

To the Members of the
International Ombudsman Institute (IOI)

March 2020

Dear Members,

Can we start by wishing you all well. We hope that those of you who have contracted the virus recover quickly, and that you, your loved ones and your staff stay well.

These are unprecedented times and our countries are facing challenges on a scale we could scarcely have imagined. Colleagues across the globe have been praising the efforts of those public services working in the front-line of tackling COVID19. Staff from many of our offices have been volunteering to work alongside healthcare and other services to offer assistance to our communities as we seek to support those who are ill and to help prevent the spread of the virus.

Staff in our offices have shown great determination and ingenuity in ensuring that our services continue to be available through remote working. At the same time, many Offices have been quick to reassure front-line service providers that we understand the challenges they are facing and accept that dealing with complaints must take a lower order of priority. Indeed, some Offices have already stopped investigating complaints concerning healthcare and other hard pressed services such as social security.

At the same time, it is clear that some of the people who use our services are particularly vulnerable in the current crisis. These include homeless people, asylum seekers and refugees, older people in care homes, and prisoners, to name but a few. It is important that our Offices continue to ensure that they too are receiving all of the additional support they will need to remain well, to be able to isolate if necessary or to recover.

Our conference theme is "Giving Voice to the Voiceless" and this has become more apposite than ever. It was of course disappointing to have to seek alternative dates, but in the current crisis, it pales into insignificance.

We look forward to being able to meet with you all again in the hopefully not too distant future. In the meantime, stay safe and well

Yours sincerely,



Peter Tyndall
IOI President



Werner Amon
IOI Secretary General