

Easy Read



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Ombudsman**
Cymru • Wales

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual report

What we did in 2024 to 2025

July 2025



How to use this document



This is an Easy Read version of:

Annual Report and Accounts of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales for the year ended 31 March 2025.



You might need some help to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



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

Website: www.ombudsman.wales

Email: ask@ombudsman.wales



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About us



We are the office of the **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**.

We have 3 main jobs:



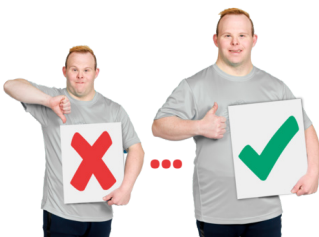
- We look into complaints about **public services** in Wales.

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



- We look into complaints about 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.



- We help **public services** and councils do better.



We are independent. This means we are not controlled by the government.



Our service is fair and free for everyone.

Our goals

We want:



- Everyone in Wales to be treated fairly by **public services**.



- **Public services** to listen, learn and do better when things go wrong.



- Councils in Wales to do the right thing, so people can trust them.

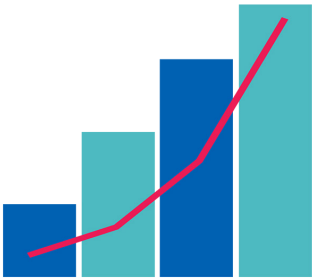


- People to see us as fair and helpful.

What happened in 2024 to 2025



This was a busy year.



- We had more complaints about **public services** than last year. Complaints have gone up by nearly half since 2019 to 2020.



- We are getting more complaints about areas other than health.



- We are solving more concerns early, before we need to do a long check.

We have continued to:



- Look into problems without waiting for a complaint.



- Take complaints by phone.



- Set clear rules for how complaints should be handled.



We have checked how our work has had an impact on services and people. We were able to help people and improve services.



Last year, a senior staff member had shared her views about a political party on social media.



After this some people questioned if we are fair and do not take sides.



To check this, we asked an outside expert to review our work on **code of conduct** complaints.



They found that our decisions were fair and based on facts and not affected by personal views.



The Senedd's Finance Committee agreed. They said we dealt with what the staff member did in the right way.



The review and the Finance Committee had some ideas to help us improve. We agreed with all these ideas and have made changes to improve.



We had many challenges this year, but our staff did an excellent job. They told us in a survey that they feel more positive about working here.

Our work in 2024 to 2025

Complaints about public services



We had more complaints about **public services** than last year.

Most complaints were about:



- Health.



- Housing.



- The way services handled complaints.



We stepped in and made sure organisations put things right.



We also gave **recommendations** to help services get better in future.

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



Public services followed almost all our **recommendations**. They did not always do this by the time we agreed.

Complaints about councillors



We got 315 **code of conduct** complaints about councillors. Most were about town and community councils.



Most complaints were about equality and respect. Equality means treating people fairly and making sure they have the same chances in life.



We looked more deeply into 49 complaints. We referred 15 complaints to other organisations that have a final say on complaints about councillors. They agreed with most of our decisions.

Our decisions and service



Very few people who asked for a review of our decision got a different outcome.



We rarely change our decisions after a review. This shows that our decisions are usually fair and correct.



Around 4 in 10 of all people who made a complaint said they were happy with our customer service.



People are usually happier about our service when they're happy with the result.



We also asked **public service** providers how we are doing. They gave our service a score of around 8 out of 10.



We did more research on what public service providers think. Our research showed:

- People trust our decisions.
- They think we are fair and act quickly.



We also check the quality of our service. Most of our own checks found little or no problems.

Being fair and open to everyone



We want to make it easier for more people to use our service.

This year:



- Around 8 out of 10 people said we are easy to contact.



- Around half of people in Wales knew who we are.



- Around 8 out of 10 people said they trust us to handle complaints well.



- Around 8 out of 10 people said they think we are fair.



- Nearly 9 out of 10 would come to us if they had a problem.



- We took over 160 complaints by phone.



- 157 people asked for extra help when using our service.



We have done more work on our new website so that it is even easier to use.



We shared more information with people, but we want to do better.



We want more people to know about us. This includes Welsh speakers and people from different backgrounds.

Helping services improve



54 organisations across Wales have to handle complaints in line with our model policy.



We gave 52 free training sessions on good complaint handling to **public services**. Since 2020, we have done 550 training sessions and trained 10 thousand people.



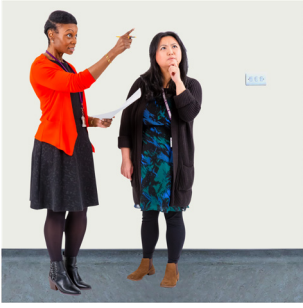
Nearly all complaints officers said they find our guidance useful.



Our research showed that more people:

- Complain when **public services** go wrong.
- Say it is easier to make a complaint.
- Feel happier with how complaints are handled.

Own initiative investigations



These are investigations that we do, without a complaint.



Investigate means looking more deeply into what happened.



We can look at other issues, connected to what we are investigating already.



We have now finished 10 of these investigations.



We can also look into a new issue, that no one complained to us about.



This year we finished 1 investigation like that. It focused on **carers' needs assessments** in Wales. An assessment is a check to see what extra help you might need.

We found that:



- In some areas, only around 3 in 100 of carers had got a needs assessment.



- Very few, around 1 in 100, got a support plan after an assessment.



- Many carers did not know about their rights to have an assessment. They also did not know what help there was for them.



Most local council complaints officers said our own initiative reports helped them make their services better.

Other reports

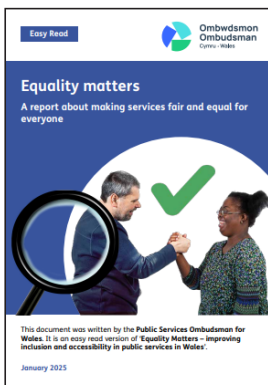


We published 8 other reports on complaints, because we thought that they can help **public services** improve. This was the same number as last year.

We also published 2 bigger reports, on topics that we got a lot of complaints about:



- **Living in Disrepair** – about poor housing and damp.



- **Equality Matters** – about **public services** being fair and equal for everyone.



The Senedd looked at our law to see how it is working. We shared strong proof of the good work we have done since 2019, when we were given new powers.

Supporting our staff and protecting the environment



Our staff kept doing excellent work during a tough year.



Sickness days went down.



More staff are now using Welsh.



In our survey 9 out of 10 staff said that we are a great place to work.



On average, **women were paid more than men** in our organisation.

We are also working to protect the environment:



- We recycle most of our waste.



- We have cut down our carbon emissions. Carbon emission means putting carbon dioxide gas into the air. This is usually by burning things like coal, oil, and gas. This can make the planet too hot.

Hard words

Code of conduct

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

Public services

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

Recommendation

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