

Written evidence from Peter Marshall (PHO 17)

Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman Scrutiny 2020-21 inquiry

1. In late 2016 I made a complaint to PHSO. It concerned the unnecessary and avoidable death of my father. The matter is still to be concluded by PHSO.
2. Because of the lack of competence of staff the initial complaint was not investigated properly (indeed I submit my precise complaint was never investigated at all) as has been patently shown by the fresh evidence presently before the PHSO's legal team.
3. I regret to say that it is all too apparent that the overall level of skill of the staff employed by PHSO is sorely lacking.
4. My own case has been handled by several Heads of the Review and Feedback Team and regrettably these too have also shown a woeful lack of care and attention to detail.
5. Additionally, there have also been data breaches involving the unlawful erasure of evidence prior to the conclusion of the Review process and which the PHSO has chosen not to report to the ICO.
6. I have made these and other extremely serious lapses known personally to Rob Berhens who has written to me making a number of admissions.
7. The overall calibre of the staff actively involved in the investigation of complaints brought to PHSO needs to be reviewed without delay because, unfortunately, I am very doubtful that my experience of the widespread incompetence over the past 5 years is an exception.
8. Perhaps these deficiencies are due to staff shortage or pressure of work? The Committee will no doubt consider this possibility too in its forthcoming interview with Rob Berhens.
9. The Committee is fully aware of the important role the PHSO has to play. However it is incumbent upon the Committee to ensure that appropriate action is taken immediately so that the public can have the confidence in the PHSO that they rightfully expect.

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