



Clinical advisers

Office of the Parliamentary and Health Service  
Ombudsman

Manchester

November 2012

Application pack and information for candidates

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This document provides candidates with information on the recruitment and selection of clinical advisers for the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. For further information about the Ombudsman, please visit our website at:  
[www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk).

## Foreword from the Deputy Ombudsman

Thank you for your interest in the work of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman and for considering becoming a clinical adviser. The work we do is extremely important in driving improvements in public services and informing public policy, as well as righting individual wrongs. From April 2011 to March 2012, 23,846 people contacted this Office, all of whom received responses appropriate to their particular issue. These ranged from informed advice on how to take their complaint forward to highly complex investigations.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman is committed to providing a high quality independent complaint handling service and to improving the way in which we work - with the people that need our services, colleagues across the organisation, and with stakeholders. We are committed to developing a diverse workforce of people with the right levels of knowledge, skills and experience.

Since the former Ombudsman, Ann Abraham, took responsibility for the second and final stage of the NHS complaints system in April 2009, we have worked more closely with NHS service providers to support improved local complaint handling and better learning from complaints. Our internal clinical advisers work closely with other casework staff to provide high quality advice to inform our assessments, and investigations, of complaints about the NHS. The Clinical Advice Directorate also provides clinical advice through service level agreements to the Ombudsmen for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Ireland.

I hope that, after reading the information in this pack, you will be able to decide whether you have what it takes to be a successful clinical adviser with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman and share our commitment to the values of this organisation. If you do, we look forward to hearing from you.



Kathryn Hudson  
Deputy Ombudsman

## About us

### The work of the Office

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's Office currently has around 420 employees based at our two sites in London (Millbank) and Manchester.

Complaints about government departments and other public organisations are referred to us through MPs, while those about the NHS in England are usually received directly from complainants. Since 1 April 2009, following the abolition of the Healthcare Commission, there has been a two-stage system for dealing with NHS complaints, with this Office becoming the second and final complaint handler.

During the 2011-12 business year, we received 23,846 enquiries and accepted 421 cases for investigation (93 parliamentary and 328 health). In this period, the largest numbers of parliamentary complaints were about the Ministry of Justice, the Home Office, the Department for Work and Pensions, and HM Revenue & Customs. The largest proportion of health complaints were about NHS hospital, specialist and teaching trusts (45 per cent), GPs (18 per cent) and PCTs (14 per cent).

When an investigation leads to an upheld complaint, the Ombudsman seeks appropriate redress for any unremedied injustice or hardship suffered by the complainant. This may involve an explanation of what went wrong, an apology, changes in procedures to prevent problems recurring and, where appropriate, financial compensation.

*Listening and Learning: The Ombudsman's review of complaint handling by the NHS in England 2011-12* (November 2012)

This is the Ombudsman's second report on complaint handling in the NHS in England. It assesses the performance of the NHS against the commitment in the NHS Constitution to acknowledge mistakes, apologise, explain what went wrong, and put things right quickly and effectively.

*Annual Report 2011-12: Moving forward* (July 2012)

The Ombudsman's *Annual Report* and *Resource Accounts* are laid before Parliament each year. They give details of our performance over the past 12 months, including financial reports and statistical information about the complaints we receive.

To view our latest published reports, please go to the link below:

[www.ombudsman.org.uk/improving-public-service/reports-and-consultations/reports/health](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/improving-public-service/reports-and-consultations/reports/health).

# The Ombudsman's role, vision and values

The Office of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman exists to:

*'provide a service to the public by undertaking independent investigations into complaints that government departments, a range of public organisations in the UK, and the NHS in England, have not acted properly or fairly or have provided a poor service.'*

Our vision is:

*'To provide an independent, high quality complaint handling service that rights individual wrongs, drives improvements in public services and informs public policy.'*

*'Our values shape our behaviour, both as an organisation and as individuals working at the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's Office, and incorporate our Principles of Good Administration.'*

## Excellence

We pursue excellence in all that we do in order to provide the best possible service.

- We seek feedback to achieve learning and continuous improvement.
- We operate thorough and rigorous processes to reach sound, evidence-based judgments.
- We are committed to enabling and developing our staff so that they can provide an excellent service.

## Leadership

We lead by example and believe our work should have a positive impact.

- We set high standards for ourselves and others.
- We are an exemplar and provide expert advice in complaint handling.
- We share learning to achieve improvement.

## Integrity

We are open, honest and straightforward in all our dealings, and use time, money and resources effectively.

- We are consistent and transparent in all our actions and decisions.
- We take responsibility for our actions and hold ourselves accountable for all that we do.
- We treat people fairly.

## Diversity

We value people and their diversity and strive to be inclusive.

- We respect others, regardless of personal differences.
- We listen to people to understand their needs and tailor our service accordingly.
- We promote equal access to our service for all members of the community.

## Governance

The Ombudsman is appointed by the Queen and is directly accountable to Parliament. She is independent of government and the NHS, and is solely responsible and accountable for the conduct and administration of all work carried out by the Office and for the decision made in each case.

### The Executive Board

The Executive Board is chaired by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman and comprises the Deputy Ombudsman, the Chief Operating Officer, and the Director of Communications. The Executive Board manages the Office's functions and activities and is responsible for the delivery of the strategic vision, policies and services to the public and other stakeholders.

### The Advisory Board

In 2004 the Ombudsman appointed a non-statutory Advisory Board to reinforce the governance of the Office.

## The Ombudsman's Principles

We want to be open and clear with both complainants and public organisations in the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. For this reason we have produced the *Ombudsman's Principles*, which consist of: the Principles of Good Administration, the Principles of Good Complaint Handling, and the Principles for Remedy.

The same six key Principles apply to each of the three documents. These are:

- Getting it right
- Being customer focused
- Being open and accountable
- Acting fairly and proportionately
- Putting things right, and
- Seeking continuous improvement.

The *Ombudsman's Principles* is based on our forty years' experience of handling large numbers of complaints. The *Ombudsman's Principles* endorses legality, flexibility, transparency, fairness and accountability - the necessary ingredients of good administration.

The three related sets of *Ombudsman's Principles* stress: the value and importance of considering the impact on the individual when offering customer service; thinking about how to deal with complaints; and offering remedy. Of course, it is essential to have proper processes and procedures in place in order to ensure fairness of treatment and for reasons of accountability, but those processes should be focused on outcomes. Public organisations should take into account what is important to the person making the complaint. They should be flexible in considering what the most appropriate response is for that particular individual while, of course, bearing in mind correct procedures and proportionality.

The *Ombudsman's Principles* outline the approach we believe public organisations should adopt to deliver good administration and customer service, and shows how to respond when things go wrong. The *Ombudsman's Principles* underpin our assessment of performance, our vision of good complaint handling and our approach to '*Putting things right*'.

For more information about the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, please go to: [www.ombudsman.org.uk/about-us](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/about-us).

## Operations Division

The Deputy Ombudsman is responsible for running the Operations Division. The purpose of Operations is to deliver the core business of the Office, first of all by assessing whether to accept requests for investigation that government departments, a range of other public organisations in the UK, and the NHS in England, have not acted properly or fairly or have provided a poor service; and then by independently and thoroughly investigating complaints. Operations is divided into:

- Customer Services and Assessment
- Health Investigations
- Parliamentary Investigations
- Developmental and Complex Investigations
- Outcomes and Learning
- Clinical Advice, and
- Complaints About Us.

## Clinical Advice Directorate

This vacancy falls within the Clinical Advice Directorate, a directorate that is responsible for the provision of a single specialist clinical advice function, based at both our London and Manchester offices. We have both internal and external advisers. The former are employed on a part-time basis, and work closely with caseworkers. Some of our external advisers are engaged as self-employed associates - generally on annual contracts, taking on cases as and when they are needed. The directorate also contains an administrative function, to ensure effective support to the director and clinical advisers. Clinical advice is used mainly in the work of two of the Operations Division's directorates:

## Customer Services and Assessment Directorate

Providing the front line of the Ombudsman's Office, Customer Services and Assessment undertakes assessments of the many thousands of complaints brought to the Office each year to determine those that are appropriate to investigate using the Ombudsman's powers. The directorate is based in both our London and Manchester Offices. It uses a wide variety of clinical advice to assess the clinical element of responses given to complainants who have raised a concern under the NHS complaints procedure.

## Health Investigations

The Health Investigations Directorate carries out investigations into complaints that the NHS in England has not acted properly or fairly, or has provided a poor service. The directorate is based in both our London and Manchester offices. It uses clinical advice to inform and enable the investigator to understand the clinical aspects of the complaint (including the questions of 'what happened?' and 'what should have happened?') in order to undertake and then conclude the investigation.

## Strategic objectives: 2011-15

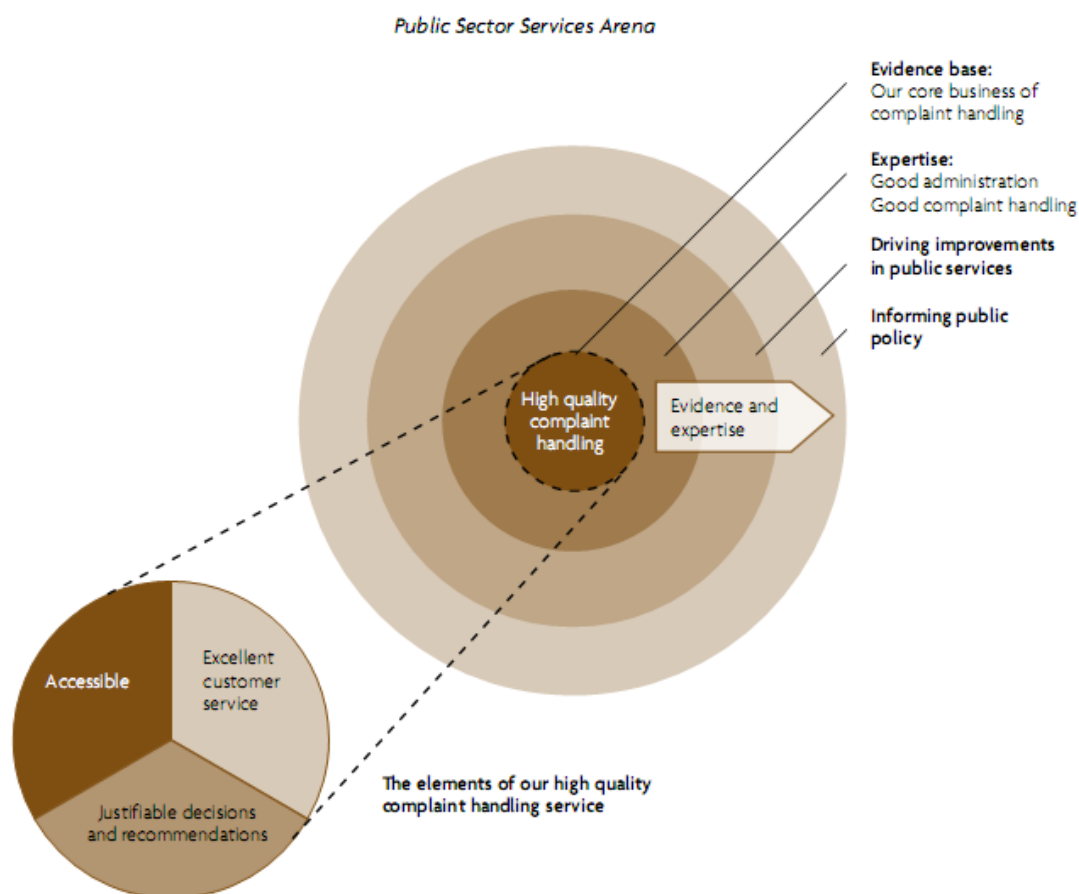
The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman has two strategic objectives that reflect our aim and vision of providing an independent, high quality complaint handling service that rights individual wrongs, drives improvements in public services, and informs public policy.

Our two strategic objectives also reflect the dual aspect of our work: individual benefit through our core business of complaint handling, and a wider public benefit through sharing our evidence and expertise.

Individual benefit is delivered by securing good outcomes for complainants and others who have suffered as a result of the same maladministration or poor service, through our interventions and investigations.

The wider public benefit is secured through the combination of our evidence base, our expertise in good administration and good complaint handling, and our acknowledged independence and impartiality. This mix enables us to provide authoritative evidence and expertise to support public organisations in our jurisdiction in improving their service, which others may draw on in developing public policy.

The dual aspect of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's work is illustrated in the following model.



Four year strategic plan 2011-15

The model incorporates the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's two strategic objectives. These are described below, together with a description of the associated outcomes that we will use to measure success in meeting our objectives.

### Individual benefit

Strategic Objective 1	<i>To provide an independent, high quality and accessible complaint handling service that rights individual wrongs</i>			
Outcome	People who need us come to us at the right time for the right reason	Excellent customer service	Our decisions are clear, soundly-based and impartial	Good outcomes for complainants are achieved as a result of our interventions and our investigations

### Public benefit

Strategic Objective 2	<i>To drive improvements in public services and inform public policy</i>			
Outcome	We are recognised as the authority on good administration and good complaint handling	Organisations in jurisdiction apply the <i>Ombudsman's Principles</i> in the design and delivery of public services	Improvements in public services are secured as a result of our reports and recommendations	Specific policies are informed by our work

Good management of the business and of people is critical to the success of any organisation and essential to the delivery of our strategic objectives. We have summarised this in what we describe as our 'enabling objective', which is shown on page 12 together with a description of the associated outcomes that we will use to measure our success in meeting it.

## Enabling objective

	<i>To equip our people with the skills, knowledge, systems and resources to deliver our strategic objectives</i>				
Outcome	We effectively manage our business and our financial resources to secure maximum benefit	We have a well-led, diverse workforce with the motivation, capability and capacity to deliver high performance	We are effective in sharing our knowledge and in managing our information	We have effective and efficient systems and a positive working environment	We live our values and meet or exceed our corporate statutory responsibilities

Each year we review and refresh our strategic plan and develop an annual *Corporate Business Plan*, which identifies the priorities and key activities for the business year ahead, including our service standards and any numeric performance targets.

## About the role

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's Office will always require a variety of relevant, up-to-date clinical expertise and advice. Our internal clinical advisers provide both oral and written advice within the Office, working closely with caseworkers. Clinicians are employed part time so that they can continue to work in the NHS and engage in ongoing professional development in that context. This is important because it ensures that they bring current and up-to-date knowledge and experience to the Office, both in terms of clinical practice and the organisational context in which services are delivered.

We are keen to accept applications from clinicians with a range of expertise, particularly from those who have broad or generalist experience that enables them to provide advice on a range of cases. Following appointment, new clinical advisers will participate in a short induction programme designed to equip them with the skills, knowledge and information they will need for their new role. This includes specific training in our case management and IT systems. Clinical advisers will also spend some time building up their casework experience in the directorates, with appropriate support from an assigned mentor and lead clinician.

We wish to recruit clinical advisers from these clinical areas:

Specialism	Location	Grade	Number of days required	Contract type
Physician	Manchester	SA1	1 day	Permanent
Surgeon	Manchester	SA1	1 day	Permanent

For salary bands please refer to page 20.

## Job description - clinical adviser

Directorate: Clinical Advice Directorate

Accountable to: Director of Clinical Advice/Lead Clinical Adviser

### Job purpose

Internal clinical advisers support the delivery of the health assessment and investigations process by providing expert professional advice to casework staff on medical/clinical issues raised in complaints to the agreed quality, speed and output standards. The adviser will also support the Office's key strategic objectives by taking an active role in quality assurance activities and in sharing the learning from complaints to enhance clinical practice and so improve patient care.

### Key accountabilities

- Effectively manages requests for clinical advice to achieve or exceed service standards, business plan and personal targets.
- Effectively communicates with caseworkers and other colleagues orally and in writing, ensuring that communication is business-focused and fit for purpose.
- Provides supported and benchmarked clinical advice to caseworkers, both as a generalist on a range of cases at assessment stage, and as a specialist at investigation stage.
- Provides expert review of original clinical actions of peers to give clear and definitive advice, which is supported by measurement against acknowledged clinical or service benchmarks in investigation cases.
- Supports caseworkers with both generalist and specialist advice within his or her sphere of competence on aspects of clinical care and clinical systems.
- Supports the provision of clinical advice at assessment stage - relating to the reasonableness of the organisation's response.
- Manages time effectively in the Office to increase the opportunities to provide advice via documented local discussions.
- Supports caseworkers so that the findings, conclusions and recommendations in reports of investigations are appropriately supported and based on a good understanding of the clinical issues.
- Identifies and documents risk, and ensures that there is an appropriate mitigation plan in place to facilitate completion and reduce the possibility of the risk occurring or recurring.

- Maintains full, accurate and up-to-date records and audit trails on the case management system and on paper casework files. Shares themes, learning and knowledge across the team and the directorate to develop knowledge management within the Office.
- Assists with identifying the need for further external and specialist professional expertise in casework.
- Adheres to the Office's systems and processes designed to ensure and demonstrate the quality of clinical advice provided, including the development of peer audit and review processes.
- Supports the delivery of the Ombudsman's key strategic objectives by participating in whole-system review and audit processes and in identifying systemic themes and root causes in complaints.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the external context in which the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman operates; including, where appropriate, building relationships with external organisations to improve the influence and accessibility of the Office in line with the external relations strategy.
- Contributes to meeting team, directorate and organisational objectives as well as personal objectives by undertaking cross-Office activities and assisting with events and projects where possible.

This job description is not intended to be exclusive or exhaustive. It is an outline indication of the areas of activity and will be amended in the light of the changing needs of the organisation.

## Person specification - clinical adviser

What we are looking for:	How you will be assessed:		
	Application form	Interview	Assessment
<b>Professional requirements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experienced, registered professional/practitioner with appropriate post-graduate qualifications.</li> <li>Relevant specialist qualifications.</li> <li>Currently in NHS clinical practice.</li> <li>Current registration with relevant regulatory/professional organisation.</li> <li>Knowledge of sources of current standards, guidelines and research that apply to clinical matters within sphere of practice and of wider NHS policy and guidance, including experience of assessing students/dealing with trainees.</li> </ul>	✓  ✓ ✓ ✓	✓	
<b>Delivering quality outcomes</b>  <b>Key indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides evidence-based clinical advice in accordance with policies and guidance that meets quality standards, and which requires little or no correction by managers.</li> </ul>			✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adheres to administrative procedures to ensure the efficient delivery of clinical advice within the required time frame.</li> </ul>		✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses relevant systems to record all case-related activity.</li> </ul>		✓	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes steps to get things right first time and identifies, assesses and manages risk appropriately.</li> </ul>	✓		
<b>Working together</b>  <b>Key indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates orally and in writing clearly, confidently, comprehensively and persuasively to colleagues at all levels.</li> </ul>			✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manages relationships with colleagues by listening attentively, probing, showing empathy and feeding back to check understanding.</li> </ul>	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages in informal reviews of cases with peers and provides constructive feedback.</li> </ul>	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes a proactive contribution to the achievement of the team, directorate or Office objectives, beyond his or her core role.</li> </ul>		✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shares knowledge, information and learning across team and other areas of the Office.</li> </ul>		✓	
<b>Managing self</b>  <b>Key indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manages own workload in an efficient and proactive manner to achieve or exceed service standards, business plan and personal targets, without prompting by managers.</li> </ul>		✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaves in line with and upholds the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's values of excellence, leadership, integrity and diversity.</li> </ul>			✓

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes responsibility for personal development and engages with line manager in identifying personal development needs and appropriate activities.</li> </ul>		✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquires, evaluates and applies relevant, up-to-date knowledge and information to carry out duties effectively.</li> </ul>			✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivates self and demonstrates self-discipline, enthusiasm and the ability to get things done.</li> </ul>		✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates commitment to high standards and achieving improvements in public services.</li> </ul>	✓		
<p><b>Supporting the business</b></p> <p><b>Key indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the Office's vision and strategic priorities and can clearly articulate his or her role in and contribution to meeting them, and can set his or her work in a corporate context.</li> </ul>		✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows openness to change and commitment to continuous improvement; acts flexibly, collaboratively and confidently, even in times of uncertainty, and is responsive to variations in business approach/priorities.</li> </ul>	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively develops understanding of the external context and takes this into account in his or her work.</li> </ul>			✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complies with records management policies and procedures.</li> </ul>			✓

## Selection process

The selection process falls into two stages.

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Stage 1 | Assessment of your application form.<br>(Applicants who pass this stage will move on to stage 2.) |
| Stage 2 | Panel interview and assessment exercise.  |

At each stage of the selection process, you will be assessed against the competencies shown in the person specification on pages 16 to 18.

Shortlisted candidates will be notified by **20 December 2012**; if you have not been notified within a week of this date, then please assume that you have been unsuccessful. Shortlisted candidates for both roles will be invited to attend an assessment and interview commencing **14 January 2013**.

The successful candidate will be expected to commence in the post by **March 2013**.

## Adjustments to the selection process

The nature of the selection process is described above. If you need to have adjustments made at either the assessment or interview to enable you to complete them, please ensure that you state this in the disability section on the application form.

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments where possible.

## Summary of terms and conditions

### Contract

Details of the clinical advisers' location and contract type are set out on page 13. Appointments are available on a permanent or secondment basis for periods of between 18 months and 3 years. If you are offered a contract working less than 2 days per week, you will not be eligible for secondment.

### Salary

#### Full-time equivalent:

SA1 Hospital Consultants/General Surgeon/General Physician: £80,000 to £106,700  
We normally aim to appoint at the minimum of the pay band, but salaries will be agreed depending on level of current salary, expertise, and practice.

### Hours

These are part-time roles. For further information please see page 13.

### Pension

The civil service pension scheme offers a career average earnings-related scheme or defined scheme. Further details are available on the civil service pensions website [www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk](http://www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk).

### Leave

The full-time annual leave allowance is 30 days per year, excluding public holidays, plus 2.5 extra statutory days; this will be calculated pro rata for these part-time roles.

### Travel

You may be required to travel on official business occasionally, normally within the UK. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman will reimburse any travel cost relating to official business (this does not include home to office journey).

### Probation

Successful candidates will be on probation for ten months. Appointments will be confirmed when this period has been completed satisfactorily.

## Performance development review

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's performance and development review cycle runs from 1 April to 31 March.

## Pre-employment checks

All offers of employment are conditional and subject to our pre-employment checks, including a basic CRB check and a health assessment for fitness to work. If necessary, you may need to undertake a medical assessment.

You will also be required to provide relevant certificates according to your specialism; so, for example, doctors will be required to provide us with a certificate of good standing.

## Outside activities

As a crown servant, you may not take part in any activity that would in any way impair the effectiveness of your work for the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, or engage in any occupation that may conflict with the interests of this Office or be inconsistent with your official position. Subject to these conditions, work of a minor or short-term nature (for example, vacation or after-hours work) will normally be allowed, provided you seek prior permission.

You will also be subject to certain restrictions. Standing as a candidate in parliamentary elections is prohibited. Standing for local authority elections, canvassing on behalf of candidates, and expressing views on matters of political controversy in public speeches or publications require prior permission from this Office and may be refused. There is also a requirement to declare involvement in any activity where you have an actual or potential conflict of interests.

## Other benefits

Other benefits offered to all staff include an employee assistance programme, season ticket or bicycle loans, a gym subsidy scheme, and childcare vouchers.

## Equal opportunities

No employee or job applicant will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, colour, disability, ethnic (or national) origin, gender, marital status, political opinion, religious belief, sexual orientation, trade union activity, or any other relevant factor, or be disadvantaged by any condition or requirement which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

## Disability

Applications from people covered by the *Equality Act 2010* are particularly welcome. The term disability is defined in the *Equality Act 2010* as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term effect (that has lasted or is likely to

last for a period of twelve months or more) on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Any disabled applicant who applies under the guaranteed interview scheme (GIS) and who meets the minimum selection criteria will automatically progress to the next stage of the recruitment process, which may be an assessment or interview.

By 'minimum selection criteria' we mean that you must provide us with evidence in your application form that you meet the level of competence required for the qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience defined as essential. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

A false declaration of a disability under the GIS to obtain a guaranteed interview, which results in employment, may invalidate your contract of employment.

If you think you have a disability but are unsure, then you may wish to consult your doctor before completing the relevant section on the application form.

You may wish to declare a disability but not apply under the GIS.

Where a disability is declared, we will make all reasonable adjustments to accommodate your needs.

## Data protection

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's Office will record the information given for the purposes of recruitment and selection monitoring. The information will be processed for the purposes of HR administration and statistical evaluation only.

## Travelling expenses

Candidates who are invited to interview can claim reimbursement of reasonable travelling expenses to the interview, up to a maximum of £100 per return journey (please note that this is for standard class travel only). Further information will be in the invitation to interview letter.

## Feedback

Candidates are asked to note that we do not provide feedback on applications at longlisting or shortlisting stage.

## Further information

For further information about the role, please contact Sue Lowson, Lead Clinician ([susan.lowson@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:susan.lowson@ombudsman.org.uk)). For further information about the recruitment process or the terms and conditions of the role, please email Rosemary Oduntan-Oke, Recruitment Manager ([recruitment7@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:recruitment7@ombudsman.org.uk)).