

# Getting the help you need from Social Services

Your guide to the Social Services and  
Well-being (Wales) Act 2014



This document was written by the **Older People's Commissioner for Wales**. It is an easy read version of 'Getting the help you need from **Social Services**'.

March 2023

## How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 24**



Where the document says we, this means the **Older People's Commissioner for Wales** and her team. For more information contact:

**Website:** [www.olderpeople.wales](http://www.olderpeople.wales)

**Email:** [ask@olderpeople.wales](mailto:ask@olderpeople.wales)

**Phone:** 03442 640 670



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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg //  
This document is available in Welsh

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## About the Older People's Commissioner for Wales



The **Older People's Commissioner for Wales** protects and promotes the rights of older people across Wales.



The Commissioner and her team make sure older people:

- can share their views
- have choice and control
- do not feel lonely
- get the support and services that they need
- are not **discriminated** against.



Being **discriminated** against is when you are treated badly or unfairly because of your age, sex, race, religion, disability or sexual identity.



The **Commissioner** and her team work to make Wales a good place to grow older.



## How to contact the Commissioner:

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales  
Cambrian Buildings  
Mount Stuart Square  
Cardiff  
CF10 5FL



**Phone:** 03442 640 670



**Email:** [ask@olderpeople.wales](mailto:ask@olderpeople.wales)



**Website:** [www.olderpeople.wales](http://www.olderpeople.wales)



**Twitter:** [@talkolderpeople](https://twitter.com/talkolderpeople)

# Introduction to the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act



The **Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act** is a Welsh law.

This law helps to:



- make sure people get the care and support that is right for them



- make sure people can stay independent for as long as they can



- make sure people's choices and views are listened to.



This law started in 2016.



It changed how Social Services work across the whole of Wales.

The aim of the law is to make sure all local authorities across Wales work in the same way to:

- promotes people's **wellbeing**



**Wellbeing** means a person is happy, healthy and is comfortable with their life and what they do.





- protect people from **abuse** and **neglect**.



And carers do not need to provide care for a certain number of hours to be able to get an **assessment**.



**Abuse** is when someone hurts you or treats you badly. There are lots of different types of **abuse**.



The **Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act** says that social services must focus on what is important to you.



**Neglect** is when someone does not look after you properly. Neglect is a type of **abuse**.



It gives you more voice and control over your care and support.



This law also covers carers for the first time. It says that carers have the right to a **carers needs assessment**. And support if they need it.



An **assessment** is the process you go through with your local authority to see if you need care and support. What care and support you need. And how you will get it.

# Your rights

The **Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act** says:



- Everyone in Wales has the right to good **wellbeing**.



- Your local authority **must** do their best to support you. And improve your **wellbeing**.



- Your local authority must make sure you can get information, advice and support about care and support services easily.



Each local authority must have an **Information, Advice and Assistance Service**.



- You have the right to have control over your support.



- You have the right to make decisions about your care and support. You must be treated as an equal partner when decisions are being made. Your local authority must assume you know what is best for you.



- You have the right to take part in talks about your care and support.



Your local authority must find out and listen to **your views, wishes, and feelings**.



They must think about whether you need a professional **advocate** to support you to take part in decisions.



A professional **advocate** is a trained person that can help you and speak up for you to make sure your views and wishes are heard and listened to.



You have the right to an **advocate**, free of charge.



- Services must focus on getting you the **right support at the right time.**



When you are having a needs **assessment**, your local authority must check what you want to achieve in your day to day life.



Your local authority must then think about what services would best support you to achieve your goals.



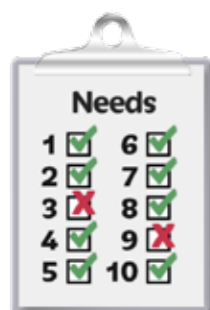
- If you meet the **National Eligibility Criteria**, you have the right to care and support.



And you have the right to a **Care and Support Plan** – or **Support Plan** if you are a carer.



The **National Eligibility Criteria** is a list of reasons you must have to be able to get care and support.



You have the right to a needs **assessment**, if you think you may need care and support services.





You have the right to be involved in the making of your **Care and Support Plan** or **Support Plan**.



You may need to pay for your care and support. You have the right to a **financial assessment** to see how much you can afford to pay.



A **financial assessment** is a check to see:

- What money you have to live on every week.
- How much you have to pay for things like rent and council tax.
- How much you have in savings.



You have the right to get a **direct payment** if you want to organize and pay for your own care and support services.

A **direct payment** is money you can be given instead of a service. You can use it to buy your own support and services.



- The law is stronger about protecting people from **abuse** and **neglect**. If your local authority thinks an adult is at risk they must investigate. And decide what action needs to be taken.



# United Nations Principles for Older Persons



The **United National Principles for Older People** is a set of principles written by the **United Nations**.



**Principles** are values and beliefs that form rules.



The **United Nations** is an organisation made up of governments from around the world. It works to make the world a better place.



The **United National Principles for Older People** say how older people should be treated.



All governments should follow these **principles**.

The **principles** are grouped under 5 important themes:



- Being independent
- Taking part in society
- Being cared for
- Doing what makes you happy
- Dignity - being treated fairly and with respect



They make sure the **Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act** included these principles.



The **Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act** says that social services must think about the **United National Principles for Older People**.



You have the **right** for these principles to be thought about when decisions about your care and support are being made



For more information about the principles, please go here: <https://olderpeople.wales/about/publication-scheme/our-policies/un-principles/>

## What to do if you do not get the help you need



If you are unhappy about the service you get from your local authority, you can complain.



You can make a complaint through your local authorities complaints process.

You can complain about:



- Any social service that your local authority provides.
- Your locally authority deciding not to provide you with a service.
- Any social service that your local authority organises through another organisation.
- A staff member.
- Social services not telling you about decisions that impact you.



Before you complain, make sure your local authority knows your situation. You can do this by contacting your social services department.



You can find details for your local authority on the Welsh Government website here:

[www.gov.wales/find-your-local-authority](http://www.gov.wales/find-your-local-authority)



If you need help to complain, your local authority must decide what help they can give you.



They should tell you about what advice and support you can get. This might include an **advocate**.



If you are not happy with the way your local authority is supporting you to make a complaint, you can complain about that too.

## Useful contacts

### Older People's Commissioner for Wales

**Address:** Cambrian Buildings  
Mount Stuart Square  
Cardiff  
CF10 5FL

**Phone:** 03442 640 670

**Website:** [www.olderpeople.wales](http://www.olderpeople.wales)

### Social Care Wales (Learning Hub)

**Address:** South Gate House  
Wood Street  
Cardiff  
CF10 1EW

**Phone:** 0300 30 33 444

**Website:** <https://socialcare.wales/hub/home>

## Welsh Government

**Address:** Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ  
**Phone:** 0300 0604400  
**Website:** [gov.wales/health-social-care](http://gov.wales/health-social-care)

## Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

**Address:** Welsh Government office  
Rhydycar Business Park  
Merthyr Tydfil  
CF48 1UZ  
**Phone:** 0300 7900 126  
**Website:** <https://www.careinspectorate.wales>

## Age Cymru

**Address:** Ground Floor  
Mariners House  
Trident Court  
East Moors Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5TD  
**Phone:** 0300 303 44 98  
**Website:** <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru>

## Care and Repair Cymru

**Address:** 1st Floor  
Mariners House  
Trident Court  
East Moors Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5TD  
**Phone:** 029 2010 7580  
**Website:** <http://www.careandrepair.org.uk>

## Carers Wales

**Address:** Ground Floor, Unit 5  
Ynys Bridge Court  
Cardiff  
CF15 9SS  
**Phone:** 029 2081 1370  
**Website:** [www.carersuk.org/wales](http://www.carersuk.org/wales)

## Citizen's Advice - Social Service Complaints

**Phone:** 0800 702 2020  
**Website:** <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>



# Hard words

## Abuse

Abuse is when someone hurts you or treats you badly. There are lots of different types of abuse.

## Advocate

A professional advocate is a trained person that can help you and speak up for you to make sure your views and wishes are heard and listened to.

## Assessment

An assessment is the process you go through with your local authority to see if you need care and support. What care and support you need. And how you will get it.

## Direct payment

A direct payment is money you can be given instead of a service. You can use it to buy your own support and services.

## Financial assessment

A financial assessment is a check to see:

- What money you have to live on every week.
- How much you have to pay for things like rent and council tax.
- How much you have in savings.

## Neglect

Neglect is when someone does not look after you properly. Neglect is a type of abuse.

## Wellbeing

Wellbeing means a person is happy, healthy and is comfortable with their life and what they do.