

Social Services Factsheet

Introduction

This Factsheet provides information on making complaints about local authority Social Services. It should be read together with our [‘How to Complain’](#) webpage, available on the ‘Making A Complaint’ tab.

Social Services provide care and support to meet a range of needs for adults, children and carers. People are usually satisfied with the help they receive from Social Services but when things go wrong, information about how to complain and where to get help must be made available. Each local authority must have in place a two stage, Social Services Complaints Procedure for people who use Social Services and their carers. If you do not use Social Services but have been affected by them, you may still be able to complain using the local authority’s Corporate Complaints Procedure.

If your concerns have not been resolved by the local authority at the end of the complaints process, or if you think the local authority is taking too long to deal with it, you can complain to us. We do not investigate every complaint we receive. Whether we can help with your own particular complaint will depend on a number of factors.

What we can do

We can:

- look at the actions of the local authority in carrying out its Social Services functions such as assessment, reviewing, safeguarding and contract monitoring;
- look at complaints relating to professional judgement and ask our social care advisers whether care was reasonable;
- look at whether a financial assessment or an assessment of your needs and eligibility for services have been properly carried out in good time;
- look at how the local authority has handled a complaint.

What we cannot do

We cannot:

- look at staff disciplinary or personnel issues or tell the local authority that it must give you a new Social Worker;
- request information from a local authority on your behalf;
- look at complaints about matters that have been, or are going, before the courts;
- directly investigate complaints about abuse as this is the responsibility of agencies involved in safeguarding;
- directly investigate a service provider who has been contracted by the local authority to carry out care on its behalf;
- investigate complaints about joint decisions taken by a number of agencies but we might consider the role of the local authority in the decision making process;
- assess your social care needs or determine how those needs should be met;

- assess your ability to pay for the cost of your care services;
- normally look at a complaint made on behalf of a child unless it is made by someone with parental responsibility for them;
- always deal with a complaint if you are not a direct user of Social Services or if you are making a complaint for someone else. We will have to decide whether you can make a complaint to us.

We are independent and impartial; we cannot order public bodies to do what we recommend but, in practice, they almost always do.

Examples of cases that we have looked at can be found on our website, under the 'Publications' tab on the '[Our Findings](#)' page.

Issues to bear in mind

Local authorities have the lead responsibility for safeguarding children and adults and often have to work very closely with other agencies, such as Local Health Boards and the Police to carry out this function. Complaints about the management of safeguarding cases may need to be responded to by more than one agency and should be made to each relevant agency to be dealt with under its own complaints procedure.

If we receives a complaint which contains information about the possibility of abuse or neglect, we will disclose that information to the relevant agencies, if it is in the public interest to do so.

Further information

Further information is available on the Welsh Government's website at:
<http://gov.wales/topics/health/socialcare/?lang=en>

You may want to consider contacting the following organisations for advice:

Age Cymru can be contacted on **08000 2223 444** or via their website at
www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/

Mind Cymru provides assistance for people with mental health problems. You can contact them by phone on **029 2039 5123, 0300 123 3393** or online at
www.mind.org.uk/about-us/mind-cymru/

MENCAP Cymru offers advice, information and support on any issue to do with learning disabilities. You can contact them by phone on 0808 8000 300 or online at
<https://wales.mencap.org.uk/>

You may also be able to get advice and help from the **Family Rights Group**, which covers England and Wales, and which advises parents and other family members whose children may require social care services. You can contact them on **0808 801 0366** and their website can be found at www.frg.org.uk

Social Care Wales: If you have a complaint regarding the registration or actions of an individual social worker or care worker, you may wish to contact Social Care Wales:
The Care Council for Wales, Southgate House, Wood Street, Cardiff, CF10 1EW
Telephone: 0300 30 33 444
Email: info@socialcare.wales
Website: <https://wales.mencap.org.uk/>

Care Inspectorate Wales: CIW regulate and inspect to improve adult care, childcare and social services for people in Wales.
0300 7900 126 ciw@gov.wales

<https://careinspectorate.wales/>

Older People's Commissioner: The Older People's Commissioner for Wales is an independent voice and champion for older people across Wales.
03442 640670 or 029 2044 5030 (for them to return your call)
ask@olderpeoplewales.com www.olderpeoplewales.com

Children's Commissioner for Wales: The Children's Commissioner provides help and support to all children and young people under 18 in Wales, or under 25 if they've been in care

01792 765600 or 0808 801 100 (freephone)

post@childcomwales.org.uk

www.childcomwales.org.uk

Contact us

If you are unsure whether we would be able to look into your complaint, please [contact us](#) on 0300 790 0203 or ask@ombudsman.wales

Also available in Welsh.

This document is available in Welsh and English. You can write to us in Welsh and we will reply in Welsh. This will not lead to a delay in responding.

ask@ombudsman.wales

0300 790 0203 Our phone line is open 10am-12:30pm and 1:30pm-4pm Monday – Friday