

Annual Report and Accounts **2020**



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The Vision of the Association is that throughout the public and private sectors:

- It is straightforward and simple for people to complain.
- People making a complaint are listened to and treated fairly.
- A complaint is dealt with quickly, fairly and effectively at the earliest stage by suitably trained staff.
- People have access to an ombudsman in all areas of consumer and public services.
- The learning from a complaint is used to improve services.

The objects of the Association are to:

- 1) Support and promote an effective system of complaint handling and redress in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Britain's Crown Dependencies and Britain's Overseas Territories.
- 2) Encourage, develop and protect the role of an ombudsman in both the public and private sectors as the 'best practice' model for resolving complaints, according recognition through membership.
- 3) Provide an authoritative voice and promote best practice and policy for those involved in complaint handling and redress to ensure an effective service for the public.
- 4) Support open and transparent accountability and endorse principles of good complaint handling.

Foreword by the Chair of the Association

Whilst it might be difficult for any of us to remember a time before social distancing and the Covid-19 lockdown, I would like to take some time to recap on what the Ombudsman Association achieved in 2019/20.

I was delighted that my election as Chair of the OA came at the hugely successful 2019 Conference in Belfast. It was fantastic to have such thought-provoking plenary sessions on kindness, on creating great places to work, and on the broader administrative justice landscape both in the UK and in the Netherlands. We had very positive feedback on the individual sessions and overall satisfaction rose from 97% at the 2018 Conference to an unheard of 100%!

During the year we successfully influenced stakeholders in a number of fields, with several governments recognising our membership criteria as representing best practice when seeking to create an ombudsman scheme. We look forward to seeing how those proposals to create a New Homes Ombudsman in the UK and public services ombudsman schemes in Jersey and the Falkland Islands are progressed.

We also successfully influenced discussions in the UK Administrative Justice Council and in the Civil Justice Council's Judicial ADR Liaison Committee to focus more on public service ombudsman reform and the role of ombudsman schemes in the consumer sector, respectively.

Members will of course know that the OA has been going through a transformation



Chairs, past and present

programme since the Strategic Review of 2014-16 to ensure that we are delivering the services that members want. The latest stage of that ongoing development has been the change to our legal status to establish the OA as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. As we approach the first anniversary of that we will be reviewing our governance and internal processes to ensure that we practise what we preach.

The first annual survey of members took place in Autumn 2019 and the results of that have shaped our focus going forward. There was strong support from members for the continuation of all the OA's main activities, with particularly strong demand for more work on developing best practice, networking, protecting the ombudsman brand, and influencing policy. The OA's Interest Groups and Conference were highly valued.

In order to deliver that it is crucial that we strengthen the financial viability of the OA. We will be exploring further in the next 12 months how we can do that to continue to be effective.

Such modest resources inevitably means that we must make the best use of technology wherever we can; the re-development

of the OA's website and creation of an online community area to make it easier and more effective for members to share best practice and network with each other will be a key focus for next year. I am also especially pleased that the creation of the Senior Leaders' Group and the use of the OA's Zoom account means that we've still been able to facilitate networking and the sharing of best practice during the Covid lockdown.

The OA of course not only covers multiple sectors but also has a broad geographic spread. Our vision of people having access to an ombudsman in all areas of consumer and public services applies equally to the four nations of the UK, Ireland, the British Crown Dependencies, and the British Overseas Territories, and we will continue to seek to deliver that vision across all of them.

I am grateful to the Board for their work and support in helping steer the Association, to the members of the Validation

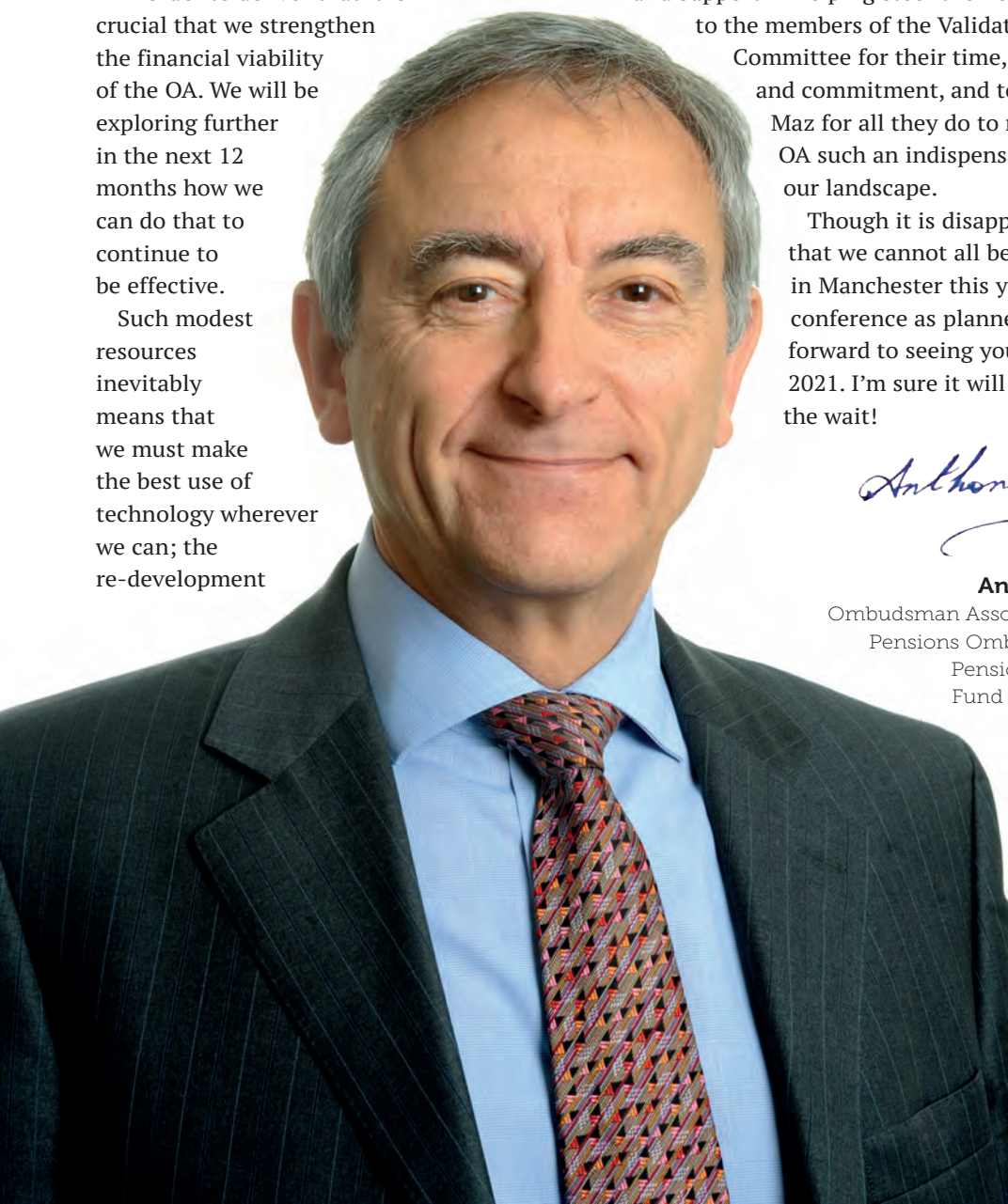
Committee for their time, expertise, and commitment, and to Donal and Maz for all they do to make the OA such an indispensable part of our landscape.

Though it is disappointing that we cannot all be together in Manchester this year for our conference as planned I look forward to seeing you all in June 2021. I'm sure it will be worth the wait!



Anthony Arter

Ombudsman Association Chair
Pensions Ombudsman and
Pension Protection
Fund Ombudsman



FORWARD

OUR ACTIVITIES

Support and promote an effective system of complaint handling and redress in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Britain's Crown Dependencies and Britain's Overseas Territories.



UK Administrative Justice Council (AJC)

The Chief Executive has continued to ensure that the work of the AJC reflects the expertise of the ombudsman community in its discussions and activities through his role on the Steering Group. There were several Steering Group and full Council meetings during the year, including the AJC Council meeting in Edinburgh on 31 January.

Ombudsman / Tribunals Familiarisation Working Group

The Chief Executive has been chairing the Ombudsman / Tribunals Familiarisation Working Group, which is exploring further how the two sectors can work together more closely; from more effective signposting to sharing best practice. Membership of the Group includes representatives of the judiciary, UK Ministry of Justice, the Housing Ombudsman, Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO), Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman LGSCO, the advice and advocacy sector, pro-bono lawyers, and academics. A workshop also took place in October attended by senior members of the judiciary and the ombudsman community, alongside other stakeholders.

There has been positive progress made on the pilots between the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman / Special Educational Needs Tribunal, and the Housing Ombudsman / Property Chamber. Looking forward, the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman will be exploring how they can do the same with the immigration tribunal and the benefits tribunal.

Civil Justice Council Judicial ADR Liaison Committee

The Chair of the Policy Network, Judith Turner, has been engaging with the Civil Justice Council's Judicial ADR Liaison Committee as they explore further the recommendations made in the Civil Justice Council's report on Alternative Dispute Resolution, including the proposals to improve signposting through a single umbrella website. The Council reports to the Master of the Rolls, Sir Terence Etherton, as Chair of the CJC and head of Civil Justice in England and Wales. Judith's membership of the Committee has provided the opportunity to highlight the role and work of the ombudsman community.

Dispute Resolution Roundtable, Oxford

The Chief Executive attended the Dispute Resolution Roundtable at Wolfson College in Oxford on 24 January alongside several members. The event was well attended by senior members of the judiciary, the ombudsman community and the civil service, and provided the opportunity to discuss further Professor Chris Hodges' proposals to reform and streamline the dispute resolution system in England and Wales. The event provided a good opportunity to promote closer understanding and working between the different sectors.

Encourage, develop and protect the role of an ombudsman in both the public and private sectors as the 'best practice' model for resolving complaints, according recognition through membership.

The Chief Executive undertook a significant programme of engagement with government officials and other stakeholders during the year, through meetings with officials and responding to relevant [consultations](#), to promote the OA's Principles and membership criteria.

Housing sector

The Chief Executive continued to engage with the UK Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in relation to their proposals to strengthen consumer redress in the housing sector. The OA's membership criteria and Service Standards Framework were highlighted as representing best practice in the UK Government's report of their consultation on establishing a New Homes Ombudsman, and the Chief Executive also accepted an invitation to join the advisory group for MHCLG's Redress Reform Working Group.

Rail sector

Throughout the year the Chief Executive had a series of meetings with stakeholders in the rail sector, including Transport Focus, the Department for Transport, the Office of Rail and Road, and the Rail Delivery Group, to further promote the OA's membership criteria and requirements.

Cross-sector workshop on complaints handling and ADR

In June 2019 the Chief Executive attended the joint Legal Services Board, Legal Ombudsman and Legal Services Consumer Panel 'Cross-sector workshop on complaints handling and ADR' in London. The workshop explored what lessons the legal services sector could draw on from the experience of other sectors. The event provided the opportunity to highlight common practice across the ombudsman community.

Falkland Islands

The Chief Executive continued a programme of engagement with officials from the Falkland Islands to support them in developing a public services ombudsman that meets the OA's criteria, briefing the Governor, the Attorney General, and relevant MLAs.



IOI Peer Review seminar

The Chief Executive attended a Peer Review seminar in September 2019, jointly organised by the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) and the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI). The seminar was well attended by both international ombudsman and the OA's members and resulted in the production of an IOI best practice paper on peer reviews.

Amanda Amroliwala, CBE,
addresses the IOI seminar



Best Practice seminar, Aberystwyth

A successful best practice seminar was held in Aberystwyth in June 2019, jointly organised with Aberystwyth University and IOI-Europe, focusing on the ways in which the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales could use its new powers to improve public service delivery.



Rafael Ribó, the Catalan Ombudsman, at the Aberystwyth seminar

Rip Off Britain

On 24 January the Chief Executive appeared on the BBC show *Rip Off Britain*, which featured an item on the ombudsman sector and the challenges that some members of the public had experienced. The interview gave the opportunity to reiterate the need for access to an ombudsman in all areas of goods and services, and reinforce the OA's criteria as representing best practice.



Jersey Public Services Ombudsman

The OA continued to engage with the Jersey Government on their proposals to establish a public sector ombudsman to replace the current Complaints Board. The Jersey Government's own subsequent consultation report reiterated the need for the proposed ombudsman to meet the OA's best practice criteria.

Which?

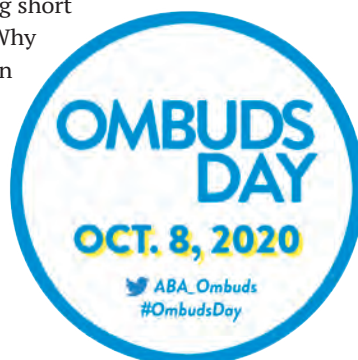
The Chief Executive met with policy and campaign staff from *Which?* in December 2019 to inform their upcoming campaigns on the need for mandatory ombudsman schemes in all consumer sectors.

Trustpilot

In January the Chief Executive met with Carolyn Jameson, Trustpilot's Chief Legal and Policy Officer, alongside Warren Seddon from PHSO, to raise concerns that some members had that the public were being put off approaching an ombudsman for help because of negative reviews about decisions on Trustpilot. It was a productive meeting and Trustpilot will be exploring what options there are to have clearer explanations about the role of ombudsman schemes and how to make a service complaint / challenge a decision.

Ombuds Day 2019

On 10 October 2019 several of our members took part in #OmbudsDay, posting short videos answering the question, 'Why do you think Ombudsman offer an important service?'. The project, which was coordinated by the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman, was very successful with each of the videos posted by our members getting good coverage on social media.



Provide an authoritative voice and promote best practice and policy for those involved in complaint handling and redress to ensure an effective service for the public.

Engagement with members

Throughout the year the Chief Executive regularly met with members to keep abreast of developments across the sector and the challenges facing their organisations, and how the OA can support them.



A £5 commemorative coin was issued in Gibraltar to mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the office of the Ombudsman

APRIL

Attended the Irish Forum meeting in Dublin; Visited new offices of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman in Edinburgh.

MAY

Met with members in the margins of the OA Conference in Belfast.

JUNE

Spoke at the OIA's Away Day in Reading; Attended Ombudsman Services' conference in London.

JULY

Attended the Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces' stakeholder symposium in London.

AUGUST

Met with The Dispute Service Limited; Visited the Rail Ombudsman's office in Stevenage.

OCTOBER

Attended PHSO's Open Day in Manchester; Visited the Housing Ombudsman in London; Met with Ombudsman Services; Met with the Rail Ombudsman.

NOVEMBER

Attended the Irish Forum meeting in Dublin; Attended the Public Sector Ombudsman Group meeting in Edinburgh; Visited the Motor Ombudsman in London; Met with the Financial Ombudsman Service.

DECEMBER

Met with the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman; Took part in social media activities to support Welsh Language Rights Day.

JANUARY 2020

Met with the Financial Ombudsman Service; Met with Ombudsman Services; Met with Bevan Brittan; Attended Legal Ombudsman's strategy and business plan consultation seminar in London; Attended the Public Sector Ombudsman Group's meeting in Manchester.

FEBRUARY

Met with the Housing Ombudsman; Met with the Rail Ombudsman.



Public Sector Ombudsman Group meeting in Manchester

Interest Groups

The OA's Interest Groups facilitate communication between members and enable staff to share ideas and issues of concern and disseminate good practice. Meetings are held at the offices of members and the OA is very grateful for those facilities being made available. The notes and presentations from the Interest Group meetings can be found in the [Members' Area of the website](#) and colleagues can sign up to receive alerts when new material is posted.



Casework Interest Group

The Casework Interest Group met in April (at the Audit Office, Wales) and in November 2019 (at the office of the Advertising Standards Authority). The Group's April meeting focused on their two previous key themes of 'compliance with decision making' and 'recommendations', the findings of which were presented at the 2019 Conference. During the year the Group also considered how the OA's Caseworker Competency Framework applied for individuals, managers, and their organisation. Tommy Robinson, from the Adjudicator's Office, stepped down from providing the secretariat to the Group and Jamie McGrandles, from SPSO, was elected Deputy Chair. The Group's key themes for 2020/21 will be 'right decision at the right time' and 'stakeholder engagement to promote the benefits of learning from complaints'.

Casework Interest
Group meeting
at the Advertising
Standards Authority

Communications Interest Group

The Communications Interest Group met in April (at the office of the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman) and in November 2019 (at the office of the Motor Ombudsman). At its meetings the Group discussed how to improve social media engagement, raising awareness without increasing premature complaints, the most effective ways to target 'hard to reach' groups, redeveloping the OA website, and crisis communications.

First Contact Interest Group

The First Contact Interest Group met in June (at the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's new office) and in November 2019 (at the Adjudicator's Office). Amongst other things, the Group considered the results of a study of premature complainants, the application of unacceptable actions policies, and the unfortunate rise of unacceptable behaviour being experienced in many organisations.

Human Resources Interest Group

The HR Interest Group met in October 2019 (at the office of the Financial Ombudsman Service). Their meeting in March 2020 was postponed due to the Covid-19 lockdown. The Group discussed work on equality, diversity, and inclusion, and managing an Ageing Workforce, considered the next steps for the Caseworker Competency Framework, and the proposed OA Mentoring Scheme. The Group's decision to establish a Learning & Development Sub-Group secured considerable interest from a number of members. The lockdown meant that was postponed from spring to summer 2020.

Legal Interest Group

The Legal Interest Group met in April (at the office of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman) and in November 2019 (at the offices of Browne Jacobson). At their meetings the Group discussed the interaction between statutory bars on the disclosure of information obtained during ombudsman investigations and Data Protection & Freedom of Information legislation, the practical effect of the doctrine of "functus officio", and updates on legal challenges faced by member schemes. The Group also led a session at the 2019 Conference on alternative legal remedy. Katrin Shaw of the PSOW stepped down as Chair after her term came to an end and Karl Bannister of the PHSO was elected as the new Chair of the Group.

Legal Interest
Group meeting at
Browne Jacobson





Clockwise from above:
Jennifer Wallace,
the "Tales from the
Casebook" panel, Sir
Declan Morgan, Reinier
Van Zutphen

2019 Conference 'Driving Improvements: collaboration and peer learning'

The 2019 Conference, *Driving Improvements: collaboration and peer learning*, was held on 21-22 May in Belfast. The Conference, which was opened by Sir Declan Morgan and attended by over 130 delegates, included sessions on the role of kindness from Jennifer Wallace, and creating great places to work from John Ryan, as well as sessions on peer reviews, effective recommendations, and addressing backlogs. There were also notable presentations from Sir Ernest Ryder on how the ombudsman sector and tribunal system could work together more closely and from the Dutch Ombudsman, Reinier van Zutphen, on engaging with the public. The event was hailed a success by members, with an unheard of 100% satisfaction rate in the feedback forms (up from 97% the previous year).

"Great programme which managed to combine thought-provoking ideas from outside the sector, with showcasing the best innovations and ideas from within. Well done."

Policy Network

The Policy Network met in April (at the offices of the Financial Ombudsman Service) and in November 2019 (at the office of the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman in Manchester). After the sudden passing of Caroline Mitchell, Judith Turner from the Rail Ombudsman / Furniture Ombudsman was elected Chair of the Policy Network and Sarah Ritzenthaler from the Legal Ombudsman was elected Vice-Chair. At its meetings the Network discussed, amongst other things, measuring the impact of ombudsman schemes, and the ADR & Civil Justice report. In November the Network held a seminar on the 'single portal' and initiated further work to help improve signposting by other organisations. Outside the meetings the Group also led a workshop at the Conference and worked together to update information about ombudsman schemes in Atkins Court Forms

OA Data Protection Officer seminar

The first Data Protection Officer (DPO) seminar took place at the offices of PHSO in Manchester on 27 November. The event

brought together DPO's from across the OA's membership to discuss the results of the recent data security survey of members, cyber security, protecting the privacy of staff, and retention and deletion policies. The event was a success and it is proposed that a standing Interest Group / network will be established.

OA Newsletter

The quarterly online newsletter for members was published in April, July, and October 2019, and in February 2020. The newsletter, which is aimed at those who deal with casework, highlights the latest activities of the OA's members and developments in the sector. During the year there were articles on the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's 'complaints map', the Housing Ombudsman's new Customer Panel, and PHSO's caseworker accreditation programme. The newsletter also now includes the Policy Network's Horizon Scanning paper as a standing item.



Members' Area of the website

The project to review and re-structure the Members' Area of the website was taken forward in 2019 by Theresa Valtin from SPSO and Caroline Dobbing from PHSO. A survey in the summer garnered 41 individual responses from 20 different member organisations. The responses represented a good mix of staff in senior management, operations, external relations, and corporate resources, providing a balanced view of what members wanted. The recommendations were considered by the Communications Group later that year and after further information gathering the project will now be taken forward in 2020 to create a new online community for members.

Support open and transparent accountability and endorse principles of good complaint handling.

OA Service Standards Framework

The Service Standards Framework Working Group further surveyed OA members in summer 2019 to inform considerations of what needs to be put in place to support members to implement the Framework. It is proposed that the Working Group acts as a 'steering group' to prepare the way for a standing 'corporate performance / reporting' Interest Group, to be set up once more members have assessed and reported against the Framework, and this work will be taken forward in 2020/21.

Case Law Database

The Case Law Database was launched in April 2019 and has been very positively received by

both members and the academic community. The database, which was jointly delivered with Dr Richard Kirkham, collates in one place all the case law about our members for the first time, reinforcing our members' commitment to transparency and accountability, as set out in the OA's criteria. Members are able to update the Database themselves with information about any new cases.

GOVERNANCE

Annual Meeting 2019

The 26th Annual Meeting of the Association took place on 21 May 2019 at the Hilton Belfast. Members received the annual report and the audited accounts for 2018/19, and the Business Plan for 2019/20 which set out the priorities that would be focused on and the activities that would be undertaken. Elections for the vacant positions on the Board took place, with the following elected for a two-year term (2019-21):

Chair:

Anthony Arter,
Pensions Ombudsman

Vice Chair:

Rob Behrens, Parliamentary & Health
Service Ombudsman

Ombudsman Member representatives:

Rosemary Agnew

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Kieran FitzGerald

Garda Síochána
Ombudsman Commission

Felicity Mitchell

Office of the Independent Adjudicator
for Higher Education

Matt Vickers

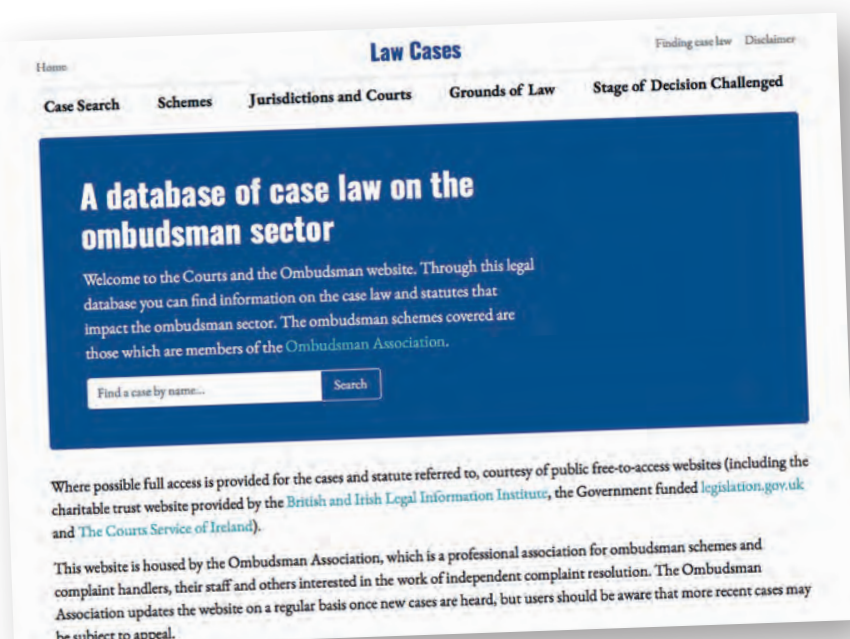
Ombudsman Services

Complaint Handler / Associate Member representative:

Rónán Ó Domhnaill,

An Coimisinéir Teanga

Note: the minutes of the Annual Meeting are in the [Members' Area](#) of the Association website.



Board

The role of the Board is to manage the business of the Association. The membership of the Board during 2019/20 was:

Anthony Arter (Chair)

Pensions Ombudsman Service

Rob Behrens (Vice Chair)

Parliamentary & Health
Service Ombudsman

Rosemary Agnew

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Kieran FitzGerald

Garda Síochána
Ombudsman Commission

Helen Megarry

The Adjudicator,
HMRC & Valuation Office

Doug Melville

Channel Islands Financial Ombudsman

Felicity Mitchell

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Rónán Ó Domhnaill

An Coimisinéir Teanga
(Language Commissioner)

Antony Townsend

Financial Regulators
Complaints Commissioner

Matt Vickers

Ombudsman Services

Nicola Williams

Service Complaints Ombudsman for the
Armed Forces

Donal Galligan

Chief Executive,
Ombudsman Association

"The OA are hugely indebted to Margaret for her work on the Validation Committee over the past decade. Margaret has helped shape the development of best practice in both the public and private sectors, resolutely striving for fair and effective redress systems for all."

Note: Biographies of Board members, including photographs, are in the public area of the [Association website](#).

Margaret Doyle's final Validation Committee meeting (from left to right): Richard Kirkham, Margaret Doyle, Donal Galligan, Kate Wellington, and Rob Behrens

Validation Committee

The role of the Validation Committee is to advise the Board on whether applications for Ombudsman and Complaint Handler Membership should be approved. The

Validation Committee have been heavily focussed on completing the re-validation programme of existing Ombudsman Members.

The Validation Committee's membership during 2019/20 was:

Chair

Rob Behrens

Ombudsman Association Vice-Chair

Representing Ombudsman Members

Felicity Mitchell

Office of the
Independent Adjudicator

Independent Members

Margaret Doyle

(until November 2019)

Dr Chris Gill

Dr Richard Kirkham

(from November 2019)

Kate Wellington

Margaret Doyle, an independent mediator and Visiting Research Fellow with the UK Administrative Justice Institute, and a long-standing fixture in the complaint handling landscape, stepped down in November 2019 after a decade on the Committee. The Association is extremely grateful for the time and effort Margaret put into her role over the years to ensure our membership criteria are robustly applied.

Dr Richard Kirkham, who is Senior Lecturer in Public Law at the University of Sheffield, joined the Validation Committee in November 2019. Richard is well known for his research on the ombudsman institution, which includes authoring *The Ombudsman Enterprise and Administrative Justice*, editing *The Research Handbook on the Ombudsman*, and also editing a section of the *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law* for over 15 years. As of his recent Nuffield Foundation ed project, Richard also collaborated with the OA to help produce the Case Law database, which for the first time collates in one place all the case law about the OA's members.

The Association is most grateful to all of the members of the Validation Committee for making themselves available as required.



Changes in Membership

There were a handful of changes at ‘office holder’ level amongst the Association’s members during 2019/20:

- **Marie Anderson** was appointed Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
- **Richard Blakeway** was appointed Housing Ombudsman
- **Sarah Daniel** was appointed the Waterways Ombudsman
- **Paul McFadden** was appointed Acting Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

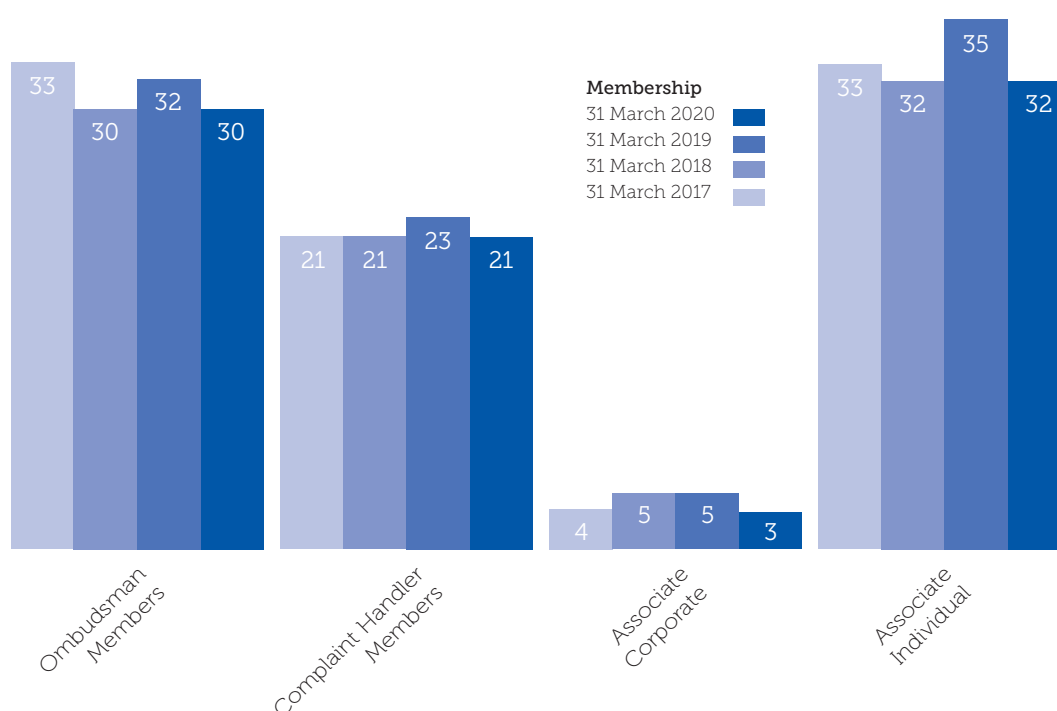
The Chief Executive has continued to engage with a number of organisations and stakeholders in the UK, Ireland, the British Crown Dependencies and the British Overseas Territories who have expressed an interest in applying for Association membership, or in establishing an ombudsman in a sector where

one does not currently exist, and further applications for membership are expected over the next two years.

During the year the Isle of Man Financial Services Ombudsman Scheme left the Association. As previously reported, the Independent Office for Police Conduct and the Consumer Council chose not to renew their membership in 2019/20 due to budget restrictions, and the role of the Independent Complaints Monitor for the Disclosure and Barring Service was discontinued. Unfortunately, the three existing Corporate Associate members (Gambling Commission, Resolver, and Browne Jacobson LLP) have all decided not to renew their membership in 2020/21, as have the Barristers Professional Conduct Tribunal as their complaint handling role is being subsumed into another body.

Membership of the Association at 31 March 2020, as compared with a year ago, is as follows:

Members	31 March 2019	31 March 2020
Ombudsman Members	32	30
Complaint Handler Members	23	21
Associate Members		
Corporate	5	3
Individual	35	32
Total	95	86



Members of the Association as at 31 March 2020

Ombudsman Members

1. Bermuda Ombudsman
2. Channel Islands Financial Ombudsman
3. Complaints Commissioner, Turks & Caicos Islands
4. Financial Ombudsman Service, UK
5. Financial Services & Pensions Ombudsman, Ireland
6. The Furniture Ombudsman
7. Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission
8. Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman
9. Housing Ombudsman Service
10. Legal Ombudsman, England and Wales
11. Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman, England
12. The Motor Ombudsman
13. Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
14. Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education
15. Ombudsman and Information Commissioner, Ireland
16. Ombudsman, Cayman Islands
17. Ombudsman for Children, Ireland
18. Ombudsman for the Defence Forces, Ireland
19. Ombudsman Services
20. Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman, UK
21. Pensions Ombudsman, UK
22. Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
23. Property Ombudsman
24. Property Ombudsman: Scotland
25. Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
26. Rail Ombudsman
27. Removals Industry Ombudsman
28. Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
29. Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces
30. Waterways Ombudsman

Complaint Handler Members

1. The Adjudicator's Office
2. Advertising Standards Authority
3. An Coimisinéir Teanga (Language Commissioner)
4. Barristers Professional Conduct Tribunal, Ireland
5. Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland
6. The Financial Regulators Complaints Commissioner
7. Greffier of the States of Jersey
8. Independent Betting Adjudication Service (IBAS)
9. IDRS Limited
10. Immigration Services Commissioner
11. Independent Case Examiner for DWP
12. Independent Complaints Reviewer (for HM Land Registry and Northern Ireland Youth Justice Agency)
13. Independent Football Ombudsman
14. Information Commissioner's Office
15. Law Society of Ireland
16. Lay Observer for Northern Ireland
17. Northern Ireland Certification Officer for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations
18. Press Ombudsman, Ireland
19. Scottish Legal Complaints Commission
20. The Dispute Service Limited
21. Welsh Language Commissioner

Corporate Associate Members

1. Brown Jacobson LLP, Solicitors
2. Gambling Commission
3. Resolver

MEMBERSHIP

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

For The Period 2 May 2019 to 31 March 2020

The directors present their report with the financial statements of the company for the period 2 May 2019 to 31 March 2020.

Incorporation

The company was incorporated on 2 May 2019 and commenced trading on 1 August 2019.

Directors

The directors who have held office during the period from 2 May 2019 to the date of this report are as follows:

■ R Agnew	appointed 21 May 2019
■ A L Arter	appointed 2 May 2019
■ R F Behrens	appointed 21 May 2019
■ K FitzGerald	appointed 21 May 2019
■ D A Galligan	appointed 2 May 2019
■ H M Megarry	appointed 21 May 2019
■ D W Melville	appointed 2 May 2019
■ SF J Mitchell	appointed 21 May 2019
■ A J Townsend	appointed 2 May 2019
■ M J Vickers	appointed 21 May 2019
■ N E Williams	appointed 2 May 2019
■ R O'Domhnaill	appointed 2 May 2019
■ N Bennett	appointed 2 May 2019 – resigned 21 May 2019

All the directors who are eligible offer themselves for election at the forthcoming first Annual General Meeting.

Statement of directors' responsibilities

The directors are responsible for preparing the Report of the Directors and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the surplus or deficit of the company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement as to disclosure of information to auditors

So far as the directors are aware, there is no relevant audit information (as defined by Section 418 of the Companies Act 2006) of which the company's auditors are unaware, and each director has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken as a director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

The auditors, Crane & Partners, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

On behalf of the board:



Anthony Arter, Director.

24 June 2020

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS OF OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Ombudsman Association (the 'company') for the period ended 31 March 2020 which comprise the Income Statement, Balance Sheet and Notes to the Financial Statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at 31 March 2020 and of its surplus for the period then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the directors have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information in the Report of the Directors, but does not include the financial statements and our Report of the Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Report of the Directors for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the Directors has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Directors.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the directors were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Directors.

Responsibilities of directors

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities set out on page two, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the Auditors that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in a Report of the Auditors and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Graham Atkin FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor) for and on behalf of Crane & Partners Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors

Leonard House, 5–7 Newman Road, Bromley, Kent, BR1 1 RJ
24 June 2020

INCOME STATEMENT

For The Period 2 May 2019 to 31 March 2020

Turnover	225,813
Administrative expenses	<u>84,314</u>
Operating surplus	141,499
Interest receivable and similar income	<u>60</u>
Surplus before taxation	141,559
Tax on surplus	<u>—</u>
Surplus for the financial period	<u>141,559</u>

BALANCE SHEET

31 March 2020

	Notes	£
Current assets		
Debtors	4	20,007
Cash at bank		<u>126,765</u>
		146,772
Creditors		
Amounts falling due within one year	5	<u>5,213</u>
Net current assets		141,559
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>141,559</u>
Reserves		
Income and expenditure account		<u>141,559</u>
		<u>141,559</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors and authorised for issue on 24 June 2020 and were signed on its behalf by:

Anthony Arter, Director.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For The Period 2 May 2019 to 31 March 2020

1. STATUTORY INFORMATION

Ombudsman Association is a private company, limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales. The company's registered number and registered office address can be found on the Company Information page.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" including the provisions of Section 1A "Small Entities" and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Turnover

Turnover represents subscriptions receivable, net of VAT, together with funds introduced from The Ombudsman Association, an unincorporated association.

3. EMPLOYEES AND DIRECTORS

The average number of employees during the period was 2.

4. DEBTORS:

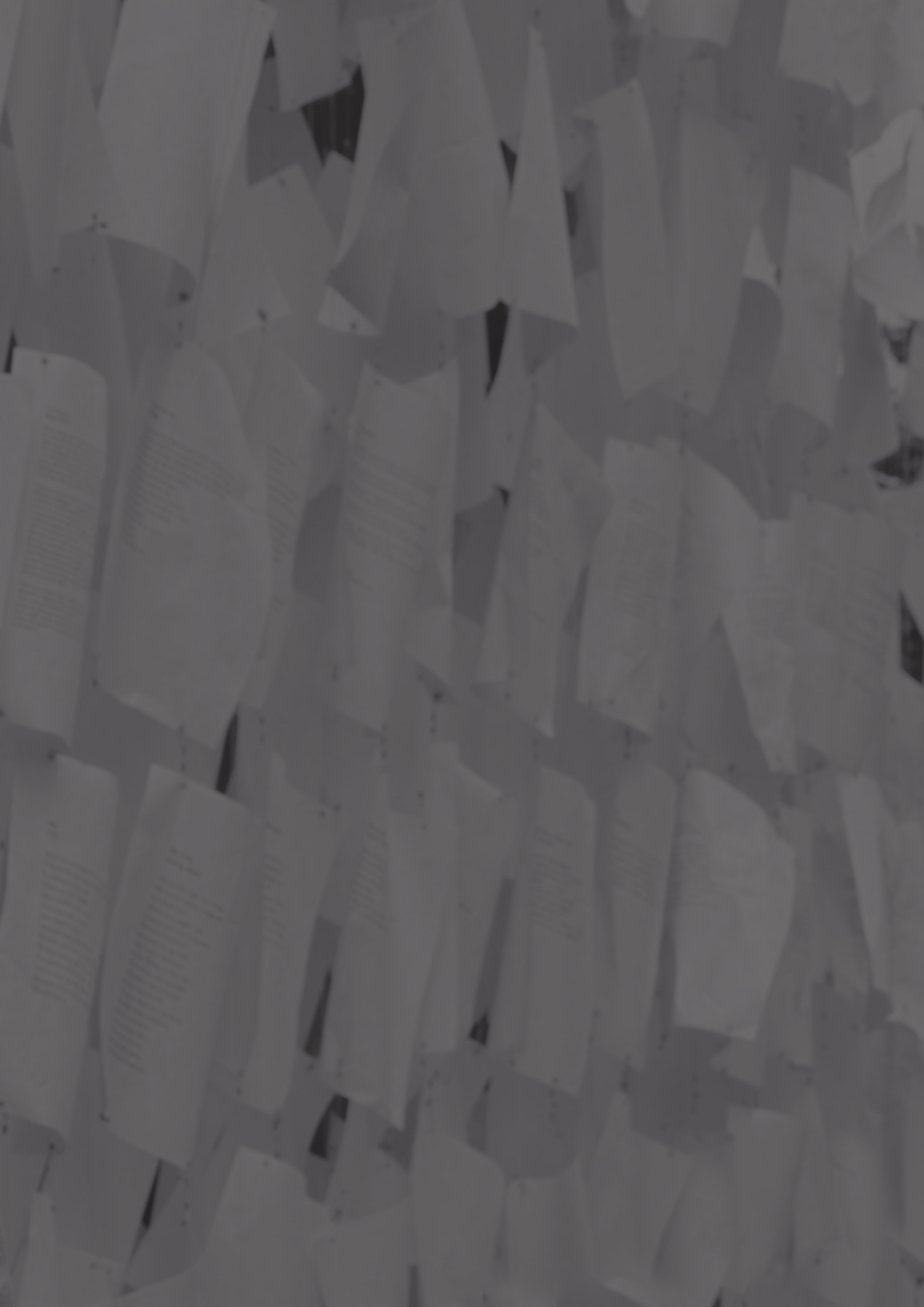
Amounts falling due within one year

Other debtors	<u>20,007</u>
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5. CREDITORS:

Amounts falling due within one year

Trade creditors	874
Taxation and social security	3,514
Other creditors	<u>825</u>
	5,213



OMBUDSMAN
ASSOCIATION
Promoting independent complaint resolution

www.ombudsmanassociation.org
@OmbudAssoc

Registered office: Leonard House, 5–7 Newman Road, Bromley, Kent, BR1 1RJ
Registered in England and Wales. Company registration number: 11976831