**Organisation Improvement Framework**

# SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN

## Edinburgh

## Assessment Report

**Commercial in Confidence**

*UNDERTAKEN BY*
**JOAN BOYD**

**On behalf of Investors in People Scotland**

**Project Reference Number: 10/0963**

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# INDEX

**INTRODUCTION**

Established in 2002 by the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) replaced three previous offices:

- The Scottish Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman
- The Local Government Ombudsman for Scotland
- THE Housing Association Ombudsman for Scotland

The office of the SPSO investigates complaints about organisations that provide public services such as the National Health Service, Councils, Housing Associations, Higher Education Establishments, Scottish Government Departments and Agencies. In addition, outreach services are provided to raise awareness of the SPSO across the general public and to promote high quality complaint handling in those bodies coming within the remit of the organisation. The main aim of the organisation is to resolve disputes fairly, reasonably, quickly and impartially.

The present Ombudsman was appointed in May 2009 and has overall responsibility for the operation of the SPSO. He is supported by the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Policy and External Communications and operational Team Managers. Wishing to improve its external standing with key stakeholders, the organisation is facing continual challenge. It is currently going through cultural change. High on the agenda are improving the consistency of management approach and creating more effective and efficient working practices. The office of the SPSO is situated in Edinburgh where 49 employees are based.

An Early Assessment took place in March 2010. At that time further development was required in regard to the following areas of the Standard:

Planning Learning and Development   (2.1 and 2.2)
Management Effectiveness   (4.1, 4.3 and 5.3)
Performance Measurement   (9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5)
Continuous Improvement   (10.1, 10.2, 10.3)

Since then, responsibility for complaints from prisoners has been passed to the organisation. Changes have been made to the team structures and voluntary severance has taken place resulting in a small reduction in staffing. Complaints from Water customers may also be transferred to SPSO's remit later this year which will again create further change. Also, resulting from the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 a complaints Standard Authority role across the whole public sector will result in increased organisational responsibility for the SPSO in the future.

**OUTCOME**

Having carried out the assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided by Investors in People UK, I am satisfied beyond any doubt that the SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN meets the requirements of the Investors in People Standard. I recommend to the Recognition Panel that the SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN be recognised as an Investor in People.

**PRIORITIES/OBJECTIVES**

As agreed during the planning activity, your Assessment focused on the following objectives:

- To give feedback on the appropriate aspects of the Investors in People Framework that relate to your organisation's objectives/priorities/issues.

**FINDINGS AGAINST PRIORITIES/OBJECTIVES**

**To be an accountable, best value organisation**

Since the last review you have created more focus on **Learning and Development** which is structured and linked to your five core objectives. You have clear skills criteria and training needs analysis has been undertaken. Your learning and development plan is available to all staff on the intranet. An example of very good practice was demonstrated by the inclusion of one team in discussions about the learning and development they need as a team.

There would be advantage going forward for you to consider introducing a skills matrix for each operational area. In particular, this would be of benefit as the work load and responsibility increases in the future. It could assist in identifying opportunities for building capabilities across teams and achieving efficiencies for resource planning.

Objectives are set for learning and development during individual pre learning discussion and the completion of the request form. The impact is measured during post discussion. In particular, the discussion on how learning has been applied in the workplace, at the 3 and 6 month stages is very good practice. Post discussion following the activity and how this links to and impacts upon the achievement of your core objectives will strengthen understanding and evaluation of developmental activities. Other ways in which you measure the impact of learning activities is through observations, informal one to one discussions and share and learn sessions. "*There are share and learn sessions at the team meetings*".

The Investors in People Standard is based on the Plan-Do-Review cycle. **Planning** includes the publicly stated intention to achieve a goal - whether this is an organisational business objective or a desire to invest in your staff through focused training and development. The Standard requires that all employees know of, and believe, senior management's commitment to develop them in line with the Business's objectives. Planning also covers the review of current resources to determine what additional resources (financial or skills) will be needed in order to achieve the Business's objectives now and in the longer term. **Doing,** is the demonstration that action has taken place to implement the learning and development necessary for staff to achieve the business objectives. It also requires consistency of approach to the implementation of your strategy for performance management, recognition and employee engagement. **Reviewing,** or measuring success, ensures that any learning from the processes or activities engaged in can be identified and fed back into the planning process/strategy before the next cycle's goals are determined.

Your **Leadership and Management Strategy** is critical to achieving your aims. The undernoted diagram suggest/indicates how you can utilise IIP to support your objectives in the very changing and challenging environment you are likely to continue experiencing as you move forward.



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Part of your **Leadership and Management Strategy (the Planning)** includes defined capabilities utilising a competency framework which is based on the Management Standards Centre (MSC) occupational standards for management and leadership. Managers spoke about the framework and how you were focussing on managerial skills. From next month your Appraisal process will include the competencies. This was discussed with all staff at a recent away day. *"Absolutely marvellous manager". "Clear expectations are set".*

Managers are very self directed in regard to management development taking place. Examples of development included a tailored in-house workshop, mentoring, sharing knowledge with international peers and visits to other Ombudsman services. I recommend that you consider specific development related to coaching skills, interpersonal skills and managing change. I'd also invite you to consider setting up a regular share and learn session for all managers where good practice could be shared and issues discussed. Alternatively more formal coaching/mentoring could be put in place.

With regard to **Management Effectiveness, (the Doing)** it is clear that this has improved since my last visit. Staff consistently described their managers as:

- Having knowledge of the business, understanding, empathy
- Being open, honest, encouraging, fair, approachable, supportive and professional
- Leading by example, setting out the bigger picture and clear expectations
- Listening, communicating well and problem solving

The outcomes demonstrated are much stronger and comments around management effectiveness were much more positive at this visit. There are different management styles in place which, I believe is a positive aspect. It is also clear that the interpersonal skill levels vary across the management team. That offers opportunity for inconsistent approach to the implementation of your strategy for performance management and employee engagement (the **Doing**). I recommend you consider introducing methods of measuring management effectiveness. *"I have one of the better managers". "People skills are my manager's best attributes". "Really good team leader". "There could be more clarity around the allocation of work". "People skills could be improved". "Micro manages".*

I would also like to mention that in general there is a clear indication that constructive feedback has improved since my last visit through regular one to ones, team discussions and the improved quality assurance process. "*Hugely constructive feedback now". "The one to ones are regular as are case reviews". "Open to discussion and there is rational decision making".*

You are a very ethical, values based organisation and I believe there is an opportunity for you to utilise your values to enhance understanding across the organisation of what your values means for everyone in terms of how they are expected to work and how they can demonstrate the values by their behaviours during day to day interactions as managers, individuals and teams.

**Continuous Improvement (the Reviewing) -** The alignment of the learning and development strategy with the business aims and the outcomes of the pre/post course process has improved the evaluation and understanding of learning and development, its benefits and impacts on performance.  It is still early days for some of the improvements implemented and as the processes become more embedded there will be greater clarity and understanding.

Senior managers consistently confirmed the direct cost and demonstrated their understanding of the time cost of learning and development.  There would be benefit in sharing this information with the extended management team to enhance their understanding of this.

Benefits and impacts on performance included:

- Improved creditability of SPSO in the market place.  In particular the professional image created within the Scottish Prison Service and the positive feedback from that organisation
- Your ability to obtain a professional training contract which generated income for SPSO
- Improved efficient service to complainants
- Better decision making, better quality of training.  For example, new trainees have developed ideas and improved delivery styles
- A 52% reduction in open cases at the end of March 2010 against the previous year
- You resolved 3524 complaints representing a 22% increase over the previous year
- Staff are highly motivated and have more confidence
- There is more flexibility within teams due to cross skilling

Examples were given of how learning and development had helped individuals, the team and overall performance.  *"Train the trainer refreshed knowledge, gave the team more flexibility and promotes good complaints handling".  "Share and learn means we handle complaints better and improve the image of SPSO". "Procedures are improved and we work more efficiently which gives a better service".  "We are getting through the work more efficiently".*

Improvements to the way in which people are managed and developed included, the review of the structure, more focus on the business and greater clarity of understanding of expectations.  Changes to the quality assurance process and guidance, the introduction of the pre/post learning discussions and leadership training were also described.  *"We are a lean mean machine now".*

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS**

**To be an accountable, best value organisation**

**Learning and Development (the Planning) –** In line with previous observations you could consider introducing a skills matrix for each operational area.  In particular, this would be of benefit as the work load and responsibility increases in the future.  I'm aware you wish to build a specialist team and to create more flexibility across the organisation.  A matrix system could assist in ease of identifying opportunities for building capabilities across teams and achieving efficiencies for resource planning.  (2.1, 2.2)

**Leadership and Management Strategy (the Planning) -** Looking at the capabilities of managers and the skills required for managing people would create opportunities for leadership and management development.  For example, consider specific development related to coaching skills, interpersonal skills and managing change.  I'd also invite you to encourage managers to share knowledge and experience and utilise skills across the management team.  For example, setting up a regular share and learn session for all managers where good practice could be shared and issues discussed.  Alternatively more formal coaching/mentoring could be put in place.  Setting out a skills matrix for leadership and management skills would give the team an opportunity to build upon each other skills and encourage peer support.  (4.1, 4.2)

**Management Effectiveness (the Doing) -** Consistent approaches and interpretation of human resource strategies are critical to ensuring staff are informed, development, well motivated, engaged and enjoy working for you.  **Management Effectiveness** is critical to achieving this.  A key area within the Standard, this is not concerned with the 'management of things' but rather with the 'management of people'.  A consistent approach to the implementation of the people management performance of any organisation underpins the whole IIP Standard and supports the ongoing growth and development of the Business.  You are aware that the benefits of being focused on people are increased staff retention, motivation, productivity and ease of cultural change within your organisation.  It would be very beneficial to ensure that systems are in place to measure the effectiveness ofmanagers and consistency of approach.  For example, you could create opportunities for upward feedback to managers, develop a 360 degree feedback system within the Appraisal process or introduce a specific survey utilising technology such as survey monkey or the IIPs survey tool.  (5.3)

You have strong values and are an ethical organisation.  Following on from my observations in the March 2010 report, I believe there is an opportunity for you to utilise your values to enhance understanding across the organisation of what they mean for everyone in terms of how they are expected to work and can demonstrate the values by their behaviours during

day to day interactions.  You are currently changing the Appraisal process to a competency based model.  I encourage you to consider bringing the behaviours that would demonstrate the values into the process.   This should strengthen understanding, help with staff engagement and continue to engender trust and mutual respect between managers and their teams. (Choice options 5.5, 5.9 and 5.16).   There are also links to inspirational leadership and trust and respect.  (Choice Options 5.7, 5.14, 5.21, 5.22 and 5.24).  The values are also reflected and link to organisational planning.  (Choice Options 1.7, 1.11, 1.13, 1.17, 1.19 and 1.23).  We can discuss this further during the Continuous Improvement Activity meeting.

**Continuous Improvement (the Reviewing) -** The alignment of the learning and development strategy with the business aims and the introduction of the pre/post course process has improved the evaluation and understanding of learning and development.  As the process fully embeds there will be greater clarity and understanding.  There would be real benefit in sharing this information with the extended management team to enhance their understanding of the importance of the commitment to and support for employee development.  (9, 10)

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS March 2010 Continuing Assessment Report**

Observations or recommendations in this section are included to offer you opportunities to consider how you might use the standard to support what you want to achieve.

**To improve a high quality, independent complaint handling Service and to be an accountable, best value organisation**

The Appraisal process is the formal way in which you identify individual development needs.  I am aware that you use Performance Agreements to capture personal development needs but these could be developed further into personal development plans.  I would recommend that you consider introducing these as part of the Appraisal process.  Whilst placing the responsibility for recording learning and development on the individual, PDPs can be of benefit by focussing in on the needs of the individual, stimulate meaningful discussion and assist the identification of objectives for learning and how this will be applied in the workplace.  It can also increase the understanding of individuals and managers across the organisation of the benefits and impacts of employee development and enhance understanding of its impact on improved performance across the organisation.  It is also useful in assisting employees to recognise how well they have progressed and can make the Appraisal more motivational. (2.3, 5.3, 9.5)

As an observation, I would invite you to consider undertaking a management training needs analysis, leadership and management profiles or learning questionnaires so that you can identify current skills levels and identify individual development needs. In particular, interpersonal skills are critical to changing mindsets, understanding emotional intelligence and staff engagement. You may wish to consider implementing a skills matrix for management development linked to the competencies. Creating opportunities for people managers to share good practice would be of benefit. Mentoring, coaching and peer support can also be very cost effective.

Another observation is utilising your values. This is an element of the choice options that you might consider. If everyone understands what the values mean in terms of how they are expected to work this can result in clarity of understanding and can be utilised as drivers for cultural change or changing mindsets. For example, SPSO aims to be courteous, considerate and respectful of people's rights. What does that mean for people in terms of demonstrating this during daily work/how they are expected to work? What does that mean for managers in terms of working together as a team, interacting with staff and supporting employee development? This can create greater clarity of behaviours, expectations, performance and team working.

**Management effectiveness – Evidence criteria 5.3**

As an observation, introducing mechanisms to encourage upward feedback from staff to managers would enable you to measure their effectiveness. For example, asking specific questions related to management behaviours during staff surveys may present opportunities. Encouraging managers to ask for upward feedback during one to ones or at team meetings would encourage open and honest dialogue and demonstrate that managers are willing to receive constructive feedback on how they can improve. Perhaps including specific questions around manager's behaviours in the Appraisal would open up dialogue and encourage upward feedback.

Whilst evidence criteria 5.4 and 6.3 is met there would be benefit is ensuring that managers are aware of their responsibilities for giving constructive feedback, ensuring staff recognise this as such and creating a culture of praise thanks and valuing individual contribution.

**Continuous Improvement –**
Managers should be reminded of their responsibilities for supporting development through discussion of objects for learning pre and post activity and linking objects to the corporate strategic aims and objectives or team objectives. 2.3, 9.4, 9.5)

**NEXT STEPS**

The IIP workshops designed for recognised organisations stretch participant's knowledge beyond the Standard into broader business and people management activities. In particular, the workshops related to Leadership and Management, Evaluation and Engagement and Empowerment may be of interest. You may also be interested in attending the IIP Knowledge Networking Groups and details of these and are available on the Website. It may be of benefit to explore the Investors in People on-line support called IIP Interactive. This contains a library of materials that you can download along with case studies and examples all linked to business themes within the framework. Go onto the IIP Website http://www.iipscotland.co.uk  clicking on IIP Interactive.

IIPs offers consultancy services and other organisations have found the IIP survey tool beneficial. IIPs works in partnership with Goodpractice.net. This organisation offers a useful on-line practical skills development tool across a range of areas, including management approaches, performance management, coaching etc. Details of this can also be found on the IIPs Website or information is available from the IIPs office.

I look forward to meeting with you all at the Continuous Improvement Activity (CIA) meeting which will take place on 3 May 2011. We can also further discuss the Annual Review option during this meeting.

I would like to take this opportunity to thanks everyone who took part in the Assessment for their contribution.

Name: Joan Boyd
Investors in People Specialist
Investors in People Scotland

Date: 15 March 2011

| | |
|---|---|
| ✔ | Areas of strength and meeting the requirements of the Standard |
| D | Met but with development areas |
| D | Not yet met but good practice is developing |
| X | Areas for development and not meeting the requirements of the Standard |
| n/a | Evidence not considered at this visit |

**The Framework**

| 01 | **Business Strategy** *A strategy for improving the performance of the organisation is clearly defined and understood.* | |
|---|---|---|
| **The Standard** | 1 | Top managers make sure the organisation has a clear purpose and vision supported by a strategy for improving its performance | ✔ |
| | 2 | Top managers make sure the organisation has a business plan with measurable performance objectives | ✔ |
| | 3 | Top managers make sure there are constructive relationships with representative groups (where they exist) and the groups are consulted when developing the organisation's business plan | D |
| | 4 | Managers can describe how they involve people when developing the organisations business plan and when agreeing team and individual objectives | ✔ |
| | 5 | People who are members of representative groups can confirm that top managers make sure there are constructive relationships with the groups and they are consulted when developing the organisation's business plan | D |
| | 6 | People can explain the objectives of their team and the organisation at a level that is appropriate to their role, and can describe how they are expected to contribute to developing and achieving them | ✔ |
| **Your Choice** | 7 | Top managers make sure the organisation has a clear set of core values that support its purpose and vision | n/a |
| | 8 | Top managers make sure the organisation's strategy is developed through the involvement of managers, people, stakeholders and other sources | n/a |
| | 9 | Top managers make sure the organisation has key performance indicators to improve its performance | n/a |

| 01 | **Business Strategy (Continued)** *A strategy for improving the performance of the organisation is clearly defined and understood.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Your Choice** | 10 | Top managers can describe how social responsibilities are taken into account in the organisation's strategy | n/a |
| | 11 | Top managers make sure the core values are at the heart of the organisation's strategy and govern the way it operates | n/a |
| | 12 | Top managers can describe how social responsibility is part of the culture of the organisation | n/a |
| | 13 | Managers can describe the organisation's core values and what this means to the way they are expected to manage | n/a |
| | 14 | Managers can describe how they are involved in developing the organisation's strategy | n/a |
| | 15 | Managers can describe the key performance indicators they use to improve the organisation's performance | n/a |
| | 16 | Managers can describe the organisation's social responsibilities and what this means to the way they are expected to manage | n/a |
| | 17 | Managers can describe how they make sure the core values are at the heart of the way the organisation operates | n/a |
| | 18 | Managers can describe how they make sure social responsibility is part of the culture of the organisation | n/a |
| | 19 | People can describe the organisation's core values and what this means to the way they are expected to work | n/a |

| 01 | **Business Strategy (Continued)** *A strategy for improving the performance of the organisation is clearly defined and understood.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Your Choice** | 20 | People can describe how they are involved in developing the organisation's strategy | n/a |
| | 21 | People can describe the key performance indicators used by the organisation to improve its performance | n/a |
| | 22 | People can describe the organisation's social responsibilities and what this means to the way they are expected to work | n/a |
| | 23 | People believe the core values are at the heart of the way the organisation operates | n/a |
| | 24 | People believe in and share the organisation's vision and values | n/a |
| | 25 | People believe that social responsibility is part of the culture of the organisation | n/a |
| **Plan:** Develop strategies to improve performance | | | |

| 02 | **Learning & Development Strategy**<br>*Learning and development is planned to achieve the organisation's objectives.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **The Standard** | 1 | Top managers can explain the organisation's learning and development needs, the plans and resources in place to meet them, how these link to achieving specific objectives and how the impact will be evaluated | ✔ |
| | 2 | Managers can explain team learning and development needs, the activities planned to meet them, how these link to achieving specific team objectives and how the impact will be evaluated | ✔ |
| | 3 | People can describe how they are involved in identifying their learning and development needs and the activities planned to meet them | ✔ |
| | 4 | People can explain what their learning and development activities should achieve for them, their team and the organisation | ✔ |
| **Your Choice** | 5 | Top managers can describe the learning and development strategy they have in place to build the organisation's capability to achieve its vision | n/a |
| | 6 | Top managers can describe how innovative and flexible ways of developing people are identified through internal and external sources, and how these are included in the organisation's learning and development strategy | n/a |
| | 7 | Top managers can describe how they have created a culture that encourages continuous learning and promotes the development of skills and knowledge at every level | n/a |
| | 8 | Managers can describe the plans they have in place to build their team's capability to contribute to achieving the organisation's vision | n/a |
| | 9 | Managers can describe how they involve people in identifying the learning and development needs of their team and the activities planned to meet them | n/a |
| | 10 | Managers can describe how they take account of people's different learning styles when planning learning and development | n/a |

| 02 | **Learning & Development Strategy (Continued)** *Learning and development is planned to achieve the organisation's objectives.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Your Choice** | 11 | Managers can describe how they act as a role model for continuous learning | n/a |
| | 12 | People can confirm that their learning and development is planned to build their future capability to contribute to achieving the organisation's vision | n/a |
| | 13 | People can describe how they are involved in identifying the learning and development needs of their team and the activities planned to meet them | n/a |
| | 14 | People can describe what team learning and development activities should achieve for the team and the organisation | n/a |
| | 15 | People can confirm that learning and development takes account of their preferred learning style | n/a |
| | 16 | People believe they have a responsibility for their own learning and development | n/a |
| | 17 | People believe that continuous learning is at the heart of the culture of the organisation | n/a |
| **Plan:** Develop strategies to improve performance | | | |

| 03 | **People Management Strategy**<br>*Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the organisation's people.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **The Standard** | 1 | Top managers can describe strategies they have in place to create an environment where everyone is encouraged to contribute ideas to improve their own and other people's performance | ✔ |
| | 2 | Top managers recognise the different needs of people and can describe strategies they have in place to make sure everyone has appropriate and fair access to the support they need and there is equality of opportunity for people to learn and develop which will improve the performance | ✔ |
| | 3 | Managers recognise the different needs of people and can describe how they make sure everyone has appropriate and fair access to the support they need and there is equality of opportunity for people to learn and develop which will improve their performance | ✔ |
| | 4 | People believe managers are genuinely committed to making sure everyone has appropriate and fair access to the support they need and there is equality of opportunity for them to learn and develop which will improve their performance | D |
| | 5 | People can give examples of how they have been encouraged to contribute ideas to improve their own and other people's performance | ✔ |
| **Your Choice** | 6 | Top managers can describe strategies they have in place to make sure recruitment and selection meets the needs of the organisation and is fair, efficient and effective | n/a |
| | 7 | Top managers can describe strategies they have in place to promote equality and manage diversity in the workplace | n/a |
| | 8 | Top managers can describe strategies they have in place to support work-life balance to meet the needs of the organisation and its people | n/a |
| | 9 | Top managers can describe how they have created an environment where giving and receiving constructive feedback is valued | n/a |
| | 10 | Top managers can describe how the organisation's structure is designed to achieve its strategy and make the most of people's talents | n/a |

| 03 | **People Management Strategy (Continued)** *Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the organisation's people.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Your Choice** | 11 | Top managers can describe how the organisation's recruitment and selection strategies are linked to its business strategy and are designed to make sure there is a talented and diverse workforce that is able to achieve the organisation's vision | n/a |
| | 12 | Top managers can describe how the organisation's equality and diversity strategies are linked to its business strategy and applied throughout the organisation | n/a |
| | 13 | Top managers can describe how the organisation's work-life balance strategies are linked to its business strategy and applied throughout the organisation | n/a |
| | 14 | Managers can describe how they make sure recruitment and selection is fair, efficient and effective | n/a |
| | 15 | Managers can describe how they value people's differences and how they are effective in promoting equality and managing diversity in the workplace | n/a |
| | 16 | Managers can describe how they make sure work-life balance solutions are effective put into practice | n/a |
| | 17 | Managers can describe how they encourage people to give and receive constructive feedback | n/a |
| | 18 | Managers can describe how they make sure people are given the opportunity to make the most of their talents within the organisation | n/a |
| | 19 | Managers can describe how they play an important role in recruiting and selecting people with values that match the organisation's values | n/a |
| | 20 | Managers can describe how they value diversity and create an environment where people can use their unique talents and achieve their potential | n/a |

| 03 | **People Management Strategy (Continued)** *Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the organisation's people.* | |
|---|---|---|
| **Your Choice** | 21 | Managers can describe how they value the work-life balance strategies and apply them creatively to benefit individuals, teams and the organisation | n/a |
| | 22 | People believe recruitment and selection is fair | n/a |
| | 23 | People believe managers value people's differences and can give examples of how they promote equality and manage diversity in the workplace | n/a |
| | 24 | People can describe how they are supported in balancing their work and personal lives | n/a |
| | 25 | People can describe how they give and receive constructive feedback to improve performance | n/a |
| | 26 | People believe they are given the opportunity to make the most of their talents within the organisation | n/a |
| | 27 | People can describe how their views are taken into account when recruiting and selecting team members | n/a |
| | 28 | People believe everyone in the organisation values diversity | n/a |
| | 29 | People believe work-life balance is valued and part of the culture of the organisation | n/a |
| **Plan:** Develop strategies to improve performance | | |

| 04 | **Leadership & Management Strategy**<br>*The capabilities managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively are clearly defined and understood.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **The Standard** | 1 | Top managers can describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively and the plans they have in place to make sure managers have these capabilities | ✔ |
| | 2 | Managers can describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to lead, manage and develop people effectively. | ✔ |
| | 3 | People can describe what their manager should be doing to lead, manage and develop them effectively | ✔ |
| **Your Choice** | 4 | Top managers can describe how they define the current and future capabilities managers need in line with the organisation's purpose, vision and values | n/a |
| | 5 | Top managers make sure managers are regularly reviewed against the capabilities and receive constructive feedback on their performance | n/a |
| | 6 | Top managers make sure managers are provided with the help they need to develop the capabilities | n/a |
| | 7 | Top managers can describe how the organisation's leadership and management strategy is linked to its business strategy and takes account of external good practice | n/a |
| | 8 | Top managers can describe how they create an environment where everyone is encouraged to develop leadership capabilities | n/a |
| | 9 | Managers can describe how they are involved in defining the current and future capabilities all managers need | n/a |
| | 10 | Managers can confirm that they are regularly reviewed against the capabilities and receive constructive feedback on their performance | n/a |

| 04 | **Leadership & Management Strategy (Continued)** *The capabilities managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively are clearly defined and understood.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Your Choice** | 11 | Managers can confirm that they are provided with the help they need to develop the capabilities | n/a |
| | 12 | Managers can describe how they encourage everyone to develop leadership capabilities | n/a |
| | 13 | People can give examples of how they have been encouraged to develop leadership capabilities | n/a |
| **Plan:** Develop strategies to improve performance | | | |

| 05 | **Management Effectiveness** *Managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **The Standard** | 1 | Managers can explain how they are effective in leading, managing and developing people | ✔ |
| | 2 | Managers can give examples of how they give people constructive feedback on their performance regularly and when appropriate | ✔ |
| | 3 | People can explain how their managers are effective in leading, managing and developing them | ✔ |
| | 4 | People can give examples of how they receive constructive feedback on their performance regularly and when appropriate | D |
| **Your Choice** | 5 | Top managers can describe how they act as role models when demonstrating leadership and management capabilities in line with the organisation's values | n/a |
| | 6 | Top managers can describe how they act as role models when working as a team and sharing knowledge | n/a |
| | 7 | Top managers can describe how they act as role models for inspirational leadership and have an open, honest and trusting management style | n/a |
| | 8 | Top managers can describe how they have made coaching part of the organisation's culture | n/a |
| | 9 | Managers can describe how they lead, manage and develop people in line with the organisation's values | n/a |
| | 10 | Managers can describe how they encourage people to work together and share knowledge within and across teams | n/a |

| 05 | **Management Effectiveness (Continued)** *Managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Your Choice** | 11 | Managers can describe how they make sure people receive information, advice and guidance to help them plan and develop their career | n/a |
| | 12 | Managers can describe how they use coaching skills to help people achieve their potential | n/a |
| | 13 | Managers can describe how they act on feedback from all levels in the organisation to improve the way they lead, manage and develop people | n/a |
| | 14 | Managers can describe how top managers inspire them to lead, manage and develop people effectively | n/a |
| | 15 | Managers can give examples of how they themselves act as inspirational leaders | n/a |
| | 16 | People can describe how their manager leads, manages and develops them in line with the organisation's values | n/a |
| | 17 | People can describe how they work together and share knowledge within and across teams | n/a |
| | 18 | People can confirm that they receive information, advice and guidance to help them plan and develop their career | n/a |
| | 19 | People can describe how their managers use coaching skills to help them achieve their potential | n/a |
| | 20 | People can confirm that they are able to give constructive feedback to their manager, and believe it is well received and acted on | n/a |

| 05 | **Management Effectiveness (Continued)** *Managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Your Choice** | 21 | People can confirm that they respect and trust their managers | n/a |
| | 22 | People can confirm that they have confidence in the leadership and management capabilities of top managers | n/a |
| | 23 | People can describe how managers inspire and motivate them to achieve their full potential | n/a |
| | 24 | People believe the organisation has a culture of openness and trust | n/a |
| | 25 | People believe that coaching is part of the organisation's culture | n/a |
| **Do:** Take action to improve performance | | | |

| 06 | Recognition & Reward  *People's contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **The Standard** | 1 | Managers can give examples of how they recognise and value people's individual contribution to the organisation | ✔ |
| | 2 | People can describe how they contribute to the organisation and believe they make a positive difference to its performance | ✔ |
| | 3 | People can describe how their contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued | D |
| **Your Choice** | 4 | Top managers make sure the organisation has a clear and fair reward and recognition strategy which is used to motivate people to improve the organisation's performance | n/a |
| | 5 | Top managers can describe how they involve representative groups (where they exist) in developing the organisation's reward and recognition strategy | n/a |
| | 6 | Top managers can describe how the organisation's reward and recognition strategy is linked to its business strategy and externally benchmarked | n/a |
| | 7 | Top managers make sure the organisation has a forward-thinking benefits strategy with policies that go beyond legal requirements | n/a |
| | 8 | Managers can describe how they are involved in developing the organisation's reward and recognition strategy | n/a |
| | 9 | Managers can describe how they apply the organisation's reward and recognition strategy fairly | n/a |
| | 10 | Managers understand what motivates their people and take account of this when recognising and rewarding them | n/a |

| 06 | **Recognition & Reward (Continued)**<br>*People's contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued.* | |
|---|---|---|
| **Your Choice** | 11 | Managers can describe how they reward and celebrate individual and team successes and achievements | n/a |
| | 12 | Managers can describe how they involve people in developing the organisation's reward and recognition strategy | n/a |
| | 13 | Managers can describe how they encourage people to recognise the contribution their colleagues make to the organisation | n/a |
| | 14 | People who are members of representative groups can confirm that the groups are involved in developing the organisation's reward and recognition strategy | n/a |
| | 15 | People can describe the organisation's reward and recognition strategy and what they need to do to be valued, recognised and rewarded | n/a |
| | 16 | People believe the organisation's reward and recognition strategy is fair and can give examples of how they are motivated by it | n/a |
| | 17 | People can describe how individual and team successes and achievements are rewarded and celebrated | n/a |
| | 18 | People can describe how they are involved in developing the organisation's reward and recognition strategy | n/a |
| | 19 | People can describe how they recognise the contribution their colleagues make to the organisation | n/a |
| **Do:** Take action to improve performance | | |

| 07 | **Involvement & Empowerment** *People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision-making.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **The Standard** | 1 | Managers can describe how they promote a sense of ownership and responsibility by encouraging people to be involved in decision-making, both individually and through representative groups, where they exist | D |
| | 2 | People can describe how they are encouraged to be involved in decision-making that affects the performance of individuals, teams and the organisation, at a level that is appropriate to their role | ✔ |
| | 3 | People can describe how they are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility for decisions that affect the performance of individuals, teams and the organisation, at a level that is appropriate to their role | ✔ |
| **Your Choice** | 4 | Top managers can describe the consultation arrangements they have in place to encourage people to take part in decision-making at both an individual and a representative level | n/a |
| | 5 | Top managers make sure the organisation has effective internal communication systems to encourage knowledge and information to be shared throughout the organisation | n/a |
| | 6 | Top managers can describe how consultation and involvement is part of the organisation's culture | n/a |
| | 7 | Top managers can describe how they involve people in designing consultation arrangements | n/a |
| | 8 | Top managers can describe how they have created a culture where people aim for continuous improvement | n/a |
| | 9 | Managers can describe how they make sure people receive the support they need to make decisions that affect the performance of individuals, teams and the organisation, at a level that is appropriate to their role | n/a |
| | 10 | Managers can describe how they encourage knowledge and information to be shared throughout the organisation | n/a |

| 07 | **Involvement & Empowerment (Continued)** *People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision-making.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Your Choice** | 11 | Managers can give examples of how they have created an environment where people aim for continuous improvement and openly challenge the way the organisation works to improve performance | n/a |
| | 12 | People can give examples of how they take ownership for decisions that affect the performance of individuals, teams and the organisation, at a level that is appropriate to their role | n/a |
| | 13 | People believe that the consultation arrangements are effective and allow them to take part in decision-making | n/a |
| | 14 | People can confirm that they have access to the knowledge and information and receive the support they need to make decisions and improve performance | D |
| | 15 | People believe their managers trust them to make decisions that improve performance | D |
| | 16 | People can confirm that they are committed to the success of the organisation | D |
| | 17 | People can confirm that they are involved in designing consultation arrangements | n/a |
| | 18 | People believe they can challenge the way the organisation works to improve performance and can give examples of how they or others have done so | D |
| | 19 | People can describe what gives them sense of ownership and pride in working for the organisation | D |
| **Do:** Take action to improve performance | | | |

| 08 | **Learning & Development**<br>*People learn and develop effectively.* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The Standard** | 1 | Managers can describe how they make sure people's learning and development needs are met | | D |
| | 2 | People can describe how their learning and development needs have been met, what they have learnt and how they have applied this in their role | | ✔ |
| | 3 | People who are new to the organisation, and those new to a role, can describe how their induction has helped them to perform effectively | | ✔ |
| **Your Choice** | 4 | Top managers make sure the organisation makes effective use of internal and external resources for learning and development | | n/a |
| | 5 | Top managers can describe how the organisation is flexible in the way it develops people, using innovative and cost-effective solutions that meet learning and development needs | | n/a |
| | 6 | Top managers can describe how they have created a culture where all learning is valued | | n/a |
| | 7 | Top managers can describe how they make sure mentoring opportunities are available | | n/a |
| | 8 | Managers can describe how they make sure knowledge and learning is shared across the organisation | | n/a |
| | 9 | Managers can describe how they provide learning and development opportunities for people to achieve their full potential for mutual benefit | | n/a |
| | 10 | Managers can describe how they recognise and celebrate learning and development achievements | | n/a |

| 08 | **Learning & Development (Continued)** *People learn and develop effectively.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Your Choice** | 11 | Managers can describe how they make sure learning and development is an everyday activity | n/a |
| | 12 | Managers can describe how they support people in their personal development actives and encourage them to broaden their knowledge and skills through learning | n/a |
| | 13 | People can confirm that knowledge and learning is shared across the organisation | n/a |
| | 14 | People can describe how they are encouraged to try new approaches and learn from their efforts, mistakes and successes | n/a |
| | 15 | People can confirm that they are motivated to learn and enjoy putting their learning into practice | n/a |
| | 16 | People can confirm that they are well supported after learning and development activities, and have clear objectives for putting the new skills and knowledge into practice | n/a |
| | 17 | People can describe how learning and development achievements are recognised and celebrated | n/a |
| | 18 | People can confirm that learning and development is an everyday activity | n/a |
| | 19 | People can describe how they are supported in their personal development activities | n/a |
| | 20 | People can confirm that mentoring opportunities are available | n/a |
| **Do:** Take action to improve performance | | | |

| 09 | **Performance Measurement** *Investment in people improves the performance of the organisation.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **The Standard** | 1 | Top managers can describe the organisation's overall investment of time, money and resources in learning and development | ✔ |
| | 2 | Top managers can explain, and quantify where appropriate, how learning and development has improved the performance of the organisation | ✔ |
| | 3 | Top managers can describe how the evaluation of their investment in people is used to develop their strategy for improving the performance of the organisation | ✔ |
| | 4 | Managers can give examples of how learning and development has improved the performance of their team and the organisation | ✔ |
| | 5 | People can give examples of how learning and development has improved their performance, the performance of their team and that of the organisation | ✔ |
| **Your Choice** | 6 | Top managers can describe how the organisation measures and evaluates how its strategies for managing people contribute to the organisation's performance | n/a |
| | 7 | Top managers can describe the impact of their investment in people on achieving key performance indicators | n/a |
| | 8 | Top managers make sure the organisation has a flexible and effective approach to measuring and reporting the return on investment on its people strategies | n/a |
| | 9 | Top managers make sure that the return on investment on its people strategies is reported clearly to all stakeholders | n/a |
| | 10 | Managers can describe how they are involved in measuring and evaluating how the organisation's people strategies contribute to its performance | n/a |

| 09 | Performance Measurement (Continued) *Investment in people improves the performance of the organisation.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Your Choice** | 11 | Managers can give examples of improvements in the performance of individuals, their team and the organisation as a result of people management activities | n/a |
| | 12 | People can describe how their career prospects have improved as a result of their learning and development and the way they have been managed | n/a |
| | 13 | People can give examples of improvements in the performance of the team as a result of people management and development activities | D |
| | 14 | People can describe how the organisation's investment in people has improved its performance | n/a |
| **Review:** Evaluate and improve performance | | | |

| 10 | **Continuous Improvement** *Improvements and continually made to the way people are managed and developed.* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The Standard** | 1 | Top managers can give examples of how the evaluation of their investment in people has resulted in improvements in the organisation's strategy for managing and developing people | ✔ |
| | 2 | Managers can give examples of improvements they have made to the way they manage and develop people | ✔ |
| | 3 | People can give examples of improvements that have been made to the way the organisation manages and develops its people | ✔ |
| **Your Choice** | 4 | Top managers can describe how the organisation has used self-review techniques to improve its strategies for managing and developing people. | n/a |
| | 5 | Top managers can describe how the organisation has used information from external reviews, including previous Investors in People assessment or review, to improve strategies for managing and developing people | n/a |
| | 6 | Top managers make sure effective feedback methods are used to understand people's needs and expectations and to highlight improvements needed to the way they are managed and developed | n/a |
| | 7 | Top managers can describe the range of measures used to monitor and understand people's view of how they are managed and developed | n/a |
| | 8 | Top managers can describe how the organisation has used Internal and external benchmarking to review and improve its strategies for managing and developing people | n/a |
| | 9 | Top managers can demonstrate an improvement in people's views of how they are managed and developed | n/a |
| | 10 | Managers can describe how they review and evaluate people management and development and use this learning to shape future activity | n/a |

| 10 | **Continuous Improvement (Continued)** *Improvements and continually made to the way people are managed and developed.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Your Choice** | 11 | Managers can describe how they involve people in identifying improvements to the way they are managed and developed | n/a |
| | 12 | People can give examples of how they are involved in identifying improvements to the way they are managed and developed | n/a |
| | 13 | People believe that managers are genuinely committed to improving the way they manage and develop them | n/a |
| | 14 | People can describe improvements that have been made, as a result of their feedback, to the way the organisation manages and develops people | n/a |
| | 15 | People believe that the organisation is a great place to work as a result of ongoing improvements made to the way they are managed and developed | n/a |
| **Review:** Evaluate and improve performance | | | |

**Organisation Improvement Framework**

# SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN

## Edinburgh

## Continuing Assessment Report

**Commercial in Confidence**

*UNDERTAKEN BY*
**JOAN BOYD**

**On behalf of Investors in People Scotland**

**Project Reference Number: 10/0101**
**Date: 3 March 2010**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Established in 2002 by the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) replaced three previous offices:

- The Scottish Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman
- The Local Government Ombudsman for Scotland
- THE Housing Association Ombudsman for Scotland

The office of the SPSO investigates complaints about organisations that provide public services such as the National Health Service, Councils, Housing Associations, Higher Education establishments, Scottish Government departments and agencies. In addition, outreach services are provided to raise awareness of the SPSO across the general public and to promote high quality complaint handling in those bodies coming within the remit of the organisation. The main aim of the organisation is to resolve disputes fairly, reasonably, quickly and impartially.

The present Ombudsman was appointed in May 2009 and has overall responsibility for the operation of the SPSO. He is supported by two Directors, a Head of Services, the Communications Manager and operational Team Managers. Wishing to improve its external standing with key stakeholders, the organisation is facing continual challenge. It is currently going through cultural change. High on the agenda are improving the consistency of management approach and creating more effective and efficient working practices.

Two Bills are currently before Parliament and if parliamentary approval is obtained these will result in increased organisational responsibility for the SPSO, create further change and significant challenge. Some alteration to the existing organisational structure is imminent.

The office of the SPSO is situated in Edinburgh where 50 employees are based. The activities of 4 contractors also come within the scope of this Assessment. I interviewed 18 individuals, including one contractor.

This is an Early Assessment and is the first occasion the SPSO has presented itself for accreditation.

**OUTCOME**

*Early Assessment*

Having carried out the assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided by Investors in People UK, I can confirm that further development is required in order to meet the requirements of the Investors in People Standard. It is recommended that the process below is followed. This will assist in keeping focused to achieve the Standard:-

1. Complete an Action Plan with the support of myself or another IIP Specialist, identifying the areas for development from this report, the action to be taken and the timescales.

2. Agree with either myself or another IIP Specialist when the assessment should be continued.

A draft copy Action Plan is attached should you choose to use this.  As agreed at the feedback meeting please contact me if you would like any further assistance from me or another Specialist.

**PRIORITIES/OBJECTIVES**

As agreed during the planning activity, your Early Assessment focused on the following objectives:

▪ To give feedback on the appropriate aspects of the Investors in People Framework that relate to your organisation's objectives/priorities/issues.

**ADDED VALUE OBJECTIVES**

▪ What do people think about the transparency and clarity of information being communicated around the implementation of change?

▪ How do people view the future and the impact of proposed external legislation? What are their observations about the way in which the organisation is going forward?

**FINDINGS AGAINST PRIORITIES/OBJECTIVES**

These findings are commented upon within the context of significant cultural change and modernisation which has been a very high priority since the appointment of the Ombudsman and the Director of Complaints and Investigations. This, coupled with uncertainty related to the potential impact of the two Parliamentary Bills awaiting approval, resulted in strategic decisions being made which have influenced the demonstrated evidence for outcomes at this visit.

Priority was given to the implementation of four specific key objectives and performance indicators mid-year 2009. These were designed to improve the service provided and enhance the organisations standing with Stakeholders. The specific outcome was to improve the reputation/performance of SPSO and enhance stakeholder engagement. In addition, due to the uncertainty of the approval of the Bills going forward, the strategy for learning and development was impacted upon and activities/resources reduced until the impact on organisational skills and capability is fully clarified.

**To provide a high quality, independent complaint handling Service**

**Business Planning** - The vision and values are clearly set out. Your vision is of enhanced public confidence in high quality, continually improving public services in Scotland which consistently meet the highest standards of public administration. You aim to do this by providing a trusted, effective and efficient complaint handling service which remedies injustice for individuals resulting from maladministration or service failure.

You have five corporate strategic objectives set for 2008-2011, one of which has already been achieved. A common understanding and commitment to achieving improvements in case handling and quality of casework was demonstrated. Individuals are aware of how they contribute to the achievement of the aims and objectives. They described how they contribute through good complaint handling, providing a high quality service, looking to improve frontline services, being efficient and supporting colleagues. *"We need to demonstrate we are independent and fair". "We have to be very efficient and deadline driven to improve our image".*

Staff explained how they had been involved in the preparation of the 2008 plan and had been kept advised of the new targets last year. I also discussed plans for staff involvement in the forthcoming planning review and update. You do consult with Union representatives and this has improved recently but earlier involvement/communication of decisions would be appreciated. There would be benefit in considering and developing how you engage with staff and Union representatives when formalising the 2010 – 2011 updated plan. *"There is*

*input from me to the objectives".*

**Developing People** - Learning and development is normally planned and aligned to the Business plan. The decision to await clarity related to the impact of the Bills going through Parliament has impacted on your ability to demonstrate outcomes at the organisational level. There is a training budget in place and activities demonstrated included train the trainers, dealing with difficult callers, interview techniques, technical updates, project management training, judicial review seminars and mental welfare. Qualifications supported included Customer Care SVQ 3, Prince 2, and Masters in Public Policy and Human Resource Management.

Individuals confirmed that they discuss learning and development during the Annual Appraisal and six monthly interim reviews. Many staff expressed the opinion that they are self directed and suggest development or courses they feel they require. They also are of the opinion that they can ask for training at any time. They confirmed their participation in the activities mentioned above. There was some comment that the technical updates should be more job specific and this is something that you are aware of and are considering. *"I can suggest any courses or training I need at any time". "We discuss this during the Appraisal". "The technical updates are not job specific enough".*

The majority of those spoken to believe that they are/will be offered the training they need. However, there were some examples of individuals requesting activities and these not being offered. Those individuals had not received feedback regarding why their requests were not being taken forward. Whilst jobs are advertised, secondments were demonstrated and individuals are involved in projects to improve or develop skills, there was a perception that opportunities for career progression were limited. On discussing this further, most of the staff did understand the specialism of roles impacted on this. Those more recent employees confirmed that this aspect was specifically covered during the recruitment process. Going forward, you may wish to consider this aspect in terms of building the capability of staff, obtaining flexibility of complaints handling across the organisation and planning for future organisational needs. *"There is strong commitment to any learning & development I need". "We get the opportunities we need and the Ombudsman is keen on personal development". "There is little opportunity for career progression because of the specialism needed and the size of the office". "We discussed career prospects at the interview. They were very open about that".*

You ensure that individuals and teams have the knowledge and skills to deliver improved practices by continuous technical updates. You have recently implemented new procedures for complaints handling and staff confirmed involvement in the design and implementation of the improved practices. Staff do share knowledge and skills within teams and sometimes share their experience of learning and development at team meetings. Some individuals are

recognised for the knowledge they hold and are regularly consulted by their colleagues.

**Continuous Improvement** - We agreed during the visit that whilst there are elements of continuous improvement related to the evaluation of learning and development. The benefits, impacts, the improvements to the way in which people are managed and the co-ordination of information to inform future strategy requires further development and more structure. There was inconsistent, insufficient and mixed information related to this aspect. Once the Bills receive approval and the additional remit of SPSO is clarified, you will be in a position to consider this and utilise the Standard to move forward.

**To Improve complaint handling by public service providers**

**Staff Engagement** - You have improved the support to front line complaint handling by public service providers through the creation of a training function. You have engaged with staff by including individuals from different functions within SPSO. These individuals have been trained as trainers and you are utilising their knowledge and skills to design and pilot external training courses for public sector complaints handlers. In addition, by implementing the new claims handling procedures and reducing outstanding claims you are positioning SPSO as a best practice 'design authority'.

To utilise the capabilities and enthusiasms of staff you are consulting and engaging with them in a number of groups looking at improvements in:

- Learning and Development
- Equality and Diversity
- Business Review
- SPSO+
- Intranet User Project

Those involved confirmed they had volunteered for the groups because of an interest or had been asked to join due to their knowledge, expertise or enthusiasm. They believe that they are trusted to make decisions and to improve performance. Examples were given of suggestions being implemented. However, some other staff believed that they are not trusted by their managers to make decisions. (Evidence criteria 7.15). Most of this is related to the changes in the complaints handling procedures but it also is reflective of inconsistency of management effectiveness about which I will comment later in the report. In addition, although there are a variety of groups, I was unable to obtain sufficient examples of managers creating opportunities for staff to challenge the way things work. Obviously the groups are doing this but those not specifically included did not seem to be aware of the

outcomes from the groups or what improvements had been made.  (Indicator 7.18)

In general, staff are of the opinion that they have a high level of personal responsibility, although, as mentioned above, the change in the quality assurance aspects of the complaints handling procedures has left some team members feeling less trusted.  I would invite you to consider further clarifying this aspect of the procedure to ensure it does not impact on staff feeling valued for their contribution.  *"I do feel I have ownership and responsibility".  "The changes have left me feeling less trusted to make decisions and your work is looked at".  "We have regular team meetings and you can put forward views and ideas".*

You will be pleased to hear that the majority of staff spoken to confirmed they were committed to the success of SPSO.  This is demonstrated by one member of staff explaining the enthusiasm for a project.  Another mentioned involvement in groups and by putting in extra time to make this successful.  An individual explained the strong will within the office to work for a successful organisation and how she contributes by putting forward suggestions for improvement.  Against that, there is concern for jobs at the moment and this is impacting on individual perceptions and creating uncertainty.  There is not sufficiency of evidence to confirm this Indicator is met but good practice is developing and perceptions are improving. (Evidence criteria 7.16)

There was mixed evidence in regard to people having a sense of ownership and pride in working for SPSO.  One individual explained that helping people and believing she made a difference gave her a real sense of pride.  Another commented that since the new appointments in the strategic team last year she felt more pride in working for the organisation.  People appear to be cautiously optimistic that the changes taking place will change the external opinion of SPSO and they can take greater pride in the work they do. Good practice is developing.  (Evidence criteria 7.19)


**To support public service improvement in Scotland**

**Communication and Consultation** - Recent improvements in the complaints investigation procedures ensure that quality assurance is being improved and the credibility of SPSO is being enhanced.  Managers explained that a sample of reports and letters are reviewed to ensure high quality and improve performance.  Also, individuals have monthly one to ones and discuss cases with their manager. In another area weekly one to ones take place to discuss operational performance and developmental aspects.

Consultation takes place with Union representatives and they are able to be involved in improvement groups.  At present one of the two representatives is involved in one group and

the training project. Consultation is positive and occurs by informal arrangement. Representatives confirmed it has been improving recently with agreed updates. Earlier involvement in 'bigger issue' decisions and more formality around information and consultation would be of benefit. It is appreciated that much of what is happening at present is a result of time constraints and representatives are confident agreed regular updates and consultation will continue.

During discussion with the Ombudsman it is clear that he plans to engage with representatives and staff during the planning for 2010 – 2011 to ensure clarity of understanding going forward.

The Intranet User project and improvements to communications are good practice in regard to the way in which people receive support, information and knowledge to make informed decisions. Sharing information with colleagues, at team meetings, by e-mail and during case reviews support staff. You are working on using information technology as a way of improving the sharing of knowledge and information to support decision making and performance improvement. This is an area where good practice is developing. (Evidence criteria 7.14)

**To be an accountable, best value organisation**

**Learning and Development** - is resourced and the budget discussed and monitored during weekly operational management team meetings, monthly monitoring of performance indicators and during individual one to one discussions. Learning is normally aligned to the Business Plan. Activities have been delayed due to the critical priority for modernisation. There is also the potential risk of wasting resources until the impact on your responsibilities and remit, going forward, is clearly established and receives Parliamentary approval. Whilst learning and development has been taking place there would be benefit going forward to create much more structure around planning this at the organisational, team and individual level

A competency framework exists and defines the capabilities of leaders and managers. However, there was inconsistent and mixed information related to how people understand these aspects and what this means for them in regard to what they should expect from their managers.

**Leadership and Management Strategy** - I would recommend that the strategy for management development requires clarity, structure and alignment with the Business Plan. This is particularly important as the implementation of the Business Review project and resulting re-structure is imminent. Also in terms of going forward in regard to the critical contribution effective management will make to the implementation of your strategies and

the support for employee development and performance management.

Coaching does take place, advice and guidance is offered by the Head of Services and four seminars are available each year from Anderson Strathearn on topics related to your organisation. I appreciate that you have a very experienced operational management team but unfortunately there was insufficient evidence of planned management development or refreshers related to people skills apart from coaching.

**Management Effectiveness** - It is clear that there are different management styles being demonstrated and whilst this is not necessarily a negative aspect there is inconsistency of approach being demonstrated. Appraisal discussions are not necessarily taking place in line with the agreed process. For example, individuals who are on secondment are not receiving an Appraisal. The frequency of interim reviews is not always being adhered to. There is also some inconsistency to the approach to discussing learning and development during the Appraisal and to setting objectives. *"The Ombudsman is a great leader, a great top guy and supports my development" "My managers is a top class manager of staff and very motivational". "He's extremely good and a pleasure to work with". "There are different approaches and management styles".*

Individuals confirmed that they do receive constructive feedback during informal dialogue, one to ones and at the Appraisal discussions and interim reviews. An individual explained the approach to constructive feedback during one to one case reviews. She commented on how that learning is shared with the rest of the team. The Case reviews and team meetings also offer opportunities for constructive feedback. There was also some comment about a manager being remote from the team. *"My manager is good at playing devil's advocate and is very constructive". "There is not much constructive feedback in our area from the manager".*

Staff confirmed that they receive praise thanks and acknowledgement for the work they do on a regular basis and during the Appraisal. Again, there seems to be some inconsistency of approach. In some areas there was a general perception that this aspect could be improved upon. Some of this may be historical and comment was made that since the change in the operational management team this has improved. Examples of praise and thanks, being taken out for a drink, comments from the Ombudsman were described. *"I am valued and recognised to an extent". "You do get thanks for a job well done and we are spoken highly of at management meetings". "I usually ask for feedback and check I'm doing okay as it isn't regularly given".*

Constructive feedback and recognition and reward are demonstrated but the evidence could be stronger and this is an area that we may wish to look at during any future visit.
In terms of celebrating success and achievements, this has to be placed in the context of

nationally agreed public sector reward and remuneration and financial governance. Staff did mention that an additional half day of flexi time was made available by the Ombudsman in recognition of the significant improvement and KPI achieved in old cases. Further development is required before sufficient evidence can be demonstrated. (Indicators 6.10 and 6.11)

**Effective Learning and Development –** The Appraisal discussions, one to ones, interim reviews, case reviews, observations in the workplace and quality assurance all offer opportunities to measure effective learning and development takes place and to identify areas for improvement or further development. There is some inconsistency of approach to discussing objectives for learning and development pre participation and post participation.

Staff who had participated were able to describe what they had learned and how they had applied this in the workplace. The impact on organisational performance could be much stronger and I had to probe for this information.

Those new to the organisation confirmed that effective induction takes place and that they had an opportunity to comment on the process. Those who had been seconded expressed the opinion that they were supported in the new role and received any coaching or development needed.

**Continuous Improvement -** We have agreed that the whole aspect of measuring the success of learning and development and resulting improvements to the way in which people are managed and developed requires further development. There are evaluation forms in use for some courses and specific pilots are separately evaluated. Some managers discuss the learning undertaken and how this impact on the individual team and organisation. Others do not appear to do so or it is perceived that they do not.

Whilst there is not sufficient evidence to meet Indicators 9 and 10, I would like to reflect the significant improvement achieved as a result of the agenda for modernisation, the outcome from the Business Review project, future ongoing re-structure and identified drivers for cultural change. In my experience, this has been achieve in a relatively short period of time against a background of new appointments to the senior operational team and ongoing external impacts over which you have had no control.

You have implemented staff surveys in the past and utilising these in the future to specifically measure how effective managers are might be beneficial. However, some comment was made that the resulting responses and actions were superficial so you may wish to consider other options. I have included some suggestions in the section headed Continuous Improvement Actions.

**ADDED VALUE OBJECTIVES**

**Communication**

As you would expect there were a variety of opinions expressed regarding the clarity and transparency of information. Views were expressed that more effort is being made to communicate. Whilst some staff expressed the belief that communication has improved and you are trying to be transparent there does appear to be contradictory information and final decisions have not yet been made. As a result, some staff feel "Chinese whispers" are perceived to be *"breeding confusion"*. It is clear from my discussions and the perceptions from comments made during the last all staff meeting that there is uncertainty and concern for jobs. On the other hand, some individuals believe that there is balance between the timing of information and clarity of information. Much of this will result from individual reactions to change and how people perceive this to be impacting on them personally.

**The Future/Going Forward**

Again mixed views were expressed. Some individuals viewed the changes positively and believed they were very necessary as historic issues had to be addressed. Others felt that the changes going forward offered opportunities for extra responsibility, more areas of work and would improve SPSO's standing with stakeholders. There was some consensus that it was too early to see how the "*direction of travel"* being outlined would ultimately effect resources and job security for everyone. *"They keep changing things and don't necessarily tell you decisions have been altered".*

Going forward, including the Prisons and Water was seen as being not that different and of benefit. One individual commented that the work for prisons should be a smooth transition and would not really present hurdles. This is seen as being a good way forward and a new area for others. *"We need to have wholesale change. Keep the good and move forward".* *"Being a bigger organisation should offer opportunities". "There is indecision and mixed messages about redundancies".* Again these comments are very reflective of how people react to change and are positioned on the change curve.

**EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS WHICH ARE NOT CURRENTLY MET**

The areas requiring further development are:
Planning Learning and Development   (2.1 and 2.2)
Management Effectiveness   (4.1, 4.3 and 5.3)
Performance Measurement   (9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5)
Continuous Improvement   (10.1, 10.2, 10.3)

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS**

Paragraphs stating that outcomes must be demonstrated or staff must demonstrate are areas where action/further development is specifically required to meet the requirements of the Standard. Observations or recommendations in this section are included to offer you opportunities to consider how you might use the standard to support what you want to achieve.

**To improve a high quality, independent complaint handling Service and to be an accountable, best value organisation**

**Developing People – Evidence Criteria 2.1 and 2.2**

To demonstrate the outcomes required for the above I would expect to see a strategy in place which is aligned to your aims and objectives at the organisational, team and individual levels. In line with the strategic planning cycle I would expect there to be discussion and understanding across the strategic management team of the learning and development needs aligned to the corporate strategic objectives. I would also expect that when engaging with managers and staff during the planning cycle that learning and development needs are discussed and identified to meet team or functional objectives. These are then fed upwards into the planning process to inform the strategy for organisational learning and development and the related budget and resources. A more formal strategy can provide the platform not only to look at current needs but also those required as your remit and responsibilities grow in the immediate and long term future.

The Appraisal process is the formal way in which you identify individual development needs. I am aware that you have considered implementing personal development plans (PDPs). I would recommend that you consider introducing these as part of the Appraisal process. Whilst placing the responsibility for recording learning and development on the individual, PDPs can be of benefit by focussing in on the needs of the individual, stimulate meaningful discussion and assist the identification of objectives for learning and how this will be applied in the workplace. It can also increase the understanding of individuals and managers across the organisation of the benefits and impacts of employee development and enhance understanding of its impact on improved performance across the organisation. It is also useful in assisting employees to recognise how well they have progressed and can make the Appraisal more motivational.

**Leadership and Management Strategy – Evidence Criteria 4.1**

In the same context the development of leaders and managers is critical to ongoing and future success of the SPSO.  How managers are equipped to deal with the change occurring due to the imminent re-structure, ongoing modernisation agenda and related impacts on staff will also be a key measure for success.  I would expect you to be able to demonstrate how you identify the skills needed in line with the competencies and corporate strategic objectives. The strategic management team should be aware of the resources and costs of this for inclusion in the overall strategy for employee development which should include your plans to develop management capabilities.

These do not require to be large formal strategic documents but could be included as part of the corporate strategic aims and objectives.

As an observation, I would invite you consider undertaking a management training needs analysis, leadership and management profiles or learning questionnaires so that you can identify current skills levels and identify individual development needs.   In particular, interpersonal skills are critical to changing mindsets, understanding emotional intelligence and staff engagement.   You may wish to consider implementing a skills matrix for management development linked to the competencies.  Creating opportunities for people managers to share good practice would be of benefit.  Mentoring, coaching and peer support can also be very cost effective.

Another observation is utilising your values.  This is an element of the choice options that you might consider.  If everyone understands what the values mean in terms of how they are expected to work this can result in clarity of understanding and can be utilised as drivers for cultural change or changing mindsets.   For example, SPSO aims to be courteous, considerate and respectful of people's rights.  What does that mean for people in terms of demonstrating this during daily work/how they are expected to work?  What does that for managers in terms of working together as a team, interacting with staff and supporting employee development?    This can create greater clarity of behaviours, expectations, performance and team working.

**Management effectiveness – Evidence criteria 5.3**

People are required to demonstrate their understanding of what it is their manager should be doing to lead, manage and develop them if this criteria is to be achieved.  People are aware there are competencies but the information described was inconsistent, mixed and insufficient for me to make an objective judgement.  Ensuring all managers understand their responsibilities for these aspects and communicating this to staff should clarify understanding and achieve consistency of approach.

As an observation, introducing mechanisms to encourage upward feedback from staff to managers would enable you to measure their effectiveness. For example, asking specific questions related to management behaviours during staff surveys may present opportunities. Encouraging managers to ask for upward feedback during one to ones or at team meetings would encourage open and honest dialogue and demonstrate that managers are willing to receive constructive feedback on how they can improve. Perhaps including specific questions around manager's behaviours in the Appraisal would open up dialogue and encourage upward feedback.

Whilst evidence criteria 5.4 and 6.3 is met there would be benefit is ensuring that managers are aware of their responsibilities for giving constructive feedback, ensuring staff recognise this as such and creating a culture of praise thanks and valuing individual contribution.

**Continuous Improvement – Evidence criteria 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5 and 10.1, 10.2, 10.3**

We agreed that elements of evaluating learning and development are in place however, you are required to demonstrate how your investment in people improves the performance of SPSO. The strategic management team are required to demonstrate the investment in time, money and resources in learning and development. They should also be able to quantify how this has improved organisational performance and how the evaluation is used to inform and develop their strategy for organisational improvement.

I would expect the strategic management team to be able to describe how they discuss and review learning and development activities in line with the planning process. Demonstrate their understanding of the real cost of their investment, an appreciation of the benefits and impacts on improved organisational improvement. This understanding would inform future strategic decision making around learning and developments. It would also identify areas where cost efficiencies might be obtained, or internal skills might be utilised. For example, if pressures on funding created a need to reduce the employee development budget, what could be done differently, what has the biggest benefit or impact on organisational improvement.

Likewise I would expect the strategic team to demonstrate examples of how evaluation has improved the strategy for learning and development and all managers to demonstrate how they have improved the way they manage and develop people as a result of evaluation or management development. People should be able to give examples of improvements.

A much more structured approach to the mechanisms for measuring and evaluating learning and development is required. This does not have to be complex. For example, you may wish to co-ordinate training and detail this together with direct and indirect costs on a spread sheet. Including learning and development at team meetings and management meetings

would be of benefit.  Formally reviewing learning and development and its related costs as part of the operational management team meetings at specific intervals would enhance understanding.

Managers should be reminded of their responsibilities for supporting development through discussion of objects for learning pre and post activity and linking objects to the corporate strategic aims and objectives or team objectives.


**NEXT STEPS**

As previously mentioned, there would be benefit in drawing up and implementing an Action Plan.  If you come forward for accreditation within 12 months from my visit, the evidence criteria banked will still be considered current.  After this period a full Assessment would be required.

You may wish to consider attending the IIP workshops. The workshops are designed for recognised organisations and may also stretch participant's knowledge beyond the Standard into broader business and people management activities.   Contact Laura Peacock laura@iipscotland.co.uk for further information about these.  Information is also available on the IIPs website.

It may be of benefit to explore the Investors in People on-line support called IIP Interactive. It contains a library of materials that you can download along with case studies and examples all linked to business themes within the framework.  Go onto the IIP Website http://www.iipscotland.co.uk    register/sign in and click on the menu button headed Interactive.

I have noted below a number of websites that may be of interest to you.

**www.mangement-standards.org    www.cipd.co.uk/manag/standards/prac**
**www.ilmscotland.com    www.wikipedia.org/wiki/coaching**
**www.leadership.co.uk     www.businessballs.com**
**www.strath.ac.uk**   - Life Long Learning - Certificate in Professional Development in Performance Coaching
**www.napier.ac.uk** – The Edinburgh Institute of Leadership and Management Practice – MSC in Coaching

I would like to thank all those who participated in the Assessment for their contribution and open discussion.

Name: Joan Boyd
Investors in People Specialist
Investors in People Scotland

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