

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	The Governance & Audit Committee / The Executive
Date:	21 September 2023/ 26 September 2023
Subject:	Annual Letter from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 2022/2023
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Carwyn Elias Jones
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 dylanowen3@ynysmon.llyw.cymru
Local Members:	Relevant to all Members

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s

1. Recommendations

The Committee and the Executive to:

- note and accept the Annual Letter from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) 2022/23;
- to support the implementation of the PSOW's Model Policy;
- to support the development of a training strategy;
- to support the development of a training needs assessment and the rollout of suitable training as required;
- 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 agreed to the implementation of elements referred to in her Annual Letter;
- to provide assurance that the Council will continue to monitor complaints thereby providing Members with the information required to scrutinise the Council's performance.

2. Background

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

The PSOW recently published her [Annual Report](#) for 2022/23.

The PSOW also publishes a separate annual summary of the performance of each council; called the Annual Letter.

The Annual Letter 2022/23, for the Isle of Anglesey County Council (IOACC), is attached as **Appendix 1**.

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:-

- 25 Service complaints were lodged with the PSOW, against IOACC; down from 29 complaints during 2021/2022. It was concluded that 20 did not require an investigation by the PSOW's office.
- 5 of the complaints lodged were dealt with by way of early resolution

In addition to the complaints lodged with the PSOW against IOACC Services, the Letter also refers to complaints made against County, Town and Community Councillors

- 1 Code of Conduct complaint was made against a member of the County Council but this was not investigated
- 1 complaint was made against a Town/Community Councillor during 2022/23, but the investigation was discontinued prior to its investigation.
- The PSOW have stated that the Town/Community Councils listed in Appendix F are included as they had a complaint closed during 2022/23 (referenced with the number of complaints) or that there were historical complaints against them in 2021/22 (referenced with a 0).

The performance for IOACC is to be found in the tables provided in the Annual Letter.

In her letter, the PSOW requests the following:-

- *“Present my Annual Letter to the Cabinet and to the Governance and Audit Committee at the next available opportunity and notify me of when these meetings will take place.”*

This report satisfies the above request and, in addition, is published to all Members and to the public. The Corporate Information and Complaints Officer has notified the Ombudsman of the dates of these meetings.

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

The Complaints Standards Agency (CSA) [Guidance for Public Service Providers on Implementing the Concerns and Complaints Policy](#) contains advice about training and refers to the need to develop a training strategy.

A training strategy will be developed and an assessment of the training needs of staff and Elected Members will be identified and addressed.

The Council will adopt the current version of the PSOW's Model Policy and ensure that its complaints management process complies with the CSA Guidance.

The Council provides quarterly complaints data in accordance with the timescale set by the CSA. Please see below a table confirming the submission date by the CSA and the date the information was submitted by the Council.

Submission Date	Date Data Sent by IOACC
22.07.2022	19.07.2022
21.10.2022	20.10.2022
03.02.2023	02.02.2023
21.05.2023	16.05.2023

- *“Inform me of the outcome of the Council’s considerations and proposed actions on the above matters at the earliest opportunity.”*

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

4. Additional information.

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

Quarterly reports are also provided to the Leadership Team

[The Governance & Audit Committee](#) receive an annual report on complaints, in September of each year. The report for 2022/23 has been reported to the Committee on 21st September 2023.

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 Governance and Audit Committee and the Executive; at the request of the PSOW.

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

Not relevant

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

Not relevant

F – 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 make 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 contained within the Corporate Concerns & Complaints Policy and are dealt with if received. If complaints are received from the Welsh Language Commissioner, they will be reported in the Welsh Language Standards Report 2022-23

G – Who did you consult?**What did they say?**

1	Chief Executive / Leadership Team (LT) (mandatory)	Endorse the report and its recommendations.
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	Endorse the report and its recommendations.
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	Endorse the report and its recommendations.
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

H - Appendices:

Copy of the Annual Letter 2022/23

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

None



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Date: 17 August 2023

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

Annual Letter 2022/23

Dear Councillor Medi

I am pleased to provide you with the Annual letter (2022/23) 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 letter coincides with my Annual Report – “[A year of change – a year of challenge](#)” – a sentiment which will no doubt resonate with public bodies across Wales. My office has seen another increase in the number of people asking for our help – up 3% overall compared to the previous year, and my office now receives double the number of cases we received a decade ago.

In the last year, I have met with public bodies across Wales – speaking about our casework, our recommendations, and our proactive powers. The current climate will continue to provide challenges for public services, but I am grateful for the positive and productive way in which local authorities continue to engage with my office.

1,020 complaints were referred to us regarding local authorities last year - a reduction of 11% compared to the previous year. During this period, we intervened in (upheld, settled or resolved at an early stage) 13% of local authority complaints.

We received fewer Code of Conduct complaints in 22/23 compared to the previous year, relating to both Principal Councils and Town and Community Councils. My role is such that I do not make final findings about breaches of the Code of Conduct. Instead, where investigations find the most serious concerns, these are referred to the Standards Committee of the relevant local authority, or the

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Adjudication Panel for Wales. In 2022/23, the Ombudsman made 12 such referrals – a welcome reduction from 20 last year.

Supporting improvement of public services

Despite the challenges of last year, we have pushed forward with our proactive improvement work and launched a new Service Quality process to ensure we deliver the standards we expect.

Last year, we began work on our second wider Own Initiative investigation – this time looking into carers assessments within local authorities. This investigation will take place throughout the coming year, and we look forward to sharing our findings with all local authorities – not just those involved in the investigation.

The Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) continued its work with public bodies in Wales last year, with more than 50 public bodies now operating our model policy. We've also now provided more than 400 training sessions since we started, with local authorities, in September 2020.

We continued our work to publish complaints statistics into a second year, with data now published twice a year. This data allows us to see information with greater context – for example, last year 14% of Isle of Anglesey County Council's complaints were referred to PSOW.

I would encourage Isle of Anglesey County Council, and specifically your Audit and Governance Committee, to use this data to better understand your performance on complaints and consider how well good complaints handling is embedded throughout the Authority.

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 and Audit Committee at the next available opportunity and notify me of when these meetings will take place.
- Continue to engage with our Complaints Standards work, accessing training for your staff, fully implementing the model policy, and providing accurate and timely complaints data.
- Inform me of the outcome of the Council's considerations and proposed actions on the above matters at the earliest opportunity.

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	16	0.24
Bridgend County Borough Council	55	0.38
Caerphilly County Borough Council	49	0.28
Cardiff Council*	142	0.39
Carmarthenshire County Council	53	0.28
Ceredigion County Council	35	0.49
Conwy County Borough Council	31	0.27
Denbighshire County Council	32	0.33
Flintshire County Council	65	0.42
Cyngor Gwynedd	36	0.31
Isle of Anglesey County Council	25	0.36
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	17	0.29
Monmouthshire County Council	23	0.25
Neath Port Talbot Council	39	0.27
Newport City Council	42	0.26
Pembrokeshire County Council	44	0.36
Powys County Council	38	0.29
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council**	54	0.23
Swansea Council	94	0.39
Torfaen County Borough Council	16	0.17
Vale of Glamorgan Council	49	0.37
Wrexham County Borough Council	65	0.48
Total	1020	0.33
* inc 9 Rent Smart Wales		
** inc 2 South Wales Parking Group		



Appendix B - Received by Subject

Isle of Anglesey County Council	Complaints Received	% share
Adult Social Services	1	4%
Benefits Administration	0	0%
Children's Social Services	3	12%
Community Facilities, Recreation and Leisure	0	0%
Complaints Handling	6	24%
Covid19	0	0%
Education	1	4%
Environment and Environmental Health	1	4%
Finance and Taxation	2	8%
Housing	4	16%
Licensing	0	0%
Planning and Building Control	5	20%
Roads and Transport	0	0%
Various Other	2	8%
Total	25	

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Appendix C - Complaint Outcomes
(* denotes intervention)

Isle of Anglesey County Council		% Share
Out of Jurisdiction	5	20%
Premature	4	16%
Other cases closed after initial consideration	11	44%
Early Resolution/ voluntary settlement*	5	20%
Discontinued	0	0%
Other Reports - Not Upheld	0	0%
Other Reports Upheld*	0	0%
Public Interest Reports*	0	0%
Special Interest Reports*	0	0%
Total	25	

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Appendix D - Cases with PSOW Intervention

	No. of interventions	No. of closures	% of interventions
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	0	16	0%
Bridgend County Borough Council	5	57	9%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	6	52	12%
Cardiff Council	25	145	17%
Cardiff Council - Rent Smart Wales	1	9	11%
Carmarthenshire County Council	7	60	12%
Ceredigion County Council	13	44	30%
Conwy County Borough Council	5	35	14%
Denbighshire County Council	2	33	6%
Flintshire County Council	5	70	7%
Cyngor Gwynedd	5	33	15%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	5	25	20%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	1	18	6%
Monmouthshire County Council	1	22	5%
Neath Port Talbot Council	7	38	18%
Newport City Council	8	48	17%
Pembrokeshire County Council	3	45	7%
Powys County Council	8	44	18%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	2	54	4%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council - South Wales Parking Group	0	2	0%
Swansea Council	10	99	10%
Torfaen County Borough Council	1	17	6%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	15	53	28%
Wrexham County Borough Council	6	67	9%
Total	141	1086	13%



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Appendix E - Code of Conduct Complaints

		Isle of Anglesey County Council
Investigations	Decision not to investigate	0
	Discontinued	1
	No evidence of breach	0
	No action necessary	0
	Refer to Adjudication Panel	0
	Refer to Standards Committee	0
	Total	1

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Appendix F - Town/Community Council Code of Complaints

Town/Community Council	Decision not to investigate	Investigations				Total	
		Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Adjudication Panel		Refer to Standards Committee
Amlwch Town Council	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Llandona Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Llanddyfnan Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rhosybol Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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Information Sheet

Appendix A shows the number of complaints received by PSOW for all Local Authorities in 2022/23. These complaints are contextualised by the population of each authority.

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 2022/23. 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 2022/23. 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 2022/23. 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 in 2022/23. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for each Town or Community Council.

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