

LLAIS

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



OUR ADVOCACY SERVICE

Integrity ~ People Centred ~ Working Together

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

We have three main roles:

01: To engage with and listen to you about your experiences of health and social care. You might see us out in the community, at events, in drop-ins – we try to meet you in the places that matter to give you a chance to have your say.

02: To represent your views to decision makers in health and social care. By law, they now must let us know what they plan to do with your feedback. If they can't act on it, they need to tell us why.

03: To provide a complaints advocacy service in every area of Wales for complaints about health and social care.

If you are unhappy with the health or social care that you or someone else is currently receiving, talk to us.

Your voice is stronger than ever.

Your right to support

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

You are entitled to free, independent complaints advocacy if you have a concern about the health and social care services you are receiving in Wales.

Llais Complaints Advocates are trained professionals. They cannot give medical or social care advice, but they can take what you have told them to health and social care to find a solution to your complaint.



Your right to support

The information you share with our advocates will not be shared without your agreement unless there is a reason to think you or someone else might come to harm.

All local health and social care service providers have their own complaints process and want you to raise your concerns with them so that they can, if possible, put things right. If you are 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 decide to make a complaint, usually this needs to happen within 12 months but sometimes this is flexible, depending on the situation.

Making a complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.



If you are not happy with the final response you receive to your complaint or the way it was handled by a service, you may take your complaint to the Ombudsman. They can consider complaints made within 1 year of the concern (or of you becoming aware of the concern).

If it has been more than 1 year, you should complain to the Ombudsman within 12 weeks of the provider's response.

Our Advocacy Process



What we can do

Guide you through the complaints process and what can be achieved

Try and achieve informal resolutions

Draft letters

Attend complaints meetings

Support you to the highest level at the Ombudsman

Refer you to other organisations that may also be able to help



What we can't do

Investigate the complaints ourselves

Provide general medical advocacy, including clinical advice

Make decisions on your behalf, including offering opinions on what you should or should not do

Support at inquests or Funding Request Panels

Support when a legal process is underway, or a solicitor appointed



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Frequently Asked Questions

Q) When I first meet someone from Llais, who comes to the meeting, and where does it happen?

It's usually just you and the advocate. Meetings can be in-person, over the phone, or online; wherever feels safest and most convenient for you.

It's good to set aside one hour for the first meeting. But the length can be shorter or longer if that suits you better.

Q) I'm worried that making a complaint will affect the care they give me in future. Can you reassure me?

Being worried about future care is something we hear a lot. There are systems in place to make sure this doesn't happen.

Q) I really struggle to get my point across in appointments. Will Llais be able to come with me and help me get the treatment or referrals I need?

Llais Complaints Advocates understand that clients might be stressed, anxious, and emotional about their experiences and about making a complaint and are trained to work at your pace.

They can't attend medical appointments, but they can go with you to meetings, both in-person or online about your complaint and talk on your behalf if you prefer.

You will be given an advocate based on where you live, and the advocacy team will find the person best suited to dealing with your complaint.

Llais advocates are expected to be good listeners, able to raise things on your behalf, with good knowledge of the complaints system.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q) What happens if it all gets too much for me, or I get unwell – can I stop and come back to my complaint later?

Absolutely. Llais advocates understand that sometimes you will need to pause. The same advocate will try to pick your complaint back up with you when you're ready, so you don't have to re-tell your story.

There can sometimes be a time limit to making a complaint, but your advocate will let you know more about this.

Q) What information do I need to have to make a complaint?

Your advocate will work with all the information you have and try to find out dates and who you saw. We can request your records from the NHS or Local Authority, but only with your permission. Your advocate will ask you to sign a form to say you are happy for this to happen.

Timing can be important because 'Putting Things Right' in Wales allows 12 months from the time of the experience (or when you realised it had caused you a problem) to start a complaint.

This can sometimes be more flexible, and if you want to start your complaint after 12 months, there can be other options available to you.

We will advise you based on your own situation.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q) Who does Llais tell about my complaint?

Your information will be kept confidential unless you agree to share it. Sometimes, as part of our Safeguarding Policy, your advocate must tell someone else if they think the law has been broken or somebody could be hurt or in danger. If we have to tell someone else, we'll explain why.

You usually have the right to meet your advocate in private and if there is a reason why this isn't possible, we'll explain.

Your advocate keeps information about the work you do together, and you can ask to see the information held about you. This information is stored safely for **18 months after the last time you contact us**. You can ask for your information to be removed from our database at any time.

Q) I work for the health board department or Local Authority about which I need to complain. What can I do and how can Llais help?



Llais Complaints Advocates have experience supporting people in this position and will be there to guide you through the process.

The 'Putting Things Right' principles apply equally to everyone and we will make sure you have the same support as anyone else.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q) I am under the age of 18 and I want to make a complaint, do I need to tell my parents/guardian?

We can support people under the age of 18 who have capacity to make a complaint about NHS services. Most 16- and 17-year-olds would be considered able to give their own consent.

Even if you are under 16, you do not have to tell a parent or guardian you are making a complaint unless you wish to do so. In deciding whether it would be OK for us to work together without a parent or guardian, we would decide if you can understand the process, the decisions that must be made and the possible effects this would have on you.



Frequently Asked Questions



Q) What will happen after I make a complaint?

We will always ask you what you want to happen. Sometimes that might be an apology from your health board or Local Authority. If the investigation shows that an apology is needed, Llais will make sure that happens.

Sometimes, you may want the courts to decide and choose to follow a legal process. Llais can't help with this but can signpost you to legal services, as well as professional bodies, such as the General Medical Council.

Maybe you just don't want the same thing to happen to other people and want staff to learn from what went wrong. The NHS and social care have processes in place to learn and can arrange to feed back to you about this.

Q) What if I'm not happy with the service Llais has given me?

We want our services to work for you, so please tell us where we can do better. We want to know what works, and what doesn't so welcome any feedback you can give us about how we're doing.

You can make a complaint at any time if you're not happy with our service. You can contact your advocate, or our National Office, if you prefer: enquiries@llaiscymru.org or 02920 235558.



Do you want to find out more about our advocacy service.

Contact your local Llais team or visit

www.llaiswales.org

If you would like this publication in Braille, Easy Read or another language, please contact your local Llais team

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.

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