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Ombudsman
Cymru • Wales

Own Initiative – Stand-alone Investigations Factsheet

For members of
the public



**easy
read**

Introduction



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



Normally we start an investigation into a public service because someone has made a complaint.



This document explains what happens when we decide to start an investigation into a public service and no-one has made a complaint.



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.

Own Initiative Investigations



We can start an investigation even though no-one has made a complaint.



This is called an Own Initiative Investigation.



We can start an Own Initiative Investigation in two ways.

1. When we are investigating one thing and we decide to investigate more things.
 - This is called an extension to an existing investigation



2. When we decide to start an investigation into a public service and no-one has made a complaint.



- This is called a 'Stand-alone Own Initiative Investigation'



- This easy read document is about Stand-alone Own Initiative Investigations

Stand-alone Own Initiative Investigations



We will start Stand-alone Own Initiative Investigations when we think that something serious is going wrong with a public service in Wales.



We may look at the whole service, or just part of it.



Deciding to start an investigation

Before we decide to start an investigation, we will look at all the information we can find.



We will think about:

- Is it important to look into the matter?



- Is there something going wrong?



- Are a lot of people being affected by the thing that is going wrong?



- Have we got good information about the problem?

What we can't do



During an investigation, we can use information from a member of staff in a service who says something is going wrong.



But we can't use this information as a reason to start a 'whistleblowing' investigation for that member of staff.



Instead, we will help them to get in touch with the right people about their concerns.

Who we speak to



If we are thinking of starting an investigation, we will also speak with other public organisations in Wales.

We may decide to do an investigation with them.



We may ask people in Wales to give us information about the service.

Who can suggest that we start an investigation?



Anyone can suggest that we start an investigation. It could be from:

- Any member of the public
- A Service user group
- A Charity
- A Community Group
- An **advocacy service**



An **advocacy service** helps you speak up, or they speak for you at difficult meetings.

Contact us



If you need more information please contact us by:



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