

Easy Read



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Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual report

What happened between 2022 and 2023

This document was written by the **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**. It is an easy read version of 'Annual Report 2022/2023'.

July 2023

How to use this document



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



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 18**.

Where the document says **we**, this means the **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**. For more information contact:



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Introduction



We are the office of the **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**.

We deal with complaints about:



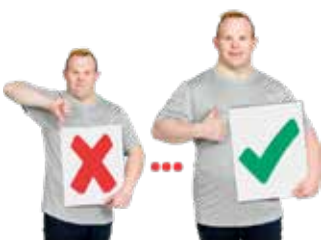
- **Public services**

Public services are services paid for by Government. For example: local councils, the NHS, social landlords.



- Local councillors breaking the **code of conduct**. Local councillors are people chosen to run a council.

Code of conduct means the rules and standards someone must follow in their job.



We make sure **public services** learn from complaints and make improvements.



We make sure **local government** works to the highest possible standards. **Local government** is your local council.

Our main aims are to make sure:



- The people of Wales feel that **public services** treat them fairly. And do something when things go wrong.



- Welsh **public services** listen to people. And use their complaints to learn and improve.



- People trust their local government to work in the best ways, and to the highest standards.



- We continue to be a respected voice that **public services** listen to, to make improvements.

We are:



- **Independent** – we are not controlled by government.



- **Impartial** – we do not take sides.



- **Fair.**



- Here for everyone who needs us.

Our work in 2022 to 2023

Michelle Morris is the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.



2022 to 2023 was her first full year in this job role.



Over the year we had many successes. And also made a lot of positive change happen.



We have had fewer new complaints about Welsh councillors breaking the **code of conduct**.



We closed a record number of complaints about **public services**. This means we were able to deliver **justice** to many more people.

Justice means people got the fair and reasonable outcomes they deserve.



We delivered over 180 free training sessions to **public services** about how to deal with complaints.



We asked people about their thoughts on our **own initiative investigation** on carers' assessments and complaints.

Own initiative investigations means we can look into some issues even if we have not had a complaint about them.



You can find out more about this on our [website here](#).



Within our organisation we started a new **Service Quality process**. This is a new process we will use to make sure we are working to a high standard.



We also celebrated getting rid of our **Gender Pay Gap**.

Gender Pay Gap is when men and women earn different amounts of money overall at an organisation. For example, maybe there are less women in manager jobs than men.



We also faced some challenges.



We are getting more and more complaints about **public services**. Almost 4 out of 10 are about health services.



Investigations into health complaints are usually more complicated. And take longer to deal with.



This means some people have had to wait longer for an outcome to their complaint.



And the workload has had an impact on the wellbeing of our staff.



We believe our new **strategic plan** will help us work better smarter. To help us deal with this workload.



Goals

Our **strategic plan** sets out our goals and how we will achieve them.



But we are under pressure from the growing number of complaints we are getting.



We need to be honest and realistic about what we can do with the staff and resources we have.

Key information about our work in 2022 to 2023



We will look at what we achieved under our 3 strategic aims from our **strategic plan** in 2022 to 2023.



Goals

Our strategic aims are the main goals we want to achieve.

Strategic aim 1: deliver justice



We received 245 more cases than last year. Which were enquiries and complaints.



We closed 492 more cases than last year.

We had a record number of complaints about **public services**:



- 37 out of every 100 complaints were about health



- 9 out of every 50 complaints were about housing



- We had more complaints about how complaints had been dealt with



We found that **public services** had got things wrong and should put things right in 538 of the complaints we received.



3 out of 4 times we found that something has gone wrong and helped to put things right early. Which means we were able to help people without the need for a full investigation.



Public services followed most of our **recommendations** for improving.

Recommendation means saying what actions need to be taken to solve a problem.



We wrote 1 special report about a **public service** that was not willing to follow our **recommendations**.



We had fewer new complaints about councillors not following the **code of conduct**.



We received fewer new complaints about councillors at Town and Community Councils.



Over half the new complaints we had about the **code of conduct** were about equality and respect.

We referred 12 investigations about **code of conduct** complaints to:



- the **Adjudication Panel for Wales** – a specialist tribunal that deals with councillors and national authorities that break the code of conduct.



- or **local Standards Committees** – this is a formal group set up locally by councils to deal with their councillors who break the code of conduct.



Nearly half of the people whose complaints we dealt with were happy with our service.



Many more people were happy with our service if they got the outcome they wanted.



When people asked us to look again at our decision, we found out that we could have done more only in a small number of complaints. This shows that our way of working is good.

Strategic aim 2: promote improvement



We delivered 183 training sessions to **public services** about how to deal with complaints well.



We did 2 **extended investigations**. This is an investigation into a problem, where we start to also look at other problems or complaints together.



We asked people about their thoughts on our **own initiative investigation** on carers' assessments and complaints.



We wrote 5 **Public Interest Reports**. These are reports about serious complaints which are important to everyone.



We wrote our fourth **casebook** in which we talked about complaints that involve human rights or equality issues.

Strategic aim 3: use our resources wisely



Our resources are things like our staff, time, and money.



A higher number of our staff told us they had good of fluent Welsh language skills.



We good rid of our median **gender pay gap**.



We avoided **carbon dioxide emissions** – this is a harmful substance that badly impacts our environment.



We wrote our new **Strategic Plan** for 2023 to 2024. It sets out our 4 new strategic aims:



1. Deliver **justice** for people that has good outcomes for them and for **public services**.



2. Be more **accessible** and **inclusive** – this means everyone can easily use our services and get support from us.



3. Make sure our work has an even bigger impact on improving **public services**.



4. Make sure our organisation is run well to the highest standards.

Hard words

Code of conduct

Code of conduct means the rules and standards someone must follow in their job.

Gender Pay Gap

Gender Pay Gap is when men and women earn different amounts of money overall at an organisation. For example, maybe there are less women in manager jobs than men.

Justice

Justice means people get the fair and reasonable outcomes they deserve.

Own initiative investigations

Own initiative investigations means we can look into some issues even if we have not had a complaint about them.

Public services

Public services are services paid for by Government. For example: local councils, the NHS, social landlords.

Recommendation

Recommendation means saying what actions need to be taken to solve a problem.

Strategic plan

Our strategic plan sets out our goals and how we will achieve them.