



**Ombwdsmon
Ombudsman**
Cymru • Wales



Own Initiative Investigations

Procedure for Investigation



Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg
This document is also available in Welsh

Introduction



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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.

This type of investigation is called an 'Own Initiative Investigation'.



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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



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

Own Initiative Investigations



The Ombudsman can start an Own Initiative Investigation.

This means that we can investigate things even when there hasn't been a complaint from a member of the public.



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 'Extended 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 Investigation'

Why we may decide to start an investigation ourselves



We may decide to start our own investigation when we have been looking into one public service, and realise that another public service might be doing something wrong.



Where people tell us that something is wrong

We may also decide to start an investigation when:



- Someone has complained - but not left their name



- A member of staff at a public service says that something is going wrong. This is called 'whistleblowing'



- Our own staff think that something is going wrong



- When other people are raising the issue, maybe a:



- Newspaper, radio or television
- Member of Parliament (MP)
- Member of the Welsh Assembly (AM)



- Service user groups
- Charities, or community groups
- Advocacy services



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



We encourage people to tell us about things that should be investigated.



We ask people to complete a form which they can download from our website.



Investigating more than the original complaint

When we are dealing with someone's complaint, we may decide to look into more things than just the one complaint.



We do this where we think that more things might be going wrong.

How we decide to go ahead with an own initiative investigation



Stand-alone Investigation

We may start a stand-alone investigation if we have information that something is going wrong with the service.



We look at the information and decide:



- If the issue is serious enough to start an investigation
- If the service is treating people in an unfair way



- If the service is being unfair to people who find it hard to speak up and complain



This information may have come from:

- The person who made the complaint



- Our records



- Other people



Extended Investigation

This is where we are already investigating something and decide to investigate more things.



We may do this where:

- The thing that went wrong for one person may be going wrong for lots of people



- We realise that there are more things going wrong than anyone originally thought

How a stand-alone investigation is organised



We have an Own Initiative Lead Officer.



They will write a proposal. The proposal will explain:

- What we want to investigate
- Why we want to do it



They will decide if it is worth investigating.



They will tell the organisation that may be investigated.

They will also tell anyone else involved.



If we decide to go ahead and start the investigation, it will be managed in the same way as any other investigation.

Telling people when we start an investigation



If we do extend a live investigation, we will tell:

- The person who made the original complaint. They will have the chance to have their say about it
- The service that we are investigating



If we decide to start a stand-alone investigation we will tell:

- The organisations that set up public services in Wales
- The organisations that check on the work of public services in Wales
- The people who check on how public services in Wales look after their money



Investigation suggestion Form



If you think that we should investigate a public service please fill in the form below.



Your name or organisation:



Today's date:



Which service do you think we should investigate?



If this is affecting someone, what is their name?

Please give us details of why this should be investigated:



For more information



If you need more information
please contact us by:



Phone:
0300 790 0203



Email:
owninitiative@ombudsman.wales



Website:
www.ombudsman.wales



Post:
**Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 1
Ffordd yr Hen Gae
Pencoed
CF35 5LJ**