

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	The Executive
Date:	25th October 2021
Subject:	Public Services Ombudsman Annual Letter 2020/21
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 2020/21 and delegates to the Director of Function to write to the PSOW, by 15 November 2021, 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 2020/21 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 2020/21, 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.

Six training sessions were provided by the Complaints Standards Team for those staff who deal with complaints between 23/10/20 and 27/11/20. The sessions were well attended and the feedback received was very positive.

- Inform me of the outcome of the Council's considerations and proposed actions on the above matters by 15 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:-

- 18 complaints were lodged against IOACC, down from 26 in 2019/20.
- Of the 18 complaints lodged with the PSOW, he concluded that 16 did not require an investigation by his office.
- 1 Section 21 Report was issued in November 2020 and this related to a complaint received and investigated during 2019/20. A Section 21 Report is issued when the Council has agreed to implement recommendations made and there is no public interest involved.
- 1 complaint remained unresolved as at 31.3.21 but was closed at the end of April without being investigated.
- No Code of Conduct complaints were recorded.
- 1 Town & Community Council Code of Conduct complaint was received but this was closed as there was no evidence of a breach.
- Previous annual letters ranked each Council but this has not been done for the latest reports but our performance can be seen in the tables provided in the letter.

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 Audit & Governance Committee receive an annual report on complaints every September entitled "Concerns, Complaints & Whistleblowing 2020/21"
<http://democracy.anglesey.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=125&MId=3855&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 2020/21

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

Ask for: Communications

 01656 641150

Date: September 2021

 communications@ombudsman.wales

Cllr. Llinos Medi
Isle of Anglesey County Council

By Email only: llinosmedihuws@anglesey.gov.uk

Annual Letter 2020/21

Dear Councillor Medi

I am pleased to provide you with the Annual letter (2020/21) for Isle of Anglesey County Council.

This letter discusses information from a year unlike any other in recent memory, and as such may not be useful for establishing trends or patterns. Information received during this remarkable year will, however, bring insights on how public services reacted in the face of unprecedented demand and the most difficult of circumstances.

During the past financial year, we have intervened in (upheld, settled or resolved at an early stage) the same proportion of complaints about public bodies, 20%, compared with 2019/20.

Regarding new complaints received relating to Local Authorities, the overall number decreased by 12.5% compared with last year. This reflects the reduction in complaints being reported by Local Authorities during the Covid-19 pandemic. My office intervened in a similar proportion of the cases closed as in the previous year (13%).

However, we referred a higher proportion of Code of Conduct complaints to a Standards Committee or the Adjudication Panel for Wales: 3.4% compared to 2% in the previous year. This higher referral rate was also accompanied by a sharp increase in the number of Code of Conduct complaints received.

During 2020/21, despite challenges caused by the pandemic, my office made great strides in progressing work related to Complaints Standards and Own Initiative Investigations. The theme and consultation period of the first wider Own

Initiative Investigation – into Local Authority Homelessness Assessments - was launched in September 2020 and the report is due in the coming months. We also commenced 4 extended Own Initiative Investigations, where we extended the scope of our work on a complaint already under investigation.

Last year, my office also pushed ahead with two new publications – ‘Our Findings’ and our first Equality Report.

‘Our Findings’ will be accessed via the PSOW website and replaces the quarterly casebooks. Our Findings will be updated more frequently and will be a more useful tool in sharing the outcomes of investigations. Our first Equality Report highlights the work done to improve equality and diversity, and to ensure that our service is available to people from all parts of society.

Local Authorities in Wales continued to submit data about the complaints they handled to the Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) during 2020/21, as well as receiving a model complaints procedure and accessing 76 virtual training sessions.

The data submitted for 2020/2021 shows:

- Nearly 12,000 complaints were recorded by Local Authorities
- This equates to 3.77 for every 1000 residents.
- Nearly half (44%) of those complaints were upheld.
- About 75% were investigated within 20 working days.
- About 9% of all complaints closed were referred to PSOW.

The CSA will publish data to the PSOW website for the first time in the coming year, marking a key achievement in the progress of this work. Training sessions have been delivered to almost all Local Authorities in Wales, and our offer of training remains open ended and will be delivered free of charge.

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 to the Town & Community Councils in your area.

I ask that the Council takes the following actions:

- Present my Annual Letter to the Cabinet to assist members in their scrutiny of the Council’s complaints performance and any actions to be taken as a result.
- 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 15 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Bennett', written in a cursive style.

Nick Bennett
Ombudsman

cc. Annwen Morgan, Chief Executive, Isle of Anglesey County Council
By Email only: annwenmorgan2@ynysmon.gov.uk

Factsheet

Appendix A - Complaints Received

Local Authority	Complaints Received	Received per 1000 residents
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	15	0.21
Bridgend County Borough Council	31	0.21
Caerphilly County Borough Council	46	0.25
Cardiff Council*	96	0.26
Carmarthenshire County Council	27	0.14
Ceredigion County Council	32	0.44
Conwy County Borough Council	32	0.27
Denbighshire County Council	32	0.33
Flintshire County Council	59	0.38
Gwynedd Council	30	0.24
Isle of Anglesey County Council	18	0.26
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	15	0.25
Monmouthshire County Council	20	0.21
Neath Port Talbot Council	19	0.13
Newport City Council	31	0.20
Pembrokeshire County Council	28	0.22
Powys County Council	38	0.29
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	40	0.17
Swansea Council	73	0.30
Torfaen County Borough Council	12	0.13
Vale of Glamorgan Council	39	0.29
Wrexham County Borough Council	43	0.32
Total	776	0.25

* inc 2 Rent Smart Wales

Appendix B - Received by Subject

Isle of Anglesey County Council	Complaints Received	% Share
Adult Social Services	0	0%
Benefits Administration	1	6%
Children's Social Services	3	17%
Community Facilities, Recreation and Leisure	0	0%
Complaints Handling	1	6%
Covid19	1	6%
Education	0	0%
Environment and Environmental Health	1	6%
Finance and Taxation	1	6%
Housing	3	17%
Licensing	0	0%
Planning and Building Control	4	22%
Roads and Transport	2	11%
Various Other	1	6%
Total	18	

Appendix C - Complaint Outcomes
 (* denotes intervention)

County/County Borough Councils	Out of Jurisdiction	Premature	Other cases closed after initial consideration	Early Resolution/voluntary settlement*	Discontinued	Other Reports-Not Upheld	Other Reports Upheld*	Public Interest Report*	Total
Isle of Anglesey County Council	7	5	4	0	0	0	1	0	17
% Share	41%	29%	24%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	

Appendix D - Cases with PSOW Intervention

	No. of interventions	No. of closures	% of interventions
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	1	17	6%
Bridgend County Borough Council	2	30	7%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	3	45	7%
Cardiff Council	26	100	26%
Cardiff Council - Rent Smart Wales	0	2	0%
Carmarthenshire County Council	6	29	21%
Ceredigion County Council	4	31	13%
Conwy County Borough Council	5	31	16%
Denbighshire County Council	2	31	6%
Flintshire County Council	11	62	18%
Gwynedd Council	5	27	19%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	1	17	6%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	0	14	0%
Monmouthshire County Council	1	19	5%
Neath Port Talbot Council	1	17	6%
Newport City Council	5	29	17%
Pembrokeshire County Council	3	26	12%
Powys County Council	4	47	9%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	2	43	5%
Swansea Council	9	67	13%
Torfaen County Borough Council	0	11	0%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	5	38	13%
Wrexham County Borough Council	6	48	13%
Total	102	781	13%

Appendix E - Code of Conduct Complaints

County/County Borough Councils	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Refer to Standards Committee	Withdrawn	Total
Isle of Anglesey County Council	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

Appendix F - Town/Community Council Code of Complaints

Town/Community Council	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Refer to Standards Committee	Withdrawn	Total
Amlwch Town Council	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

Information Sheet

Appendix A shows the number of complaints received by PSOW for all Local Authorities in 2020/2021. These complaints are contextualised by the number of people each health board reportedly serves.

Appendix B shows the categorisation of each complaint received, and what proportion of received complaints represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix C shows outcomes of the complaints which PSOW closed for the Local Authority in 2020/2021. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix D shows Intervention Rates for all Local Authorities in 2020/2021. An intervention is categorised by either an upheld complaint (either public interest or non-public interest), an early resolution, or a voluntary settlement.

Appendix E shows the outcomes of Code Of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Local Authority in 2020/2021. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix F shows the outcomes of Code of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Town and Community Councils in the Local Authority's area. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for each Town or Community Council.