

Resolving Concerns and Complaints Policy (Staff)



Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.



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Policy Statement - Resolving Concerns and Complaints Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets the context for resolving any concerns, complaints, disputes, conflicts and / or allegations of bullying or harassment. It replaces the traditional Grievance and Dignity at Work Policies and offers a timely, supportive and proactive approach to resolving workplace issues to achieve constructive outcomes.

A happy workforce is essential to achieving a more effective and efficient workforce. This policy and associated procedure will focus on this in order to achieve the goal of ensuring that the people of Bangor are at the center of everything we do.

Most issues can be resolved through early dialogue and the policy encourages the use of informal methods as a first port of call (and where appropriate) as a way of supporting individuals to find an early resolve. This will reduce the likelihood of any concerns (referred to under STEP 1 in the Procedure) escalating into official complaints (STEP 2) which in turn reduces the risk of relationship breakdowns.

This policy reflects the culture of the City Council, the Code of Conduct and Practice, and what is set out in the Job Descriptions and the Terms and Conditions of Employment of all Council staff. These documents are contractual and refer to what is expected of all staff in terms of attitude and behaviors.

2. Scope

The policy is appropriate for staff employed by Bangor City Council, whether permanent, temporary, casual, full or part-time.

The policy does not apply when workers are employed through agencies or self-employed consultants.

This policy is to be used to resolve concerns and complaints relating to all aspects of employment matters including;

- Concerns and complaints between colleagues
- Concerns and complaints within or between teams
- Concerns and complaints between managers and team members
- Collective concerns and complaints

- Concerns and complaints about the employer's acts or omissions, e.g. terms and conditions of employment; Health and safety; working practices; equal opportunities; the working environment.
- Allegations of bullying or harassment.

A concern or complaint relating to actions taken under another policy and procedure will be managed under that relevant policy (e.g. if a member of staff raises a complaint during the disciplinary process it may be appropriate to deal with matters together during the disciplinary).

It is important that the procedure deals only with concerns and complaints of a substantive nature and concerns/complaints should not be introduced as a deterrent or as a means of delaying other processes.

In order to address issues promptly, staff members are encouraged to raise matters as soon as possible and within three months of the issues being referred to taking place. The employer may consider extending this in exceptional circumstances.

3. Principles

Bangor City Council is committed to fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding with all employees. Taking ownership for resolving any concerns and complaints is a key part of that and everyone has a responsibility to ensure that they work together professionally towards this goal.

Bangor City Council encourages staff to be honest and open by reporting any concerns immediately or as close as possible to any incident with a focus on finding an early and constructive resolution before things escalate.

We recognize that concerns and complaints are inevitable in the workplace and that in many cases when managed well it leads to healthy, resilient and positive relationships.

The City Council also recognizes that a speedy and constructive resolution of grievances offers clear benefits to employee wellbeing, to service performance and ultimately to the customer experience.

We recognize that concerns and complaints may be different in nature and complexity and therefore the timescale for finding a resolution may vary depending on the situation. In all cases, the employer will commit to facilitating a resolution as soon as practicable - this to avoid a concern eventually turning into a complaint. The facilitator or investigating officer should communicate regularly to explain where any process or investigation is at and set out the expectations in terms of timescales from the offset. If there is any likely delay this should be clarified as soon as possible and the reasons for it shared.

The policy and associated procedure imposes ownership of the resolution of concerns / complaints on the parties concerned. A resolution in this manner is more likely to be successful for both sides in the long run than a resolution imposed upon them.

It is therefore important that all parties involved work towards the same goal - ie

- to consider what a fair outcome would look like
- to consider what they are willing to contribute to reach a resolution

We understand that conflict and the idea of talking to someone can be stressful and turbulent. However, where appropriate, we believe that a conversation, whether direct with the other person or with the help of a third party (e.g. a mediator), is the most effective way of resolving concerns and complaints.

There may be circumstances where not all individuals may be confident enough to discuss issues face-to-face with the other party(s), especially initially, and therefore the support of the line manager will be crucial under those circumstances (or senior manager / independent party if not suitable to discuss with the line manager).

To assist in the resolution process, the Council will provide any necessary support and facilitate discussions where relevant.

Support will be available to all parties involved in the concern/complaint and counselling (Medra) and Occupational Health support can be accessed where required.

Everyone is expected to:

- seek to find an early resolution
- be honest and open throughout the process
- show respect for others
- take ownership and work together to resolve the issue
- foster a culture where all parties can negotiate with one another in a fair, constructive and productive way
- listen and communicate openly so that everyone involved are aware of the questions and problems and, where possible, resolve it quickly and to the satisfaction of all concerned
- maintain confidentiality at all times - including after the process is over.
- feel confident that raising an issue will not have a negative impact on themselves or their career when the issue is raised in good faith (anyone who persecutes another employee for raising an issue or concern may be subject to disciplinary action)

4. Equality

The Council is committed to ensuring that the concerns and complaints resolution process seeks to ensure that there is no discrimination against protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010.

5. Review of Policy / Procedure

The policy / procedure will be reviewed in 3 years; however, the policy / procedure may be reviewed within this period to make any amendment / changes necessary in the light of operating experience or a change in employment law or statutory guidance.

6. Version History

Version	Date of Publication	Review Date	Summary of Changes
1st	14/11/24	30/11/27	New Policy