

TONYREFAIL & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

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1. Introduction

Tonyrefail & District Community Council is committed to dealing with any concerns or complaints you may have about the service we provide. This Complaints Policy is intended to ensure that complaints by members of the public about the Council's actions, or lack of action, or standard of service are dealt with promptly and effectively.

The Council aims to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible, the Council will put right any mistakes made and will provide any service you are entitled to where we have failed to deliver. The Council aims to learn from mistakes and use the information to improve our services.

2. When not to use this policy

This procedure does not apply to:

- Complaints about the substance of policy decisions made by the Council,
- Complaints about the conduct of an individual councillor (these should be made to the Public Services Ombudsman at www.ombudsman.wales),
- Complaints by an employee of the Council about the Council's actions as an employer (these should be dealt with under the Council's Grievance Procedure),
- Freedom of Information or Data Protection issues (these should be made directly to the Clerk at clerk@tonyrefail-cc.gov.wales).

3. Informal resolution

It is best to deal with matters straight away rather than try to sort them out later. If you have a concern, raise it with the person you are dealing with. They will try to resolve it for you there and then. If the member of staff is unable to help, they will explain why. If you are still unhappy with the explanation, you can raise it with the Clerk or you can lodge a formal complaint.

4. Formal process

- 4.1 If you would like the Council to consider your complaint formally, you will be asked to complete a **Complaints Form** (*Annexure 1*). The form can be obtained by:
- Asking for a copy from the person you are already in contact with,
 - Contacting the office on 01443 673991 or office@tonyrefail-cc.gov.wales,
 - Visiting the office at Trane Cemetery, Gilfach Road, Tonyrefail, CF39 8HL,
 - Downloading a copy from the Council's website: www.tonyrefail-cc.gov.wales.
- 4.2 Complaints about the Council's administration and procedures should be made initially to the Clerk who will deal with your complaint. If you are unwilling to approach the Clerk, a complaint may be made to the Chair of the Council who will refer the complaint either to the Clerk or a relevant Committee.
- 4.3 Complaints made anonymously may not be investigated.
- 4.4 Complaints that cannot be dealt with immediately to your satisfaction, will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days.
- 4.5 In general, complaints will be dealt with within 20 working days of receipt, although this time limit may be extended with your agreement, or where the Council feels it necessary to take legal or other advice.
- 4.6 Normally, the Council will only be able to look into issues that are less than six months old. The Council may, as an exception, consider issues older than six months provided you have strong reasons for why you chose not to raise your concerns earlier, and there will need to be sufficient information about the issue to allow the Council to consider it properly.
- 4.7 The Council will not consider concerns about matters that took place more than two years ago.

5. Dealing with your concern

- 5.1 The Council will formally acknowledge your complaint, normally within 5 working days and will ask how you would like to be contacted. We will also ask if you have any particular requirements with regards to how we communicate with you during this process (eg. If you have a disability and require adjustments).
- 5.2 We will make sure that your dealings with the Council in the future do not suffer because you have expressed a concern or made a complaint.
- 5.3 If you are expressing concern for someone else, we will need to obtain their agreement for you to act on their behalf.

- 5.4 If your complaint covers more than one body, the Council will usually work with them to decide who should take the lead in dealing with your concerns (eg. Natural Resources Wales, RCT County Borough Council).



- 5.5 The Council will ask what outcome you are hoping for.

6. Investigation

- 6.1 The Council will inform you as to who has been assigned to look into your concern or complaint.
- 6.2 If your complaint is straightforward, the Council will usually ask the Clerk to investigate and get back to you. If there is a simple solution to your problem, the Council will ask you if you are satisfied with the outcome.
- 6.3 If it is more complex or serious, the Council will
- Let you know the reasons why it may take longer to investigate your complaint,
 - Tell you how long it is expected to take,
 - Keep you updated on the progress of the investigation.
- 6.4 If your complaint warrants it, the Council may take external advice or appoint an independent investigator.
- 6.5 The person investigating your complaint will need to see the information held that is relevant to your complaint. If you don't want this to happen, it is important that you inform the Council.
- 6.6 In all cases, the person who is investigating your concerns will first aim to establish the facts. In some cases, the Council may ask to meet with you to discuss your concerns. Occasionally, mediation may be offered to resolve disputes.
- 6.7 The Council will look at relevant evidence. This could include files, notes of conversations, letters, e-mails, photographs or whatever may be appropriate to your particular concern. If necessary, the Council will talk to members of staff or other people involved and will consult Council policies and procedures and any legal guidance.

7. Resolution

If the Council formally investigates your complaint, we will let you know the outcome in keeping with your preferred form of communication. This could be by letter or e-mail, for example. If necessary, the Council will produce a longer report explaining the conclusion.

If the Council got it wrong, we will tell you why it happened and if there is a fault in Council systems and procedures, we will let you know what we are doing to make sure it does not happen again.

Annexure 1: Complaint Form

Tonyrefail & District Community Council

Concern / Complaint Form

A: Your Details

Surname	Forename(s)	Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/ if other, please state:
Address and postcode		
Your email address		
Daytime contact phone number		
Mobile number		

Please state by which of the above methods 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.

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.** Please note that before taking forward the complaint we will need to satisfy ourselves that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned.

B: Making A Complaint on Behalf of Someone Else: Their Details

Their name in full	
Address and postcode	
What is your relationship to them?	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?	

C: About Your Concern / Complaint

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

C.1 Name of the department / section / service you are complaining 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 first became aware of the problem, please give the reason why you have not complained before now.

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

Signature:

Date:

When you have completed this form, please send it to:

The Clerk, Tonyrefail & District Community Council
Trane Cemetery, Gilfach Road, Tonyrefail, CF39 8HL

OR

e-mail to clerk@tonyrefail-cc.gov.wales

For further information, call 01443 673991

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg - This document is available in Welsh