



OMBUDSMAN
ASSOCIATION

Promoting independent complaint resolution

ANNUAL REPORT

2014 to 2015

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Objects of the Association

The objects of the Association are:

To encourage, develop and safeguard the role and title of Ombudsman in both the public and private sectors

To define, publish and keep under review criteria for the recognition of Ombudsman offices by the Association

To accord recognition publicly to those persons or offices who satisfy the defined criteria for recognition in:

- the United Kingdom
- Ireland
- the British Crown Dependencies
- the British Overseas Territories

To facilitate mutual learning between schemes and to provide services to members designed to develop best practice

To work to raise the profile of Ombudsmen and understanding of their work with key influencers and the wider public in ways which add value to the promotional work of individual Ombudsman schemes

Foreword by the Chair of the Association

This year has been an extremely busy one for the Association, full of change and contemplation of the future.

At the Annual Meeting on 15 May last year, members received a paper outlining the findings of the recent 'strategic review' of the Association, which had identified the key things members wanted to see the Association doing more of. That included:

- Being proactive in communication with members, providing information and briefings on policy developments, emerging trends and things to watch out for;
- Improving relationships with governments and decision makers;
- Playing an advocacy role, influencing governments and decision makers;
- Offering more training specific to ombudsmen and complaint handlers;
- Providing guidance, best practice and case-studies.

It was recognised that to deliver this the Association would require more resources. Voting members approved the recommendation that the Executive

Committee carry out immediate reviews to determine how best to implement those results. It was agreed that the governance and membership of the Association would also be reviewed, with regard to achieving greater inclusivity for all the Association's members.

I would like to thank the members of the Executive Committee who took forward those reviews and in particular the staff of the various members who contributed to that work.

A consultation was undertaken in February-March 2015 on the Executive Committee's proposals for implementing the findings of the strategic review. Following feedback, the Executive Committee revised its initial proposals for changes to the governance of the Association to reflect the views expressed through the consultation. The revised proposals to achieve greater inclusivity for all the Association's members will be considered at the May 2015 Annual Meeting.

I'm delighted that we are starting to see the increase in activity that members had expressed a desire for. The Policy Network has now been established with a dual aim of coordinating joint Association positions on issues and providing briefings to members on developments.

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Lewis Shand Smith

Foreword

Continued from page 2

The Interest Groups continue to provide both networking and professional development opportunities for staff, enabling members to share best practice. The HR Interest Group will take forward and refine the Behaviours, Knowledge & Skills framework for caseworkers, whilst the Communications Interest Group will support the re-launch of the Association's newsletter. And the recently established Service Standards Group will look at developing a generic standards framework that could be used by all members.

The EU ADR Directive has dominated the thinking of many of our members over the past year, with those most affected actively engaging with policy makers. Where the Association could provide added value by speaking on behalf of the sector we have done, responding to the UK Department for Business, Innovation & Skills' consultation, providing a briefing for members at a seminar in December 2014, and engaging with policy makers and the generic competent authority, the Trading Standards Institute, where appropriate. Although plans have been less developed in Ireland, the 'Irish Forum' has similarly engaged with policy makers there.

If the ADR Directive has provided 'challenges and opportunities' for private sector members, the Parliaments and Assemblies within these islands have sought to do the same for the public sector. Various committee and government reports and inquiries have looked at the roles and powers of public services ombudsmen, with proposals put forward to create a unified public services ombudsman in Northern Ireland, give new powers to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, and bring together those public services ombudsmen with an English or Westminster jurisdiction. The Smith Commission and 'vow' for further devolution to Scotland has also led the Scottish Parliament

to consider the remit of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Amid that uncertainty for the future, the Association has achieved significant success in its long-held aim to safeguard the role and title of 'ombudsman'. Following engagement with policy makers at UK government departments, Companies House added to their criteria that a business must be an ombudsman member of our Association before it can trade using the title 'ombudsman'. This recognition of the Association's membership criteria as the 'gold standard' is something we should be justifiably proud of.

I'd like to record my thanks again to Ian Pattison, who stepped down as Secretary at the end of June 2014 after nine years in the role. Ian's able administration allowed a smooth handover to Donal Galligan, who took on the role of Association Secretary on an interim basis whilst the strategic review was completed.

My thanks go to the Executive, those who have led the networks and of course to Donal for the efficient way he has steered the Association through the reviews, supported me and made a successful start to delivering the key developments members wish to see.

Further thanks go to Ian Buxton, who managed the Association's accounts and payroll, quietly and efficiently, for many years. I wish him all the best for his (second) retirement.

Lewis Shand Smith
Ombudsman Association Chair
Chief Ombudsman and Chief Executive, Ombudsman Services
May 2015

ANNUAL MEETING 2014

The 21st Annual Meeting of the Association was held on 15-16 May 2014, in Manchester, jointly hosted by Ombudsman Services and the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO). Attended by 125 people, it consisted of three separate events:

- Workshops run by Ombudsman Services and PHSO during the afternoon of 15 May;
- The Association Dinner held during the evening of 15 May;
- The 21st Annual Meeting of the Association held during the morning of 16 May.

Workshops on 15 May 2014

Three workshops were held during the afternoon of 15 May, with participants selecting two to attend:

- **Case management systems** – Led by John Baguley, Ombudsman, Ombudsman Services, with presentations from Arlene Adams, CEO of Peppermint Technology Ltd and Hayley Chalmers, Investigations Officer, Ombudsman Services.
- **Role of social media in complaint handling** – Led by Sally Sykes, Executive Director of External Affairs and Strategy, PHSO, with a presentation from Jane Wilson, former CEO, Chartered Institute for Public Relations
- **EU ADR Directive and its implications for the Association and its members** – Led by Lewis Shand Smith, Chief Ombudsman, Ombudsman Services, with presentations from Nick Mawhinney, European Consumer & Competition Policy, BIS, and Eric Houtman, Belgian Energy Ombudsman.

Association Dinner on 15 May 2014

The Association dinner, held in the Mumford Restaurant in the Manchester Meeting Place, was attended by 92 people.

Annual Meeting on 16 May 2014

This was held in the Harwood Room at the University of Manchester, followed by a lunch. The 21st Annual Meeting (the formal business of the Association) took place first, attended by 75 people, including 15 (Voting) Ombudsman Members.

Chair's address

The Association's Acting Chair, Lewis Shand Smith, gave the following address:

Half of what might be said by way of introduction to the meeting has been provided by Tony King in his foreword to the Annual Report and the other half from our main agenda item.

May I therefore just highlight some of the key points.

The Validation Committee has now completed its review of ombudsman members – please accept our thanks for undertaking this essential piece of work. We need to decide the how and when of a similar re-validation for complaint handling members. The committee will now look at the criteria for private sector ADR bodies required by the EU Directive, with a view to aligning our own principles where necessary and appropriate.

I have spoken twice now at our annual conferences on ombudsmen in a time of change. Changes in the context where we operate and in the expectations on us continue

to accelerate. The EU Directive on ADR, which requires that ADR should be available for all contracts for the supply of goods and services within the EU, has now been published and is to be transposed into UK law by July 2015. BIS is now consulting on the transposition, and in particular asking questions about the residual body, helpline and competent authority as well as funding and ways in which consumers, citizens and business can be encouraged to engage with ombudsmen and other ADR bodies.

The Public Affairs Select Committee has published two reports, one on complaint handling and the other on the future of public sector ombudsman in England and the UK Parliamentary Ombudsman. The proposals in 'Time for a People's Ombudsman Service' may seem radical (well if you're part of the English ombudsman system...) but they reflect themes and proposals that have been discussed and recommended for at least a decade.

This is against a backdrop where access to the administrative and civil courts is being significantly reduced. For many people seeking justice, an ombudsman is the only realistic possibility for a complaint to be heard, investigated and resolution and redress determined. In a recent survey OS discovered that 33% of those escalating complaints in the private sector will do so to an ombudsman; 6% will use the small claims court. Ombudsmen are not an alternative to courts and tribunals, but an integral and essential part of administrative and civil justice.

This presents a challenge to the Ombudsman Association. What kind of organisation should we be? How do we manage to represent the broad church of membership: public and private, ombudsmen and complaint handlers? Can we speak with one voice? Can we influence the political agenda? How do we raise public awareness and improve accessibility? By what means can we raise the standards by which we operate, recognizing that the failure of one of us can tarnish the reputation of all? How should the Association be staffed and funded?

These kinds of questions informed the review that has been conducted into the Association and the requirements of our membership. The next stages of that review form the main part of our agenda this morning. May I echo Tony's remarks in the Report and thank those who carried out the review, collated the results and brought the recommendations forward for the Executive and today's meeting.

And finally, our thanks must go to Tony King. Tony, we're sorry that you had to leave the Chair earlier than planned and for the circumstances that made that necessary. You steered the Association through a time that had the potential to be divisive and destructive with sensitivity and great wisdom. We thank you most sincerely for that and, for all you have done as a member of the Association and Executive and for your continuing support and commitment.

Strategic Review Recommendations

Members received a paper outlining the details of the recent 'strategic review' of the Association, including a recommendation from the Executive Committee that it embark on immediate reviews of the following, with a view to commencing implementation of the results within six months of this Annual Meeting:

- The Secretariat, to decide on if and how it should be expanded to cover its existing functions, together with a wider policy, communications and training oversight remit;
- Governance and membership of the Association, especially with regard to achieving greater inclusivity for all its members;
- 'Horizon scanning' capability and profile-raising (including advice and advocacy roles) with governments and policy makers (in all its members' jurisdictions);
- Funding and revenue raising, including alternatives to conventional annual membership subscriptions (this may involve an additional levy on members during the 2014/15 year to fund additional staff and activities for the remainder of the year);
- Expansion of guidance and best practice, and also member networking capabilities (such as the existing Interest Groups and staff seminars);
- Expansion of approved training and development opportunities (including CDP) delivered by training partners, such as the current arrangements with Queen Margaret University;
- Development of the Association's technology capability to support membership administration and communication, as well as its support of forums, blogs and increased website capability such as e-learning capability.

Executive Committee

The new Executive Committee was then voted in, as follows:

Association Chair:

Lewis Shand Smith Chief Ombudsman,
Ombudsman Services

Association Vice-Chair:

Jane Martin Local Government Ombudsman
for England

Representing Ombudsman Members:

Christopher Hamer The Property Ombudsman
Dame Julie Mellor Parliamentary & Health Service
Ombudsman
Jim Martin Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Caroline Wayman Principal Ombudsman & Legal
Director, UK Financial Ombudsman
Service

Representing Ombudsman Members in Ireland:

Kieran FitzGerald Commissioner, Garda Síochána
Ombudsman Commission
Bill Prasifka Financial Services Ombudsman, Ireland

Representing Complaint Handler Members:

Judy Clements The Adjudicator
Elizabeth Derrington Independent Complaints Reviewer

The Association Secretary is also a permanent member of the Executive Committee.

Note: the minutes of the Annual Meeting are in the 'members' area' of the Association website. Details of Executive Committee members, including photographs, are in the public area of the Association website.

Presentations:

After the formal business of the Association, an update was given by Marie Anderson, Deputy Northern Ireland Ombudsman, on the joint Human Rights Project at the Northern Ireland Ombudsman.

The second session was chaired by Dame Julie Mellor, Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman, and presentations were given by:

- Emily O'Reilly, European Ombudsman
- Peter Tyndall, President of the European Region of the International Ombudsman Institute and Ombudsman & Information Commissioner, Ireland.

SEMINAR 2014

A Policy Network seminar on the topic of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive and the Online Dispute Resolution Regulations was held at the offices of the UK Financial Ombudsman Service on 4 December 2014 and was attended by 27 staff members of member schemes. The Seminar was the first for the newly formed Policy Network. The presentations from the seminar can be found in the members' area of the Association's website.

BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2015

The 2015 Ombudsman Association Biennial Conference, the 11th such Conference of the Association, will once again be held at the Burleigh Court Conference Centre, Loughborough University, on 14 and 15 May.

ANNUAL MEETING 2015

The 22nd Annual Meeting of the Association will be held during the morning on the first day of the Biennial Conference (on 14 May 2015).

STRATEGIC REVIEW

The results of the Strategic Review carried out in 2013-14 were presented to members at the 2014 Annual Meeting. Members approved the recommendation from the Executive Committee that it embark on immediate reviews of the following:

- The Secretariat, to decide on if and how it should be expanded to cover its existing functions, together with a wider policy, communications and training oversight remit;
- Governance and membership of the Association, especially with regard to achieving greater inclusivity for all its members;
- 'Horizon scanning' capability and profile-raising (including advice and advocacy roles) with governments and policy makers (in all its members' jurisdictions);
- Funding and revenue raising, including alternatives to conventional annual membership subscriptions (this may involve an additional levy on members during the 2014/15 year to fund additional staff and activities for the remainder of the year);
- Expansion of guidance and best practice, and also member networking capabilities (such as the existing Interest Groups and staff seminars);
- Expansion of approved training and development opportunities (including CDP) delivered by training partners, such as the current arrangements with Queen Margaret University;
- Development of the Association's technology capability to support membership administration and communication, as well as its support of forums, blogs and increased website capability such as e-learning capability.

Three sub-groups of the Executive took these reviews forward, reporting back to the Executive Committee on their findings and proposals.

As some of the changes required to create a more inclusive Association and to enhance the services that members receive would necessitate changes to the Association's existing governance and subscription rates, a consultation on the Executive Committee's proposals was held from 23 February – 12 March 2015. Three briefing meetings for members took place, in London (24 February), Dublin (5 March) and Warrington (6 March). A total of 22 different members were represented at the briefings.

The responses to the consultation – 31 in total – reflected a representative cross section of the wider membership, with around half of ombudsman members responding, a third of complaint handler members and 15% of individual associate members.

The proposed changes to the governance of the Association being put forward for consideration at the 2015 Annual Meeting reflect the responses received from members through the consultation.

(The research, consultation results and reports for the strategic review are available to view in the members' area of the Association's website.)

POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Policy Network

The Policy Network was established to provide a forum for all members to share horizon scanning, develop initiatives, and to harness the existing expertise of members to develop joint Association positions. The core of the Network consists of the policy leads of those on the Executive Committee, to enable it to be more efficient in developing and signing off on policy positions. The wider Network consists of the policy leads of all members. This provides a pool of resources that can be engaged with as appropriate depending on the subject matter. The Policy Network met twice during the year and organised a seminar on ADR and ODR for the wider membership.

Interface with governments and other bodies

ADR Directive

Preparation for implementation of the EU ADR Directive has been the focus of many members' activities this year. Where the Association could provide added value by speaking on behalf of the sector we have done so, responding to the UK Department for Business, Innovation & Skills' consultation, providing a briefing for members at a seminar in December 2014, and engaging with policy makers and Trading Standards Institute. Although plans have been less developed in Ireland, the 'Irish Forum' has similarly engaged with policy makers there.

The Secretary also engaged with the Citizens Advice Consumer Service regarding their plans to develop their service to incorporate the helpdesk function envisaged in the implementation of the ADR Directive. They are keen to work with some of the Association's members in developing a pilot scheme and with the wider membership in due course.

Protection of title 'Ombudsman'

Towards the end of the year the Association achieved significant success in its long-held aim to safeguard the role and title of 'ombudsman'. The Secretary engaged with policy makers at UK government departments to discuss how the current process in the UK to protect the use of the title 'ombudsman' by private sector companies could be improved and strengthened – a long-held ambition for the Association.

In March 2015, Companies House issued updated Guidance on the criteria for registering a company in the UK with the title 'ombudsman', or trading as such. Businesses now have to be certified by the relevant ADR competent authority, have a proven track record in that area (expected to be at least 12 months), and, crucially, hold Ombudsman membership of the Ombudsman Association. Those who use the term Ombudsman without permission are liable to a fine of up to £1000, with a further £100/day fine until the offence is resolved.

Service Complaints Ombudsman

In June 2014 the UK Government introduced legislation to create a Service Complaints Ombudsman for the UK's Armed Forces, replacing the current Service Complaints

Commissioner. The Association provided briefing to Peers and to the House of Commons' Defence Select Committee on the principal features of an Ombudsman, based on the Association's membership criteria.

Ombudsman landscape

The Secretary has developed relationships within the wider European ombudsman landscape, attending a meeting of the National Energy Ombudsman Network (NEON) and the first meeting of the Coordination meeting for Ombudsman Networks, which aims to try and co-ordinate dates and topics of forthcoming conferences and seminars to avoid clashes and overlaps where possible.

Conferences and seminars

The Secretary has attended a number of seminars and conferences this year on the ADR Directive, informal resolution, consumer rights and administrative justice to maintain knowledge of the landscape and draw attention to the activities of the Association's members.

Media interviews

The Chair undertook a number of radio interviews during the year to promote the Association's principles of good complaint handling and our membership criteria for Ombudsmen, in light of the ADR Directive and proposed changes in the public sector ombudsman landscape.

The Administrative Justice Forum

The Administrative Justice Forum was set up by the UK Ministry of Justice (MoJ) after the abolition of the Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council, with which the Association had close ties. It is intended that the Forum will bring an independent perspective to bear on policy and practice in this important area of justice to inform the programme of work the MoJ will take forward to improve the administrative justice system for users and taxpayers. The Ombudsman Association is a member of the Forum and attends the meetings, held twice a year.

Consultation responses

The Association continues to seek to raise the profile of Ombudsmen, particularly in its responses to relevant consultations, White Papers and calls for evidence.

Where appropriate in responding to issues and consultations, the Association encourages the establishment of 'Ombudsman Association compliant' schemes which meet the criteria for Ombudsman Membership. It also continues to campaign for the protection of the word 'Ombudsman' to avoid 'the risk of damaging the credibility of the Ombudsman 'brand'.

This year, relatively few formal responses were made, namely to:

- UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills – Implementing the Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive
- UK Cabinet Office – Review of the balance of competencies between the UK and the EU
- UK House of Commons Defence Committee – Inquiry into the Armed Forces Bill
- Irish Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation – the Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive

GUIDANCE, BEST PRACTICE AND NETWORKING

Interest Groups

The Association has five Interest Groups with each meeting twice a year. They facilitate communication between schemes and enable staff to share ideas and issues of concern, and disseminate good practice. Meetings are held at the offices of member schemes, and the Association is very grateful for those facilities being made readily available.

Those interested in joining any of the Interest Groups should contact either the respective Chairs (see below) or the Association Secretary (secretary@ombudsmanassociation.org).

Legal Interest Group

The Legal Interest Group brings together legal advisers and those with an interest in legal matters within member schemes. It is chaired by Marie Anderson, Deputy Northern Ireland Ombudsman.

Communications Interest Group

The Communications Interest Group brings together communications professionals and those with an interest in PR/ Communications matters in member schemes. It is chaired by Andrew Walton, Media & Communications Manager, Legal Ombudsman.

HR Interest Group

The HR Interest Group brings together HR professionals and those with an interest in personnel, training and development in member schemes. It is chaired by Niki Mclean, Director of Corporate Services at the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

First Contact Interest Group

The First Contact Interest Group brings together those concerned with, and with an interest in, 'gateway' services within member schemes, and dealing with complaints and enquiries when they are first received. It is chaired by Carol Neill, Outreach Team Leader at the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Interest Group

The EDHR Group brings together a wide range of operational professionals to share best practice on taking account of equality, diversity and human rights issues in day-to-day operations. It is chaired by Baljit Kaur, Equality & Diversity Manager at the Legal Ombudsman.

(Note: notes of all Interest Group meetings are in the 'members' area' of the Association's website)

Sectorial networks

Members meet in a number of sectorial networks to share best practice and sector updates. Although not formally Association meetings, the Secretary attends these meetings when invited to provide updates on Association activity.

- The Irish Forum – meet five times a year, tied into the Executive Committee meeting cycle.
- Private Sector Ombudsman meeting – meet twice a year
- Public Sector Ombudsman meeting – meet 2–3 times a year

Service Standards Framework Group

An embryonic Service Standards Framework Group has been set up to develop a generic standards framework that could be used by all members. The first meeting will take place in April 2015.

COMMUNICATIONS

Blog, Newsletter and social media

The Ombudsman blog, which replaced the formal periodic newsletter, provides a continuous blog of news, articles and features. This can be viewed at: www.ombudsmanassociation.org/ma/blog/. We are very grateful to Catherine Caladine from Ombudsman Services for her assistance with this.

A survey of members showed wide support for the re-introduction of a quarterly online newsletter with in-depth articles, alongside the monthly 'OA News' email from the Secretary which highlights shorter articles on the blog, horizon scanning and recent developments in the sector. The Communications Interest Group has agreed to coordinate the re-introduction of the online newsletter.

Back copies of most issues of The Ombudsman are available to view or download from the Association's website: www.ombudsmanassociation.org

The Association now has its own Twitter account (@OmbudAssoc) which is used to draw attention to articles on the Association's blog, job vacancies on the website, changes in personnel, activities of members and developments in the sector.

The Association Website

The Association website (www.ombudsmanassociation.org) consists of four main sections:

FIND

A search facility for members of the public to look for a suitable ombudsman or complaint handler

ABOUT

Detailed description of ombudsmen, what they do and what areas they cover (including Complaint Handlers)

THE ASSOCIATION

Details of the Association, its members, publications and activities

MEMBERS

A resource area for Association members and staff of member schemes containing the notes of the various Interest and Working Groups, in addition to other items of interest, as well as dates of forthcoming Association events and activities. Also available in this area are presentations given at Conferences and Seminars.

Access details for this area for members and staff of member schemes can be obtained from the Association Secretary (secretary@ombudsmanassociation.org)

At the top of each page are links to job vacancies in member schemes and details of current accredited training opportunities.

Member schemes can put job vacancy advertisements free of charge on the Association website. These can include advertisements for Council/Board members (where applicable), the office holder and staff members. Some schemes make great use of this facility and others are also encouraged to. For further information, contact the Association Secretary.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Approved accredited training

During 2014/15, two 'Professional Award in Ombudsman and Complaint Handling Practice' courses were run by Queen Margaret University (QMU), in Manchester (July 2014) and Edinburgh (February 2015), with 23 students in total attending.

Two 'Professional Certificate in Ombudsman and Complaint Handling Practice' courses were also run by QMU during the year, in London (April 2014) and Reading (November 2014), with 22 students in total attending.

Behaviours, knowledge and skills Framework

Initial work has been undertaken on drafting a generic behaviours, knowledge and skills framework for caseworkers that all members might be able to sign up to. The first stages of developing a directory of training products that members use and would recommend to other schemes was also undertaken. Both strands of work will be explored further by the HR Interest Group in 2015/16.

FINANCES

Finances 2013/14

The income for 2013/14, including the surplus from the 2013 Conference of £16,325 (€19,747), was £103,482 (€125,172). Expenditure was £90,933 (€109,993), giving a total surplus for the year of £12,549 (€15,179), thereby increasing the Association's reserves to £76,863 (€85,582).

(Note: figures shown in Euros are calculated at the exchange rate on 31 March 2014 of 1.2096 Euros to the Pound Sterling.)

Finances 2014/15

The income for 2014/15 was £82,648 (€114,236). Expenditure was £85,718 (€118,480), giving a total deficit for the year of -£2,790 (-€3,856), thereby reducing the Association's reserves to £72,823 (€100,657).

(Note: figures shown in Euros are calculated at the exchange rate on 31 March 2015 of 1.38 Euros to the Pound Sterling.)

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Association at 31 March 2015, as compared with a year ago, is as follows:

Members	31 March 2015	31 March 2014
Total	107	113
Ombudsman Members	31	30
Complaint Handler Members	26	31

Associate Members:		
Corporate	4	4
Individual	46	48

Executive Committee

The role of the Executive Committee is to manage the Association on behalf of members. The membership of the Committee during 2014/15 was:

Lewis Shand Smith	(Chair) Ombudsman Services
Jane Martin	(Vice-Chair) Local Government Ombudsman
Judy Clements	The Adjudicator
Elizabeth Derrington	Independent Complaints Reviewer
Kieran FitzGerald	Commissioner, Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission
Christopher Hamer	The Property Ombudsman
Jim Martin	Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Dame Julie Mellor	Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman
Bill Prasifka	Financial Services Ombudsman, Ireland

Caroline Wayman	Chief Executive and Chief Ombudsman, UK Financial Ombudsman Service
Ian Pattison	Secretary, Ombudsman Association (April-June)
Donal Galligan	Interim Secretary, Ombudsman Association (July-March)

(Note: Bill Prasifka left the Executive Committee in March 2014)

The Executive Committee met five times during 2014/15:

- 11 April 2014
- 10 June 2014
- 3 September 2014
- 5 December 2014
- 13 February 2015

Validation Committee

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

The Validation Committee's membership during 2014/15 has been:

Chair

Lewis Shand Smith Ombudsman Association Chair

Representing Ombudsman Members

Peter Tyndall Ombudsman & Information
Commissioner, Ireland

Independent Members

Ann Abraham
Margaret Doyle
Professor Mary Seneviratne

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

Re-validation of existing members

The Association's rolling programme of re-validating its members was deferred pending the outcome of the Strategic Review. At the time of its suspension, all of the Ombudsman Members had been re-validated, although there had been a small number of outstanding 'follow-up' queries with some members.

The Complaint Handler member designation had been created to ensure that members in that category received recognition for the standards they worked to. The Association will start to re-validate Complaint Handler members as well, as initially envisaged, later this year.

It is intended that re-validation of ombudsman and complaint handler members will take place on a five-yearly basis.

MEMBER SCHEMES OF THE ASSOCIATION AT 31 MARCH 2015

Ombudsman members

Bermuda Ombudsman

Complaints Commissioner for the British Virgin Islands

Complaints Commissioner for the Cayman Islands

Financial Ombudsman Service, UK

Financial Services Ombudsman Bureau, Ireland

Financial Services Ombudsman, Isle of Man

Furniture Ombudsman

Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission

Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman

Housing Ombudsman Service

Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

Independent Police Complaints Commission

Legal Ombudsman, England and Wales

Local Government Ombudsmen, England

Northern Ireland Ombudsman

Ombudsman and Information Commissioner for Ireland

Ombudsman for Children, Ireland

Ombudsman for the Defence Forces, Ireland

Ombudsman Services

Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman

Pensions Ombudsman Service, UK

Pensions Ombudsman for Ireland

Property Ombudsman

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Removals Industry Ombudsman

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Waterways Ombudsman

Complaint handler members

Adjudicator, HM Revenue and Customs, Valuation Office, and the Insolvency Service

Advertising Standards Authority

An Coimisinéir Teanga (Irish Language Commissioner)

Barristers Professional Conduct Tribunal, Ireland

Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland

Disclosure and Barring Service (Independent Complaints Monitor)

Financial Services Complaints Commissioner

First Civil Service Commissioner and Commissioner for Public Appointments

Greffier of the States of Jersey

IDRS Limited

Immigration Services Commissioner

Independent Case Examiner for DWP

Independent Complaints Reviewer (for Land Registry, National Archives, Northern Ireland Youth Justice Agency and Children's Commissioner for Wales)

Independent Football Ombudsman

Information Commissioner

Judicial Complaints Reviewer (Scotland)

Law Society of Ireland

Lay Observer for Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Ombudsman

Police Investigations & Review Commissioner, Scotland

Press Ombudsman, Ireland

Scottish Information Commissioner

Scottish Legal Complaints Commission

Service Complaints Commissioner for the Armed Forces

The Dispute Service Limited

Welsh Language Commissioner

Corporate associate members

Brown Jacobson LLP, Solicitors

Law Society of Scotland

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh



Ombudsman Association
56 Cambridge Road
Surrey
SM5 3QS
020 8642 6143
secretary@ombudsmanassociation.org
www.ombudsmanassociation.org

'Ombudsman Association' is the
public name of the British and
Irish Ombudsman Association