



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Officeholders – Appointment of Acting Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and Accountable Officer

By correspondence

Reference: SPCB (2025) Paper 18

Executive summary

1. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (the “Ombudsman”) Rosemary Agnew demits office on 30 April 2025. Following a successful recruitment exercise, her successor has been identified and will be nominated to the Parliament for appointment by His Majesty on 1 April 2025. As her successor is not able to take up appointment until 20 October 2025, under the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002, when there is a vacancy in the office of the Ombudsman, the SPCB may appoint an acting Ombudsman to discharge the Ombudsman’s functions.
2. The Ombudsman is also the Accountable Officer and when there is a vacancy of more than four weeks, the SPCB must appoint an Accountable Officer.
3. We have approached the Ombudsman to ask if she could recommend a member of her Senior Management Team who would be willing and able to undertake the role of acting Ombudsman and Accountable Officer. The Ombudsman has recommended Andrew Crawford who is the Head of Improvement, Standards and Engagement.

Acting Ombudsman

4. Under Schedule 1 paragraph 5 of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002, when there is a vacancy in the office of the Ombudsman, the SPCB may appoint an acting Ombudsman to discharge the Ombudsman’s functions.
5. The SPCB has appointed acting officeholders in the past. The individuals have all been recommended by their respective officeholders and have all been members of the Senior Management Team (SMT).

Accountable Officer

6. Under Schedule 1 paragraph 14 of the 2002 Act, the SPCB must designate the Ombudsman or a member of staff, as the Accountable Officer. The Ombudsman is the Accountable Officer. The Accountable Officer is personally responsible for the propriety and regularity of the public finances of their office, must sign the accounts and ensure that the resources of the office are used economically, efficiently and effectively.
7. If the Ombudsman is absent for four weeks or more, the SPCB must appoint another Accountable Officer.

Recommendation

8. The Ombudsman was invited to recommend a member of her SMT to be the acting Ombudsman and Accountable Officer and she has recommended Andrew Crawford.
9. Mr Crawford is the Head of Improvement, Standards and Engagement, with responsibility for complaints standards, learning & improvement, training and customer service complaint.
10. Does the SPCB agree that Andrew Crawford be appointed as the acting Ombudsman and Accountable Officer?

Governance

11. All governance issues have been considered.

Resource implications

12. We would recommend the acting Ombudsman be placed on point one of the salary scale of the current Ombudsman (OH pay scale 2). The acting Ombudsman's salary will be £142,661.

Publication Scheme

13. This paper can be published after the SPCB has made its decision and the appointment and accountable officer letters have been issued.

Decision

14. The SPCB is invited to:
 - (i) appoint Andrew Crawford as the acting Ombudsman from 1 May to 19 October 2025
 - (ii) appoint Andrew Crawford as the Accountable Officer from 1 May to 19 October 2025, and

(iii) agree that the salary of the acting Ombudsman and Accountable Officer is £142,661.

Officeholder Services

25 March 2025