

# OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION

Promoting independent complaint resolution



## ANNUAL REPORT

# CONTENTS

<b>1.</b>	<b>Foreword by the Chair of the Association</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Annual Meeting 2018</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Report against the Business Plan 2018/19</b>	<b>3</b>
1)	Support and promote an effective system of complaint handling and redress	3
2)	Protect the role of an ombudsman as the 'best practice' model	5
3)	Provide an authoritative voice and promote best practice	6
4)	Support open and transparent accountability	8
<b>4.</b>	<b>Finances</b>	<b>9</b>
•	Finances 2017/18	9
•	Finances 2018/19	9
<b>5.</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>9</b>
•	Changes in membership	9
•	Forthcoming changes	9
•	Executive Committee	10
•	Validation Committee	10
<b>6.</b>	<b>Members of the Association</b>	<b>11</b>
•	List of members as at 31 March 2019	11

## 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

Identifying the key achievements of a membership organisation can often feel like trying to nail jelly to the wall. So much time and effort goes into influencing stakeholders behind the scenes, trying to amplify the messages of members and others to achieve positive change or to stop a disastrous proposal, and into quietly persuading members to adopt best practice, that the list of 'achievements' can look remarkably like either trying to claim credit for others' work or simply like a blank piece of paper.

Having run an association myself in a previous life I'm well aware of the time and effort it takes to deliver what members have called for, especially when a broad membership can mean very different priorities for each member. And it is for that reason that I'm delighted that the Association continues to punch above its weight on such modest resources.

It is fitting that several of our highlights came in 2018, the 25th anniversary of the Association's establishment. The conference in Edinburgh was hailed by several delegates as 'the best ever', with fascinating and thought-provoking presentations on ethics, altruism, and mental health. I know that Donal and Maz have done their best to maintain that standard for the 2019 conference in Belfast.

The publication of the Caseworker Competency Framework in October was a significant step forward in developing the caseworker profession. In identifying the key capabilities that a caseworker needs to be successful it will help guide the way that caseworkers approach their role, including the way they make decisions and interact with others. As well as helping raise standards across the sector, adhering to the Framework will enable members to display to stakeholders that they meet industry best practice. It would be remiss of me not to take this opportunity to thank Kate Wellington for her work in leading the project.

November saw the culmination of the Association's successful influencing

of the UK Government and the rail sector in the launch of a Rail Ombudsman scheme compliant with our membership criteria. Such a small sentence does not do justice to the work that was involved and the achievement that this success represents.

That membership of the Association and the recognition of our criteria as setting out best practice are increasingly being seen as essential across the complaint handling and redress landscape was further evidenced by the expansion in membership, including attracting two Ombudsman schemes and two Complaint Handler members.

In April 2019 the Case Law Database was launched, collating in one place all the case law about our members for the first time. The project was jointly delivered with Dr Richard

Kirkham and made possible by funding from the Nuffield Foundation. As well as providing a useful resource for our members, academics, and the public alike, collating and making

that information publicly available has helped to reinforce the ombudsman community's commitment to transparency and accountability.

Finally, in May 2019 we completed the change in the Association's legal status by registering as a company limited by guarantee at UK Companies House, in the process successfully securing recognition from UK Government of the authoritative position of the Association in 'modernising and professionalising the redress sector' and 'promoting best practice and policy'.

As is so often the case, the year was also marked by sadness when our much-valued colleague Caroline Mitchell passed away suddenly in early 2019 after a short illness. Caroline was a firm fixture in the ombudsman landscape for many years, having joined the Insurance Ombudsman Bureau (the first private sector scheme in the UK) in 1984, and worked for the Building Societies Ombudsman and the Police Complaints Authority, before joining the Financial Ombudsman Service in 2002 and spending several years on our Executive Committee and recently chairing the Policy Network. Caroline will be greatly missed, and our thoughts remain with her family and loved ones.

It's been an honour to Chair the Association and I'm extremely proud of what we have achieved together these past two years to raise standards across the sector. My thanks go to the members of the Executive for their work and support in helping steer the Association, to the members of the Validation Committee for their time and commitment, and to Donal for his tireless work in delivering the Association's aims.

Although my time as Chair has come to an end my commitment to, and support of, the Association will not. Whilst Groucho Marx might have refused to join any club that would have him as a member, I'm happy to wear my membership of the Ombudsman Association as a badge of pride and will continue to do so.

**Nick Bennett**

Ombudsman Association Chair  
Public Services Ombudsman for Wales



FORWARD

# Annual Meeting 2018

**T**he 25th Annual Meeting of the Association took place on 24 May 2018 at the Hilton Carlton, Edinburgh. The Annual Meeting was attended by 57 people, including 22 Ombudsman Members, 9 Complaint Handler Members, and 7 Associate Members.

In the opening address Nick Bennett, the Association's Chair, highlighted the 25th anniversary of the Association's establishment in 1993 as the UK Ombudsman Association and charted its development as membership was extended first to ombudsman offices from Ireland, and then to the British Overseas Territories and the Crown Dependencies. The Chair stressed the need to maintain the Association's criteria for ombudsman schemes as the 'gold standard', highlighting that the recent development of the Service Standards Framework reflected the principles developed in previous years.

## Change to legal status and amendments to the Association's Rules

The Chair set out the proposed change to the Association's legal status to become incorporated as a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, highlighting the benefits of doing so, including the mitigation of financial risk to the Director and members of the Executive and the fulfilment of a duty of care to staff and members. The proposal was unanimously approved by the Ombudsman Members in attendance. The Ombudsman Members also unanimously approved the proposed articles for the new company / amendments to the Association's existing Rules.

The Director at the INFO Conference in Dublin in September 2018

## Business Plan 2018/19

Members approved the Business Plan and budget for 2018/19, which set out the priorities that would be focused on and the activities that would be undertaken.

## Executive Committee

Elections for the vacant positions on the Executive Committee took place, with the following elected for a two-year term (2018-20):

### Vice Chair:

**Anthony Arter,**  
Pensions Ombudsman

### Ombudsman Member representatives:

**Rob Behrens,**  
Parliamentary & Health  
Service Ombudsman

**Doug Melville,**  
Channel Islands Financial Ombudsman

**Nicola Williams,**  
Service Complaints Ombudsman for the  
Armed Forces

### Complaint Handler / Associate Member representatives:

**Helen Megarry,**  
The Adjudicator's Office  
**Antony Townsend,**  
Financial Regulators  
Complaints Commissioner

Note: the minutes of the Annual Meeting are in the [Members' Area](#) of the Association website. Biographies of Executive Committee members, including photographs, are in the public area of the [Association website](#).



# Report against the Business Plan

The Association's 2018/19 Business Plan grouped the activities for the year under the Association's Objects, highlighting the key priorities as:

- Establish membership of the Association as a necessity for those involved in complaint handling.
- Develop a Caseworker Competency Framework for all members to support development of a 'casework' profession.

## 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.

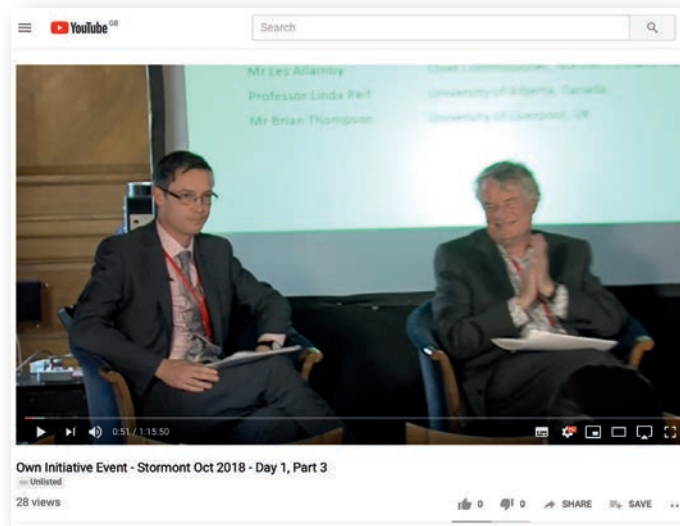
During the year, the Director undertook a significant programme of engagement with parliamentarians, government officials and other stakeholders through meetings, speaking at and attending seminars and conferences, and responding to relevant [consultations](#), to support and promote an effective system of complaint handling and redress and highlight the work of our members. That has also included engaging on proposals to establish new redress schemes, such as a public services ombudsman in Jersey and a dispute resolution scheme for larger SMEs in the UK that fall outside the Financial Ombudsman Service's jurisdiction.

## International Network of Financial Services Ombudsman (INFO) Conference

The Director attended the INFO Conference in Dublin on 24-26 September, speaking in the closing session on the value of collaboration with other ombudsman schemes. The conference provided a good opportunity to learn more about the issues our members who operate in the financial sector face, and to raise the profile of the OA's work and standards documents to a broader international audience.

## Own-Initiative workshop, Belfast

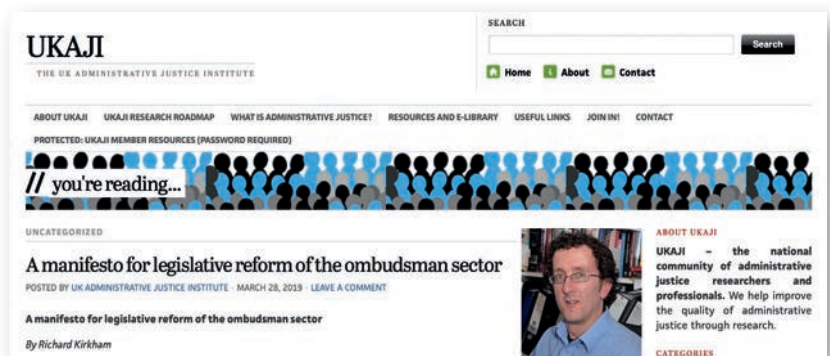
The Director attended the joint Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) / International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) Own-Initiative workshop in Belfast on 22-23 October, chairing a session on taking a human rights approach to investigations. The event was well attended by offices from around the world and provided helpful insight on effective use of own-initiative powers. The workshop sessions were recorded and are available on [YouTube](#).



Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/y23nfzue>

## Ombudsman Legislative Reform Roundtable, Sheffield

The Director attended the Ombudsman Legislative Reform Roundtable event in Sheffield on 18 January. The event brought together leading figures from across the landscape to discuss and take forward some of the key principles that should underpin reform of the public services ombudsman covering England / Westminster.



Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/y6sqf6l3>



Communications  
poldershop in The Hague

## Administrative Justice decision making and procedures

The Director spoke at an Administrative Justice Council workshop, *Administrative Justice decision making and procedures*, on 2 November in London, highlighting the project to develop a Caseworker Competency Framework for the OA's members.

The Director also attended a number of events during the year, taking the opportunity to engage with participants to promote the Association's Principles and the Service Standards Framework, including:

- BSI Consumer and Public Interest Network (CPIN) seminar on inclusivity and consumer vulnerability, London, 11 July;
- International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) 40th anniversary event and conference, Brussels, 1-3 October;
- IOI-Europe 'poldershop' on communications, The Hague, 12-13 November; and
- Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman 20th anniversary event, Gibraltar, 10 December.

Commemorative stamp  
marking 20th anniversary  
of the Gibraltar Public  
Services Ombudsman



## BSI Consumer and Public Interest Strategic Advisory Committee

The Director continues to attend meetings of the BSI Consumer and Public Interest Strategic Advisory Committee (CPISAC). The Committee provides advice to BSI on consumer and public interest policies and strategies. The Director's membership of the Committee provides the opportunity to keep abreast of developments in the sector and to promote the OA's activities.

## UK Administrative Justice Council

The Administrative Justice Council (AJC) is chaired by the UK Senior President of Tribunals, Sir Ernest Ryder, with an independent secretariat provided by JUSTICE. The AJC promotes fairness, accessibility, and efficiency in administrative justice. The Director's membership of the AJC Steering Group has provided the opportunity to ensure the experience and expertise of the ombudsman community is reflected in discussions and activities. There have been a



number of meetings of the Steering Group, the various Panels, and the full Council this year, with several projects being progressed around ombudsman reform, developing a 'polluter pays' mechanism for the tribunals system to encourage better decision making by government departments, and a 'familiarisation' programme between Ombudsman schemes and Tribunals to share understanding and best practice between the two systems.

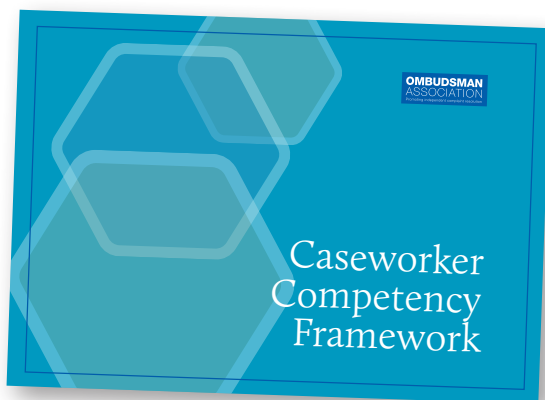
## Caseworker Competency Framework

The publication of the *Caseworker Competency Framework* in October was a significant step forward in developing the caseworker profession. In identifying the key capabilities that a caseworker needs to be successful it will help guide the way that caseworkers approach their role, including the way they make decisions and interact with others. As well as helping raise standards across the sector, adhering to the Framework will enable members to display to stakeholders that they meet industry best practice.

The project was led by Kate Wellington, following an open recruitment, and included

a public consultation on the draft in May/June and two workshops at the OA Conference, attended by 40 delegates. We received 20 written responses, including from government, consumer organisations and bodies within the jurisdiction of ombudsman schemes, as well as from our own members. The Working Group, which had wide representation from across the membership, considered the initial drafts and the consultation responses.

Members have been asked to consider how they will be utilising the Framework in their activities, such as in recruitment, training and appraisals, to share their experiences at the 2019 Conference. Further activity will take place in 2019 to support that work.



## 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.

2018 marked the 25th anniversary of the Association's founding in 1993. With the support of Ania Rolewska, an academic at Aberystwyth University, the Director produced a short 'history' of the Association that was published on the OA's website at the conference in Edinburgh in the form of an [interactive digital timeline](#).

Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/y657m5q2>

The Director undertook a significant programme of engagement with government officials, parliamentarians and other stakeholders during the year to promote the Association's Principles and membership criteria.



## Consumer Protection All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG)

The Director responded to the UK Parliament Consumer Protection APPG inquiry into 'The effectiveness of ombudsmen and the potential for reform', submitting a [written response](#) in June and giving oral evidence in July 2018. The Chair and the Director subsequently attended the launch of the [report on Ombudsman](#) in the Westminster Parliament on 30 January 2019. Whilst the APPG took a different approach to the Association in some recommendations, it was pleasing that the evidence we gave was quoted throughout their report and that they supported the OA's position that all businesses and services should be covered by an ombudsman.

## Housing / Property landscape

The Director continued to engage with various stakeholders in relation to the UK Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's (MHCLG) proposals to strengthen redress in the housing market, including meeting with civil servants in October and submitting a [response](#) to their consultation on social housing and the effective resolution of complaints, and with various other stakeholders in relation to proposals to create a New Homes Ombudsman. The UK Government published their report on [Strengthening Consumer Redress in the Housing Market](#) in January 2019, and the Director has continued to liaise with members on the proposed changes of relevance to them.

## UK Consumer Green Paper

The Director submitted a [response](#) to the UK Government's Consumer Green Paper in July, attended a workshop held by the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in September focused on the ADR aspects of the Green Paper, and met further with officials in 2019. Positively, the OA's work in both raising and setting standards through the Service Standards Framework and the Caseworker Competency Framework were warmly welcomed.



## Rail Ombudsman

November saw the culmination of the Association's successful influencing of the UK Government and the rail sector in the launch of a Rail Ombudsman scheme compliant with our membership criteria, in particular around independence and governance arrangements. A considerable amount of work was undertaken during the intensive engagement with officials from the Rail Delivery Group, Office for Rail & Road, and the Department for Transport, and it is good to see colleagues from the Rail Ombudsman taking an active role in the Association.

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**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.**

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## Interest Groups

The Association had six Interest Groups active during the year. The Groups 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 members and the Association 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.

The Chairs of the Interest Groups met in February 2019 to share what was on the agenda of each group, coordinate dates and topics, and help drive collaboration and learning in running an effective group for members. It was agreed to meet twice a year going forward in order to assist forward planning of agenda topics and the conference programme.

## Casework Interest Group

The Casework Interest Group met in May 2018 (at the office of the Scottish Legal Complaints Commissioner) and in November 2018 (at the office of the Motor Ombudsman). The Group continues to be extremely productive outside meetings, with two sub-groups established to take forward work on compliance and on effective recommendations, both of which will be presented at the Conference in May 2019. As well as discussing the work of the sub-groups, the Group also discussed proportionality, the use of mediation, and managing increasing caseloads. Michael Morgan from the Tenancy Deposit Scheme was elected Deputy Chair.

## Communications Interest Group

The Communications Interest Group met in April 2018 (at the Advertising Standards Authority) and in November 2018 (at the Office of the Ombudsman, Ireland). Following a proactive awareness raising drive a significant number of new members joined the Group during the year. At its meetings the Group discussed the use of plain language, surveying service users, reviewing the Members' Area of the website, and the publication and publicising of decisions. During the year Matt Wilson stepped down as Chair of the Group and was succeeded by Sally Brown from the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman. Paul Howe from the Office of the Ombudsman was elected Deputy Chair.

## First Contact Interest Group

The First Contact Interest Group met in June (at the office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman) and in December 2018 (at the office of the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman). Amongst other things, at its meetings the Group discussed GDPR, training, and embedding early dispute resolution. The Group also used the commitments in the Service Standards Framework to frame a discussion item on timeliness and will continue to take the same approach moving forward.

The Interest Groups facilitate communication between schemes and enable staff to share ideas and issues of concern and disseminate good practice

## Human Resources Interest Group

The HR Interest Group met in October 2018 (at the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner) and in March 2019 (at the offices of the Financial Ombudsman Service). At its meetings the Group discussed the Caseworker Competency Framework, the use of productivity and other targets, measures to support staff wellbeing, and the development of a cross-sectorial mentoring scheme.

## Legal Interest Group

The Legal Interest Group met in October 2018 at the offices of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, discussing updates on legislative changes and jurisprudence. Outside of meetings, the Group had finalised and launched the OA's Data Protection Guidance at the conference in May 2018 and undertook work on the Case Law Database during the year.

## Policy Network

The Policy Network met in May 2018 (at the offices of the Financial Ombudsman Service) and in November 2018 (at the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner). The Group discussed customer satisfaction surveys and benchmarking of them, how schemes gather insight, and the latest policy developments. The Network have also established the quarterly Horizon Scanning newsletter to share information on recent and upcoming developments.

## 2018 Conference 'Setting the standard'

The 2018 Ombudsman Association Conference, *Setting the Standard*, was held on 24-25 May at the Hilton Carlton in Edinburgh. The Conference was a significant success, with 130 delegates attending and plenary presentations on ethical behaviour, altruism, mental health, equality and diversity, and speaking truth to power. Workshops also took place on supporting staff, GDPR, quality assurance and proportionality in decision making. The full programme and presentations from all the plenary sessions and workshops can be found in the [Members' Area of the website](#).

David Whetham and  
Jonny Benjamin at the  
2018 Conference



## OA Newsletter

The online newsletter was published in June 2018 and April 2019. The newsletter is aimed at those who deal with casework, highlighting the latest activities of the Association's members and developments in the sector. The newsletter will be returning to its quarterly format in 2019/20.

Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/y2zov6f9>

## 2019 Conference

The 2019 Conference, *Driving Improvements: collaboration and peer learning*, will take place at the Belfast Hilton on 21-22 May 2019. Full details of the event can be found on the Association's website, where the presentations and notes of discussions will be made available.

Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/y5ez6zsg>

## Members' Area of the website

Following the departure from their roles of the two Communications Group members who were to take forward the review of the Members' Area of the OA website, two new members of the Group have volunteered to take the project forward. A survey of members will be undertaken in 2019.



## International engagement

In April 2018 the Director met with Helen Ford, from the New South Wales Energy & Water Ombudsman, to share experiences and provided introductions to several of our members. In June the Chair and the Director met with Michael Manthorpe, the Australian Commonwealth Ombudsman, during his visit to London to share experiences. Also in June, the Director gave a presentation to a high-level delegation from the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission who were on a study visit to learn more about ombudsman schemes. The Director promoted the concept and benefits of the ombudsman system and the high standard that our criteria sets.

In previous years the OA had a strong relationship with our sister organisation, the Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZOA). We have sought

to re-establish that relationship with the Director meeting his counterpart in September 2018 and the Chair having a teleconference with

the ANZOA Chair in March 2019, with a plan to continue to do so on a regular basis going forward.

In March 2019 the Chair spoke at an International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) seminar in Aosta, Italy, about the benefits of ombudsman networking with each other to share experiences and best practice and to set industry standards.



Nick Bennett at the Aosta seminar

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

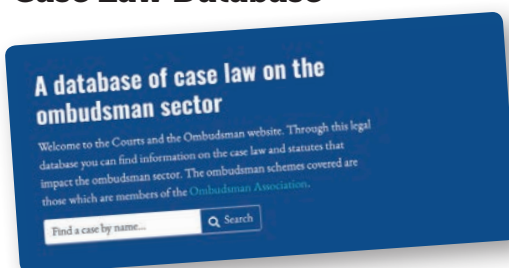
### OA Service Standards Framework

The Service Standards Framework Working Group, which has been meeting to share best practice and experience around implementing the Service Standards Framework, in particular in capturing, measuring and reporting on performance, gave a presentation at the OA Conference in May 2018 and also met in October 2018.

A survey was circulated to all members in December / January in order to gather information on how many members have already adopted the Framework (or intend to), how many had reported against it, and what activities they would find useful to review / benchmark their performance with other members.

Nineteen members responded to the survey; 14 Ombudsman members and five Complaint Handler Members. Those who responded were at varying stages of adopting / reporting against the Framework. The Working Group are considering the responses and what activities might be most effective going forward to support members to adopt and report against the Framework.

### Case Law Database



Work was undertaken on the construction and population of the Case Law Database during the year and it was launched in April 2019. The Database collates in one place all the case law about our members for the first time. The project was jointly delivered with Dr Richard Kirkham and made possible by funding from the Nuffield Foundation and has been extremely well received. As well as providing a useful resource for our members, academics, and the public, collating and making the information publicly available has helped to reinforce our members' commitment to transparency and accountability, as set out in the OA's criteria.

Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/y2kbmko6>

# FINANCES

## Finances 2017/18

Total income for 2017/18, including membership subscriptions and conference fees, was £174,649 (€198,506). Expenditure was £166,728 (€189,503). The Association's overall reserves at 31 March 2018 were £127,476 (€144,890).

(Note: figures shown in Euros are calculated at the exchange rate on 31 March 2018 of 1.136 Euros to the Pound Sterling.)

## Finances 2018/19

Total income for 2018/19, including membership subscriptions and conference fees, was £198,289 (€230,154). Expenditure was £207,006 (€240,271). The Association's overall reserves at 31 March 2019 were £118,760 (€137,762).

(Note: figures shown in Euros are calculated at the exchange rate on 31 March 2019 of 1.16 Euros to the Pound Sterling.)

# MEMBERSHIP

## Personnel changes

There have been several changes at 'office holder' level amongst the Association's members during 2018/19:

- Andrea Keenoy was appointed interim Housing Ombudsman
- Alan Mahon was appointed Ombudsman for the Defence Forces.
- Aled Roberts was appointed Welsh Language Commissioner.
- Patrick Sullivan was appointed a Commissioner at the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission
- Matt Vickers was appointed Chief Ombudsman at Ombudsman Services

## Changes in Membership

During the year we were pleased to welcome the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland back to the Association, and also the newly established Rail Ombudsman as a member. The Consumer Council (for Northern Ireland) and the Northern Ireland Certification Officer for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations both joined as Complaint Handler Members. We also welcomed three new Individual Associate Members during the year.

## Forthcoming changes to Membership

The Director has continued to engage with a number of organisations and stakeholders in the UK, Ireland and the British Crown Dependencies 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. The Director will continue to promote the benefits of Association membership when engaging with both existing and proposed dispute resolution organisations.

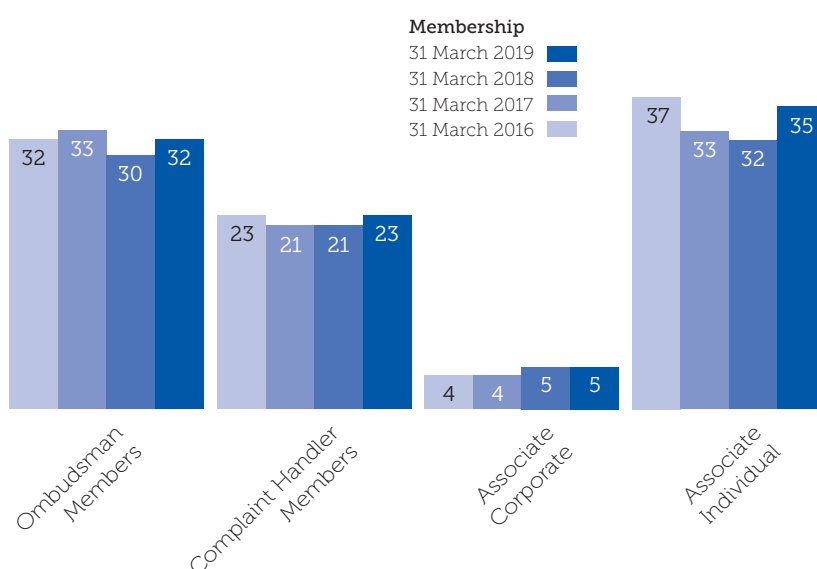
Unfortunately, three existing members have taken the decision not to renew their membership in 2019/20 due to budget reductions (the Independent Office for Police Conduct, the Consumer Council, and Queen Margaret University), and the role of the Independent Complaints Monitor for the Disclosure and Barring Service is being discontinued.

**Membership of the Association at 31 March 2019, as compared with a year ago, is as follows:**

Members	31 March 2018	31 March 2019
Ombudsman Members	30	32
Complaint Handler Members	21	23

### Associate Members

Corporate	5	5
Individual	32	35
Total	88	95



## Executive Committee

The role of the Executive Committee is to manage the Association on behalf of members. The membership of the Committee during 2018/19 was:

### Nick Bennett (Chair)

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

### Anthony Arter (Vice Chair)

Pensions Ombudsman Service

### Rob Behrens

Parliamentary & Health  
Service Ombudsman

### Kieran FitzGerald

Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission

### Kevin Grix

The Furniture Ombudsman

### Mick King

Local Government & Social  
Care Ombudsman

### Helen Megarry

The Adjudicator, HMRC &  
Valuation Office

### Doug Melville

Channel Islands Financial Ombudsman

### Rónán Ó Domhnaill

An Coimisinéir Teanga  
(Language Commissioner)

### Antony Townsend

Financial Regulators  
Complaints Commissioner

### Nicola Williams

Service Complaints Ombudsman for the  
Armed Forces

### Donal Galligan

Director, Ombudsman Association

## The Executive Committee met four times during 2018/19:

- 10 May 2018
- 27 September 2018
- 6 December 2018
- 28 February 2019

The minutes of the Executive Committee can be found in the [Members' Area of the website](#).

## 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 met five times during 2018/19 and were heavily focussed on the ongoing re-validation programme of existing Ombudsman Members, which is due to be completed by end 2019.

The Validation Committee have been taking into account the guidance from the Executive Committee both during the re-validation programme and when considering applications

from new members, in particular with regard to the Association's Guiding Principles to avoid fragmentation of redress schemes within a single industry.

The Validation Committee's membership during 2018/19 was:

### Chair

#### Anthony Arter

Ombudsman Association Vice-Chair

### Representing Ombudsman Members

#### Rob Behrens

Parliamentary & Health  
Service Ombudsman

### Independent Members

#### Margaret Doyle

#### Dr Chris Gill

#### Professor Mary Seneviratne

(until November 2018)

#### Kate Wellington

(from November 2018)

Mary Seneviratne, Emeritus Professor of Law at the Nottingham Law School, stepped down in November 2018 following over 12 years on the Committee. The Association are extremely grateful for the time and effort Mary put into her role over the years to ensure our membership criteria are robustly applied.

Kate Wellington, who is currently Head of Legal Operations at *Which?*, joined the Validation Committee in November 2018. Kate has extensive experience in dispute resolution, consumer redress and regulatory policy. As well as previous roles for the Civil Procedure Rule Committee and a leading international law firm, Kate recently led the OA's project to develop a Caseworker Competency Framework.

The other two current independent members of the Association's Validation Committee were re-appointed in September 2017 for staggered terms of two years (Margaret Doyle) and three years (Chris Gill) to ensure continuity. The Association is most grateful to the members of the Validation Committee for making themselves available as required.

"The OA is deeply grateful for the time and effort that Mary has put into her role on the Validation Committee over the past 12 years – we've been incredibly lucky that she has given her time freely to contribute to the protection of the role of ombudsman schemes"



From left to right: Anthony Arter, Mary Seneviratne, Donal Galligan and Margaret Doyle

## MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION AT 31 MARCH 2019

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

### COMPLAINT HANDLER MEMBERS

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

### CORPORATE ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

1. Brown Jacobson LLP, Solicitors
2. Gambling Commission
3. Resolver
4. Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
5. Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

**Ombudsman Association**

PO Box 343

Carshalton

SM5 9BX

T: 020 8642 6143

M: 07442 496024

**[donal.galligan@ombudsmanassociation.org](mailto:donal.galligan@ombudsmanassociation.org)**

[www.ombudsmanassociation.org](http://www.ombudsmanassociation.org)

@OmbudAssoc

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