

Leadership Team Quarterly Meeting Minute

Date:	Thursday 14 May 2026, 09:30 – 16:30, by MS Teams <i>(including a break for Casework Matters – NAIT presentation 10:30-11:30, and Business Planning session.)</i>	
Attendees:	Ombudsman (Chair)	Paul McFadden
	Head of Improvement, Standards & Engagement	Andrew Crawford
	Head of Corporate and Shared Services	Stuart Crickmar
	Head of Investigations (PSC)	Judy Saddler
	Head of Investigations (INWO+SWF)	Elaine Cameron
	Corporate Services Manager (Note-taker)	Fiona Paterson
Presenters:	Executive Casework Officers:	Adele Keddie, Scott Ramsay
Apologies:	None	
Documents:	Papers: <u>Leadership Team - Quarterly (2026): 2026-2028 (qA2045395)</u>	

	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Main points of discussion</i>	<i>Actions agreed</i>	<i>Due</i>	<i>Lead</i>
1.	Minute, action points and matters outstanding	LT noted the minutes as published. The AAB outstanding actions were reviewed and meeting updated on progress. LTM actions from the previous meeting were also reviewed.			
2.	LT Governance decisions	LT agreed that all actions from LT meetings will be collated in a central log and reviewed at all LT meetings. Similarly, the LT decisions log would continue to be a central log of all LT decisions taken at meetings.	Create single LT Actions Log, and add to all LT meeting agendas	May	FP



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PERFORMANCE				
3. INWO	<p>LT noted the key messages and strong performance, in particular, that the team had met all KPIs in Q4 and timeliness had improved greatly.</p> <p>LT also noted the comment that smaller teams are disproportionately impacted by leave, such as sickness and other required for non-casework responsibilities. Hol highlighted the FTE/weekly hours resource calculation methodology which is included in the quarterly dashboard and noted that TU time (25% facilitation time) is not included in this calculation. In line with this, LT noted the change to risk INWOR3 with an increase in likelihood.</p> <p>LT agreed that ECO QA will be removed as a mitigation to operational risks and that management QA will be put in place in 2026-27. Hol confirmed the various measures and processes in place to assure the quality of the INWO output.</p> <p>Hol noted to the meeting that delivery against the 2025–26 INWO Business Plan was impacted by reduced capacity, with 7 projects carried forward. The 2026–27 INWO Operational Plan has been reviewed to reflect available resources and strategic priorities.</p> <p>Hol suggested the value of working towards a more consistent, outcome-focused approach to performance. This would include consideration of factors such as FTE/working hours and timeliness at different stages of the process, alongside a deeper understanding of what is driving improvements in productivity. The intention is to identify learning that can be shared more widely. Hol will continue to develop the quarterly performance paper to support this approach.</p>			



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4.	SWF	<p>LT noted the good performance despite a sharp increase in demand and the reallocation of a Case Reviewer to another team in Q4. The team has returned to full capacity for 2026-27.</p> <p>LT agreed that ECO QA will be removed as a mitigation to operational risks and that management QA will continue.</p>			
5.	PSC	<p>LT noted the continued increase in casework demand in Q4, and noted the significant pressures on PSC teams. LT also noted the ongoing strong productivity and noted to gratitude to HOI and all PSC teams. The same number of cases were closed in quarter due to good uptake in the overtime initiative. LT discussed impact and sustainability of OT</p> <p>Hol drew attention to the growing number of cases for decision at the early part of the casework process, which is likely to increase as we enter a period of summer leave. Additionally, there remains an issue with sourcing some specific professional casework advisers in some disciplines.</p> <p>Hol shared that another Ombudsman service is looking to replicate our complaint checker, merged with the online complaint form, as a model for their own developments.</p> <p>The LT noted further discussion with the management team focussing on performance management and its impact on the overall casework output would be helpful ahead of the internal audit in Q3.</p>	<p>Timetable a full management team discussion on performance management.</p>	<p>July</p>	<p>FP</p>
6.	ISE	<p>HoISE informed LT the team is now at full complement after a prolonged period of vacancies in the last 12 month period. He went on to draw attention to the following key points from the paper.</p>			



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		<p>The QA of Child Friendly Complaints and Support and Intervention Policy has led directly to additional process improvements, and the outcomes from these QAs will be shared with LT.</p> <p>The planned Spotlight reports and Parliamentary engagement plan will involve resources from across the office for input, insight and collaboration. Analysis of themes and trends will require additional trained resource to interrogate the data for more effective insight reports.</p> <p>Strong demand remains for support around CFCH, particularly since the law has been enacted, however some complaint handling advice calls relate to specific cases, which need to be carefully managed, decisions to be made about how we push back on going too deep into cases / advice, as there has been over a 40% increase in enquiries.</p> <p>There is much external pressure for a review of the MCHP guidance, however, the CSA team are mindful not to drop standards in response to this pressure, but finding a balance across the workplan.</p>			
		QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT			
7.	Decision Reviews report	<p>The ECOs were invited into the meeting to address the paper. The LT noted the continued increase in reviews, with Q4 seeing the highest number received in a quarter. Decision reviews outcomes show that decision-making with PSC remains very strong, giving LT a high level of assurance. The ECOs explained in general terms the reasons behind some of the cases which were reopened in quarter. The backlog and current wait times were shared.</p>	Ombudsman and HOI discuss Decision Review process.	20 May	Omb



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		<p>LT noted the significant pressures and thanked ECOs for their commitment in responding to this. The ECOs were thanked for their contribution to the meeting.</p> <p>LT discussed the long term sustainability of this process and agreed a decision on managing the pressure in this function is urgently needed. The Ombudsman and both HOIs agreed to discuss the various available options to address the pressure on this function at the next LT meeting.</p>			
8.	Customer Service Complaints report	<p>HolSE noted that the changes to the process will be in place from 2026-27, which is expected to impact on the numbers of cases accepted for consideration in this process. The key message was there was nothing of concern to note, and some individual points will be addressed directly with the staff members concerned.</p>			
9.	<p>Customer Survey reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - INWO / SWF / PCS - Positive Comments 	<p>Hol PSC noted the PSC Q4 returns were lost through an unforeseen technical issue. Therefore, there will only three quarters to report on for 2025-26. External messaging on loss of data will be prepared.</p> <p>Hol INWO & PSC noted response rates have remained higher than previous years. INWO received an interesting healthcare best practice comment on a specific case through the INWO survey which was noted and actioned.</p> <p>Additionally, the SWF survey results contained overall positive feedback with constructive comments that were actioned by the team manager. Some feedback has progressed to learning for the team. Hol will continue to include this report in main performance and quality paper to ensure linkages are highlighted.</p>	<p>Consider 6-monthly infographic of the positive comments report.</p>	<p>Nov</p>	<p>AS</p>
GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING					



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10.	Financial monitoring	<p>The HoCSS noted the year-end was as previously forecast, with the financial statements expected by the end of June. He brought to LT's attention the Professional fees, which varied significantly from previous years and will be monitored closely, but is expected to return to a similar level as previous years.</p> <p>He also noted a minor change to the contingency bid as recorded, following SPCB questions around the staff cost calculations.</p> <p>The financial position is normal for this point in the financial year.</p>			
11.	External Audit	LT noted the dates for drafting the ARFS in preparation for the AAB review and the External Audit field work.			
12.	Internal Audit	LT noted all internal audit recommendations will be tracked on the AAB Outstanding Actions paper. The LT discussed the Performance management audit and noted it will involve all managers.			
13.	Risk, Incident, and Issue Management Report	<p>LT reviewed the SPSO Strategic Risk Appetite for 2026-27, agreeing the scope of the topics where this could be ambiguous, and the organisation scores for each area.</p> <p>Following this, the strategic risks were discussed in detail and further developments to the register agreed, which will be undertaken before the next meeting. This included recording issues of casework demand and resourcing, alongside a further risk around casework demand.</p>	<p>Update the draft Risk Register with the amendments as agreed.</p> <p>Reformat the risk registers and corresponding team appetite sheets into one workbook.</p> <p>Review the draft risk register for finalising</p>	<p>End-May</p> <p>End-May</p> <p>End-Jun</p>	<p>FP</p> <p>FP</p> <p>LT</p>
14.	Corporate Services assurance	The LT noted the papers and were updated on performance and key risks, in particular, the reduction in sickness absence days and ICT issues.			



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	AOB				
15.	LTQ meetings	<p>LT provided feedback on the new format of the quarterly meetings. The content, format and purpose of the papers provided to the meeting were discussed, including as drivers of outcomes. The various measures of performance were also covered.</p> <p>It was noted the casework Dashboard provides a framework for reporting on casework performance, while the ISE performance is aligned with three Strategic Objectives and reports on the So What, and Why.</p>	Agree consistency for casework performance reports, such as, executive summary in Dashboard.	Aug	Hol
16.	2026-27 Business Planning	<p>The LT discussed the six strategic priorities and underlying enablers to which the operational plans will be aligned. The difference between management of projects versus business as usual activities was discussed. Further consideration of programme management may be required.</p> <p>The Ombudsman requested a full management meeting to discuss business plan activity, resourcing, and possible mitigating actions that may be employed to address the risk from rising casework demand.</p>	<p>Reformat the Ops Plan into one workbook.</p> <p>Timetable a meeting for the full management team to discuss business plan activity, resourcing, and mitigating actions in July.</p>	May July	FP FP

Approved for publication on 8 June 2026

Paul McFadden, Scottish Public Services Ombudsman