



OA Validation Committee: Independent Member

Candidate Information pack

Message from the Chair of the Ombudsman Association (OA)

Thank you for your interest in the role of Independent Member of the OA's Validation Committee.

The Validation Committee scrutinises both applications for membership and the re-validation of existing members against our membership criteria and has a majority of independent members who are appointed via an open recruitment process. This is a crucial time for the Committee, which recently launched a re-validation programme of all of the OA's Members, following the review of the OA's Criteria in 2023, and the recruitment of two new members will help ensure that programme is delivered.

Further information on what the roles entail, as well as on the OA itself, can be found in this document.

If you have any further questions about the role please contact Donal Galligan, Chief Executive, donal.galligan@ombudsmanassociation.org / +44 (0)7442 496024

Kind regards

Margaret Kelly
Chair

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1. Who we are

The Ombudsman Association (OA) is the professional association for ombudsman schemes and complaint handling bodies in the UK, Ireland, the British Crown Dependencies, and the British Overseas Territories. You can read more about our work in our [Annual Report](#).

The OA's [membership criteria](#) are recognised both in the UK and internationally as representing best practice. This is reflected in the UK Cabinet Office's [Guidance for government departments on setting up Ombudsman schemes](#), which addresses the point of when it is appropriate to use the title 'ombudsman', and in the criteria used by UK [Companies House](#) on when a company can use the protected term 'ombudsman'.

The OA came into being in 1993 as the United Kingdom Ombudsman Association, becoming the British and Irish Ombudsman Association (BIOA) when membership was extended to Ireland in 1994. In 2012 the Association was renamed the 'Ombudsman Association' (OA). In 2019 the OA was registered at UK Companies House as a company limited by guarantee. Further information on the OA's history can be found on our [website](#).

The Vision of the OA is that throughout the public and private sectors:

- It is straightforward and simple for people to complain.
- People making a complaint are listened to and treated fairly.
- A complaint is dealt with quickly, fairly and effectively at the earliest stage by suitably trained staff.
- People have access to an ombudsman in all areas of consumer and public services.
- The learning from a complaint is used to improve services.

The objects of the Association are to:

- a) Support and promote an effective system of complaint handling and redress in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Britain's Crown Dependencies and Britain's Overseas Territories.
- b) Encourage, develop and protect the role of an ombudsman in both the public and private sectors as the 'best practice' model for resolving complaints, according recognition through membership.
- c) Provide an authoritative voice and promote best practice and policy for those involved in complaint handling and redress to ensure an effective service for the public.
- d) Support open and transparent accountability and endorse principles of good complaint handling.

2. The Board

The Ombudsman Association is registered in England and Wales (at Companies House) as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee (Company registration number: [11976831](#)). The OA's Articles can be viewed [here](#).

The Board is responsible for the business of the OA and consists of: five members representing Ombudsman Members (including the Chair and Vice-Chair); one Complaint Handler / Associate Member; an Independent Non-Executive; and the Chief Executive and Treasurer. You can view the profiles of the current [Board members here](#).

3. The Validation Committee

The Validation Committee, which has a majority of independent members, currently consists of: the OA Vice Chair (who chairs the Committee); one Ombudsman Member of the Board; and three Independent Members. An existing Independent Member will be stepping down in January and we are taking the opportunity to recruit both their replacement and an additional member. You can view the membership and profiles of the existing Validation Committee [here](#).

The Committee provides valuable advice to the Board by scrutinising both applications for membership and the re-validation of existing members against our [membership criteria](#). The Terms of Reference for the Validation Committee are set out in the [OA's Articles](#) (54.1).

Following a review of the OA's criteria undertaken by the Validation Committee, and a public consultation, [changes to the OA's membership criteria](#) were approved in 2023. In 2024, a re-validation programme of all of the OA's members was launched and is scheduled to be completed in early 2028.

Time Commitment

Validation Committee meetings: There are four scheduled Validation Committee meetings a year, which take place online, and follow the Board meeting cycle. Additional meetings can take place on other occasions as required.

Applications / Re-validations: Preparation for each meeting requires Independent Members to review application and / or re-validation documentation and associated materials and produce a report in advance of the meeting, highlighting any issues or concerns in regard to meeting the criteria. Whilst each application / re-validation is different, typically that might require c.3 hours work.

Term

The initial appointment is for a 3-year term. At the end of the first term, the Board may choose to reappoint if both parties agree.

Remuneration

The role is unremunerated. Independent Members of the Validation Committee are invited to attend the OA's Annual Conference for free. All travel expenses for attendance at in-person meetings are reimbursed (in line with the OA's Financial Policies).

4. Person specification

Essential Criteria

Applicants must be able to demonstrate:

- a) Understanding of the role and importance of the ombudsman sector.
- b) Experience of analysing materials and producing reports.
- c) Experience of providing appropriate challenge and scrutiny at management level, including the ability to question, challenge constructively, and inform decision-making.

Desirable Criteria: In addition to the above essential criteria, experience / understanding of membership organisations would be valuable.

5. Selection process

Please submit your CV and a covering letter, setting out how you meet the criteria and knowledge / skills required for the role. Covering letters should be a maximum of two sides. Applications should be submitted to maz.morgan@ombudsmanassociation.org no later than **12 noon on Monday 13 January 2025**.

Shortlisting will take place week commencing **13 January 2025**. Candidates who demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria and have the knowledge / skills required for the role (and if required, the desirable criteria), will be invited to attend an online interview. Interviews are envisaged to take place **between 17-24 January 2025**. Further details will be provided to candidates invited for interview.

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all job applicants. The information you supply in your application will be treated in confidence and will be used solely for assessing your suitability for the role.