The constitutional position of PHSO

“...to humanise the state bureaucracy”
## How should it work?

### For the public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to complaints system</th>
<th>An impartial final decision on complaints</th>
<th>Public services learning from complaints</th>
<th>Improvements to the complaints system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and confidence about how &amp; where to complain</td>
<td>A fair and impartial final decision on their complaint</td>
<td>Trust that their complaint will make a difference &amp; confidence that systemic issues will be put right</td>
<td>A complaints system that is straight forward and easy to access</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### For Parliament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Better access to Ombudsman for constituents</th>
<th>Support in holding government and public services to account</th>
<th>Evidence of systemic problems in public service delivery with which to hold government to account</th>
<th>Better insight into a complex and hard-to-navigate complaints system for citizens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More information about areas of public dissatisfaction &amp; concern about public services</td>
<td>Confidence that learning is feeding service improvements</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unmet need: Access to the complaints system

• Strong evidence of unmet need

18% of public service users have a reason to complain

40% won’t
Unmet need: An impartial, final decision

- Those who do complain encounter obstacles

- Not listened to (36%)
- “I’m hitting my head against a brick wall”
- Feel that they are not taken seriously (46%)
- Not kept up to date (57%)
- Nearly half (45%) not told about the Ombudsman

“How many times will I have to explain this?”
Unmet need: Learning and improvements

- Lack of trust that complaints will make a difference
- 64% do not expect any change as a result of their complaint.

“The system was not set up with the public in mind”

“I feel like the little man against the system”

“Nothing changes”
A new strategy

Working with others to deliver more impact for more people
Our strategic aims 2013-2018

More impact for more people

1. Make it easier for people to find and use our service
2. Help more people by investigating more complaints and provide an excellent service for our customers
3. Work with others to use what we learn from complaints to help make public services better
4. Lead the way to make the complaints system better

5. Develop our organisation So that it delivers these aims efficiently and effectively
An agenda for wider change

• 2000 - Collcutt Review
• 2005 - NAO report
• 2011 - Law Commission
• 2011 - Open Public Services White Paper
• 2012 - Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council
• 2013 - Public Administration Select Committee
“...the MP filter can no longer be sustained in an era of joined up government and we strongly recommend it is abolished”

Collcutt Review, 2000
Ombudsman and administrative justice

- Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
- Local Government Ombudsman
- Housing Ombudsman
- Care Quality Commission
- Mental Health
- Independent Police Complaints Commission
- Tribunals
- Regulators
- Inspectorates
- Internal reviewers
“..[the aim of the Ombudsman is] to humanise the administration and to improve relations between Westminster on one hand and the individual citizen.”

Harold Wilson, Prime Minister, 1964
The Ombudsman’s Mandate

Only 7 Ombudsman in Europe without own initiative investigations

UKBA

Better links to advice and advocacy sector

Private service users?

ATOS
A blueprint for reform

Access

• Relaxation of the need for complaints to be made in writing
• Relaxation of the need for complaints to the Parliamentary Ombudsman to be made exclusively by MP referral

Parliamentary Engagement

• Automatic grant of debating time in the House of Commons for Ombudsman reports that disclose un-remedied injustice
• Designation of the Ombudsman/PASC/Health Committee relationship as collaborative
• Creation of a separate scrutiny mechanism to ensure the Ombudsman’s accountability to Parliament
A blueprint for reform

Ombudsman and the administrative justice system

• Harmonisation of the Ombudsman system in the short-term

Ombudsman’s mandate

• Extension of the Ombudsman’s mandate to investigate complaints about the provision of privately funded services

• The grant of an express power to the Ombudsman to investigate suspected maladministration and/or service failure in the public interest without receipt of a formal complaint
Your views

What reform is needed to create an Ombudsman system fit for 21st century Britain?

What recommendations do you think PASC should be making in the Autumn?

Email: julie.mellor@ombudsman.org.uk