



Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

What we do with your complaint about a public body

This document was written by the **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**. It is an easy read version of 'What we do when we get your complaint about a public service provider in Wales.'

February 2024

How to use this document



This is an easy read document. You may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 20**.



Where the document says **we**, this means the **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**. For more information contact:

Website: www.ombudsman.wales

E-mail: ask@ombudsman.wales

Phone: 0300 790 0203



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About the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales



We are the office of the **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**. We deal with complaints about:

- **Public services**



Public services are services paid for by Government. For example: local councils, the NHS, social landlords.



- Local councillors breaking the **code of conduct**. Local councillors are people chosen to run a council.

Code of conduct means the rules and standards someone must follow in their job.



Our aim is to improve **public services**.

About this factsheet



This factsheet explains:

- what happens when you complain to us about a **public body** in Wales



Public bodies are organisations that run **public services** for people in Wales. They get money from Welsh Government to provide their services.



- and what we can do to help solve your complaint.



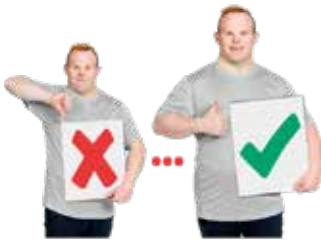
We cannot look into every complaint we get.



We must use our money and staff time well.



We need to focus on the most serious complaints.



We need to focus on complaints that will help improve public services.



We look carefully at all the complaints we get. We must make hard decisions about complaints we cannot look at.



We can talk to you if we decide not to look into your complaint.

What we will do

We will look into the details of your complaint.
This includes:



- Checking we can look into the organisation you are complaining about. [You can find a list of the main organisations on our website here.](#)



- Checking we can deal with the issue you are complaining about.



- Checking we have enough information about your complaint.



We will look at the information you gave us and facts.



We will let you know if we can look into your complaint or not.



If we cannot help, we will do our best to tell you what you can do next.

Taking your complaint further

If we can help, we will:



- Take a closer look at your complaint. We will check if we can solve it early on.



- Take a closer look to see if we need to **investigate**.

Investigate means looking into the facts to find out what happened. We will usually do it if we think there may be a serious problem.

We look at whether:



- You have already complained to the organisation. And if you gave them enough time to reply.



- You complained to us within a year of the issue happening.



- You can take legal action to put things right for you.



- A different organisation could deal with your complaint better.



- A service did something wrong. And this had a bad impact on you, or the person you are complaining for.



- There is more that the organisation can do to put things right.



Sometimes we will ask the organisation you complained about to:

- take a closer look at your complaint
- and reply to you.



We will do this if we think they have not had enough time to look at the complaint already.



It takes us around 25 days to check a complaint.



We close most complaints after this step. We **investigate** around 1 in every 10 complaints.

What happens if we investigate



We will talk to you about what will happen.



We will then write to you to tell you:

- when the **investigation** will start
- and what we are **investigating**.



We will get all the information we need. We will get information from you, and the organisation you complained about.



We often get advice from professionals too.



We will then make a decision about your complaint.

As we **investigate**, we can:



Finish the **investigation** and decide to support your complaint.



Finish the **investigation** and decide not to support your complaint.



Solve the complaint by asking the organisation to put things right.



End the **investigation** early. We will do this if there is not enough proof to show something was done wrong.



At the end of the **investigation**, we will explain to you:

- What we found out.
- Why we made our decision.



An **investigation** can take around 12 months.



It can take longer if things are complicated.



We will keep in contact with you during the **investigation**.

Following up



If we support your complaint, we will suggest what should be done to put things right.



Sometimes we arrange for organisations to put things right **before** an **investigation**.



We will tell the organisation how much time it has to put things right.



If the organisation does not act, we will take further action.

If you are unhappy with our decision



Once we have made our decision, we will close the complaint.



We will not open the case again just because you disagree with our decision.



You can write to us within 24 working days to ask us to check again.

You can ask us to check your complaint again if:



- you can show that we have not thought about all the information you gave us

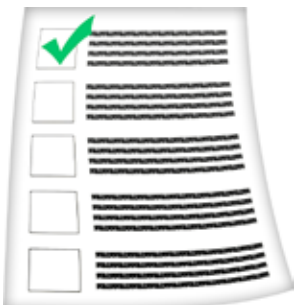


- or you have new information or proof to give us.

Our Review Officer will decide if:



- there is reason to check your complaint again



- and if we need to take further action.

Meeting your needs



We want to make it easy for everyone to use our services.



We can help you find an **advocacy** organisation if you need it.

An **advocacy** organisation can help you speak up for yourself. And make sure your voice is heard.



We will communicate with you in the best way for you. Please tell us what your needs are.



[There is more information about how we can support you on our website here.](#)

Contacting us



We understand that some complaints can be upsetting or stressful.



We understand that you may feel strongly about your complaint.



You have the right to be heard, understood and respected.



Please be polite and kind to our staff when contacting us.

Hard words

Advocacy

An advocacy organisation can help you speak up for yourself. And make sure your voice is heard.

Code of conduct

Code of conduct means the rules and standards someone must follow in their job.

Investigate or investigation

Investigate means looking into the facts to find out what happened. We will usually do it if we think there may be a serious problem.

Public bodies

Public bodies are organisations that run public services for people in Wales. They get money from Welsh Government to provide their services.

Public services

Public services are services paid for by Government. For example: local councils, the NHS, social landlords.

