

Note of the Executive Board Meeting held on 17 September 2008

Present:	Alice Brown Niki Maclean David Robb	Ombudsman Head of Services Director of Policy and Development
	Fiona Paterson,	Senior Personal Assistant (secretary)
In attendance:	Emma Gray Iain Law Judy Saddler Annie White	Communications & Outreach Manager Investigations Manager Investigations Manager Casework Knowledge Manager
	Murdo Fraser Valerie Malloch	Policy and Research Officer (for items 4 and 5) Policy and Research Officer (for items 4 and 5)

Actions

1. The meeting opened at 09:30 with apologies from Kathleen Steindl, Investigations Manager and Eric Drake, Director of Investigations.
2. The minutes from the meeting held on 30 July 2008 were agreed with minor amendments.
3. Action points held over from previous meetings were reviewed.

4. Strategic Activities Update

4.1. Administrative Justice Steering Group

The Board were informed that the first report of this Group which focuses on tribunals will be launched in early October. The second report which will cover the whole administrative justice landscape will be drafted by November by Professor Tom Mullen in conjunction with Consumer Focus Scotland to be published in the Spring.

4.2. Scottish Government Scrutiny Review

A Ministerial announcement on this review is expected by the end of September. The SPSO met with the Government on possible changes and improvements to the SPSO Act as part of the legislative reform currently taking place and were informed the legislative timetable is very tight. This will drive discussions on major decisions on future design of public services during the next fortnight. A note of the meeting will be circulated to Board members and the Management Team.

Preparation is being made for a staff announcement on work streams, implementation and resourcing after the Ministerial announcement is made.

DR has been meeting with interested parties, including Waterwatch, the Care Commission and the Police Complaints Commission Scotland to maintain open communication channels in preparation for the announcement. A meeting with the new Prison Complaints Commissioner is also planned.

5. General Projects Update

The Board noted the updated Project Tracker and progress made on ongoing projects.

The Board endorsed the practice of tabling an End Project Report and requested that all Project Leaders complete a report for the Board at the end of every project. The Board noted the lessons learned in the first of these reports on the Business Plan 2008-09 Preparation project.

All

5.1. SPSO Training Programme

The Board thanked VM for the thorough paper outlining the options for consideration and implementation timeline and approved the recommended option of In-house model. The Board requested that the impact on resources is closely monitored.

NM

6. Operational Report

The Board thanked the Managers for the report in its revised format which was well received. The Board noted the contents of the paper and accompanying annexes and issues arising from the report were discussed.

The Board reinforced its previous decision that it is mandatory for all CIs to complete the 'Draft Due' field on all investigation cases. Initial information on the possibility of providing technical support to remind CIs to undertake this task has indicated this may not be possible. Further enquiries will be made of the Welsh office to confirm how their system supports this option.

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FP**

ED

The Board agreed the recommendation that the Director of Investigations will meet with the Planning Adviser to gauge workloads, workflow and likely future capacity.

6.1. Managing high risk / profile cases and prioritisation of cases

The Board noted the additional paper and requested that the paper include the rationale/explanation for why collecting this data is required. The Board requested that a similar explanation be recorded for the Fast-track process.

AW

The Board requested a diagram to illustrate the process be included and further investigation of how this information may be stored on the CHAS file to eliminate the separate record keeping.

FP

7. Financial Performance

The Board noted the current financial position and the predicted overspend. The Board discussed potential areas for savings and will continue to monitor the budget closely.

The Board approved the revised submission for the 2009-10 budget.

8. People and Human Resources Report

The Board noted the paper and accompanying annex of the Learning and Organisation Development plan 2008-09. The Board were interested to note that Entry Interviews will be conducted with all new starts and look forward to the first report.

9. Review of Risks

The Board noted the paper outlining key risk areas, audit issues and outstanding actions. The Board also noted the attached report from the External Auditors on IT issues and agreed the proposed actions.

NM

The Board approved the Risk Management Policy with minor amendments and requested the policy be published.

FP

The Board noted the External Auditor's report on the 2007-08 Audit and requested that report be published.

FP

The Board provided comments on the Draft Business Continuity Plan for amending and finalising.

FP

10. AOB

There was no other business.

Reserved Items

8. People and Human Resources Report, Annex 1: Review of SPSO Pay scales

The meeting closed at 13:15.