



Complete Agenda

Democratic Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date and Time

11.00 am, MONDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 2016

Location

Ystafell Gwryfai, Council Offices, Caernarfon, Gwynedd. LL55 1SH

Contact Point

Eirian Roberts

01286 679018

eirianroberts3@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

(DISTRIBUTED 23/09/16)

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Membership

Elected Members (3)

Councillors

Lesley Day
Eryl Jones-Williams
Michael Sol Owen

Independent Members (with a vote) (5)

Margaret E. Jones
Jacqueline Hughes
David Wareing
Einir Young
Aled Jones

Community Committee Member (with a vote) (1)

David Clay

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

3. URGENT ITEMS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

4. MINUTES

4 - 5

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 27th June, 2016 be signed as a true record (attached).

5. PREPARING FOR THE 2017 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 6 - 16

To consider the report of the Monitoring Officer (attached).

6. LOCAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURE FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS

To consider a verbal report by the Monitoring Officer.

7. THE OMBUDSMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16 17 - 65

To consider the report of the Monitoring Officer (attached).

8. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MEMBERS 66 - 67

To consider the report of the Monitoring Officer (attached).

STANDARDS COMMITTEE 27/06/16

Present:-

Elected Members:- Councillors Lesley Day, Eryl Jones-Williams and Michael Sol Owen.

Independent Members:- Ms Jacqueline Hughes, Mr Aled Jones, Miss Margaret Jones, Mr David Wareing and Dr Einir Young (Chair)

Community Committee Member:- Mr David Clay.

Also in Attendance: Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Siôn Huws (Senior Solicitor) and Eirian Roberts (Members Support Officer).

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received from any members present.

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous committee meeting that took place on 18 April, 2016, as a true record.

Councillor Lesley Day thanked her fellow members for their good wishes.

Councillor Michael Sol Owen noted that he had inadvertently forgot to send an apology.

3. THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

Submitted – the report of the Monitoring Officer appending a draft of the committee's annual report for the period from 1 April 2015 up to 31 March 2016. The committee's observations and approval of the document were invited. It was noted that the Chair and the Monitoring Officer would add a foreword to the report prior to its publication.

The Senior Solicitor noted that it was intended to circulate the report to the clerks of community and town councils following the full Council meeting in October.

Members were asked to check their personal details and to then e-mail the Senior Solicitor.

During the discussion on the contents of the report:-

- It was suggested that a reference should be made to Linda Byrne's inability to continue as an independent member due to illness.
- Councillor Lesley Day noted that she was not the chair of the Democratic Services Committee in 2015/16.

It was asked if it would be possible to present the annual report to the Council's July meeting from now on, however, the Monitoring Officer explained that the calendar did not favour this.

RESOLVED to approve the draft of the annual report and to submit it to the Council's meeting on 6 October.

4. ATTENDING AND OBSERVING MEETINGS

Submitted - the report of the Monitoring Officer reviewing the system of visiting Cyngor Gwynedd meetings and the County's Community Council meetings and the benefit gained and requesting the committee to consider if there was value in identifying a more structured programme to observe meetings.

During the discussion:-

- It was suggested that it would be useful for the Standards Committee to observe the work of preparing for the 2017 Local Government Elections, and specifically the sessions to raise awareness of prospective candidates and the induction programme for elected members following the elections. It was also suggested that it would be a good idea to include an item on the work of the Standards Committee in the awareness raising sessions in order that prospective candidates know how to behave in campaign activities. The Monitoring Officer noted that he was already in discussion with the Democratic Services regarding raising awareness within the induction system about the role of the Standards Committee.
- It was suggested that it would be sensible to contact councils beforehand to inform them of a member's intention to come and observe a meeting, especially if that member required a translation service.

RESOLVED

- (a) That there was value in identifying a more structured programme of observing meetings and to trust in the Monitoring Officer and the Senior Solicitor to agree on a draft programme of visits to as many councils as possible, over the next 12 months.**
- (b) To request that the Monitoring Officer provides a brief report to the next meeting outlining the preparation work for the 2017 Local Government Elections and how the Standards system interweaves with this.**

5. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MEMBERS

Submitted, for information – the report of the Monitoring Officer on formal complaints made against members.

Further to the contents of the written report, the Senior Solicitor noted that the Ombudsman had now informed the Council that he was investigating Case 201600999.

RESOLVED to note the report.

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am and concluded at 11.35 am

CHAIRMAN

Agenda Item 5

MEETING	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
DATE	3 October 2016
TITLE	PREPARATION FOR THE 2017 ELECTIONS
AUTHOR	IWAN G D EVANS, MONITORING OFFICER

Background

Following from my undertaking to the committee i attach a report which was submitted to the Councils Democratic Services Committee on the 20th of September 2016.

The report sets out the work taking place in preparation for induction of new members of the authority following the May 2017 elections. The report provides an opportunity for the committee to gain an understanding of the arrangements and consider what further training might be needed by members following the elections.

Recommendation

That the Committee considers the report and provides guidance on possible further training opportunities.

MEETING	Democratic Services Committee
DATE	20/09/2016
PURPOSE	Update the Committee members on the latest developments and the work of the Local Government elections focus group (May 2017).
AUTHOR	Vera Jones, Democratic Services Manager

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the Democratic Services Committee meeting held on 22 March 2016, the committee was asked to nominate 4-5 members who would be willing to be members of the focus group to assist with the preparations for the Local Government Elections (to be held in May 2017).
- 1.2 It was decided that a focus group be set up, to include Councillors Annwen Daniels, Selwyn Griffiths, Jason Humphreys, Michael Sol Owen and the Cabinet Member responsible for Democracy, Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn.
- 1.3 Three work streams were identified for the Local Government elections preparatory work, namely:
- Preparing candidates
 - Induction and training programme
 - Electronic considerations
- 1.4 Please note, the work of the focus group supports and is linked with the work of the Diversity Sub-group; both are presenting a separate progress report to the committee meeting.

2. DEVELOPMENTS TO DATE – preparing candidates and induction programme

- 2.1 The focus group met on 14 June to discuss the first two elements: preparing candidates; and the induction / training programme for the May 2017 period onward. Councillors Annwen Daniels, Selwyn Griffiths, Michael Sol Owen and Dyfrig Siencyn were present. The result of their work is as follows:
- Preparatory sessions for elected members - **Appendix A**
 - Induction programme for members - **Appendix B**
- 2.2 In considering what to include and how to arrange the above activities, the group considered the 2012 arrangements, messages from elected members deriving from the personal development interviews, and consulted with the Council's Business Group.

- 2.3 The Democratic Services Committee is asked to discuss and adopt the draft plans as noted in Appendix A and Appendix B.

3. DEVELOPMENTS TO DATE – Information Technology

- 3.1 In order to ensure sufficient time to consider the different factors, the focus group met to discuss the electronic provision in a separate session in July. Councillors Annwen Daniels, Selwyn Griffiths, Michael Sol Owen and Dyfrig Siencyn, were present, along with Huw Ynyr, Information Technology Senior Manager and Urien Huws, Information Technology Desktop Engineer with expertise in the field for the benefit of members.
- 3.2 During the meeting the members considered their needs/ requirements (i.e. what is required from the electronic provision), and were able to compare 4 different electronic devices. It is a very complicated field, and it became evident early on that the focus group would not be able to come to any conclusions during the session. Further work is required in this field with another meeting arranged for October 2016. Further information is available in **Appendix C**.
- 3.3 To assist the focus group with their work of considering IT provision, it would be very useful if the Democratic Services Committee could
- a) Endorse the requirements for the IT provision (discussion on Appendix C, point 1)
 - b) Discuss the benefits and disadvantages of providing one standard provision for all members or a choice of provision (discussion on Appendix C, point 5)
 - c) Share their initial thoughts about what information (if any) members require if we developed a specific site, eg a Councillor intranet site

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The Democratic Services Committee has been asked to consider the developments thus far and discuss as noted in 2.3 and 3.3 above. A further update will be reported at the next meeting on 29 November 2016.
- 4.2 In addition to the above, we are aware that not all current members will choose to stand in the May 2017 elections. We are also aware that important information needs to be gathered from members who either decide not to stand, or, indeed from those who do not succeed in being re-elected. The group will consider the arrangements for those members at their next meetings.

Appendix A - Awareness Raising Sessions Work Programme

PREPARING CANDIDATES FOR THE MAY 2017 ELECTION

BACKGROUND

1. Following Personal Development Interviews with individual members and discussions at the Democratic Services Committee in 2014/15, the need to better prepare people to become county councillors was identified - targeting potential candidates prior to the submission of nominations, so that they understand what faces them if successful.

THE PROPOSAL

2. To aim for the County Council elections on 4 May 2017, bearing in mind that the Notice of Election would be published 6 weeks beforehand, around 23 March.
3. It is intended to hold a series of sessions for people who are considering standing as candidates around January 2017.
4. It is intended to publicise these sessions as widely as possible, using social media, party links and the community council's mailing lists to try to attract as much interest as possible in the meetings
5. It is proposed to hold 3 evening meetings: one in Arfon, one in Dwyfor and one in Meirionnydd, with specific information packs to be shared and distributed at the meetings.

ORDER OF THE MEETINGS

Welcome	A brief introduction, possibly by the Chair of the Area Forum
Being a Councillor	Presentation by Arwel Jones on:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Responsibilities of the County Council (as opposed to community councils)• The role of the Local Member and the institutional role within the Council (time requirements)• Expectations regarding technology, etc.
New Member's Experience	A 10 minute talk from a new member (different in the three areas) about his/her experiences in 2012
Structure of the Council	An explanation from Arwel Jones of the political arrangements (Cabinet / Scrutiny / Committee Arrangements)
Members' Conduct	A presentation from Iwan Evans / Sion Huws on the Gwynedd Standard and the Code of Conduct
Salary and Expenses	An explanation from Arwel Jones on the Arrangements for Salaries and Expenses
The Electoral Process and the Nomination Procedure	An explanation from Raymond Harvey about the electoral process, key dates and forms to be completed
Induction requirements for new members after the election	New members will be required to attend an induction meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday 9 and 10 May, 2017 in Caernarfon. Introduction of the order of the days and their introductory requirements e.g. bank details

NB Fairly informal, allowing people to ask questions during the presentations

Appendix B - Possible Induction Programme

Members' Induction - May 2017 Elections.

Tuesday, 9 May and Wednesday, 10 May, 2017.

Principles:

- Learning tends to be more effective in smaller groups, so, an "information fair" format is recommended
- combination of experienced and new members in each group (promoting informal mentoring)
- It must be ensured that Members are made aware of where to find more information.
- Further sessions can be arranged if a member so wishes

Summary.

1st Day, 9 May, 2017:

10 - 11 Welcome and introduction to the Council.

11 – 12 Group visits to the stands.

12 – 1 Lunch break.

1 – 2 Group visits to the stands.

2 – 3 Group visits to the stands

3 – 4 Presentation by 4 Heads of Service

2nd Day, 10 May, 2017:

10 – 11 'Tour' of the chambers for new members

11 – 12 Group visits to the stands.

12 – 1 Lunch break.

1 – 2 Group visits to the stands.

2 – 3 Presentation by 5 Heads of Service

Further Details / Explanations

TITLE	LOCATION	MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED	OFFICERS	COMMENTS/CONSIDERATIONS
Welcome by the Chair and introduction by the Chief Executive (10 – 11 a.m.)	Siambr Dafydd Orwig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome by the Chair of the Council • Chief Executive's Welcome. • Introduction to the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd. • A brief introduction to the 'Council's situation'— where we are in terms of savings etc. • The role and work of members • Explanation of the order of the day / next days, i.e. the information Fair - see below. 	Chairman of the Council. Chief Executive.	

INFORMATION FAIR

Members will split into 5 groups.

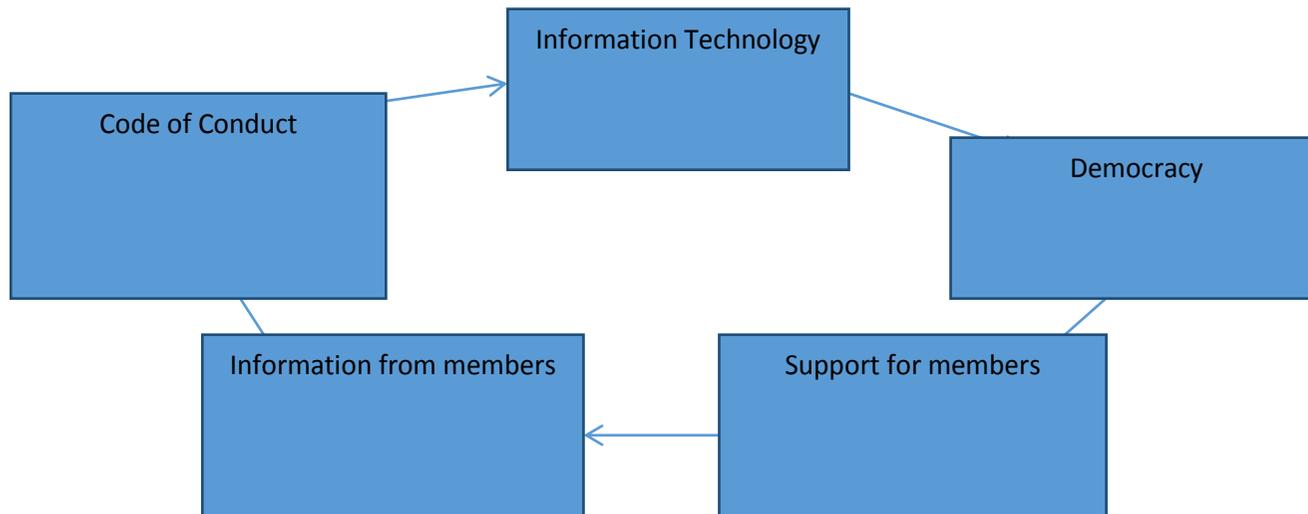
It is suggested that each group spend an hour at each stand.

Each group will begin at one stand and will then move on to the next stand in the circle.

All members will visit three stands on the first day, and two on the second day (giving everybody an opportunity to visit every stand over the course of the two days).

Linguistic needs will need to be considered; one non-Welsh speaking group is suggested.

Ushers will be needed to take members from one stand to the next.



DETAILS ABOUT THE 'STANDS'

TITLE	LOCATION	MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED	OFFICERS	COMMENTS/CONSIDERATIONS
Information Technology	Siambwr Hywel Dda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive equipment • Sign a contract • Return old equipment • Mini/basic training on new equipment and arrange further IT training if required • Modern.gov 	Huw Ynyr Bryn Goodman Urien Huws Sion M Owen	What equipment we give members depends on the work of the sub-group.

TITLE	LOCATION	MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED	OFFICERS	COMMENTS/CONSIDERATIONS
Democracy in the Council	Daron	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democracy in general - the big picture (Welsh Government, local Government etc.) • The Council's structure in terms of committees - Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny • A brief introduction to the role of the other committees • Corporate governance - Council officers etc. • Political groups and political balance 	Geraint Owen Arwel Ellis Jones Vera Jones	Need to ensure that the information describing committees is straightforward and available on the website (and for the pre-election sessions).

TITLE	LOCATION	MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED	OFFICERS	COMMENTS/CONSIDERATIONS
Support for members	Peris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Personal Development interview • Where to find further information e.g. Rhaeadr and e-gwynedd 	Carey Cartwright Cara Williams Sarah Scott	Various activities within one room.

TITLE	LOCATION	MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED	OFFICERS	COMMENTS/CONSIDERATIONS
Receiving information from members	Enlli (Mawddach to take photographs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a photograph • Arrangements for access passes • Travel costs, care costs, salaries, pensions etc. • Submit their bank details 	Mari Powell Jones. Photographer. Other staff.	Various activities in one room. Take photographs – Ystafell Mawddach

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to discuss special requirements 		
--	--	---	--	--

TITLE	Location	MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED	OFFICERS	COMMENTS/CONSIDERATIONS
Code of Conduct	Gwyrfai or Llyfni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information presentation session and an opportunity to asks questions • Present a hard copy of the code of conduct • Key Principles • Registration of interests • Explain the declaration of interests at meetings and the requirements upon them • Social Media Protocol • Sign to accept the position 	Iwan Evans and Sion Huws	Refer to where to find further information. Practical examples.

At the end of both days, there will be a short presentation by Heads of Service about the main duties of their services. All members will reconvene at Siambr Dafydd Orwig for these sessions at 3 o'clock on 9 May and 2 o'clock on 10 May.

TITLE	Location	MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED	OFFICERS	COMMENTS/CONSIDERATIONS
Presentation by the Services	Siambr Dafydd Orwig	<p>Each Head will have a 10 minute slot to outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service's main responsibilities • Service structure • Contact details • Main challenges facing the service <p>The relevant Heads will be available at the end of the session to answer any further questions from individual members.</p>	<p>Day 1: 4 Heads</p> <p>Day 2: 5 Heads</p>	There will be a need to refer members to where to find further information.

At the beginning of the 2nd day, 10 May, there will be an opportunity for new Members to take a 'tour' of the chambers and receive a short presentation on the systems within. It is important that all new members make the effort to attend this session in order to become aware of arrangements before the first meeting of the new Council to be held on 18 May 2017. Experienced members are also welcome.

TITLE	LOCATION	MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED	OFFICERS	COMMENTS/CONSIDERATIONS
'Tour' of the chambers Day 2. 10 – 11 a.m. New Members	Convene in Siambr Dafydd Orwig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Siambr Dafydd Orwig and Siambr Hywel Dda • Try the voting system • An introduction to web-casting and guidelines, and see examples • Visit the tea and coffee area, Siop Gwynedd (probably no time to visit Penrallt) 	Democratic Services Team	Consideration to holding an event at an alternative location to the headquarters - following the initial meetings. E.g. remote attendance by video conferencing and/or Penrhyn

After the first days

Below are the subsequent sessions that will need to be scheduled (within 6 months / year) Other possible additional titles.

- Training for chairs (a simple version of the current training)
- Introduction to the Council's main policies and strategies
- Equality
- Safeguarding
- Data Management
- Corporate Parenting
- Finance - the Council's financial arrangements e.g. where does our funding come from? Understanding of revenue, capital, balances etc.
- Developing the new Cabinet - specific training
- Planning (immediate for Planning Committee Members prior to first meeting) and within few weeks for members who are not committee members
- Social Media
- Personal development interviews and annual reports
- Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales)
- Decisions for Future Generations (Well-being of Future Generations Act)
- Outside Bodies

Appendix 3 – IT Requirements for Members

Electoral Focus Group May 2017 Meeting 2 - possible electronic equipment

Date – 06/07/2016

Present - Councillors Annwen Daniels, Selwyn Griffiths, Michael Sol Owen and Dyfrig Siencyn.
Officers - Huw Ynyr, Senior Information Technology Manager, Urien Huws, Information Technology Desktop Engineer, Arwel Ellis Jones, Senior Corporate Support Manager, Vera Jones, Democratic Services Manager, Sion Owen, Member Support Officer.

1. Needs were considered (i.e. what is required of the electronic provision)
 - ✓ Receive e-mail
 - ✓ Read documents with ease
 - ✓ Calendar
 - ✓ Portable
 - ✓ Handle/edit documents (for some)
 - ✓ Send photographs? (for some)

(Note, it must be remembered that a provision for handling documents from a home computer is currently being offered for editing documents)
2. 4 devices were assessed against the above criteria during the meeting: iPad Air 2, Lenovo L450/460, Lenovo x250, Surface Pro.
3. Two devices, the iPad Air 2 and the Surface Pro, currently top the list. The focus group believe, however, that more work is needed before a conclusion can be reached, asking officers:
 - a) To find out the intentions of other authorities in Wales in terms of device and cost
 - b) To find out about the next Apple release, and its next new device (which is likely to happen around October 2016)
 - c) To arrange for Focus Group members to trial the devices so that they can come to a fairer conclusion.
4. The above work is under way at present, with a further meeting to consider the matters in a, b and c above arranged for October 2016.
5. Further, the focus group was asked to consider three ways of handing out the equipment, which means, either:
 - i) Providing one standardised piece of equipment to all members
 - ii) Allowing each member to choose equipment
 - iii) Providing equipment according to a member's duties (e.g. different for a Cabinet Member)
6. The group began to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the above. Consideration will undoubtedly be given at the next meeting and when any equipment is being trialled, so that a conclusion can be reached and recommendations presented on the electronic provision. Recommendations are expected to be reported to the Democratic Services Committee on 29 November 2016.

7. The group will also try to finalise the practical arrangements for distributing new equipment, putting guidelines in place in the event that a member ceases to be a member, and considering arrangements for collecting current equipment (dependent on the option selected for the future).

Committee	Standards Committee
Date :	3 October 2016
Title	The Ombudsman's Annual Report 2015/16
Author	Monitoring Officer
Action :	Note for Information

Background

1. The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales has published his annual report for the year 2015-2016.
2. A copy of those parts of the report relevant to code of conduct complaints is attached to this report as an **Appendix**. The report can be found on the Ombudsman's website (www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk)
3. The Ombudsman also produces an annual letter. This is what he has to say in that letter in relation to Code of Conduct complaints:

"The number of Code of Conduct complaints rose by 19% compared with 2014/15 (274 in 2015/16 against 231). It is disappointing to see this rise, although it is almost entirely attributable to community councils where there has been a 49% increase.

Last year I introduced a public interest test for code of conduct complaints and I am pleased to say this has helped my office in dealing with these complaints in an effective manner.

I am only too aware that we are in the run-up to the local elections where historically there is a spike in code of conduct complaints against local authority members. I have spoken previously about vexatious complaints and I would be most disappointed to see an increase in complaints of a trivial matter over the next 12 months when my office is dealing with issues of real concern across public services in my jurisdiction."

Recommendation

4. The Committee is asked to note the report.

ANNUAL REPORT

2015/16

10 YEARS
OF PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

10 YEARS
OF PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

The Annual Report 2015/16

of

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Laid before the National Assembly for Wales
under paragraph 14 of Schedule 1
of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005

Annual Report 2015/16

1	Introduction by the Ombudsman	5
2	My Role as the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales	8
3	Ten Years of the Ombudsman's Office	12
4	The Complaints Service	14
5	Improving Public Services	25
6	Governance and Accountability	28
7	Other Activities	31
8	Annual Equality Report	36
Annex A	Public Body Complaints: Public Interest Reports Case Summaries	45
Annex B	Public Body Complaints: Statistical Breakdown of Outcomes by Public Body	55
Annex C	Code of Conduct Complaints: Statistical Breakdown of Outcomes by Local Authority	67

1. Introduction by the Ombudsman



It is with great pleasure that I present this report for the year 2015/16, which was my first full year in office, and the tenth Annual Report of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales since the office was established on 1 April 2006.

I see my Annual Report as having two key purposes:

1. to report on the performance and work of my office over the past year
2. to draw the attention of the National Assembly and the people of Wales to the messages that emerge from the outcomes of the complaints made to me regarding any areas of concern in relation to the nation's public service delivery.

However, with the office celebrating its 10 years anniversary, it is also appropriate in this Annual Report to reflect on the journey since 1 April 2006, from being the 'new kid on the block' to becoming a mature and well respected ombudsman scheme. This report therefore also looks back on some of the key developments over the past decade.

Whilst the ombudsman scheme in Wales is well respected at home and abroad, I feel strongly that we must ensure that it is fit for purpose not only for today but also tomorrow. It is important that we understand the office's journey of the past; but we need to do so in the context of ensuring that Wales also has the modern ombudsman scheme that it deserves to the future. That is why I have been particularly pleased that the Finance Committee of the National Assembly for Wales agreed to undertake an inquiry into the powers of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, and that a draft Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill has resulted from this. I discuss this in greater detail later in this report, but would like to take the opportunity here to record my sincere thanks to Mrs Jocelyn Davies, AM, Chair of the Finance Committee and to all the Committee members for their diligent work in this matter. I sincerely hope that the new Fifth Assembly will decide to take the Draft Bill forward, introducing it as one of its first pieces of legislation after the Assembly May 2016 election.

Whilst I am passionate about the need for the PSOW's powers to be strengthened and extended through new legislation, I have also since taking up post been considering what initiatives I can introduce to address current issues facing the office. As I reported last year, the year on year volume increase of casework was a matter of concern and I was seeking ways that would allow us to 'turn the curve'. During the past year, I introduced some staffing changes at my office, key amongst these was enhanced roles for a number of investigation staff to include 'improvement officer' duties. This places a greater emphasis on best practice, corporate cultural development, and ending cycles of poor service delivery. Whilst the new arrangements are still in their early days, I have been very pleased with the progress that has been made. To complement these changes I wanted to enhance our external communication activity and, therefore, increased the office resource accordingly. I was particularly pleased that we were able to issue a thematic report this year. This brought to public attention an area of concern emanating from the investigations of my office in relation to poor quality hospital care 'out of hours'.

At the same time that the work above was in progress, my staff and I also worked together to produce a new three year strategic plan to take us forward to 2018/19. This resulted in a new Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Aims. I am extremely pleased with the outcome of this work and grateful to my team for the enthusiastic way that they engaged with this process. I am grateful too to the PSOW's Advisory Panel Members who also contributed to the development of the plan.

We also continued with a number of outreach activities during the year, this included giving particular attention to improving our provision for those people who are deaf or have hearing difficulties. More information about our outreach work during the year can be found in my 'annual equality report' found at Section 8 of this report.

However, by far the greatest activity of the office during the year of course was the core business of considering the complaints made to me. Whilst overall, the office caseload (which includes both enquiries and complaints) was up by 4%, interestingly and for only the second time since the creation of the office, there was a fall in the complaints received about public service providers (down 4% compared to 2014/15). Notably, the only sector that saw an increase in complaints to my office was the NHS in Wales, which was up by 4%; complaints about all other sectors fell to different degrees.

I have previously spoken about wanting to ensure that the resource of my office is devoted to issues of real concern rather than trivial complaints about the Code of Conduct. It is of particular disappointment to me therefore that complaints alleging that councillors had breached their authority's Code rose by 19%. This is solely attributable to community and

town councils, where complaints about members of these councils rose by 49%. I have been particularly pleased that the public interest test I introduced last year has helped my office in dealing with these complaints in an effective manner. I discuss this further at section 4 of this report.

Finally, I would like to thank my staff and the Advisory Panel for their support during the past year. For many members of staff it has involved direct changes to their roles and for others there have been associated effects. I am truly grateful to them for their positive attitude to the new arrangements and their continued professionalism in our common aim of ensuring administrative justice for public service users and improving public service delivery in Wales.



Nick Bennett
Ombudsman

2. My Role as the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

As Ombudsman, I have two specific roles. The first is to consider complaints about public services providers in Wales; the second role is to consider complaints that members of local authorities have broken the Code of Conduct. I am independent of all government bodies and the service that I provide is free of charge.

Complaints about Public Service Providers

Under the PSOW Act 2005, I consider complaints about bodies which, generally, are those that provide public services where responsibility for their provision has been devolved to Wales. The types of bodies I can look into include:

- local government (both county and community councils);
- the National Health Service (including GPs and dentists);
- registered social landlords (housing associations);
- and the Welsh Government, together with its sponsored bodies.

I am also able to consider complaints about privately arranged or funded social care and palliative care services.

When considering complaints, I look to see whether people have been treated unfairly or inconsiderately, or have received a bad service through some fault on the part of the service provider. Attention will also be given to whether the service provider has acted in accordance with the law and its own policies. If a complaint is upheld I will recommend appropriate redress. The main approach taken when recommending redress is, where possible, to put the complainant (or the person who has suffered the injustice) back to the position they would have been in if the problem had not occurred. Furthermore, if from the investigation I see evidence of a systemic weakness, then recommendations will be made with the aim of reducing the likelihood of others being similarly affected in future.

A New PSOW Act?

I have outlined above the key features of my role as Ombudsman. However, during the course of the year the Finance Committee of the National Assembly for Wales conducted an inquiry into the Ombudsman's powers. Following its report on the inquiry, a Draft PSOW Bill was issued.

I was extremely pleased to see that included in the Draft PSOW Bill were the following proposals, enhancing the existing powers of the PSOW:

- the ability to undertake own initiative investigations;
- the ability to accept oral complaints;
- the ability to consider complaints about private hospitals in circumstances where a patient's pathway has involved treatment and/or care by both public and private health care providers;
- a complaints standards authority role.

Having then conducted a public consultation on the Draft Bill, in the introduction to the resultant report, the Finance Committee Chair, Mrs Jocelyn Davies, AM, noted that rather than amending the 2005 Act, it was felt that the Ombudsman's role should be governed by Welsh legislation. The aim therefore was to create one piece of bilingual legislation which would repeal the PSOW Act 2005. The report contained a number of recommendations, the first of which was:

Recommendation 1 - The Committee recommends that a future Committee of the National Assembly for Wales should introduce the Draft Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill, as soon as possible, in the Fifth Assembly.

(Source: National Assembly for Wales Finance Committee Consideration of the consultation on the Draft Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill (March 2016))

I am delighted with the outcome of the Assembly Finance Committee's work. I have commented publicly in a number of places that I think it is vital that we ensure that the PSOW's legislative basis is sound and that we can claim to be genuinely fit for the future and that legislation:

- addresses future challenges affecting service users in an ageing society where there are greater levels of physical and emotional vulnerability;
- makes a real contribution to public service improvement and reform whilst offering excellent value for money;
- ensures that citizens from more deprived backgrounds will find it easier to make a complaint;
- strengthens the citizen's voice and ensures that wherever possible processes will follow the citizen rather than the sector or the silo.

I very much hope that the Fifth Assembly takes forward the Committee's recommendation, together with the others in its report, without delay after the May 2016 election and that new Welsh legislation will soon result.

Both Finance Committee reports referred to above are available on the Assembly's website: assembly.wales

Code of Conduct Complaints

Under the provisions of Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 and also relevant Orders made by the National Assembly for Wales under that Act, I consider complaints that members of local authorities have breached their authority's Code of Conduct. I can consider complaints about the behaviour of members of:

- county and county borough councils
- community councils
- fire authorities
- national park authorities and
- police and crime panels.

All these authorities have a Code of Conduct which sets out in detail how members must follow recognised principles of behaviour in public life.

If a county councillor wishes to make a complaint about another county councillor within their own authority, then I expect them to first of all make their complaint to that authority's Monitoring Officer, as it may be possible to resolve the matter locally without my involvement.

Amendments to Legislation in Relation to the Model Code of Conduct

I very much welcomed the Welsh Government's amendments to legislation (in force from 1 April 2016). Below I draw attention to some of the key changes which impact on my role in relation to Code of Conduct complaints and are relevant to my office:

- **The Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016** - There is provision for a number of amendments in relation to the legislation on the Model Code of Conduct, all of which I have welcomed. Perhaps the key amongst these from my perspective is that the previous requirement placing an obligation on a local authority member to report a potential breach of the Code to me, as Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, has been omitted from the Code, but there continues to be the obligation to report such matters to the monitoring officer. However, if a matter remains unresolved following consideration by the monitoring officer, or the complaint raised is a serious one, then the complaint can then be referred on to me for consideration. This now supports the informal arrangement for resolving low level member against member complaints that this office has recently agreed with county or county borough councils. This amendment does not prevent a member from reporting a potentially serious breach of the Code to me.

- The Local Government (Standards Committees, Investigations, Dispensations and Referral (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

These Regulations introduce a number of amendments in relation to:

- The Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001
- The Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001
- Local Authorities (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations 2001.

In particular, I am pleased that:

- provision has been made to enable a standards committee or a monitoring officer, with the prior written agreement of the Chairperson of the standards committee, to refer the report of a misconduct investigation to another authority's standards committee for determination with a view to overcoming any potential conflict of interest a standards committee may have in dealing with the complaint under consideration
- two or more relevant authorities are now able to establish a joint standards committee
- a member seeking to appeal the determination of a standards committee will in future first need to obtain the permission of the President, or a nominated panel member, of the Adjudication Panel.

These are all developments which this office has previously advocated and supported during past discussions with the Welsh Government and, indeed, with monitoring officers. I very much hope that these amendments will lead to both a more effective ethical standards system and a reduction in Code of Conduct complaints to my office and the associated staff resource.

3. Ten Years of the Ombudsman’s Office – A retrospective of Annual Reports

Adam Peat is the first Public Services Ombudsman for Wales



2006/07

The journey begins - PSOW Act came into effect on 1 April 2006, creating a one stop shop for complaints about public service providers in Wales. It replaced the previous offices of the Commissioner for Local Administration in Wales, the Health Service Commissioner for Wales, the Welsh Administration Ombudsman, and the Social Housing Ombudsman.



2007/08

For first time health public interest investigation reports published (under previous Health Commissioner legislation making health investigation reports public was prohibited). Focus on issuing guidance to public bodies on good administrative practice: Principles of Good Administration; and Principles for Remedy.

Peter Tyndall is now the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales



2008/09

New Strategic Plan introduced with emphasis on: being an accessible service, particularly for those in vulnerable circumstances; and streamlining PSOW complaints procedure to deal with the challenges faced due to increasing caseload.



2009/10

Complaints Advice Team created with greater emphasis on customer care, 'managing expectations' and proactive approach to Early Resolution (Quick Fix). Guidance issued to councillors on the code of conduct for local authority members.



2010/11

Health complaints now account for quarter of all complaints to the office. PSOW engages with Welsh Government and Assembly to propose addressing anomaly of lack of administrative justice available to people who self fund care and those who receive services from hospices.



2011/12

Work of group chaired by Ombudsman results in Welsh Government issuing Model Policy & Guidance for complaints handling for adoption by all public services providers in Wales. Complaints Wales signposting service launched, to help people make complaints to public bodies about poor service. NHS Redress Measure introduced and independent review stage removed. Ombudsman becomes sole independent reviewer of health complaints.

Peter Tyndall is the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Margaret Griffiths becomes Acting Ombudsman from December 2013

Nick Bennett is the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales from August 2014



2012/13

Ombudsman proposes reform of the PSOW Wales Act.

Ombudsman engages with Welsh Government and Assembly concerning lack of redress for people in receipt of public services delivered by private sector organisations, with particular reference to private health care.

Ombudsman reviews own governance arrangements and creates Advisory Panel.



2013/14

A time of transition begins when Acting Ombudsman takes up role.

Trend of year on year increases in complaints continue, with health complaints having increased 146% over a period of five years. Health now accounts for 36% of all complaints to the office.

Social services complaints also begin to cause concern, with a 19% increase on previous year (although from a lower base in terms of number of complaints compared to other areas of complaint).



2014/15

Ombudsman can now consider complaints about independent care providers where care is self funded, as well as hospices and domiciliary care.

Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 removes independent review stage. Ombudsman becomes sole independent reviewer of complaints about social services.

Assembly Finance Committee agrees to undertake a review into powers of the Ombudsman.

Ombudsman instigates innovation project to seek efficiency gains in face of ever increasing complaints caseload. Other work undertaken to 'turn the curve', includes increased emphasis on data gathering and review of staff resources.

Nick Bennett is Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

2015/16

Assembly publishes Draft Public Services Ombudsman Wales Bill.

Staff changes take place, to include introducing 'improvement officer' role and greater emphasis on external and internal communication.

And forward to the next ten years ...

... the PSOW's powers have by now been strengthened and the Ombudsman operates to the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2016 ????

10 Celebrating 10 Years

2005 2016

ANNIVERSARY

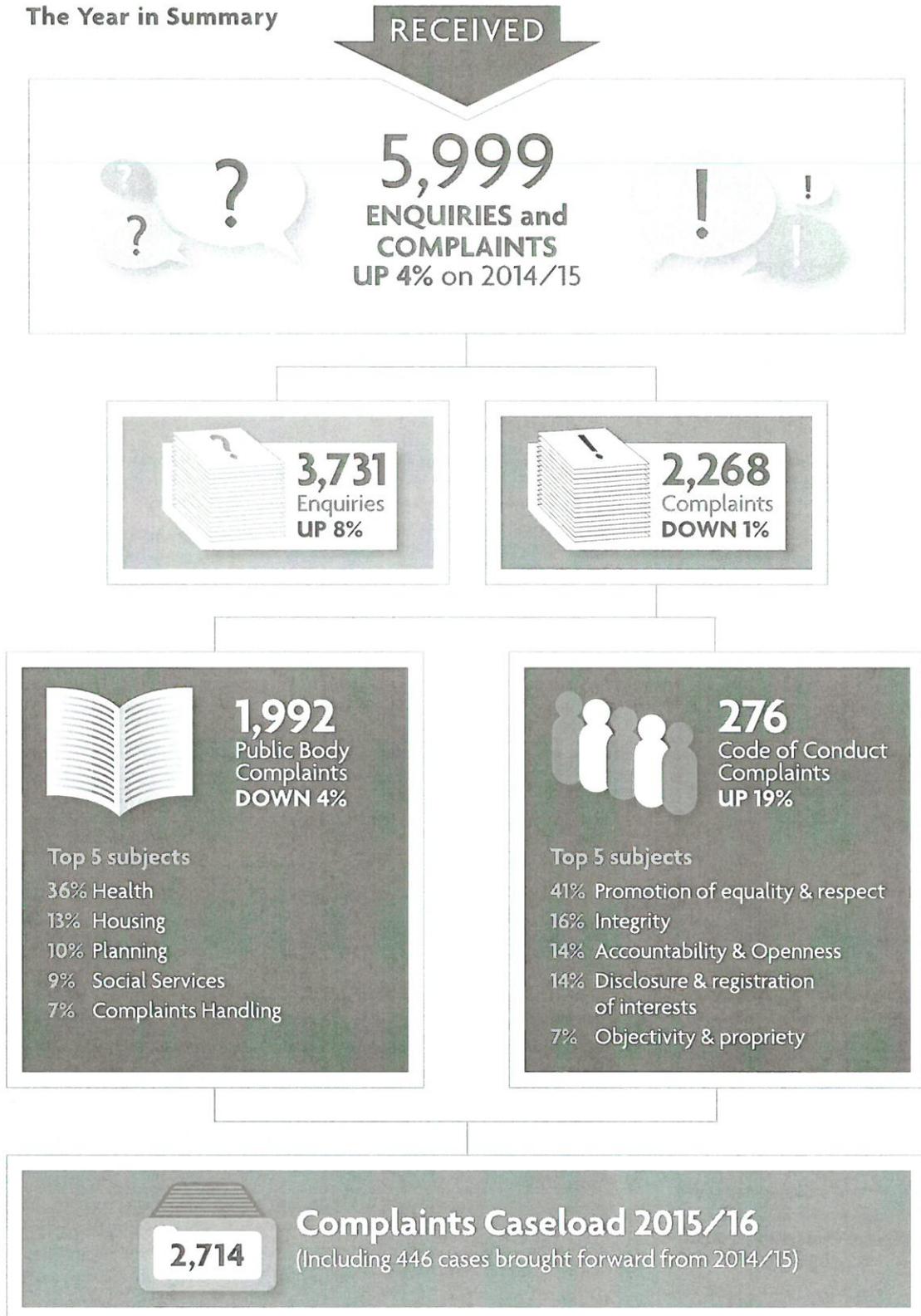
In recognising ten years of the Ombudsman's office, I was extremely grateful to Dame Rosemary Butler, the Presiding Officer, for agreeing to host an anniversary event at the Senedd Building. I was delighted that a number of Assembly Members, many public sector ombudsmen colleagues, other stakeholders and staff were able to join me to mark the occasion. It was an opportune time to reflect on the past achievements of the office as well as to look forward to the future.



Dame Rosemary Butler, Presiding Officer, welcomes Nick Bennett, Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and colleague public sector ombudsman at the Senedd

4. The Complaints Service

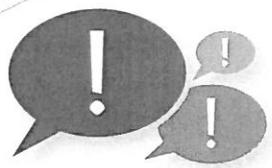
The Year in Summary

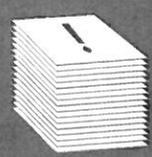


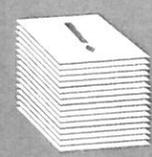
 **2,714** **Complaints Caseload 2015/16**
 (Including 446 cases brought forward from 2014/15)



2,315 **COMPLAINTS**
 UP 3% on 2014/15



 **2,050**
 Public Body Complaints
 UP 2%

 **265**
 Code of Conduct Complaints
 UP 11%

521 detailed consideration/
 investigation
 UP 22%



37 investigated
 DOWN 31%



397
 Resolution or Upheld
 UP 4%

Of these:
 55% Health
 10% Complaint Handling
 9% Housing
 8% Social Services
 6% Planning

18
 Evidence of Breach
 DOWN 6%
 (= 1 case)

Of these:
 39% Disclosure & registration of interests
 17% Objectivity & propriety
 17% Integrity
 16% Duty to uphold the law
 11% Promotion of equality & respect

Overall Casework

The number of enquiries and complaints (public body complaints, and complaints about the conduct of members of local authorities) totalled 5,999 during 2015/16 which is a 4% increase on the position for 2014/15. As can be seen from the chart below, comparing the position with that of five years ago, there has been a 54% increase. However, there are signs that the increases that the office has seen since the time it came into existence are beginning to plateau. I discuss the various aspects of this in greater detail below.

Total Enquiries and Complaints received by year



Enquiries

The office dealt with 3,731 enquiries during 2015/16, compared with 3,470 the previous year (an 8% increase). Compared with five years ago, this is a 100% increase. It is worth noting that February 2016 saw the highest ever number of enquiries made to this office.

An enquiry is a contact made by a potential complainant asking about the service provided, which does not, in the end, result in a formal complaint being made to me. At this point in our service we will advise people how to make a complaint to me or, where the matter is outside my jurisdiction, direct the enquirer to the appropriate organisation able to help them. Where appropriate, the Complaints Advice Team will also seek to resolve a problem at enquiry stage without taking the matter forward to the stage of a formal complaint.

We set ourselves the target of answering our main line reception calls within 30 seconds in 95% of cases. Yet again the Team performed impressively in this regard, answering 99% of calls within this timescale.

I am delighted that despite the continued increase in enquiries to this office we have maintained a prompt service at the frontline.

Code of Conduct Complaints

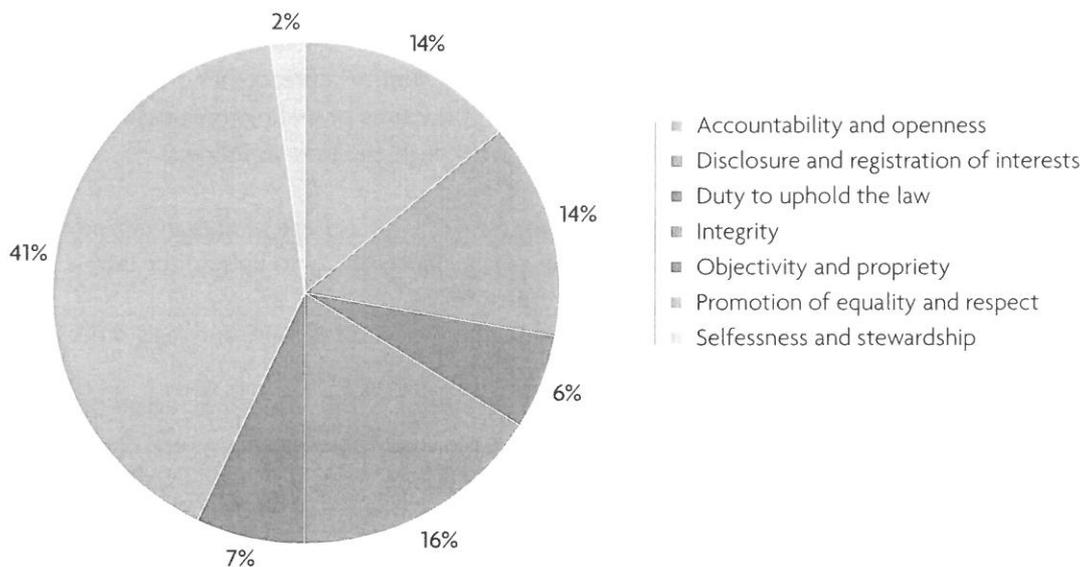
Complaints received

The number of Code of Conduct complaints rose by 19% compared with 2014/15 (274 in 2015/16 against 231). It is disappointing to see this rise, especially in relation to community councils where there has been a 49% increase.

	2015/16	2014/15
Community Council	158	106
County/County Borough Council	115	125
Fire Authority	0	0
National Park Authority	1	0
Police & Crime Panels	0	0
Total	274	231

Nature of Code of Conduct complaints

By far the majority of complaints received during 2015/16 related to matters of 'equality and respect', accounting for 41% of the complaints made to me (this was 35% in 2014/15). The next largest area of complaint related to 'integrity' at 16%, and then 'disclosure and registration of interests' and 'accountability and openness' both of which accounted for 14% of the Code of Conduct caseload.



Summary of Code of Conduct complaint outcomes

Consistent with previous years, the vast majority of these complaints (213 of them) were closed under the category 'Closed after initial consideration' (178 were closed in this way in 2014/5). This includes decisions such as:

- there was no 'prima facie' evidence of a breach of the Code
- the alleged breach was insufficiently serious to warrant an investigation (and unlikely to attract a sanction)
- the incident complained about happened before the member was elected (before they were bound by the Code), and
- with a few referred back for local resolution.

Despite the higher level of complaints received, fewer were taken into full investigation (27 in 2015/16 compared with 34 the previous year). I largely attribute this to be the result of a key change over the past year whereby I introduced a 'public interest test'. This test was developed as a result of the high number of trivial complaints received at my office, and to make clear the criteria that I will apply when considering whether a complaint should be taken into investigation or not. It also ensures that I continue to investigate serious complaints to maintain public confidence in standards of public life.

Of those 27 cases that were fully investigated, six were referred to either a standards committee or the Adjudication Panel (nine were referred in 2014/15). In such circumstances it is for these bodies to consider the evidence found, together with any defence put forward by the member concerned. It is then for them to determine whether a breach has occurred and, if so, what penalty, if any, should be imposed. Whilst at the time of writing three cases await consideration, decisions have been arrived at on the other three cases, as follows:

Hearing by:	Decision & Sanction	Nature of breach of Code
Standards Committee	Breach of Code - Councillor suspended for one month	Duty to uphold the law
Standards Committee	Breach of Code - Councillor suspended for one month	Disclosure and registration of interests
Tribunal of Adjudication Panel for Wales	Breach of Code - Councillor suspended for three months and to receive training during this time.	Disclosure and registration of interests

A breakdown of the outcomes is below:

	2015/16	2014/15
Closed after initial consideration	213	178
Complaint withdrawn	15	7
Investigation discontinued	10	20
Investigation completed: No evidence of breach	11	17
Investigation completed: No action necessary	10	8
Investigation completed: Refer to Standards Committee	3	8
Investigation completed: Refer to Adjudication Panel	3	1
Total Outcomes – Code of Conduct complaints	265	239

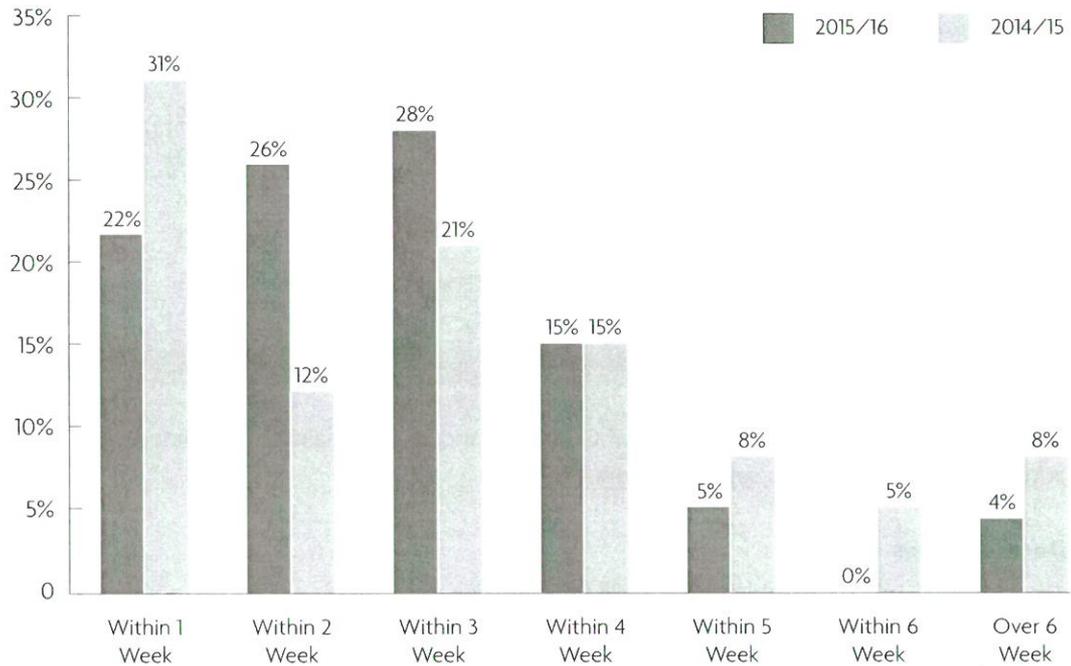
A detailed breakdown of the outcome of Code of Conduct complaints investigated, by authority, during 2015/16 is set out at Annex C.

Decision times

Time taken to tell the complainant if I will take up their complaint

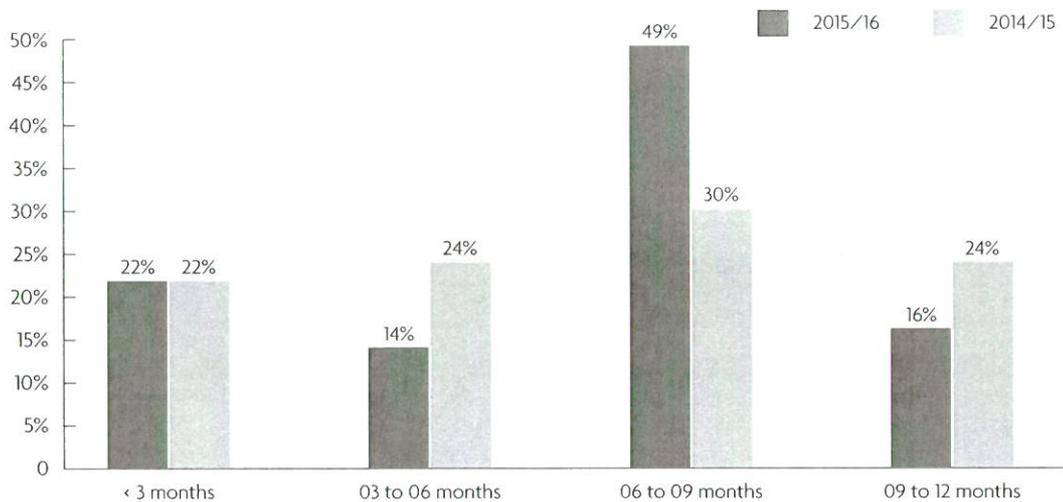
In respect of Code of Conduct complaints, 91% of complainants were informed within four weeks of whether I would take up their complaint (from the date that sufficient information is received). I'm particularly pleased that we surpassed our 90% target in this regard. Last year I reported that we achieved the four week target in 79% of cases and that I would work with my staff during this past year to ensure that we advise both the complainant and the accused member promptly as to whether I will take the matter into investigation or not. In addition to this improvement against the four week target, it is also worth noting that 96% had been informed within five weeks. My staff and I are always mindful of the fact that being the subject of a complaint can be a stressful and serious matter for the member being complained about.

Further details on these decision timescales are shown below.



Decision times for concluding Code of Conduct investigations

Comparing performance against 2014/15, in addition to the improvement in meeting the four week target, as discussed above, I am also pleased that there was an improvement on closing investigations within twelve months. Furthermore, as the chart below shows, during the past year 85% of Code of Conduct investigations were completed within 9 months, compared with 76% in 2014/15.



5. Improving Public Services

It is important to me that not only do we put things right for users of public services when poor service has been identified, but that as a consequence of our work improvements occur in those areas of service delivery where we have identified failings. Below I describe some of the initiatives introduced this year to build on already established practices in this regard.

Improvement Officers

In particular, during the course of the year I introduced into the roles of a number of investigation staff in my office, the additional role of 'improvement officer'. Whilst the main element of their role remains the investigation of complaints, their improvement role will include stakeholder engagement with certain bodies in jurisdiction as well as subject leads for areas which continue to affect quality public services.

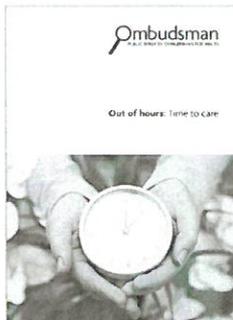
Those organisations assigned an Improvement Officer were: Abertawe Bro Morgannwg UHB, Aneurin Bevan UHB, Betsi Cadwaladr UHB, Cardiff and Vale UHB, Hywel Dda UHB and Ceredigion County Council. In engaging with these bodies we hope to see ongoing improvements in complaints handling, learning and putting things right, along with the governance arrangements necessary for continuous improvement. We will regularly review our data, and the insights we gain from these arrangements, to identify any improvements. I will in due course consider whether it would be beneficial to extend this approach to other bodies.

Subject leads are now in place for:

- health (with a separate lead for clinical advice)
- housing
- local government planning services
- social services, and
- the code of conduct for local authority members.

Subject leads are specifically tasked with identifying trends from casework across the office, leading on thematic reports, and monitoring legislative and other developments affecting the subject area.

Thematic Reports



The first thematic report emerging from the new approach described above was published in March 2016. The report entitled 'Out of Hours: Time to Care' highlighted a number of cases investigated that showed inadequate standards of care given to patients in hospitals across Wales outside of 'normal' working hours.

As I can currently only look at complaints submitted to me by service users, my report called for an independent systemic review on out of hours care. In particular I identified the following areas for attention:

- inadequate consultant cover across seven days
- delays in medical review and lack of consultant review
- lack of senior supervision for junior medical staff
- failure to meet pre-existing standards of care and established guidelines.

Whilst I did not suggest that the failures in care identified by my office were typical of health service delivery in Wales's hospitals, they did not appear to be isolated incidents. An independent systemic review would confirm whether or not there were any emerging patterns or inconsistencies in quality of care in this area and, if so, allow for them to be addressed appropriately.

In addition to the above there were other activities during the year in relation to the goal of improving service delivery. In particular, I was pleased to be able to publish a joint publication with the Information Commissioner:

- **Principles of Good Administration and Good Records Management** - This was a revision of the 'Principles of Good Administration' originally issued by the Ombudsman in 2008. I was delighted to be able to work with the Information Commissioner in reviewing this document, which now includes two new Principles in relation to good records management. Following consultation with bodies within my jurisdiction, the new document was published in February 2016.
- **Enhanced Data Capture** – We have also during the year reviewed the level of data that we capture in relation to the complaints made to me, with particular focus on health complaints in the first instance. The aim is to enable us to identify trends at a more micro rather than macro level. As we only begun inputting data at this level during this year, it is too early to have been able to benefit from this yet. However, I hope that we will be able to derive useful information to act upon during 2016/17.

Furthermore, sight should not be lost of the already established vehicles used to highlight areas for service delivery improvements by bodies in jurisdiction. These included:

- **Public interest reports** – Seven such reports were issued during 2015/16 and summaries of these investigation reports together with findings and outcomes are set out at Annex A. The full reports are available on my website at www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk.
- **The Ombudsman's Casebook** – These continued to be published quarterly. Four main areas highlighted for service improvement in the publications issued during the year were:
 - services for vulnerable citizens
 - reducing the distress of dying - why improvements are needed to end of life care
 - GP services
 - special needs education.
- **The Code of Conduct Casebook** – At the request of its readership, we began issuing these quarterly during 2015/16 rather than on a six monthly basis, which was our previous practice. An annual commentary by me is to appear in the April editions of the Casebook.
- **Annual letters** – These are issued to county councils and health boards and used as the basis of discussions with the Chairs and Chief Executives of individual local health boards. Local authorities are also invited to seek a meeting to discuss their particular Annual Letter if they so wish. It is intended that the Annual Letters to be issued during 2016 in respect of the operational year 2015/16 will for the first time include an improvement officer's commentary in relation to those bodies assigned an improvement officer.

6. Governance and Accountability

The Ombudsman

The Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005 establishes the office of the Ombudsman as a 'corporation sole'. The Ombudsman is accountable to the National Assembly for Wales, both through the mechanism of the annual report, and as Accounting Officer for the public funds with which the National Assembly entrusts the Ombudsman to undertake their functions.

I appeared before an Assembly committee on a number of occasions during the past year. This included the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee to discuss the Annual Report for 2014/15; and the Finance Committee to discuss my budget estimate submission for 2016/17. I also appeared before the Finance Committee in relation to providing evidence to its inquiry into the PSOW's powers. I welcomed the opportunity on each occasion to discuss not only the work already undertaken by my office, but also what the work of the office could look like in the future.

Advisory Panel and Audit & Risk Assurance Committee

As reported last year, although a corporation sole, I have an Advisory Panel which provides both challenge and support to me as Ombudsman. There is also an Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, a sub-committee of the Panel. Having reviewed the level of membership during the past year, I decided to strengthen its membership by one additional member. An open/public recruitment exercise was conducted. I was very pleased to appoint Mr Jonathan Morgan from a strong field of candidates. Mr Morgan served as an Assembly Member for 12 years, and is a former Chair of the National Assembly Public Accounts Committee. He joined the Panel in March 2016 and will also be a member of the PSOW's Audit & Risk Assurance Committee.

The work of both the Panel and the Committee over the past year will be reported in greater detail as part of the Governance Statement within my Annual Accounts for 2015/16.

Management Team

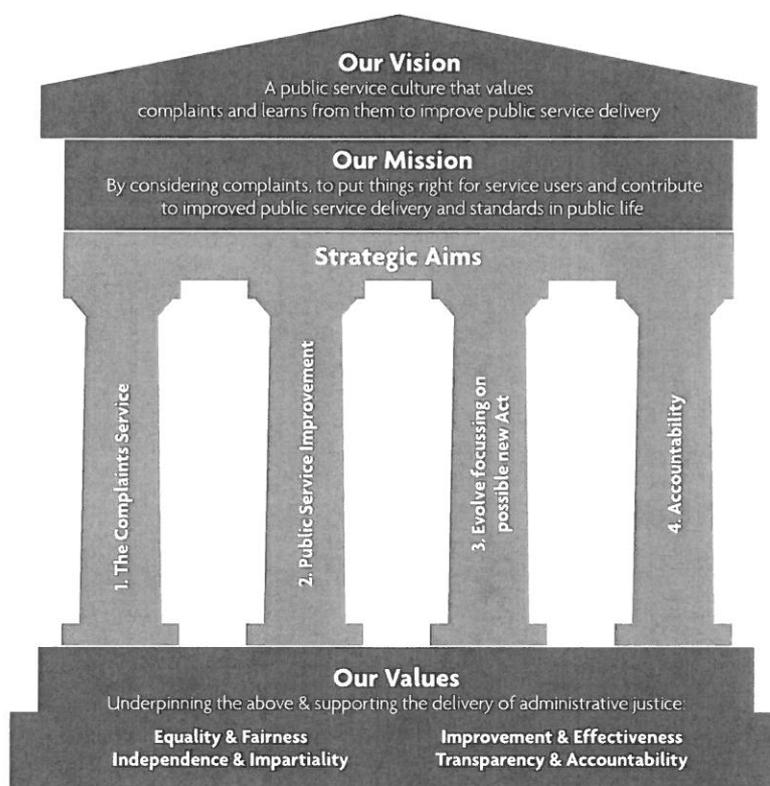
The Management Team has continued to support and advise me in relation to strategic direction as well as the operational, day to day, running the office. I am particularly grateful to them this year for ensuring a successful and seamless staffing and operational transition. The revised staffing structure can be found at page 30.

Three Year Strategic Plan

This was the final year of the existing strategy and, therefore, during the year, my staff and I developed a new three year strategic plan for the office to the operational year 2018/19. We held a number of workshops, which proved to be very productive. A separate workshop was also held for Advisory Panel Members and I was very grateful to them for their contribution. A new Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Aims resulted from this work.

Whilst taking forward the service under the existing powers of the Ombudsman was a key focus for our discussions, I felt that it was important that we created space in our strategic planning to implement any new PSOW Act that might be created during the lifetime of the plan. However, I wish to reinforce the message in this report that in doing so I have not taken anything for granted in relation to the introduction of new legislation or what that legislation might contain.

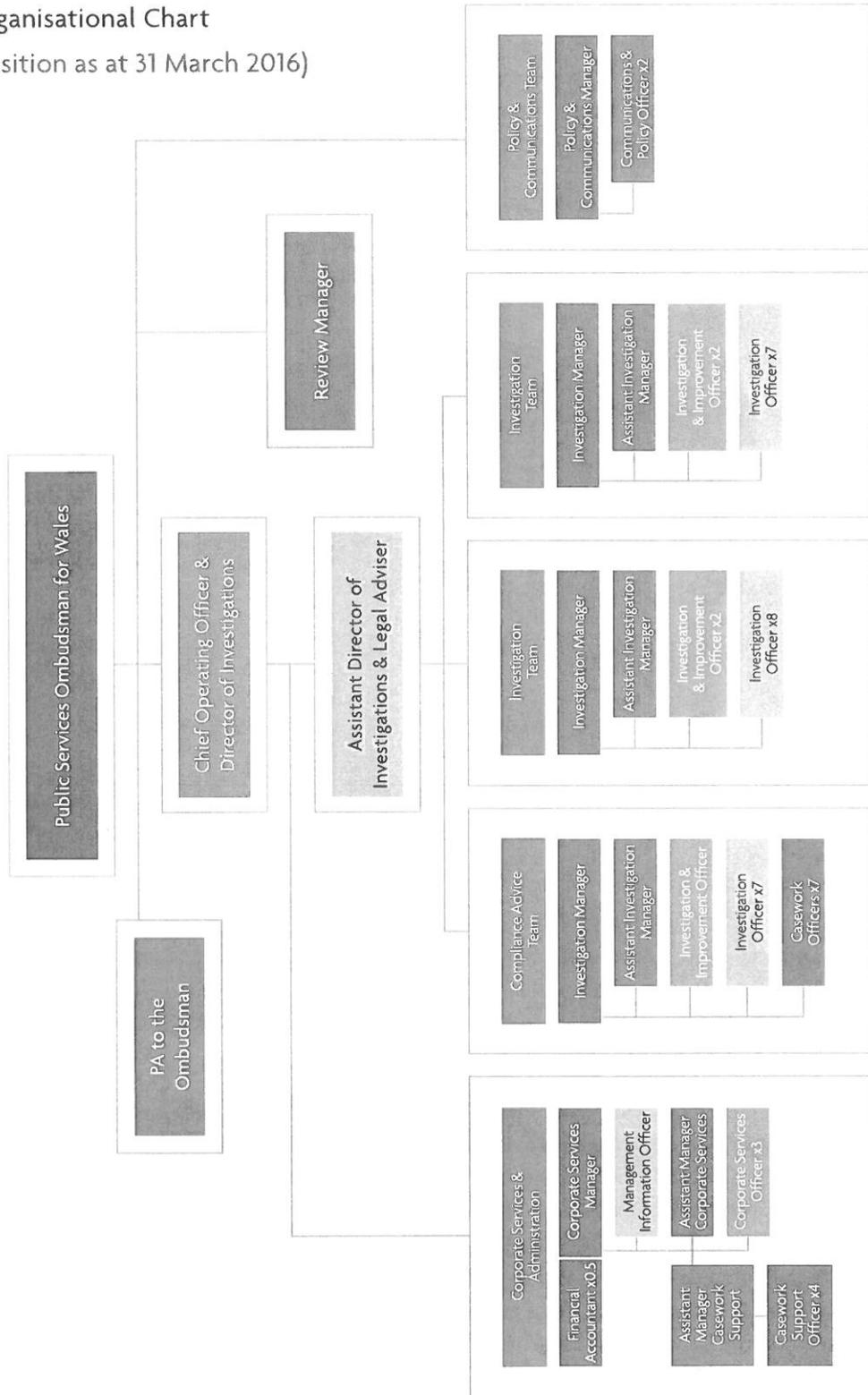
Below is an illustrated summary of the strategic plan, the full text of the Strategic Aims can be found in the comprehensive document entitled 'Three Year Strategic Plan 2016/17 to 2018/19: Innovation, Influence, Improvement' on the website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk



European Directive on Alternative Dispute Resolution

Last year I reported on the possible impact on the PSOW of the European Directive on Alternative Dispute Resolution and the Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015 that the UK Government laid before Parliament on 17 March 2015. At the time of writing my report last year I was still considering whether or not it was appropriate for the PSOW to apply to be an ADR entity. For completeness, I now report here that I concluded that it was not appropriate for the PSOW to do so. Furthermore, since my decision, other UK public sector ombudsmen (and the Irish Ombudsman) have arrived at a similar conclusion.

Organisational Chart
(Position as at 31 March 2016)



7. Other Activities

Co-operation with Commissioners

I have been actively looking for opportunities to co-operate with other ombudsmen and commissioners in circumstances where this is appropriate. I have already reported on a publication I issued jointly with the Information Commissioner, and I am pleased that I can report on another two specific developments that have taken place over recent months:

- **Internal Audit Contract** – With the end of the PSOW’s internal audit contract on the horizon, I was pleased that the Children’s and Older People’s Commissioners agreed that, with a view of achieving cost savings, it would be beneficial to procure on the basis of comprehensive internal audit tender process upon which each Commissioner’s office could then draw upon individually. A successful tender process resulted to the satisfaction of both Commissioners and myself,
- **Future Generations Commissioner** – I also had very positive discussions with the new Future Generations Commissioner and was pleased to be able to agree to provide the Commissioner with a staff salaries service for her office.

In addition to the above, I have continued to meet regularly with the Commissioners in Wales to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Complainant satisfaction research

We have continued with our satisfaction survey practice in relation to customer satisfaction for our first contact service. The table below gives the outcome for 2015/16 as follows (some respondents did not answer every question; the ‘no responses’ have been disregarded in respect of the outcomes below):

	% of respondents answering either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’
It was easy to find out how to contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales	95%
The service I have received has been helpful and sensitive	88%
Staff were able to understand my complaint / The person that dealt with my query knew enough to be able to answer my questions	88%
I was given a clear explanation of what would happen to my query/complaint	89%
The service has provided what I expected of it	83%

Clearly, the above outcomes are very pleasing; not least against the background of the increased volume of work faced by the frontline service as discussed earlier in this report.

We have also been considering other ways of understanding various stakeholders' views of my service. Looking at good practice elsewhere in the ombudsman community, I have decided that we should establish a number of sounding boards in this regard. The first of these will comprise members of advice and advocacy bodies, particularly inviting those organisations who help complainants through the complaints process. I also intend forming sounding boards to gain feedback from other organisations, including members of bodies within my jurisdiction, to understand their perspective on the service provided by my office. I hope that the first of these will be in place at the end of the first quarter of 2016/17.

Communications

External:

- Media - A positive relationship with the media continued over the past year and meetings with a number of journalists, particularly broadcast journalists took place to discuss and explain matters of current concern and interest to the office. Once again a number of opportunities arose for me to give television and radio interviews. There was an excellent level of reporting on the 'Out of Hours: Time to Care' thematic report as well as on the public interest reports that I issued during the year.
- Website and Social Media – We have during the year been reviewing the PSOW website and our social media activity. As a result we further developed our social media presence by adding to the existing Twitter account by introducing a Facebook page and also creating a YouTube channel. We intend to commence work on revamping the website during 2016/17.

Internal: We have also enhanced and improved internal communication activities in the office. In particular a weekly bulletin is now being produced for staff which highlights press attention gained by the ombudsman's office, as well as articles in the press relevant to the work of the office. The bulletin is also used to share around the office briefings from various meetings that staff have attended. In addition to the bulletin a new version of the Magnifying Glass, the staff newsletter, has been introduced and this now appears in an online digital format.

The Ombudsman Community

Over the years, despite being a relatively small Ombudsman scheme compared to those of other countries, the PSOW has punched above its weight in relation to its position within the ombudsman community. PSOW officeholders have held senior offices at the OA (the British and Irish Ombudsman Association) and the International Ombudsman Institute.

I was delighted to be able to continue to carry the torch when, in May 2015, I was elected as the Vice Chair of the OA. An Ombudsman is pretty much a unique role and membership and participation within such organisations are important. This allows us to share best practice, learn from each other and indeed advance the ombudsman institution in light of external developments. Other members of my staff have also continued to participate in OA activities, including participating in a number of the OA Interest Groups.

Complaints about the PSOW service

We have over the past year also reviewed and revised our own complaints policy and procedure. That is the procedure for those people who want to complain about the service I provide. A key change is that I have decided to appoint an independent external reviewer of complaints about my service.

This review service is available to those who have complained to me about my service, but remain dissatisfied having received my response. It is not for the reviewer to 're-investigate' a complaint or review a decision taken by me (in respect of a complaint about a public service provider), but to consider the service my staff have provided bearing in mind the examples listed below. Following any review, I will then consider any recommendations or suggestions the reviewer may make.

I have taken this step with a view to taking further the developments of recent years in making the PSOW open to scrutiny and review; in this instance in respect of the handling of complaints about the PSOW service.

The policy can, for example, be used when complainants feel that we have:

- treated them unfairly or rudely; or
- failed to explain things clearly; or
- caused unreasonable delays; or
- failed to do what we have said we would; or
- failed to follow our processes correctly.

The policy for complaints about my service also accommodates the process for when someone wants to request an internal review by the PSOW of the decision on their complaint about a public service provider.

Further details about this policy is available on my website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk.

The table below reports on the number of complaints received during 2015/16 and their outcomes, together with a comparison of the position in 2014/15.

	2015/16	2014/15
Complaints brought forward from previous year	1	3
New complaints received	61	82
TOTAL COMPLAINTS	62	85

OUTCOMES		
Not upheld (service related issue)	20	14
Upheld in whole or in part	15	12
Related to investigation decision - referred to investigation process	18	44
Complaint withdrawn or insufficient information	9	14
Total closed during year	62	84
Ongoing and carried forward at 31 March	0	1

The nature of the complaints that were upheld/partly upheld were:

Undue delay in response / or delay in correspondence referral	4
Interview Digital Sound recording error	1
Incorrect information provided	1
Incorrect complainant title / salutation on correspondence	1
Internal records not updated in a timely manner	1
Incoming courier process error	1
Misfiling of correspondence	1
Correspondence sent in error	5
Total	15

The following corrective action was undertaken:

- an apology was issued to the complainant in all 15 cases
- the relevant line Manager(s) were made aware of the upheld complaints relevant to their team for future training and monitoring
- appropriate and relevant staff training was undertaken where necessary
- appropriate action in accordance with PSOW Human Resources policies was undertaken
- relevant policies / processes reviewed to minimise risk of re-occurrence.

Report on Independent Review of Complaints About the PSOW Service

Whilst the arrangement for independent external review of complaints about my services has been in place for less than a full year, a report has been prepared for the four months to 31 March 2016. Seven complaints were referred to the external reviewer, but none was accepted for review. One was premature, in two cases further advice was sought from the external reviewer and in the remaining four cases the complaint was about my decision on their complaint about a public service provider, rather than about the service provided by my staff. The independent external reviewer made two recommendations: that I provide greater clarity about the role and limits of internal complaints and review processes, and possible routes, at the beginning of the process, and that I add further details of the limitations of the independent external review service to my responses to complaints about the services I and my staff provide. Both recommendations will be implemented.

8. Annual Equality Report

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 laid down by the National Assembly for Wales, the Ombudsman is required to produce an annual report in respect of equality matters. I do so here as part of my overall Annual Report for 2015/16.

A commitment to treating people fairly is central to the role of an ombudsman. As Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, I am committed to providing equal opportunities for staff in the service provided to complainants. No job applicant, staff member or person receiving a service from the Ombudsman will be discriminated against, harassed or victimised due to personal characteristics such as age, disability, ethnicity, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, whether they are married or in a civil partnership, or on the basis of any other irrelevant consideration. My staff are expected to share my total opposition to unlawful and unfair discrimination and the commitment to conducting business in a way that is fair to all members of society.

Accessibility

As part of our process, we do our very best to identify as early as possible any individual requirements that may need to be met so that a service user can fully access our services and, in particular, we ask people to tell us their preferred method of communication with us.

During 2015/16, we gave particular focus to improving access to our service for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. A new British Sign Language (BSL) video is now available, which explains the Ombudsman's service, as well as how people who are deaf or hard of hearing can access that service. Subtitles in both English and Welsh also make the video accessible to those with hearing loss who are unable to understand BSL. This coincides with the provision of the new SignVideo interpretation service which allows BSL users to contact the Ombudsman for free, using fully-qualified live interpreters. Calls can be made using a videophone, laptop, PC, tablet or smartphone enabling BSL users to have improved access to the Ombudsman's services.



We have always tried to make reasonable adjustments where these will help people make and present their complaint to us. Well established examples are: providing correspondence in Easy Read; using Language Line for interpretation, where a complainant is not comfortable with making their complaint in English or Welsh; obtaining expertise to assist us to understand the particular requirements of complainants with certain conditions, such as Asperger's syndrome; and visiting complainants at their homes.

We produce key documents in alternative formats, such as CD/tape and Braille, and translate these into the eight key ethnic minority languages used in Wales. Our website has continually been developed from initially being upgraded A to AA compliant, and then other introductions such as: enhanced BrowseAloud service; embedding the GoogleTranslate service meaning that the PSOW website content pages are automatically translated into any one of over 100 languages on selection; and, most recently, the BSL video referred to above.

The Complaints Advice Team also continues to provide information on advocacy and advice organisations to those people who may need assistance in making their complaint to me. This information is also readily available on our website.

Equality Data Gathering/Monitoring – Service Users

We continued with our equality monitoring in respect of service users, which informs our annual outreach strategy. The outcome of the monitoring during 2015/16 in respect of the protected characteristic groups (as defined in the Equality Act) is set out below.

In view of the nature of the work of this office, we would expect the people who complain to me to, at the very least, mirror the national demographic position; in fact, we would expect the proportion of complainants from groups who could be considered to be at disadvantage or vulnerable to exceed the national picture. In respect of each of the questions we asked, those who completed the form were given the opportunity to respond 'Prefer not to say'.

The results below are not dissimilar to those of previous years and similarly I am relatively satisfied that in making comparisons with official data available (e.g. the Census 2011) the composition of our service users meets or exceeds national demographics in the way we would expect. This office has previously identified an area that appeared to be slightly underrepresented was the minority ethnic community. Progress had been made whereby we were matching the demographic (4% of the Welsh population according to the Census). However it is really good to see, from an awareness point of view, that of those who completed the equality monitoring form during 2015/16, 6% identified themselves as being from a minority ethnic background.

Protected characteristic group	Percentage Outcome
Age	
Under 25	3%
25-34	11%
35-44	20%
45-54	23%
55-64	22%
65-74	11%
75 or over	5%
Prefer not to say/No response	5%
Disability	
Yes	25%
No	64%
Prefer not to say/No response	11%
Health problem or disability limiting day-to-day activities?	
Yes, limited a lot	24%
Yes, limited a little	12%
No	53%
Prefer not to say/No response	11%
Gender reassignment	
Yes	0.5%
No	23%
Prefer not to say/No response	76.5%
Religion or belief	
No religion	40%
Christian (all denominations)	47%
Other religions	8%
Prefer not to say/No response	5%
Married or same-sex civil partnership	
Yes	47%
No	41%
Prefer not to say/No response	12%
Race/Ethnicity	
White	88%
Other ethnic background	6%
Prefer not to say/No response	6%
Sex	
Male	50%
Female	45%
Prefer not to say/ No response	5%
Sexual orientation	
Heterosexual or straight	84%
Gay or Lesbian	1%
Bisexual	1%
Other	1%
Prefer not to say/No response	13%

Outreach

We take the results from our equality monitoring into account when developing our outreach programmes. We gave focus to two areas in particular during 2015/16: older people and people who are deaf or hard of hearing. With both equality and accessibility considerations in mind, we have also been giving attention to poverty/social exclusion as our research has indicated that awareness of the Ombudsman is low amongst this part of the Welsh population.

As part of this work my staff and I have engaged with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action; Tenant Participation Advisory Service, Shelter Cymru and I also chaired a meeting between the Welsh Government's Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty, Michael Sheen (actor and campaigner) and housing charities in relation to youth homelessness. We have also engaged with organisations such as Action on Hearing Loss; Age Cymru and others.

Complaints Wales Signposting Service

I also view the Complaints Wales signposting service as important in relation to the office's contribution to the equality duty. This is an independent and impartial service delivered by the Complaints Advice Team to inform people where and how to put a complaint about a public service that provides the service they wish to complain about or to the appropriate independent complaint handler or ombudsman. I believe this to be an important service for those people who do not understand, are unfamiliar with, or feel disenfranchised from 'the public service system'. Promotion of the service continued during 2015/16, on this occasion through local/regional newspaper advertisements (both print and their associated online presence).

Our Casework

Our commitment and contribution to equality matters also manifests itself in our complaint handling work. We also have regard to matters of human rights. Whilst it is not for the Ombudsman to decide whether a public service provider is in breach of such legislation, it is possible that the failure to take account of any such legal obligations, or to follow policies and procedures designed to implement these obligations, will be maladministration. For example, following the investigation during the past year into a complaint about a homeless person, who was disabled and suffered from a post traumatic stress disorder, amongst other failings, I found that the time taken by the Authority to consider Mr A's housing application was out of kilter with the aims of the Equality Act. I made a number of recommendations. These included providing appropriate training for staff and ensuring that the special housing needs form and occupational therapy assessment processes are included in the Equality Impact Assessment tool to be used in Authority's new Allocation Scheme.

Training

We continue to provide relevant training to staff in relation to equality and human rights issues. I consider this important in relation to the service we provide to complainants, but also so that my staff are able to identify during our investigations any failings by public service providers in respect of their equality duties (as illustrated in a case example above). In particular, during 2015/16 I was grateful to members of the offices of the Northern Ireland Ombudsman and Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission for providing training to my staff on a manual they had jointly developed. The manual and the associated training will assist my staff in using a human rights-based approach in the decision to accept a complaint as well as investigating and reporting on the investigation.

Staff Equality Data Gathering/Monitoring

Our staff have been asked to complete and return a monitoring form seeking information in respect of each of the protected characteristics. We also now gather such information during our recruitment exercises. That disclosure is, of course, on a voluntary basis. The data held at 31 March 2016 is set out below.

Age	The composition of staff ages is as follows: 21 to 30: 17% 31 to 40: 29% 41 to 50: 31% 51 to 65: 23%
Disability	88% of staff said there were not disabled, no member of staff said that they were a disabled person (12% preferred not to say) However, when asked if their day-to-day activities were limited because of a health problem or disability which had lasted, or was expected to last, at least 12 months, 2% said that they were limited a lot, 2% said they were limited a little, 84% said their day to day activities were not limited (12% preferred not to say)
Nationality	In describing their nationality, 53% said they were Welsh; 25% said British, 10% said they were English, 2% said 'Other' (10% preferred not to say)
Ethnic group	The ethnicity of staff is: 81% White (Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish, British); 2% White/Irish 3% Black (African, Caribbean, or Black British/Caribbean 2% Asian or Arian British/Bangladeshi (12% preferred not to say)
Language	When asked about the main language of their household, 73% of staff said this was English; 13% said Welsh, and 2% said 'Other' (12% preferred not to say)

Religion or Belief	Responses to the question asking staff about their religion were as follows: No religion: 39%; Christian 39%; Muslim 2%; Other:1% (19% preferred not to say)
Marriage/ Civil Partnership	When asked if they were married or in a same sex civil partnership, 49% of staff replied 'Yes'; whilst 32% said 'No' (19% preferred not to say)
Sexual Orientation	Responding on this, 75% said that they were Heterosexual or Straight, 2% said Gay or Lesbian (23% preferred not to say)

Under the specific duties we are required to set an equality objective for gender and pay; if we do not do so, we must explain why. I currently do not have any specific objective in this regard because females are very well represented at the higher pay scales within my office. The position is kept under continual review and the equality objectives will be revised if necessary. The table below shows the current the position.

Pay and Gender - data as of 31/03/2016

Pay (FTE)	Male	Female
Up to £20,000	1	4
£20,001 to £30,000	1	14
£30,001 to £40,000	2	4
£40,001 to £50,000	7	18
£50,001 to £60,000	4	3
£60,001 +	1	1
Subtotal	16	44
Total	60	

In relation to the working patterns of the above, all staff work on a full time basis with permanent contracts, with the exception of the following;

- 12 members of staff work part time (10 female, 2 male).
- 2 members of staff were employed on a fixed term contract.

Recruitment

During the past year we have had six members of staff leave. Seven new employees were recruited, five of these were to fill vacant posts and two were for the newly created positions of Communications & Policy Officers. Due to the low numbers involved, the equality data for the individuals appointed has been reported as part of the all staff information above; it is not considered appropriate to report separate equality information relating to these individuals due to the risk of identification

Equality data gathered from all of the past year's four recruitment exercises are as follows (note: totals showing 101% or 99% are a result of rounding):

Key

- **CWSO** – Casework Support Officer
- **PCO** – Policy and Communications Officer
- **IO/CO** – Investigation Officer and Casework Officer – joint recruitment panel.
- **APM** – Advisory Panel Member

		CWSO	PCO	IO/CO	APM	Total
Age	Did not say	3%	0%	6%	6%	4%
	under 25	34%	20%	28%	0%	21%
	25-34	36%	42%	35%	6%	30%
	35-44	18%	14%	21%	12%	16%
	45-54	8%	18%	10%	6%	11%
	55-64	1%	6%	0%	59%	17%
	65-74	0%	0%	0%	12%	3%
	75 and over	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		100%	100%	100%	101%	100%
Gender	Did not say	4%	0%	2%	0%	2%
	Male	32%	38%	42%	65%	44%
	Female	64%	62%	56%	35%	54%
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Nationality	Did not say	1%	0%	3%	0%	1%
	Welsh	68%	64%	63%	35%	58%
	English	5%	6%	9%	6%	7%
	Scottish	1%	2%	3%	0%	2%
	Northern Irish	1%	0%	1%	6%	2%
	British	23%	27%	18%	53%	30%
	Irish	1%	0%	3%	0%	1%
			100%	99%	100%	100%

		CWSO	PCO	IO/CO	APM	Total
Ethnic Group	Did not Say	3%	2%	8%	0%	3%
	White (Welsh/ Scottish/English/ NI/British)	93%	95%	81%	88%	89%
	White (Irish)	1%	2%	2%	6%	3%
	White (Gypsy/Irish traveller)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	White (Other)	0%	0%	0%	6%	2%
	Asian /Asian British	2%	2%	6%	0%	3%
	Black, African, Caribbean or Black British	0%	0%	3%	0%	1%
	Mixed or multiple ethnic group	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Other ethnic Group	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		100%	101%	100%	100%	100%
Language	Did not say	2%	0%	2%	0%	1%
	English	95%	94%	93%	94%	94%
	Welsh	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Bilingual (Welsh / English)	3%	6%	5%	6%	5%
	Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Disability	Did not say	2%	2%	3%	0%	2%
	Yes	2%	2%	1%	6%	3%
	No	97%	97%	96%	94%	96%
		101%	101%	100%	100%	101%
Limited Activities	Did not say	2%	2%	3%	0%	2%
	Yes, limited a little	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Yes, limited a lot	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	No	97%	98%	97%	100%	98%
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

		CWSO	PCO	IO/CO	APM	Total
Religion	Did not say	7%	6%	12%	0%	6%
	None	64%	61%	59%	12%	49%
	Christian	29%	32%	29%	88%	45%
	Buddhist	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Hindu	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Jewish	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%
	Muslim	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Sikh	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
			100%	101%	0%	0%
Married or civil partnership	Did not say	5%	0%	7%	12%	6%
	Yes	12%	35%	16%	71%	34%
	No	83%	64%	77%	18%	61%
		100%	99%	100%	101%	100%
Sexuality	Did not say	15%	2%	19%	0%	9%
	Heterosexual	77%	89%	74%	100%	85%
	Gay or Lesbian	6%	5%	7%	0%	5%
	Bisexual	2%	5%	0%	0%	2%
	Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		100%	101%	100%	100%	100%

*excludes internal promotion

Staff Training

The majority of staff training is based upon job roles or applicable for all staff to attend, and as such there are no equality considerations to report. All individually requested training by staff has been approved, and as such there is no need to report on equality data differences between approved and non-approved training requests.

Disciplinary / Grievance

Due to the small numbers of staff working in the office, and the small number of instances of disciplinary / grievance, it is not considered appropriate to report on equality data for this category due to the risk of identification of staff involved. I remain satisfied that there are no identifiable issues in this area that would cause me concern.

Procurement

Our procurement policy now refers to the relevant equality requirements that we expect our suppliers to have in place.

Annex C

Code of Conduct Complaints:
Statistical Breakdown of Outcomes by Local Authority

County/County Borough Councils

County/County Borough Council	Closed after initial consideration	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Standards Committee	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Withdrawn	Total Cases Closed
Blaenau Gwent	3							3
Bridgend	9							9
Cardiff	14		1				2	17
Carmarthenshire	3	3	1	1				8
Conwy	2							2
Denbighshire	5							5
Flintshire	1							1
Gwynedd	6							6
Isle of Anglesey	1	1						2
Monmouthshire	4		1	1				6
Neath Port Talbot	2							2
Newport	2							2
Pembrokeshire	5		1	2				8
Powys	13							13
Rhondda Cynon Taf	3		1					4
Swansea	11							11
Torfaen	5		1					6
Vale of Glamorgan	6					1		7
TOTAL	95	4	6	4		1	2	112

Community/ Town Councils

Community/Town Council	Closed after initial consideration	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Standards Committee	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Withdrawn	Total Cases Closed
Abergavenny Town			1					1
Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community	17							17
Aberystwyth Town	1						1	2
Amroth Community		1						1
Bangor City	1							1
Bargoed Town	1							1
Barry Town						1		1
Brackla Community	1						1	2
Bronwydd Community	1							1
Buckley Town	1							1
Builth Wells	1							1
Caldicot Town	2							2
Connah's Quay Town				1				1
Crickhowell Town	1							1
Devauden Community	1							1
Dinas Powys Community					2			2
Fishguard & Goodwick Town	1							1
Garw Valley Community	4	1					1	6
Glynneath Town	22							22
Gorseinon Town	2							2
Gwehelog Fawr Community	1							1
Holyhead Town	14							14

Community/ Town Councils (Continued)

Community/Town Council	Closed after initial consideration	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Standards Committee	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Withdrawn	Total Cases Closed
Llanddew Community	6							6
Llanedi Community		1						1
Llanelli Rural	2		1					3
Llanelli Town				1				1
Llanfynydd Community [Carmarthenshire]							1	1
Llanfynydd Community [Flintshire]				1				1
Llangatock Community	1							1
Llangefni Town	2							2
Llanover Community		1						1
Llansteffan & Llanybri Community				1				1
Llantilio Pertholey Community	3						7	10
Llantwit Fardre Community	1							1
Llanwrtyd Wells Town		2						2
Llywel Community	1							1
Magor with Undy Community						1		1
Manorbier Community	1		2		1			4
Merlins Bridge Community	1							1
Mumbles Community	5							5
Neyland Town							1	1
Northop Community	1							1

Community/ Town Councils (Continued)

Community/Town Council	Closed after initial consideration	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Standards Committee	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Withdrawn	Total Cases Closed
Penmaenmawr Town			1					1
Pontyclun Community	1							1
Porthcawl Town	1						1	2
Radyr and Morganstown Community	5							5
Saltney Town	1							1
Towyn & Kinnel Bay Town	2							2
Trefeglwys Community				1				1
Tywyn Town	6			1				7
Welsh St Donats Community	2							2
Welshpool Town	3							3
TOTAL	117	6	5	6	3	2	13	152

National Park Authorities

National Park Authority	Closed after initial consideration	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Standards Committee	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Withdrawn	Total Cases Closed
Brecon Beacons	1							1

Agenda Item 8

Committee :	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date:	3 October 2016
Title	Allegations against members
Author:	Monitoring Officer
Action:	For Information

1. Background

The purpose of this report is to present information to the Committee regarding formal complaints made against members. The report is based on information received from the Ombudsman and the case references are his.

2. Complaints

2.1 Case 7294/201600258

Date Received: 12/04/16

Complaint

Complaint that a town councillor had failed to declare a prejudicial interest on several occasions and had taken part in meetings.

Decision

Ombudsman has investigated – no evidence that the code had been breached.

2.2 Case 201600999

Date Received: 23/05/16

Complaint

Complaint that a town councillor had failed to declare a prejudicial interest on several occasions and had taken part in meetings.

Decision

Ombudsman investigating

2.3 Case 201603417

Date Received: 12/09/16

Complaint

Complaint that a county councillor had failed to declare a prejudicial interest in a matter before a committee for a decision.

Decision

Ombudsman considering whether to investigate.

3. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the information.