

Statement from Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Following the allegation of political bias, made against a former officer of PSOW, the Ombudsman has (today) announced that an independent review will be conducted to provide assurance that its code of conduct processes are sound, free from political bias and that lessons are learned from what has happened.

The Ombudsman, Michelle Morris, fully accepts that PSOW now needs to rebuild trust in the work of the organisation on complaints against Councillors. The remit will include reviewing discretionary decisions previously made, by the former officer and her team, not to investigate complaints when applying the Ombudsman's processes.

The review will be led by James Goudie KC and is expected to report this summer.

Issued: Tuesday 9th April 2024

Note to Editors:

1. The Ombudsman's process includes the application of a two-stage test, first whether the evidence suggests that a breach of the Code of Conduct has occurred and second, whether an investigation is required in the public interest.
2. 10% of the Office's caseload last year were complaints against Councillors;
3. 90% of caseload were complaints about public services, specifically:-
 - a. NHS Bodies 46%
 - b. Local Authorities 37%
 - c. Housing Associations 12%
 - d. Welsh Government & Sponsored Bodies 2%