



## Information pack for candidates

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## About the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)

PHSO is an independent national ombudsman service. We make final decisions on complaints that have not been resolved by the NHS in England, UK government departments and some other public organisations. We do this fairly and without taking sides. Our service is free.

We look into complaints where an individual or group believes there has been injustice or hardship because an organisation has not acted properly or fairly, or has provided a poor service, and not put things right.

Our work rights individual wrongs and it also has a wider impact. Our recommendations lead to organisations making changes so that others have a more positive experience

As well as investigating complaints, PHSO shares the findings from casework to help drive improvements in public services. Our legislation enables us to lay reports in Parliament - to help it hold the organisations providing those services to account. We also share findings more widely to help improve the organisations we investigate:

- Over the last three years we have published policy reports covering topics as wide as [X-rays and scans](#), [continuing healthcare](#) and [NHS complaint handling](#). These highlight recurring failings and make recommendations to address them.
- PHSO publishes summaries of individual cases where failings are identified. A single complaint can result in widespread improvements. In recent years, PHSO published cases from individual complainants affected by the Windrush scandal. These cases highlight the devastating impact that failings can have on individuals.
- PHSO also publishes findings from systemic investigations. In July 2021, PHSO published the first-stage findings of its [investigation into the communication of changes to women's State Pension age](#).

## Vision and values

Our vision is to be an exemplary public services ombudsman by providing an independent, impartial, and fair complaints resolution service, while using casework to help raise standards and improve public services. Our values are:

**Independence:** PHSO is independent from organisations we investigate, holding them to account for service failure

**Fairness:** We listen carefully to complainants and the organisations we investigate and make impartial and fair decision based on relevant evidence

**Excellence:** PHSO learns from engagement with complainants and organisations investigated to improve 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 have investigated have implemented our recommendations.

# Competencies

## Engaging people

### **Communicating effectively**

Communicates ideas and information effectively, both orally and in writing. Uses language and a style of communication that is appropriate to the situation and people concerned.

### **Team working, diversity and inclusion**

Develops strong working relationships inside and outside the team to achieve common goals. Breaks down barriers between groups and involves others in discussions and decisions. Creates an inclusive environment, one from which all staff can benefit, contribute, and feel valued.

### **Customer focus**

Provides excellent services to meet internal and external customer needs. Understands the needs and perspective of the customer and looks for ways to adopt an approach during each stage of the process that is tailored and sensitive to their case or circumstance.

## Organisational and external sensitivity

### **Continuous improvement**

Continually looks to improve skills, knowledge, and ways of working and seeking ways to improve efficiency and value.

### **Managing change**

Continues to perform an acceptable standard during times of change. Maintains awareness of a constantly changing business environment and shows a desire to listen and be part of new ideas.

### **Organisational awareness**

Understands the political landscape in which PHSO operates and some of the challenges we face in our aim to deliver 'more impact for more people'.

## Delivering results

### **Negotiating and influencing**

Sells the benefits of the position they are proposing and negotiates to find solutions that everyone will accept.

### **Planning and quality focus**

Plan's activities to make sure resources are used effectively while making sure quality is not compromised.

### **Creative and analytical thinking**

Is able to analyse situations, diagnose problems, establish, and evaluate alternative courses of action and produce practical and acceptable solutions. Continually seeks out ways of improving processes by problem solving to identify the root cause before making a decision.

## Leadership

### **Maximising potential**

Actively encourages and supports the development of self and others. Motivates and empowers others to achieve organisational goals. Creates an environment in which people take ownership of their own career progression, taking remedial action where needed while acknowledging and celebrating success.

### **Decision making**

Looks at issues with a broad view to achieve the organisations goals. Thinks ahead and prepares for the future.

### **Strategic vision and thinking**

Using and understanding the bigger picture to uncover potential challenges and opportunities for the long term and turning these into a compelling vision for action.

# Application and selection process

## How to apply

We very much hope you will consider applying for this role. To make an application please 'click' on the advertised job and apply now by submitting your CV. Please note for some positions you may also be asked to complete a personal statement as part of your application - this will be detailed in the advert.

Interviews and assessments usually take place within two weeks of closing date.

## Selection

Your CV will be considered and shortlisted against the knowledge, skills and experience required for the role as detailed in the job description and person specification.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to a competency and values-based interview and assessment

Further details regarding any assessments at interview stage will be provided to shortlisted candidates.

Please note, we do not provide feedback on applications at longlisting or shortlisting stage.

## Adjustments to the selection process

If you need any adjustments to enable you to complete the selection process, please ensure that you state this in the disability section on the application form.

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments where possible.

## Pre-employment checks

All offers of employment are conditional and subject to our pre-employment checks, including security clearance, DBS check, references, and a health assessment for fitness to work. If necessary, you may need to undertake a medical assessment.

## Data protection

We will record the information provided in your application for the purposes of recruitment and selection monitoring. We will process the information for the purposes of HR administration and statistical evaluation only.

## Benefits

At PHSO our motto is 'live well, work well' and to support this we offer a generous range of benefits. This includes:

- Civil Service Pension scheme (minimum 26.6% employer's contribution)
- Generous basic holiday entitlement of 30 days. We also offer an additional 2.5 extra-statutory holiday on top of the normal public and bank holidays
- Flexitime
- 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme including free counselling, bereavement support and health advice
- Premium access to Headspace mindfulness and wellbeing app

## Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Equality, diversity, and inclusion are fundamental to the way we work. We are committed to maintaining a culture where our employees can be themselves at work and perform at their best. We understand that it is essential that our employees can represent and understand the diverse community we serve.

To do this we recognise the importance of having a workforce made up of individuals with their own unique identities at all levels and we actively encourage applications from individuals with diverse identities such as people who are LGBTQI+, from Black, Asian, Mixed Ethnicity and any Other Ethnic Group, with a disability, impairment, learning difference or long-standing condition, with caring responsibilities or any other self-identified diversity.

In consultation with employees, we set ourselves objectives in this area which are reported to our Diversity Steering Group and Board. Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2020 - 2024 [\[link to website\]](#) is available on our website so that we are publicly transparent and can be held to account.

Our employee led networks provide opportunities for staff to participate and contribute to making PHSO an inclusive organisation. Participation is actively encouraged and supported. Our current staff networks are:

**Break the Stigma** - raising awareness of the importance of safeguarding mental health and wellbeing of staff in the workplace. It engenders an open culture to talk about mental health issues and is supported by several mental health first aiders.

**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Forum** - provides peer support for colleagues to raise issues, concerns, and ideas in relation to equality, diversity, and inclusion. It also promotes an open and inclusive culture where staff can celebrate diversity.

**Pride at PHSO** - promotes and represents the interests of LGBT+ staff employed at PHSO, with participating open to both LGBT+ staff and allies. The group identifies and shares good practice, raises awareness, and provides support, mentoring and coaching to LGBT+ staff.

**Wellbeing Ambassadors** - help us to embed wellbeing activity across the organisation, supporting colleagues to use and understand the tools and resources available in our 'Live Well, Work Well' programme.

## Disability Confident Scheme

We are a Disability Confident organisation playing a role in changing attitudes for the better. We make sure that disabled people and people with long term health conditions can fulfil their potential in the workplace.

Further information on the Disability Confident scheme and its requirements of employers can be found [here](#). Any disabled applicant who applies under the scheme and who meets the minimum selection criteria will automatically progress to the next stage of the recruitment process, which may be an assessment or interview.

## Outside activities

Please consider the following information before submitting your application.

PHSO employees are crown servants and as such they may not take part in any activity that would in any way:

- impair the effectiveness of their work for the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
- engage in any occupation that may conflict with the interests of this Office or be inconsistent with their official position.

Subject to these conditions, work of a minor or short-term nature (for example, vacation or after-hours work) will normally be allowed, provided employees seek prior permission.

Employees are also subject to certain political restrictions. They are prohibited from:

- standing as a candidate in Parliamentary elections
- standing for local authority elections
- canvassing on behalf of electoral candidates.

They must seek permission from the Ombudsman to express views on matters of political controversy in public speeches or publications and this may be refused.

Employees are also required to declare involvement in any activity where they have an actual or potential conflict of interests.