

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	The Executive
Date:	26th October 2020
Subject:	Public Services Ombudsman Annual Letter 2019/20
Portfolio Holder(s):	Dafydd Rhys Thomas
Head of Service / Director:	Lynn Ball, Director of Function (Council Business) / Monitoring Officer
Report Author: Tel: E-mail:	Beryl Jones 01248 752588 bjxcs@ynysmon.gov.uk
Local Members:	Relevant to All Members

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s

1. Recommendation

That the Executive notes and accepts the PSOW's Annual Letter for 2019/20 and delegates to the Director of Function to write to the PSOW, by 30 November 2020, to confirm the same and to state that the Council will continue to monitor complaints, and thereby provide members with the required information in order to help scrutinise performance.

2. Background

Since 2006 the PSOW has published an annual report on the work undertaken by his office over the previous 12 months.

The PSOW's recently published Annual Report for 2019/20 can be found at:-

<https://www.ombudsman.wales/annual-report-accounts/>

The PSOW also publishes a separate annual summary of Performance for each Council; called the annual letter.

The Annual Letter 2019/20, for the Isle of Anglesey County Council, (IOACC) is attached as Appendix 1.

In the letter, the Ombudsman requests the following:-

- Present my Annual Letter to the Cabinet to assist members in their scrutiny of the Council's performance.

This report satisfies this request and in addition, the report is published to all Members and to the public.

- Engage with my Complaints Standards work, accessing training for your staff and providing complaints data.

Training Sessions have been arranged with the Complaints Standards Team for those staff who deal with complaints. Session have arranged between 23/10/20 and 27/11/20

- Inform me of the outcome of the Council's considerations and proposed actions on the above matters by 30 November.

This action will be completed following this meeting.

3. The Annual Letter

The Letter largely relates to service complaints but also includes a section on complaints made under the Code of Conduct for Members.

The Headline Messages:-

- 26 complaints were lodged against IOACC, down from 31 in 2018/2019.
- Of the 26 complaints lodged with the PSOW, he concluded that 25 did not require an investigation by his office.
- 1 of the complaints lodged was dealt with by way of an early resolution
- 2 Section 21 Reports were issued in April 2019 but these related to complaints received and investigated during 2017/18. A Section 21 Report is issued when the Council has agreed to implement recommendations made and there is no public interest involved.
- One Code of Conduct complaint was made against a member of the Council but this was not investigated
- Previous annual letters ranked each Council but this has not been done for the last 2 reports but our performance can be seen in the tables provided in the letter.

1. 4. Additional information.

In addition to the Annual Letter, information on concerns, complaints and compliments are published monthly on the Council's website at <https://www.anglesey.gov.uk/en/Get-involved/Official-complaints/Council-complaints-statistics.aspx>

Quarterly reports are also provided to the Senior Leadership Team, the half year data was reported to the meeting held on 19/10/20

The Audit & Governance Committee receive an annual report on complaints every September entitled "Concerns, Complaints & Whistleblowing 2019/20."
<http://democracy.anglesey.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=125&MId=3729&Ver=4&LLL=0>

B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?

N/A

C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?

At the specific request of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

CH – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?

Yes

D – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?

Yes

E – Impact on our Future Generations(if relevant)

1	How does this decision impact on our long term needs as an Island	N/A
2	Is this a decision which it is envisaged will prevent future costs / dependencies on the Authority. If so, how:-	
3	Have we been working collaboratively with other organisations to come to this decision, if so, please advise whom:	
4	Have Anglesey citizens played a part in drafting this way forward? Please explain how:-	

5	Outline what impact does this decision have on the Equalities agenda and the Welsh language	
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DD – Who did you consult?		What did they say?
1	Chief Executive / Senior Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	No Observations
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	As part of the SLT
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	Author of the report
4	Human Resources (HR)	N/A
5	Property	N/A
6	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	N/A
7	Procurement	N/A
8	Scrutiny	N/A
9	Local Members	N/A

F - Appendices:
Copy of the Annual Letter 2019/20


FF - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):
N/A

Our ref: NB

Ask for: Communications

 01656 641150

Date: 7 September 2020

 Communications
@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Councillor Llinos Medi Huws
Council Leader
Isle of Anglesey County Council

By Email Only
llinosmedihuws@anglesey.gov.uk

Dear Councillor Huws

Annual Letter 2019/20

I am pleased to provide you with the Annual letter (2019/20) for Isle of Anglesey County Council.

I write this at an unprecedented time for public services in Wales and those that use them. Most of the data in this correspondence relates to the period before the rapid escalation in Covid-19 spread and before restrictions on economic and social activity had been introduced. However, I am only too aware of the impact the pandemic continues to have on us all.

I am delighted to report that, during the past financial year, we had to intervene in (uphold, settle or resolve early) a smaller proportion of complaints about public bodies: 20% compared to 24% last year.

We also referred a smaller proportion of Code of Conduct complaints to a Standards Committee or the Adjudication Panel for Wales: 2% compared to 3% last year.

With regard to new complaints relating to Local Authorities, the overall number has decreased by 2.4% compared to the previous financial year. I am also glad that we had to intervene in a smaller proportion of the cases closed (13% compared to 15% last year). That said, I am concerned that complaint handling persists as one of the main subjects of our complaints again this year.

Amongst the main highlights of the year, in 2019 the National Assembly for Wales (now Senedd Cymru Welsh Parliament) passed our new Act. We are now the first ombudsman's office in the UK to have full and operational powers to drive systemic improvement of public services through investigations on our 'own initiative' and the Complaints Standards role.

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During 2019/20, we have engaged intensively with Local Authorities on this issue, starting to exercise our new Complaints Standards powers.

Local Authorities in Wales submitted data about the complaints they handled to the Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) for the first time in 2019/2020, revealing much more about the complaints landscape in Wales.

The data submitted for 2019/2020 shows:

- Over 13,000 complaints were recorded by Local Authorities – 4.25 for every 1000 residents.
- Nearly half (42%) of those complaints were upheld in full or in part.
- About 80% (79.51%) were investigated within 20 working days.
- About 7% (6.91%) of all complaints ended up being referred to PSOW.

The CSA will work with public bodies to ensure the data submitted is an accurate representation of complaints being submitted by service users.

A summary of the complaints of maladministration/service failure received relating to your Council is attached.

Also attached is a summary of the Code of Conduct complaints relating to members of the Council and the Town & Community Councils in your area.

Action for the Council to take:

- Present my Annual Letter to the Cabinet to assist members in their scrutiny of the Council's performance.
- Engage with my Complaints Standards work, accessing training for your staff and providing complaints data.
- Inform me of the outcome of the Council's considerations and proposed actions on the above matters by 30 November.

This correspondence is copied to the Chief Executive of your Council and to your Contact Officer. Finally, a copy of all Annual Letters will be published on my website.

Yours sincerely



Nick Bennett
Ombudsman

CC: Annwen Morgan, Chief Executive
Beryl Jones, Contact Officer

Factsheet

A. Complaints Received

Local Authority	Complaints Received	Complaints received per 1000 residents
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	17	0.24
Bridgend County Borough Council	34	0.23
Caerphilly County Borough Council	49	0.27
Cardiff Council*	122	0.33
Carmarthenshire County Council	42	0.22
Ceredigion County Council	31	0.42
Conwy County Borough Council	29	0.25
Denbighshire County Council	32	0.34
Flintshire County Council	61	0.39
Gwynedd Council	37	0.30
Isle of Anglesey County Council	26	0.37
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	13	0.22
Monmouthshire County Council	16	0.17
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council	22	0.15
Newport City Council	39	0.25
Pembrokeshire County Council	25	0.20
Powys County Council	72	0.54
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	39	0.16
Swansea Council	92	0.37
Torfaen County Borough Council	5	0.05
Vale of Glamorgan Council	30	0.23
Wrexham County Borough Council	33	0.24
Wales	866	0.28

* inc 1 Rent Smart Wales

B. Complaints Received by Subject

Isle of Anglesey Council	Complaints Received	Complaints Percentage Share
Adult Social Services	4	15.38%
Benefits Administration	1	3.85%
Children's Social Services	2	7.69%
Complaint Handling	2	7.69%
Environment and Environmental Health	2	7.69%
Finance and Taxation	3	11.54%
Housing	4	15.38%
Planning and Building Control	8	30.77%

C. Complaint Outcomes

(* denotes intervention)

Complaints Closed	Premature/ Out of Time/Right to Appeal	Out of Jurisdiction	Other cases closed after initial consideration	Early Resolution/ voluntary settlement*	Discontinued	Other Reports- Not Upheld	Other Reports Upheld - in whole or in part*	Public Interest Report *	Grand Total
Isle of Anglesey County Council	9	2	14	1	0	0	2	0	28
Percentage Share	32.14%	7.14%	50.00%	3.57%	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	0.00%	

D. Number of cases with PSOW intervention

	No. of interventions	No. of closures	% of interventions
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	1	17	6%
Bridgend County Borough Council	1	34	3%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	6	50	12%
Cardiff Council	21	120	18%
Cardiff Council - Rent Smart Wales	-	1	0%
Carmarthenshire County Council	6	46	13%
Ceredigion County Council	4	30	13%
Conwy County Borough Council	6	34	18%
Denbighshire County Council	2	32	6%
Flintshire County Council	8	57	14%
Gwynedd Council	4	39	10%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	3	28	11%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	2	15	13%
Monmouthshire County Council	2	15	13%
Neath Port Talbot Council	4	25	16%
Newport City Council	4	38	11%
Pembrokeshire County Council	7	29	24%
Powys County Council	14	71	20%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	5	40	13%
Swansea Council	4	93	4%
Torfaen County Borough Council	1	5	20%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	4	27	15%
Wrexham County Borough Council	4	33	12%
Grand Total	113	879	13%

E. Code of Conduct Complaints Closed

County/County Borough Councils	Closed after initial consideration	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Standards Committee	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Withdrawn	Total
Isle of Angelsey	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

F. Town/Community Council Code of Complaints

Town/Community Council	Closed after initial consideration	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Standards Committee	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Withdrawn	Total
Amlwch Town Council	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
Bodorgan Community Council	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Holyhead Town Council	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Appendix

Explanatory Notes

Section A provides a breakdown of the number of complaints against the Local Authority which were received during 2019/20, and the number of complaints per 1,000 residents (population).

Section B provides a breakdown of the number of complaints about the Local Authority which were received by my office during 2019/20. The figures are broken down into subject categories with the percentage share.

Section C provides the complaint outcomes for the Local Authority during 2019/20, with the percentage share.

Section D provides the numbers and percentages of cases received by the PSOW in which an intervention has occurred. This includes all upheld complaints, early resolutions and voluntary settlements.

Section E provides a breakdown of all Code of Conduct complaint outcomes against Councillors during 2019/20.

Section F provides a breakdown of all Code of Conduct complaint outcomes against town or community councils.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback on the enclosed information, including suggestions for any information to be enclosed in future annual summaries. Any feedback or queries should be sent via email to communications@ombudsman-wales.org.uk