

**Response by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
to the Finance Committee's
consultation on the draft Public Audit (Amendment) (Wales) Bill**

I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Finance Committee's consultation on the draft Public Audit (Amendment) (Wales) Bill.

As Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW), I investigate complaints made by members of the public who have suffered hardship or injustice through maladministration or service failure on the part of a body in my jurisdiction, which essentially includes all organisations that deliver public services devolved to Wales. These include:

- local government (both county and community councils)
- the National Health Service (including GPs and dentists)
- registered social landlords (housing associations)
- the Welsh Government, together with its sponsored bodies.

I am also able to consider complaints about privately arranged or funded social care and palliative care services and, in certain specific circumstances, aspects of privately funded healthcare.

General comments

I broadly support the proposals outlined in the consultation document. Whilst it would not be appropriate for me to express an opinion on the governance arrangements of the Wales Audit Office (WAO), I certainly see the benefits of enabling the WAO to adopt a more flexible approach to fee charging and agreement work. I particularly welcome the proposals for changing the requirements placed on the Assembly by the current legislation to consult the First Minister on:

- the appointment of the Chair of the WAO;
- the remuneration arrangements for the Chair and the Auditor General for Wales (AGW); and
- the termination of the Chair's appointment.

I believe that the proposed change will enhance independence of the roles concerned and is appropriate given the close accountability relationship between the AGW and the National Assembly for Wales.

Closing remarks

I trust that you will find my comments useful. Should you wish to discuss any of my points further, please do not hesitate to contact Ania Rolewska, my Head of Policy (ania.rolewska@ombudsman.wales).



Nick Bennett
Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
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