

**Response of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
to the Law Commission’s Consultation on
‘The Form and Accessibility of the Law applicable to Wales’**

1. I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Law Commission’s consultation on ‘The Form and Accessibility of the Law Applicable to Wales’.

2. As Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW), I investigate complaints made by members of the public who believe they have suffered hardship or injustice through maladministration or service failure on the part of a body in my jurisdiction, which essentially are all those organisations responsible for delivering public services devolved to Wales, these include:
 - local government (both county and community councils);
 - the National Health Service (including GPs and dentists);
 - registered social landlords (housing associations);
 - and the Welsh Government, together with its sponsored bodies.

I am also able to consider complaints about privately arranged or funded social care and palliative care services. In addition, I consider and investigate complaints that members of local government bodies have broken their authority’s Code of Conduct for Members. I am independent of all government bodies.

3. I can only respond to a consultation based on evidence from PSOW casework; therefore rather than answer the specific consultation questions I will provide general comments based on PSOW’s experience which may be helpful to the Law Commission’s consideration of accessibility of the law applicable to Wales.

Due to the nature of our work, the accessibility of law in Wales is of utmost importance to PSOW as we need to ensure that bodies in our jurisdiction are correctly applying the law. Accessing the law easily is paramount to doing this effectively.

We require the position in Wales to be clear from the outset. Currently it is extremely difficult to access and find the law applicable in Wales. To facilitate searching for laws it would be useful to have access to a consolidation of Welsh law e.g. all local government provisions in one place.

Databases should be kept up to date and appreciate the differences in English and Welsh law. All databases or systems used should be controlled and accurate, as well as appropriately resourced so that we can have confidence that what we find is correct. It would also be useful if text books were produced in English and Welsh or at the very least note variations in English and Welsh law.