quality services tailored to people's needs and that when concerns are raised about these services, we are responsive, sensitive, transparent and thorough.

The principles we apply in handling complaints are complainant focused, simple, fair, objective, timely and effective, accountable, and committed to continuous improvement

3. Abbreviations and Definitions

Term	Definition
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	ASB (as set out in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014) is: (a) conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person, (b) conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or (c) conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person
Complaint	A complaint is: an expression of dissatisfaction or concern, written or spoken or made by any other communication method, about a provider's action or lack of action or the standard of service provided A complaint is not: An initial request for a service; an appeal against a 'properly made' decision, a means to seek change to legislation or a 'properly made' decision; a means for lobbying groups/organisations to seek to promote a cause
Subject Access Requests (SARs)	A SAR (as set out by the Information Commissioners Office) is a request made by or on behalf of an individual for the information which they are entitled to ask for under Article 15 of the UK GDPR

4. Policy

4.1 When to use this policy

When you express your concerns or complain to us, we will usually respond in the way we explain below. However, sometimes you may have a statutory right of appeal so, rather than investigate your concern, we will explain to you how you can appeal. Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are not covered by this policy (for example decisions on whether you are nominated by the Local Authority to be allocated one of our properties or certain planning issues, etc.), and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known.

For complaints relating to potential data breaches, Freedom of Information' or data access issues such as data Subject Access Requests (SARs) or other data protection matters please see Appendix C to contact the associations appointed Data Protection Officer.

If your concern or complaint is about the conduct or behaviour of another resident of Beacon Cymru Group and/or their visitors, you may wish to raise the matter informally and directly with them. You will find more information in the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) policy about how we are able to support you to do this. Concerns and complaints of this nature are not dealt with under this policy, unless there is a concern or complaint about how we have responded to reports of ASB.

4.2 Asking us to provide a service

If you are approaching us for a service (e.g. reporting a repair), even if this is to tell us something needs to be fixed (e.g. broken-down boiler) then this policy doesn't apply as we need an opportunity to respond to your request. If you make a request for a service, and then are not happy with our response, this policy then applies, and you will be able to make your concerns known as described below.

4.3 Informal resolution (stage one)

If possible, we believe it's best to deal with things straight away. Colleagues in Beacon Cymru Group are empowered to resolve many concerns at the informal resolution stage. If you have a concern, please raise it with the person you're dealing with. They will try to resolve it for you there and then. If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern, the member of staff will draw them to our attention. If the member of staff can't help, they will explain why, and you can ask for a formal investigation. Concerns dealt with at this stage should normally be responded to within ten working days.

4.4 How to express concern or complain formally (stage two)

You can express your concern in any of the following ways:

- Ask for a copy of the complaint form from the person with whom you are already in contact and tell them that you want us to deal with your concern
- Get in touch with one of our team on **01792 479200** if you want to make your complaint by telephone
- Use the form on the website at <https://beacon.cymru/get-in-touch/complaints/>
- Email us at complaints@beacon.cymru
- Message us via <https://www.facebook.com/beaconcymrugroup>

- Write to us at 220 High Street, Swansea, SA1 1NW

Please be aware the above methods are the best way to make a complaint, if you chose to text or email a member of staff directly with your complaint this could lead to a delayed response.

Copies of this policy and the complaint form are available from offices in Tonypany and Swansea or our website and are available in Welsh and in large print

Copies of the policy and the complaints form are available in:

- Welsh

4.5 Dealing with your concern

We will formally acknowledge your concern within a maximum of five working days (sooner if possible) and let you know how we intend to deal with it.

We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any requirements – for example, if you need documents in large type.

We will deal with your concern in an open and honest way.

We will make sure that your dealings with us in the future do not suffer just because you have expressed a concern or made a complaint.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within six months. This is because it's better to investigate your concerns while the issues are still fresh. We may exceptionally be able to look at concerns which are brought to our attention later than this. However, you will have to explain why you have not been able to bring it to our attention earlier and we will need to have sufficient information about the issue to allow us to consider it properly. In any event, we will not consider any concerns about matters that took place more than three years ago.

If you're expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we'll need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

Anonymous complaints

Complaints received anonymously will not be dealt with under the Complaints Policy

Petitions

If a petition received includes a complaint about Beacon, the Complaints Policy will be followed, however the author (if known) alone will be involved in correspondence. Signees will not necessarily receive a response.

4.6 What if there is more than one body involved?

If your complaint covers more than one body, (e.g., more than one housing association, repairs contractors, local authority, etc.), we will usually work with them to decide who should take a lead in dealing with your concerns. You will be given the name of the person responsible for communicating with you while we consider your complaint.

If the complaint is about a body working on our behalf (e.g. repairs contractor), you may wish to raise the matter informally and directly with them first. However, if you want to express your concern or complaint, we will investigate this ourselves and respond to you.

4.7 Investigation

We will tell you who we have asked to investigate your concern or complaint. If your concern is straightforward, we'll usually ask somebody from the relevant service area to investigate it and respond to you. If it is more serious, we may use someone from elsewhere in Beacon Cymru Group or, in certain cases, we may appoint an independent investigator.

We will set out our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that this is correct. We'll ask you to tell us what outcome you're hoping for. The person looking at your complaint will usually need to see the files we hold relevant to your complaint. If you don't want this to happen, it's important that you tell us.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask if you're 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 written response.

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority within 20 working days.

If your complaint is more complex, we will:

- Let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate
- Tell you how long we expect it to take
- Let you know where we have reached with the investigation, and
- Give you regular updates, including telling you whether any developments might change our original estimate

The person who is investigating your concerns will firstly aim to establish the facts. The extent of the investigation will depend upon 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 with you to discuss your concerns. We might suggest a mediation process to find ways to ensure concerns are fully heard, restore relationships and agree a plan for future contact.

We'll look at relevant evidence. This could include information you have provided, our case files, notes of conversations, letters, emails or whatever may be relevant to your particular concern. If there are specific documents you want us to consider, please let us know. If necessary, we'll talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies, any legal entitlement and guidance.

4.8 Outcome

If we formally investigate your complaint (stage two), we will let you know what we find. If necessary, we will produce a report. We'll explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we made a mistake, we'll tell you what happened and why. If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we'll tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again. If we make a mistake, we will always apologise for it.

4.9 Putting things right

If we didn't provide you with a service that you should have had, we'll aim to provide it, if that's possible. If we didn't do something well, we'll aim to put it right. If you have lost out because of a mistake on our part, we'll try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we'd done things properly. If you had to pay for a service yourself, when we should have provided it for you, we will try to refund the cost.

4.10 The Ombudsman

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman is independent of all government bodies and can investigate 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 service provider
- Has been disadvantaged personally by a service failure or have been treated unfairly

The Ombudsman normally expects you to bring your concerns to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right.

You can contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales by:

- Phone: 0300 790 0203
- The website: 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's Office deals with complaints about services in Welsh. We can advise you about such organisations.

4.11 What if you need help?

Our staff 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 agencies like those listed below who may be able to assist you.

Find your Member of the Senedd (MS)	https://senedd.wales/find-a-member-of-the-senedd
Find your Member of Parliament (MP)	https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP
Shelter Cymru	https://sheltercymru.org.uk
Citizens Advice Bureau	Housing - Citizens Advice

Find a solicitor	https://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk/
Age Cymru	https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/
Advocacy Support Cymru	https://www.ascymru.org.uk/
Advocacy Matters Wales	https://www.advocacymatterswales.co.uk/

A full list of advocacy and advice bodies can be found on the Ombudsman website - <https://www.ombudsman.wales/advocacy-template/>

You can use this concerns and complaints policy if you are under the age of 18. If you need help, you can speak to someone on the Meic Helpline (0808 802 3456; www.meiccymru.org) or contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Contact details are:

- Phone 01792 765600
- Email post@childcomwales.org.uk
- Website www.childcom.org.uk
- In writing: Oystermouth House, Phoenix Way, Llansamlet, Swansea SA7 9FS

4.12 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, understood and respected. We also consider that Beacon Cymru Group staff have the same rights. Therefore, 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 deem someone's actions or behaviour are unreasonable and/or unacceptable.

5. Monitoring and measures

We take concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we've made. We are committed to learning from our mistakes and using the information we gain to improve our services.

Beacon's senior management team considers a summary of all complaints quarterly and is made aware of all serious complaints. Our Board also considers our response to complaints annually.

We share summary (anonymised) information on complaints received and complaints outcomes with the Ombudsman as part of our commitment to accountability and learning from complaints.

Where there is a need for significant 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've promised have been made.

6. Linked policies

- Rent Setting Policy
- Service Charge Policy

- Rent Management Policy
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- WHQS Policy
- Landlord Compliance Policy
- Housing Management Policy
- Managed Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy

7. Relevant legislation and regulations

- Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016
- Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) 2019 Act (Complaints Standard Authority)
- Housing Act (Wales) 2014 (including the Welsh Housing Quality Standard)
- Housing Act 1988
- Housing Act 1996
- Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations in Wales

8. Data Protection Statement

The Group operates a Data Protection Policy which governs how the organisation will manage the collection, retention, processing, management and disposal of individual's personal data and special category data. The Policy is designed to incorporate all the legal requirements contained in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and all guidance and best practice issued by the Information Commissioners Office.

9. Welsh Language Statement

The Group acknowledges that members of the public can express their opinions and needs better in their chosen language. Therefore, we will ensure that services are available through the medium of Welsh if requested, are of a high quality and provided in a timely manner.

10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Beacon Cymru has a specific Equality and Diversity Policy, which reflects not only the legal parameters of the Equality Act 2010 but also embraces the spirit of the Act in recognising the value of diversity in our communities. It reinforces Beacon Cymru's commitment to eradicating prejudice, discrimination, and victimisation in all forms.

Beacon Cymru values diversity and is committed to equal opportunities. Beacon Cymru will ensure that this Policy is operated fairly and will not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of age, disability, gender identity/reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

11. Appendix A – Concern/Complaint Form Appendix A – Concern/Complaint Form [\[Digital version available here\]](#)

A: YOUR DETAILS

Surname	Forename/s	Title: Ms, Mr, Mrs, Mx, Miss, other (please state)
Your address and postcode		
Your email address		
Your daytime contact telephone number		

Please state how you would prefer us to contact you	
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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.

B: MAKING A COMPLAINT ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE; THEIR DETAILS

Please note: We must be satisfied you have the authority to act on behalf of the person who has experienced the problem.

Their name in full	
Their address and postcode	
Their email address	
Their daytime contact telephone number	
What is your relationship to them	
Why are you making this complaint on their behalf	

C: ABOUT YOUR CONCERN / COMPLAINT

(Please continue your answers to the following questions on a separate sheet(s) if necessary).

C1	If known, name of the department/section/service you are complaining about

C2	What did they do wrong or failed to do?

C3	How have you suffered or been affected by this?

C4	When were you first aware of the problem?

C5	If it is more than six months since you became aware of the problem, please provide the reason for not telling us about it sooner

C6	Have you already told your concern to the staff member responsible for the service? If so, please provide brief details of how and when you did so

C7	What could be done to put things right?

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

Signature		Date	
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When you have completed this form, please return it to:

Complaints and Concerns – Customer Services Team, Beacon Cymru Group, 3rd Floor, 220 High Street, Swansea, SA1 1NW

12. Appendix B –Roles and Responsibilities

Stage	Who can investigate
Stage 1	All resident facing staff can raise and / or investigate and resolve
Stage 2	Managers, Line Managers and above to investigate. The person investigating the complaint will be determined by the Director of the relevant Service Area or in their absence the relevant Head of Service or CST Senior. If the complaint is about a Director the relevant Exec Director will investigate.

13. Appendix C - How to Raise a Data Protection Concern

If you have concerns about how we process your personal data or believe your data protection rights may have been broken under the Data use and Access Act, you can raise a complaint with us. This may include issues such as delays in response to a data request, concerns over how your data has been used or shared, or dissatisfaction with the outcome of a Subject Access Request (SAR).

To submit your complaint to our Data Protection Officer (DPO) by:

- Use the form on the website at <https://beacon.cymru/get-in-touch/complaints/>
- Email us at complaints@beacon.cymru
- Write to us at 220 High Street, Swansea, SA1 1NW

Our DPO aims to acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days, and provide a full response within 20 working days, where this is not possible they will:

- let you know within this time why they think it may take longer to investigate
- tell you how long they expect it to take
- let you know where they have reached with the investigation, and
- give you regular updates, including telling you whether any developments might change our original estimate

Complaints relating specifically to the conduct of the DPO shall be directed to a Beacon Cymru Group Executive Director, who will investigate independently and provide written findings to the complainant, within 20 working days.

If you remain unhappy after this internal review, you have the right to take your concern further to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). For more information or to submit a complaint, please visit the ICO's website: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us>.

You can also review our full Privacy Policy and learn more about how your data is used under the Data Use and Access Act [here](#).