

Report to	Cabinet
Date of meeting	18 th February 2025
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Julie Matthews / Kevin Roberts
Head of Service	Ann Lloyd, Head of Adult Social Care and Homelessness
Report author	Kevin Roberts, Statutory and Corporate Complaints Officer
Title	Public Service Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 23/24

1. What is the report about?

To provide Cabinet with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) Annual Letter relating to complaints received about the council, members and town councils and benchmarking Denbighshire's performance against all Local Authorities in Wales.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

The Ombudsman has a statutory obligation to report to Local Authorities on its interventions in the reporting areas. This report is presented to Local Authorities in Wales annually and there are specific actions requested within the PSOW Annual Letter about which Council Committees it should be reported to.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That Cabinet consider the data in the letter, alongside the council's data, to understand more about performance on complaints, including any patterns or trends and the organisation's compliance with recommendations made by the Ombudsman.

3.2. That you agree that any considerations and proposed actions as a result of the PSOW Annual Letter are reported back to the PSOW at the earliest opportunity.

4. Report details

Appendix 1 Public Service Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023/24

4.1. Denbighshire sits in the middle of the other Local Authorities in Wales in terms of complaints made to the Ombudsman per 1000 residents.

4.2. Only 6% of the referrals received by the Ombudsman saw intervention, with no full investigations undertaken.

4.3. The Your Voice report, which details the complaints and compliments that have been received through the statutory and corporate complaints process is attached at Appendix 2. This report goes to Scrutiny every quarter and to the Governance and Audit committee annually (November 2024). This report wouldn't normally come to Cabinet but gives context to the PSOW Annual Letter.

4.4. During 2023 / 2024 the Ombudsman made 6 recommendations to Denbighshire, and we achieved a 67% compliance rate. There was only one recommendation made where we did not complete the recommendation within the set timescale, and this was an Education Services matter. The recommendation of the Ombudsman was to reword a policy, but the timescale was unachievable due to the processes involved in putting forward changes to legislative policy and then submitting these changes to the website. The recommendation was completed but fell into the 2024 / 2025 reporting period.

4.5. There were no Code of Conduct complaints upheld.

4.6. There were no Town Council complaints upheld.

4.7 The report was taken to Governance and Audit Committee on 20th November and they asked that a number of changes are made / additional information is added to future reports. We will ensure that those changes are incorporated into the next PSOW Report for 2024/2025 which will go to the Governance and Audit Committee and Cabinet in the Autumn 2025.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

The council's complaints procedures contribute to the corporate priority of a well-run, high performing Council.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

All costs relating to customer feedback are absorbed within existing budgets.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

This is a performance report and no decision is being sought to make any changes that would impact on staff or the community. Therefore, a Well-being Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

This report will be presented to Scrutiny Committee for Information and has been sent to the Chief Executive

8.1. The council's complaints process is subject to quarterly scrutiny and this report will be presented as information in the next Scrutiny Meeting.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

There are no obvious financial implications from this report

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

Further Public Services Ombudsman for Wales intervention if recommendations are not followed.

11. Power to make the decision

Sections 7.3 and 7.4.2(b) of the Council's Constitution outlines the Committee's remit and powers with respect of Services' performance