

A Visible Ombudsman: Strengthening the Voice of the Citizen

Mission

“By considering complaints, to put things right for service users and contribute to improved public service delivery and standards in public life.”

To achieve our goals and to contribute to improved standards of public service delivery effective communication should be at the heart of everything we do.

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is preparing to take on additional new powers, subject to Assembly approval. It's therefore crucial that in the work we undertake we are seen as a confident, respected, independent and impartial body.

Ultimately, our strategy should be bold, and push to the forefront our ability to inform the wider world of lessons learnt from complaints and strengthen the voice of the citizen.

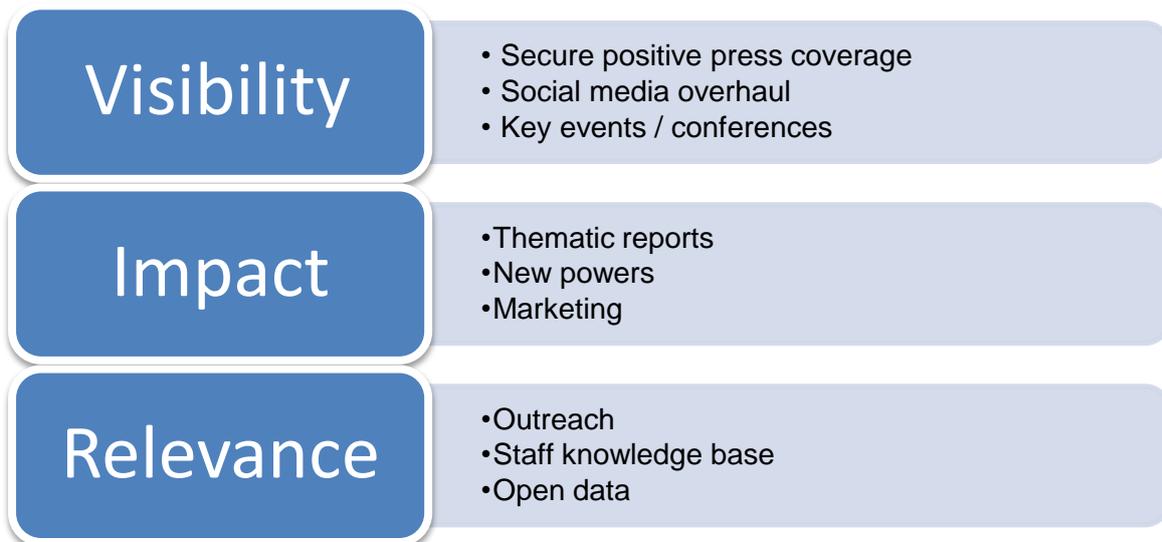
Strategy Objectives

This strategy is based on three primary objectives: Visibility, Impact and Relevance. These objectives support our three year strategic plan, *Innovation, Influence and Improvement* and look to consolidate our position at the vanguard of the ombudsman community.

Together with this document, a communications toolkit has been created outlining the levers we have at our disposal to help implement this strategy.

Our objectives are ambitious but do not come without risk. All aspects of external communication have risks associated with it, particularly when the landscape for reactive comment is so varied. We should sensibly calculate these risks without hampering our ability to convey our message and execute our strategy.

Only by effectively communicating our findings and unleashing the potential of our organisational knowledge base can we expect public service providers to learn and change for the better. Ensuring justice is 'seen to be done' plays an integral part in this, as does practicing what we preach, and abiding by the same values we expect all public service providers to adopt.



Visibility

Maintaining high visibility is paramount if the general public is to understand the Ombudsman’s role and functions. Additionally, it is impossible for public service providers to learn wider lessons from our work if they do not know about them.

Priorities

- 1 Secure positive media coverage of our work on a national and regional scale, particularly surrounding public interest reports.
- 2 Undergo a dynamic overhaul of our social media channels and website to engage directly with complainants and emphasise our citizen-centred principles.
- 3 Identify key high profile events and conference opportunities for the Ombudsman and senior staff to attend and deliver key messages.

Impact

We should use proactive communications as an improvement tool for public services providers. We should focus our work on positive outcomes and ensure when the Ombudsman utilises his powers, the audience is maximised.

Priorities

- 1 Use our set piece documents such as thematic reports and our annual report to “shine a light” on hot topic issues in Wales.
- 2 Identify media opportunities to inform public of importance of new powers and what it will mean for public services in Wales.
- 3 Use marketing tools to target key demographics we might normally find hard to reach.

Relevance

Our communications should focus on key issues of importance to the citizen in Wales and make a valuable contribution to the public debate.

Priorities

- 1 Undergo an extensive outreach programme to engage with our stakeholders
- 2 Build on our internal communication strategy to unleash potential of staff knowledge base and deepen capacity to understand Welsh political landscape.
- 3 Develop data communications from an open data platform to inform public debate.

Measuring Success

There are a number of indicators that can be used to judge the strategy's success. The implementation of action points in our communication toolkit, volume and reaction of media coverage and internal / external feedback all have a role to play in measuring effectiveness.

We will audit our press output on an annual basis.

Review

This strategy should be reviewed in 12 months.