

Making a complaint about the work of Audit Wales





How to complain about the work of Audit Wales (the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office)

Your comments are important

- 1 The Auditor General and the Wales Audit Office expect those who carry out work on their behalf, to perform their work to the standards commensurate with their qualifications and experience. In the case of senior staff, such as directors and managers, or, in the case of firms, partners, the standard expected is that of an expert provider of professional services. Complaints give us an opportunity to put things right when mistakes have been made and to improve the quality of our work. We take complaints seriously, will investigate them thoroughly and honestly, and will reply to you as quickly as possible.

About this leaflet

- 2 This leaflet (which is also available in Welsh) explains:
 - the role of the Auditor General and the
 - role of the Wales Audit Office;
 - the complaints we will (and will not) investigate;
 - how to make a complaint;
 - how we deal with complaints; and
 - who else may be able to help you.
- 3 The Auditor General is the auditor of most public bodies in Wales, including the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related bodies, local government bodies and NHS bodies. These are called ‘organisations’ in this leaflet. The Auditor General carries out both financial audit work (the audit of accounts) and performance audit, such as value for money examinations, at these organisations.
- 4 The Wales Audit Office is a statutory board that provides staff and other resources for the exercise of the Auditor General’s functions, and monitors and advises the Auditor General. The Auditor General and the Wales Audit Office, and its staff, are together known as “Audit Wales”.
- 5 The legal powers and responsibilities of the Auditor General are set out in the Government of Wales Acts 1998 and 2006, the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and certain other pieces of legislation. The Auditor General has published a Code of Audit Practice and a Statement of Practice (for certain local government functions) that set out how auditors should carry out the Auditor General’s wide range of duties and powers.

Complaints that we will (and will not) investigate

- 6 We will normally investigate all complaints relating to:
 - work being carried out by Wales Audit Office staff or contractors where the complaint is received while the work is still ongoing, such as, for example, whether the processes being followed are reasonable;
 - the behaviour of Wales Audit Office staff and contractors;
 - services provided by the Wales Audit Office, such as conferences and events.
- 7 We will not investigate complaints that are raised more than six months after the matter complained about took place. If, however, you can show that you were unaware of the matter complained about during this period and that there are good reasons for why you were unaware, we may exceptionally investigate your complaint.
- 8 We will not normally investigate matters raised that should only be reviewed by the courts, such as how statutory functions have been exercised in relation to work that has been completed and the decisions that were taken, and conclusions drawn, in exercising statutory functions. It is normally inappropriate for us to investigate such matters because we cannot retrospectively change the outcome of the exercise of statutory functions, and so investigations would not usually be a good use of public money.
- 9 Examples of matters that we will not normally investigate are:
 - the substantive content, and particularly the findings and conclusions, of any published Auditor General reports or audit opinions; and
 - decisions that were taken in the production of published reports or audit opinions, and the processes that were used.
- 10 We will not investigate access to information (e.g. Freedom of Information) decisions under the procedures set out in this leaflet, as separate specific procedures apply. If your complaint relates to a Freedom of Information request, and you are seeking a review, you should contact the Information Officer at 24 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF11 9DA (or email infoofficer@audit.wales).

Complaints relating to the Welsh Language Standards

- 11 The Wales Audit Office and the Auditor General are each required to comply with certain specified Welsh Language Standards as set out in Compliance Notices from the Welsh Language Commissioner. The specified standards are published on our website. We will deal with complaints relating to the relevant specified Welsh Language Standards in accordance with this leaflet.
- 12 The relevant specified Welsh Language Standards are of three types:
 - service delivery standards – as apply, for example, to the production of documents for public use, such as audit reports;
 - operational standards – for example, in respect of the treatment of job applications;
 - policy making standards – for example, for consideration of the effects of a proposed new policy, such as the Wales Audit Office's social media policy, on opportunities for people to use Welsh.
- 13 The Wales Audit Office will provide intranet-based training materials to make all staff aware of the requirement to deal with any complaints regarding compliance with the applicable Welsh Language Standards in accordance with the procedures set out in this leaflet. These materials will include coverage of the need to keep records of all complaints so as to inform the Wales Audit Office's annual Welsh Language reporting process.
- 14 If your complaint relates to Welsh Language Standards, then please contact our Welsh Language Officer at 24 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF11 9DA (or call 02920 320 500).

Complaints about organisations audited by the Auditor General

- 15 We will not investigate complaints about the policies and decisions made by, or the services provided by, organisations audited by the Auditor General. You should refer these complaints to the organisation itself, as it should have its own complaints procedure. If, however, you have a complaint about an organisation that might inform our work, for example a complaint that relates to misuse of public money, we will take account of it as far as it is relevant to our work. We cannot generally provide feedback on such considerations. As part of the audit of local government bodies we may be able to answer some specific questions and we will give reasons for not seeking a court declaration, where applicable, in response to properly made objections at audit. Guidance on writing to us about matters that could inform our work can be found on the Audit Wales website.

Writing to the Auditor General for Wales or the Wales Audit Office: A guide for correspondents

- 16 Generally, we cannot investigate instances of organisations dealing with people in a poor way that causes hardship or injustice (known as 'maladministration'). You should refer these complaints to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman's contact details are:

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae

Pencoed

CF35 5LJ

Tel: 0300 790 0203

www.ombudsman.wales

How to make a complaint

- 17 If you are not satisfied with the work of Wales Audit Office staff or others working on behalf of the Auditor General, you should first give the relevant member of staff the opportunity to deal with it.
- 18 If you are not sure who to contact, or if you are not satisfied with the way your complaint has been dealt with by the relevant member of staff, please contact the Complaints Manager as follows.

E-mail: complaints@audit.wales

Write to:

Complaints Manager Audit Wales
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Phone: 029 2032 0500

Website: www.audit.wales

- 19 You should make any complaint in writing. Putting a complaint in writing helps provide clarity as to the particular issues that you are concerned about. If writing is problematic, please see our Reasonable adjustments policy. When writing to us, please tell us your address and phone number. We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. You can also write to us in either Welsh or English and we will respond in the language you have used. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay.

Our commitment to dealing with complaints

- 20 When we deal with complaints, we will be polite, helpful, positive and fair to both the person complaining and the person (or people) being complained about.
- 21 We will acknowledge your complaint within five days of receiving it. If we will not investigate your complaint, we will write to you explaining why. If possible, we will suggest another organisation that may be able to help you.
- 22 If we will investigate your complaint, we will contact you to explain who will deal with it (an investigating officer) and when to expect a reply. We will consider complaints carefully and, if the matter is straightforward, we will aim to reply within 20 working days. If we need to carry out a more detailed investigation we may need to take longer, in which case we will endeavour to keep you informed.
- 23 The investigating officer will provide you with a substantive response to your complaint.
- 24 We will treat all complaints in confidence, as far as the law allows. However, it will usually be necessary to let those you complain about know about the nature of your complaint, and frequently your identity is likely to be self-evident from the context even if your complaint were anonymised. In addition, we may need to disclose information contained in your complaint in order to meet other legal obligations, such as under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If disclosure of your personal information is necessary, we will try to let you know beforehand. You should note, however, that disclosure pursuant to some legal obligations does not require your consent, and, if such disclosure is necessary, the disclosure is not a breach of the Data Protection Act.

- 25 Following the response, if you are not satisfied that the investigating officer has dealt with your complaint properly, you should contact the Audit Wales Director of Corporate Services at:
- 24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ
- 26 The Director of Corporate Services will arrange for the handling of your complaint to be reviewed, by an independent person if appropriate, as long as you provide good reasons to show why you believe that the investigating officer has not dealt with your complaint properly. Unless there is a significant flaw in the original handling of your complaint, the complaint itself will not be reconsidered. The independent person will recommend an appropriate course of action to the Auditor General and send you details. The Auditor General will consider this to be the final stage of the complaints process.
- 27 If you provide new information that was not previously available and could not reasonably have been available, the Director of Corporate Services will consider this information and take appropriate action. However, the Director of Corporate Services will not get involved in ongoing correspondence with you if you essentially repeat the same complaint. We will not respond to complaints that are not genuine or are vexatious, or that are an abuse of the complaints process.



Audit Wales

24 Cathedral Road

Cardiff

CF11 9LJ

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

We welcome telephone calls in
Welsh and English.

E-mail: info@audit.wales

Website: www.audit.wales