

15 February 2019

John Griffiths AM  
Chair of the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

Nick Ramsay AM  
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee

Dear John and Nick,

**THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (WALES) BILL**

As you will be aware the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill (the Bill) is currently passing through the Assembly. During Stage 2 proceedings, Members debated amendments to establish an independent review panel to report annually on the Ombudsman's performance to the Assembly and review any cases decided by the Ombudsman that are referred to it by an aggrieved person.

Establishing an independent review panel would be costly and represent a significant change in policy, as Ombudsmen have not historically been subject to review other than by the courts and by the legislatures to which they are accountable. For these reasons I was unable to support the amendments.

During the debate Members acknowledged the Ombudsman's direct accountability to the Assembly, but concerns were raised about the accountability arrangements and the need to consider how that oversight role might develop should the Bill be passed.

Given the work that our respective committees undertake in relation to accountability of the Ombudsman, I would like to meet to consider our current oversight arrangements and discuss how we move forward scrutinising the Ombudsman and his additional powers.

I would be grateful if your Clerks would liaise with the Committee Clerk (seneddfinance@assembly.wales 0300 200 6387) to arrange a suitable time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Llyr'.

Llyr Gruffydd AM, Chair

