

Advocacy and Safeguarding in Wales Newsletter Issue No 1 May 2020

Age Cymru Check in and Chat Service

The service continues to provide some reassurances to older people, answer basic queries and link people to local services and support during the [Coronavirus](#) outbreak.

We have all been advised to self-isolate as much as possible to help protect us from the virus. This is particularly important for people over 70 and those with underlying health conditions because they are at higher risk of developing more severe symptoms if they become infected.

These are potentially difficult times for many older people, especially those living alone who may not have anyone to share their concerns. Others may just want to have a chat about what they saw on television last night. Hopefully, this initiative will help older people cope with some of the challenges arising from the Coronavirus outbreak.

Anyone over 70 in Wales can register free of charge, to receive a regular telephone call from us in either English or Welsh. All you have to do is call Age Cymru Advice on 08000 223 444 or [send us an email](#) - please ensure you include the following information in your email.

This will help us deal with your registration more efficiently.

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Please let us know if you're over 70
- Do you require a call in Welsh or English
- An emergency contact - who do you want us to contact in an emergency
- Password - our staff member will say your chosen password at the start of every call to give you peace of mind this is a genuine call.

We'd like to thank Metro Bank and Thomas Carroll staff for volunteering to support us with our calls.

Many people have signed up to the service, some receiving a daily call, stretching the Charity's resources to the absolute limit.

At the same time the Charity has dealt with nearly 2,279 calls to its free to use Advice line.

The charity's chief executive, Victoria Lloyd says: "Like many other organisations we have switched our operations so that our teams are working from home and we've had to postpone many of the activities and events we had planned. Our priority is to reach out to older people and be there for them during these very worrying times. With more than half of the over seventy fives in Wales having no access to the internet telephone contact is hugely important for people and the response to our calls has been overwhelming:"

Just a few compliments the check in and chat calls have received:

Mrs Jones, Gwynedd – It's good to have someone to talk to, even if it is to have a moan!

Mrs Phillips, Powys – It's so good to have an intelligent conversation with someone.

Mr Atkinson, Wrexham – This service is a lifeline for us.

Mr Foster, Denbighshire – Thank you much for caring; it means the world.

Mrs Griffiths, Swansea – It's nice to know there's someone else alive!

Miss Smith, Gwent - Being there is a help, believe me.

Coronavirus Emergency Appeal

Unfortunately, due to current restrictions we have had to cancel many of our fundraising activities which could lead to the Charity being short of funds to continue providing support to older people who are reaching out to us during these deeply worrying times. Calls to our advice line have increased by 200% during the last few weeks and we only expect this number to rise.

Age Cymru is determined to respond and is particularly concerned about the plight of older people who are on their own, without the support of family, friends or neighbours.

To help us to continue to be here for older people at their time of need in this difficult financial environment the Charity has launched a Coronavirus Emergency Appeal.

Donations to the appeal will help Age Cymru to keep answering the growing number of calls to its Advice Line and meet rising demand for friendship calls from older people who are feeling frightened and lonely. They will also help local Age Cymru's to offer practical help to older people in acute need in their areas.

To support Age Cymru's emergency appeal, please visit:

www.agecymru.org.uk/donate

You may also call 08000 223 444 to make a donation.

What some of our providers are currently saying and doing

HAFAL - Caryl Matthews

I usually attend at two secure mental health units to offer advocacy but can't be there. I have offered telephone support to patients generally and to offer advice prior to any care and treatment review meetings and ward rounds. I am telephoning and emailing the units weekly to check that nothing has arisen.

False Allegations Support Organisation - Margaret Gardener

In the Gwent area I live in, the FASO voluntary organisation has done no support work recently.

However UK wide we support, as advocates, families going through the child protection system as support workers for those being falsely accused and going through the family courts for access to their children. Also those needing support going through the criminal courts due to false allegations of sexual abuse.

Mental health issues are more prominent in the stories we hear, however the contact is less than normal due to the corona virus pandemic.

Pembrokeshire People First - Karen Chandler

Pembrokeshire People First (PPF) is a charity run by and for people (aged sixteen+) with a learning disability and/or autism.

During the pandemic, PPF is still offering a full range of services.

If you need an advocate, call PPF on **01437 769135** (10-4, Monday - Friday)

PPF also has a big timetable of online activities - everything from keep fit to Harry Potter, and quizzes to cookery. Anyone can join - just ask to join the PPF Moving on At Home Facebook page and all the instructions are on there.

North Wales Advocacy Service - Ellen Williams

The North Wales Advocacy Service is still up and running and accepting referrals as normal. The team are working from home, but are contacting CYP's by phone, skype, facetime etc.

We welcome referrals at this time.
Tel: 01286 238007

Advocacy Support Cymru - Rhiannon Lane

We are still accepting referrals, and are holding client meetings via telephone and / or video call where appropriate.

All telephones are diverted so that our normal office contact numbers will go through to the relevant people even though we are all working from home. The same is true of the fax number. We are encouraging referrals to be sent via electronic means. However, post is still being collected although we are finding that the delivery of post is, understandably, currently much less frequent and this may cause delays if referrals are sent via post.

Tel: 02920 540444

Age Connects North Wales Central - Alison Price

[Conwy Older People's Forum Newsletter](#)

Powys Teaching Health Board - Mental Health - Linda Woodward

The three advocates working for Powys Mental Health Advocacy are all working from home. No face to face visits are presently taking place. All work is taking place via telephone, email or skype.

We have received COVID-19 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards guidance from Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board Region. Also guidance regarding the MCA (2005) in connection with DoLS for hospitals, care homes and supervisory bodies. It is strange times indeed to be working as an advocate and not being able to have any face to face contact. Understandably new referrals are presently low including for IMCA.

Tel: 07974 935355

Diverse Cymru - Dawn Ashton

Diverse Cymru's offices are currently closed and will remain so for the foreseeable future, pending review of the current restrictions.

We are able to offer access to our services via email at info@diverse.cymru and by telephone at **02920 368888**. Enquiries received via either route will be directed to the most appropriate department or person to respond.

The service we can offer at present is limited and restricted to telephone and email support as obviously face-to-face and home visits cannot be undertaken. It may be that Diverse Cymru are unable to offer information and support for all enquiries received but will endeavour, where possible, to provide details of other organisations who can potentially assist.

Our website is also still available and we would direct people to this as another source of information.

Alzheimer's Society—Bev Perkins

Advocacy hasn't changed. The world around it has. People are more vulnerable, with fewer rights and less services, but Advocacy Hasn't Changed.

So our specialist advocacy service for people with dementia at Alzheimer Society is still here. Yes we are (rightfully) limited in our face to face contact but we are using every means possible to continue to advocate. Skyping care homes, zooming those who can, asking for copies of records to assess from afar and using discretion to respectfully but proportionately challenge. Our health and social care system has incredible capabilities, for which we are very grateful – but it was not without its shortcomings before COVID19 and there are certainly some unique challenges now. The most pressing people with dementia now face include:

- Tensions in public when people don't remember the need for social distancing and often excessively restrictive responses
- The impact of social isolation on entry to care, and lack of contact with loved ones, especially Towards end of life
- Lack of care packages and accompanying testing that would make it safer for everyone Involved
- Avoiding going in to hospital and an urgency to leave – plus the resulting placements which are often out of area

Thankfully our campaigns team are dealing with some of the issues that are widespread by lobbying government. Some of the requests they've made are for:

- A national strategy to support social care through COVID-19, which has since been announced.
- COVID19 deaths outside hospital to be announced daily, instead of fortnightly.

- Government are now publishing every five days.
- Government to take responsibility for providing care homes with PPE rather than leaving them to fend for themselves. They have pledged to take this on.
- Testing for care staff and people being discharged from hospital into care settings – government have now agreed that this will happen.

Steps forward are being taken slowly, with more still needed. Especially around finding ways to facilitate support care homes to facilitate contact with their loved ones. Alongside this, Alzheimer's Society has launched an Emergency Appeal to ask the public to help fund vital support for people living with dementia, who may be isolated, alone and without basic support to help them eat, wash and take medication during the coronavirus crisis. For details, visit:

www.alzheimers.org.uk/coronavirus-appeal

Tel: 01352 700 741

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Mind - Shian Neale

Community Advocacy Service

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Mind (previously known as Merthyr and the Valleys Mind) provides an Advocacy Service to support people with mental health problems to express their views and to support them to have their voice heard. The Advocate empowers the individual to take active steps towards mental and emotional wellbeing as well as support to achieve personal goals.

The Community Advocacy Service remains open to referrals during these unprecedented times, during COVID-19. The service is open to adults eighteen years and over, who are living within the Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf areas.

Currently our advocates are working from home, in line with government guidance and continue to provide support remotely via the telephone or email.

Regular contact is maintained with the local Rehabilitation Unit and Supported Recovery Unit in the area so that referrals may be easily made. We recently contributed some iPads to the units to enable clients to maintain contact with their families and loved ones during this time.

Your Money Matters Service

This service provides support with benefit claims and issues to Mental Health inpatients at The Royal Glamorgan Hospital, Pinewood House and Ysbyty George Thomas. The advocate works with the patient during their hospital stay and carries on supporting them in the community until all their benefit issues have been resolved. Whilst our advocate is unable to see in-patients face to face on the wards during Covid 19, contact is maintained with existing clients via the phone or ward staff. Both ward managers and the Crisis team are aware that referrals can still be made as usual and that interviews and support can be provided over the telephone.

Contact Details:

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Mind:
01685 707487 or
info@ctmmind.org.uk

Community Advocate: Angela Griffiths
07980 737136
angela.griffiths@ctmmind.org.uk

Money Matters Advocate: Alison
Goodfield 07794 436920
alison.goodfield@ctmmind.org.uk

All Mind services are promoted within our website and social media platform.

Webiste: cwmtafmorgannwgmind
Twitter: [@ctmmind](https://twitter.com/ctmmind)
Facebook: [@ctmmind](https://www.facebook.com/ctmmind)

Carmarthenshire People First - Sarah Phillips

Carmarthenshire People First's primary focus during the current time is to support people with a learning disability and the other vulnerable individuals.

We provide concise, easy to understand information to those supported by the charity to ensure they understand the changes currently affecting their lives and to prevent further isolation to an already vulnerable group.

Carmarthenshire People First will endeavour to continue its support for those individuals in the community requiring additional assistance by working closely with Covid-19 groups already in existence, as well as the relevant local authorities through the distribution of food, cleaning products and prescription pickups where and when necessary.

The charity is also increasing its strong internet and social media presence in order to provide solid up-to-date Information.

In addition, the charity has arranged regular telephone contact for those with additional vulnerabilities and particularly at risk from the increased isolation required by government guidelines. It is becoming ever more clear that a friendly, recognisable voice is of growing importance in these confusing and difficult times.

Carmarthenshire People First is considered a 'safe space' by those individuals who do not receive statutory services but are considered vulnerable within the community. That additional support, albeit in a virtual format during the pandemic, has become ever more important for those who need it most. This work is already underway and Carmarthenshire People First has created a dedicated Covid-19 co-ordinator post in order to work closely with current staff and volunteers as well as other agencies throughout Carmarthenshire for the duration of the pandemic.

[Carmarthenshire People First](#)

Tel: 01267 234635

Age Cymru Gwynedd a Mon - Sylvia Targett

Our Advocacy service has been suspended for the time being as has our Wills and Power of Attorney Service as we are obliged to carry out home visits/care home and hospital visits. We are now concentrating on the Age Cymru Check in and Chat service and we telephone people from all over Wales to see how they are getting on and to see if they have any issues. If we find that they have issues then we try and resolve them for them or give them the contact numbers they need.

We have also started an ACGM check in and chat system in order to support our clients who are no longer receiving advocacy and home care in Bontnewydd. We keep in touch with clients in care homes on the phone, and via email – we have long chats.

We are also supporting care homes with a weekly phone call to see if they are okay – the managers are finding it tough and I think that they are pleased to have someone to talk to. Working with m-sparc in Gaerwen we were able to acquire five full face PPE's each for the private care homes on Anglesey as they had not received any.

Sadly three of my clients have contracted Covid-19 – two have passed away and one is currently in hospital. I get daily updates from the care home and hospital and work well together. There is a lot of anxiety out there and people are now fed up of being in self-isolation.

There have also been some attempts of fraud and also a lady who was confirmed as having small TIA's but refused point blank to go to hospital. These are some of the measures that the people we have talked to have taken in order to reduce anxiety:

- Limiting the news coverage due to information overload.
- Contacting family and friends

- Sticking to a daily routine
- Keeping busy during the corona virus lockdown – some people have been learning to knit, reading more. we have shared recipes over the phone; going for walks and one gentleman has found bits of wood in his shed and is making bird tables.
- Those who can go out safely are able to go for a walk once a day.

Email sylvia@acgm.co.uk

Tel: 01286 685 922

A Voice for You - Shirley Howson

We provide citizen advocacy to people with learning disabilities. All our advocates are volunteers, and we currently have thirty five active advocacy partnerships. Our advocates are maintaining contact with their advocacy partners by phone, email, skype and face time. Many of the advocacy partners are reliant on their support staff to facilitate this contact and this is working well, mainly due to the well established relationships the advocates have with their partners, and the links they have made with support staff. The long term nature of citizen advocacy partnerships has made it easier for all parties to cope with the challenges of social distancing. For example:

Case J: this is non-instructed advocacy, and prior to the start of the social distancing measures the advocate regularly spent time with her advocacy partner at her home. The advocate became aware of tensions within the staff team in the home and was concerned that her advocacy partner was not getting consistent support to meet her complex needs. The advocate raised this concern with the care provider and had arranged a meeting. The meeting was not able to go ahead due to social distancing, but they were able to discuss the issues by phone and email.

The matter was promptly investigated by the care provider and has now been resolved.

The advocate is in regular contact with her partner by phone, and has reported that the staff are very happy the issues have been resolved and this means her advocacy partner is now getting consistent support, which is essential for her wellbeing. Our citizen advocates also provide issue based advocacy support, and have been able to continue with phone, email and skype. For example:

Case G: this person was known to us through our advocacy café, and asked for support with regard to their PIP have been stopped last year and he wanted to appeal the decision. The advocate had several meetings with G and had agreed to assist with completing the appeal claim and to support G at the hearing.

Once social distancing measures were enforced and the advocacy café had to be closed, the advocate was still able to complete the appeal forms with G over the phone and by email, and they were then submitted to the court. G heard from the court last week that the PIP was to be re-instated and would be backdated to last year.

Tel: 01686 629951

**People First Bridgend -
Adam Kurowski Wakeford**

People First Bridgend continues to function and provide a service to its beneficiaries with learning disabilities and autism, albeit through remote means.

Our advocates are in regular contact with many clients via phone or email and have had success getting people set up on video conferencing.

Where clients are not contactable, for example because they are in prison, correspondence has been maintained between us and their nurse or social worker.

Where none of the above is possible, we are sending physical letters out to maintain some level of contact.

Our group facilitator has likewise been maintaining regular communication with beneficiaries and has been sending out bi-weekly Easy Read activity packs, which have been well received and are in-demand.

The facilitator for our autism support group has maintained support via social media and ran a creative writing competition in partnership with the NAS.

The most important thing we've found is to maintain contact and a presence to our beneficiaries, even if an advocacy issue is not present. Providing moral support and encouragement during this time has been vital to people's wellbeing.

This has been especially important for those living independently in the community, as social distancing and isolating has meant many have lost contact with their usual face-to-face peer support groups and activities.

As a team, we've been having weekly video conference meetings using Microsoft Teams.

Ironically, we've seen more of each other during lockdown than before. We still face some challenges with administrative duties such as monitoring reports, but this is just down to finding a method that works for everyone.

We're also utilising remote means of training and development such as e-learning and webinars.

Lockdown has forced us to adapt and try new remote means of working; our beneficiaries have also made fantastic efforts to try new methods.

This period is teaching us what is possible remotely and we're hoping to apply much of what we've learned to our work post-lockdown.

Tel: 01656 668314
admin@peoplefirstbridgend.co.uk

Disability Can Do - John Miles

My Future First Project

Our project provides free information, advice and advocacy support for people living in the Caerphilly borough who need to make significant decisions about their care needs and accommodation options. The COVID-19 outbreak has forced us to primarily work from home but we continue to provide information and advice via email, telephone and our website. We are no longer visiting care homes but continue to visit people at home if it is considered to be essential and safe.

COVID-19 has also created a new challenge for our local hospital Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr, as they are now supporting patients from all over the former Gwent area. To assist with hospital discharges we are supporting patients who reside within the Aneurin Bevan Trust catchment area. The additional temporary support we can provide addresses some of the practical issues related to safe discharge, this may include assisting with access to homes if medical equipment needs to be delivered, moving furniture around to accommodate a hospital bed or commode and ensuring that people have the essential groceries available to them prior to their discharge.

All referrals for our additional support will be looked at on a case by case basis to ensure our support is appropriate, safe and deliverable.

www.disabilitycando.org.uk
futurefirst@disabilitycando.org.uk

Tel: 07979 795786

p2p Citizen Advocacy - Jackie Hughes

Hi Everyone. My name is Jackie Hughes, I am the co-ordinator of Person To Person Citizen Advocacy. We find unpaid volunteers to become Citizen Advocates for people with learning disabilities.

A Citizen Advocate is someone you can trust. Someone on your side.

A Citizen Advocate will spend time with you, listen to what you want and make sure your voice is heard.

A Citizen Advocate will help you get the information you need and talk through things you do not understand. A Citizen Advocate will help you to become more independent so you can gain more confidence. Most importantly a Citizen Advocate will be a long term friend to you.

During the Covid 19 outbreak it has become necessary to close our Office, however we are all working from home and are offering a telephone service.

If you would like to speak to us please give us a call on **07436 102162**. Stay safe everyone.

Citizens Advice - Kayleigh Norval

Due to recent developments regarding COVID-19, Citizens Advice Merthyr Tydfil have planned for and expanded our remote working capability so that all staff are able to work from home. We would like to assure local residents that we will remain in regular contact with our clients, albeit using alternative communication channels. We have adapted our services to be able to advise on various different topics over the phone and online.

We have provided contact Centre style equipment for our advisers to deliver telephone and web chat advice at home. We have trained more advisers to be able to give generalist advice on furlough, benefits and other COVID-19 related queries. We have even created templates to allow our trained benefit advisers to continue to complete disability benefit forms over the phone.

We have created an advice number for people to access – **0300 330 2121**. Our administration line is still open and can be reached on **01685 382188**.

We will continue to keep our service users and partner organisations updated via Facebook and Twitter. We appreciate your patience and support during these unprecedented times. Thank you for your cooperation. Please stay home and stay safe.

ICF Advocacy Development Project West Wales Care Partnership - Pete Irvine

What can advocates do to support people eligible for a service who require hospitalisation due to contracting Covid-19?

It is clearly very challenging for advocates to provide effective advocacy in circumstances when almost all engagement is being delivered remotely. However, the current circumstances also mean that the rights and entitlements of the people advocacy supports are at very significant risk of not being fully and consistently respected. It remains important for those people who advocates are engaged with at the point of hospital admission, or, are referred following admission, that they receive do receive support when serious medical treatment need to be taken.

What appears to be possible is to strive to ensure that clinicians are respecting the rights of everyone to treatment and care, equitably and fairly, so that the service-user groups we support do not face discriminatory clinical decision-making.

Following concerns, the Welsh Government has clarified and distributed guidance on decision-making in relation to fairness and equity in terms of:

- Access to critical care
- Appropriate consultation on issues of consent to treatment, withdrawal or withholding of treatment and, or, attempts to resuscitate

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-ethical-values-and-principles-healthcare-delivery-framework>

A key statement in the guidance is in terms of 'Good decision-making' it references the need to 'consult people as much as possible in the time available and provide adequate time for this decision-making (with an advocate if wished.)

IMCAs will be familiar with the decision-making processes for serious medical treatment decisions and given the nature of Covid-19 are likely to have a surge in referrals.

For other engaged advocates they need to consider how best to provide support in very pressured situations for both patients and clinicians.

In these circumstances advocates need to accept they will not be able to provide support in the way they would like to do but can make a difference by asking the right questions. It does not seem unreasonable to:

- Ask clinicians if they have followed the appropriate guidance and legal framework in their decision-making
- Check that decisions are being taken entirely on the basis of clinical presentation and potential outcomes rather than other characteristics

Clinicians will be under extreme pressures in terms of life-sustaining decisions and this should be taken into account in representations but if we are to remain true to our advocacy practice values we must continue to strive to protect the rights of people to receive appropriate, fair and equitable treatment.

Email - peteadvdev@gmail.com

Cardiff and Vale Action for Mental Health (CAVAMH) Update April 2020 - Linda Newton

Provides support to voluntary sector groups with an interest in mental health and to people with lived experience, both service users and carers, to have a voice in the planning and development of mental health services. We do this through networking, engagement, information training and development.

Core networks are:

Cardiff and Vale Mental health Forum for voluntary sector groups and partners.

Sefyll involvement project for adults with mental health lived experience

Nexus – for carers and older people with lived experience including dementia

Join the Dots for Young people
We are putting in place new ways of connecting with existing and new stakeholders, sharing updates on services, well-being, sharing feedback on experiences, issues & solutions and trialling alternatives to face to face meetings. This includes a Covid 19 page on our web page:
www.cavamh.org.uk

On line Forum to share info, tips, issues, solutions, polls and a place for socialising, games and well-being.
Info at <https://cavamh.boards.net/>

Weekly Newsletter

Weekly MHF e-bulletins as local agency/national situations change, gathering/sharing feedback on issues and concerns as they develop.
Latest info is on our [website](#)
If you have info to share, please get in touch.

Video Network meetings: We bring people together on line through our MHF interest group meetings - BME, young people etc. to share developments, the latest issues and linking with Cardiff and Vale Mental Health Clinical board, as new arrangements come in place.

Contact us if you are interested in joining in. Post info about what you are doing and respond to/circulate the wellbeing and feedback polls coming very soon.

Sefyll and Nexus – the involvement projects for people with lived experience – enabling people to have a voice in how services are developed and delivered: continue to support individual members directly involved with the projects via telephone/email, providing emotional and practical support where needed as well as sharing news, members' tips and coping strategies and gathering/sharing views. Reaching out to contact new stakeholders, who might now be in greater need of contact and supporting.

Join the Dots – the involvement project for young people continues tweet and is partnering up with another organisation to provide information about mental health and wellbeing for young people.

Please share what we are doing with stakeholders - that would be great.
For more info contact Linda Newton on Linda@cavamh.org.uk or

Tel 07522 914210

Age Connects- Neath Port Talbot - Dean Richards

We wanted to remain very much part of the community and help as many older people as possible get the help and support they need during this difficult period. After we suspended all of our community activities, we quickly remodelled a number of our services to adapt to the growing demand from local older people to assist with essential tasks. For those with no local family, friends or neighbourhood support networks in place, we devised a programme of activities that enables them to stay home, stay well and connected whilst adhering to social distancing guidelines.

The services that are currently being delivered include a telephone information and advice service, including support around welfare benefits, personalised shopping service, emergency food parcel provision (if necessary), prescription/ medication collection and delivery service, dog walking, telephone befriending calls and 'keeping in touch' telephone calls. We have also started collecting and delivering hot meals for a few local cafes/restaurants and will be opening discussions with a similar establishments in the coming weeks.

We have had a fantastic community response to our volunteer recruitment campaign and have recruited one hundred new volunteers as part of our COVID19 Community Response Team. Strict measures are maintained to ensure our staff and volunteer team can continue to provide flexible support and serve the community.

This includes following all public health guidelines, issue of PPE, completing enhanced DBS checks and provision of Age Connects NPT identification badges.

We have built up some fantastic relationships with the community and witnessed some excellent examples of partnership working and community spirit.

We have been involved in some innovative practices and a national pilot activity to improve service provision and access issues. It was fantastic to have recently received a letter of thanks and recognition for community work from HM The Queen's representative in West Glamorgan, Lord-Lieutenant Mrs Louise Fleet, JP.

Dean@ageconnectsnpt.org.uk

North Wales Community Health Council (NWCHC) - Carol Williams

NWCHC is the independent watchdog of NHS services in, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham and Ynys Môn.

We encourage and support people to have a voice in the design and delivery of NHS services. NWCHC works with the NHS, inspection and regulatory bodies. We provide an important link between those who plan and deliver NHS services, those who inspect and regulate it, and those who use it.

NWCHC hears from the public in many ways. We visit NHS services to talk to patients and carers. We talk to people at events and through community groups. We use surveys, apps and social media. Our advocacy service helps people to raise concerns about NHS care or treatment. We want to hear about experiences of the NHS – positive and poor.

One function is to enable users of the NHS to raise concerns about the services they receive, through an independent complaints advocacy service.

Tel: 01248 679 284

The NWCHC Advocacy Service

We provide a free independent advocacy service for NHS complaints that offers confidential support, advice and guidance to make a complaint against the NHS. Our Advocates offer advice and support about the NHS Complaints Procedure.

The aims of our Advocacy Service are:

- To enable patients, carers and relatives to access information and offer advice on the options available;
- To support patients, carers and relatives to raise concerns and complaints to appropriate organisations for investigation.

The level of support depends on each complainant's individual needs. The service is friendly, confidential and professional, encouraging NHS organisations to learn from patients' experiences and improve services. Our Advocates and support staff are based in our Bangor and Wrexham offices. NWCHC still provides a full advocacy service throughout the COVID19 pandemic. Our team has many working from home, which may on occasion cause some slight delays. We are here to support patients and the public through these uncertain times. We can be contacted on **01248 679284** or **01978 356178**. Calls are taken through a messaging service. This is being monitored on a frequent basis with calls being returned as soon as possible. We can also be contacted on:

admin@waleschc.org.uk

Advocates do have individual mobile telephone numbers – provided on request.

Postal correspondence to our offices at Bangor: NWCHC, 11 Chestnut Court, Parc Menai, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 4FH

Wrexham: NWCHC, Unit 1b and Unit 1d Wilkinson Business Park, Clywedog Road South, Wrexham, LL13 9AE

ASNEW

ASNEW – we are still open for business

You can contact us by phone:

01352 759332

Email: advocacy@asnew.org.uk

Website: www.ASNEW.org.uk

An advocate will then contact you and see how they can help you remotely.

Keep safe-stay well.

Conwy and Denbighshire Mental Health - Advocacy statement regarding Covid-19

All our advocates are working from home, but all our phone, fax systems, emails are functioning as normal. Until further notice our team will not be providing face-to-face support but we are able to give support by phone, video calls, Whatsapp.

It is important to remember that during this period of uncertainty that it is as important as ever that people have access to an advocacy service.

CADMHAS is still open to referrals and to support people through our:
Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) in Conwy Denbighshire and Powys

Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA) in Conwy and Denbighshire

Community Mental Health Advocacy in Conwy and Denbighshire

Young People Advocacy in Denbighshire

Relevant Person Representative (RPR) in Conwy and Denbighshire

To contact us call 01745 81399 or email us at admin@cadmhas.co.uk

Epilepsy Wales

During this extremely difficult time Epilepsy Wales are still providing support for people with epilepsy and their families.

As Epilepsy Wales' North Wales Outreach Worker I am still providing support and advice over the phone and email. I can also provide emotional support and I am here to listen to people's worries and concerns.

Lynne Pearce - 07525 806511

lynnepearce@epilepsy.wales

Social Care Wales

New level four qualifications for independent advocates

The new level four qualifications for independent advocates will be available for first teaching from September 2020.

We will be delivering joint interactive on-line events to launch the new qualifications with City and Guilds on the 4 May in the afternoon for:

- Employers
- Workers
- Learning providers

The event is anticipated to last between one and two hours, it will provide an introduction to: the content of the qualification, how it will be delivered and assessed and expectations of employers, managers and learning providers.

Please use this as a diary marker for the event.

Karen Wakelin

Karen.Wakelin@SocialCare.Wales

Safeguarding

Social Care Institute for Excellence

As with many workplaces, SCIE staff are now working from home. We're making sure that all preparations are in place to provide the same high-quality service that you expect from us. We kindly ask that for any training or consultancy enquiries, these are sent through [our dedicated enquiry page on our website](#), as opposed to our phone lines.

At an uncertain time for the sector, we are still doing our utmost to continue to offer evidence-based solutions and share good practice related to the Coronavirus outbreak for all those working in social care. Visit our updated Coronavirus (Covid-19) hub for the latest social care Guidance. Click [here](#) for a link to our website

[Safeguarding adults during the Covid-19 Crisis.](#)

[Mental Capacity Act and Covid-19](#)

[Corona advice and information blogs for Social Care](#)

The Athena Programme

[Deprivation of liberty safeguards article during Covid-19 pandemic](#)

Scams Information

COVID-19 SCAMS

Unscrupulous criminals are exploiting fears about COVID-19 to prey on members of the public, particularly older and vulnerable people who are isolated from family and friends.

National Trading Standards is warning people to remain vigilant following a rise in coronavirus related scams that seek to benefit from the public's concern and uncertainty over COVID-19.

Members of the public should ignore scam products such as supplements and anti-virus kits.

These falsely claim to cure or prevent COVID-19. In some cases individuals may be pressurised on their own doorsteps to buy anti-virus kits or persuaded into purchasing products that are advertised on their social media feeds. In addition, some call centres that previously targeted UK consumers with dubious health products are now offering supplements that supposedly prevent COVID-19.

Communities are also being urged to look out for signs of neighbours being targeted by doorstep criminals. While there are genuine groups of volunteers providing help during self-isolation, there have been reports of criminals preying on residents – often older people or people living with long-term health conditions – by cold-calling at their homes and offering to go to the shops for them.

The criminals often claim to represent charities to help them appear legitimate before taking the victim's money. There are genuine charities providing support, so consumers should be vigilant and ask for ID from anyone claiming to represent a charity.

COVID-19 scams identified include:

Doorstep crime

- Offering to do shopping. Thieves take the money and do not return.
- Doorstep cleansing services that offer to clean drives and doorways to kill bacteria and help prevent the spread of the virus.

Online scams

- Email scams that open malicious attachments, which put people at risk of identity theft.

Refund scams

- Companies offering fake holiday refunds for individuals who have been forced to cancel their trips.

Counterfeit goods

- Fake sanitisers, face masks and Covid19 swabbing kits sold online and door-to-door.

Telephone scams

- As more people self-isolate at home there is an increasing risk that telephone scams will also rise,

Donation scams

- There have been reports of thieves extorting money from consumers by claiming they are collecting donations for a COVID-19 'vaccine'.

Loan sharks

- Illegal money lenders are expected to prey on people's financial hardship, lending money before charging extortionate interest rates and fees through threats and violence. Please see *Friends Against Scams*, which provides free online training.visit: www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk. NTS is also [issuing urgent advice](#) to help prevent people falling victim to COVID-19 scams.
- Members of the public are being urged to keep in contact with family members and inform them of the prolific scams and the possible dangers to them.
- Scams can be reported to Action Fraud online at: www.actionfraud.police.uk/ or by calling 0300 123 2040.

For advice and information on how to check if something might be a scam, visit: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/check-if-something-might-be-a-scam/.

The full press release is available [here](#).

Resources

Age UK

The latest report from Age UK. [Report on older people and domestic abuse](#)

COVID-19 Information

The information changes on an almost daily basis, the link below can be used to access the most up to date information and recommendations from Welsh Government and Public Health Wales

[COVID-19 Welsh Gov. information](#)

[COVID-19 Public Health information](#)

Golden Thread Advocacy Programme

Even though the programme was completed on 31 March 2020 we would still like to invite you to view and use our online resources that were produced over the past few years.

The resources can be accessed through the [Age Cymru Website](#).

If you look at the section "our work" and click on the Golden Thread Advocacy Programme this will lead you to all the work we have produced.

[Advocacy awareness documents](#)

and

[Programme Documents](#)

NDTi

The NDTI are responsible for delivery the Advocacy Quality performance mark or QPM and produce regular updates on the subject. Click [here](#) for the link to their website.

Older People's Commissioner for Wales

The [OPCW](#) website provides all the latest information from the commission on all the issues that are relevant to older people throughout Wales.

Advocacy QPM - Latest Update

[Advocacy and rights during corona virus crisis](#)

Age Cymru Advice

Age Cymru's advice line can provide free, impartial advice on a range of subjects.

Perhaps they may want advice about how much they should be paying for a loved ones care? Or perhaps they may want to know if they are eligible for Pension Credit and want help with claiming it?

Age Cymru Advice can help with all these issues, and more – call us today

08000 223 444

Contact us...

- **To subscribe to the e-bulletin or newsletter**
- **If you have any comments or questions about the articles**
- **If there's anything you would like to see in the next e-bulletin or newsletter**

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