

OmbudsPEI



Approachable | Fair | Impartial

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



November 2023

The Honourable Darlene Compton
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
197 Richmond Street, Charlottetown PEI

Dear Madam Speaker,

I am honoured to present the first Annual Report for both the Office of the Ombudsperson and the Office of the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner to the Legislative Assembly.

The Report has been prepared in accordance with section 38 of the *Ombudsperson Act* and section 5 of the *Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Protection Act*. It covers the activities of the offices for the period of February 14, 2022, to March 31, 2023.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandy Hermiston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Sandy Hermiston
Ombudsperson and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner



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Land Acknowledgement

In the spirit of Reconciliation, we acknowledge that the land upon which our organization stands is unceded Mi'kmaq territory. Epekwitk (PEI), Mi'kma'ki, is covered by the historic Treaties of Peace and Friendship. We pay our respects to the Indigenous Mi'kmaq People who have occupied this Island for over 12,000 years; past, present and future.





About OmbudsPEI

The Office of the Ombudsperson promotes fairness, transparency and accountability in the Island's public sector.

The Office of the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner investigates reports of serious wrongdoing in the provincial government. These two offices operate together as OmbudsPEI. Our services are free and confidential.

Our Vision

A municipal and provincial public sector that is fair, transparent and accountable in the design and delivery of its programs and services.

Our Mission

OmbudsPEI promotes responsive service, fair and transparent procedures and reasonable decisions by the municipal and provincial governments. Our work enhances good governance and public confidence in government programs and services.



Ombudsperson and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner's Message

My first day on the job began in true Island fashion – as a snow day!

Once I was able to collect my laptop computer and my mobile phone, I set up office in my half-empty apartment (it takes a while for belongings to travel from an island in the Caribbean Sea to an island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence) and began answering calls. A few Islanders seemed anxious to talk to me about their concerns. It was good to know that some people were already aware of the new office and willing to reach out and share their complaints with me, a warm welcome indeed.

Joey Jeffrey, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, was instrumental in hiring me and in helping me navigate the creation of this new office, for which I am very grateful. I want to thank Information and Privacy Commissioner Denise Doiron for providing me with interim space to work and helping me get to know how things work on PEI. Chief Electoral Officer, Tim Garrity attended my swearing in and offered support – which I gladly accepted. Through Tim and Elections PEI, I was able to find office space and select a provider to create

our logo and website. I love the way Prevail Creative captured the bridge and the water in our logo – both such important parts of life on PEI. Child and Youth Advocate Marvin Bernstein reached out and offered support and tips as the newest independent office - all of which was very helpful.

I am also grateful for the warm welcome I received from the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman and their staff. They provide invaluable support and resources which contributes to a strong foundation for Ombuds work on PEI.

We started from scratch, so it took a few months to confirm office space, create job descriptions and begin hiring staff. Our Deputy Ombudsperson, Matthew Chapman and our Office Manager, Lauren McKearney began work on June 13, 2022, with Investigator, Alexandra Dalton joining us on July 4th. In March our team was completed with the addition of another Investigator, Cody McEachern, who began working with us in April 2023.

Now that we are fully set up and staffed, we are ready for the next phase of building our new office – outreach and awareness. We look forward to getting out into the community and talking to Islanders and the public service. We want to let everyone know who we are, what we do and how to reach us. OmbudsPEI is here to help, to listen and to recommend fair solutions to improve the public service for everyone.

In this last year, I have often reminded our team that we are building this plane while we are flying it – which is no small feat.

Sandy Hermiston



2022-2023 Year at a Glance



Office Contacts:
151

Complaint/Inquiry Methods:

- Email: 29
- In-Person: 2
- Office Own Initiative: 1
- Referral from MLA: 2
- Online Form: 5
- Phone: 112



Inquiries: 60
Referrals: 27
Complaints: 64



Closed Complaints: 44
Informal Resolutions: 11
Investigations: 12
Declined: 13
Non-jurisdictional: 1
Complaint Withdrawn
or Abandoned: 7



Time to Close Files:
0-14 days: 4
15-30 days: 5
31+ days: 35



Open Complaints: 20
Current Assessments: 7
Informal Resolutions: 11
Current Investigations : 2



Top Public Bodies by Complaints:

- Community and Correctional Services
- Municipal Government
- Office of the Public Trustee, Public and Official Guardian
- HealthPEI

Highlights from 2022-23



Put together a team of dedicated people:

- One Deputy Ombudsperson
- Two Investigators
- One Office Manager



Built a brand and website



Concluded investigation into ORT access in corrections, leading to first public report being published



Created operational procedures for complaints handling

Other highlights



- secured centrally located accessible office space in downtown Charlottetown
- attended the annual meetings of the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Canadian Public Interest Disclosure Commissioners
- featured speaker at the Federation of Canadian Ombudsman conference (Ombudsperson)
- obtained professional certifications for Ombuds staff



How Complaints are Processed



Contact OmbudsPEI, either via phone, email or online.



Submit a complaint using our online complaint form, or mail us your completed complaint form. If you need help, call us!



We will review your complaint to make sure we have the authority to investigate it. If we do not have the authority to accept your complaint, we will do our best to refer you to someone who does.

Sometimes we decide not to investigate a complaint. If this happens, we will explain why we have made this decision.



If we decide to accept the complaint we will talk to you and the department or agency at the centre of the complaint for more information.

We do not take sides. We are independent and impartial and we want to help resolve the issue if possible.



Once we have a clear picture of the issue, we will offer suggestions on how to resolve the matter informally. Most of our investigations are closed at this point because the complaint has been resolved or we find there is no concern about fairness.



If the problem is complicated, we will consider whether to investigate the complaint more formally. This type of investigation takes longer and often results in a written report with observations and recommendations for improvement.



We close our investigation and monitor any recommendations made to ensure they are fully implemented.



When we receive a complaint, we assess whether we have the authority to consider it. If we do not, we will do our best to refer the complainant to someone who does.

Because we are an office of last resort, we also look to see if there is an appeal option or internal complaint process available. If the complainant has not yet taken advantage of these options, we will ask them to do so. We want to ensure that the government agency has the chance to make things right before we become involved.

What OmbudsPEI can investigate?

- Provincial Ministries/Departments
For example: Community and Correctional Services, Social Development & Housing, Health, Seniors
- Boards, Commissions and Tribunals
For example: IRAC, WCB, PEI Housing Corporation
- Health PEI
- Municipalities and council members

Complainants can come back to us if they believe their fairness concerns were not addressed. OmbudsPEI regularly receives complaints about matters that we do not have the jurisdiction to investigate.

Despite this, we do our best to understand the issue and identify other ways the complainant might have their concerns addressed. In these situations, we provide contact information for other complaint handling organizations where appropriate or offer suggestions for who the complainant might contact to try to resolve their concerns.

Many of the complaints received by OmbudsPEI are dealt with by us without the need to contact government agencies.

For example, if a complainant disagrees with a decision without being able to point to how or why the decision was unfair, we may decide not to investigate.

Sometimes complainants may not understand legislation or the role and function of the agency they are complaining about. When this happens, we do our best to help the complainant better understand those issues.

A considerable amount of work can go into assessing whether to investigate a complaint. Sometimes the complexity of the issue requires research and review of a large volume of documents. It is not uncommon for a complaint to involve multiple decisions and actions by different organizations and individuals.

We will always do our best to explain the reasons for our decision and invite clarification, correction and additional information from the complainant before we conclude our assessment. Just as we expect government agencies to hear and consider all relevant information and provide reasonable explanations for their decisions, we also hold those same expectations of ourselves.

If we decide to consider the complaint, we talk to the complainant to fully understand their concerns. Sometimes the issue is complex, and we need to ensure we understand it before we decide whether to contact the government agency. If it appears that the complainant was treated fairly, we will explain this to them and welcome feedback before deciding how to proceed.

If we proceed with the complaint, we will begin an informal resolution process involving the complainant and the government agency. We allow both sides an equal chance to provide us with information and explanations for what happened.



How we do our work



If we are able to resolve the complaint informally, we will close our file. When we resolve a complaint informally, we often post an anonymized summary of the case on our website and on our social media accounts.

It is not uncommon for OmbudsPEI to receive complaints about legal proceedings. These complaints might involve the court system or private legal counsel. In those situations, there is often little we can do but suggest the complainant consult legal counsel.

In other situations, complainants raise concerns relating to the collection, retention or distribution of personal information by government agencies. Complaints like this are best considered by PEI's Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC). When this happens, we will be clear about what issues we can assess and what issues the complainant should raise with the OIPC.

We also receive complaints about the activities of the Legislature, the actions of individual members of the Legislative Assembly, or about how government priorities are decided. Because the *Ombudsperson Act* prohibits us from investigating those matters, we will typically refer complainants to MLA constituency offices or otherwise suggest that they engage the issue through the democratic process itself.

When we are unable to resolve the complaint informally, we move to our investigation process, which is more formal. We must send a notice of investigation to the head of the agency and can require the production of documents and compel witnesses to speak with us.

If we cannot reach a resolution that satisfies our fairness concerns, we can report our concerns to the Legislature and the public. It is then up to the government to decide whether to accept our recommendations and implement them.

Our goal is to improve administrative processes and practices while taking reasonable steps to address any harms experienced by the complainant. We recognize that some harms cannot be undone but will seek to prevent similar harms from occurring in the future. Our primary purpose is to make sure that government programs and services are being administered in a fair manner. No matter what led to the complaint, if the government agency improves their processes for all Islanders, we will commend it for its efforts.

What OmbudsPEI cannot investigate:

- Decisions made by the federal government
- Decisions, recommendations, acts, orders or omissions of the Legislative Assembly of PEI, Cabinet, Executive Council
- Decisions, orders, or omissions made by the courts
- Decisions, recommendations, acts or omissions where there is a right of appeal or objection or a right to apply for a review of the merits of the case to a court or tribunal
- Private businesses or private matters

FAIRNESS CRITERIA



Fair Service

- Were the staff approachable?
- Were you treated with dignity and respect?
- Were the staff helpful, honest and forthright?
- Was confidentiality respected?
- Was an apology offered if a mistake was made?
- Did you receive the decision within a reasonable period of time?



Fair Process

- Were you given enough information to understand what was required?
- Did you have enough time to present your point of view?
- Did staff take the time to listen?
- Was the decision made free from any bias/conflict of interest?
- Did the decision-maker honour any commitments made and follow regular procedure?
- Did you receive reasons for the decision?
- Were you told about any avenues for review or appeal?



Fair Decisions

- Did the government have the legal authority to make the decision?
- Was the decision based on the relevant information?
- Was the decision oppressive or unjust?
- Was the decision made in good faith, with proper purpose and based on relevant considerations?
- Were the facts and law correct in the decision?
- Was the decision reasonable?
- Is there a clear explanation of how the legislation, regulation or policy was applied?
- Does the decision include an explanation of how the decision-maker considered and assessed the arguments and the evidence?
- Was there a rational connection between the evidence presented and the conclusions reached?
- Was the decision made within a reasonable period of time?

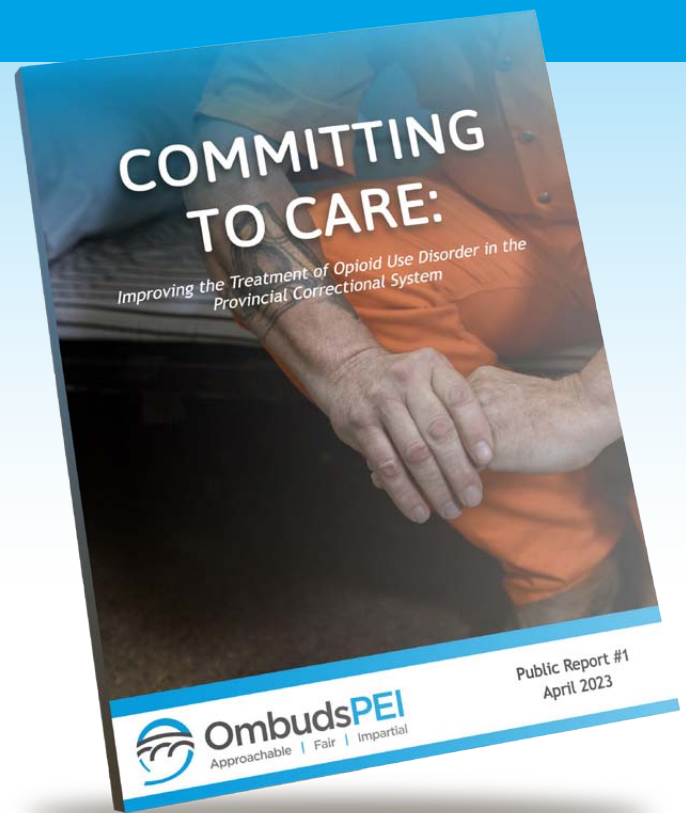


Investigations

On April 24, 2023, OmbudsPEI released its first public report, *Committing to Care: Improving the Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) in the Provincial Correctional System*. This report was the culmination of a 10-month investigation into complaints received from inmates at the Provincial Correctional Centre in Charlottetown concerning the delayed delivery of Opioid Replacement Therapy (ORT).

Through our investigation we learned that while inmates receiving ORT at the time of their admission to the correctional centre continued to receive ORT, others eligible for the treatment had to wait until a few weeks before their release to be offered it. This policy meant that inmates not receiving ORT on admission were offered opioid withdrawal management only and experienced significant withdrawal symptoms and persistent cravings. These symptoms and cravings were in some cases causing behaviors that worsened the OUD of inmates.

OmbudsPEI consulted with treatment providers, correctional staff, inmates, local stakeholders and correctional institutions across Canada to determine whether PEI's Community and Correctional Services' (CCS) OUD treatment protocols were consistent with current standards of medical care. We discovered that ORT was the current standard of medical care for treating OUD and that opioid withdrawal management was not medically recommended, nor was it a suitable



alternative to ORT. The results of these consultations were conveyed to CCS together with OmbudsPEI's concerns that existing practices could be seen to be unfair to inmates.

In response to OmbudsPEI's concerns, CCS committed to ensuring that all inmates eligible for ORT would be offered it without delay. By doing so, CCS committed to providing inmates with OUD the best chance for long-term, stabilizing treatment to the same level of care provided to other Islanders. By improving the treatment of OUD in the correctional system CCS is now not only assisting inmates with improving their lives, but also helping to mitigate the risks of criminal recidivism and its impact on the communities across Prince Edward Island.

Informal resolution – Featured Cases

Case summaries provide real-life examples of the work that we do. They provide examples of the types of complaints we receive and help us explain how we assess the concerns that are brought to our attention. The following examples reflect the types of issues that we deal with on a day to day basis. They do not, however, reflect all the work that we do.



Free from Supervision

Public Guardian and Trustee

A complainant who was subject to guardianship and trusteeship under the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) contacted our office with complaints about their experience. The complainant believed the PGT should have noticed sooner that the psychological condition that caused them to be placed under care had improved. The individual also complained that the PGT made decisions on their behalf which they believed were unfair, including placing them in a private care home that they believed overcharged for its services and selling their personal vehicle.

We contacted the PGT through our informal resolution process to relay the complaints and to pose questions about the PGT's actions and decisions. We learned that although the PGT had no written policies regarding the monitoring of a client's clinical condition, in practice they do monitor for improvements. This practice is what led to the termination of the guardianship and trusteeship in this case. The PGT explained that the termination of guardianship and trusteeship is ultimately dependent on professional medical opinions and the will of the courts. The PGT can only provide opinions in support of an argument for removing an individual from care.

In the complainant's case, the PGT arranged for medical reassessments of their condition within a few months

of becoming aware that they may no longer require guardianship and trusteeship. When the medical assessment supported that conclusion, the PGT acted diligently to request the complainant's removal from guardianship and trusteeship by the courts, which occurred less than two months later.

As part of our investigation we learned that the PGT has provided input on proposed new legislation, the *Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act*, which provides for guidance on how and when reviews of guardianship and trusteeship orders should occur. If passed, we understand that the new legislation would codify the practice it already has in place.

With respect to the individual's complaint about the selling of their vehicle, we learned that the PGT made this decision based on a psychiatrist's opinion that their driver's license would not be reinstated. Despite the complainant's capacity eventually improving to the point that they were again able to drive, we could not fault the PGT for taking action based on the doctor's opinion. To address their complaint about expenses they were charged while residing at the care home, we obtained records from PGT of what was charged, which we confirmed was not unreasonable.

Following a thorough assessment of the complaint, we determined that no further action was required and closed our file.



Informal resolution – Featured Cases (continued)



Freedom to Choose *Public Trustee*

A senior under trusteeship complained that the Public Trustee had not completed their tax returns and was refusing to allow them to move to another care home. The complainant explained that the Trustee was not returning their calls to answer their questions. We contacted the Public Trustee who confirmed that the complainant's taxes were in fact filed. The Trustee explained that they did not have a say over where the complainant could live. We told the complainant they were free to choose where to live and helped them contact the Trustee about their desire to move.



Keeping in Touch with Family *Provincial Correctional Centre*

An inmate in custody at the Provincial Correctional Centre (PCC) complained that they were being prevented from contacting their sister. Staff at the PCC denied the request because they believed the complainant was lying about their relationship. Our investigator confirmed their relationship. We relayed that information to PCC. They made their own enquiries and confirmed to us that they decided to add the sister to the inmate's call list.



Licensing Fairness *Department of Transportation and Infrastructure and Access PEI*

A senior who had previously held an Ontario driver's license returned to Canada from overseas and applied for a PEI driver's license through Access PEI. The complainant was told that because the country they moved from did not have a reciprocal driver's license agreement with PEI, and because their former Ontario driver's license had expired, they would need to apply for a new license and take all applicable knowledge and road tests.

We contacted the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure about the complainant's concerns and were told that because the individual held an Ontario license in the recent past, they could be issued a PEI driver's license without the need to re-test. The Access PEI agent the complainant had dealt with was unfamiliar with this policy. We encouraged a meeting between the complainant and a senior manager that resulted in the individual receiving a PEI driver's license.





Take a Deep Breath

Provincial Correctional Centre

An inmate at the Provincial Correctional Centre (PCC) complained that medical staff were not treating their acute breathing problems. Despite repeatedly asking for a medical assessment and submitting internal complaint forms about a lack of medical care, they received no response.

We contacted PCC through our informal resolution process to inquire about the complainant's medical status and responses to their internal request and complaint forms. Four days later, the complainant called us again to tell us that their symptoms were worsening and that they still had no response from healthcare or centre management. We reached out to PCC again and within two hours they met with the complainant to review their request and complaint forms. The next morning, the complainant saw a nurse who provided them with medication to improve their breathing. Later in the week the complainant was provided with additional medication to improve their symptoms. The complainant was also referred to medical specialists for further assessment.

The complainant was thankful for our involvement and believed it led to them receiving the medical care they needed. As the actions taken by PCC resolved the complainant's concerns, we considered the matter resolved and closed our file.



I Want my Mom

Provincial Correctional Centre

An inmate in custody at the Provincial Correctional Centre (PCC) complained that they were being prevented from contacting their mother and the Prince Edward Island Regulatory & Appeals Commission (IRAC) by phone. This was preventing the complainant from making an appeal that would allow them to keep their home.

We contacted PCC and were told that there was no reason that the complainant should be prevented from calling either their mother or IRAC. PCC explained that a staff error caused the confusion and that it would add both phone numbers to the complainant's approved contact list. We confirmed this occurred.





Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection)

An effective public service depends on the commitment of everyone working within it to maintain the highest possible standards of honesty, openness and accountability. *The Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Protection Act* creates a safe avenue for public servants to report wrongdoing or make complaints of reprisal. Employees covered by this legislation can choose whether to report internally or directly to the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner.

Employees can generally recognize when something is wrong. Deciding what to do next is sometimes challenging. As a first step, we encourage employees to speak with one of our investigators. Employees are protected when they seek our advice.

What is a wrongdoing?

A wrongdoing occurs when a public entity:

- breaks a law
- manages public money incompetently and/or negligently
- does something (or fails to do something) that causes danger to life, health or safety of people or the environment
- encourages others to do any of the above

What is a reprisal?

A reprisal occurs when an employee has asked for advice, made a disclosure or participated in an investigation of a disclosure and the public entity has taken action against them as a result.

This includes measures such as:

- a dismissal, layoff or suspension
- a demotion, transfer, reprimand or elimination of position
- change of employment location or hours of work
- reduction in pay

The benefits of an effective whistleblower protection program include:

- identification of a wrongdoing that might go undiscovered
- resolving matters internally
- providing a channel for internal complaints
- avoiding potential litigation
- avoiding potential negative publicity
- exercising legislative authority
- managing challenging complaints
- promoting public and employee confidence



In 2022/23 OmbudsPEI received six inquiries by telephone about issues related to whistleblowing but none proceeded to make a formal disclosure. There were no disclosures or investigations reported to us by any Deputy Ministers or CEOs of public entities under section 11 or 12 of the *Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Protection Act*.



Sandy Hermiston
*Ombudsperson and
Public Interest Disclosure
Commissioner*

Sandy Hermiston was appointed as PEI's first Ombudsperson in February 2022. She has more than 35 years of experience as a lawyer, most of which have been spent in the public service. Sandy has worked in the Ombudsman world since 2014, first as counsel to the Alberta Ombudsman and more recently as the Cayman Island's first-ever Ombudsman.

Sandy's public service career began in 1990 in Canada's north (Yellowknife, NWT) where she spent seven years living and working in a small jurisdiction where the breadth of work was wide and communities tight knit. She then moved "south" to Edmonton, Canada's most northern major city, where she spent 17 years as general counsel to an administrative tribunal, acquiring extensive expertise in administrative law and procedural fairness. In 2014 Sandy was appointed general counsel to the independent offices of the Alberta Ombudsman and Public Interest Commissioner, working to resolve complaints of fairness and whistleblowing disclosures. Ms. Hermiston was appointed as the first-ever Ombudsman of the Cayman Islands in 2017 where she successfully established an office dealing with typical Ombudsman complaints as well as freedom of information, data protection, whistle-blower protection and public complaints about police misconduct.

During her career as a public servant, Sandy has demonstrated her ability to establish newly-created roles and offices, having done so in four different jurisdictions. She possesses a broad understanding and knowledge of public administration and government structures and functions, as well as significant experience in the governance of public bodies.

Sandy is committed to ensuring fair treatment, reasonable decision-making and transparency

in PEI. She sees complaints and whistleblower disclosures as opportunities for meaningful dialogue and improvement. She will ensure that where things go wrong, action is taken to put them right wherever possible.



Matthew Chapman
Deputy Ombudsperson

Matthew joined OmbudsPEI as the Deputy Ombudsperson in June 2022, bringing with

him a wealth of experience in ombudsperson investigations and

in helping the federal government recognize egregious historical harms. Coordinating and investigating complaints and disclosures made to OmbudsPEI, Matt relies on a broad skillset developed over his academic and professional careers.

Matt obtained his commercial pilot's license from Selkirk College in 2002 and worked in the aviation industry in northern Saskatchewan before obtaining a bachelor's degree in history in 2007. After researching and writing a book for the Navy in 2008, he earned a master's degree in military history from the University of Victoria in 2010. For the next five years Matt worked with the federal government to help compensate victims of childhood physical and sexual abuse suffered at Indian Residential Schools across Canada.

In 2015 Matt joined the office of the BC Ombudsperson where he conducted hundreds of investigations and helped public agencies shift their practices to become more administratively fair. Of note in his ombuds career, Matt was an investigator in the BC Ombudsperson's largest investigation to date, resulting in the public report *Misfire: The 2012 Ministry of Health Employment Terminations and Related Matters*. He was also the lead investigator and

(Continued...)



Meet the Team

author of the public report Severed Trust: Enabling WorkSafeBC to do the right thing when its mistakes hurt injured workers.

Matt is grateful to all Islanders for welcoming him and his family and is honored to help the province establish a meaningful, effective and enduring Office of the Ombudsperson.



Lauren McKearney
*Office Manager /
Executive Assistant*

Lauren joined OmbudsPEI in June 2022 as their Office Manager/Executive Assistant. After graduating from the University of Prince Edward Island in 2017 with a Bachelor of Arts, Lauren moved on to work in the non-profit, government, and legal sectors. Lauren contributes to the success of the office through her customer service and management skills.

As a born and raised Islander, Lauren is proud to be a part of the first team to serve the people of Prince Edward Island in the Office of the Ombudsperson and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner. Lauren hopes that through her and the OmbudsPEI team, the highest level of public sector accountability and transparency can be achieved.



Alexandra Dalton
Investigator

Alex joined the OmbudsPEI team in July 2022 as an Investigator. Alex has deep roots in PEI, having been born and raised on a beef and potato farm in West Prince. After high school she moved to New Brunswick for eight years where she completed an undergraduate degree in international relations at Mount Allison University (2012) and a law degree at the University of New Brunswick (2015). After articling she worked as a lawyer for six years in the areas of criminal, mental health and family law in PEI, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan, including acting as a prosecutor and public defender. These experiences have afforded her the ability to connect with and help people from all walks of life.

Alex is happy to have returned home to PEI. She is an active member of the community, having been president of a local charity (Community Legal Information), a member of the PEI Youth Futures Council and a volunteer at numerous free legal information clinics. In her spare time, she enjoys travelling, being outdoors and spending time with family and friends.

Alex is excited to be part of the OmbudsPEI team and is looking forward to serving Islanders.





Cody McEachern
*Investigator/
 Communications Officer*

Cody joined the OmbudsPEI team in April 2023 as an investigator. Born in Fredericton, N.B. and raised in P.E.I., Cody has spent the last eight years exploring the Maritimes both personally and professionally as a journalist and photographer. While attending Holland College in 2015 for journalism, Cody began his reporting career as a freelance business and tourism writer for Brunswick News and got his first summer internship at the company's Woodstock paper, the Bugle-Observer.

After graduating in 2017, Cody moved to Halifax N.S. to work as a freelance reporter with The Halifax Metro, before moving into a full-time reporter position for Truro Daily News in Truro, N.S. From there, Cody spent six years working in newsrooms in both Nova Scotia and P.E.I. as a reporter, lead editor and news director, most recently as the business and municipal reporter for The Guardian in Charlottetown.

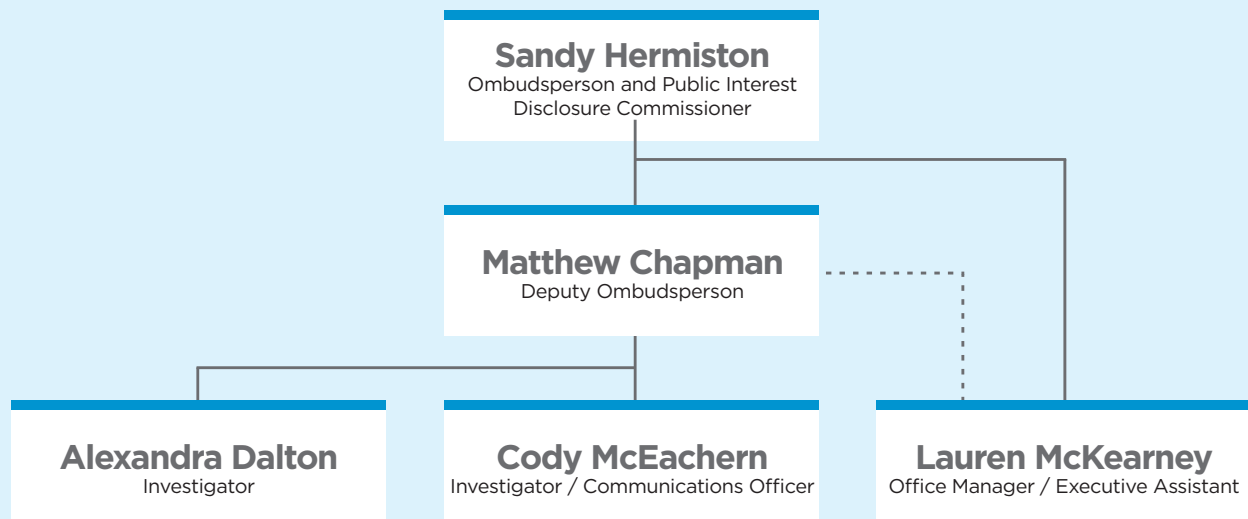
Throughout his career, Cody has gained experience through his reporting on the topics of housing, business, mental health and addictions, municipal issues, labour, education and healthcare, among others. In his spare time, he can be found spending time with his wife and two kids, playing guitar, flying his drone or taking photos of the Island's unique landscapes and towns.

Cody is excited to be a part of the OmbudsPEI team and is looking forward to using his experience to help advance fairness for Islanders.





OmbudsPEI Organizational Chart



A FAIR LINK



The theme of our first Annual Report is bridge building. In this report we will highlight this office's work to build a bridge for Islanders to raise concerns about fairness in the programs and services provided by PEI's municipal and provincial governments. The inspiration for this theme came from PEI's fixed link (now known as the Confederation Bridge). The idea of creating a fixed link to connect Islanders to the rest of Canada was first proposed in 1885 by Senator George Howlan. It took more than one hundred years for the fixed link to become a reality.

The Bridge was built by creating major structural pieces and then connecting them. Creating an Ombuds office is a very similar process – during our first year of operation we have been creating our major structural pieces. Thankfully we have also been able to connect many of those pieces.

History of our office

In 1998, Herb Dickieson, the only New Democrat ever elected to the PEI Legislative Assembly, introduced a bill to create an office of the Ombudsman. While that bill was defeated, the creation of the office was then part of the Liberal Party's election platform leading up to the 2007 election.

However, it wasn't until 2019, after the Progressive Conservative Party and the Green Party both promised to create an Ombuds office, that the proposal became reality. The bill to create this office passed in 2021 with the office opening its doors almost 25 years after it was first proposed.

OmbudsPEI

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



Approachable | Fair | Impartial
Approachable | Équitable | Impartial



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