

## A GUIDE TO OUR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLAINTS ADVOCACY SERVICE

If we can help you, we'll  
tell you how. If we can't,  
we'll do our best to let  
you know who can



## Who is Llais?

Llais is the **national, independent body** set up to give the people of Wales a stronger voice in their health and social care services.



This guide will tell you how our complaints advocacy service can help you raise a concern about the NHS or social services you or someone else have received or are receiving.

### **A service that works for you**

Our trained complaints advocates have access to interpreters and we can provide information in a way that suits you in different languages, large print, easy read and audio format, for example.

You just let us know what you need and we will do our best to help.

### **Contact us**

Please get in touch in the way that suits you. Our contact details are on the back page of this leaflet.



## Your right to support

You are entitled to free, independent and confidential complaints advocacy services to help make a complaint, if you:

- **are an adult, young person or child and have a concern about NHS services in Wales or**
- **you are an adult and have a concern about social services in Wales**

We may also be able to support someone who is paying directly for social services from a registered social services provider.

## Complaints are important

Llais is an entirely independent, statutory body set up by the Welsh Government to help make sure people's real experiences – good and bad – inform the way health and social services are provided. Our complaints advocacy service helps to make sure lessons are learned when things go wrong. This includes making services better for everyone.

## The right support

We support our complaints advocates to hold the national Independent Advocacy Qualification and provide our service in line with national standards.



## Our complaints advocacy service can help you with:

- support to make a complaint about a service, care or treatment provided or paid for by the NHS or local authority
- support to make a complaint for someone else, including if someone has died
- putting you in touch with other organisations if we think they can also help
- we may also be able to support someone who is paying directly for social services from a registered social services provider
- answer your questions about the complaints process and explain your options
- provide you with a step-by-step guide to the complaints process
- provide you with a trained, professional complaints advocate who will help you raise your concern and support you through the complaints process



## **At what point can we help you?**

We can help at any of the key stages of your complaint, outlined here.

### **Raise your concern with the service provider**

All local health and social care service providers have their own complaints procedures and want you to raise your concerns with them so that they can, if possible, put things right. If you're not sure where to start with this, you can contact us and we will help you find the right person to talk to.

If you cannot resolve your concern informally, or you would prefer to raise your concern formally, we can help. Usually, you need to raise your concern within 12 months but there may be exceptions to this.

## **Making a complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)**

If you are not happy with the final response you receive or the way your complaint was handled by a service provider, you can usually take your complaint to the PSOW. They can consider complaints made within 1 year of the matters being complained about (or of the complainant becoming aware of the issue).

If your complaint is about something that happened over a year ago, but you had complained to the provider within 1 year, you should complain to PSOW within 12 weeks of the provider's response.



## The kind of things we can help with

We will provide the type and level of support you need. For example, you may feel you need support throughout the process or, once you have talked about your concerns and the process with one of our complaints advocates, you may feel able to continue without support.

We can help you:

- **find information relevant to your concern**  
You may feel that you need a bit of help to find information, for example asking for a copy of your medical records
- **talk about your concerns, the concerns process and what you might realistically achieve**  
Concerns are sometimes about things that are very distressing, and the process of raising a concern can seem very daunting. Sometimes people find it helps to talk through the process with someone who knows it well and who is empathetic and independent

- **write letters**  
A concern is more likely to be resolved quickly and successfully if it is expressed clearly. We can help you work out what you want to say and draft letters
- **attend complaints meetings with you**  
Sometimes meetings with providers are part of the process. They can be daunting and occasionally upsetting. We can support you to prepare for and attend meetings with you so, you can make the most of the opportunity to discuss your concerns



## Who we can help

We are keen to hear from everyone in our diverse communities, and particularly those whose voices are heard least. So, if you have any additional needs, that's fine, too. Whatever they are, we can help.

For example, if you have:

- **mental health issues**
- **learning difficulties**
- **sensory disabilities**
- **little or no English**
- **suffered a bereavement**

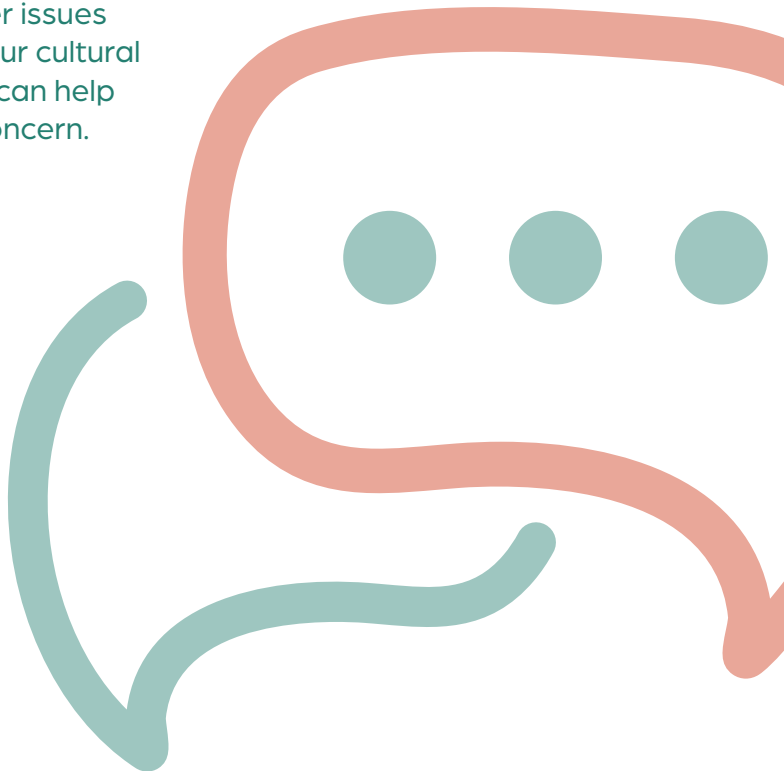
or have any other issues and whatever your cultural background, we can help you raise your concern.

Our complaints advocacy service is also available in the Welsh language.

Our complaints advocacy team has access to:

- **secure case management and reporting systems**
- **letter templates**
- **interpreting facilities**
- **communications kits and other resources**

to help them help you.



## What happens when you get in touch

One of our team will talk to you about your concern, the help you think you need and if you have any particular communication needs such as large print materials or access to someone who can sign.

If we think we can help, we will explain our service to you. If we can't help, we will do our best to signpost you to someone who can.

If you need one, a complaints advocate will contact you and agree an initial plan with you.

This plan sets out what we have agreed we will do on your behalf and how we will keep in touch with you through the process.





## What we can't do

Our complaints advocates can help you make a complaint. We will use your feedback the right way and we will use your feedback to improve future health and social services for all of us. There are some things our service can't do:

- **make decisions on your behalf**
- **offer an opinion on the validity of a concern**
- **offer clinical opinions or give medical advice**
- **offer advice about on-going care and treatment**
- **investigate concerns**
- **provide support with Continuing Healthcare or Individual Patient Funding Request Panels**
- **provide support at inquests**
- **offer additional support such as bereavement support and counselling (although we can provide contact details for these professionals)**
- **help you to raise a concern if you are under 18 years old and have a concern about social services**
- **usually work on concerns that are over 12 months old, unless you have only just found out that you have cause for complaint, or have some other strong reason for not raising your concerns sooner**
- **give legal advice or help with legal action**
- **help with complaints about privately-funded treatment**
- **get health or social care staff disciplined**
- **help you if you don't live in Wales**

If we can't help, please do still get in touch. We will **always do our best** to help you find someone who can.



## Be part of something important

We're here to make sure people's views and experiences help to make health and social care services better for everyone.

To find out more about Llais and how you can get involved in improving health and social care in Wales with us, please contact your local Llais team or visit **[www.llaiswales.org](http://www.llaiswales.org)**

If you would like this publication in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us.

You can also download it from our website or get in touch to ask for a copy.



# YOUR LOCAL LLAIS TEAM

## Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Covering Cardiff and the  
Vale of Glamorgan.

**Tel:** 029 2075 0112

**Email:** cardiffandvaleenquiries@  
llaiscymru.org

## Cwm Taf Morgannwg

Covering Bridgend, Rhondda  
Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil.

**Tel:** 01443 405830

**Email:** cwmtafmorgannwg  
enquiries@llaiscymru.org

## Gwent

Covering Newport, Caerphilly,  
Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire  
and Torfaen.

**Tel:** 01633 838516

**Email:** gwentenquiries@  
llaiscymru.org

## Neath Port Talbot and Swansea

Covering Neath Port Talbot  
and Swansea.

**Tel:** 01639 683490

**Email:** nptandswansea  
enquiries@llaiscymru.org

## North Wales

Covering Flintshire, Denbighshire,  
Wrexham, Conwy, Anglesey  
and Gwynedd.

**Tel:** 01978 356178 / 01248 679284

**Email:** northwalesenquiries@  
llaiscymru.org

## Powys

Covering Montgomeryshire,  
Brecknockshire and Radnorshire.

**Tel:** 01874 624206 / 01686 627632

**Email:** powysenquiries@  
llaiscymru.org

## West Wales

Covering Pembrokeshire,  
Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion.

**Tel:** 01646 697610

**Email:** westwalesenquiries@  
llaiscymru.org

This leaflet is also available in Welsh.

We welcome calls and correspondence  
in Welsh. If you write to us in Welsh we will  
respond to you in Welsh, and this will not  
lead to a delay. The Complaints Advocacy  
service can be provided in Welsh.



Eich llais mewn iechyd | Your voice in health  
a gofal cymdeithasol | and social care