

Meeting of:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	12 FEBRUARY 2026
Report Title:	PUBLIC SERVICES OMUBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL LETTER 2024/25
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	To present to the Committee the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2024/25.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present to the Standards Committee the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2024/25 for noting.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) is independent of all government bodies and has legal powers to investigate complaints about public services and independent care providers in Wales. They also investigate complaints that Members of local government bodies have breached their authority's Code of Conduct.
- 2.2 The PSOW reports annually on the number of complaints against public bodies received by its office.
- 2.3 The Complaints Officer is the Contact Officer for the PSOW, and the Monitoring Officer is responsible for liaising with the PSOW regarding Member Code of Conduct complaints.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 **Appendix 1** provides the PSOW Annual Letter for 2024-2025.
- 3.2 As outlined in the Annual Letter, the number of complaints against the Authority for the period 2024–2025 was 58 of which 57 were closed. The figure for 2023-2024 was

59. The figure for 2024-25 represents 0.07 complaints received per 1000 residents. Children's Social Services attracted the largest number of complaints - 14. Overall, 20 cases were not investigated, 19 were premature, 12 were out of jurisdiction, 5 were settled by working with the Ombudsman for early resolution. One complaint proceeded to investigation and was upheld.

- 3.3 10 Member Code of Conduct complaints against the Authority's Councillors were received by the PSOW in this period, none of which proceeded to investigation.
- 3.4 The PSOW Complaints Standards Authority publishes datasets on complaints handled by local authorities. These datasets are now published on the Ombudsman's website and on the Council's website. This data shows that in 2024/2025 the Ombudsman intervened in 11% of the Authority's complaints.
- 3.5 In terms of complaints handling roles, Section 115 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 sets out a provision that came into force in April 2021 for the Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) to "review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively and to make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively". GAC currently receives an Annual Report on complaints under its Terms of Reference. Anonymised data is also shared quarterly with the PSOW Complaints Standards Authority as part of the Council's commitment to accountability and learning from complaints.
- 3.6 The Council takes complaints and concerns seriously and will try to learn from any mistakes made. The Information Team (responsible for the management of the Corporate Complaints process) has developed a process to monitor both the effectiveness of the complaints process and how complaints data is being used to improve services and delivery of care. It is proposed that Services then consider any emerging themes and identify any service improvements required as a result of concerns raised. The information identified will then be used to contribute to service development which could include additional training, changes to internal procedures, increased monitoring etc.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing goals/objectives as a result of this report.
- 5.2 Standards are an implicit requirement in the successful implementation of the corporate well-being objectives.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no climate change or nature implications.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the report.

Background documents:

None