

# Age Cymru Advice Statement of Service

## What we do.

Age Cymru Advice provides an information and advice service to older people, their carers and families in Wales on a range of issues including:

- Welfare benefits for older people including checking benefit entitlement
- Health and social care
- Housing, including housing options, repairs and adaptations and heating
- Legal issues such as Wills and Power of Attorney
- Bereavement and death
- Local services and opportunities to engage in new activities
- We also provide a gateway to our national and local partner services in your area

The service is free, independent and confidential and we won't pass your details to anyone else without your permission.

## How we provide support.

- **Telephone support.** Our advice line is open Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm. Call us on: 0300 303 44 98 (charged at a local rate). We can call you back if you're concerned about your phone bill.
- **Email advice:** You can email us directly at: [advice@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:advice@agecymru.org.uk)
- **Website:** There's support available via the information and advice pages on our website: [www.agecymru.org.uk/advice](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/advice)
- **Chatbot and Live Chat:** Our automated Chatbot, Pam is available on our website to help with your questions and our Live Chat facility can put you in touch with a member of the team.

- **Information guides and factsheets.** These cover a wide range of subjects affecting older people in Wales and those who care for and support them and are available from our website: [www.agecymru.org.uk/information-resources](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/information-resources)

## How we put you at the heart of what we do.

Our service can be identified as being:

- **Holistic**, meaning that we'll take the time to explore what issues you're facing, both regarding the presenting problem and more widely, before offering information, advice and support; and
- **Person-centred**, meaning that we'll put you at the heart of the situation, taking care to understand what matters to you, what you want to achieve and creating a plan with you, to help you achieve your goals.

## How we treat you.

We follow five key principles when delivering our service.

- 1. The service is provided free of charge.** We won't charge you for any of our information and advice. If we signpost or refer you onto another organisation, we'll tell you if there's any charge for their service.
- 2. The information and advice we provide is independent of any outside influence and impartial.** We will never recommend a service or provider to you, including our own services. Where possible we will always provide you with all relevant options available to you and help you make an informed decision. We are not bound by local or national government policies and will always advise you on what's best for you.
- 3. All information is confidential.** The work we do with you is confidential. This means all information we keep about you is stored securely and we'll always talk to you before discussing your information with anyone else. If you feel you're at risk of harm, abuse or neglect, we can look at ways to help you feel safe. We'll

keep your information safe and you have the right to see your own records. We'll support you to have access to them if you wish. To make sure we're providing the best service possible, auditors from Age Cymru, Age Cymru Gwent and Age UK sometimes check our files. If you don't wish to have your information used in this way, please let us know.

- 4. Clients are treated with fairness, dignity and respect and we expect clients to treat our staff and volunteers in the same way.** We won't judge anyone based on their age, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion. We won't judge anyone based upon the circumstances they find themselves in and we won't try to influence the decisions you make following our advice. Sometimes clients will make a decision that we don't think is in their best interest. We'll tell you if this happens and aim to provide enough information and advice to help you make an informed choice. We'll respect whatever decision you make.
  
- 5. Our service is as accessible as possible for older people.** Support is available in Welsh and English. Our advice line can offer information and advice in community languages through the Language Line telephone interpretation service. People with hearing loss can choose to contact the advice line via British Telecom's text to voice relay service, Next Generation Text. If you have difficulties accessing or understanding our information and advice, for example because of a disability or language issue, we'll take all reasonable steps to provide our service in a manner that's accessible and appropriate to your needs or circumstances and we'll always aim to give you as much time as you need when we take your call.

### **What will happen if we cannot provide the service you require?**

Sometimes people come to us with problems that we don't have the expertise or knowledge to help with. We're unable to provide consumer debt advice, financial advice or immigration advice. In these cases we can provide you with basic information and direct you to another organisation for further help. Where possible we'll give you a selection of organisations to choose from and we'll either signpost or refer you to them.

When signposting we'll give you the organisation's contact information so you can contact them yourself.

When referring we'll take your contact details and pass them to the organisation on your behalf, and they'll contact you directly. We'll always get your permission before referring you to another organisation.

As we're an advice line, we don't offer casework. If, after advising you, it would appear that you'd benefit from someone acting on your behalf we'll offer you a referral or signpost you to a service or organisation which can help.

### **Why are we unable to accept third party referrals?**

Age Cymru Advice won't take third party contacts (i.e. a request from a service or individual for us to contact someone else) unless we have their express permission. This is to ensure that an individual won't receive uninvited contact from us which may be unwelcome or even distressing. This applies to professionals who may ring the service as well as friends or family of an older person. If a person is unable to contact us for some reason, we'll make arrangements to ensure they can access our support via a friend, relative, support worker or advocate.

### **How to make a complaint, compliment or suggestion about our service.**

If you'd like to compliment or make a suggestion about our advice line service please contact the Head of Programmes and Services, either in writing at; Age Cymru, Ground Floor, Mariners House, Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff, CF24 5TD, via email at: [enquiries@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@agecymru.org.uk) or by telephoning 029 2043 1555 between 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.

If you wish to make a complaint, please follow Age Cymru's complaints procedure. A copy of the full complaints procedure is available at [www.agecymru.org.uk/howarewedoining](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/howarewedoining) or on request by telephoning 029 2043 1555 between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

## What we expect of our clients.

In return for providing support, we expect you to:

- Treat our staff with courtesy and respect
- Provide us with accurate and truthful information about your circumstances
- Provide us with the information we need to advise you

Our service meets the requirements of the Welsh Government's Information and Advice Quality Framework (IAQF) Wales and is assessed against the Age UK Quality Mark (IAQP) and Advice Services Alliance Advice Quality Standard (AQS). This ensures that we comply with recognised Advice Sector standards of practice and meet the information and advice benchmarks for accuracy and quality. Our advice line service is a member of the Helplines Partnership, which is the membership body for organisations that provide information, support or advice via phone, email, text or online. This ensures we maintain our standards of best practice through access to expert consultancy and training.

## How you can help us.

Our advice line team gains satisfaction from their work and the positive impact they have on our clients. We don't expect any further form of recognition or gifts. While cards and thank you gifts are lovely to receive, there are several other ways you can support us so we can continue to provide the service.

- **Make a donation.** Visit [www.agecymru.org.uk/donate](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/donate) or call 029 2043 1555. Please make it clear when you make your donation if you wish to donate specifically to the advice line service and if you are a tax payer please ask us about 'Gift Aid'.
- **Volunteer for Age Cymru.** We have a range of opportunities. Visit [www.agecymru.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/volunteer) or call [029 2043 1555](tel:02920431555) to find out what we have available.
- **Fundraise, join our campaigns or leave a legacy.** Visit [www.agecymru.org.uk/getinvolved](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/getinvolved) for more information on how you can get involved.



- **Tell us your story.** Let us know about your experience of our advice line and the difference it has made to you. Email [advice@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:advice@agecymru.org.uk) or call 029 2043 1555.
- **Tell others about our service and recommend us to your friends and family.**

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