

Un Llais Cymru, Hydref 2014

One Voice Wales, October 2014

Nick Bennett

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales



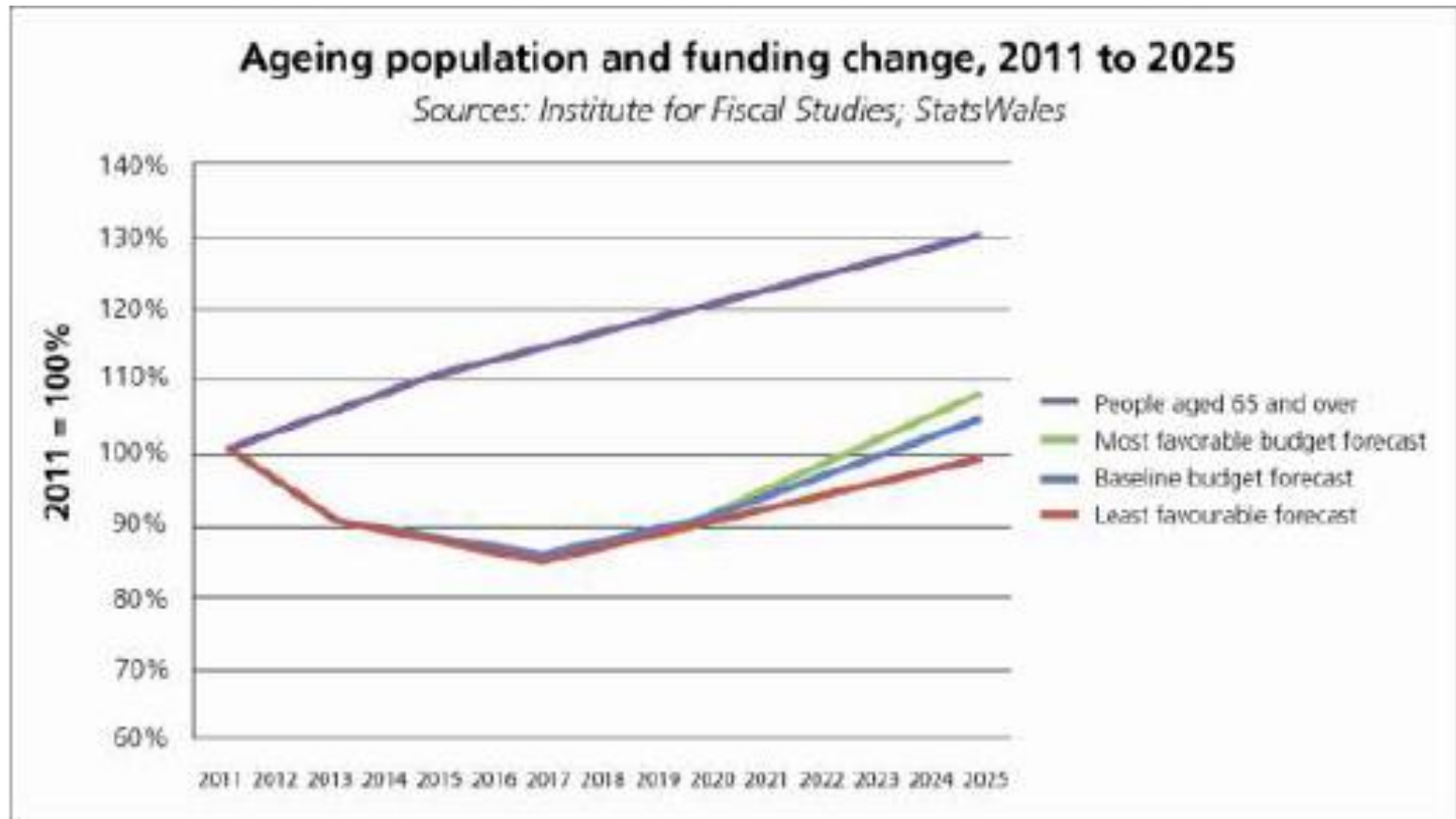
Investigating Complaints

Improving Services

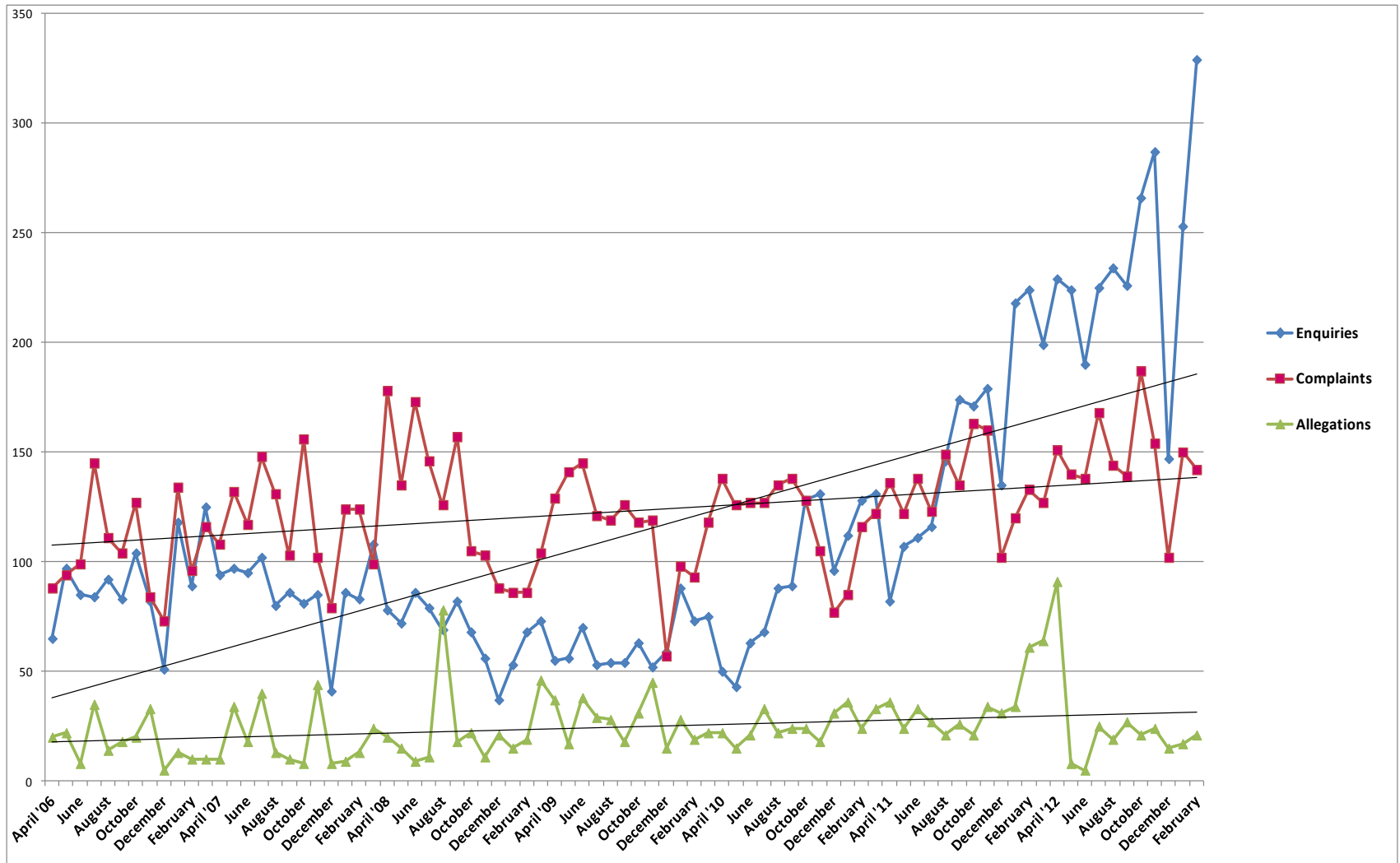
Context

- Scottish referendum
- Further constitutional change?
- Barnett Formula
- Public service austerity
- Williams Commission
- Mergers?

Extract from Report of Commission for Public Service Governance and Delivery: Ageing Population



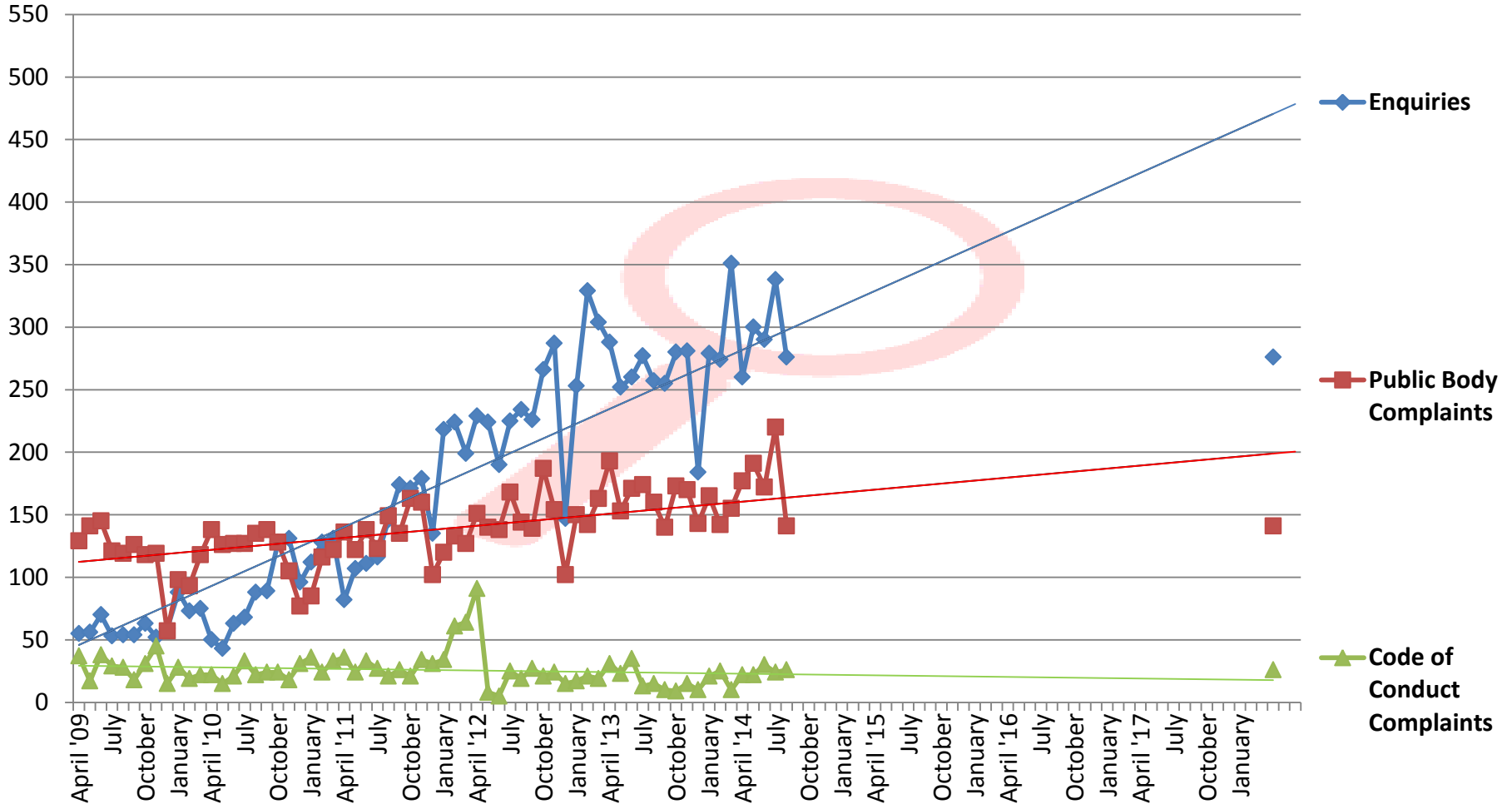
New Workload Trends Since 2006/07



Investigating Complaints

Improving Services

Enquiries and Complaints Projections to March 2018



Investigating Complaints

Improving Services

Community Councils

- Diversity
- 67% of seats uncontested
- 12% of seats not contested at all
- So only 1 in 5 elected in a public poll
- “Community and neighbourhood representation must be maintained and enhanced. To achieve thatmerged or enlarged.

The Code of Conduct



The Code of Conduct for members of local authorities in Wales

Guidance from the
Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
for members of county and county borough councils,
fire and rescue authorities, and
national park authorities



Y Cod Ymddygiad ar gyfer aelodau awdurdodau lleol yng Nghymru

Canllawiau gan Ombwdsmon
Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus Cymru
ar gyfer aelodau cynghorau sir a chynghorau
bwrdeistref sirol, awdurdodau tân ac achub, ac
awdurdodau parciau cenedlaethol

Investigating Complaints

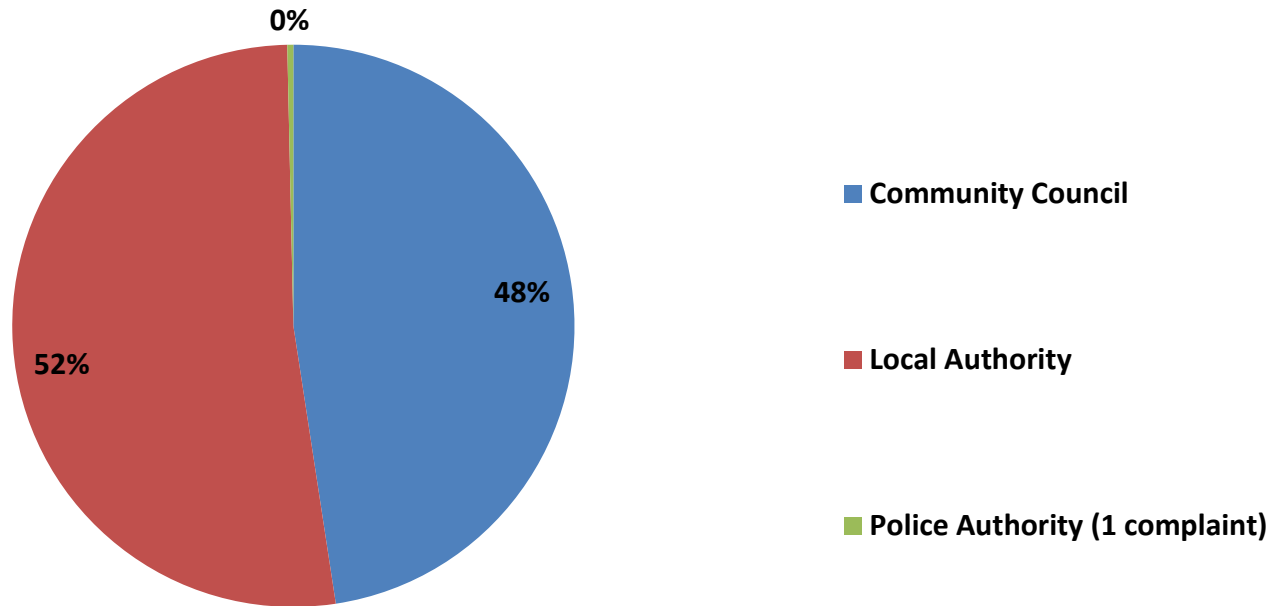
Improving Services

The Nolan Principles

- Selflessness
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Equality and Respect
- Openness
- Accountability
- Leadership



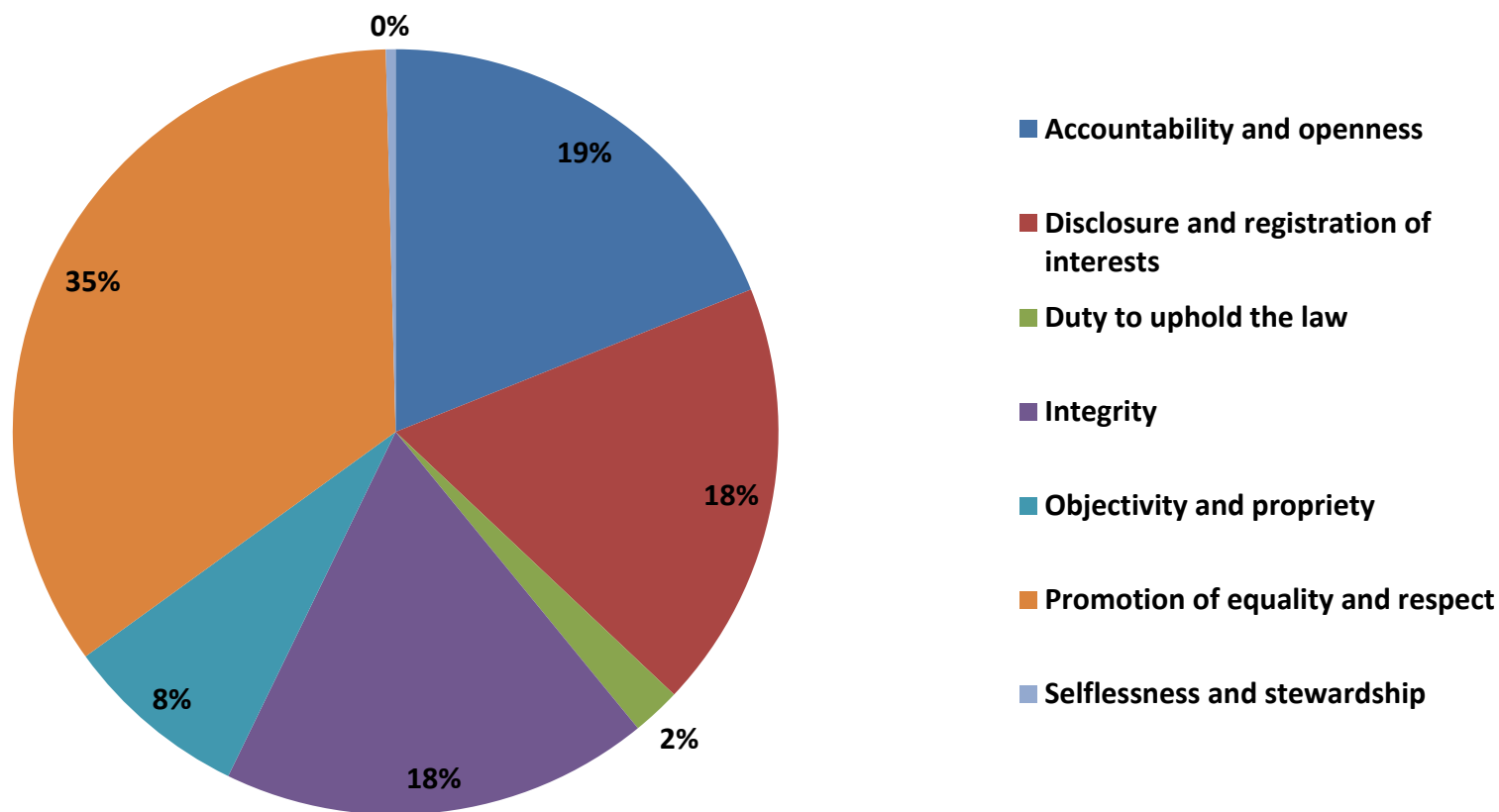
Code of Conduct Complaints by Type of Authority



Investigating Complaints

Improving Services

Subject of Code of Conduct Complaints



Investigating Complaints

Improving Services

How we investigate

- Complaints Advice Team
- Evidence
- 2 stage test
- 1st Stage – 2nd Stage ? Monitoring Officer
- Investigations Private and within 12 months
- Role of Standards Committee and the Adjudication Panel of Wales

Complaints Not Upheld

Will not attract sanction	22
No prima facie evidence of breach	251
Before member elected/bound by code	1
Withdrawn	12
Little further can be achieved	5
Investigation: No evidence of breach	23
Total	314

Discontinued

Discontinued	15
Discontinued, referred to Monitoring Officer	2
Total	17

Complaints Upheld

No action necessary	13
Refer to Standards Committee	15
Refer to Adjudication Panel	5
Total	33

Vexatious Complaints

- A breach in itself!
- Minority problem
- Factionalism and tit for tat
- Broader reputational risk
- 20% of code complaints from 1 individual council!
- Over 70 complaints about one Community Council

Conclusion

- New opportunities for local democracy
- Need to focus on serious cases
- Focus on Nolan principles
- Not least leadership!