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Our ref: SMH

Ask Susan Hudson
for:

Your ref:

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Date: 17 January 2011

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Ms Catherine Hunt
Deputy Clerk
Finance Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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Dear Ms Hunt

National Assembly for Wales - Finance Committee – 12 January 2011

I refer to your email on 14 January 2011 whereby you sought information detailing the increase in the number of cases closed by the Ombudsman's office this year compared to last year, as requested by the Finance Committee on 12 January 2011.

As Mr Tyndall informed the Committee, we have put measures in place over the past year and a half to increase efficiency. Whilst increased efficiency and effectiveness should be a continual goal for any organisation, we have introduced these changes mindful of the need to reduce the backlog of cases (i.e. the number of cases on hand at any one time) and to position ourselves to be able to deal with the anticipated increase in complaints to this office in forthcoming years.

I will now turn to the detail requested by the Finance Committee on cases closed. The position is as follows:

Number of cases closed this year (as at 31 December 2010)	1,517
Number of cases closed last year (as at 31 December 2009)	1,271

Thus, as you will see the rate of **case closures at end of December 2010 is up by 19%** compared to the position at end December 2009.

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In terms of the 'backlog' referred to by Mr Tyndall at the Finance Committee, the position in previous years (as reported in our Annual Reports) was as follows:

Caseload carried forward to 2009/10	585
Caseload carried forward to 2010/11	563

As of today, 17 January 2011, the caseload on hand is 305

You will see, therefore, that compared to the position at the beginning of April 2009 the **'backlog' has been cut by almost a half.**

This also has to be considered in the light of the considerable increase in enquiries received. The position here is:

Enquiries dealt with this year (as at 31 December 2010)	783
Enquiries dealt with last year (as at 31 December 2009)	541

Therefore, the rate of **enquiries** dealt with as at the end of December 2010 was **up by 45%** compared to the position as at the end of December 2009.

[Note: Enquiries are contacts made by people asking about the Ombudsman's service, or seeking advice about making a complaint about a public service or concerning another complaint handling organisation, and which do not result in a formal complaint being made to the Ombudsman.]

I hope that this information is satisfactorily comprehensive to answer the Committee's query.

Yours sincerely



Susan Hudson
Policy & Communications Manager