



COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE



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1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 The Valuation Tribunal for Wales is committed to providing a quality service and aims to get things right. The Tribunal will try to settle complaints quickly and informally at your first point of contact. Where this is not possible a formal process is in operation.

2. AIMS

- 2.1 The Tribunal will try to:
- Make the process of complaining as easy as possible;
 - Treat the complaint seriously, whether it is made in person, by telephone or in writing;
 - Deal with the complaint promptly and politely;
 - Respond positively with an explanation or apology when things are wrong, or with information on any action taken;
 - Improve its service and will publish information on complaints

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 There are two types of complaint::
- Administrative, and
 - Judicial.

This policy covers **administrative complaints only**.

- 3.2 This policy is not applicable to complaints about judicial decisions. If you are aggrieved by a judicial decision, other processes of redress are available, including appealing to the upper courts.¹
- 3.3 This policy covers matters where you feel we have not handled your dealings with us correctly or well at an administrative level. The issues involved could include our being discourteous, or giving you wrong or misleading information, or failing to do something that we should have done when dealing with your enquiry or when processing your appeal.

¹ Guidance on how you can challenge a tribunal decision is contained in information leaflets on our website.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- If you have an administrative complaint, raise the matter with any member of our staff. If they are able to resolve the problem immediately, they will do. If they cannot achieve this themselves, but they feel that another member of staff is able to do so, they will refer the matter on, so that it is resolved as soon as possible.
- If we are not able to resolve matters quickly in this way, you can ask for the complaint to be referred to one of our Executive Managers, or you can contact the nearest Executive Manager directly yourself with full details. (The contact details are shown in the *Tribunal Addresses* appendix at the end of this policy.)
- Putting your complaint in writing and in your own words is often very helpful at this stage, as it makes it extremely clear what your personal concerns are and what we must address.
- The Executive Manager will attempt to sort out your complaint within five days of receipt if possible. If further information is required (or if they need to undertake an investigation) they will contact you and let you know within this time period.
- If the matter is going to take more than five working days to resolve, the Executive Manager will write to you giving an estimate of when a conclusion is likely to be reached. Our aim is to resolve all complaints, which require significant investigation, within one month of receipt. If this proves not to be possible, we will let you know about any delay and the reason(s) for it.
- The Executive Manager's final conclusion will be sent to you in writing. If we have made a mistake, we will apologise and tell you what steps we will take to put things right now, if possible; or if it is not now possible to resolve the particular issue, what lessons we have learned and what steps we will be taking to prevent a reoccurrence of the problem in the future.
- If you are not satisfied with the Executive Manager's response or you feel that your complaint has not been properly considered or

remedied, you may write to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), asking the CEO to investigate further.

- The CEO will acknowledge your letter or email within five days of receipt, and will endeavour to complete investigations and respond fully within one month. If this is not possible he or she will keep you updated on progress, and give you a revised estimate on when a conclusion is likely to be sent to you. The CEO will investigate both the substance of your original complaint and the manner in which it has been handled by the Executive Manager. The CEO will give a full written response.
- The CEO's investigation and conclusion will be the final stage of this complaints procedure.

5. COMPLAINTS INVOLVING STAFF CONDUCT

- 5.1 Complaints which involve allegations about the conduct of a member of staff will be handled as described in Section 4, but with the following adjustments if the allegations relate to an Executive Manager or the CEO.
- 5.2 In the case of a complaint about the conduct of an Executive Manager, the CEO will carry out the initial investigation and, if a further investigation is required, it will be undertaken by a member of the VTW's Governing Council appointed for the purpose by the Tribunal's President.
- 5.3 In the case of a complaint about the conduct of the CEO, the initial investigation will be undertaken by a member of the Governing Council appointed for the purpose by the President. Any further investigation will be undertaken by the President.

6. MAKING A COMPLAINT TO EXTERNAL BODIES

- 6.1 It is our aim to resolve administrative complaints under this internal policy and procedure. However, there are external bodies to whom you can address complaints about our administrative processes and conduct, if you wish.



6.2 *The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales*

The ombudsman can investigate administrative complaints **after** the above internal complaints procedure has been exhausted. The ombudsman's contact details are given in the *External Bodies* appendix at the end of this policy.

6.3 *The Information Commissioner*

The Information Commissioner can investigate complaints about data protection breaches. Contact details are shown in the *External Bodies* appendix.

6.4 *The Welsh Language Commissioner*

The Welsh Language Commissioner can investigate complaints about us failing to fulfil our obligations under our Welsh Language Compliance Notice, which has been issued to us by the Commissioner. However, failures in our Welsh Language duties are most quickly resolved by using the above internal complaints procedure in the first instance. The Commissioner often expects organisations and complainants to have addressed issues directly between themselves before a complaint is raised with the Commissioner's office. Our Welsh Language Compliance Notice requires us to have a complaints procedure in place to deal with these issues; and the above internal procedure serves this purpose.

The Commissioner's contact details are shown in the *External Bodies* appendix.

7. ASSEMBLY MEMBERS AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

7.1 If you believe we have failed administratively in any way, you can ask your local AM or MP to look into the matter. You can do this before or after we have begun, or concluded, the above internal complaints procedure.



8. RELATED POLICIES

- 8.1 The following VTW policies are related documents and should be observed in conjunction with this Policy:

Managing Unreasonable External Contacts

9. INTERPRETATION

- 9.1 The above provisions aim to provide succinct guidance on how unreasonable external contacts with the VTW will be managed. If, however any of the provisions are unclear, further advice and guidance should be sought from the Chief Executive Officer or in their absence a member of the Executive Management Team.



10. APPENDIX - CONTACT ADDRESSES

The following managers may be contacted by email using the VTW's general email address (correspondence@valuationtribunal.wales) and marking the message for the attention of the relevant individual.

Executive Managers

Executive Manager
Valuation Tribunal for Wales
22 Gold Tops
Newport
NP20 4PG

Telephone 01633 266367

Executive Manager
Valuation Tribunal for Wales
Government Buildings - Block A(L1)
Sarn Mynach,
Llandudno Junction
LL31 9RZ

Telephone 03000 625350

Chief Executive Officer

Chief Executive Officer,
Government Buildings - Block A(L1)
Sarn Mynach
Llandudno Junction
LL31 9RZ

Telephone 03000 625350

President

The President will receive correspondence at either of the addresses listed above, or through the VTW's general email address (correspondence@valuationtribunal.wales). All correspondence for the President must be clearly marked "For the attention of the VTW President".



11. APPENDIX - EXTERNAL BODIES

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae
Pencoed
Bridgend
CF35 5LJ

Telephone: 0300 790 0203
Email: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Information Commissioner

Information Commissioner's Office – Wales
2nd Floor
Churchill House
Churchill Way
Cardiff
CF10 2HH

Telephone: 016 2554 5297
Email: wales@ico.org.uk

Welsh Language Commissioner

Welsh Language Commissioner
Market Chambers
5–7 St Mary Street
Cardiff
CF10 1AT

Telephone: 0345 6033 221
Email: post@welshlanguagecommissioner.wales

12. ANNEXE - WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Governing Council of the Valuation Tribunal for Wales has considered the following questions and made the following responses when revising this policy on <date>:

- A. Does this policy have any positive or adverse effects on — (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and (b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

Response:	With regard to the Welsh Language this policy has...	
	...positive effects	...adverse effects
(a) Opportunities	No	No
(b) Treatment	No	No

- B. In developing this policy have we considered how we could formulate or change it in such a way that it will have positive effects or increased positive effects on — (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and (b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

Response:	During development consideration was given to...	
	...positive effects	...increasing positive effects
(a) Opportunities	Yes	Yes
(b) Treatment	Yes	Yes

- C. In developing this policy have we considered how we could formulate or change it in such a way so that the policy decision will not have adverse effects, or so that it has decreased adverse effects, on — (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and (b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

Response:	During development consideration was given to...	
	...adverse effects	...decreasing adverse effects
(a) Opportunities	Yes	Yes
(b) Treatment	Yes	Yes