



## **APPOINTMENT OF OMBUDSMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**APPOINTMENT BRIEF**  
**JANUARY 2020**



## AN INTRODUCTION

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The Property Ombudsman (TPO) has been providing consumers and property agents with an alternative dispute resolution service since 1990.

The Ombudsman's resolutions are designed to achieve a full and final settlement of the dispute and all claims made by either party. The Ombudsman can, where appropriate, make compensatory awards in individual cases up to a maximum of £25,000 for actual and quantifiable loss and/or for aggravation, distress and/or inconvenience caused by the actions of an agent.

Our core values which state that we will be accessible, clear, professional, fair and transparent align with those of the Ombudsman Association and underpin all the work we do.

### **TPO staff**

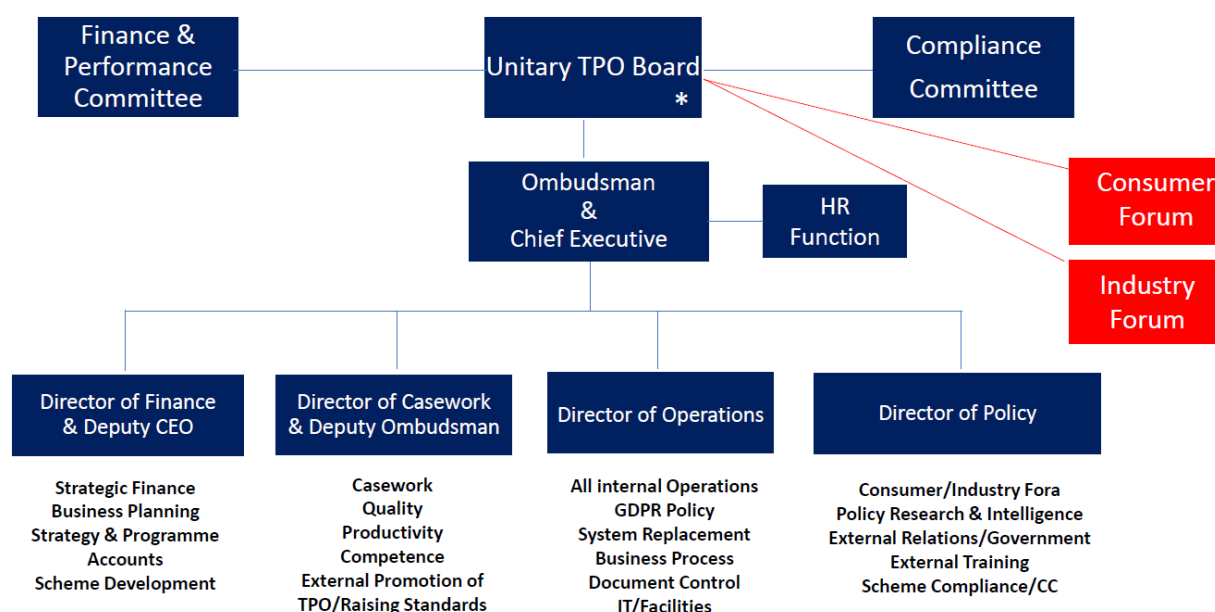
Our Salisbury office employs around 80 members of staff tasked with varying duties: from membership and complaints administration to complaints mediation and investigation.

Our people are knowledgeable, approachable and passionate about what we do. We believe that all our employees should be given the opportunity to fulfil their potential. This means that when working for TPO everyone is encouraged to participate and feel that their contribution is valued.

## Independence

TPO is a not-for-profit independent company. Recently replacing TPO's former Council and Board, its unitary Board has 9 Non-Executive Directors, including its independent Chair, Baroness Diana Warwick.

The Board appoints the Ombudsman, sets the Terms of Reference for the scheme and has responsibility for raising sufficient funds for the administration and functioning of the scheme. The Board has no role in the discharge of the Ombudsman's duties or decisions.



\* Remunerations & Nominations Committee will be chaired by the Chair of the Unitary Board

## Government Approval

TPO is a government approved scheme to provide independent redress in relation to disputes between consumers and property agents.

Statistics and commentary for TPO's approvals from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Chartered Trading Standards Institute and the National Trading Standards Estate Agency Team can be found [here](#).



## **Redress not Regulation**

The Ombudsman provides redress, where appropriate, to consumers whose complaints are considered on a case by case basis. The Ombudsman is not a regulator and does not have the authority to take regulatory or legal action against an agent, impose regulatory fines or dictate the way agents conduct their business.

## **Key outcomes**

TPO has gone from strength to strength over the last few years. Despite an increased workload, due in significant part to an increase in the number of Residential Leasehold Management members, 2018 saw:

- Over £2m returned to consumers in awards
- 97% of awards paid
- 92% of complex cases resolved within 3 months by year end
- 100% of local resolutions processed within 10 days

## A Key Objective

Despite producing a 'hot topic' note and publishing case reviews, the number of complaints continues to rise, as does demand for its services. An important objective for TPO is to identify and address trends in consumer detriment. The Consumer and Industry Forums have been set up to enable stakeholder discussions to highlight such issues, and action is being taken to produce more guidance, tighten up best practice in the Codes of Practice, and ensure consumers are properly advised on the risks of appointing two agents.





## **An action-packed year, and what's to come**

During 2018 TPO underwent significant modernisation across its governance, systems, skills and services. It saw an important and successful transition from a Council and Board to a single Unitary Board with a more defined external focus. New systems are in place which will mean more streamlined processes and faster decision making on complex casework.

A major challenge over the last year has been to do everything to understand, respond to, and prepare for changes in the policy landscape. TPO has a key role in responding to government consultations and calls for evidence to ensure that TPO's voice is heard as the sector stands up and is counted on regulation, service excellence, and closing redress gaps.

You can read our responses to some key consultations here:

- Protecting consumers in the letting and managing agent market – [link](#)
- Improving the home buying process – [link](#)
- All Party Parliamentary Group for Excellence in the Built Environment: New Homes Ombudsman Inquiry, Call for Evidence – [link](#)

## **Looking ahead**

Moving forward, TPO believes that its role can be further extended to cover other gaps in redress, particularly around New Homes. It will continue to work closely in partnership with consumer groups, the industry, government and other stakeholders to update the Sales and Lettings Codes of Practice to reflect new legislation and best practice.

Our new Ombudsman and CEO will be joining at a time of change and significant uncertainty in the property market and the political landscape. As such they will have a real opportunity to further modernise our brand and approach, to build TPO's profile as an effective and independent redress service and to ensure the organisation is recognised as a trusted organisation in the property industry, and a key partner for government.

# THE ROLE

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## **Job Purpose**

The CEO and Ombudsman role is a key strategic leadership post operating within a complex and changing external landscape.

A key purpose of the role will be to act as a visible figurehead within TPO and in the industry, ensuring the organisation is represented effectively with policy makers and a wide range of stakeholders.

In addition to this a further strategic purpose of the role will be to take the lead on developing TPO's long-term plans, and shaping its policies, systems, resources and culture in order to ensure the continuous improvement and long-term success of the organisation.

The final and fundamental purpose of the role is to discharge the functions of the Office of Ombudsman, ensuring transparent independence in all decision making undertaken.

## **Main Tasks and Responsibilities**

### **Strategic**

- To play a key leadership role in shaping overall strategy in collaboration with the Board, ensuring it has realistic timeframes, milestones and objectives and assures the financial strength of the organisation
- To receive unresolved complaints, investigate and issue decisions as set out in the Terms of Reference
- To ensure the successful implementation of the agreed Strategic Plan
- To analyse problematic situations and occurrences and provide solutions to ensure the organisation's survival and growth

### **Management**

- To maintain and strengthen the financial position of the organisation and ensure TPO is a viable, commercially astute organisation over the long term
- To ensure the day to day operations of the organisation are run according to the values, standards and budgets agreed by the Board
- To lead, manage, motivate and empower managers and staff
- To develop a high performing managerial team
- To review working methods and policies, in conjunction with senior management team (SMT), in order to ensure that arrangements are fit for purpose
- To ensure effective performance of all teams through setting and reviewing appropriate standards, targets and key performance indicators
- To ensure open and transparent ways of working throughout the organisation, with good communication and engagement at all levels
- To ensure adherence to legal guidelines and in-house policies in order to maintain the organisation's legality and compliance

- To demonstrate a commitment to the principles of human rights, equality, fairness and diversity in all aspects of work

## **Governance**

- To ensure the Board is given appropriate advice and direction in order to enable it to fulfil its role
- To ensure effective running and forward planning of the governance and administrative machinery
- To ensure that risk management mechanisms are appropriate and proportionate to the risk appetite of the Office and are recorded on the Risk Register
- To ensure that the Office complies with relevant statutory and regulatory responsibilities

## **External**

- To represent the Office in delivering presentations to a wide stakeholder audience and contributing to conferences and training courses organised by external bodies
- To act as spokesperson for TPO, imparting its Vision and Values to a wide audience
- To represent the Office at national conferences and meetings
- Build relationships and shared working with other Ombudsmen and relevant membership organisations
- To oversee the organisation's public relations and media activities; and act as the spokesperson as appropriate
- To keep up to date with government policy trends in the industry and the issues and challenges presented by the political and economic environment

## **Working Relationships and Contacts:**

### **Internal**

- The Chair of the Board and Non-Executive Directors
- The Senior Management Team (SMT)
- The Corporate team
- All Employees
- Contract staff

### **External**

- Ombudsman Association
- Approval bodies including MHCLG, CTSI, NTSELAT
- Industry bodies
- The wider Ombudsman community nationally
- Consumer bodies
- Enforcement bodies





## PERSON SPECIFICATION

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Candidates for this role should bring all or most of the following;

### **Experience and knowledge:**

- A track record of strategic leadership, successful delivery and managing change in an organisation of appropriate scale and complexity
- Experience of working at board level or working closely with boards or trustees
- Experience of engaging with business leaders, policy makers, the media and a range of other cross-sector audiences
- Evidence of a commercial mindset and an understanding of good business practice and financial management
- Experience of leading and inspiring diverse teams
- Experience of complaint handling, ombudsman services, redress schemes or in quasi-judicial or other relevant settings would be an advantage
- Knowledge and senior-level networks within the property space would be an advantage, or otherwise the ability to assimilate quickly the required knowledge and build strong networks

## Skills and personal qualities

- Good people skills and personal impact– with an ability to engage with and influence a variety of different people
- Excellent communication and public speaking skills
- Complex decision-making capability
- Sensitivity, diplomacy and understanding of complexity
- Familiarity with diverse business functions such as marketing, PR, finance etc.
- In-depth knowledge of corporate governance and general management best practices
- An entrepreneurial mindset with outstanding organisational and leadership skills
- Analytical abilities and problem-solving skills

## TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

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Salary: £112,542

Holiday entitlement: 30 days

Pension: 10% employer contribution

Life assurance scheme (up to age 70)

Contract: Full time, permanent

Probationary period: 6 months

Location: Salisbury

Exclusions: please note that our Terms of Reference preclude us from employing anyone as Ombudsman who is currently, or who has in the past five years, been employed within the property industry.

## HOW TO APPLY

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Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to The Property Ombudsman on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at **[www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments)**, using code QAQDB.

Click on the '**apply**' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter.

The closing date for applications is noon on **Tuesday 18 February 2020**.

If you would like to speak with the Ombudsman before applying please contact us.

### GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please **do not** include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

*The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.*



