

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday 8 th January 2024
Report Subject	Overview of Ethical Complaints
Report Author	Chief Officer Governance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report shows a summary of the ethical complaints alleging a breach of the Code that have been submitted to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW). As per the Committee's resolution, the complaints distinguish between different Councils and Councillors whilst still remaining anonymous.

The report gives the Committee an understanding of the number and types of complaints being made, and the outcome of consideration by the PSOW. Since the last report (4 September 2023) 2 complaints have been received of which 1 was not investigated and 1 is under investigation.. There are still 4 outstanding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee notes the number and type of complaints.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
1.01	The attached spreadsheet at Appendix A lists in summary form the complaints received during 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. Each entry lists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Ombudsman's reference number (year/4 digit reference) • the type of Council (Community, County or Town) • the complainant (Councillor, officer, public) • the provisions which are alleged to have been breached • the decision at each of the 3 stages of investigation
1.02	Since the last report: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) 2 new complaints (2023/03774 and 2023/03046) have been received. Complaint 03774 was dismissed and 03406 is being investigated b) 1 complaint from 2021 (2021/05656) has been referred for a hearing by this committee;

	<p>c) 1 complaint from 2022 (2022/01184) has been closed following investigation – the full investigation outcome is attached as a confidential appendix; and</p> <p>d) 1 complaint from 2022 (number withheld pending publication on the APW website) has been referred for the Adjudication Panel for Wales to convene a case tribunal.</p>
1.03	This report is correct as at the date of preparation (18.12.23). If we are notified of the outcome of any complaints after this date they will be included in the next quarterly report.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None associated with the complaints recorded in this report.
2.02	As a complaint has been referred to the committee for a hearing, training has been provided.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A - Number of complaints. Appendix B – Confidential note of PSOW findings in case 2022/01184)

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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7.01

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales – the Ombudsman investigates service complaints and alleged breaches of the code. The Ombudsman will only investigate an alleged breach of the Code if there is clear evidence of a breach and it is in the public interest to do so.