





Our ref: 202208582/EF/CH

Ask for: Emily Fletcher

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Date: 2 May 2024

 Emily.Fletcher
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Patricia Armstrong
Deputy Monitoring Officer
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Dear Ms Armstrong

**Code of Conduct complaint made against Councillor Andrew Phillips of
Llansantffraed Community Council by Ms Elin Prysor**

I write further to my report on the investigation of a complaint about Councillor Andrew Phillips dated 12 January 2024 and my decision to refer the matter for consideration by the Council's Standards Committee (our case reference 202208582).

The Committee members will be aware of events regarding social media posts made by a former employee of PSOW, Sinead Cook. I personally took the decision to refer this matter to the Standards Committee for consideration, I recognise however, that the Committee will want to assure itself of the independence, impartiality and integrity of my investigation as part of the hearing process. I have therefore set out below a note outlining my role as decision maker and the role of my staff during the investigation of this case, which I hope is helpful.

As the Committee will be aware from my Report, the complaint was investigated on my behalf by Emily Fletcher, Investigation Officer in our Code of Conduct Team. Ms Sinead Cook, Code Team Manager, was Ms Fletcher's manager from the date of receipt of the complaint (30 March 2023) until 31 August 2023. As the Code Team Leader, Ms Cook was responsible for the file allocation and regular oversight of Ms Fletcher's progression of the case until the end of August.

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On 1 September 2023, as happens from time to time in accordance with the operational needs of our office, we rotated our team leaders and Ms Cook moved to manage a different team in PSOW. On this occasion, the rotation occurred as a result of the retirement of a team leader who managed a Public Service Complaints Investigation Team.

On 23 October 2023, Mrs Annie Ginwalla became the manager of the Code of Conduct Team. Annie Ginwalla (and formerly, Sinead Cook) reports to and is line managed by Ms Claire Beynon, Head of Service Improvement. Following Councillor Phillips' interview with Ms Fletcher and Rachel Pillinger (Investigation Officer), the evidence gathered was analysed by Emily Fletcher, Investigation Officer, Claire Beynon and Katrin Shaw, Chief Legal Adviser and Director of Investigations.

I, as Ombudsman considered and approved the draft report for issue to Councillor Phillips on 13 November 2023.

Following receipt of Councillor Phillips' comments on my draft report, his comments were considered by Emily Fletcher, Annie Ginwalla and Katrin Shaw before I considered and approved the final report for issue to Councillor Phillips and to you as Deputy Monitoring Officer for consideration by the Standards Committee. As you are aware, I decided that the evidence gathered during my investigation was suggestive of a breach of the Code of Conduct and that the matter should be referred to the Standards Committee to decide whether Councillor Phillips breached the Code and if so, what sanction, if any should be imposed.

Please would you bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Standards Committee.

A copy of this letter has been provided to Councillor Phillips.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Morris

Michelle Morris

Ombwdsmon Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus / Public Services Ombudsman

Cc Councillor Andrew Phillips