

Quarterly Bulletin

July 2018

Welcome to my second Quarterly Bulletin. Since the last Bulletin I have published a number of investigation reports in the public interest. These include reports on complaints about the treatment provided by a GP to a patient with breast cancer, the way a Council dealt with a planning application for a wind turbine, and the care and treatment of patients within two Health Trusts. This edition of the Bulletin also provides a further update on the important work within my Office to prepare for our first 'own initiative' investigations and our ongoing research project to explore issues in public sector complaints handling.

Marie Anderson, Ombudsman

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Own Initiative investigations

The establishment of the new 'own initiative' power is designed to help the Ombudsman identify and address systemic failures which have the potential to affect the wider public. It aims to ensure that significant failings can be addressed across sectors as a whole. The Office has now published the overarching criteria to be used when selecting an issue for an own initiative investigation.



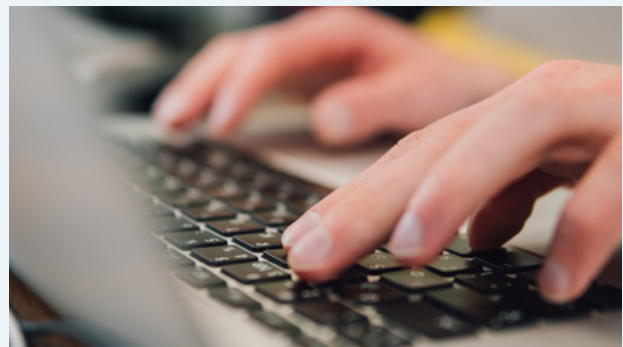
Ombudsman & Children's Commissioner sign co-operation agreement

Ombudsman Marie Anderson and Children's Commissioner Koulla Yiasouma have signed a Memorandum of Understanding which will see their organisations sharing appropriate information, maintaining effective channels of communication and generally co-operating together in order to inform & improve the work of their respective offices.



Complaint about GP not upheld

An Ombudsman investigation has found that a GP provided appropriate care and treatment to a patient who was concerned about a lump in her breast. After taking independent professional advice the Ombudsman concluded that the GP 'followed good practice and relevant clinical standards' during the patient's breast cancer examinations.



Research into complaints handling

A number of focus groups have been held recently to explore in greater detail the complaints handling experiences of public sector authorities. The sessions were extremely positive, with excellent feedback and engagement from complaints handling staff in the education, health, housing, government departments and local council sectors.



Patient placed on surgery waiting list did not meet Trust's criteria for grading as 'urgent'

Investigation finds patient did not suffer an injustice, but Ombudsman recommends Trust adheres to existing orthopaedic guidelines and protocol so as not to disadvantage others with similar clinical needs.



Application for wind turbine 'not processed in appropriate manner' by Council

The Ombudsman has found that a Council provided a planning applicant with misleading and inaccurate information about his application, and has made a series of recommendations for remedy.



Complaint about the care of a patient by two Health and Social Care Trusts

An investigation into a complaint from a member of the public about the care & treatment provided to her late husband by three hospitals in the Belfast and South Eastern areas has led to a number of recommendations being made to the Trusts.



Consultant provided appropriate care to patient following workplace accident

The Ombudsman has concluded that a hospital pain management consultant gave a patient proper care following an accident at work in which he was electrocuted.

Signposting to the Ombudsman – a guide for public authorities

All listed authorities within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction have a statutory obligation to signpost complainants to the Ombudsman's office where the listed authority's complaints handling procedure is exhausted. This leaflet explains to authorities how this signposting letter can be worded.