Factsheet 44w • April 2026

Information on NHS services for older people in Wales

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1 Information about this factsheet

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

- information on GP services;
- specialist services to which your GP may be able to refer you;
- 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.

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2 Structure of the NHS in Wales

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 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 University Health Board	Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire
Powys Teaching Health Board	Powys
Swansea Bay University Health Board	Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot
Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board	Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil
Cardiff & Vale University Health Board	Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen

Links to each LHB web page can be found on the NHS 111 Wales website at:

www.gov.wales/nhs-wales-health-boards-and-trusts

Alternatively, you can telephone **111** for further information.

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 8.1 below).

- **Velindre NHS Trust**

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

- **Public Health Wales NHS Trust**

  Public Health Wales provide and manage a range of public health, health protection and healthcare improvement services (including surveillance, prevention and control of communicable diseases). They make information about protection and improvement of health available to the public and arrange research into these topics.

3 Llais – a national body to give people a stronger voice in their health and social care services

Llais is an independent standalone body, set up by the Welsh Government, that represents the voices and opinions of people in Wales in regard to health and social care services. Llais can provide help and advice if people are experiencing problems with – and/or want to make a complaint about – NHS services in Wales. They can assist in regard to raising issues informally, as well as formal complaints.

Complaints advocacy

Llais have dedicated complaints advocacy staff who you could contact when making a complaint. Their service will be free and confidential, can help you explore your options and provide a step-by-step guide to the process.

Contact details for Llais can be found in section 20 below. Further relevant information can also be found in Age Cymru's Factsheet 66w *Resolving problems and making a complaint about NHS care in Wales*.

4 Getting help when feeling unwell

4.1 Speaking to your GP

Seeing your GP may well be the best option if you are feeling unwell, or are concerned about a particular health condition – **also see section 6 below for further information on GP services**.

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 – for example, your local pharmacist, or the NHS 111 Wales service (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 immediately below).

4.2 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.

4.3 NHS 111 Wales

This service can be contacted by telephoning **111**. They can advise on a range of health issues, where the situation is not an immediate emergency.

The NHS 111 Wales service is a national, confidential, 24-hour telephone advice and information service staffed by nurses and professional advisers. There is also extensive information available on their website.

You can use a search facility on the NHS 111 Wales website at the link overleaf for contact details for your nearest services, including:

- GP surgeries;
- dental services;
- opticians;
- pharmacies;
- hospitals / A&E departments / minor injury units; *plus*

- health, wellbeing and support organisations.

NHS 111 Wales local services search facility:

https://111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices

4.4 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 may 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)"
- minor neck or back injuries[1].

Note: Minor Injury Units in different areas may have variations in the types of issues they can, or cannot, help with, so it would be a good idea to check before visiting.

If you ring NHS 111 Wales, they should be able to advise on this, or you can use the search facility on their website at the following link (select *Hospitals, including Emergency departments and MIUs* from the ***'Popular Services'*** menu and you can then filter the search results to show Minor Injury Units only, which will include their contact details):

https://111.wales.nhs.uk/LocalServices/Default.aspx

[1] 'Minor Injury Unit', NHS 111 Wales website: https://111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/minorinjuryunit (last accessed 2 March 2026).

4.5 Emergency dental services

NHS 111 Wales has information on where you can access NHS dental treatment in an emergency or out-of-hours:

https://111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/dentistinformation

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.

5 Serious or life-threatening illness or injury

5.1 Calling 999

If someone believes their illness or injury may be very serious or life-threatening – or if you are concerned about another person – you can seek help immediately by calling 999 (or attending the nearest A&E department see section 5.2 below).

A life-threatening or emergency situation would include:

- **loss of consciousness**;
- **persistent, severe chest pain**;
- **breathing difficulties**;
- **acute confused state and/or fits that are not stopping**;
- **severe bleeding that cannot be stopped**;
- **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.

5.2 Attending an Accident & Emergency (A&E) department

A&E departments assess and treat people with serious injuries or illness, such as those outlined in the bullet points above in section 5.1.

Major A&E departments are usually open 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year (not all hospitals have an A&E department).

At A&E a doctor or nurse will assess your condition and decide on further action. You usually have to wait before you are seen, particularly on Friday or Saturday nights.

Note: A&E departments are often located at the largest major hospital for your area. However, contact NHS 111 Wales if you're unsure. You can either ring 111, or you can search on their website via their '**Services Near You'** page at the following link (click on the *Hospitals, including Emergency departments and MIUs* section and you can then refine the results to show A&E departments):

https://111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices

6 Information on GP services (including registering, appointments and home visits)

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 (also see section 7.8 below for more information about supporting people with long-term conditions).

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.

6.1 Registering with a practice

Everyone living lawfully in the UK and who is 'ordinarily resident' has the right to register with a GP practice[2]. 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 111 Wales website at the following link (or you can ring them on **111**):

https://111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices

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 or health promotion activities;
- 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 on, or complain about, services;
- rights and responsibilities of patients and action that may be taken if patients are abusive.

[2] 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.

You will need confirmation of your address to be accepted onto a practice list. If you have been registered with another practice, your medical records can be transferred from your previous practice.

Note: Contact NHS 111 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 111 Wales should be able to explain the process.

6.2 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.

6.3 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 some 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.

6.4 Making and attending an appointment

You should generally be able to see a GP within two working days (NHS 111 Wales advise that "most practices aim to see non-urgent cases within two days, although waiting times will vary according to the size of the practice"[3]).

There is usually a system that allows you to see a GP in an emergency if there are no available appointments.

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 if Welsh 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.

6.5 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.

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[3] 'GPs - Frequently Asked Questions', NHS 111 Wales website: https://111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/gpfaq/ (last accessed 20 March 2026).

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.

6.6 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 during these times, you should be given details of the out-of-hours service. This may involve ringing another number. You could also call NHS 111 Wales who will be able to suggest the most appropriate option for you.

6.7 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.

6.8 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 111 Wales who will recommend the most appropriate action to take.

6.9 ‘GP Practices in Wales’ – a guide by the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales

The Older People’s Commissioner for Wales has produced the following information guide that may be useful to you:

GP Practices in Wales: A Guide for Older People

The guide provides information on older people’s rights and what they can expect in terms of services and support from their GP practice. A copy can be accessed at:

https://olderpeople.wales/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/GP-Practices-in-Wales-A-Guide-for-Older-People-online.pdf

7 Services to which your GP may refer you

7.1 Urgent Primary Care Centres (UPCCs) / Same Day Emergency Care Services (SDECs)

UPCCs treat people with urgent primary care needs on the same day.

SDECs help people access diagnostics and treatment for emergency care needs and return home on the same day.

Both UPCCs and SDECs do not operate on a ‘drop-in’ system, so you’d need to contact your GP who could then refer you if this type of service would seem best placed to meet your needs (rather than a visit to Accident & Emergency (A&E), for example).

7.2 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).

7.3 NHS help with mental health needs (including 'NHS 111 press 2')

If you have been experiencing 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 while – it is important to speak to your GP.

Mental health issues are just as important as physical illnesses and, like physical illnesses, may respond better when diagnosed and treated early.

Note: NHS 111 press 2

NHS 111 Wales offer a service for urgent mental health support – to access the service **telephone 111 and press option '2'**.

The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in all areas of Wales. The number's free to call from a landline or mobile (even if you have no credit left).

Further information can be accessed on the NHS 111 Wales website at:

https://111.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/m/article/mentalhealthandwellbeing

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NHS treatment for mental health needs

A range of treatments can help, depending on the severity of your symptoms, such as:

- **Talking therapies** – these can be helpful for people who are feeling low, anxious or out of sorts. They involve talking to someone who's trained to help you manage your thoughts and feelings and the effect they have on your mood and behaviour. They're available for free on the NHS and may be offered in one-to-one sessions or in a group. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and counselling are common types of talking therapies:
  - CBT is based on the idea that the way we feel is affected by our thoughts, beliefs and behaviour. It can help you change negative thought patterns and behaviours to improve how you feel.

- Counsellors are trained to listen and empathise. They won't tell you what you should do in your situation – but they'll support and guide you to understand your problems and deal with negative thoughts and feelings.

- **Medication** – antidepressants are a common type of medication doctors prescribe for symptoms such as a low mood. They work by boosting the level of brain chemicals that lift your mood. There are different types and your doctor should explain which they think is best for you, taking into account any other medication you're already taking.

  Antidepressants can make you feel better – but they often take a couple of weeks to take effect. You'll need to arrange to see your doctor 4 weeks after you start taking antidepressants – or sooner if you're experiencing any serious side effects. They'll want to check how you're feeling and see whether they should change your dose or try a different approach.

- **Self-help** – your doctor might suggest you have a look at self-help resources or groups. These can be a great way to find support, share ideas on what helps, boost your mood and gain confidence. Meeting other people who understand what you're going through can be helpful too.

- **Applied relaxation** – if you have anxiety, you might be offered applied relaxation. This teaches you to use relaxation techniques to help you cope in situations where you feel anxious.

- **Mindfulness** – this is a technique to help you focus more on the present moment by becoming more aware of the sights, sounds and feelings that you're experiencing. It can help you cope with difficult thoughts or feelings. Mindfulness exercises can be done at home or when you're out and about.

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 information guide 56 *Your mind matters: Thinking about your mental health*.

7.4 NHS help with hearing difficulties

Visit your GP if hearing difficulties are causing you practical problems. If your GP cannot find a medical reason, 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

NHS 111 Wales has further information on hearing loss on their website at:

https://111.wales.nhs.uk/Encyclopaedia/h/article/hearingloss

The charity, Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID), 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.

7.5 NHS chiropody / podiatry

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 issues.

Your GP should be able to tell you about the local eligibility criteria for NHS chiropody. NHS 111 Wales 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.

7.6 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.

7.7 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*.

7.8 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.

Education Programmes for Patients

The NHS Wales website has information on Education Programmes for Patients (EPP Cymru), which provide self-management courses for people living with a long-term health condition/s. They also provide courses for carers. Further information can be found at:

https://performanceandimprovement.nhs.wales/functions/quality-safety-and-improvement/improvement/our-work/epp

7.9 District nurses

District nursing services provide care to people in their own homes (or ordinary place of residence, such as a care home) and are operated by the Local Health Board. District nurses provide help, such as the following:

- health and well-being support to help you live independently and manage a chronic illness or disease;
- pain management and symptom control in chronic disease management and/or palliative care;
- help with the management of wounds;
- catheter and continence care;
- support to people to help them manage their medication; *and/or*
- provide support to carers (i.e. informal carers, such as a patient's partner or other family members).

You cannot self-refer to receive district nursing, but your GP, or health professionals in a hospital setting, should arrange for you to receive visits from a district nurse if they feel you require this service.

7.10 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 arrange 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, checking your home for potential hazards and/or attending an exercise class to improve your strength and balance.

Further information

NHS 111 Wales has information on falls on their website at:

https://111.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/f/article/falls

Age UK's information guide, *Staying steady: How to reduce your risk of falling*, may also be helpful to you, or you can visit our section on falls prevention on the Age Cymru website at:

www.agecymru.wales/our-work/promoting-health-and-wellbeing/falls

7.11 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 you would need to be assessed by the NHS continence service in order to access this assistance.

Welsh Government guidance on the provision of continence products

Welsh Government guidance, notes that "within Wales, there is no statutory requirement to provide pad containment products, resulting in each [Local] Health Board developing their own policy and guidelines".

Their guidance document has therefore been published with the aim of outlining "national guidance to prevent variation and reduce discrepancy"[4].

A copy of, '*Guidance for the provision of continence containment products for adults in Wales – Consensus document 2022 (All Wales Continence Forum)*' can be accessed on the Welsh Government website at:

www.gov.wales/adult-continence-products-whc2022003

[4] Welsh Health Circular (WHC/2022/(003)): Guidance for the provision of continence containment products for adults in Wales (October 2022).

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 111 Wales has further information on their website at:

- **Urinary incontinence** –

  https://111.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/i/article/incontinence,urinary

- **Bowel incontinence** –

  https://111.wales.nhs.uk/Encyclopaedia/i/article/incontinence,bowel

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

7.12 Sexual health services

You can access these services by visiting your GP, at some pharmacies or a sexual health clinic. If you are unsure which service is right for you, you can contact NHS 111 Wales for further guidance. You do not have to use a local sexual health clinic, but you may wish to check what services are provided at your chosen service before attending. The service is confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside of the clinic without your permission.

Further information can be found on the NHS 111 Wales website at:

https://111.wales.nhs.uk/lifestylewellbeing/sexualhealth

7.13 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.

7.14 GP referral to a memory clinic and/or specialists where someone may have dementia

Memory problems can be caused by other health issues, rather than dementia (for example, depression or anxiety, stress, certain medicines, use of alcohol or drugs and/or other health problems – such as hormonal disturbances or nutritional deficiencies).

Your GP can carry out some initial checks to try to find out what the cause might be. 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)"[5].

Types of dementia

Dementia is a term used to describe a collection of symptoms that occur when certain diseases or conditions affect the brain. There are many conditions that cause dementia. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause, but others include vascular dementia and frontotemporal dementia. Symptoms might include:

- short-term memory problems;
- confusion, disorientation and getting lost in familiar places;
- difficulty planning or making decisions;
- speech and language problems;

[5] 'Alzheimer's disease', NHS 111 Wales website: https://111.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/a/article/alzheimersdisease (last accessed 26 March 2026).

- difficulty moving around without assistance or performing self-care tasks;
- personality changes, such as becoming aggressive, demanding and suspicious of others;
- low mood or anxiety; *and/or*
- hallucinations and/or delusions (seeing or hearing things that are not there and/or believing things that are untrue).

Further information

- **NHS Wales Dementia Guide** –

  https://111.wales.nhs.uk/LiveWell/Dementia

- **Age UK information guides**:
  - IG47: *Caring for someone with dementia: Practical help and emotional support for you*;
  - IG48: *Living with dementia: From concerns and diagnosis to support and future care*;
  - IG55: *At home with dementia: Tips for making your home dementia friendly*.
- **The Alzheimer's Society** – see section 20 below for contact details.

7.15 Telehealth and 'virtual wards'

Telehealth

Telehealth is the delivery of health care from a distance. For example, it may be possible to remotely monitor a patient's vital signs in chronic condition management – blood pressure, glucose level and heart and lung function etc. It might also be able to assist with diagnosis, review assessments and prevention. The aims of telehealth systems may include:

- improving quality of life and wellbeing for a patient and/or their carer/s;
- improved management of long-term conditions; *and/or*
- reducing hospital admissions and emergency ambulance call outs.

Speak to the NHS staff involved in your care to discuss whether telehealth systems could help in your circumstances.

Note: Technology cannot generally substitute for human interaction and support and should therefore not be inappropriately used as a replacement for this. You should query your care plan if this appears to be the case.

Virtual wards

Virtual wards provide care to people in the community, often in a patient's own home (or sometimes another care setting outside of hospital). They allow people to receive the treatment they need at home safely and conveniently, rather than being in hospital. Care is planned and managed by a multi-disciplinary team with some – or potentially all – elements of care delivered virtually. This type of care might be particularly suitable for those at high risk of hospitalisation because of a pre-existing condition, or people recently discharged from hospital who continue to need care.

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

Social services assistance

Following a visit to your GP, 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:

- 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 modifications or equipment to 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 *Disability equipment and home adaptations in Wales*.

7.17 Social prescribing

Your GP may offer social prescribing options if they feel they could help in your situation – this might be as an alternative, or in addition to, other treatments or referrals (other organisations, outside of health settings, might also play a role in social prescribing, such as local authorities or third sector organisations).

What is social prescribing?

Social prescribing options can vary greatly, as what can help someone can be unique to them, but it could involve things like:

- exercise classes;
- gardening clubs;
- art, dance, or singing groups;
- cookery;
- sports groups; *or*
- walking groups.

The aim is to find ways that meet the practical, social and emotional needs that might be negatively affecting someone's health and wellbeing (because they have previously gone unmet). It can also "help empower individuals to recognise their own needs, strengths, and personal assets and to connect with their own communities for support with their health and wellbeing" and focuses on "taking an early preventive approach to enhancing people's health and wellbeing [and] addressing health inequalities"[6].

[6] National Framework for Social Prescribing, Welsh Government, December 2023.

Overall, it is hoped that these types of services "can improve mental wellbeing, reduce anxiety and depression, enhance self-esteem, reduce loneliness and isolation, maintaining healthy body weight, and help people live better, for longer"[7].

7.18 Ear wax removal

Your GP may be able to arrange for you to have excess ear wax removed.

However, over recent years there has been a marked decrease in the availability of this service, meaning many people have to seek out removal privately.

It should be noted that a Welsh Government health circular (for action by Local Health Boards) – **'Ear Wax Management Primary and Community Care Pathway'** – states that "ear wax management [should] be delivered in a primary and community care setting" and that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommends that these services "should offer to remove ear wax if the ear wax is contributing to hearing loss or other symptoms, or needs to be removed in order to examine the ear to take an impression of the ear canal"[8].

Therefore, you could consider making a complaint if you are not able to access NHS provision in your area – see section 18 below.

Note: The charity, RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf People), has been campaigning on the scaling back of NHS provision for ear wax removal. A copy of their report, **'Stop The Block: the crisis of NHS ear wax removal in Wales'**, can be viewed online at the following link:

https://rnid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/stop-the-block-2025-report-WALES-1.pdf

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[7] 'Social prescribing growing in Wales', 11 December 2023, Welsh Government website: https://media.service.gov.wales/news/social-prescribing-growing-in-wales (last accessed 27 March 2026).

[8] 'Welsh health circular – Ear Wax Management Primary and Community Care Pathway', Welsh Government, 29 September 2020. A copy can be accessed on the Welsh Government's website at: www.gov.wales/ear-wax-management-primary-and-community-care-pathway-html

7.19 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")[9].

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"[10].

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8 Transport for hospital appointments or treatment

8.1 The Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) or St John Ambulance Cymru

The Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) is operated by the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust. The service provides non-emergency transport to people who are unable, for medical reasons, to make their own way to hospital appointments or treatment centres (for example, because you need support from walking aids, use a wheelchair, require oxygen, or your medical needs prevent you using public transport).

See section 20 below for contact details, or further information – including an **online eligibility checker** – can be found in the 'Welsh Ambulance Services' section of the NHS Wales website at:

https://ambulance.nhs.wales/services

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[9] 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 27 March 2026).

[10] Ibid

St John Ambulance Cymru also operate similar patient transport services – again, see section 20 below for contact details.

8.2 Community transport schemes

Community transport allows people who are unable to use conventional public transport – because of a disability, for example – to access basic public services and facilities. If you are not able to access NEPTS or St John Ambulance assistance, it's possible that a community transport scheme may be able to help. See Age Cymru's Factsheet 6w *Finding help at home in Wales* for some further information on community transport provision.

9 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.

10 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 will often be provided in a care home setting, though – depending on individual circumstances – might also be delivered in 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*.

11 NHS treatment waiting time targets

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"[11].

11.1 General targets

- 95% of patients referred should "start their treatment within 26 weeks".
- "All patients whose care is too complex to be undertaken within 26 weeks [should] receive their definitive treatment within [a] maximum of 36 weeks"[12].

[11] 'Waiting times', NHS 111 Wales website: https://111.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/w/article/waitingtimes (last accessed 27 March 2026).
[12] Ibid

11.2 Cancer treatment targets

"75% of patients…referred as suspected of having cancer should start definitive treatment within 62 days from point of suspicion"[13].

11.3 Mental health treatment targets

"People referred for a mental health assessment should be seen within 28 days of receipt of referral. Following assessment, those who need treatment should start to receive it within 56 days"[14].

11.4 Postponement of a planned operation

If you were scheduled to have an operation, but it is postponed by the hospital "on more than one occasion with less than eight days notice for a reason that has nothing to do with your medical condition, then you should receive your operation within 14 days, or at your earliest convenience"[15].

11.5 Waiting time exceptions

The maximum waiting times targets, outlined above, have some exceptions. For example, this could include:

- where "delaying the start of your treatment is in your best clinical interests, for example where stopping smoking or losing weight is likely to improve the outcome of the treatment";
- where "it is clinically appropriate for your condition to be actively monitored in secondary care without clinical intervention or diagnostic procedures at that stage";
- "if you fail to attend appointments that you had chosen from a set of reasonable options"[16], *or*
- in the case of organ transplants, where long waits may occur due to a lack of suitable organs.

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[13] Ibid
[14] Ibid
[15] Ibid
[16] Ibid

11.6 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*.

12 Services at your local pharmacy

Pharmacists are experts on medicines. They can help if you are having difficulty taking medicines (whether prescribed, or 'over the counter'), or offer assistance if you 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; *or*
- 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.

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 they may be causing, plus 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 & 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:

https://collaborative.nhs.wales/programmes/national-palliative-and-end-of-life-care-programme

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.

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15 Specific NHS services for older people

15.1 Free NHS services once you reach the age of 60

The following services are free when you reach the age of 60, regardless of your income or savings:

- NHS-funded sight tests.
- NHS dental **check-ups** (also known as dental 'examinations'). However, note that you may still have to pay for subsequent dental treatment (i.e. things like fillings or crowns) that is identified as needed during the free check-up, unless you qualify for help with treatment charges.

See Age Cymru's Factsheet 61w *Help with NHS health costs in Wales* for further information.

15.2 Annual seasonal flu (influenza) vaccine

Every year flu viruses change and can result in people becoming seriously unwell. It's a good idea to get your flu vaccination as soon as it becomes available to you – usually from the end of September each year.

This is because, ideally, the flu vaccine should be given before flu starts to spread more widely in the community during the autumn and winter. However, importantly, the vaccine can still be given at a later date, if you missed out at the beginning of the roll out.

Further information on eligibility criteria based on age and/or other factors can be found on the NHS Wales website at:

https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/fluvaccine

15.3 COVID-19 booster vaccines

The Welsh Government makes periodic booster doses of the vaccine available for people in certain groups – for example, residents in a care home for older adults or people aged 75+ (or younger people who are in a 'clinical risk group', including those who are immunosuppressed).

Further information on the Welsh Government's current programme can be found on their website at:

www.gov.wales/covid-19-vaccination-programme

15.4 Over-65s – free pneumococcal vaccine

The pneumococcal vaccination 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.

Most people will only need to have this vaccination once (though some people with a long-term health condition might require a "five-yearly vaccination depending on their underlying health problem"[17]).

Further information can be found on the NHS Wales website at:

https://111.wales.nhs.uk/livewell/vaccinations/pneumococcal65

15.5 Shingles vaccination

The shingles vaccine is being offered to older people in a phased approach. The NHS Wales website has further information, so you can work out when you should be eligible (see the table under '*Eligibility for the vaccine*' at the following link):

https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/shingles-vaccine

If you don't have internet access, you could speak to your GP surgery for further information, or contact Age Cymru Advice (see section 20 below).

15.6 Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine

RSV is a contagious virus that circulates in autumn and early winter. For most people it causes a mild cold-like illness, but older people are more likely to be at risk of developing a more serious infection from it. You will be offered the RSV vaccine if:

- you are aged 75 or over; *or*
- you live in a care home for older adults (whatever your age).

You should be contacted automatically and invited to receive the vaccine. However, contact your GP if you're concerned you might have missed your invite.

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[17] 'Pneumococcal vaccine', NHS 111 Wales website: https://111.wales.nhs.uk/livewell/vaccinations/pneumococcal65 (last accessed 30 March 2026).

Further information can be found on the NHS Wales website (scroll down the page for a link to the RSV information):

https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines

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, you'll 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 you're registered with a GP, you'll definitely be invited for a screening before your 53rd birthday. It's important you ensure that your GP has your correct address on file, as Breast Test Wales identify those to invite from GP lists.

Further information can be found on the Breast Test Wales website:

https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/breast-screening

16.2 NHS cervical screening programme

NHS Wales advise that cervical screening (a smear test) is not in itself a test for cancer. However, the screening "looks for high-risk types of a very common virus called human papillomavirus (HPV). Almost all cases of cervical cancer are caused by high-risk types of HPV. The virus can cause cell changes over time, which can lead to cervical cancer if left untreated".

Therefore "finding cell changes early can prevent cervical cancer from developing [and] cervical cancers which are found early are easier to treat"[18].

All women aged between 25 and 65 are invited every 5 years.

Note: If you are 65 or over and have never had a cervical screening appointment before, then you can ask to have one.

You should receive a letter in the post inviting you to make an appointment (though you'll need to make sure you are registered with a GP in order to receive the automatic invitation). Further information can be found at:

https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/cervical-screening-wales/about-cervical-screening

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 50 and 74 for bowel screening every **two** years.

As long as you are registered with a GP surgery (and they have your correct address on record), 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. Likewise, "if you have any bowel symptoms or are worried about your family history of bowel cancer **do not wait for your bowel screening test kit**. It is important that you speak to your doctor"[19].

Further information on the bowel screening programme can be found at:

https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/bowel-screening

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[18] 'About Cervical Screening', Cervical Screening Wales (NHS Wales) website: https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/cervical-screening-wales/about-cervical-screening (last accessed 31 March 2026).

[19] 'Your invitation', Bowel Screening Wales website: https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/bowel-screening/about-bowel-screening/your-invitation/ (last accessed 31 March 2026).

16.4 Prostate cancer

NHS Wales advise that “there is no single test for prostate cancer”. One of the commonly used tests is a “blood test, known as a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test [which] measures the level of PSA and may help detect early prostate cancer”. However, “men are not routinely offered PSA tests to screen for prostate cancer, as results can be unreliable”[20].

If you’re concerned about prostate cancer, speak to your GP.

Further information can also be found on the NHS 111 Wales website at:

https://111.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/c/article/canceroftheprostate

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Note: TRANSFORM trial

This trial is currently being undertaken in the UK to find if there is a way that a screening programme could work in future. Invitation letters, sent via GP practices, are being sent to selected men aged 45 to 74. Invitations will be controlled to best reflect the UK population, so it’s not possible to volunteer to take part, however. Further information can be found on the Prostate Cancer UK website at:

https://prostatecanceruk.org/research/transform-trial

16.5 Diabetic Eye Screening Wales

If you have diabetes, high blood sugar can damage the back of the eye (retina), which can cause serious and permanent sight loss. Early changes to your retina can often go unnoticed, so the NHS invite people with diabetes to come for eye screening. Everyone aged 12 or over who has diabetes and is registered with a GP should be invited for the screening. How often you are screened will depend on your last two diabetic eye screening results:

[20] ‘Cancer of the prostate’, NHS 111 Wales website: https://111.wales.nhs.uk/Encyclopaedia/c/article/canceroftheprostate (last accessed 31 March 2026).

"If your last two…screenings found no sign of diabetic eye disease you will be screened every two years. This is because you are at low risk of diabetic eye disease. If diabetic eye disease was found you will be screened more often"[21].

You should speak to your GP if you have not received an invite. Further information can be found at:

https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/diabetic-eye-screening-wales

16.6 Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening

AAA screening looks for a swelling (aneurysm) of the aorta in the abdomen. If this happens there is a risk that the aorta may split or tear (rupture) which can be extremely serious. If an AAA is found you will be offered treatment and/or monitoring of the condition.

AAA screening is currently offered to men aged 65 (the screening programme is offered to men only, as they are six times more likely to have an AAA than women). You will be invited for an ultrasound screening test if you are registered with a GP (if not, contact the Wales Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme).

You may also wish to contact them, or your GP, if:

- you are already over 65 and have never had an AAA screening scan; *or*
- you are a younger man – or a woman of any age – with a close family history of AAA.

Further information can be found on the NHS Wales website at:

https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/abdominal-aortic-aneurysm-screening

[21] 'Diabetic Eye Screening Wales', Public Health Wales website: https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/diabetic-eye-screening-wales (last accessed 31 March 2026).

16.7 Lung cancer screening – a future national screening programme

The Welsh Government is planning to introduce, in 2027, a national lung cancer screening programme in Wales. This will be targeted towards those at greatest risk of the disease – for example, people aged 55 to 74 who are either current or previous smokers.

Further information can be found in a Welsh Government written statement and on the NHS Wales website.

- Written statement:

  www.gov.wales/written-statement-national-lung-screening-programme-wales

- NHS Wales information:

  https://performanceandimprovement.nhs.wales/functions/networks-and-planning/cancer/workstreams/lung-health-check/

16.8 Screening programmes and people who are trans (transgender) or non-binary

As indicated in the sections above, many screening programmes are based on age and/or gender. People will be invited for screening, based on the gender that they are registered under with their GP.

Based on the gender on record with the GP, some people may be automatically invited for screening that they do not need or, conversely, potentially miss out on an automatic invite for screening that could be important (for example, where risk of certain conditions may depend on the sex someone was assigned at birth).

NHS Wales advise that if you think you should have been invited for a screening test you should contact your GP.

There is also further information on the screening programmes, specific to trans (transgender) or non-binary people, on the NHS Wales website at:

https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/information-for-people-who-are-transgender-or-non-binary

17 Help with health costs and the NHS Low Income Scheme

Most NHS services and treatment are free, including NHS prescriptions in Wales.

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.

Age Cymru's Factsheet 61w *Help with NHS health costs in Wales* has further information on this topic.

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

You can raise concerns or make a complaint if you are unhappy with any NHS service you are currently receiving (or have received). This includes NHS services provided by:

- Your GP or practice-based staff.
- The ambulance trust.
- Hospitals – including, Accident & Emergency services, outpatient or inpatient treatments.
- An independent hospital or treatment centre treating you *on behalf* of the NHS.
- Community based NHS staff such as:
  - district nurses;
  - dentists;
  - optometrists;
  - pharmacists.

See Age Cymru's Factsheet 66w *Resolving problems and making a complaint about NHS care in Wales* for information on this topic.

19 Age discrimination in health services and the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010

The *Equality Act 2010* ('the Act') protects you from being unfairly discriminated against. It applies to anyone over the age of 18 and to all public services. It means it is unlawful for the NHS – without good and sufficient reason – to provide inferior services, or refuse to provide services at all, **solely** because of a 'protected characteristic' defined by the Act. The protected characteristics are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

Age discrimination

Under the Act, age discrimination will mean being treated **unfairly** or **differently** because of your age. The law only intends to prevent harmful or unjustifiable use of age, including a 'stereotypical view' of a particular age group. It does not intend to prevent differential treatment where there is **'objective justification'**.

Note: As an example, cancer screening or flu vaccination programmes are instances where objective justification can allow for services to be geared towards a certain gender or age ranges.

Situations where the Act could apply, include when a GP, consultant or other health professional discusses treatment options with you or makes a 'best interests' decision about treatment or care. Your age can play a part here, but staff should take account of your 'biological' age, not simply your 'chronological' age (your age in years).

If there are treatments for conditions such as cancer that are less successful or less well tolerated as people get older, the doctor should discuss this openly when explaining treatment options. You can often clarify and resolve a situation by discussing it with staff concerned but, if necessary, the law means that you can take NHS organisations, clinicians or managers to court on grounds of age discrimination.

You could contact the **Equality Advisory & Support Service** helpline if you think you have been discriminated against – see section 20 below for contact details. Age UK's Factsheet 79 *Equality, discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty* also has further information.

20 Useful organisations

Age Cymru Advice

Free and confidential information and advice on matters affecting the over 50s in Wales. Service available in Welsh or English.

Tel: 0300 303 44 98

E-mail: advice@agecymru.org.uk

Website: www.agecymru.wales/advice

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.wales/local

Alzheimer's Society

Provide information and advice about all types of dementia. They may also operate support services in your area, including for families and carers.

Dementia support line:
0333 150 3456 (English)
03300 947 400 (Welsh)
Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk

Bladder & Bowel Community (The)

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

E-mail: help@bladderandbowel.org
Website: www.bladderandbowel.org

Breast Test Wales

Part of NHS Wales and operate the breast screening programme in Wales. There are a number of regional offices listed on their website at:

https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/breast-screening/contact-us

Bowel Screening Wales

Part of NHS Wales and operate the bowel screening programme in Wales.

Tel: 0800 294 3370
Website:
https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/bowel-screening

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 Wales

Charity providing information, advice and support for carers.

Tel: 029 2081 1370
E-mail: info@carerswales.org
Carers UK Helpline: 0808 808 7777
Website: www.carerswales.org

Cervical Screening Wales

Part of NHS Wales and operate the cervical screening programme in Wales. There are a number of regional offices listed on their website at:

https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/cervical-screening-wales/contact-cervical-screening-wales

Citizens Advice

Free advice centres offering confidential and independent advice.

Tel: 0800 702 2020
Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales

Continence Product Advisor

An online service offering independent advice about continence products.

Website: www.continenceproductadvisor.org

Equality Advisory & Support Service

A helpline that can advise people on equality and human rights issues.

Tel: 0808 800 0082
Website: www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW)

Independent inspector and regulator of healthcare organisations in Wales.

Tel: 0300 062 8163
E-mail: hiw@gov.wales
Website: www.hiw.org.uk

Llais

A body that represents the voices and opinions of people in Wales in regard to health and social care services.

Tel: 029 20 235558
E-mail: enquiries@llaiscymru.org
Website: www.llaiswales.org

Local Health Boards (LHB)

Each LHB is responsible for delivering NHS healthcare services in the geographical area they cover. You can find contact details for the one covering your area from the Welsh Government's website at:

www.gov.wales/nhs-wales-health-boards-and-trusts

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 assist 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.

Tel: 0800 090 2309
Website: www.mariecurie.org.uk

Medicines & 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, or visit the MHRA website.

Tel: 0800 731 6789
Website: https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk

NHS 111 Wales

NHS 111 Wales can provide contact details for local services and telephone or web advice on health issues and common illnesses.

Tel: 111
Website: https://111.wales.nhs.uk

Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (The)

A service provided by the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust.

Tel: 0300 123 2303
Website: https://ambulance.nhs.wales/services

Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Independent champion for older people across Wales.

Tel: 03442 640 670
E-mail: ask@olderpeople.wales
Website: www.olderpeople.wales

Patients Association (The)

A healthcare charity that supports the rights of patients.

Helpline: 0800 345 7115
Website: www.patients-association.org.uk

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 the NHS.

Tel: 0300 790 0203
E-mail: ask@ombudsman.wales
Website: www.ombudsman.wales

Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)

A charity for people who are deaf, have hearing loss, or tinnitus.

Tel: 0808 808 0123
E-mail: contact@rnid.org.uk
Website: https://rnid.org.uk

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

A charity for people who are blind or partially sighted.

RNIB Helpline: 0303 123 9999
E-mail: helpline@rnib.org.uk
Website: www.rnib.org.uk

St John Ambulance Cymru

Operate patient transport services. Can provide support to the NHS, local authorities, nursing and care homes and to private individuals.

Website: www.sjacymru.org.uk/en/page/patient-transport-services

Stroke Association

A charity dedicated to conquering stroke.

Stroke Helpline: 0303 3033 100
Website: www.stroke.org.uk

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

21.1 Who we are

Age Cymru is the national charity for older people in Wales.

Our vision is a society which offers all people in Wales the best experience of later life. Older people are valued, included and able to shape decisions affecting their lives.

Our mission is to improve the lives of older people by delivering trusted advice, support and services. We use our knowledge, insight and experience to influence policies and decisions affecting older people.

Together with our local partners:

- we provide information and advice;
- we deliver wellbeing programmes;
- we provide independent advocacy;
- we support carers; *and*

- we campaign and research.

Age Cymru

Mariners House
Trident Court
East Moors Road
Cardiff CF24 5TD

029 2043 1555

www.agecymru.wales

21.2 How we can help

Age Cymru Advice: our information and advice service for matters affecting people over 50 in Wales

Age Cymru Advice is committed to being the foremost information and advice service to older people in Wales. We aim to provide effective, accessible, high-quality information and advice while offering a free, impartial and confidential service. Age Cymru Advice can assist older people themselves, their family, friends, carers, or professionals. All our guides and factsheets are available to download from our website, or you can contact our advice line to have copies posted to you for free.

Local support

Age Cymru Advice also acts as a gateway to our local services. Face to face support via local offices and home visits may be available to people requiring additional or more specialised support.

Getting in touch

If you want to talk to one of our expert advisers, in Welsh or English, call us on **0300 303 44 98**. Our advice line is open between 9am and 4pm, Monday – Friday. Calls are charged at the same rate as a call to a standard 01 or 02 number. They will also be automatically included in any landline or mobile inclusive minutes package. You can also:

- email us at **advice@agecymru.org.uk**; *or*
- visit our website at **www.agecymru.wales/advice**

www.facebook.com/agecymru

www.x.com/AgeCymru

www.youtube.com/agecymru

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21.3 How you can help

All the information and advice we provide is free and completely impartial. In many cases our timely intervention can be life changing.

We are an ageing population and more people than ever are coming to us for support. You can help us be there for those that need us most.

Make a donation

No matter how small or large, donations make a massive difference and help us continue our important work.

Call: **029 2043 1555**
Visit: **www.agecymru.wales/donate**

Or you can scan the QR code below:

Every donation we receive helps us be there for someone when they need us.

- £10 helps towards a fully trained expert advice worker to respond to queries from people who need the support of our information and advice service.
- £20 helps towards the cost of us producing free information guides and factsheets that provide useful advice on issues affecting people over 50.

Fundraise

Whether it is having a bake sale, running a marathon or knitting small hats for the Big Knit, there are so many ways to raise vital funds to support our work.

Call: **029 2043 1555**
Visit: **www.agecymru.wales/getinvolved**

Volunteer with us

You can support us to make a difference to the lives of older people by helping us in a variety of ways.

However you'd like to get involved, we'd love to hear from you.

Call: **029 2043 1555**
Visit: **www.agecymru.wales/volunteer**

Leave us a gift in your will

With a gift to Age Cymru in your will, you can do so much to make sure older people have the support they deserve in the years to come. Leave a world less lonely.

Call: **029 2043 1555**
Visit: **www.agecymru.wales/legacy**

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