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Ombudsman
Cymru • Wales

Own Initiative - Extended Investigations

For members of the public



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Introduction



The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) is an independent organisation that deals with complaints about:



- public services - these are services provided by an organisation that is part of the government
- local councillors - these are people chosen to run a council.



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

An **investigation** means looking into something to find out what has happened.



This information explains what can happen when we have decided to start an investigation into a public service.

Own Initiative Investigations



When we decide to start an investigation where no-one has made a complaint or in addition to the complaint made, it is called an 'Own Initiative Investigation'.

We can start an Own Initiative Investigation in two ways:



1. When we look into something that has not come from a member of the public. This is called a 'Stand-alone Own Initiative Investigation.'



2. When we are already looking into a complaint made by someone and decide to look into more things. This is called an 'Extended Own Initiative Investigation.'



This information is about Extended Own Initiative Investigations.

What the PSOW can do

The PSOW can decide to extend a live investigation if we:



- are looking into a complaint about a service, and
- we think that there has been other things going wrong with that service.



We can also extend an investigation if we see something going wrong with another service that is linked to the first investigation.



The PSOW must think about whether:

- something is going wrong that means that certain people are being treated unfairly?
- it is right to extend the investigation?



Examples of possible Extended Investigations



The PSOW could extend a live investigation if:

- a service is carrying on doing something that is wrong



- the way a service is working is unfair to some people.

Is it right to extend the investigation?



The PSOW would think that it is right to extend an investigation if:

- people are concerned about what is going wrong



- the people who are being treated unfairly find it hard to make complaints for themselves.

Telling you what is happening



If the PSOW is investigating your complaint and we decide to also look into something else, we will:

- tell you what is happening



- give you a chance to have your say about it



- ask you if you want to give more information.

What the PSOW cannot do



The PSOW cannot:

- extend a complaint that is not already being looked into



- investigate anything that we do not think it would be right to look into



- investigate anything that would be against our own rules.

Listening to people



There are some rules about looking into complaints about health services in Wales called 'Listening To People'.



You can ask the Health Board to follow these rules instead if you have made a complaint about a health service and we ask to extend the investigation.

How to contact us

If you need more information please contact us by:



Phone:
0300 790 0203



Email:
owninitiative@ombudsman.wales



Website:
www.ombudsman.wales



Post:
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