



**Summary Minutes for publication of the meeting of the
Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
Audit & Risk Assurance Committee
held on 29 April 2025**

Present: Mike Usher (Independent Member & Chair)
Dave Tosh (Independent Member & Vice Chair)
John McSherry (Independent Member)
Laura Davies (Independent Member)
Jayne Woods (Independent Member)
Jane Martin (Independent Member) (online)

Also Present: Michelle Morris (Public Services Ombudsman for Wales)
Simon Hart (Interim Executive Director Corporate Resources)
Katrin Shaw (Executive Director Casework & Legal)
Information Governance Manager
Finance Manager
TIAA – internal auditors
Audit Wales – external auditors
Head of Public Service Complaints
HR Business Partner
Minute taker

1. Welcome & Declarations of Interests

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the ARAC meeting and introductions were given for those who had not attended previously.
- 1.2 The Chair declared an interest for Item 8 as he had been a member of the working group looking at publication of minutes for the Welsh Government. As the interest was not such that prohibited the Chair's involvement in line with the [PSOW's Declarations of Interest Policy for Independent Members](#), the Chair was able to participate in the discussion at Item 8.

2. Apologies for Absence and Quorum

- 2.1 There were no apologies for absence.
- 2.2 It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate as set out in the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2025

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2025 were approved.

4. Matters Arising (not otherwise on the agenda) & Action Log

- 4.1 The Matters Arising and Action Log were noted by the Committee.

5. Internal Audit matters

5.1 Internal Audit Recommendations – Progress Report

There were no outstanding Internal Audit Recommendations to note.

5.2 Internal Audit Progress Report (SICA)

5.2.1 TIAA presented the Internal Audit Progress Report (SICA). The list of upcoming audits was noted with the first one planned for June 2025.

5.3 Internal Audit Annual Report 2024/25

5.3.1 The Committee were pleased to note the Internal Audit Annual Report 2024/25 which stated the PSOW had 'reasonable and effective risk management, control and governance processes' which was the highest level of overall annual assurance that could be given.

5.3.2 Two important and five routine recommendations had been made during the year, all of which had been accepted by management, and all internal audit service delivery KPIs had been met.

5.4 Draft Internal Audit Strategy & Annual Plan 2025/26 (including Audit Charter)

5.4.1 The Committee considered the Internal Audit Strategy & Annual Plan 2025/26 and noted that approval of the Plan included approval of the Audit Charter.

5.4.2 The Strategy & Plan aimed to look at big picture risks (funding, cyber security, AI considerations) and heading towards 2030 sustainability would become more of a feature.

6. Governance and Risk matters

6.1 Risk Report & Risk Register

6.1.1 The Committee noted the Risk Report and Risk Register and discussed the changes to the Risk Register since the last meeting which had been set out in the covering report.

6.2 In-depth consideration of key risk – Staff Attitudes & Psychological Safety

6.2.1 The HRBP updated the Committee on the process and results of the recent staff survey.

6.2.2 The Committee congratulated the PSOW on a remarkable response rate and the overall very positive survey scores.

6.3 Update on the Independent Review's Recommendations & Lessons Learned

6.3.1 The Committee noted the update on completion of work to comply with the Independent Review's Recommendations and Lessons Learned. It was further noted that the Ombudsman had committed to give a full update on the Independent Review and actions resulting therefrom within the body of the Annual Report and at the Senedd scrutiny session in October.

6.4 Information Governance Report

6.4.1 The Information Governance Manager updated the Committee on progress with training and awareness for staff of phishing links and signing to confirm they had read and understood policies.

6.5 Draft Governance Statement

6.5.1 The Committee noted the draft Governance Statement

6.5.2 The Chair informed the Committee that he and the internal and external auditors had held their annual meeting prior to the ARAC meeting and there were no matters of concern raised.

7. Financial and external audit matters

7.1 External Audit Recommendations

7.1.1 There were no external audit recommendations to note.

7.2 External Audit – Audit Plan 2024/25

7.2.1 Audit Wales presented the Audit Plan 2024/25 which reflected a slightly different format to previous years.

7.3 Audit Enquiries to those charged with governance and management

7.3.1 The Committee approved the response to the Audit Wales Audit Enquiries letter which had been completed to reflect the position at 31 March 2025 and highlighted that there had been no major changes since last year.

7.4 Financial Monitoring and Indicative Outturn 2024/25

7.4.1 The Committee noted the Financial Monitoring report and Indicative Outturn for 2024/25 and agreed that a good end of year position had been achieved.

8. ARAC and Committee management matters

8.1 Other matters that require reporting to Audit & Risk Assurance Committee

8.1.1 The Committee noted the Matters that require reporting to the ARAC.

8.2 Publication of ARAC Meeting Minutes

8.2.1 The Committee considered the proposal to publish ARAC minutes on the PSOW website. It was noted that Welsh Government had recently issued guidance on the principles for the publication of Board & Audit Committee Minutes and whilst the document is for guidance only this presents the PSOW with an opportunity to consider its own approach to publishing the ARAC minutes.

8.2.2 The proposal was to retain a detailed set of minutes for internal use but for a summary of the discussions to be published. It was further noted that Welsh Government had adopted this approach and that their summary minutes were only published after approval at the next meeting.

8.2.3 The Committee agreed to publish the ARAC summary minutes going forward following approval at the next meeting.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 **July 2025 Meeting** – There would be a joint ARAC and Advisory Panel workshop in July.

10. Date of Next Meeting

10.1 The next meeting of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee would be held at PSOW's offices on Wednesday, 23 July 2025.
