

Should we look into how local councils are deciding whether someone is homeless?



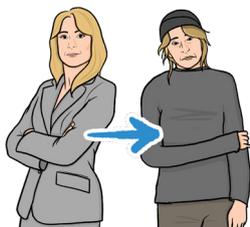
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Introduction



This document is from the **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)**.



We are thinking about starting an investigation into:

- How local councils in Wales are deciding whether someone is homeless
- What the Council has done to help homeless people during the coronavirus outbreak.



We want to know what you think. Should we investigate this issue?



Please read this report and tell us what you think by writing to:

The Improvement Team
Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Old Field Road
Pencoed
CF35 5LJ



We need your thoughts by midnight on 30 October 2020

The **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)** is an independent organisation that deals with complaints about **public services** provided by:

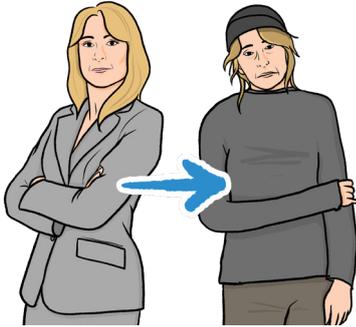


- Local councils
- The National Health Service (NHS)
- Housing associations
- The Welsh Government



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

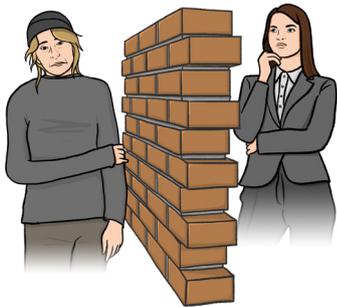
People who are homeless



Anyone can become homeless.



Many homeless people were **vulnerable** before they became homeless. Being homeless makes people even more **vulnerable**.



Being homeless makes it harder for you to get the help and support you need.

Homeless people find it harder to complain if they are not getting the help they should.



Vulnerable means they find it hard to keep themselves safe from harm.

Local councils



Local councils can help people:

- Not to become homeless
- To get the support they need to find a place to stay



The law says that:

- Local councils have to decide if you are homeless



- If a local council decides you are not homeless:

- They must explain why
- You can ask them to look at the decision again



- If the council decides that you are homeless, they have to find you a place to stay

What are the issues?



When people go to local councils in Wales and say they are homeless:

- In some cases the council decides that they are not homeless

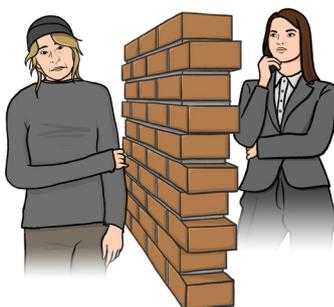


- But when they are asked to look at it again, the council realises they made a mistake

It is hard for homeless people to ask for a council to look at it again.



Hardly any homeless people have complained to PSOW about the way the council works.



This is probably because it is very hard for homeless people to complain about the way they are treated.

This proposal



We propose to start an investigation to find out:

- Are local councils in Wales deciding if people are homeless or not in the right way?



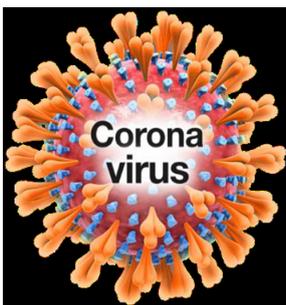
- Do people know that they can ask for the council to look at their decision again?



- Are councils looking at their decisions again in the right way?



- Are councils learning how not to make that mistake again, when they change their mind about whether someone is homeless?



- What did the Council do to help homeless people during the Coronavirus outbreak, and what did they learn?

What do you think?



Please tell us what you think by writing to:
The Improvement Team
Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 1
Old Field Road
Pencoed
CF35 5LJ



or filling in our survey on our website
www.Ombudsman.Wales



We need your thoughts by midnight on
30 October 2020.

We want to know what you think.

Here are some questions which may help you.



- Are local councils deciding if people are homeless in the right way?



- Are homeless people being told that they can ask the council to look at the decision again?



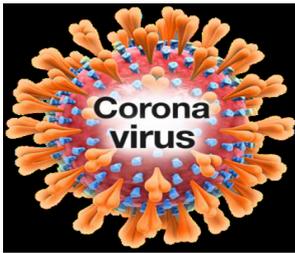
- Are local councils doing things at the right time?



- When a council has changed its mind about whether someone is homeless, are they learning how not to make that mistake again?



- When they realise that they got something wrong, do councils tell their staff not to get it wrong again?



- What has the Council done differently to help homeless people during the coronavirus outbreak? Has it worked?



- Would an investigation into this be a good thing for people in Wales?



- Are we the best people to investigate this matter?



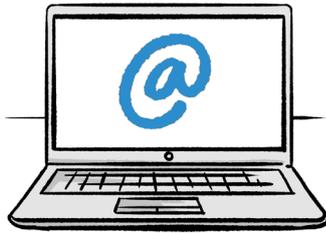
- Would this investigation affect people using the Welsh language?

For more information



If you need more information please contact us by:

Phone:
0300 790 0203



Email:
ask@ombudsman.wales



Website:
www.ombudsman.wales



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