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Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems report 2024-25

December 2025



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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.



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Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems report 2024-25

of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
for the year ended 31 March 2025

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Foreword

Protecting the environment remains a priority for us. Where possible, we work to reduce the impact of the office on the environment and seek to operate in a sustainable and responsible manner.

This report presents our performance and actions during 2024-25 under biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty, in compliance with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

It also outlines our progress in the 'areas for improvement' that we identified in 2022-23:

- reviewing the tools available to comprehensively evaluate our carbon footprint and undertake any training required to use them;
- considering the sustainability impact of reducing / adjusting our office space; and
- encouraging staff to consider ways they can reduce their environmental impact.

We continue to operate a hybrid model of working, with many of our staff continuing to work from home and attending the office depending on the need. This is reflected in our sustainability performance this year.

An important factor shaping our work during 2024-25 continues to be an increase in our casework. The volume of our new complaints this year has been the highest on record. That increase continues to place our staff under considerable pressure and has affected our capacity to undertake some work not directly related to our core business.

Michelle Morris

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
December 2025

Background



Our role

We have three main roles.



We investigate complaints about public services.



We consider complaints about councillors breaching the Code of Conduct.



We drive systemic improvement of public services and standards of conduct in local government in Wales.

Our ambition



People of Wales feel that public services treat them fairly and respond when things go wrong.



Welsh public services listen to individuals and use their complaints to learn and improve.



Welsh local government is trusted to deliver the highest standards of conduct.



The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales continues to be an influential and respected voice in public service improvement.

Our principles

We are independent, impartial, fair and open to all who need us.

Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty background

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (the section 6 duty) for public authorities in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales.

The section 6 duty requires that public authorities 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems'.

To comply with the duty, public authorities should embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into their early thinking and business planning, including any policies, plans, programmes and projects, as well as their day-to-day activities.

PSOW falls within the definition of public authority under the terms of the Act and so we are required to publish a report on how we have complied with the section 6 duty.

Although PSOW is not subject to the full duties of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, we fully support the vision of the Act to create a more sustainable Wales.

Our building

We continue to occupy one office in Pencoed, near Bridgend. We originally took up the lease for the ground floor in 2005, which expanded to occupy part of the first and second floors to accommodate over 70 staff and visitors in a largely open plan office space.

Over the recent years, we have worked to reduce the office space that we use, in line with our new model of hybrid and agile working.

From April 2024, a new lease for a reduced floor area, was agreed and is reflected in this report.

Electricity is the only energy supply used and this provides lighting and heating/ cooling as well as powering normal office equipment.

Building	Constructed	No. of Floors	Total Usable Floor Area (ft ²)	Heating Type
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae	2004	1	9,279	Air Handling Units

Action report



Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.

Attention to sustainability is integrated into our key policies and strategic plans.

At the beginning of April 2023 we launched our new Strategic Plan 2023-2026. Under our new Strategic Aim 4, 'Ensuring that we are a healthy, efficient and accountable organisation', we have committed to 'Play our part in protecting the environment, by further reducing our carbon footprint.'

Also, for the duration of the Plan, we have identified Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in relation to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, and actions to reduce our waste and electricity.

In our Business Plan for 2024-25, we committed to

- maintaining energy use and waste despite increased office presence (achieved when our waste and energy does not increase compared to the previous period)
- ensuring that our carbon footprint does not exceed 60,000 KgCO₂e produced.

Our Procurement Policy requires that 'all procurement should consider sustainability issues'.

In 2022-23, we committed to reviewing the tools available to comprehensively evaluate our carbon footprint and undertake any training required to use them.

This work continues to progress. We use the UK Government GHG (Green House Gases) conversion factors to help us report on emissions. Part of our emissions are produced by staff working from home and commuting to and from the office. We now accurately record where staff are working from (home/office) and how often they travel to/from the office.

We continue to encourage staff to consider ways they can reduce their environmental impact.

We have increased the number of people who have use of the Electric Vehicle (EV) charger available at the office. Having this facility available will have contributed to staff decisions to purchase an EV car instead of a standard fuel car.

In March 2024, half of the ground floor office had new air conditioning installed. These new units are more energy efficient and environmentally friendly which should be reflected in the emissions figures for future years. The remaining units were upgraded in March 2025.

The office plants continue to thrive, we are now able to offer staff cuttings to take home to grow them at home. Not only is this good for the environment but also great for staff well-being.

Objective 2: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats.

Our office building is leased, which limits our ability to make changes to the energy efficiency of the building. Because of that, our work to improve sustainability and reduce any adverse impact on the environment has focused on reducing waste, energy use and emissions.

Waste produced on site

This year, we have seen a slight increase in the amount of waste produced, this was mostly due to the recycling of old IT equipment, which accounted for 70% of the increase.

This year, we recycled 84% of our waste which is an improvement on last year's figure of 72%. All non-recyclable waste avoided landfill. We continue to move towards greater use of digitised materials, to reduce our reliance on paper.

Waste Type	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Confidential Waste (recycled) (kg)	16,320	3,285	3,472
Mixed Recycling (kg)	572	739	2,726
General Waste (kg)	804	1,565	1,242
Total Waste	17,696	5,589	7,440
Emissions produced (kg CO ₂ e)	376.59	118.94	158.33

*conversion factors from UK Government GHG conversion factors for company reporting (0.207074 per unit)

Electricity

Compared to last year, we reduced our energy usage by 25%. This is a result of the upgraded air conditioning system throughout the office space.

Electricity usage	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Usage (kWh)	74,102.00	64,170.00	48,069.00
Emissions produced (kg CO ₂ e)	15,334.62	13,287.00	9,953.85

*conversion factors from UK Government GHG conversion factors for company reporting (0.207074 per unit)

Staff working at home

Staff working from home continues to be the preferred location although staff have worked from the office more than in recent years. All staff are now using energy efficient laptops rather than desktop PCs.

The figures below for 2022-23 and 2023-24 are based on average time working at home/commuting to the office. Whereas , the figures for 2024-25 are based on where staff actually worked from (working at home/ commuting to the office).

Emissions	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Working at home	29,452	33,728	25,511.86
Commute to the office	13,191	15,615	20,204.87
Total staff emissions	15,334.62	13,287.00	9,953.85

*conversion factors from UK Government GHG conversion factors for company reporting (0.2686 per unit for unknown fuel car travel, 0.03546 per unit for train travel)

We are committed to considering the sustainability impact of reducing / adjusting our office space.

Overall:

- we have seen a reduction of approximately 25% of electricity usage in the office.
- we continue to care for our office plants which we now share cuttings with staff and continue to help absorb CO₂ in the office.
- we have seen an increase in waste we recycle and expect this to remain consistently high due to the Workplace recycling regulations which were introduced in Wales in April 2024.

Objective 3: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery.

Responsibility for PSOW's performance on sustainability lies with the Executive Director – Corporate Resources and the Head of Corporate Services.

The Head of Corporate Services undertakes internal reviews of PSOW performance on sustainability on an annual basis.

The findings of the process are communicated to PSOW's Management Team, and these serve to inform our strategic planning as well as this annual sustainability report.

Climate change and climate change risk

Our impact on climate change is limited by the nature of the business, and our ability to control some aspects is limited by our occupation of a rented and shared building on a managed business park. That said, it is important that we understand our impact and take steps to minimise adverse impact and to manage the consequences of climate change. In particular, we can:

- consider what we do and how we can have an impact on climate change, even where our impact may be small
- minimise and mitigate waste, energy and emissions
- manage risk associated with climate change.

This report includes our consideration of our impact on climate change, as well as biodiversity, ecosystems and sustainability.

We include appropriate climate change risk in our risk register, for consideration by our Management Team and our Audit & Risk Assurance Committee.

Reporting and planning

We continue to monitor and report on performance of sustainability on an annual basis. In compliance with the requirements under section 6, sub-section (6) of the Environment Act 2016, we identify at the same time any areas for improvement.

Looking forward, these will include:

- maintaining energy use and waste
- encouraging staff to consider ways they can reduce their environmental impact.



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