

Leadership Team Governance Meeting Notes

Meeting Date	Wednesday 12 November 2025, 10:00 – 11:30, by MS Teams	
Attendees	Ombudsman	Paul McFadden
	Head of Improvement, Standards & Engagement	Andrew Crawford
	Head of Corporate and Shared Services (HOCSS)	Stuart Crickmar
	Head of Investigations (HOI-PSC)	Judy Saddler
	Head of Investigations (HoI-INWO+SWF)	Elaine Cameron
	Executive Casework Officer (ECO)	Adele Keddie
	Executive Casework Officer (ECO)	Scott Ramsay
	Corporate Services Manager (CSM) (Note-taker)	Fiona Paterson
Observer	Improvement, Standards & Engagement Officer (Insight) Dawn Linkston	

Item	Subject	Main points of discussion	Decisions and actions agreed	Due	Lead
1.	Governance decisions taken at LT operational meetings	Decisions taken at LT operational meetings during Q2 were noted and confirmed.			
2.	Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">Action point updates and matters outstanding	LT noted minutes as published. The outstanding action points were reviewed and noted. Attention was drawn to the new actions resulting from the current internal audit activities. The reports will be tabled at the February meeting.			



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<p>3. Financial monitoring</p>	<p>The HoCSS noted the year-to-date position, commenting that at this point we were in a comfortable position with the current year-end forecast to be on budget. The December outturn will provide a stronger indication of year-end position, and a decision on contingency applications will be taken at that point</p> <p>It was noted that the 2026-27 budget approval may be delayed this year due to the Scottish Parliament Finance Committee sitting at a later date than usual.</p> <p>HoISE indicated a strong possibility that the income target could be met by year-end. HoI-PSC noted we may start to see an uplift in requests for professional advice, following the increase in cases received in Q1&2.</p> <p>The sustained increase in cases received, leading to a rising case backlog, high caseloads and delayed allocation, was fully discussed by LT. It was noted that the wider Ombudsman community were noting a similar trend this year.</p> <p>The Ombudsman requested a small working party gather the information available around this topic, including previous communications and publications issued to the SPCB, to prepare a multi-faceted approach to addressing these pressures.</p>	<p>Publish the Current Contracts and Statement of Expenditure.</p> <p>Working party to discuss multifaceted approach to address pressure from rising caseloads.</p>	<p>Nov 2026</p> <p>Nov 2026</p>	<p>CSM</p> <p>HoCSS; Hols</p>	
<p>4. External Audit</p>	<p>The HoCSS noted the Annual Report and Financial Statements was laid before Parliament, following a clean</p>				



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		audit, and thanked all teams for their timely contributions, and for making this a smooth process.			
5. Internal Audit		The LT noted the audit activities for 2025-26 were almost complete and final reports will be tabled at the February meeting. Actions have been added to the Outstanding Actions paper.			
6. Risk, Incident, and Issue Management, including Business Plan exceptions		<p>The LT noted the strategic risks remain constant for Q2 and reflected on the data incidents as recorded. A closer review will be undertaken during the business plan activities in Q4.</p> <p>LT approved the Q2 BP performance summary for publication.</p>	Publish the Q2 BP	Nov 2025	CSM
7. Corporate Services assurance, encompassing:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Services • HR and Wellbeing • ICT • Information Governance • Internal Professional Advisers 	<p>The LT noted the papers.</p> <p>The LT discussed the increase in some aspects of the absence figures in the HR report and what may be the root cause, many of which were known and outwith the workplace.</p> <p>The Climate Change Duties Report and SPSO Environment, Sustainability and Biodiversity Report were approved for publication.</p> <p>LT thanked the HoCSS and team for the strong assurance provided by the overview and the supporting reports, noting that all statutory requirements are being met.</p>	<p>Circulate the Q2 shared services report to BH office-holders.</p> <p>Publish the Biodiversity report and submit the Climate Change Duties report.</p>	Nov 2025	CSM



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Equalities Climate Change Duties Report and SPSO Environment, Sustainability and Biodiversity Report 				
8. Casework Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casework Performance Dashboard Legal update 	<p>Hol-PSC provided a performance overview to the LT, who noted improved productivity results, alongside the increasing caseload.</p> <p>It was noted the ECOs will provide internal cover for the Legal and Policy Officer during her planned leave in Nov and Dec, particularly managing the JR administration.</p>			
9. Quality Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Casework Officer Report, including updates on Decision Reviews and Quality Assurance 	<p>The LT were updated on the quarterly findings from the decision review work.</p> <p>The ECOs drew attention to the current volume of reviews which are increasing in line with the rise in cases received by the office, with accompanying high numbers of post closure correspondence. The ECOs noted their competing priorities, with the additional duties they will be providing during the Legal and Policy Officer's planned leave.</p>			



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Customer Service ComplaintsPositive Comments Reports	<p>At this point, it is unlikely the Quality Assurance programme will restart until further resources are available.</p> <p>The LT noted, and discussed observations about the uplift in stage three complaints.</p> <p>The Ombudsman noted this excellent report, a powerful recognition of the good work done by the office.</p>	Publication of the Q2 report approved.	Nov 2025	CSM
10. AOB		None			

Approved for publication on 17 December 2025

Paul McFadden, Scottish Public Services Ombudsman