

## Quality Assurance Dip Sampling Review:

### Review of Inadmissible Code of Conduct Complaints

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#### Introduction

In line with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales' (PSOW) ongoing commitment to quality assurance—and as recommended in the 2024 Independent Review of Investigations into Code of Conduct Complaints—I was appointed to undertake a targeted review of inadmissible cases. This was carried out through a dip sampling exercise (n=15) to ensure continued adherence to process integrity, high standards of decision-making and free from political bias.

#### Methodology

##### Sample Selection

For the purpose of this review, I was provided with a full list of all Code Team closure cases (n = 87) and Code Team Manager override cases (n = 4).

Secure access was granted to the PSOW's complaints handling system, enabling full review of the relevant documentation.

From the 91 cases, I randomly selected 15 cases (16.5%) for review:

- 13 cases from the Code Team closure list
- 2 cases from the Code Team Manager override list

##### Case Review Criteria

Each selected case was assessed against the same three core criteria employed in the 2024 Independent Review:

1. Presence of Clear Evidence
2. Adherence to Established Processes
3. Existence of Sound and Well-Articulated Rationale

These benchmarks were used to evaluate the rigour, fairness, and quality of decision-making.

#### Findings

Across all 15 cases reviewed, I found:

- Clear and Appropriate Use of Evidence: Each decision was supported by relevant and proportionate documentation.
- Robust Implementation of Established Processes: There was consistent adherence to procedural requirements and decision-making protocols.

- Strong, Well-Reasoned Rationale: The rationale for each inadmissibility decision was clearly articulated, logically sound, and well-substantiated.
- There was no evidence of political bias or undue influence in any case reviewed. The decisions reflected careful consideration of the merits and context of each complaint.

## **Conclusion**

The review confirms that PSOW's handling of inadmissible Code of Conduct complaints demonstrates a consistently high standard of practice. Decision-making was balanced, evidence-based, and procedurally robust. This provides assurance that the integrity of the complaints process is being maintained.

Dr Melissa Mc

29.05.2025