



Complaints Procedure and Monitoring Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Snowdonia National Park Authority aims to provide a high standard of service in all aspects of its work. On occasions when the public feel that the Authority has fallen short of those standards, we should encourage people to complain, so that we are given an opportunity to rectify the situation.
- 1.2. The Authority aims to embrace good customer care principles, and therefore complaints from the public are to be welcomed. Such complaints can alert the Authority to issues which need to be addressed.
- 1.3. It's the Authority's aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, and to this end an effective and efficient process is required to resolve any dissatisfaction experienced by the public.
- 1.4. It is the ultimate aim of the Authority to make the complainant feel that they have helped us improve our services. To maintain good customer relations the complainant needs to feel it was worth their while to take the time to complain, therefore hopefully turning a negative experience into positive action.

2. Definition of Complaint

- 2.1. A complaint is defined as follows:

“An expression of dissatisfaction with a service provided by the Authority which requires a response, and for which there is no alternative appeal procedure”.

3. Procedure for Dealing with Complaints

- 3.1. Any member of Snowdonia National Park Authority staff receiving an initial complaint either in person or by telephone, should endeavour to resolve the situation 'on the spot' as far as possible. In such cases, staff should treat the complaint seriously, adopt a positive approach, and as far as possible offer a solution to rectify the problem.

- 3.2. In such cases where a resolution is not possible or the complainant is not satisfied with the response given, staff should invite the complainant to take the matter further and to submit a written formal complaint. The complainant should be made aware that complaints are welcomed in both Welsh and English. Contact details of the appropriate Head of Service should be given to the complainant, along with a copy of the complaints procedure where possible.
- 3.3. If the complainant pursues the matter, the Head of Administration and Customer Care must be informed, and a copy of the letter along with any relevant documentation shall be forwarded for recording in the complaints file.
- 3.4. If the complaint is made to an Authority Member, the Member will pass on details of the complaint and all relevant information to the Head of Administration and Customer Care or the relevant Head of Service.
- 3.5. The Head of Administration and Customer Care will ensure that the complainant is acknowledged promptly (within 5 working days).
- 3.6. The issues of concern raised by the complainant should be investigated and addressed fully and answered in writing no later than 15 working days after receipt.
- 3.7. A reply to a complaint must also contain details on how to take the complaint further (to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales), should the complainant not be satisfied with the response (along with a copy of the complaints procedure, if not previously given).
- 3.8. A copy of the reply must be forwarded to the Head of Administration and Customer Care, and shall be kept in the complaints file.

4. Complaints relating to Senior Staff and Authority Members

- 4.1. A complaint against a Head of Service will be investigated by the Director of that service.
- 4.2. A complaint against a Director will be investigated by the Chief Executive.
- 4.3. A complaint against the Chief Executive will be investigated by the Chairman.
- 4.4. A complaint against an Authority Member shall be referred to the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee.

5. Monitoring

- 5.1. All Authority staff members will be expected to follow this procedure and also to be aware of how to deal with verbal complaints made over the telephone and especially those submitted in a face to face situation. Staff will be expected to make attempts to solve customer complaints immediately, and if they are unable to offer a solution they should invite the customer to take the matter further.
- 5.2. The Head of Administration and Customer Care will submit an annual report on the Complaints Procedure. The report will provide a basis to assess the effectiveness of the Complaints Procedure, the effectiveness of the corrective steps taken in response to those complaints received, along with any training issues identified.
- 5.3. The central customer complaint file shall be kept for a minimum of 7 years.
- 5.4. The Complaints Procedure and Monitoring Policy forms an important part of the Authority's ongoing commitment to ensuring excellent customer care in its service provision.