

Factsheet 44w ● December 2019

Information on NHS services for older people in Wales



Age Cymru Advice

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Contents

1	Information about this factsheet	5
2	Structure of the NHS in Wales	5
	2.1 Local Health Boards	6
	2.2 NHS Trusts	7
	2.3 Community Health Councils – bodies to represent the interests of the public in the NHS	8
3	Getting help when feeling unwell	9
	3.1 Your local pharmacy service	9
	3.2 NHS Direct Wales	9
	3.3 Minor Injury Units	10
	3.4 Emergency dental services	10
4	Serious or life-threatening illness or injury – calling 999 or attending an Accident & Emergency (A&E) department	11
	4.1 Welsh Government targets for emergency care	12
5	GP services – general information	12
	5.1 Registering with a practice	13
	5.2 Registering with a practice if you live in a care home	14
	5.3 Home visits	14
	5.4 Making and attending an appointment	15
	5.5 Seeking a second opinion	16
	5.6 Out-of-hours services	16
	5.7 Changing your practice	16
	5.8 GP services when you are resident somewhere temporarily	16
6	Services to which your GP may refer you	17
	6.1 Referral to an NHS consultant or other specialist medical professional	17
	6.2 NHS help with mental health needs	17
	6.3 NHS help with hearing difficulties	18
	6.4 NHS chiropody	18
	6.5 NHS physiotherapy services	19
	6.6 NHS speech and language therapists	19
	6.7 NHS support for people with long-term conditions	19

6.8	NHS falls prevention services	20
6.9	NHS continence services	20
6.10	Marie Curie and Macmillan nurses	21
6.11	GP referral to a memory clinic/specialists where someone may have dementia	21
6.12	Services that may be provided by the local authority social services department	22
6.13	Priority NHS services for military veterans	23
6.14	NHS information on complementary health therapies	24
7	The Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (provided by the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust)	25
8	Hospital stays and NHS services following hospital discharge	25
9	NHS continuing healthcare (NHS CHC) – for people with high level, complex, health needs	26
10	NHS treatment waiting times	26
11	Free NHS prescriptions in Wales	27
12	Services at your local pharmacy	28
13	Reporting unwanted side effects from medication – the ‘Yellow Card Scheme’	30
14	Palliative care (end of life care)	30
15	Specific NHS services for older people	31
	15.1 Over-60s – free dental check-ups	31
	15.2 Over-60s – free NHS sight tests	32
	15.3 Over-65s – free seasonal flu jab	32
	15.4 Over-65s – free jab against pneumonia	33
	15.5 Shingles vaccination	33
16	NHS screening for cancer and other conditions	34
	16.1 NHS breast screening programme	34
	16.2 NHS cervical screening programme	34
	16.3 NHS bowel cancer screening	35
	16.4 Prostate cancer	36
	16.5 Diabetic retinopathy	36
	16.6 Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA)	36
17	Help with health costs and the NHS Low Income Scheme	37

17.1	Help with NHS health costs if you receive Pension Credit	38
17.2	Help through the NHS Low Income Scheme	39
18	Resolving problems with NHS care or services – the NHS Wales complaints procedure	40
19	Age discrimination in health services and the relevance of the Equality Act 2010	41
20	Useful organisations	42
21	Further information about Age Cymru	48

1 Information about this factsheet

This factsheet contains information on a range of NHS services in Wales, including:

- information on GP services;
- specialist services which your GP may be able to refer you to;
- specific services for older people over a certain age; and
- NHS screening programmes.

Note: The information given in this factsheet is applicable in Wales. Different rules may apply in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Contact Age UK, Age NI and Age Scotland respectively for further information – see section 21 for their contact details.

2 Structure of the NHS in Wales

The Minister for Health and Social Services in the Welsh Government has ultimate responsibility and accountability for all aspects of the NHS in Wales. In terms of the day to day operation of NHS Wales, this is delivered through seven Local Health Boards and three NHS Trusts. Their role is outlined in sections 2.1 and 2.2 below.

Note: Primary and secondary care services

Health services may be referred to as ‘primary’ or ‘secondary’ care services.

Primary care services are delivered by the health professionals you see when you first have a health problem, or seek advice on how to stay healthy – for example, GP practices, district nurses, dental surgeries, pharmacists, opticians, or other businesses providing NHS services.

Secondary care services are usually provided in hospital following an emergency admission via the A&E department, or treatment provided via an out-patient appointment. The ambulance service is also a secondary care service.

2.1 Local Health Boards

There are seven Local Health Boards (LHBs) in Wales. Each LHB is responsible for delivering all NHS healthcare services in the geographical area they cover. The following table lists the LHBs and has further information on the areas of Wales they cover.

Local Health Board	Area covered
Betsi Cadwalader University Health Board	Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham
Hywel Dda Health Board	Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire
Powys Teaching Health Board	Powys
Swansea Bay University Local Health Board	Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot
Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Local Health Board	Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board	Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan
Aneurin Bevan Health Board	Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen

Links to each LHB web page can be found on the NHS Wales website at:
www.wales.nhs.uk/nhswalesaboutus/structure

Alternatively, NHS Direct Wales should be able to provide you with details for your LHB and advise you if you are unsure of which one covers your area. NHS Direct Wales can be contacted on **0845 46 47**.

2.2 NHS Trusts

In addition to the LHBs, there are currently three NHS Trusts with an *all-Wales* focus:

- **Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust**

Responsible for emergency services (plus they also operate the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service – see section 7 below).

- **Velindre NHS Trust**

Provides specialist cancer care and a range of national support services.

- **Public Health Wales NHS Trust**

Public Health Wales' remit is to:

- Provide and manage a range of public health, health protection, healthcare improvement and health advisory services, including surveillance, prevention and control of communicable diseases.
- Make information about protection and improvement of health in Wales available to the public and arrange research into these topics.
- Collect, analyse and disseminate information about the health of people in Wales – for example, cancer incidence and mortality and survival rates.
- Provide and manage services for screening of health conditions and for health related matters. Monitor, evaluate and conduct research into screening services.

2.3 Community Health Councils – bodies to represent the interests of the public in the NHS

Community Health Councils (CHCs) are a statutory and independent voice whose role is to represent the interests of the public in the health service in their area. They are “the independent NHS ‘watchdog’ in Wales concerned with all aspects of NHS care and treatment”¹.

They should monitor the quality of NHS services from the point of view of patients “with regard to quality, quantity, access to and appropriateness of the services provided for them. They then act as the public voice in letting managers of health services know what people want and how things can be improved. In turn, CHCs also consult the public directly on some issues to make sure that they are properly reflecting public views to the Local Health Board”².

Additionally, CHCs provide confidential help and advice to people if they have problems with, or complaints about, NHS services – see section 18 below, plus Age Cymru’s Factsheet 66w *Resolving problems and making a complaint about NHS care in Wales* for further information.

Note: Further information and links to the contact details for all of the CHCs in Wales can be found on the NHS Direct Wales website at:

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/communityhealthcouncils

If you don’t have internet access, or are unsure which CHC covers your area, you can telephone NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47.

¹ ‘Independent Advocacy Service for NHS Complaints’ – Community Health Council advocacy leaflet (a copy is available from www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/communityhealthcouncils)

² Local Services – Community Health Councils, NHS Direct Wales website: www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/communityhealthcouncils (last accessed 20 November 2019)

3 Getting help when feeling unwell

Seeing your GP may well be the best option if you are feeling unwell, or are concerned about a particular health condition. However, there are also other services that, depending on the circumstances, could be an appropriate first point of contact. They may be able to help you directly, or put your mind at rest. These include:

- **Your local pharmacist**
- **NHS Direct Wales**
- **Minor Injury Units**
- **Emergency dental services**

Further information on each of these services can be found in sections 3.1 to 3.4 below.

3.1 Your local pharmacy service

Pharmacists can give advice on minor ailments, such as colds, aches and pains. They can suggest non-prescription medicines to ease symptoms and help you decide whether you need to see a doctor. As experts on medicines, they can answer questions about prescription items you are taking, or non-prescription remedies that you want to buy.

3.2 NHS Direct Wales

This service can be contacted on **0845 46 47** in regard to a range of health issues, where the situation is not an immediate emergency.

The NHS Direct Wales service is a national, confidential 24-hour telephone advice and information service staffed by nurses and professional advisers. The service is available in English and Welsh.

Note: You can use a search facility on the NHS Direct Wales website at the following link for contact details for your nearest services, including GPs; dental services; opticians; pharmacies; hospitals / A&E departments / minor injury units; and health, wellbeing and support organisations:

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices

3.3 Minor Injury Units

These are units, often located in hospital grounds, for people with less serious and non-life-threatening injuries that do not need the attention of Accident & Emergency (A&E) staff.

The following are examples of the types of injuries that can be treated at a Minor Injury Unit:

- “Broken bones (fractures) [or] dislocations, sprains and strains”;
- “wounds and minor burns”;
- animal bites;
- “foreign bodies to eyes, ears and nose [or other] non-penetrating eye and ear injuries”; or
- “head or face injuries (if there is no loss or change in level of consciousness)”³.

3.4 Emergency dental services

NHS Direct Wales has details of where you can access NHS dental treatment in an emergency or out-of-hours. If you have a usual dentist and need treatment out of hours, you can call the surgery and you should be told how to access urgent care via an answerphone message.

Also see Age Cymru’s Factsheet 5w *Dental care: NHS and private treatment in Wales* for further information.

³ Local Services – Minor Injury Unit, NHS Direct Wales website:
www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/minorinjuryunit/ (last accessed 20 November 2019)

4 Serious or life-threatening illness or injury – calling 999 or attending an Accident & Emergency (A&E) department

If someone believes their illness or injury may be very serious or life-threatening, they can seek help immediately by calling 999, or they should go to the nearest A&E department.

A life-threatening or emergency situation would include:

- Loss of consciousness;
- persistent chest pain for 15 minutes or more;
- breathing difficulties;
- pain that cannot be relieved by simple analgesia (i.e. the use of a painkiller);
- acute confused state;
- heavy blood loss;
- medicine overdose; *or*
- signs that indicate a stroke – these include:
 - weakness on one side of your face making your eye or mouth droop;
 - inability to lift both arms at the same time; or
 - difficulties with speech or understanding what is said.

Remember FAST:

Face

Arms

Speech

Time to call 999 – an acronym to help you recognise the symptoms of a stroke.

4.1 Welsh Government targets for emergency care

The Welsh Government sets targets for the NHS in Wales. In regard to emergency care at A&E departments, these are:

- That “95 per cent of patients should spend less than 4 hours in all emergency care facilities from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge”; and
- that “12 hour or more waits within all hospital emergency care facilities” should be eradicated entirely⁴.

You could consider making a complaint if you experience care that misses these targets – see section 18 below.

5 GP services – general information

GP practices offer a range of services to prevent and treat illnesses and support people with long-term conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and lung conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or emphysema.

Nurse consultants, nurse practitioners and specialist nurses frequently work alongside GPs and practice nurses. Their additional training means they can diagnose, treat and manage a variety of health conditions and some can prescribe from a list of medicines. See section 6.7 below for more information about supporting people with long-term conditions.

⁴ Accident and Emergency – Time Spent in NHS Wales Accident and Emergency Departments: Monthly Management Information, NHS Wales Informatics Service website (page last updated: 19 May 2017): www.infoandstats.wales.nhs.uk/page.cfm?orgid=869&pid=62956 (last accessed 20 November 2019).

5.1 Registering with a practice

Everyone living lawfully in the UK and who is ‘ordinarily resident’⁵ has the right to register with a GP practice. This right is based on residence and not on nationality, payment of tax or national insurance contributions.

Note: You can find a list and contact details of local practices in your area from the NHS Direct Wales website at the following link (or you can ring them on 0845 46 47):

[www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/searchlocalservices.aspx?s=GP Surgeries](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/searchlocalservices.aspx?s=GP%20Surgeries)

If a practice is accepting new patients, you could call in and collect a *practice leaflet*, which should include information such as the following:

- The name and qualifications of health professionals and support staff;
- the services provided by the practice, such as special clinics for diabetics, health promotion activities and whether it is a practice supporting trainee GPs;
- opening hours and how to make an appointment to see or speak to staff;
- criteria for home visits;
- how to request a repeat prescription;
- how to contact a doctor out of hours;
- information for patients with disabilities or special language needs;
- how to comment or complain about services;
- rights and responsibilities of patients and action that may be taken if patients are abusive or violent.

⁵ There is no legal definition of ‘ordinary residence’ but it refers to the place you normally live for the time being, as long as there is some degree of continuity about your stay. The main test is set down in *Shah v London Borough of Barnet (1983) All ER 226*. Further information can be found in Age UK’s Factsheet 25 *Returning from abroad*.

You will need confirmation of your address to be accepted onto a practice list and should be asked if you want to name a **'preferred practitioner'**. This is someone you would like to receive services from generally or in relation to a particular condition. This can be a doctor or a nurse and your preference should be noted.

If you have been registered with another practice, your medical records can be transferred from your previous practice.

Action: Contact NHS Direct Wales if you cannot find a practice to accept you. The Local Health Board has a duty to assign you to a practice if you cannot find one yourself. NHS Direct Wales can explain the process.

5.2 Registering with a practice if you live in a care home

If you move permanently into a local care home you may be able to stay registered with your existing GP. However, if you move further away, you may need to register with a new practice.

You should receive the same range of services that you received when living in your own home.

5.3 Home visits

Your practice leaflet should give information on the criteria for home visits.

Giving a full description of your condition when you phone the surgery helps the doctor make an informed decision about the need for a home visit. While having a general policy, decisions should still be made on a case-by-case basis.

If you are ill and have a partner with medical problems that make it difficult for them to be left alone

Let the practice know if you are affected by this issue. You may be able to have a home visit, if arranging for someone else to stay with your partner would be difficult. Your GP can understand your needs better and help you take care of your own health if you let them know you are a carer.

There are also a number of organisations who specialise in providing advice or support to carers. Contact details can be found in section 20. Age UK's information guide, *Advice for carers*, may also be helpful.

5.4 Making and attending an appointment

You should generally be able to see a GP within two working days⁶.

Your practice should try and meet any reasonable request to see your 'preferred practitioner', though this might not necessarily be possible.

There is usually a system that allows you to see a GP in an emergency if there are no available appointments. You may also be able to speak to a GP or nurse by telephoning at an agreed time.

A typical appointment slot is about 10 minutes. If you have complex issues to discuss you may like to ask if you can have a double appointment. You could think about the following prior to attending your appointment:

- Do you need to remind your GP if you have hearing difficulties, need information in large print, or English is not your first language.
- You may like to make notes beforehand, so you have a reminder of what you want to tell the doctor or ask about.
- If you are worried about new symptoms, try to remember when you first noticed them. Does there seem to be a pattern or certain times when they are better or worse? Could they be linked to any change in medication?
- Don't leave anything out, thinking it's minor or trivial. GPs can only work with what you tell them, so give them sufficient information for them to grasp the whole picture and decide what's significant.
- If you don't understand the answer to your questions or some of the words used, ask for an explanation or for the answer to be written down so you can read it again later.
- If you are going to hear the results of tests and discuss treatment, you may want to ask whether there is more than one treatment, what the pros and cons of each are and whether there are any common side effects.

⁶ 'GPs - Frequently Asked Questions', NHS Direct Wales website: www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/gpfaq/ (last accessed 21 November 2019)

5.5 Seeking a second opinion

If, following a consultation and discussion with your GP, you have doubts about a diagnosis or suggested treatment, you can ask your GP to refer you for a second opinion. Although you have no legal right to a second opinion, GPs rarely refuse unless there is sufficient reason and they do not think it necessary. The referral may be to another GP in your practice or a consultant.

If your case is complicated or diagnosis unclear, your GP or consultant may want a second opinion to ensure all possible treatment options are explored.

5.6 Out-of-hours services

Each Local Health Board in Wales is responsible for providing an out-of-hours service that meets Welsh Government standards. Out-of-hours usually means from 6.30pm to 8am on weekdays, all day Saturday and Sunday, and bank holidays. If you call your practice out of hours you will be given details of the out-of-hours service. This may involve ringing another number. You could also call NHS Direct Wales who will be able to suggest the most appropriate option for you.

5.7 Changing your practice

You do not need to tell your practice if you want to change, or have found another practice to accept you. However, you may, as a courtesy, wish to tell them. Once you are accepted by another practice, your medical records will be transferred.

5.8 GP services when you are resident somewhere temporarily

If you are to live away from your usual address for up to three months, you can apply to be a 'temporary' resident at a local practice. If their list is not full they are likely to accept you. If you become ill while staying with friends, approach their local practice to see if they are willing to treat you. In other circumstances call NHS Direct Wales who will recommend the most appropriate action to take.

6 Services to which your GP may refer you

6.1 Referral to an NHS consultant or other specialist medical professional

Following an appointment with your GP, they may decide that you need to see a specialist consultant or other professional for further exploration of your issue, including tests to make a diagnosis and subsequent treatment. Your GP will give you information on how the referral will proceed.

Examples of specialists include Cardiologists (for heart disease); Oncologists (for the treatment of cancer); or Rheumatologists (treatment of conditions affecting joints, bones and muscles).

6.2 NHS help with mental health needs

If you have been experiencing – on several days a week – periods of anxiety, low mood, poor sleep or a loss of interest in things you used to enjoy, and this has been going on for a month or more, it is important to speak to your GP. Mental health issues are just as important as physical illnesses and like physical illnesses, respond better when diagnosed and treated early. A range of treatments can help, depending on the severity of your symptoms.

‘Talking treatments’, such as counselling can help you understand and manage your feelings. For some people, certain types of medication may help, or there may be ‘self help’ groups or activities available. Potentially a combination of different things might help; you can speak to your GP about the various options.

You may also wish to read Age UK’s free information guide 56 *Your mind matters: Thinking about your mental health*.

6.3 NHS help with hearing difficulties

Visit your GP if hearing difficulties are causing you practical problems. If your GP cannot find a medical reason, such as build up of wax or an ear infection, you can be referred for a specialist hearing test. If the test indicates a hearing aid in one or both ears would be helpful, staff will discuss options with you. NHS hearing aids are provided on a long term loan basis; batteries are supplied free of charge.

Further information

The charity, *Action on Hearing Loss*, can provide information on hearing aids (both those available on the NHS and ones which can be purchased privately). You can also check your hearing using their confidential online or telephone hearing check – see section 20 for contact details.

6.4 NHS chiropody

Chiropodists (also known as podiatrists) help people who have problems with their lower leg or feet.

To receive chiropody as an NHS patient, you must meet local eligibility criteria. This usually means you must have a medical foot problem or health condition – such as diabetes, arthritis and circulatory problems – that puts you at risk of foot-related problems.

Your GP should be able to tell you about the local eligibility criteria for NHS chiropody. NHS Direct Wales or your Community Health Council may also be able to provide this information – see section 20 below for contact details.

Note: Nail cutting

Routine care such as nail cutting is unlikely to be offered as NHS treatment, but may be available from local voluntary organisations. For example, your local Age Cymru may have a nail cutting service, or be able to advise you of the contact details of another organisation that can help. See section 20 for details on how to contact your local Age Cymru.

6.5 NHS physiotherapy services

Physiotherapists arrange treatment and rehabilitation following injury or disability affecting, for example, your joints, ligaments or muscles (i.e. musculoskeletal conditions that could be as a result of trauma caused by a fall, or perhaps a specific condition such as arthritis).

They may be members of a multi-disciplinary team that offers rehabilitation support in a number of areas – for example, for someone who has had a stroke.

6.6 NHS speech and language therapists

These professionals assist people with speech and communication. They can also help with eating and swallowing difficulties that can occur following a stroke, or in people with dementia.

See section 20 below for contact details for the *Stroke Association* and the *Alzheimer's Society*.

6.7 NHS support for people with long-term conditions

Millions of people have one or more 'long-term', chronic, conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD), or other lung diseases. These are conditions that cannot be cured, but can be managed with the help of medication and other treatment.

Your GP practice should be keen to help you better understand and manage your own care. This may include drawing up a care plan to help you manage your condition on a day-to-day basis and recognise symptoms that you should report to your GP.

Information, practical support and regular reviews with a health professional can help you better understand and manage your own care. The NHS Wales website has further information on chronic conditions at:

www.wales.nhs.uk/healthtopics/conditions/chronicconditions

6.8 NHS falls prevention services

If you have a fall, or start to feel unsteady, you should discuss this with your GP, even if you have not suffered any injury as a result and feel fine otherwise. Your GP may want to check your medication or commission tests to see if there is any medical reason to explain it. With your permission, your GP can also refer you to the local falls prevention service for a falls risk assessment. This could include checking your eyesight, investigating any continence problems, checking your home for potential hazards and/or attending an exercise class to improve your strength and balance.

Age UK's information guide, *Staying steady*, may also be helpful to you.

6.9 NHS continence services

These services are staffed by specialist nurses and physiotherapists. They can assess your symptoms, identify the cause, and discuss what treatment or exercises may help tackle your continence problems.

If you wish, you may be able to refer yourself directly to your local NHS continence service for an assessment, *without* seeing your GP first.

An organisation called the *Bladder and Bowel Community* may also be helpful to you – see section 20 below for contact details.

Availability of continence products from the NHS

You may be able to get continence products on the NHS, such as incontinence pads or bedding, but different Local Health Boards may have different qualifying criteria. In order to receive the products you would need to be assessed by the NHS continence service.

If you are not eligible for continence products on the NHS

You can buy many continence products in pharmacies and supermarkets, though it may be a good idea to discuss their suitability with your GP or continence services staff before using them permanently.

The *Bladder and Bowel Community*, mentioned above, may also be able to offer further advice, or there is an impartial, not for profit, website called the *Continence Product Advisor* who could be a useful source of information – see section 20 below for contact details.

Further information

NHS Wales Direct has further information on their website at:

- **Urinary incontinence** –
www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/i/article/incontinence,urinary
- **Bowel incontinence** –
www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/Encyclopaedia/i/article/incontinence,bowel

Also, see Age UK's information guide, *Bladder and bowel problems*.

6.10 Marie Curie and Macmillan nurses

These nurses support people with cancer, as well as their families, to manage the physical and emotional aspects of their illness, particularly as people approach the end of their life. Also see section 14 for more information on end of life care and section 20 for contact details for Marie Curie and Macmillan Cancer Support.

6.11 GP referral to a memory clinic/specialists where someone may have dementia

Note: Dementia is a term used to describe a collection of symptoms that occur when certain diseases or conditions affect the brain. These symptoms include: short-term memory problems; mood changes and problems with thinking, speech and communication.

There are many conditions that cause dementia. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause, but others include vascular dementia and frontotemporal dementia.

Following an initial appointment with your GP, they may decide to refer you to a memory clinic so a more detailed assessment can be carried out. This may include physical examinations, memory tests and possibly a brain scan.

Specialists you might see include:

- “a psychiatrist (usually called an old age psychiatrist);
- an elderly care physician (sometimes called a geriatrician);
- a neurologist (an expert in treating conditions that affect the brain and nervous system)”⁷.

Age UK’s information guide 48 *Living with early-stage dementia: Living well in the present and planning for the future* has further information on this topic.

6.12 Services that may be provided by the local authority social services department

Social services assistance

Following a visit to your GP, or after hospital treatment, you may be referred to the local authority social services department for social care services, for example:

- personal care at home;
- meals on wheels;
- adaptations to the home for someone with a disability; or
- provision of care home accommodation.

Social services departments can carry out **care needs assessments** to see what people with care or support needs require.

For further information on these topics, see Age Cymru’s factsheets on social care, including:

⁷ ‘Alzheimer’s disease’, NHS Direct Wales website (24 September 2019): www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/a/article/alzheimersdisease (last accessed 22 November 2019)

- 41w – *Social care assessments for older people with care needs in Wales*;
- 6w – *Finding help at home in Wales*;
- 29w – *Finding care home accommodation in Wales*.

Occupational therapists (OTs)

OTs advise on home modifications or equipment that could make living at home easier. You can be referred to an OT by your GP or social services. They are often members of a multi-disciplinary team that can assess people's care needs (and, indeed, they may be part of the team that carries out a social services care needs assessment, as discussed above).

Age Cymru's Factsheet 41w (see above) can provide further information on OTs in the wider context of care needs assessments and social services provision. Also, see Factsheet 42w *Obtaining disability equipment and home adaptations in Wales*.

6.13 Priority NHS services for military veterans

If you are a veteran, you may wish to make health and social care workers aware of this, as it may enable them to better tailor services to your needs, as well as referring you to relevant dedicated or specialist services.

In situations where a **“referring GP and consultant agree that [a] patient's condition is related to their military service they have been asked to prioritise veterans over other patients with the same level of clinical need”** (though “veterans will not be given priority over other patients with more urgent clinical needs”)⁸.

Note: “Veterans are former members of the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Marines, Royal Air Force, or the Merchant Navy and fishermen who served in a vessel that supported a military operation by HM Forces”. This includes “Regulars, Reservists and those who did National Service”⁹.

⁸ Press release: Military veterans urged to sign up for priority NHS treatment in Wales, 29 June 2019, Welsh Government website: www.gov.wales/military-veterans-urged-sign-priority-nhs-treatment-wales (last accessed 22 November 2019)

⁹ Ibid

You may also wish to visit the Project 360° section of our website at the link below. Project 360° is a national partnership project in which Age Cymru is working alongside veteran's charity Woody's Lodge, and members of Age Alliance Wales¹⁰. The project aims to ensure that services provided by Age Alliance Wales members are meeting the needs of older veterans, and that the right support is given to older veterans through a 360° provision:

www.agecymru.org.uk/project360

6.14 NHS information on complementary health therapies

These include therapies such as acupuncture, chiropractic treatment, osteopathy or homeopathy. **They are not usually used by most doctors in the UK and thus are rarely available as NHS treatment**, though your GP will know if they are.

Important: The NHS Direct Wales website advises that “there are very few high-quality studies into the effectiveness of complementary or ‘alternative’ treatments”. If complementary treatment is used, it should be “alongside but never replace the treatment offered by your doctor”. Most people using complementary therapies “pay for private treatment”¹¹.

If you are considering any of these therapies on a private basis, you should mention this to your GP. This is particularly important if you take prescription medicines and might be recommended to take *other* medication or herbal remedies by the therapist.

Always check that the therapist has appropriate qualifications and insurance to treat you. Osteopaths and chiropractors must be registered with their own regulatory bodies in order to practice legally in the UK. These are: the *General Osteopathic Council* (www.osteopathy.org.uk) and the *General Chiropractic Council* (www.gcc-uk.org).

¹⁰ Age Alliance Wales consists of “24 national voluntary organisations committed to working together to develop the legislative, policy and resource frameworks that will improve the lives of older people in Wales” – see: www.agealliancewales.org.uk

¹¹ ‘Complementary therapies’, NHS Direct Wales website (page last updated 1 March 2016) www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/c/article/complementarytherapies (last accessed 25 November 2019).

7 The Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (provided by the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust)

The Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) “provides non-emergency transport to the residents of Wales who are unable, for medical reasons, to make their own way to hospitals and treatment centres”. The service can include:

- “Outpatient appointments”;
- “Dialysis and oncology treatment”;
- “Day centre and psycho-geriatric clinics”;
- “Admissions and discharges, including inter-hospital transfers”¹².

When you contact NEPTS they will ask you a number of questions in order to determine whether you are eligible for the service – see section 20 for contact details.

8 Hospital stays and NHS services following hospital discharge

The following information resources cover topics such as the questions to ask prior to a hospital admission – be it planned or unplanned (i.e. an emergency admission) – and the procedure that should then be followed when you are ready to leave hospital:

- Age Cymru’s Factsheet 37w *Hospital discharge arrangements for older people in Wales*;
- Age UK information guide 7 *Your hospital stay*.

As detailed in the above resources, if you require temporary or ongoing services following a hospital stay, some of these may fall within the remit of the local authority social services department, rather than the NHS.

¹² ‘Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS)’, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust website: www.ambulance.wales.nhs.uk/en/125 (last accessed 25 November 2019)

9 NHS continuing healthcare (NHS CHC) – for people with high level, complex, health needs

NHS CHC is a package of care arranged and funded solely by the NHS to meet physical and/or mental health needs that have arisen because of disability, accident or illness. It can be provided in any setting including, but not limited to, a care home, a hospice or your own home.

Eligibility is decided via a full assessment where the *'nature'*, *'intensity'*, *'complexity'* or *'unpredictability'* of someone's health needs mean that they have to be actively managed by the NHS.

Eligibility decisions for NHS CHC rest on whether your need for care is primarily due to your health needs – often referred to as having a **'primary health need'** (as opposed to a need for care due primarily to social care needs that fall within the remit of social services departments, rather than the health service).

This topic is covered in detail in Age Cymru's Factsheet 20w *NHS continuing healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care in Wales.*

10 NHS treatment waiting times

NHS Wales publishes information on maximum waiting times – see below. It should be noted that the targets are based on "Referral to Treatment times" – this is the total time from first being referred "by a GP or other medical practitioner for hospital treatment in the NHS in Wales and includes time spent waiting for outpatient appointments, diagnostic tests, therapy services and inpatient or day-case admissions".

"If a GP, dentist, optician or other clinician refers you for hospital treatment, the clock [on your waiting time] starts when your referral letter is received by the hospital"¹³.

¹³ 'Waiting times', NHS Direct Wales website (page last updated 30 January 2019): www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/w/article/waitingtimes (last accessed 25 November 2019)

General targets

- 95% of patients referred by a primary care service, such as a GP or dentist, should “start their treatment within 26 weeks”.
- “All patients whose care is too complex to be undertaken within 26 weeks or those who choose to wait longer [should] receive their definitive treatment within [a] maximum of 36 weeks”¹⁴.

Cancer treatment targets

- Patients suspected of having cancer and urgently referred by their GP, “should wait no more than 62 days for their treatment to commence”.
- “Patients who have been newly diagnosed as having cancer, [but] not through a GP referral should start their treatment within 31 days of a decision to treat”¹⁵.

Note: If you have waited longer than the target times

You could contact either the relevant department in the hospital to which you’ve been referred, or your Local Health Board. If you are unhappy with the response, you could use the NHS Wales complaints procedure – there is further information on this in Age Cymru’s Factsheet 66w *Resolving problems and making a complaint about NHS care in Wales*.

11 Free NHS prescriptions in Wales

NHS prescriptions are free for people of all ages who live in Wales, regardless of income and savings.

To benefit from the free prescriptions you will generally need to be registered with a GP in Wales and obtain your prescriptions from a pharmacist in Wales.

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

Patients who live in Wales, but are registered with a GP in England

If you are in this situation, due to living very near the border for example, you should ask to be issued with an ‘*entitlement card*’. “This allows a prescription issued in England to be dispensed at a pharmacy in Wales for free”¹⁶.

Contact *NHS Direct Wales* for more information on getting an entitlement card – see section 20 for their contact details.

Welsh patients who are registered with Welsh GPs, but regularly receive treatment within English NHS Trusts, or out of hours services based in England

If this scenario applies, then you won’t qualify for an entitlement card and may be charged for prescriptions at Welsh pharmacies. However, “you can apply for a refund from the NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership”¹⁷ – contact NHS Direct Wales for further information (see section 20 below for contact details).

12 Services at your local pharmacy

Pharmacists are experts on medicines. They can help if you are having difficulty taking prescribed or over-the-counter medicines, or have questions about them. Speak to your pharmacist if:

- You find labels hard to read.
- The usual packaging hard to open.
- Tablets are difficult to swallow.
- You take many tablets at different times of the day and find it difficult to take them as prescribed.

Your pharmacist may offer a simple solution, or be able to decide if you are eligible for special help because of a disability.

¹⁶ ‘Free Prescriptions’, Welsh Government website: www.gov.wales/free-prescriptions (last accessed 25 November 2019)

¹⁷ Ibid

In some areas the following services may be available from your local pharmacy:

- **Prescription collection service** – at your request, the pharmacy collects a repeat prescription from your GP practice to save you the journey.
- **Home delivery service** – this may be combined with the above service and allows prescription medicines to be delivered to you.

Community Pharmacy Discharge Medicine Service

This service is for people returning to their own home after a stay in hospital or other care setting and aims to ensure that they continue to receive their correct medicines during this transition. In the past, a discharge advice letter was sent to the patient and their GP only. In some instances delays in these letters getting to GPs resulted in new prescriptions being issued which contained incorrect medicines.

The service aims to minimise re-admittance to hospital or A&E visits caused by medication errors, as well as medicine waste.

Medicine Use Review (MUR)

Your pharmacist may invite you for a MUR, or you can ask for one if you take a number of medicines regularly. It offers you a chance to raise any problems you have taking several medicines, discuss any unwanted side effects you think they may be causing and get advice on how to take them in the best way. This review helps you to make sure you are getting the most benefit from the medicines you take.

If you use non-prescription medicines as well, take them with you so the pharmacist gets a complete picture.

Your GP should also regularly review the medication you take, to ensure you take the most appropriate medicines at the most appropriate dose.

Health promotion/lifestyle advice

Many local pharmacies offer cholesterol testing, blood pressure checking and advice to help you give up smoking.

13 Reporting unwanted side effects from medication – the ‘Yellow Card Scheme’

The Yellow Card Scheme is administered by the *Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)*. It allows health professionals and patients to report:

- Unwanted side effects from prescription or non-prescription medicines or herbal remedies.
- Defective medicines of an unacceptable quality.
- Counterfeit or fake medicines.
- Problems with medical devices, such as surgical instruments and syringes.

A Yellow Card form is available in most pharmacies or your GP surgery. Alternatively, you can call the Yellow Card hotline, or complete a form online – see section 20 for contact details.

14 Palliative care (end of life care)

End of life care is provided through palliative care services. Palliative care aims to improve the quality of life of patients, their families or informal carers who are facing issues associated with life limiting illness. Rather than the length of life, the focus should be on the *quality* of life. As such, services focus on relieving and preventing suffering, both in terms of the prevention or relief of physical pain, but also emotional, spiritual, or other social concerns of the patient that can be addressed.

Depending on people’s preferences, the palliative care service should make it easier for them to die in their own home, rather than being admitted to hospital. Services can potentially be delivered in a range of settings – for example, in addition to your own home or hospital, a hospice, care home, or in the local community at day centres may be appropriate.

Palliative care services may involve a wide range of professionals, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, psychologists and chaplains.

If you are diagnosed with an advanced, progressive, incurable illness, the NHS team caring for you should offer the opportunity to discuss your future care. Here you could discuss treatment options and express your thoughts, concerns, wishes and preferences, including where you would like to be cared for. If you wish, this discussion can include your family or someone else you nominate. This information should be recorded in your care plan, so that every service caring for you is aware of your preferences.

The NHS Wales website has a range of information on palliative care at:
www.wales.nhs.uk/palliativecare

Age UK's information guide, *Thinking about end of life*, may also be helpful.

Note: End of life and NHS continuing healthcare (NHS CHC)

In circumstances where someone has a rapidly deteriorating condition and may be approaching the end of life, urgent consideration of CHC eligibility may be appropriate – see Age Cymru's Factsheet 20w *NHS continuing healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care in Wales* for further information.

15 Specific NHS services for older people

15.1 Over-60s – free dental check-ups

You are entitled to free dental check-ups (also known as dental 'examinations') if you are 60 or over.

However, you may still have to pay for subsequent dental treatment, unless you qualify for help with these charges (see section 17 below).

The purpose of a check-up is to have a general look at your oral health – your mouth, teeth, gums – and discuss how you can reduce your risk of tooth decay, gum disease and mouth cancer.

Regular check-ups are still important even when you wear full dentures. The dentist can check your overall oral health and the fit of the dentures.

Frequency of check-ups

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) publish guidelines to assist dentists to decide how regularly particular patients require a routine check up. NHS Direct Wales advise that:

“If you have been used to regular check ups every 6 months, this is not always the case anymore. The time between routine check ups can be longer or shorter depending on how healthy your teeth and gums are. Your dentist will discuss this with you and decide on the length of time needed until your next check up”¹⁸.

15.2 Over-60s – free NHS sight tests

Anyone aged 60 or over is entitled to a free NHS sight test in Wales. A sight test checks not only your vision, but also your general eye health and can pick up conditions, such as glaucoma, in the early stages before long-term damage is done.

Younger adults should have a test every two years and those 70 and over, every year. Opticians can use their professional judgement in individual cases when deciding the frequency of the test.

If you find it difficult to get to the optician, NHS Direct Wales will have details of opticians who can offer a home visiting service. You can either ring them, or use a search facility on their website – see section 20 for their contact details.

More information on eye conditions is available from the charity, RNIB – again, see section 20 below for contact details.

15.3 Over-65s – free seasonal flu jab

A dose of flu can lead to complications such as pneumonia or severe bronchitis in certain groups of people.

A free seasonal flu jab is offered to people aged 65 and over every year.

¹⁸ Dentists - Frequently Asked Questions', NHS Direct Wales website: www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/dentistfaq/ (last accessed 25 November 2019)

GP practices usually issue invitations to have a flu jab in the late summer/early autumn.

In addition to those aged 65 and over, the flu jab is also offered to younger people in certain circumstances – for example, if they:

- Are receiving Carer's Allowance and/or are the main carer for an older or disabled person whose welfare could be at risk if they fell ill.
- Have particular medical conditions (such as chronic respiratory, heart, kidney or liver disease; a neurological condition such as multiple sclerosis; receive treatments which suppress the immune system, such as chemotherapy for people with cancer; or a weakened immune system as a result of conditions such as HIV or AIDS).
- Have had a stroke or mini stroke (known as TIA – transient ischaemic attack).
- Are living in a residential care home or other care facility on a long-term basis.
- Are a frontline health or social care employee.

The flu jab doesn't normally have side effects, though occasionally it can cause mild fever and slight muscle aches for a day or so.

15.4 **Over-65s – free jab against pneumonia**

The pneumococcal vaccination – commonly known as the pneumo jab – provides protection against pneumococcal infections: these include pneumonia, septicaemia and bacterial meningitis. It is offered to people aged 65 and over and will be available through your GP practice. It is not necessary to have this jab every year and most people will have it once only.

15.5 **Shingles vaccination**

There is a shingles vaccination for older people in Wales aged 70 to 79. You shouldn't need to contact anyone in order to arrange a vaccination – your GP will invite you for it. If you are concerned that you have missed your invitation, however, you could contact your GP surgery. Further information can also be found on the NHS Direct Wales website at:

16 NHS screening for cancer and other conditions

16.1 NHS breast screening programme

This programme is coordinated by **Breast Test Wales** (see section 20 for contact details). They aim to offer screening every *three* years. Breast Test Wales provide the following information on who should be screened:

- All women aged 50 or over are **eligible** for breast screening.
- Women aged between 50 and 70 are invited **automatically**.
- Women aged over 70 can **request** an appointment every *three* years. To arrange this they will need to contact the local Breast Test Wales screening centre.

Note: Women will not necessarily get their invitation in the year that they turn 50; however, as long as they are registered with a GP, they will definitely be invited for a screening before their 53rd birthday. It is important that women ensure that their GP has their correct address on file, as Breast Test Wales identify those to invite from GPs' lists.

16.2 NHS cervical screening programme

Cervical screening (a smear test) checks the health of your cervix and is designed to help prevent cancer. All women between certain ages – see the table on the following page – should receive a letter in the post inviting them to make an appointment (though you'll need to make sure you are registered with a GP in order to receive the automatic invitation).

Trans men who have a cervix should also be screened, though if registered with a GP as male, you will not receive an automatic invitation. However, you can ask your GP practice to arrange an appointment.

Age	When you will be invited for cervical screening
Under 25	Up to 6 months before you turn 25
25 to 49	Every 3 years
50 to 64	Every 5 years
65 or older	Only if 1 of your last 3 tests was abnormal If the above does not apply, but you are aged 65 and over and have concerns, you should contact your GP.

16.3 NHS bowel cancer screening

An NHS national bowel screening programme is run by **Bowel Screening Wales**. They invite all men and women aged between 60 and 74 for bowel screening every *two* years.

As long as you are registered with a GP surgery, you will automatically be sent an invitation for screening through the post. If you are not registered with a GP, but would like to take part in the screening programme, contact Bowel Screening Wales on the number listed in section 20 below.

If you are over 74 and concerned about bowel cancer, you should contact your GP.

Note: NHS Wales has stated that “evidence supports population screening [being extended to] the 50-74 age group. In Wales, there is an improvement plan to offer screening to those aged 50-59 by April 2023 and we have developed a plan to achieve this in stages. You will be invited by Bowel Screening Wales according to this plan”¹⁹.

¹⁹ ‘Frequently Asked Questions’, Bowel Screening Wales website: www.bowelscreening.wales.nhs.uk/frequently-asked-questions (last accessed 26 November 2019)

16.4 Prostate cancer

There are no plans at present to screen men to detect prostate cancer (in Wales, or any other parts of the UK). This is “because it has not been proven that the benefits would outweigh the risks”. For example, the screening test can be “unreliable and can suggest prostate cancer when no cancer exists (a false-positive result)” and vice versa²⁰.

Currently, medical research efforts are being directed towards making the prostate cancer screening test more accurate and/or exploring new types of tests altogether.

Rather than a national screening programme, “there is an informed choice programme on prostate cancer risk management. It aims to give men good information on the pros and cons of [having a test]”. Your GP can help you decide whether it is right for you. If you are aged 50 and over and decide to have a test “your GP will be able to arrange for it to be carried out for free on the NHS”²¹.

16.5 Diabetic retinopathy

This condition is a complication of diabetes, where the retina at the back of the eye can become progressively damaged. People of all ages in Wales who have diabetes should be called to a special screening to detect any signs of diabetic retinopathy.

NHS Direct Wales advise that screenings should take place **annually**. You should speak to your GP if you have not received an invite.

16.6 Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA)

An AAA is a swelling of the main blood vessel which carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body. A large aneurysm can be serious, but if an aneurysm is detected at an early stage, it can be monitored and then treated if necessary.

²⁰ Encyclopaedia – Cancer of the prostate, NHS Direct Wales website (page last updated 25 April 2016): www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/c/article/canceroftheprostate (last accessed 26 November 2019)

²¹ Ibid

NHS Wales is currently implementing the **Wales Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme** for men aged 65. You will be invited for a “one-off ultrasound screening test” if you are registered with a GP²² (if not, contact the Wales Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme – see section 20 below).

You may also wish to contact them if you are already over 65 and have never had an AAA screening scan, or are a younger man with a “close family history of AAA”²³.

Note: The screening is being offered to men only, as AAA is six times higher in men than women. Also, where women are affected, “on average [it] happens 10 years later than in men”. However, “women who have a family history of AAA should speak to their GP, who will be able to advise them”²⁴.

17 Help with health costs and the NHS Low Income Scheme

Most NHS services and treatment are free. *However*, services such as NHS dental treatment and the purchase of glasses or contact lenses after an NHS sight test are not (and attract a charge). Certain people, such as those on a low income, may be eligible for help with these costs – either the full cost, or part of the cost.

Section 17.1 and 17.2 below have some fairly brief information on this topic – for more detailed information, see Age Cymru’s Factsheet 61w *Help with NHS health costs in Wales*.

²² ‘Wales Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme’, Wales Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme website: www.aaascreening.wales.nhs.uk/key-messages-about-the-screening-program (last accessed 26 November 2019)

²³ ‘About AAA Screening’, Wales Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme website: www.aaascreening.wales.nhs.uk/about-aaa-screening (last accessed 26 November 2019)

²⁴ ‘Wales Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme: Frequently Asked Questions’, Wales Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme website: www.aaascreening.wales.nhs.uk/frequently-asked-questions (last accessed 26 November 2019)

17.1 Help with NHS health costs if you receive Pension Credit

Note: Pension Credit is a weekly entitlement that older people on a low or modest income may be awarded. It has two parts – Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit. See Age UK's Factsheet 48 *Pension Credit* for further information.

If you receive the Guarantee Credit part of Pension Credit

If you receive the Guarantee Credit part of Pension Credit (either on its own, or alongside Savings Credit), you are automatically entitled to help with the following health costs:

- Free NHS dental treatment (in addition to your free check-ups which all over 60s are entitled to).
- A voucher towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses.
- Repayment of necessary travel costs to receive NHS treatment or diagnostic tests at a hospital, or an 'equivalent establishment'. This includes travel required as a result of a referral by a GP or dentist, as well as subsequent care received under the care of a specialist hospital consultant. Travel to an equivalent establishment as a hospital may be eligible if your GP or consultant refers you as part of your treatment. Check with them or NHS Direct Wales if you are unsure whether the particular referral will be eligible.

Note: If you have a partner, they will also be automatically entitled to help with the above health costs. Partner refers to your husband, wife or civil partner; or, someone you live with as though you are married or civil partners.

Savings Credit on its own

If you receive Savings Credit on its own, you are not entitled to automatic help with health costs. *However*, you may qualify for assistance via the **NHS Low Income Scheme** – see below.

17.2 Help through the NHS Low Income Scheme

The Low Income Scheme (LIS) is administered by the NHS Business Services Authority. The scheme may assist people who don't qualify for help with health costs automatically – for example, because they are not getting Pension Credit Guarantee Credit – but are nevertheless still on a low income. You may be eligible for full *or* partial help with the same types of health costs listed in section 17.1 above, if you have:

- a 'low' income; **and**
- capital of no more than **£16,000** if you live at home or are staying in a care home temporarily; *or*
- capital of no more than **£24,000**²⁵ if you live permanently in a care home.

Note: 'Low' income in relation to the LIS scheme

Under the LIS rules, your income will be compared with what are known as your 'requirements' – see Age Cymru's Factsheet 61w *Help with NHS health costs in Wales* for further information on this.

You can contact the *NHS Business Services Authority* for further information on making a claim – see section 20 for their contact details.

²⁵ In previous years, the NHS Low Income Scheme capital limit for people living permanently in a care home tended to correspond with the capital limit for help with care home fees from local authorities. However, at the present time, whilst the capital limit in regard to care home means testing has increased significantly in recent years to £50k, NHS Wales information indicates that the capital limit for the Low Income Scheme remains at £24k: www.healthcosts.wales.nhs.uk/low-income-scheme (last accessed 26 November 2019).

18 Resolving problems with NHS care or services – the NHS Wales complaints procedure

There is a two-stage system for resolving complaints about the NHS in Wales:

● Stage one

This stage will involve a local investigation by the body concerned, using the formal complaints procedure if required. The Welsh Government has produced guidance, *'Putting Things Right'* (see below), which details how NHS bodies in Wales should handle complaints or concerns which are raised with them.

● Stage two

This will involve taking your complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, if you remain dissatisfied following the local investigation. See section 20 below for contact details for the Ombudsman.

The 'Putting Things Right' guidance

The Welsh Government published this guidance for use with all complaints or concerns with NHS care or services. It has been in use for a number of years, with the most recent version – *Version 3* – dated November 2013. A copy of the full guidance document can be viewed on the NHS Wales website at:

www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=932&pid=50738

Support from your Community Health Council

If you wish, your local Community Health Council (CHC) should be able to offer you assistance in pursuing a complaint and each CHC will run a **Complaints Advocacy Service**.

Further information on CHCs in general can be found above in section 2.3; whilst Age Cymru's Factsheet 66w *Resolving problems and making a complaint about NHS care in Wales* has more in-depth information on making a complaint to the NHS, including the role of the CHC Complaints Advocacy Services.

19 Age discrimination in health services and the relevance of the Equality Act 2010

The *Equality Act 2010 (Age Exceptions) Order 2012* applies to public services, including the NHS. It means that it is unlawful, without good and sufficient reason, to refuse to provide services (or provide inferior services) **solely** because of a person's age.

Age discrimination is unfairly treating someone differently because of their age. As such, it should be noted that the ban on age discrimination only intends to prevent the *harmful or unjustifiable* use of age, including a 'stereotypical view' of an age group. It does not intend to prevent differential treatment where it can be objectively justified – as an example, the selection of a particular age range for a cancer screening or vaccination programme would be a situation where there is objective justification.

Under the legislation, when a GP or consultant or other health professional is discussing treatment options with a patient or making a decision about treatment or care, a person's age can play a part, but the professional should take into account '*biological*' age and not simply 'chronological' age (age in years) when making the treatment recommendation. It may be recognised that some treatments for conditions such as cancer are less successful or less well tolerated as people get older. If this is the case, it should be explored openly during discussions about treatment options. An example of potential 'unjustifiable discrimination' would be where a stereotypical view of someone of a particular 'chronological' age appeared to have been adopted.

The law applies to anyone over the age of 18 who believes they have been treated less favourably because of their age when **requesting or receiving** NHS services. Discussing issues with the staff concerned can often clarify and resolve a situation. However the law means that patients can potentially take organisations or individual clinicians or managers to court on grounds of age discrimination.

20 Useful organisations

Action on Hearing Loss

The largest charity in the UK tackling hearing loss.

Information Line: 0808 808 0123 (or Textphone: 0808 808 9000)

E-mail: information@hearingloss.org.uk

Website: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Age Cymru Advice

Free and confidential information and advice on matters affecting the over 50s in Wales.

Tel: 08000 223 444

E-mail: advice@agecymru.org.uk

Age Cymru organisations (local)

Your local Age Cymru may be able to provide advice and support on a range of issues. **Age Cymru Advice** can provide details of your local Age Cymru (see above), or visit the Age Cymru website at:

www.agecymru.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society

Provides information and factsheets about all types of dementia. They may also operate services in your area to support people with dementia, along with their families and carers.

Helpline: 0300 222 11 22

Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk

Bladder and Bowel Community (The)

Provides a range of information and resources for people with bladder and bowel problems.

Tel: 01926 357220

E-mail: help@bladderandbowel.org

Website: www.bladderandbowel.org

Breast Test Wales

There are a number of regional offices listed on their website at:

www.breasttestwales.wales.nhs.uk/contact-us

Bowel Screening Wales

Tel: 0800 294 3370

Website: www.bowelscreening.wales.nhs.uk

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

CIW inspects and regulates care and social services in Wales.

Tel: 0300 7900 126

E-mail: ciw@gov.wales

Website: www.careinspectorate.wales

Carers UK

A national charity providing information, advice and practical and emotional support for carers.

Advice Line: 0808 808 7777

Website: www.carerswales.org

Cervical Screening Wales

There are a number of regional offices listed on their website at:

www.cervicalscreeningwales.wales.nhs.uk/contact-us

Citizens Advice Bureaus (CABs)

National network of free advice centres offering confidential and independent advice, face to face or by telephone.

Tel: 03444 77 20 20

Details of your nearest CAB can be found at:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales

Community Health Councils (CHCs)

CHCs are a statutory and independent voice in health services in Wales. They work to enhance and improve the quality of local health services. For information on the CHC covering your area, see the NHS Direct Wales website at:

www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/communityhealthcouncils

Continence Product Advisor

An online service offering independent advice about continence products.

Website: www.continenceproductadvisor.org

Dying Matters

Dying Matters aims to help people talk more openly about dying, death and bereavement, and to make plans for the end of life. It provides information for professionals and the public.

Tel: 08000 21 44 66

Website: www.dyingmatters.org

General Dental Council (GDC)

The General Dental Council (GDC) is responsible for registering all dentists and other dental care professionals who practise in the UK. You can find out if a professional is registered by searching the register on their website.

Tel: 020 7167 6000

Website: www.gdc-uk.org

General Medical Council (GMC)

The GMC registers doctors to practise medicine in the UK. They should protect and maintain the health and safety of patients by ensuring doctors comply with recognised standards. Members of the public may report the conduct of a doctor to the GMC.

Website: www.gmc-uk.org

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

The HCPC regulate a range of professions, including: chiropodists / podiatrists, dietitians, occupational therapists, paramedics, physiotherapists, radiographers and speech and language therapists.

Tel: 0300 500 6184

Website: www.hcpc-uk.org.uk

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW)

The HIW is the independent inspector and regulator of NHS healthcare and independent healthcare organisations in Wales.

Tel: 0300 062 8163

E-mail: hiw@gov.wales

Website: www.hiw.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support

Offer a range of support for people affected by cancer, their carers and family. Macmillan Cancer Support fund nurses and other specialist health care professionals and operate cancer care centres. They also support cancer support groups across the UK.

Tel: 0808 808 00 00

Website: www.macmillan.org.uk

Marie Curie Cancer Care

A charity that is dedicated to the care of people with any terminal illness, as well as offering support to family members.

Support line: 0800 090 2309

Website: www.mariecurie.org.uk

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) – The Yellow Card Scheme

This scheme allows you to report unwanted side effects or reactions to prescription, non-prescription or herbal medicines. Your pharmacy may be able to supply you with a yellow card form. Alternatively, you can obtain a form using the contact details below.

Tel: 0800 731 6789

E-mail: yellowcard@mhra.gov.uk

Website: <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk>

NHS Business Services Authority

The NHS Business Services Authority administers the NHS Low Income Scheme.

Tel: 0300 330 1343

Website: www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/HelpWithHealthCosts.aspx

NHS Direct Wales

NHS Direct Wales can provide contact details for local services and telephone or web advice on health issues and common illnesses.

Tel: 0845 46 47

Website: www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (The)

A service provided by the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust.

Tel: 0300 123 2303

Website: www.ambulance.wales.nhs.uk

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

The NMC aims to safeguard patients by ensuring nurses and midwives deliver care to a high standard. Members of the public can report the conduct of a nurse or midwife to the NMC.

Tel: 020 7637 7181

Website: www.nmc-uk.org

Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Independent champion for older people across Wales.

Tel: 03442 640670

E-mail: ask@olderpeoplewales.com

Website: www.olderpeoplewales.com

Patients Association (The)

A healthcare charity that supports the rights of patients.

Helpline: 0800 345 7115

Website: www.patients-association.com

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

The Ombudsman looks to see whether people have been treated unfairly or have received a bad service from a public body, such as a local authority.

Tel: 0300 790 0203

E-mail: ask@ombudsman.wales

Website: www.ombudsman.wales

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

Contact RNIB for information and advice about sight problems and products or publications available to support people who are blind or partially sighted.

RNIB Helpline: 0303 123 9999

E-mail: helpline@rnib.org.uk

Website: www.rnib.org.uk

Stroke Association

A charity dedicated to conquering stroke.

Stroke Helpline: 0303 3033 100

Website: www.stroke.org.uk

Wales Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme

There are a number of regional offices listed on their website at:

www.aaascreening.wales.nhs.uk/contact-us

Welsh Government

The devolved government for Wales.

Tel: 0300 060 4400

E-mail: customerhelp@gov.wales

Website: www.gov.wales

21 Further information about Age Cymru

Age Cymru is the leading charity for all older people in Wales. We campaign, we research and we fundraise to make sure we build a better life for all older people. We ensure older people's voices are heard, we challenge and change attitudes, we fight discrimination wherever we find it and we tackle elder abuse in all its forms. Together with our local Age Cymru partners we provide vital services in communities across Wales.

The Age UK family

Along with Age UK, Age Scotland and Age NI, Age Cymru is a member of the Age UK family.

Age UK (Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65; website: www.ageuk.org.uk)

Age NI (Age NI Advice: 0808 808 7575; website: www.ageni.org)

Age Scotland (Tel: 0845 833 0200; website: www.agescotland.org.uk)

Our information materials

Age Cymru and Age UK publish a large number of free Information Guides and Factsheets on a range of subjects, including money and benefits, health, social care and housing. Some resources, such as this factsheet, are produced 'in-house' by Age Cymru, whilst others are branded Age UK and – depending on the subject matter – contain either information which is applicable in England and Wales, or for the whole of the UK.

Contact details

Age Cymru Advice

Tel: 08000 223 444

E-mail: advice@agecymru.org.uk

Website: www.agecymru.org.uk



www.facebook.com/agecymru



www.twitter.com/agecymru



www.youtube.com/agecymru

Contact us if you would like:

- To order copies of any factsheets or information guides.
- Further advice if you cannot find the information you need in this factsheet.
- Details of your nearest local Age Cymru organisation.

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Age Cymru
Ground Floor, Mariners House
Unit A, Trident Court
East Moors Road
Cardiff
CF24 5TD

Can you help Age Cymru?

Please complete this donation form with a gift of whatever you can afford and return to: Age Cymru, FREEPOST RLTL-KJTR-BYTT, Ground Floor, Mariners House, Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff, CF24 5TD. Alternatively, you can phone 029 2043 1555 Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm or visit www.agecymru.org.uk/donate. Thank you.

Personal details

Title:	Initials:	Surname:
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Address:
Postcode:

Tel:	Email:
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By providing your email address and/or mobile number you are agreeing to us contacting you in these ways. You may contact us at any time to unsubscribe from our communications.

Your gift

I would like to make a gift of: £

I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to Age Cymru

Card payment

I wish to pay by (please tick) MasterCard Visa CAF CharityCard
 Maestro American Express

(Maestro only)

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Signature X
Expiry date <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>						Issue no. (Maestro only) <input type="text"/>

Gift aid declaration

(please tick) Yes, I want Age Cymru to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations. I confirm I pay an amount of income tax/capital gains tax to cover the amount that all charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs will reclaim on my donations in the tax year. Date: ___/___/___
I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.



Age Cymru is a registered charity 1128436. Company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales 6837284. Registered office address: Ground Floor, Mariners House, Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff, CF24 5TD. We work in partnership with local Age Cymru partners to provide direct help to over a million people every year.
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