

# PHSO

# business plan 2018-19

# Contents

Welcome from the Ombudsman and Chief Executive	Page 3
Part 1: From Strategy to Business Plan	Page 4
Part 2: Who we are	Page 7
Part 3: Business Plan key activities	Page 10

# Welcome from the Ombudsman and Chief Executive

Welcome to the business plan for 2018-19.

The plan sets out how we intend to deliver against the first year of the new three-year strategy. In the strategy we have three, new strategic objectives: to improve the quality of our service, whilst remaining independent, impartial and fair; to increase the transparency and impact of casework; and to work in partnership to improve public services, particularly front-line complaints handling.

This plan details the activities we will aim to deliver in 2018-19 to achieve these objectives and to fulfil our ambition of being an exemplary public services ombudsman.

In this first year of the strategy, we have been conscious that we must strike a balance between being ambitious and being realistic. We have therefore undertaken considerable planning to ensure that this plan is deliverable and activity is carefully phased in 2018-19 and beyond. We are confident that the activities in this plan set a solid foundation for future delivery of the strategy.



**Rob Behrens CBE**  
Ombudsman and Chair



**Amanda Campbell CBE**  
Chief Executive

Part 1

from strategy  
to business plan

## The Strategy

In 2018-19 we will launch the new three-year strategy. In developing this new strategy we have undertaken extensive research, which involved examining the context in which we are operating and better understanding the influences on PHSO. We have looked closely at what is working elsewhere in the ombudsman sector; received valuable input from a wide variety of people who use our service and organisations we investigate; and invested significant time in talking to staff to understand how they think we can improve and what our priorities should be.

When developing the strategy, we have been conscious that we must strike a balance between being ambitious and being realistic, drawing on strengths and opportunities, but identifying the challenges we face. We are already in the middle of completing an ambitious change programme that will improve our service and help us achieve the 24% spending review savings that we are committed to delivering by 2019-20. Our view is that the strategy, while bold, achieves this balance.

The strategic objectives are:

### Objective 1

**To improve the quality of our service, whilst remaining independent, impartial and fair**

We will introduce new ways of working that resolve cases more quickly, improving both the quality and timeliness of our decisions and the overall experience of people making complaints.

We will invest in our staff so they are equipped to deliver a professional casework service that remains sensitive to the complex, often tragic, issues that are brought to us.

### Objective 2

**To increase the transparency and impact of our casework**

We will publish more information about our casework online to help improve public services, while enabling complainants, the public and organisations we investigate to have confidence in what we do.

We will target our insight reports so that important lessons from our casework and systemic reviews contribute to raising standards in public services.

### Objective 3

**To work in partnership to improve public services, especially frontline complaint handling**

We will strengthen our relationships with other ombudsman services, and collaborate with others to improve how the public sector responds when things go wrong, from sharing good practice to offering training to complaint handlers.

Drawing insights from our casework, we will work with those best placed to apply the lessons learned to improve public services.

## From Strategy to Business Plan

For **objective 1**, the main focus in the first year of this strategy is to complete the work we have already started to improve our service. The business plan outlines the critical work we will continue on quality improvements in casework and to develop staff training, leading to internal accreditation. We will also formalise existing alternative / early dispute resolution approaches and research what tools we can use. Next year we will build on this by piloting new approaches.

We know that improving public services and the health system is not something we can deliver in isolation. We will need to work with complainants, organisations we investigate and the advocacy services that support complainants, to achieve the changes that are needed. For **objective 2** in 2018-19, we will begin to look at how we can publish more casework and we will start a project to look more closely at the enablers for greater transparency.

We want to be an exemplary ombudsman service - one that continually learns from the best of what others are doing, while contributing to improvements elsewhere across the public sector and the wider ombudsman sector. In 2018-19, in order to deliver **objective 3**, we have set out a number of activities that will help us collaborate more with other ombudsman services and strengthen external relationships.

Key enablers are essential to delivering our strategy, and we have set a number of **business critical** activities in 2018-19.

There is much to do to deliver this business plan, but we are confident that with the commitment of our staff, we are well placed to achieve what we have set out.

Part 2

who we are

## Who we are

We were set up by Parliament to provide an independent complaint handling service for complaints that have not been resolved by the NHS in England and UK government departments.

We share findings from casework to help Parliament scrutinise public service providers. We also share our findings more widely to help drive improvements in public services and complaint handling.

## Role

We combine the two statutory roles of Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (the Parliamentary Ombudsman) and Health Service Commissioner for England (Health Service Ombudsman). The powers are set out in the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 and the Health Service Commissioners Act 1993.

We are not part of government or the NHS in England. We are neither a regulator nor a consumer champion.

We are accountable to Parliament and our work is scrutinised by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee.

## Vision

To be an exemplary public services ombudsman by providing an independent, impartial and fair complaints resolution service, while using our casework to help raise standards and improve public services.

## Values

PHSO's values have been developed in close consultation with our staff so we all have a shared understanding about the type of ombudsman service we want to be.

The values are:

- **Independence** - we are independent from organisations we investigate, holding them to account for service failure or injustice.
- **Fairness** - we listen carefully to complainants and the organisations we investigate and we make impartial and fair decisions based on relevant evidence.
- **Excellence** - we learn from engagement with complainants and organisations we investigate to improve our accessibility, efficiency and effectiveness and the quality of our decisions.



- **Transparency** - we communicate with those using our service and then publish information about our findings, how we are performing, and how organisations we investigate have implemented our recommendations.

## The Board

While the Ombudsman in law is a corporation sole, we are governed by a unitary, decision-making board of executives and non-executives. Their purpose is to lead, provide stewardship and to preserve and build our reputation.

The Board is led by its Chair, Rob Behrens, CBE, who was appointed Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman on 6 April 2017. The chief executive officer, Amanda Campbell, and her senior management team are also members of the Board.

The non-executive Board members bring an external perspective to our corporate governance. They come from diverse professional backgrounds and bring a wide range of experiences.

Part 3

business plan

key activities

## What we need to deliver in 2018-19

The following pages set out the specific activities we need to undertake in 2018-19 in order to achieve the deliverables in the strategy. The activities are grouped against each strategic objective and have a relevant owner.

The focus of the plan is on transformation activity to facilitate the delivery of the strategy.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1** To improve the quality of our service, whilst remaining independent, impartial and fair

	Deliverable from the strategy	Activity Required to Succeed (Headline Description)	Accountable Officer	Timing of delivery		
				18/19	19/20	20/21
Improving our Service	1. Review and implement any necessary changes to operational policies	1.1.1 Implement a review of our approach to casework quality and the quality of PHSO reports (The activity is also linked to publication activities under strategic objective 2)	Director of Operations & Quality	(Q1 start) →		(Q4 finish)
		1.1.2 Commence and complete a review of existing processes to support the quality improvements from 1.1	Director of Operations & Quality	(Q2 start) →		(Q4 finish)
		1.2 Commence and implement a review of the Joint Working Team	Director of Operations & Quality	(Q1 start) (Q4 finish)	-	-
	2. Review how we draw upon clinical advice for resolving complaints, adapting our operating model and training as needed	2.1 Commence and implement a review of the Clinical Advice Team	Director of Operations & Quality	(Q1 start) →	(Q1 finish)	-
	3. Develop our Service Charter to broaden how we monitor and measure performance, improving our accountability by publishing clear information about the range of work we do and how well we are doing against agreed standards, which can be compared with other organisations	3.1 Identify and implement an approach to include feedback from organisations we investigate into the Service Charter	Director of Public Affairs & Insight	(Q2 start) (Q4 finish)	-	-
		3.2.1 Commence project to scope benchmarking of data with LGSCO and Ombudsman Association	Head of Business Planning	(Q1 start) →	(Q4 finish)	-
		3.2.2 Implement recommendations of benchmarking project	Head of Business Planning	-	(Q1 start) →	(Q4 finish)
	4. Identify early complaints resolution methods we can easily introduce and incorporate into staff training	4.1 Commence and complete research into early dispute resolution (EDR) approaches (including existing EDR, new EDR, and complex EDR & mediation)	Director of Public Affairs & Insight	(Q1 start) →	(Q4 finish)	-
		4.2 Formalise existing EDR into casework processes, including training, performance measurement and evaluation	Director of Operations & Quality	(Q2 start) (Q4 finish)	-	-
		4.3.1 Develop approaches to new EDR, including training for pilot, and performance measurement (linked to research in 4.1.1)	Director of Operations & Quality	(Q2 start) (Q3 finish)	-	-

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	Deliverable from the strategy	Activity Required to Succeed (Headline Description)	Accountable Officer	Timing of delivery		
				18/19	19/20	20/21
		4.3.2 Commence and complete pilot on new EDR approaches, including evaluation	Director of Operations & Quality	(Q4 start)	→ (Q4 finish)	-
	5. Begin scoping how we will pilot and evaluate mediation and other more complex early resolution methods, in consultation with our stakeholders.  Pilot the use of mediation and other early resolution methods.  Evaluate mediation and other dispute resolution pilots, implementing the most successful as part of our new 'Ombudsman toolbox'	5.1.1 Research and select an approach to complex EDR and mediation, including training for pilot, performance measurement (linked to research in 4.1.1)  5.1.2 Commence and complete pilot on 'complex EDR and mediation', including evaluation	Director of Public Affairs & Insight  Director of Operations & Quality	-  -	✓  ✓	-  ✓
	6. Complete the delivery of our new operating model and initial staff training	6.1.1 Continue Phase 2 professional transformation training  6.1.2 Commence and implement in-house accreditation	Director of Legal & Governance  Director of Legal & Governance	(Q1 start) (Q3 finish)  (Q4 start)	-  → (Q4 finish)	-  -
Accreditation	7. Build on staff training programme by taking steps towards acquiring professional accreditation.  Begin accreditation of caseworkers.  Build the approach from our pilots into our training and accreditation programme, so staff are fully equipped to use these methods	7.1.1 Commence and complete project with external partner on approach to externally validated accreditation  7.1.2 Implement external accreditation of caseworkers	Director of Legal & Governance  Director of Legal & Governance	-  -	✓  ✓	-  ✓

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2 To increase the transparency and impact of our casework**

	Deliverable from our strategy	Activity Required to Succeed (Headline Description)	Accountable Officer	Timing of delivery		
				18/19	19/20	20/21
Transparency	1. Start publishing quarterly data about the health complaints we receive.  Publish the first annual report on the complaints we receive about the health system, highlighting trends and key insights as we already do for parliamentary cases	1.1.1 Commence and complete project scoping approach to publication of health data	Head of Public Affairs & Insight	(Q1 start) (Q3 finish)	-	-
		1.1.2 Identify datasets and format and begin publication	Head of Public Affairs & Insight	(Q1 start) (Q4 finish)	-	-
		1.1.3 Publish annual report according to agreed approach	Head of Public Affairs & Insight	-	✓	✓
	2. Develop an approach to enable us to publish more information about our findings and the level of compliance with our recommendations	2.1 Commence and implement an approach to measuring compliance with our recommendations	Director of Public Affairs & Insight	(Q1 start) → (Q4 finish)	-	-
	3. Scope a project for publishing the vast majority of our casework online, as well as exploring what other material we should publish	3.1.1 Commence and complete scoping of the parameters and ambition of publication	Director of Public Affairs & Insight	(Q2 start) (Q4 finish)	-	-
		3.1.2 Deliver an online solution that facilitates publishing much more of our casework	Director of Public Affairs & Insight	-	✓	-
		3.1.3 Commence publishing some of our casework online	Director of Public Affairs & Insight	-	✓	-
		3.1.4 Complete our plans to publish much more of our closed casework decisions online, drawing out insights for the organisations we investigate	Director of Public Affairs & Insight	-	-	✓
		3.2 Continue to examine our casework to publish relevant Insight that helps improve public services	Director of Public Affairs & Insight	(Q1 start)		
	4. Build on our training programme to improve the quality of our investigation reports	See Objective 1 (1.1.1)	Director of Operations & Quality	See Obj 1 1.1.1	See Obj 1 1.1.1	See Obj 1 1.1.1

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2** To increase the transparency and impact of our casework

	Deliverable from our strategy	Activity Required to Succeed (Headline Description)	Accountable Officer	Timing of delivery		
				18/19	19/20	20/21
Policy	5. Publish a transparent set of principles and case studies about the use of financial remedy and work with national organisations to explore how we can better explain who we are and what we do to organisations we investigate	5.1.1 Finalise financial remedy guidance	Director of Legal & Governance	(Q1 start) (Q2 finish)	-	-
		5.1.2 Establish joint working with LGSCO and Ombudsman community on the principles of financial remedy with ombudsman schemes	Director of Operations & Quality	(Q2 start) (Q4 finish)	-	-
Feedback	6. Start a review that explores new ways to get feedback from those involved in our casework and begin introducing the most effective methods we identify	6.1 Develop external engagement events programme (including Ombudsman’s annual open meetings, podcast series, Ombudsman association, and a wider thought leadership campaign)	Director of Comms	(Q1 start)		→

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 To work in partnership to improve public services, especially front-line complaint handling**

	Deliverable from our strategy	Activity Required to Succeed (Headline Description)	Accountable Officer	Timing of delivery		
				18/19	19/20	20/21
Partnership working	1. Review the challenges to casework posed by the structural changes and new organisational arrangements being introduced across the health and social care sectors, working with LGSCO, as needed	1.1 Provide response to any pre-legislative scrutiny Committee convened on Health Service Safety Investigation Bill and share PHSO thinking on impact of changes	Director of Legal & Governance	✓ (As required)	✓	-
		1.2 Develop and finalise initial Memorandum of Understanding with non-statutory Health Service Investigation Branch	Director of Legal & Governance	(Q1 start) (Q2 finish)	-	-
	2. Explore how we can share the experiences we have had delivering our Strategy 2018-21 with ombudsmen colleagues and invite them to share their views on what we should include in our next strategy	2.1.1 Consult with Ombudsman through existing channels on approach and recommend options	Director of Public Affairs & Insight	-	-	✓
		2.1.2 Deliver option identified for engagement.	Director of Public Affairs & Insight	-	-	✓
Supporting complaints handling	3. Build on and strengthen existing external relationships, while developing new strategic partnerships with the shared aim of setting common standards and expectations for resolving complaints, starting with the NHS, identifying tools and training opportunities to help meet these standards	3.1 Scope and develop initial partnership plan that reflects options for different levels of investment.	Director of Public Affairs & Insight	✓	-	-
		3.2 Commence and implement a review of External Liaison Team to assess effectiveness of driving improvements in complaints handling	Assistant Director of Customer Services	(Q2 start) (Q3 finish)	-	-
		3.3 Consider options for internships for university students.	Director of HR	(Q3 start) (Q3 finish)	-	-
	4. Work with our partners to develop and publish a number of new tools and training options for improving frontline complaints handling across the public sector, consulting with target audiences and piloting different delivery methods to test what works	4.1.1 Scope short and long term options for tools and other products that we can usefully develop in partnership	Director of Public Affairs & Insight	(Q2 start) (Q3 finish)	-	-
4.1.2 Choose with partners the tools and training material where we think this is most needed		Director of Public Affairs & Insight	-	✓	-	



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	Deliverable from our strategy	Activity Required to Succeed (Headline Description)	Accountable Officer	Timing of delivery		
				18/19	19/20	20/21
		4.1.3 Complete the roll out of those tools and training approaches we find work best, and re-launch a new version of 'My expectations' to reflect any changes we think are needed as part of this process, ensuring the revised guidance is co-produced with both the people who use our service and our partners	Director of Public Affairs & Insight	-	-	✓

**BUSINESS CRITICAL ENABLERS** Setting the foundations for an exemplary ombudsman service

	Deliverable from our strategy	Activity Required to Succeed (Headline Description)	Accountable Officer	Timing of delivery		
				18/19	19/20	20/21
People	1. Create an integrated approach to learning and development	1.1 Develop a formal three-year Learning and Development Plan for the whole organisation based on skills required to deliver the strategy	Learning & Development Manager	(Q2 start) (Q4 finish)	-	-
		1.2 Develop and deliver a leadership and management training programme	Learning & Development Manager	(Q2 start) → (Q4 finish)	-	-
	2. Create a leading and supportive HR service	2.1 Complete the HR Service review (including system requirements), implement recommendations and evaluate	Director of HR	(Q1 start) → (Q4 finish)	-	-
		2.2 Review HR policy and procedures against best practice	Director of HR	(Q2 start) (Q4 finish)	-	-
		2.3 Complete review of pay and reward, agree new pay and reward policy, implement recommendations and evaluate	Director of HR	(Q3 start) → (Q4 finish)	-	-
		2.4 Complete review on approach to appraisal, and evaluate	Director of HR	(Q2 start) → (Q4 finish)	-	-
		2.5 Implement the senior structure review and evaluate	Director of HR	(Q1 start) → (Q1 finish)	-	-
		2.6.1 Develop behaviours framework supporting our values (linked to the competency framework and appraisals process)	Director of HR	(Q1 start) → (Q1 finish)	-	-
		2.6.2 Embed new values	Director of HR / Director of Comms	(Q1 start) → (Q1 finish)	-	-
		2.7 Commence and complete EDI review	Director of HR	(Q1 start) (Q3 finish)	-	-

**BUSINESS CRITICAL ENABLERS** Setting the foundations for an exemplary ombudsman service

	Deliverable from our strategy	Activity Required to Succeed (Headline Description)	Accountable Officer	Timing of delivery		
				18/19	19/20	20/21
Technology	3. Develop an exemplary IT service to support our strategic objectives ensuring we have the right tools	3.1.1 Commence the IT Service review	Head of ICT	(Q1 start) (Q3 finish)	-	-
		3.1.2 Implement recommendations of IT Service review	Head of ICT	(Q4 start) → (Q4 finish)	-	-
		3.2.1 Develop a new IT and Digital Strategy	Head of ICT / Director of Comms	(Q1 start) (Q3 finish)	-	-
		3.2.2 Implement recommendations of the Strategy (and identify Capital Plan)	Head of ICT / Director of Comms	-	✓	✓
		3.3 Deliver IT accessibility improvements for staff	Head of ICT	(Q1 start) (Q4 finish)	-	-
		3.4 Review home and mobile working	Director of HR	(Q2 start) → (Q4 finish)	-	-
		3.5 Commence and complete approach to Dynamics 365	Head of ICT / Director of Comms	(Q1 start) (Q4 finish)	-	-
Assurance	4. Ensure robust assurance of our data	4.1 Continue to deliver GDPR action to ensure compliance	Head of Information Assurance	(Q1 start) → (Q4 finish)	-	-
	5. Develop greater transparency of the information we hold	5.1 Commence and complete publication scheme, considering scope of organisational transparency	Head of Information Assurance	(Q1 start) (Q4 finish)	-	-

**BUSINESS CRITICAL ENABLERS** Setting the foundations for an exemplary ombudsman service

	Deliverable from our strategy	Activity Required to Succeed (Headline Description)	Accountable Officer	Timing of delivery		
				18/19	19/20	20/21
		5.2 Commence work with NHS Digital to consider options for connecting to the Health and Social Care network to improve information security and casework efficiency	Head of Information Assurance	(Q2 start) (Q3 finish)	-	-
	6. Demonstrate an improved approach to monitoring and assessing value for money	6.1.1 Implement quick win value for money (vfm) metrics	Director of Finance	(Q2 start) → (Q3 finish)	-	-
		6.1.2 Commence and complete research into new approach to vfm	Director of Finance	(Q4 start) → (Q4 finish)	-	-
		6.1.3 Implement new approach to vfm	Director of Finance	-	✓	-
Accommodation	7. Provide an effective working environment	7.1.1 Commence and complete a review of London accommodation options working with LGSCO, and implement recommendations	Head of ICT & Accommodation	(Q2 start) (Q4 finish)	-	-
TOM	8. Ensure target operating model is fit for purpose following changes relating to delivery of the strategy	8.1 A Target Operating Model review will be undertaken at an appropriate time following the delivery of key pieces of activity in the strategy which propose impact on the Service Model	Director of Operations & Quality	(Q4 start) → (Q3 finish)	-	-