

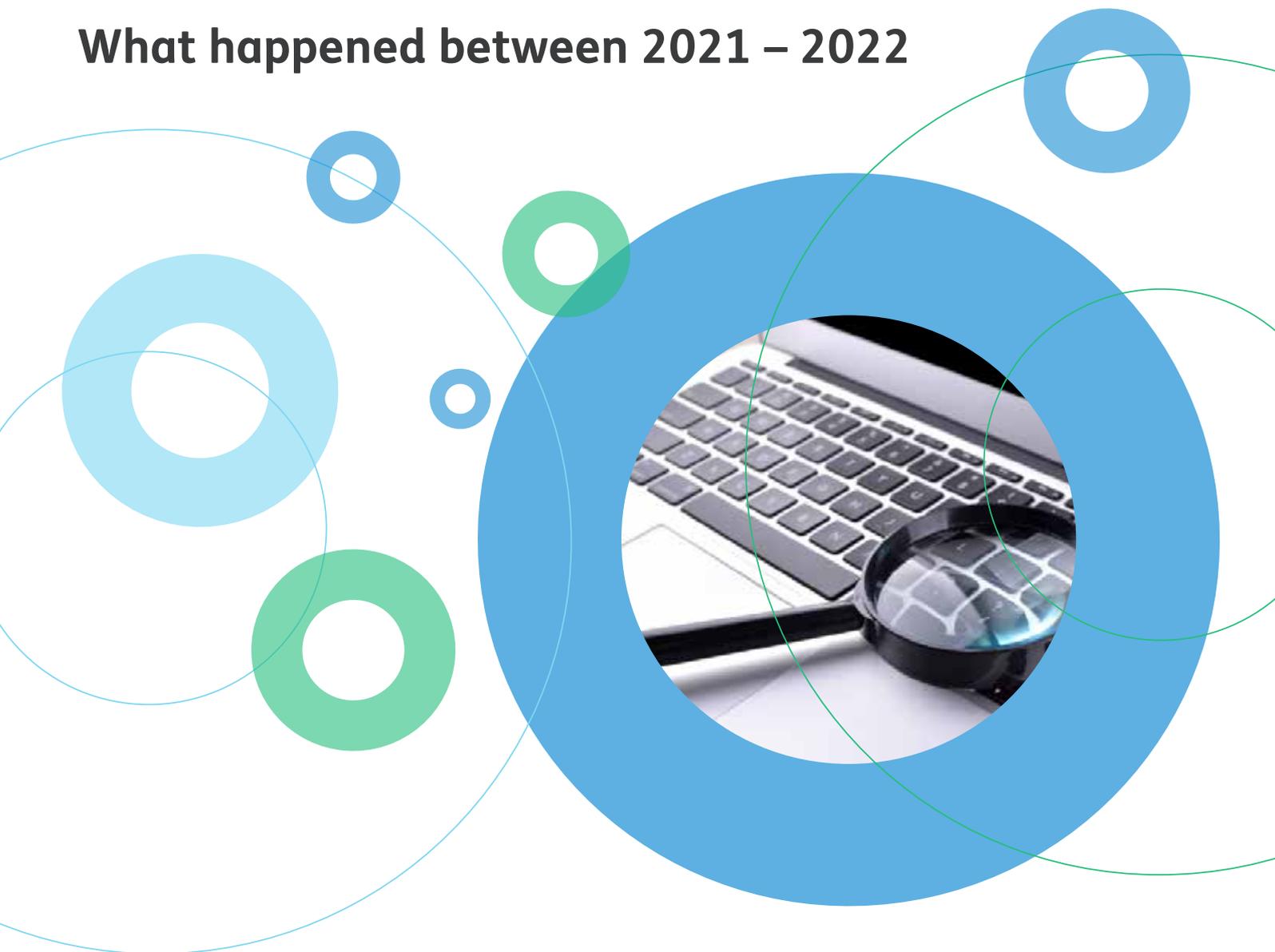
Easy Read

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OMBWDSMON GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS CYMRU
PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Report

What happened between 2021 – 2022



This document was written by the **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**. It is an easy read version of ‘**Annual Report and Accounts 2021 - 2022**’

July 2022

How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 28**.



Where the document says **we**, this means **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**. For more information contact:

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Introduction



We are the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

We deal with complaints about:

- **Public services**



Public services are services paid for by Government. For example: local councils, the NHS, social landlords.



- Local councillors breaking the **code of conduct**. Local councillors are people chosen to run a council.



Code of conduct means the rules and standards someone must follow in their job.



Our aim is to improve **public services**.



We make our own decisions to look into complaints. And we are not owned by any government organisation.



Our service is for all and free of charge.

What happened between 2021-2022



Nick Bennett finished his term as an **Ombudsman** this year.



Ombudsman is the person leading our office. In our office, we have many people who look into complaints.



We welcomed Michelle Morris as an **Ombudsman** from April 2022.



Michelle is writing a plan about how we will work to provide a fair complaints service for people who are not happy with **public services**. Or about how local councillors behave.



We had many complaints in 2021 to 2022. It was much more than we had in 2020 to 2021 and 2019 to 2020.



We closed many complaints by making things right for the people of Wales.



We continued our work during COVID-19.

We had more than 8 thousand new cases:



- Almost 5 thousand cases were enquiries.
- 169 were **Code of Conduct** pre-assessments. This means cases which we could not look into because we did not get all the information we needed.
- 2,726 complaints were about **public services**.
- 294 complaints were about the **Code of Conduct**.
- We closed 2,865 complaints in total.

Complaints about public services

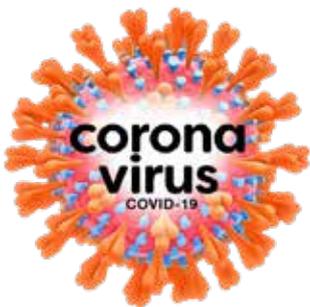


We had complaints about:

- Health boards
- County and County Borough Council
- and Housing Associations



The complaints were about health services, housing, complaint handling, social services, planning and building control.



3 out of 100 complaints were about COVID-19.



We issued more than 1 thousand **recommendations** to public service providers.



Recommendation means saying what actions need to be taken to solve a problem.



We **recommended** that the providers pay over 132 thousand pounds of **financial compensation**. This was over twice as much as in 2020 to 2021.



Financial compensation is when you are paid money by a person or organisation. They pay you this money to cover the harm, loss or stress they have caused you.



26 out of 100 **recommendations** were about making changes in the way people work. Or about training. Or more information for staff.

Complaints about the Code of Conduct



We had fewer complaints about the **Code of Conduct** than last year. But more than we had in 2019 to 2020.



Most of our new complaints were about members of Town and Community Councils.



Almost half of our new complaints about the **Code of Conduct** was about councillors not treating others **equally** and with respect.

Equality



Equally means treating people fairly and making sure they have the same chances in life.



We closed fewer **Code of Conduct** complaints than last year, but many more than the year before that. We looked into many more complaints.

If the complaints were very serious, we referred them to:



- a **local Standards Committees**
- or to the **Adjudication Panel for Wales.**



We referred 20 complaints about the **Code of Conduct** to the **local Standards Committees**. Or the **Adjudication Panel for Wales**.



This is twice as many as last year. We are worried about this increase.



When the **Adjudication Panel for Wales** and **Standards Committees** look at the complaints we refer, they generally agree with our findings.

Supporting public services to improve



We had a lot more complaints this year. Our work was much more than last year.



But we continue to help **public services** to improve by learning from the complaints we get.



We have 39 **public bodies** in Wales under the **Complaints Standards Authority**.



The aim of the **Complaints Standards Authority** is to work with **public bodies** to help them deal with complaints in the right way.

We do this by:

- providing guidance and training
- and by collecting information about how they deal with complaints.





Public bodies are organisations that run services for the public. They have money from Welsh Government to run.



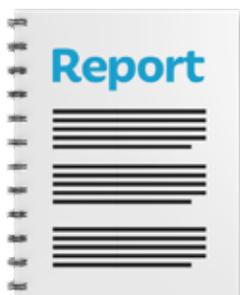
We provided 140 online training sessions to **public bodies** across Wales.



For the first time we put information about how many complaints were made to the County and County Borough Councils on our website.



We can look into problems with **public services** even if we have not had a complaint about them.



This year, we published a report about how County and County Borough Councils deal with homelessness assessments in Wales.



You can read about it here: [Homelessness Reviewed: An open door to positive change.](#)



When we look into a complaint, we can look into extra things linked to it, if we think there may be a problem.

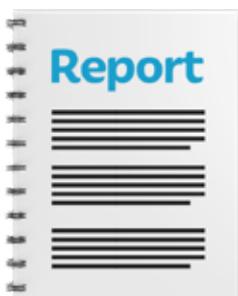


We completed 3 big investigations like that during the year.



If we think that our complaint is very serious or can help all **public bodies** to improve how they work, we issue a **public interest report** about it.

We wrote 7 reports like that this year:



- 5 about health care
- 1 about social care
- and 1 about waste management.



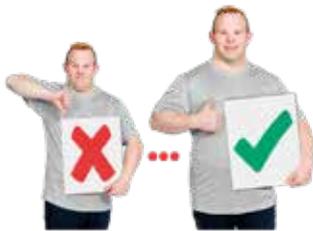
We have added the [Our Findings](#) tool on our website. This tool helps people to search through complaints that we closed.



We published our third [Equality and Human Rights Casebook](#). This has a list of our complaints about human rights and **equality**.



We have updated our guidance about Principles of [Good Administration](#) and [Good Records Management Matters](#).



This guidance is to help **public bodies** work better.

What we learnt

Equality



We want to make sure we are doing a good job. And we handle complaints in an **equal** and fair way.



If you are not happy with our decisions, you can ask for a **review**.



A **review** is when we check a plan or how something is working to make sure we are working in the best way.



You can ask for a **review** if you can show that we did not properly think about the information you sent. Or if you can send us new information.



We had 260 new **review** requests from people this year.

About feedback from people



We asked for feedback from people who made a complaint and from the **public bodies**. We use that feedback to improve how we work.



This year, 26 **public bodies** took part in our **Sounding Boards**. This is a group where you can share your ideas and feedback.



Public bodies gave us good feedback and were happy with our service.



But not as many people were happy with our service this year.



43 out of 100 people who made a complaint were happy with our service.



But people said they were happier with our service when they had a good result from their complaint.



We got 32 complaints about us.



We agreed with around 4 out of every 10 complaints about us.



We are working on an action plan to improve how we work based on this feedback.

How we work and how we use our resources



We are responsible to the **Senedd** for how we work and how we use our **resources**.



The **Senedd** is the Welsh Parliament. It is where laws are made in Wales.



Resources are useful things we have or things we own. For example, buildings, vehicles, information, money and staff.



We had a budget of £5.2 million this year.



We used most of our **resources** to handle complaints. The rest of the **resources** were used on things such as training and other things.



We spent around £491 on every case this year.



We want to protect the environment and continue to support **sustainable** working.



Sustainable means that the services are run carefully so they can run in the future.



We had just over 9,000 kg of waste.



We used 2 % more energy than last year.



We did not send any general waste to landfill.



We tried to use **resources** that use the lowest amounts of energy.



We stayed connected with colleagues in the UK, Europe and around the world.

About equality, diversity and inclusion



We want to make sure we have **equality**, **diversity** and **inclusion** in our organisation.



Diversity means people are not all the same. For example, people come from different backgrounds, make different choices or are good at different things.



Inclusion means everyone can take part, and everyone has a fair chance.



We want people to know that everyone can use our service.



43 out of 100 people who took part in a national survey said that they knew about us.



80 out of 100 people who made a complaint said that it was easy to contact us.



We took 221 complaints in person or on the phone. And we had the first complaint in British Sign Language.



We want to make our workplace **equal, diverse,** and **inclusive.**



Most of our staff agreed that our workplace is **equal, diverse** and **inclusive.**



We got the **Autism Awareness Employer Status** this year. This means we have a good understanding about Autism.



We also got the **Chwarae Teg FairPlay Employer** award at silver level. This means we are recognised as being a fair employer.



And we reduced our **Gender Pay Gap** to 3% from 5% last year.



Gender Pay Gap is when men and women earn different amounts of money overall at an organisation. For example, maybe there are less women in manager jobs than men.

How we support our staff



We value and support our staff.



The challenges that we faced during 2021 to 2022 affected how well and healthy our staff were.



We worked hard to support our staff during the year.



All our staff completed their yearly **appraisal process**.



This is when we talk about how staff have worked during the year and what they need to do in the future.



Around 7 out of 10 of staff completed 28 hours or more of professional development. This means things like training.



More staff took sick leave because of stress compared to last year. A lot of the times, this had nothing to do with work.

Results from the staff survey this year:



87 out of 100 staff said that **Public Services Ombudsman** for Wales is a good place to work.



Almost all said that their work was flexible. This means that it allowed them to balance their work and home life.



More than half said that they had enough **resources** to do their work.



More than half said that the workload was okay.

Hard words

Code of conduct

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Diversity

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Equality

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Financial compensation

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Gender Pay Gap

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Inclusion

Inclusion means everyone can take part, and everyone has a fair chance.

Ombudsmen

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Public services

Public services are services paid for by Government. For example: local councils, the NHS, social landlords.

Public bodies

Public bodies are organisations that run services for the public. They have money from Welsh Government to run.

Resources

Resources are useful things we have or things we own. For example buildings, vehicles, information, money and staff.

Recommendation

Recommendation means giving suggestions like what actions need to be taken to solve a problem.

Review

A review is when we check a plan or how something is working to make sure we are working in the best way.

Sustainable

Sustainable means that the services are run carefully so they can run in the future.