

## Consulting on our Performance

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### Public Participation

A participation strategy for Children and Young People was approved by our Cabinet Members, following the adoption of a Public Participation Strategy in 2022.

Over the past year, there was 28,726 page visits to our Get Involved Torfaen online engagement hub. There were 205 new registrations, bringing the total to 902 subscribers. These subscribers receive regular newsletters informing them of new consultations and updates about ones that have closed.

We have published 27 consultations, which had a total of 6,858 contributions. Highlights included:

- Play Sufficiency – 1,902 visits – 1,165 surveys
- Budget 2025/26 – 754 visits – 233 surveys
- Parks Management – 797 visits 438 surveys
- Rights of Way – 500 visits – 311 surveys
- Pontypool Market – 371 visits – 164 surveys
- Food Strategy – 207 visits – 86 surveys
- Cemeteries – 519 visits – 258 surveys
- Sport & Leisure – 348 visits – 227 surveys
- Cwmbran Outdoor Gym – 383 visits – 178 surveys
- 20mph Review – 680 visits – 256 surveys
- Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) – 438 visits – 255 surveys

Between November and January 2024, we relaunched our new residents survey after a gap of two years. The survey was based on a new WLGA Data Cymru survey which enables local authorities to benchmark their results against other councils in Wales. The survey had 3,300 visits and was completed 2,049 times.

All consultations were to 3,700 contacts on the media releases mailing list, including regional and local press. In addition, they were promoted in Weekly News bulletins to just under 15,000 residents each time. These have also been sent to all of our Ward Members.

For each consultation, service teams engaged other primary stakeholders and 39 face-to-face engagement events.

Our Corporate Engagement Team regularly engages with our citizen forums, including a youth forum, youth alliance and three 50+ forums, and special interest groups, include the Torfaen Access Forum, which supports people with disabilities and the canal volunteers' group, Bridge 46.

In September 2024, the council's new look 'Get Involved' Torfaen People's Panel was set up. Following a low take-up, the panel was extended to include all citizen forums and community groups. It now has 73 members willing to take part in more in-depth consultations.

A staff Participatory Group has also been established to improve public consultation and engagement, putting an emphasis on informing the public how their contributions have influenced or changed policies or strategies.

Meetings are held every six weeks and have included discussions about data protection, accessibility and best practice for consultations.

Every quarter, we also reach out to key service areas for feedback on their service user perspectives, including business-as-usual feedback and annual service user surveys.

During 2024/55, subscribers to our digital press release and newsletters increased by 578, but the number of subscriptions fell. In total we have 25,239 subscribers and 75,675 subscriptions. We sent 506 bulletins, which had an average open rate was 38% and a 3.9% click rate per bulletin.

Our press releases regularly make it into the local newspapers (South Wales Argus and Pontypool Free Press) and occasionally BBC Wales and ITV Wales which helps to communicate examples of our performance to a wider audience.

Social media remains the primary way in which our Communications Team engages directly with our residents.

We have:

- Nearly 43,000 followers on our 3 of our main social media sites – Facebook, 23k, X 15.6k, Instagram 3.1k (70% female / 30% male).
- Our posts got 8.5m impressions and 7.5m reach.
- A growing council WhatsApp channel.

We produced two editions of Torfaen Talks during 2024/25 which is very popular with older residents and those who do not follow us online.

In September, we introduced a new Eco Echo magazine for schools. This termly magazine aims to promote and encourage school recycling and environmentally friendly practices.

## Responding to Complaints

We will always aim to provide a first-class service to the residents and businesses operating in Torfaen but sometimes we may not always get it right. When this is not the case, we encourage people to tell us through a complaint and to let us know if they feel we have let them down in any way. If we have been unable to informally resolve a complaint at the point that it is expressed, a formal complaint for investigation can be lodged. Our complaints process is designed to help us:

- Put things right for the complainant.
- Make sure we don't make the mistake again, and
- Improve our services for everyone.

We regularly review, monitor and report on our complaints process throughout the year. This review includes looking at the number of complaints received across our services and reviewing how efficiently and effectively they are resolved. We constantly assess this information and use the outcomes of complaints to look where improvements could be made to our policies and procedures.

During the year, an internal audit of Corporate and Social Care Complaints was undertaken and full assurance was provided.

Each year, an annual complaints report is received and reviewed by the Council's [Governance and Audit Committee](#) prior to being endorsed by Cabinet. The Governance and Audit Committee play a vital statutory role in challenging the effectiveness of the Council's complaints process ensuring it is delivering the intended outcomes.

An overview of our performance is set out below:

Complaints received and responded to								
Financial Year	Stage 1	Late Reply	% on time	Stage 2	Late reply	% on time	PSOW*	PSOW Investigation
2022/23	135	4	97.04%	3	0	100%	18	0
2023/24	224	6	97.3%	10	3	70%	14	0

<b>2024/25</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>98.8%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>
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There was a decrease in stage one complaints in 2024/25, with a significant reduction for Waste services following updates to collection arrangements. There was also marked improvements in communication across other service areas, helping to prevent enquiries becoming complaints.

It is important that complainants fully exhaust the complaints process prior to contacting the PSOW, the team has therefore proactively recorded a higher number of stage 2 complaints across both processes. The slight increase in complaints made to the PSOW is reflective of this. It is also worth noting that there were multiple submissions from two/three complainants which are counted separately in the Ombudsman's figures. There were no investigations undertaken by the Public Services Ombudsman. The number of complaints received by the PSOW remains very low in comparison to other local authorities and this gives us confidence that our own internal processes are fair and robust.

More information on the performance of our complaints process is set out within our latest [Annual Complaints report](#).