

John Griffiths AM

Chair of the Equalities, Local Government and
Communities Committee

Dai Lloyd AM

Chair of the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

10 November 2016

Dear John and Dai,

**PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES: ESTIMATE OF INCOME AND
EXPENSES 2017-18**

On the 5 October 2016, the Finance Committee considered the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales's estimate for 2017-18.

During the evidence session, we learnt that the number of health complaints received by the Ombudsman continued to rise by 4 per cent last year. Of the 662 Local Health Boards/NHS Trust complaints in the past year:

- Five section 16 reports were upheld;
- 102 reports were upheld in whole or in part; and
- 113 complaints reached an early resolution.¹

The Committee welcomes the increase in the number of early resolutions and the positive impact this has had on reducing costs for the Ombudsman. We also recognise the need to ensure that a robust system is in place to hold public bodies in Wales to account. However, Members are concerned by the growing number of health complaints and the administrative burden this is placing on the NHS, given that the majority of complaints are not upheld.

¹ Record of Proceedings, 5 October 2016, Paragraphs 66-71



As you will be aware, the Finance Committee's responsibilities are limited to considering the Ombudsman's use of resources, or expenditure from the Welsh Consolidated Fund. Therefore, we wanted to draw our concerns to the attention of both of your Committees. We wondered whether this is an area that the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee can explore further when it considers the Ombudsman's Annual Report 2015-16, or the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee may wish to consider why there are increasing numbers of complaints within the Health Service in Wales

The Finance Committee will include the following conclusion in its report on the Ombudsman's estimate for 2017-18:

As a result of the Committee's role being limited to scrutinising the Ombudsman's estimate only, the Chair has written to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee and the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to raise its concerns regarding levels of health complaints.

The Finance Committee's report will be laid before the Assembly by 22 November 2016.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Thomas
Chair

