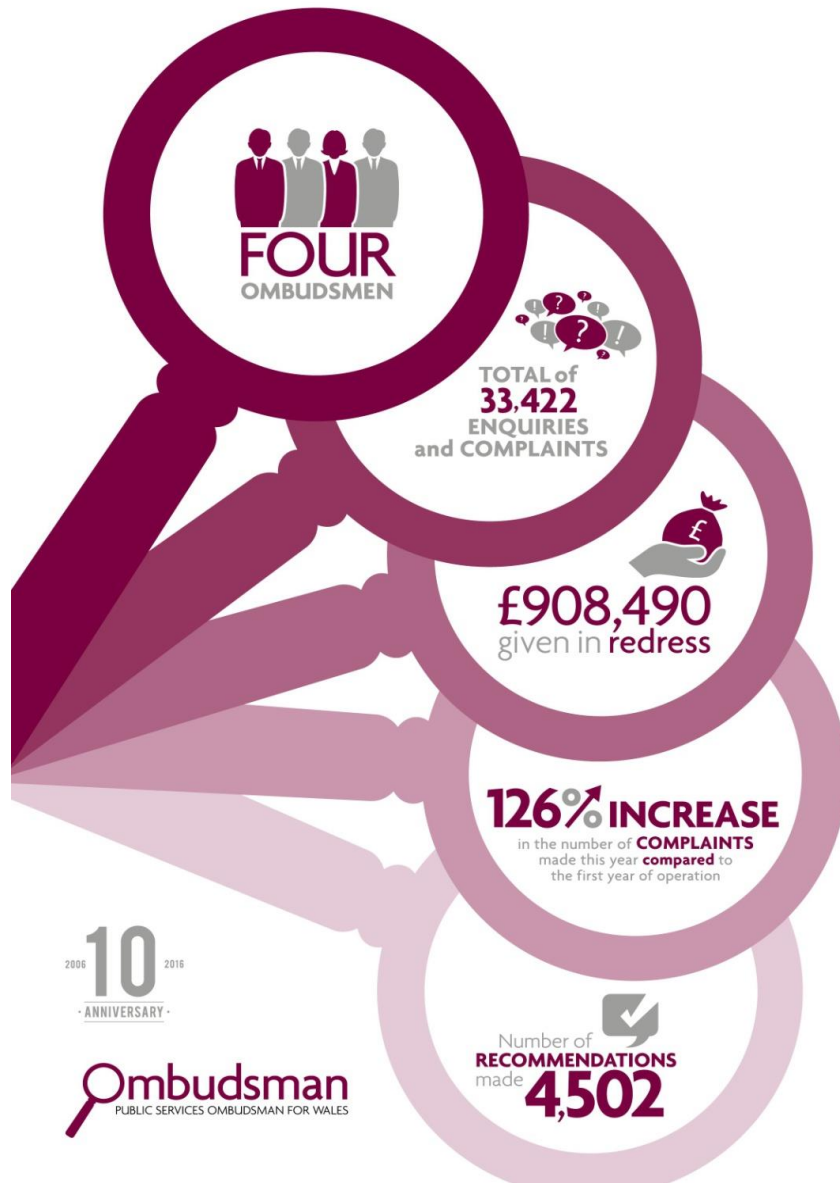




Flintshire Standards Committee, October 2017

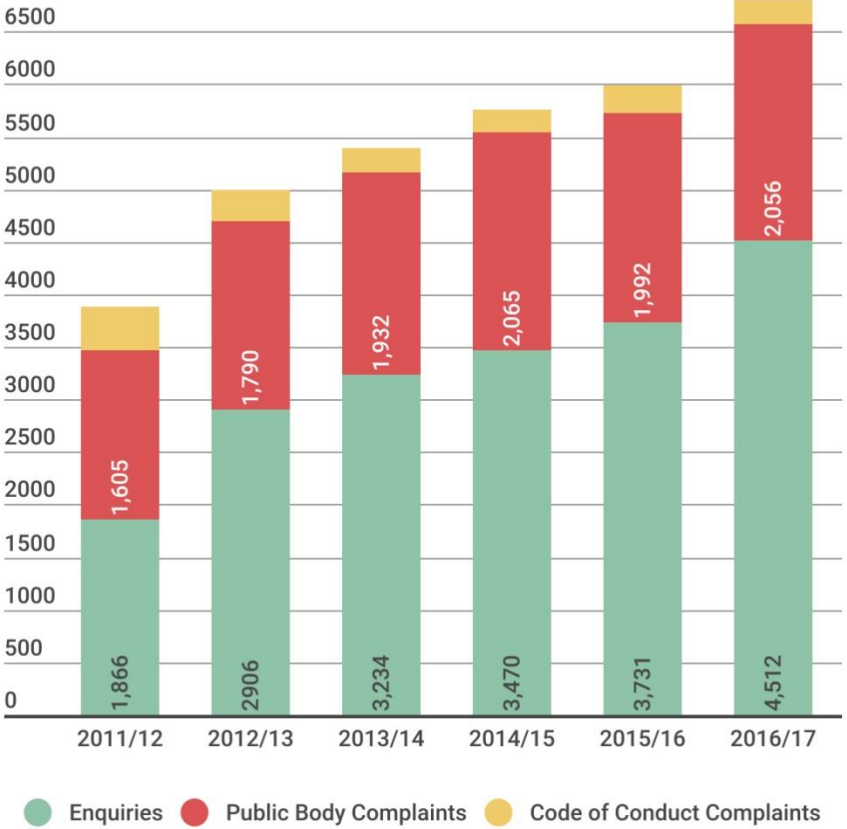
Nick Bennett
Public Services Ombudsman
for Wales

In **the last 10 years** there have been:



The last 10
years....

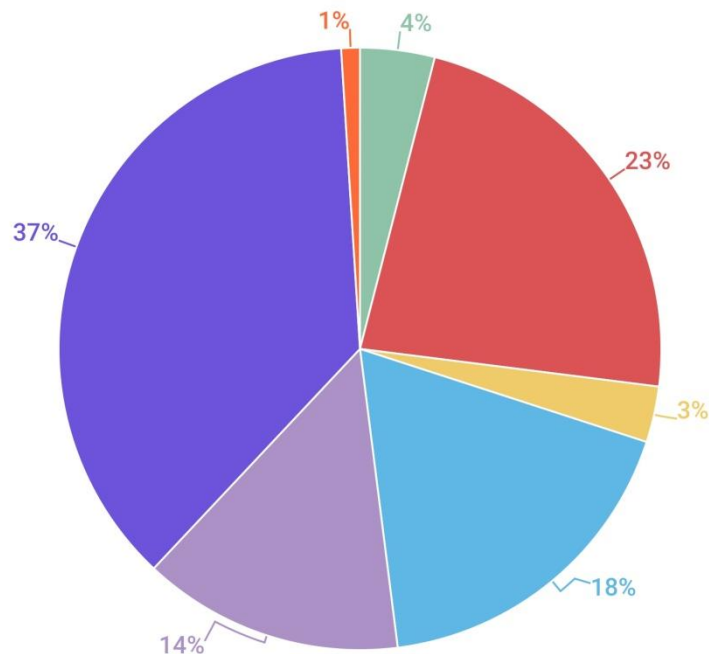
Enquiries and Complaints – the upward trend



Context

- Brexit
- Further constitutional change – Wales Bill
- Public service austerity
- Williams Commission
- White Paper : Reforming Local Government Resilient and Renewed
- Review of Community Councils

Subject of Code of Conduct Complaints



- Accountability and openness
- Disclosure and registration of interests
- Duty to uphold the law
- Integrity
- Objectivity and propriety
- Promotion of equality and respect
- Selflessness and stewardship

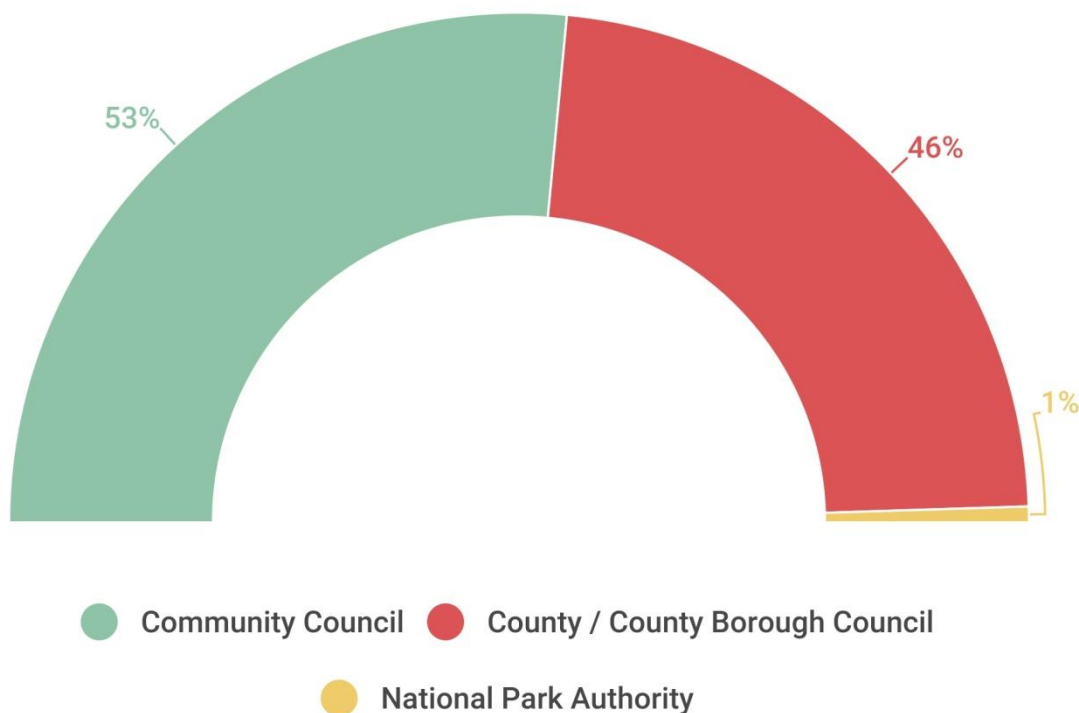
Complaints Not Upheld

	No of complaints
No prima facie evidence of breach	140
Withdrawn	20
Not in the public interest to investigate	44
Investigation: no evidence of breach	12
Total	216

Discontinued

	No of complaints
Discontinued: Not in the public interest to pursue	10
Total	10

Code of Conduct Complaints by Type of Authority



Flintshire Facts !

- 5% of the population
- Less than 4% of code complaints!
 - 4 County & 4 Town & Community Council

Testing Public Interest

- Is an investigation required in the public interest?
 - Public interest factors (non exhaustive)
 - Seriousness of breach
 - Deliberately seeking personal gain
 - Misuse of position of trust causing harm
 - Motivated by discrimination (protected characteristics)
 - Evidence of previous similar behaviour

Complaints Upheld

	No of complaints
No action necessary	16
Refer to Standards Committee	5
Refer to Adjudication Panel	1
Total	22

Vexatious Complaints

- A breach in itself!
- Minority problem
- Factionalism and tit for tat
- Broader reputational risk
- “Cllr S was clicking his pen on and off in an aggressive manner!”
- “Cllr P tutted and huffed whilst shaking his head!”

The future ?

- Distributed leadership
- Balancing regional and local General competence
- Clustering?
- Succession planning
- Delivery

New PSOW Bill

- Own Initiative
- Complaint Standards Authority
- Private Healthcare
- Oral Complaints

Conclusion

- New opportunities for local democracy inc Local resolution
- Need to focus on serious cases
- Focus on Nolan principles
- Not least leadership!

Questions