

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	The Executive / The Governance & Audit Committee
Date:	27 September 2022/ 28 September 2022
Subject:	Annual Letter from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 2021/2022
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Robin Williams
Head of Service / Director:	Lynn Ball, Director of Function (Council Business) / Monitoring Officer
Report Author: Tel: E-mail:	Corporate Information and Complaints Officer 01248 752588 bjxcs@ynysmon.gov.uk
Local Members:	Relevant to all Members

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s
<p>1. Recommendations</p> <p>The Committee and the Executive to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - note and accept the Annual Letter from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) 2021/22. - to note any feedback to be shared with the PSOW; to authorise the Director of Function (Council Business) / Monitoring Officer to write to the PSOW to confirm that the Committee and the Executive have given formal consideration to her Annual Letter and to provide reassurance that the Council will continue to monitor complaints, and thereby provide members with the information required to scrutinise the Council's performance. <p>2. Background</p> <p>Since 2006 the PSOW has published an annual report on the work undertaken by his/her office over the previous 12 months.</p> <p>The PSOW's recently published Annual Report for 2021/22 is to be found at:- https://www.ombudsman.wales/annual-report-accounts/</p> <p>The PSOW also publishes a separate annual summary of performance for each council; called the annual letter.</p> <p>The Annual Letter 2021/22, for the Isle of Anglesey County Council (IOACC), is attached as Appendix 1.</p>

In her letter, the PSOW requests the following:-

- *“Present my Annual Letter to the Cabinet and to the Governance & Audit Committee to assist members in their scrutiny of the Council’s performance and share any feedback from the Cabinet and the Governance & Audit Committee with my office”*

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

- *“Continue to engage with our Complaints Standards work, accessing training for your staff, fully implementing the model policy, and providing complaints data”*

Complaints Standards Agency (CSA) training sessions were completed at the end of 2020 and the model policy is fully implemented. The Council provides quarterly complaints data in accordance with the timescale set by the CSA.

- *“Inform me of the outcome of the Council’s considerations and proposed actions on the above matters by 30 September 2022”*

This will be completed following the meetings of this Committee and the Executive.

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:-

- 29 complaints were lodged with the PSOW, against IOACC; up from 18 complaints during 2020/2021. It was concluded that 26 did not require an investigation by the PSOW’s office
- 3 of the complaints lodged were dealt with by way of early resolution
- 1 Code of Conduct complaint was made against a member of the Council but this was not investigated
- 4 complaints were lodged against town or community councils; 1 was not investigated and no evidence of breach was found in the remaining 3 cases
- Previous annual letters ranked each Council but this is no longer the case. The performance for IOACC is to be found in the tables provided in the Annual 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 Strategic Leadership Team

The Governance & Audit Committee receive an annual report on complaints, in September of each year. The report for 2021/22 has/will be reported to the Committee on 21st September 2022.

<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?

There were no alternative options

C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?

This is a matter for both the Executive and the Governance and Audit Committee; at the request of the PSOW

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

Not relevant

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

Not relevant

E – Impact on our Future Generations(if relevant)

1	How does this decision impact on our long term needs as an Island	The purpose of the Corporate Complaints Policy is to learn lessons when things go wrong and making changes to service delivery as required and where possible.
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:	The facts presented contribute to building better services for the future
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	Welsh Language complaints are dealt with separately and reported in the Welsh Language Standards Report 2021-22

DD – Who did you consult?		What did they say?
1	Chief Executive / Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	No observations
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	As part of the Strategic Leadership Team
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	This report is published to all elected members

F - Appendices:

Copy of the Annual Letter 2021/22

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

None

Ask for: Communications

 01656 641150

Date: August 2022

 communications@ombudsman.wales

Cllr. Llinos Medi
Isle of Anglesey County Council
By Email only: llinosmedihuws@anglesey.gov.uk

Annual Letter 2021/22

Dear Councillor Medi

I am pleased to provide you with the Annual letter (2021/22) for Isle of Anglesey County Council which deals with complaints relating to maladministration and service failure, complaints relating to alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct for Councillors and the actions being taken to improve public services

This is my first annual letter since taking up the role of Public Services Ombudsman in April 2022, and I appreciate that the effects of the pandemic are still being felt by all public bodies in Wales. Our office has not been immune from this, with records numbers of cases being referred to us over the last two years. The strong working relationships between my Office and local authorities continues to deliver improvements in how we are dealing with complaints and ensuring that, when things go wrong, we are learning from that and building stronger public services.

Complaints relating to Maladministration & Service Failure

Last year the number of complaints referred to us regarding Local Authorities increased by 47% (compared to 20/21 figures) and are now well above pre-pandemic levels. It is likely that complaints to my office, and public services in general, were suppressed during the pandemic, and we are now starting to see the expected 'rebound' effect.

During this period, we intervened in (upheld, settled or resolved at an early stage) a similar proportion of complaints about public bodies, 18%, when compared with recent years. Intervention rates (where we have investigated complaints) for Local Authorities also remained at a similar level – 14% compared to 13% in recent years.

Complaints relating to the Code of Conduct for Councillors

We also received a high number of Code of Conduct complaints last year, relating to both Principal Councils and Town and Community Councils. A record number (20) were referred to either the Adjudication Panel for Wales or local standards committees, due to evidence of a breach of the Code.

Supporting improvement of public services

In addition to managing record levels of complaints, we also continued our work using our proactive powers in the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019. Specifically undertaking our first Own Initiative Investigation and continuing our work on the Complaints Standards Authority.

October 2021 saw the publication of the first own initiative investigation in Wales: [Homelessness Reviewed](#). The investigation featured three Local Authorities and sought to scrutinise the way Homelessness assessments were conducted. The report made specific recommendations to the investigated authorities, as well as suggestions to all other Local Authorities in Wales and Welsh Government. Some of these recommendations will bring about immediate change – updating factsheets and letter and assessment templates to ensure that key equality and human rights considerations are routinely embedded into processes for example – all the recommendations were designed to bring about tangible change to people using homelessness services in Wales.

The Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) continued its work with public bodies in Wales last year. The model complaints policy has already been adopted by local authorities and health boards in Wales, we have now extended this to an initial tranche of Housing Associations and Natural Resources Wales. The aim being to implement this work across the Welsh public sector.

In addition to this, the CSA published information on complaints handled by local authorities for the [first time](#) – a key achievement for this work. The data for 21/22 showed:

- Over 15,000 complaints were recorded by Local Authorities
- 4.88 for every 1000 residents.
- Nearly half (46%) of those complaints were upheld.
- About 75% were investigated within 20 working days.
- About 8% of all complaints closed ended up being referred to PSOW.

The CSA has now implemented a model complaints policy with nearly 50 public bodies, and delivered 140 training sessions, completely free of charge, during the last financial year. The feedback has been excellent, and the training has been very popular - so I would encourage Isle of Anglesey County Council to engage as fully as possible.

Complaints made to the Ombudsman

A summary of the complaints of maladministration/service failure received relating to your Council is attached, along with a summary of the Code of Conduct complaints relating to members of the Council and the Town & Community Councils in your area.

In light of the new duties on political leaders and standards committees to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of their members, we look forward to working with you, your Monitoring Officer and standards committees to share any learning from the complaints we receive and to support your authority's work.

I would also welcome feedback on your Governance & Audit Committee's review of your authority's ability to handle complaints effectively so that we can take this into account in our work and support its work on the handling of complaints.

Finally, can I thank you and your officials for the positive way that local authorities have engaged with my Office to enable us to deliver these achievements during what has been a challenging year for everyone. I very much look forward to continuing this work and collaboration to ensure we further improve public services across Wales.

Further to this letter can I ask that your Council takes the following actions:

- Present my Annual Letter to the Cabinet and to the Governance & Audit Committee to assist members in their scrutiny of the Council's performance and share any feedback from the Cabinet and the Governance & Audit Committee with my office.
- Continue to engage with our Complaints Standards work, accessing training for your staff, fully implementing the model policy, and providing complaints data.
- Inform me of the outcome of the Council's considerations and proposed actions on the above matters by 30 September.

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,



Michelle Morris
Public Services Ombudsman

cc. Dylan Williams, Chief Executive, Isle of Anglesey County Council.

By Email only: dylanwilliams@ynysmon.gov.uk

Factsheet

Appendix A - Complaints Received

Local Authority	Complaints Received	Received per 1000 residents
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	14	0.20
Bridgend County Borough Council	55	0.37
Caerphilly County Borough Council	60	0.33
Cardiff Council*	182	0.50
Carmarthenshire County Council	54	0.29
Ceredigion County Council	52	0.72
Conwy County Borough Council	27	0.23
Denbighshire County Council	34	0.36
Flintshire County Council	99	0.63
Gwynedd Council	39	0.31
Isle of Anglesey County Council	29	0.41
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	27	0.45
Monmouthshire County Council	20	0.21
Neath Port Talbot Council	45	0.31
Newport City Council	40	0.26
Pembrokeshire County Council	39	0.31
Powys County Council	55	0.42
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	51	0.21
Swansea Council	71	0.29
Torfaen County Borough Council	18	0.19
Vale of Glamorgan Council	61	0.46
Wrexham County Borough Council	71	0.52
Total	1143	0.36

* inc 17 Rent Smart Wales

Appendix B - Received by Subject

Isle of Anglesey County Council	Complaints Received	% Share
Adult Social Services	6	21%
Benefits Administration	0	0%
Children's Social Services	2	7%
Community Facilities, Recreation and Leisure	1	3%
Complaints Handling	3	10%
Covid19	0	0%
Education	0	0%
Environment and Environmental Health	1	3%
Finance and Taxation	2	7%
Housing	5	17%
Licensing	0	0%
Planning and Building Control	7	24%
Roads and Transport	2	7%
Various Other	0	0%
Total	29	

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	8	7	10	3	0	0	0	0	28
% Share	29%	25%	36%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	

Appendix D - Cases with PSOW Intervention

	No. of interventions	No. of closures	% of interventions
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	0	13	0%
Bridgend County Borough Council	7	54	13%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	7	58	12%
Cardiff Council	45	159	28%
Cardiff Council - Rent Smart Wales	1	16	6%
Carmarthenshire County Council	7	49	14%
Ceredigion County Council	13	46	28%
Conwy County Borough Council	2	24	8%
Denbighshire County Council	4	33	12%
Flintshire County Council	15	94	16%
Gwynedd Council	6	41	15%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	3	28	11%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	2	26	8%
Monmouthshire County Council	2	21	10%
Neath Port Talbot Council	5	45	11%
Newport City Council	4	36	11%
Pembrokeshire County Council	2	40	5%
Powys County Council	7	55	13%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	3	45	7%
Swansea Council	10	76	13%
Torfaen County Borough Council	2	20	10%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	9	62	15%
Wrexham County Borough Council	4	67	6%
Total	160	1108	14%

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	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

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
Llanddona Community Council	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Llanddyfnan Community Council	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Rhosybol Community 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 2021/2022. 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 2021/2022. 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 2021/2022. 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 2021/2022. 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.