

# Working with customers

## Managing Customer Contact Policy



**easy  
read**

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Ombudsman  
PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES



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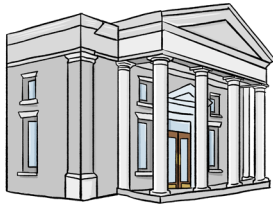


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# Introduction



The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is a government organisation that deals with complaints about **public services** provided by:



- Local Councils



- The National Health Service (NHS)



- Housing associations



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

- The Welsh Government



A **public service** is a service provided by an organisation that is part of the government.



This information explains how we work with our customers who behave in a difficult way.



Our customers are people who are making a complaint about a public service in Wales.

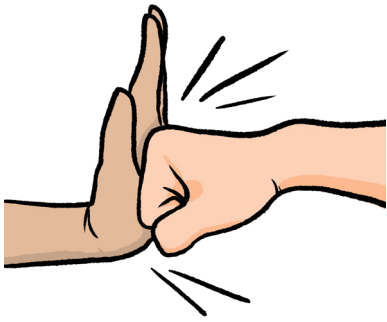


If customers behave in a difficult way, it can be harder for us to help them.



But we still aim to treat these customers in a fair way.

# Difficult behaviour



Sometimes our customers can behave in a difficult way. For example they can be:

- **Aggressive.** This means they want to make our staff feel frightened



- **Abusive.** This means that they are threatening, hurting or shouting at our staff



- **Offensive.** This is when a customer says things that are rude



Our staff have the right to do their job without customers behaving in this way.



Difficult behaviour also includes:

- Swearing



- Not letting our staff speak



- Being sexist. This is when you don't treat someone well because they are a woman or a man



- Being racist. This is when you don't treat someone well because of their skin colour or background



- Making our staff feel upset



If a customer threatens violence against our staff, we will tell the police.

# Being unreasonable



We aim to be fair to all our customers.



This includes giving all our customers a fair amount of time.



But sometimes our customers can be **unreasonable** about this.



**Unreasonable** means being unfair or not having respect.



A customer can be unreasonable about the amount of time we are giving them by:

- Sending us too many emails or letters about their complaint, or making too many phone calls



- Sending us copies of the same letter



- Not agreeing that we have made a decision or explained something to them



- Carrying on contacting us after we have made a decision



- Not giving us enough time to reply properly





- Asking for information they don't need



- Refusing to do things in the proper way



- Saying things that have nothing to do with their case



- Asking to speak to someone who is not dealing with their case

# Ending a telephone call



Our staff may end a telephone call if the customer is behaving in a difficult way or being unreasonable.



Before they end the call our staff will give the customer a chance to behave properly.



If our staff ends a telephone call, they will tell their manager about it.



The manager will make a decision about what should happen next.



They may decide that we should work with the customer in another way.

# Working with customers in another way

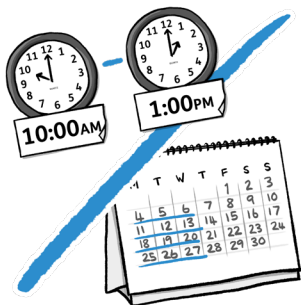


We may decide to work with a customer who has difficult behaviour by making certain rules for how our staff deal with them.



These might be:

- Letting them have just one email, letter or phone call a day



- Saying that telephone calls have to be at certain times, or on certain days



- Saying that all calls, emails and letters have to go to one certain member of staff



- Agreeing with the customer about behaving in a proper way



We will think about whether it may be useful for the customer to use an **advocate**.



An **advocate** is an independent person who will help you to speak up or speak for you.



In serious cases we may:

- Block all telephone calls or emails from certain customers



- Tell the customer that we will read their letters, but if there are no new issues, we will not respond

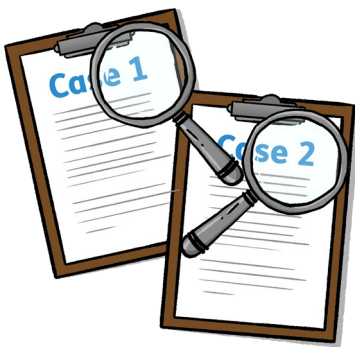


Even in serious cases we will try to keep working with the person.



## How we decide to deal with difficult behaviour

We will decide on the best way to deal with difficult or unreasonable customers by:



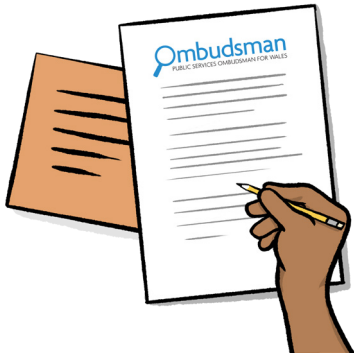
- Looking at each case separately



- Talking to our **Equality and Human Rights Advice Group**



Our **Equality and Human Rights Advice Group** are experts on treating people in a fair way.



If we have rules about dealing with a certain customer, we will write to them to explain.

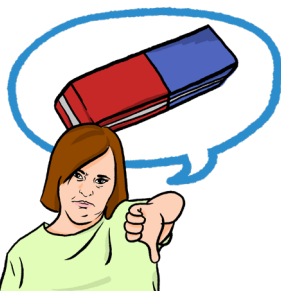


We may only have these rules in place for a certain amount of time.



## Appealing a decision

If you are not happy about our decision, you can **appeal**.



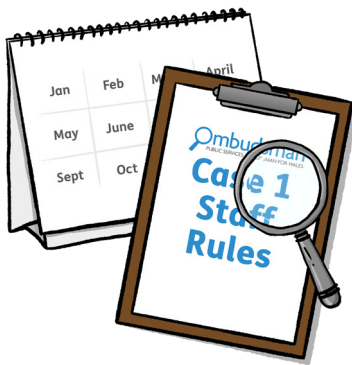
When you **appeal** it means you disagree with a decision and you are asking for it to be changed.



You can appeal by writing to our Chief Legal Advisor and Director of Investigations.



We will tell you how to contact them when we write to you to explain our rules for dealing with you.



## Reviewing a decision

If we decide to have some rules about the way we deal with you, we will look at them again after a certain amount of time.



We will let you know if we decide to end the rules.

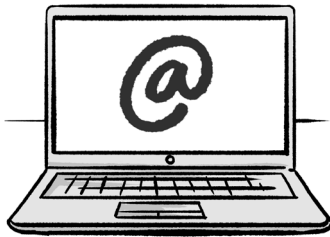
# For more information



If you need more information please contact us by:



Telephone: **0300 790 0203**



Email: **[ask@ombudsman.wales](mailto:ask@ombudsman.wales)**



Post:

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