

## Adjudication Panel for Wales Annual Report 2004-05

July 2005

Dear colleague

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I am writing to update you on the activities of the Adjudication Panel during the last year.

In the 12 months since I issued last year's report, which covered the first 18 months of the Panel's work, we have not had to consider any referrals from the Commission for Local Administration in Wales, nor any appeals against decisions of Standards Committees. However, the Commission has recently referred two cases to the Panel, which I will report on in due course.

There is no statutory requirement for me to produce a formal annual report. I have, therefore, decided that it would make for better use of public resources if I were to bring you up to date by means of this letter.

In last year's report, I indicated that the small number of cases that had been dealt with by the Panel reflected, in part, the introduction of the new ethical framework. I was optimistic that this was also an indication that local government members in Wales recognised the importance of, and aspired to, high standards of propriety in public office. This view has been borne out by the absence of any referrals or appeals during the past year.

After our initial training, the Panel's activities were scaled back last year. Nevertheless, the Panel and its members remain ready and able to deal with any cases that are referred to us. We have continued our training and have kept abreast of developments and changes associated with standards in public office. Part of this training was a very successful joint seminar with members of the Adjudication Panel for England and the Standards Commission for Scotland. This enabled us to share experiences of the ethical framework in each country. I would like to express my gratitude to David Laverick, the President of the Adjudication Panel for England for organising this event.

Police authorities in Wales are subject to the model code of conduct introduced by the UK Government on an England and Wales basis. Nevertheless, the investigation and subsequent determination of allegations of misconduct in Wales are the responsibility of the Commission for Local Administration in Wales and the Adjudication Panel for Wales respectively. In September of last year, the Panel was fortunate to receive a presentation from a representative of the Standards Board for

England on the provisions of the police authorities' code of conduct and some of the practical issues arising from its application.

In February of this year, I was very grateful for the opportunity to address the All-Wales Standards Committees conference in Aberystwyth and to answer questions on the work of the Adjudication Panel. I was encouraged by the number who attended the conference and by the enthusiasm shown towards the workings of the ethical framework in Wales.

I am also grateful to Adam Peat for meeting me during what is a busy time for him as he moves towards formal establishment of the new Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The year ahead promises to be an interesting one. Earlier this year, the Committee on Standards in Public Life published its tenth report on implementing standards of conduct in public life, which the UK Government is currently considering. Consultations on the operation of the codes of conduct in both England and Wales have begun. The implications for Wales of the tribunal reforms in England were explored at the Council of Tribunals' conference in Cardiff on 23 June. I look forward to the outcome of these developments with interest.

I hope that you will find this update of interest. Further information on the Adjudication Panel is available from our website: [www.adjudicationpanelwales.org.uk](http://www.adjudicationpanelwales.org.uk), or from the Adjudication Panel for Wales Support Unit at the address below.

J Peter Davies

PRESIDENT OF THE PANEL