

Terms of Reference: Expert Advisory Panel

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Expert Advisory Panel provides a non-executive advisory function to the Ombudsman. Its members offer challenge and support in areas of PHSO's work where the Ombudsman finds that useful.
- 1.2 Members contribute to different work areas as agreed with the Ombudsman and Chair in writing.

2. Membership

- 2.1 The Panel membership consists of independent advisors appointed by the Ombudsman for this purpose.
- 2.2 The Ombudsman appoints one of these advisors as Chair of the panel, for a term of two years.
- 2.3 Membership terms are limited to two years, with the option of annual extensions up to a total of five years. This helps to ensure that the Panel's expertise is relevant to the changing priorities of the organisation.

3. Remit and responsibilities

- 3.1 The Expert Advisory Panel members are not PHSO employees and the Panel is not a decision-making forum.
- 3.2 Panel members are accountable directly to the Ombudsman and will be called upon to work on projects or any other activity as agreed with the Ombudsman and Chair of the Panel.
- 3.3 All requests for Panel assistance will be agreed by the Ombudsman, either at his own instigation or on the recommendation of the Executive Team.
- 3.4 Requests will be made in writing to all members to consider collectively who is best-placed to contribute, given their skills and experience.
- 3.5 Members may elect to work individually, in conjunction with other members or as a full panel, depending on the requirements of each request. These views will be considered by the Chair, who will make the final decision on who contributes to each piece of work.

- 3.6 Where the Ombudsman himself identifies the need for advice from a member of the Panel, he will confirm the purpose of the work and the anticipated extent of the time commitment to the Chief Executive for information.

4. Frequency and notice of meetings

- 4.1 Members will meet in full panel form quarterly, with additional meetings convened if business needs dictate.
- 4.2 The agenda will be agreed by the Chair and will be circulated along with any meeting papers a minimum of five working days before the meeting.
- 4.3 The Executive Team and other staff members may also attend, subject to the Chair's agreement.

5. Chair of the meeting

- 5.1 At any meeting of the Expert Advisory Panel, the appointed Chair will chair the meeting.
- 5.2 If the Chair is absent from the meeting, the Ombudsman or Chief Executive will Chair the meeting.

6. Secretariat and administration

- 6.1 Secretariat support will be provided by the Governance Team.
- 6.2 The Secretariat will maintain a schedule of actions arising to record and track the progress of actions, and a schedule of all active pieces of work that the panel is contributing to, to facilitate Chair oversight.
- 6.3 The Secretariat will facilitate feedback to contributing members on both a continuous basis where relevant, and more formally as standard following the close of each piece of work, to facilitate continuous improvement.

7. Evaluation, review and sign-off

- 7.1 The Terms of Reference for the Expert Advisory Panel will be reviewed annually to ensure it is operating at maximum effectiveness. Should any changes be considered necessary, these will be presented to the Ombudsman and the Executive Team for approval.

Effective date: 20 March 2023

Review date: 19 March 2024