

**REPORT OF MONITORING OFFICER**

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**SUBJECT:  
PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

- 1 The Ombudsman considers complaints of maladministration and service failure against public bodies and allegations against members of local authorities that they have broken the Code of Conduct.
- 2 In the overall number of maladministration complaints against public authorities, there was a decrease of 4% compared to the previous year. Local authorities continue to account for the largest proportion of complaints. The number of complaints recorded against them fell from 938 to 906. As might be expected, it was followed by NHS bodies where there was a slight increase from 769 to 798. In relation to the National Park Authorities, there was a reduction from 9 to 8 and this figure is taken for all 3 National Park Authorities. So it can be seen that the National Park Authorities are playing very small role in the overall number of complaints against public bodies, being only 8 for 2016, out of 1992 cases.
- 3 In contrast, however, there has been a 19% increase in the number of Code of Conduct complaints. This is mainly explained by 49% increase of complaints relating to community councils. This does not directly concern this National Park Authority as it has no jurisdiction for community councils, except where, in the past the PSOW has asked for assistance in relation to dealing or investigating some of these complaints locally .
- 4 Interestingly the majority of complaints received during 2015/16 related to matters of "equality and respect", accounting for 41% of the complaints made to the PSOW. "Disclosure" and "registration of interests" only accounted 14% of the Code of Conduct caseload referred to him. He does not give a breakdown as to how many of these related to community councils and the "National Park Authority" in the table on page 21 of his report, refers to only one such complaint coming to him in relation to a National Park Authority which is unidentified. So far as I am aware it does not relate to this Authority.

On page 58 of his report, he provides a breakdown of the "Other Local Authority" complaints, from 2 National Park Authorities and 2 Fire and Rescue that initially came to his attention. None resulted in any Section 16 report being upheld either in whole or in part.

- 5 There was one voluntary "quick fix" case which was resolved by a voluntary agreement reached between the complainant and the Authority. I was made aware of that case and I am satisfied it has raised no significant issues and remedial steps have been taken to ensure that such a problem is not repeated in the future even though there was no formal finding against the Authority.

- 6 Full details of the PSOW 's annual report can be found on the attached hyperlink. [http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk/~media/Files/AnnualReports\\_en/Annual%20Report%202015-16%20-%20Final%20for%20web%20English.ashx](http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk/~media/Files/AnnualReports_en/Annual%20Report%202015-16%20-%20Final%20for%20web%20English.ashx)  
[http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk/~media/Files/AnnualReports\\_cy/Annual%20Report%202015-16%20-%20Final%20for%20web%20Cymraeg.ashx](http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk/~media/Files/AnnualReports_cy/Annual%20Report%202015-16%20-%20Final%20for%20web%20Cymraeg.ashx)
- 7 The PSOW has also issued a new training video. I suggest that Members watch this at home prior to the meeting so that any points arising can be discussed. The attached hyperlink  
Link to Welsh version: <https://youtu.be/s-ju9nztRRk>  
Link to English version: <https://youtu.be/Cm4escGiBqk>