



Citizen Voice Body

How the NHS, Local Authorities and the Citizen Voice Body should work together to listen to people



This document was written by the **Welsh Government**. It is an easy read version of ‘**Establishment of the Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care, Wales. Draft Code of Practice on Access to Premises, Statutory Guidance on Representations and Draft Guidance on Service Change in the National Health Service**’.

How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 41**.



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Where the document says **we**, this means **Welsh Government**. For more information contact:

Website: gov.wales/citizen-voice-body-guidance-access-representations-and-nhs-service-change

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This document was made into easy read by **Easy Read Wales** using **Photosymbols**. To tell us what you think about this easy read version, [click here](#).

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Introduction



We want Wales to be a healthy country.



We want people to have a chance to have a say in Health and Social Care.



This means people must get a chance to have a say about the NHS and Social Services. About the work they do, and how they do it.



In **April 2023** the **Community Health Councils** will change to the **Citizen Voice Body**.



The **Citizen Voice Body** will make sure people get a chance to have their say about the NHS and Local Authorities.

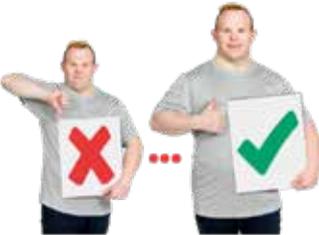
We want the **Citizen Voice Body** to:



- Listen to what people have to say about the NHS and Social Services.



- Support people with advice and help when they want to make a complaint.



- Use what they have learnt from people to make the NHS and Social Services better.



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The Welsh Government wrote some documents to help the Citizen Voice Body, NHS and Local Authorities do a good job.

These documents are:



- Code of Practice on Access to Premises
- Statutory Guidance on Representations
- Revised guidance on service change in the NHS

Code of Practice on Access to Premises



The Welsh Government has written a **code of practice** which helps the **Citizen Voice Body**.

A **Code of Practice** gives rules and advice about the law. It helps the Citizen Voice Body, NHS, local authorities and other partners do what the law tells them to do.



The **code of practice** will make sure people get a chance to have their say.



This will make services better and right for people.



It will help the **Citizen Voice Body** to be able to go into NHS and Social Services buildings to talk to people.



It also helps the **Citizen Voice Body** to talk to people in their own homes or buildings run by other organisations on behalf of Social Services or NHS.



The **Citizen Voice Body**, NHS and Social Services must follow the **code of practice**.



Who is the code of practice for?

The **code of practice** is for:

- The Citizen Voice Body
- The NHS
- Local Authorities
- Other organisations providing services for the NHS or Local Authorities



These organisations must follow the **code of practice**. And if they do not then they must explain why.

When does the code apply?



The **code of practice** applies when the **Citizen Voice Body** asks a health or social service if they can come to their buildings to talk to people.



Or to a place where a service is being provided. This could mean a care home, or the person's own home.



The **Citizen Voice Body** should be allowed to go to talk to people face to face.

Key ideas of the Code of Practice



The **Citizen Voice Body** is there to talk for people and listen to what people think.



This means that health and social services, NHS and local authorities should tell people about the **Citizen Voice Body**.



People must have the chance to talk to the **Citizen Voice Body**.



And organisations should allow the **Citizen Voice Body** to come to talk to people face to face when they ask for it.



The **Citizen Voice Body** must also be aware of when is a good time to ask if they can come.

Asking to make a visit

If the **Citizen Voice Body** want to arrange a visit to talk to someone, they should:



- Let the service provider know that they would like to visit. This could include the time and who will be visiting.



- They should give notice of their visit for some settings. And this might change for different settings.



- Agree how many people will be visiting. If too many people might be a problem.



- Make sure that the people visiting have had the right training.



If a meeting cannot happen, then the **Citizen Voice Body** and service provider should work together to find a different way to listen to people.



If services are being provided in people's own homes, then the **Citizen Voice Body** should check if the person is happy for them to visit.



If someone is in a residential home then the Citizen Voice Body should check if that person is happy for them to visit.



If the **Citizen Voice Body** need to visit people under the age of 18, they should ask the person, or a parent and carer if they are okay with it.



People can say no if they do not want to talk to the **Citizen Voice Body**.

Agreeing to the Citizen Voice Body making a visit



Service providers must follow the **code of practice** if the **Citizen Voice Body** asks if they can visit them.



Service providers must think about the **well-being** of people using their services.

Well-being means a person is happy, healthy and is comfortable with their life and what they do.



We think it is the right thing for people to be able to talk to the **Citizen Voice Body**.



Service providers must work with the **Citizen Voice Body** to find the best way for people to reach them.



Service providers and the **Citizen Voice Body** must think about people's rights when they arrange a meeting.



Service providers and the **Citizen Voice Body** should think about what spaces there are for people to meet. For example, a private space where they will not be disturbed.

If the meeting is agreed:



Service providers must support people to meet with the Citizen Voice Body.

This could be done by:



- letting people know about the visit



- giving people information about the **Citizen Voice Body**



- talking to the **Citizen Voice Body** about important information about the meeting - for example, if they need to wear anything important



- having someone to welcome the **Citizen Voice Body** and introduce them to people



- making sure people's needs are met when talking to the **Citizen Voice Body**.



The **Citizen Voice Body** may find it useful to watch and understand how people use the service.



This means they will understand what people are telling them better.



The **Citizen Voice Body** should make sure the person who is making the visit has proof that they are who they say (for example, an ID card).



People visiting on behalf of the **Citizen Voice Body** must tell service providers when they arrive.



People visiting on behalf of the **Citizen Voice Body** must have the right training.



And have the right level of DBS check. This is a check for a criminal record.



Citizen Voice Body visitors must tell the people they are visiting what they want to talk to them about.



They must always remember people's rights when they do this.



And get their permission to talk to them.



And visitors and the setting must arrange things so visiting does not get in the way of people receiving services.

If the meeting is not agreed:



The **Citizen Voice Body**, NHS and Local Authorities must always follow the **code of practice**.



The NHS and service providers can say no to the **Citizen Voice Body** coming for a visit.



But only if they follow the **code of practice**.



If they do say **no**, then they must explain the reason why.



And give ideas about how to arrange the visit another time, or in another way.



And they must do this before the date of the meeting if they know about it in advance.

If the code is not followed:



If the NHS or Local Authorities do not follow the **code of practice** they may be taken to court.



If a service provider stops the **Citizen Voice Body** from meeting people, this might affect their **well-being**.



And the **Citizen Voice Body** can tell the Healthcare and Care Inspectors.



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The **Citizen Voice Body** can also let the Government know if the NHS or Local Authorities are not following the **code of practice**.

Statutory Guidance on Representations



Because of **The Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020**, the **Citizen Voice Body** can make **representations**.



Representations mean speaking about or on behalf of other people. This means telling people what they have found out from listening to others.



We think that by doing this the NHS and Local Authorities will be able to hear what people have to say.



And this will make healthcare and social care services better.



The NHS and Local Authorities must understand and follow this **statutory guidance**.

Statutory guidance is guidance that must be followed by law.



We want the NHS and Local Authorities to work closely with the **Citizen Voice Body**.



We think that people should know that their views are being listened to.



And that **representations** made by the **Citizen Voice Body** are making a difference.



To do this, the NHS and Local Authorities must tell the **Citizen Voice Body** what has happened with the lessons learnt from the **representations**.



The Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020 makes sure that the NHS and Local Authorities listen to the **Citizen Voice Body**.



And that they use what they learn to make their services better.



This means the things people tell the **Citizen Voice Body** will be important to make a difference. And make services better.

What this guidance hopes for

The NHS and local authorities must think about how they will make sure they:



- listen to people through the Citizen Voice Body
- tell the Citizen Voice Body how they will use the views of people to make things better
- tell the **Citizen Voice Body** how people's views have made a difference.



Talking on behalf of people



The **Citizen Voice Body** must listen to people who use the services.



Then they will tell the NHS and Local Authorities what people say about the services they receive.



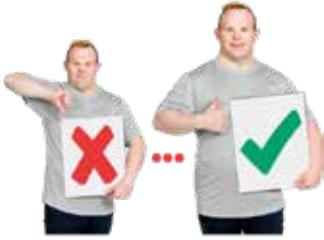
They should work with the NHS and Local Authorities to make sure people are listened to.



The **Citizen Voice Body** can also make **representations** to the NHS and Local Authorities about how they plan services and the changes they want to make.



And the NHS and Local Authorities should listen and think about the **representations** when making decisions.



The **Citizen Voice Body** can also make **representations** about whether services are good or need to be better.



The **Citizen Voice Body** can also make **representations** to the NHS and Local Authorities about services that other organisations do for them.



The **Citizen Voice Body** will also be responsible for listening to people's complaints.



They can support people to make complaints when the service they have received was not good.

What the NHS and Local authorities need to do



The NHS and Local Authorities must show that they have been thinking about **representations** when making changes.

They need to make sure:



- there is a clear process to look at **representations** and taking action.



- they listen and understand what people have told the **Citizen Voice Body**



- think about if the information that the **Citizen Voice Body** has told them needs to be shared with other organisations.



The NHS and Local Authorities need to give feedback to the **Citizen Voice Body**.

They should:



- tell the **Citizen Voice Body** how long it will take for them to reply



- keep the **Citizen Voice Body** up to date

- reply to the **Citizen Voice Body** in good time and not leave people waiting too long.



It is important that records are kept so that the NHS and Local Authorities can learn from them.

Working together



The Government want the NHS, Local Authorities and the **Citizen Voice Body** to work closely together so that services can be made better.



Sometimes the **Citizen Voice Body** might want to make **representations** to the NHS and Local Authorities together.



If the **representation** is being made to both the NHS and the Local Authorities, then they must decide who will be responsible for replying to the **Citizen Voice Body**.



This **statutory guidance** will be checked and changes will be made to make sure it is working.

If the guidance is not followed:



If the NHS and service providers do not follow the **statutory guidance** they may be taken to court.



And the **Citizen Voice Body** can tell the Healthcare and Care Inspectors.



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The **Citizen Voice Body** can also let the Government know if the NHS and Local Authorities are not following the **statutory guidance**.

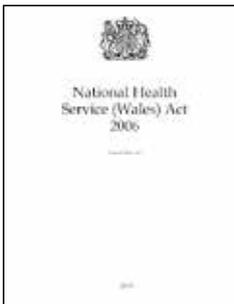
Changed guidance on service change in the NHS



It is important that people have a say in how changes in NHS services are made.



When changes are made to NHS services they must think about the **Healthier Wales** plan for health and social care.

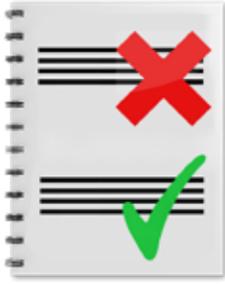


The National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 tells Local Health Boards and NHS trusts that they must ask people about:



- Plans for services which the NHS offer.
- Changes to the way services are provided.
- Decisions that affect how services are provided.





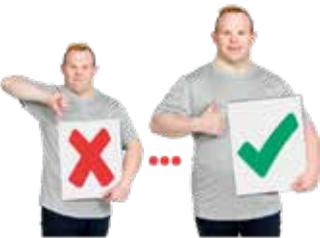
The Community Health Councils are being replaced by the **Citizen Voice Body**.



This means the NHS must think about what the **Citizen Voice Body** can tell them when they make decisions about changes to services.



The **Citizen Voice Body** can tell the NHS what people have told them about services.



The NHS must change some of their services to be better for people.



And this should be done fairly and in the best way.



The NHS should work with the **Citizen Voice Body** to make sure these changes are best for people.

Building relationships and trust



The NHS should tell people about the **Citizen Voice Body**.



Giving a chance for people to talk to the **Citizen Voice Body** will help the NHS understand better what people need.



And help people understand the NHS better.



The NHS can only make changes after they have spoken to people.



And people have had a chance to say what they think of the changes.

The NHS needs to:



- listen to people who use their services



- work with people, patients, and other organisations to plan changes



- work with the **Citizen Voice Body** and understand that they can talk on behalf of people

- make sure they work in a fair way



- make information **accessible**

Accessible means everyone is able to find and use something.

Third sector and voluntary organisations can be very good at talking to people and understanding people.



The **third sector** is another name for voluntary, charity or campaign organisations.



The NHS should include these organisations in their plans.



The NHS and **Citizen Voice Body** should work together to make sure they are working in the best way.

Thinking about changes



Changes can be small or big.



If the NHS want to make big changes, then they must talk to lots of people.



The NHS must have a plan, and this plan must be agreed by their Board.



The plan should say what they want to happen in the future.



And how they will help the communities they work with.



The plan should also say how they will manage the changes they want to make.



If the NHS is working with other organisations they should include them when making their plans.



The plans should say when changes might happen.



The NHS and organisations need to think about the communities they work with when they make the plans.



And make sure that they are **equal** and **accessible**.
And make sure people can understand it.

Equal means treating people fairly and making sure they have the same chances in life.

Asking people what they think

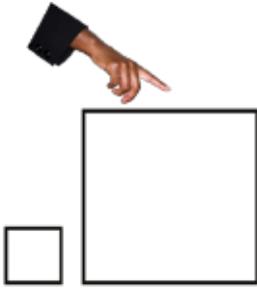
Sometimes if a big decision is being made then a bigger **consultation** is needed.



A **consultation** is when a lot of people are asked what they think about something. This could be in discussions, surveys or other ways.



The **Citizen Voice Body** can also tell the NHS what people think.



If the change is a big change, then more people should know about the planned changes and what they think about it.



First the NHS should talk to different partners, groups and organisations. For example, Regional Partnership Boards, Staff, and the **Citizen Voice Body**.



Talking to these partners will help to decide what the NHS needs to find out from people through a **consultation**.



And give people at least 6 weeks to say what they think.

Consultations should:



- take place before decisions have been made



- give enough information for people to understand what they are being asked



- give people time to think about it and say what they think



- be listened to.



The NHS must think about lots of things when they plan a **consultation**.



When asking people what they think, it is important people have all the information they need. Like:



- Why the change is needed



- What the NHS want for the future

- What the NHS hopes to change



- Why the NHS thinks it is a good idea. And gives proof for this



- Who will the change affect

- What will happen if it does not change



The **consultation** should be **accessible**.



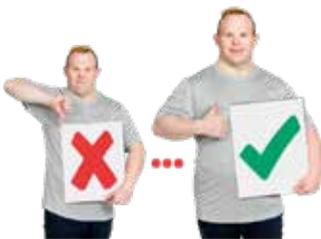
And in a way that people understand. For example, in Welsh or Easy Read.



The NHS should talk to people, staff and other organisations while they are thinking of making the change.



They should also talk to MPs, patient groups, charities and other groups.



When the **consultation** is finished the NHS can make changes if people agree.



The NHS should think about how well the **consultation** worked.

If a change is urgent



Sometimes the NHS might need to make a decision quickly. And cannot wait for people to tell them what they think.



This should only happen if the safety or **well-being** of patients or staff is at risk.

To work in the best way:



- The NHS must try to tell people about the plans to change.



- The NHS must tell the **Citizen Voice Body** about how patients and carers have been told.

- And how other plans have been made to meet people's needs.



- The NHS should say what they will do to put the service back or make it better.



The NHS should think about plans for emergencies before they happen.



And these emergency plans should be shared with organisations and the **Citizen Voice Body**.

If a change cannot be agreed



Sometimes people will not agree with the plans for changes that the NHS make.



The **Citizen Voice Body** can let the government know when there are any issues.



The **Citizen Voice Body** should tell the government why they have concerns.



The NHS will need to show the government that they have asked people for their views.



And the government will ask the **Citizen Voice Body** and NHS to think how to make the plans better.



If this cannot happen the government can ask the NHS to ask for help from an independent panel.



The panel can tell the NHS and **Citizen Voice Body** how they can make an agreement.



This statutory guidance will be checked, and changes will be made to make sure it is working.

Hard words

Accessible

Accessible means everyone is able to find and use something.

Code of Practice

A Code of Practice gives rules and advice about the law. It helps Citizen Voice Body, NHS bodies, local authorities and other partners do what the law tells them to do.

Consultation

A consultation is when a lot of people are asked what they think about something. This could be in discussions, surveys or other ways.

Equality

Equality means treating people fairly and making sure they have the same chances in life.

Representations

mean speaking about or on behalf of other people. This means telling people what they have found out from listening to others.

Statutory guidance

Statutory guidance is guidance that must be followed by law.

Third sector

The third sector is another name for voluntary, charity or campaign organisations.

Well-being

Well-being means a person is happy, healthy and is comfortable with their life and what they do.