



Parliamentary  
and Health Service  
Ombudsman



Non-Executive  
Board Member



# Welcome

Dear Applicant

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) provides a national service for citizens with unresolved complaints and with nowhere else to go.

At the end of our three-year strategic plan, we are on the way to becoming an exemplary Ombudsman service clear in our values of Independence, Fairness, Excellence and Transparency and with achievements in resolving challenging cases, producing influential policy reports and restoring the trust of stakeholders.

However, there is much to be done. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic we need to continue to raise the profile of the service and find more effective ways of reaching vulnerable, disadvantaged communities. We need to add to the diversity and inclusiveness of our teams at all levels of operation and oversight.

This is a challenging and interesting time to join the organisation. We are looking for a new Board member to join a well-functioning team, committed to a collaborative approach and with necessary experience to help shape strategic thinking as we navigate these unprecedented circumstances and move towards a new three-year strategic plan.

Wherever you are now, you will be assured of a warm welcome to an effective and committed group.



**Rob Behrens**  
Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman



# About the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

PHSO makes final decisions on complaints that have not been resolved by UK government departments and the NHS in England, and some other UK public organisations. This is done independently and impartially.

We are an independent national ombudsman service, holding public bodies to account. PHSO is not part of government, the NHS in England or a regulator. We are neither a consumer champion nor an advocacy service. A free service for everyone PHSO looks 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.

We normally expect people to complain to the organisation first so it has a chance to put things right. If an individual believes there is still a dispute about the complaint after an organisation has responded, they can ask PHSO to look into the complaint. We share findings from casework with Parliament to help it hold organisations that provide public services to account, and these findings are shared more widely to help others promote improvements in public services.

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

## **Strategy 2018-21: Delivering an exemplary ombudsman service**

At the beginning of 2018-19, we launched a new three-year corporate strategy which sets out our vision to be an exemplary public services ombudsman **Our strategy 2018-21 | Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)**

We developed the strategy with input from people who use our service as well as the organisations we investigate and work with. We looked closely at what is working elsewhere in the ombudsman sector and talked to staff to understand what our priorities should be and how we can improve.

The strategy sets out three objectives and the activity planned in each year to deliver them. In the first 12 months of the strategy, we have achieved much of what we set out to do.

### **Objective 1: To improve the quality of our service, while remaining independent, impartial and fair**

Our aim is to deliver a consistent, high quality, ombudsman service that makes fair, final decisions for both complainants and the organisations we investigate.

### **Objective 2: To increase the transparency and impact of our casework**

Being an exemplary ombudsman service means holding ourselves accountable to the same high standards we hold others to.

### **Objective 3: To work in partnership to improve public services, especially frontline complaint handling**

Helping to improve public services is central to what we do and we are committed to working with strategic partners and organisations we investigate to improve how the public sector responds when things go wrong, from sharing good practice to developing training material for frontline complaint handlers.



# 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. It is also essential that our employees represent and understand the diverse community we serve.

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 have the opportunities to fulfil their potential in the workplace.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's purpose is to make final decisions on complaints that have not been resolved by the NHS in England, UK government departments and other public organisations. We do this fairly and without taking sides.

We know that large sections of our communities do not bring complaints to us, despite suffering failings and injustices when using public services. We need to develop our knowledge and understanding of why there are individuals who are unable to or reluctant to bring a complaint to us. Where people do bring complaints, we must make sure that our service is adaptable to meet their needs so that they can fully engage with us.

Creating and maintaining an equal, diverse and inclusive Ombudsman service is vital for individuals who work for us. It is also important for people who bring their complaints to us and those we investigate as we carry out our work.

All staff are encouraged and supported to play an active role in the delivery of our ED&I strategy and a number of groups such as the Diversity Working Steering Groups, Break the Stigma, Dignity at Work Network, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum and Pride in PHSO are helping us to drive forward our ambitions through a range of activities.



# Our Board Members

**Rob Behrens CBE, Executive Chair**



Rob Behrens was appointed as Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman and Chair of the organisation on 6 April 2017. He has considerable experience of investigating allegations of public service failure and, as a result, bringing redress to service users. His previous roles include Complaints Commissioner at the Bar Standards Board and Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (Office of the Independent Adjudicator) in England and Wales.

Rob transformed the Office of the Independent Adjudicator into an outstanding ombudsman service by focusing on promoting best practice and providing a more efficient and effective service to complainants.

Following this he became Visiting Professor at the University College London Institute for Education and also Chair of the European Network of Ombudsmen in Higher Education. Rob was made a CBE for 'services to higher education' in the New Year's Honours List, December 2015.

**Anu Singh, Non-Executive Board Member**



Anu is a board level local government and health leader. Former roles include statutory director of adult social care and chair of an NHS integrated care trust.

Anu was also director of patient and public participation and insight for NHS England. She made sure that the voices of patients, service users, carers and the public were at the heart of how the NHS worked. She was responsible for equalities, health inequalities, person centred care, and the national relationship with the voluntary and community sector.

She is passionate about service improvement and community empowerment, with experience leading on new relationships with communities for a range of local councils.

**Sir Alex Allan KCB, Non-Executive Board Member**



Alex has many years of experience gained throughout his long career at the highest levels of civil service.

Alex is a member and chair of the Selection Panel for QC Appointments, a member of the Advisory Board of the Oxford Internet Institute, and a trustee of the Treloar Trust – a charity providing education and support for young people with physical disabilities.

Former roles include the Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Ministerial Interests, Principal Private Secretary (Chief of Staff) to the Prime Minister and to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Justice, High Commissioner to Australia, and chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee. He has led various Government reviews, including two of record management.

**Balram Gidoomal CBE, Non-executive Board Member**



Balram Gidoomal is an experienced businessman and entrepreneur, having worked for over 30 years at board and senior management levels in the private, public and voluntary sectors. He is currently Board Chair for several private sector companies. He was previously a Board Member of the Food Standards Agency, Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust, Imperial College, an external member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and a member of the Complaints Audit Committee of the UK Border Agency.

He is Founder Chairman of South Asian Development Partnership and is a trustee of several other voluntary organisations. Until 2016 he was Chair of the Office of Independent Adjudicator for Higher and Further Education in England and Wales, and in that role was Chair of the European Network of Ombudsmen in Higher Education.



# Our Board Members

## **Elisabeth Davies, Non-Executive Board Member**



Elisabeth Davies has worked across charitable and public sectors with a particular focus on dispute resolution and consumer protection. Since April 2020 she has been Chair of the Office for Legal Complaints. She is also a former Chair of the Legal Services Consumer Panel.

Elisabeth is the Senior Independent Director and Chair of the Quality Committee at the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman and is also Chair of the Assurance and Appointments Committee of the General Pharmaceutical Council, maintaining the independence of the Investigation, Fitness to Practice and Appeals Committees and helping to ensure that their decisions have the confidence of the public and the profession.

She is a Trustee of Support Through Court, supporting people going through the court process without legal representation, and Chair of the Prisoners' Education Trust, a charity working across every prison in England and Wales to help prisoners achieve their potential through learning. In January 2019 Elisabeth was appointed on to the Civil Justice Council, providing advice to the Secretary of State, the Judiciary and Civil Procedure Rule Committee on the effectiveness of aspects of the justice system.

A trained CEDR accredited mediator and experienced negotiator, in her spare time Elisabeth is studying for an MSc in Dispute Resolution.

## **Mick King, Non-Executive Board Member**



Mick King was appointed Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for England in January 2017. Mick has served as Deputy Local Government Ombudsman since 2004 and was, most recently, the Chief Executive Officer, Accounting Officer, and Secretary to the Commission for Local Administration in England. Before joining the ombudsman sector he worked for 15 years in a range of consumer and public protection roles, including as the Chief Trading Standards Officer for Northumberland County Council.

At the LGO, Mick has been responsible for expanding the Ombudsman's role to cover all types of adult social care services in both the public and private sectors, as well as leading significant business transformation to streamline the Ombudsman's operations and improve public access and accountability.

## **Dean Fathers, Non-Executive Board Member**



Dean has 20 years of experience operating at board level across the full spectrum of NHS services: primary, acute, mental health, community and authority-wide.

He is currently the non-executive chair of the Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, and recently gave up his role with the United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust to take on the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman appointment. Since joining the NHS he has been involved in several substantial transformations to help lead significant numbers of staff through transformative change.

Dean has also held senior appointments in the third, public and private sectors as well as in academia.

# Our Board Members

## **Carolyn Hirst, Non-Executive Board Member**



Carolyn has her own business, Hirstworks, where she works as a mediator, investigator, complaints reviewer, trainer and independent researcher. Based in Scotland, she is the mediation practice supervisor for Cyrenians - a charity working with people who have few choices. She also mediates for both the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission and Edinburgh Sheriff Court.

As an experienced board member, she carries out governance reviews and is currently a non-executive board member of NHS Lothian, the vice-chair of Midlothian Integration Joint Board and a trustee of the Edinburgh and Lothians Health Foundation. She has tribunal experience as a former member of Employment Tribunals (Scotland) and of the FirstTier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber).

Carolyn previously worked part-time as a lecturer in ombudsman and complaint handling practice at Queen Margaret University, where she is now an honorary research fellow. She was deputy Scottish public services ombudsman for five years. Before that she worked in social housing for nearly 20 years, which culminated with being deputy director of a housing and care organisation.

## **Linda Farrant, Non-Executive Board Member**



Linda is a CIPFA qualified accountant and has a broad experience of non-executive roles in the public and voluntary sectors covering health, housing, criminal justice, and education. Linda has spent much of her executive career in local government working on finance, regeneration policy and developing devolved public services.

She is currently deputy chair of East and North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and chair of the governance and audit committee. She has recently completed two terms on the board of Ofsted and the audit and corporate governance committee of the Care Quality Commission.

## **Find out more**

You can read more about PHSO at:

<https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/>

<https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/publications/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2020-2024/pillar-two-representation>

Read some of the reports we have produced at:

Continuing Healthcare: Getting it right first time | Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)

Making Complaints Count: Supporting complaints handling in the NHS and UK Government Departments (Executive Summary) | Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)

# Role Profile

The PHSO Board is responsible for leadership, performance scrutiny, risk management and governance and for overseeing the building of public confidence in the service.

**Vision** The vision of PHSO 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.

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

The 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 decisions 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 investigate have implemented our recommendations.

The overall purpose of the role of the Non-Executive Board Members is:

1. to contribute to the Board leadership and development of strategy
2. to monitor the performance of the organization
3. to ensure appropriate and constructive challenge and effective scrutiny of Executive Directors
4. to ensure robust governance arrangements.

As a Board Member it is expected that you will:

1. attend meetings of the Board and other meetings as required and appropriate
2. chair and/or participate in Board Committees
3. lead and contribute to projects and corporate activities as determined from time to time, and
4. help champion PHSO's commitment to continuous improvement.



# Person Specification

All of our Non-executive Board Members are required to demonstrate general and specific core competencies.

## Specific backgrounds sought for this appointment

We are looking for candidates who are able to bring one or more of the experiences set out below:

Competence	Evidence
Knowledge and understanding of engagement with vulnerable service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experience of interacting with vulnerable service users, either in a professional or personal capacity.</li><li>• Understanding of real or perceived barriers to accessing public services.</li><li>• Awareness of different accessibility needs.</li></ul>
Knowledge and understanding of customer services/ service user operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding of customer services and the shift to digital first.</li><li>• Understanding of operational delivery and demand management.</li><li>• Experience of working with a comparable organisation.</li></ul>
Expertise in communications, campaigns and public affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding and/or experience of public sector communications and campaigns, including awareness raising activity .</li><li>• Knowledge or understanding of risk and issues communications.</li><li>• Ability to develop and manage strategic partnerships.</li><li>• Expert knowledge of the health, social and political landscape in which PHSO sits.</li></ul>

## Core competencies (all non-executive Board Members)

Competence	Evidence
Ability to contribute to strategic direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding of the relationship between the purpose and values of an organisation and its strategic direction.</li><li>• Knowledge and experience of strategic planning and delivery, with the ability to scrutinise performance data.</li><li>• Experience of contributing to the achievement of objectives within time and resource constraints.</li></ul>
Ability to explore accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding of the role of governance.</li><li>• Offer appropriate challenge to help achieve the best outcomes for the organisation.</li><li>• Able to support the executive team whilst holding them to account for their performance.</li><li>• Willingness to accept responsibility and to be held accountable for personal decisions and to accept shared responsibility for corporate decisions.</li><li>• Experience of evaluating own performance.</li></ul>
Awareness of equality and diversity issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Able to explore and work with values of respect, inclusion, fairness and transparency and what these might mean.</li><li>• Awareness that equality and diversity issues are of key importance throughout any organisation.</li></ul>

# Person Specification

## Competence

Ability to listen and communicate effectively

Ability to work effectively as part of a team

Capacity and skill to understand the priorities of PHSO and our stakeholders

## Evidence

- Well-developed listening skills.
  - Good communication skills and the ability to put views across clearly and sensitively in a variety of settings.
  - Awareness of, and acceptance, of diverse views.
  - Ability to inspire confidence and support amongst PHSO stakeholders including complainants, bodies in jurisdiction, patients, service users and members of the public.
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- Experience of collaborative working.
  - Involving and including others in a decision making process to achieve the best outcome for an organisation.
  - Sharing expertise at the same time as being able to recognise expertise in others.
  - Ability to reflect on own behaviour and impact on others.
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- Understanding of the prime purpose of an Ombuds scheme.
  - Experience of working with one or more of PHSO's key stakeholder groups.
  - Understanding of the wider health, social and political landscape in which PHSO sits.
  - Understanding of the diversity inherent in the work of PHSO and differing viewpoints amongst key stakeholder groups.



# Terms of Appointment

## Remuneration

The Non-Executive Board Member remuneration is £10,000 per year. Remuneration is taxable under Schedule E and subject to Class I National Insurance contributions. It is not pensionable.

Board Members will also be eligible to claim expenses, according to PHSO policy, for travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on PHSO business. In particular PHSO will reimburse:

- Travel expenses to and from home to the PHSO Board meeting venue.
- Travel and subsistence expenses incurred as part of any work of a member of the Board away from the normal venue.

## Impact of appointment on people in receipt of benefits

Your appointment may have an effect on your entitlement to benefits. If you are in receipt of benefits you should seek advice from the Benefits Agency.

## Time commitment and location

It is expected that a commitment of approximately two days a month will be required. Board meetings are currently held virtually. Under normal circumstances they are held in Manchester or London.

## Length of appointment

The initial appointment will be for a period not exceeding three years. Any Board Member may hold office for a maximum of two terms. Re-appointments can be made at the end of the first period of office for a further maximum period of three years, subject to a satisfactory performance appraisal and the needs of PHSO. However, a degree of change is often sought and there should be no expectation of automatic reappointment.

This is a public appointment or statutory office and is not subject to the provisions of employment law.

To ensure that public service values are maintained at the heart of PHSO, members will be required, on appointment, to adhere to a commitment to the seven principles of public life.

## 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.

It is also essential that our employees represent and understand the diverse community we serve.

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 have the opportunities to fulfil their potential in the workplace.

## Standards in public life

You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct, including impartiality, objectivity and integrity in the implementation of the role and responsibilities.

## External interests

You should note particularly the requirement to declare any conflict of interest that arises in the course of PHSO business and the need to declare any relevant business interests, positions of authority or other connections with other commercial, voluntary, academic or public bodies.

Candidates may be able to combine Board membership with an existing position in a public or private sector organisation, or with an existing non-executive portfolio. As the Ombudsman's jurisdiction includes a wide range of UK Government organisations and the National Health Service in England, successful candidates will need to be particularly alert to actual or perceived interest.

You must also confirm that you understand the standards of probity required by public appointees outlined in the "Seven Principles of Public Life". These principles are set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, and are listed in Appendix 1.



# How to Apply

We very much hope that you will consider applying for this role. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/phso-nebm/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- a copy of your CV or equivalent biographical information, setting out your work history, responsibilities and achievements
- a covering letter (maximum 2 sides) explaining why this role is important to you and how you are able to bring to PHSO what we are looking for.
- we would be grateful if you would also include the names and contact details of two referees (who will be contacted if you are shortlisted for interview).

**Closing date is Friday 23rd April 2021**

Please ensure you have also completed and submitted the equal opportunities monitoring form. The information you provide will be treated as confidential and used for statistical purposes only. The form will not be treated as part of your application.

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 have the opportunities to fulfil their potential in the workplace.



# The Recruitment Process

The Selection Panel will be:

- Rob Behrens, Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
- Elisabeth Davies, Senior Independent Member of the PHSO Board (Panel Chair) and member of PHSO Remunerations Committee
- Paula McDonald, Independent Panel Member

Agreement of the initial longlist will take place by the end of April 2021 and selected candidates will be invited to meet with our advising consultant at Starfish Search in early May 2021.

Agreement of the final shortlist will take place on 11th May 2021.

Informal meetings and telephone calls, as required, will follow confirmation of the final shortlist.

Formal interviews for shortlisted candidates will take place in the second half of May, most likely on Friday 21st May 2021.

## Appendix: The seven principles of public life

All applicants for public appointments are expected to demonstrate a commitment to, and an understanding of, the value and importance of the principles of public service.

The seven principles of public life are:

1. Selflessness Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
2. Integrity Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
3. Objectivity Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
4. Accountability Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. Openness Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. Honesty Holders of public office should be truthful.
7. Leadership Holders of public office should exhibit these seven principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.





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Starfish