

Note of the Senior Management Group Meeting held on 19 January 2010

Present: Jim Martin Ombudsman (Chair)
Niki Maclean Director of Corporate Services
Emma Gray Head of Policy and External Communications

In attendance: Gillian Lafferty Executive Casework Assistant
Paul McFadden Complaints Standards Authority Manager
Fiona Paterson Senior Personal Assistant (Secretary)

Val Malloch, Policy and Research Officer, for part of item 3.

Actions

1. The meeting opened at 10:00 with no apologies.
2. The notes of the meetings held on 14 December 2010 were agreed with no amendments and action points held over from previous meetings were reviewed.

3. Strategy Group Update

The Group noted the quarterly performance update on activities in the Policy, External Communications and Outreach areas. The Group were informed that the analysis of the responses to the consultation of the Model CHP guidance will be published in February. Initial findings show a number of concerns about the implications of the practical implementation of the model CHP guidance, which will be addressed in the analysis.

The Parliament approved the Principles on 12 January which fulfils the requirement of the PSR Act. The statement will be published with this month's Commentary and sent to each body under jurisdiction by email and hard copy.

The Group discussed the first three months performance on prison complaints. The Group were informed that the Chief Executive of the SPS expressed his appreciation at the smooth transfer of complaints from Commissioner to Ombudsman at the recent update meeting.

VM joined the meeting to inform the group of the ongoing preparations for the inclusion of water complaints from 1 July. Discussions with the Water Implementation Team and Water Watch on knowledge transfer are taking place in January.

Action 1: The SMT requested that the information analyst (LR) visit the office of WaterWatch to interrogate their IT system and complaints handling data base to assess what will be required of the SPSO system. Work on preparing the SPSO IT system will begin in February.

NM

The Group approved the recommended expenditure for media analysis.

4. Corporate Services Update

The Group noted the quarterly performance update on the Corporate Services activities and were informed of current recruitment activities. The Group noted the changes identified in January to some monitored risks.

The Group agreed to renew the Health and Safety contract with Law at Work from 1 February 2011.

Action 2: Outstanding expenditure and underspend must be finalised by 2 February. SMT will discuss the financial position in a separate meeting once the year-to-date figures are available.

NM

5. Complaints and Investigations Update

The Group noted the quarterly casework performance and discussed in detail the current casework trends and upcoming integration of prison cases into the general CR allocation.

The meeting closed at 11:30

SMT Decisions taken outside of the monthly meeting

Wednesday 9 February 2011

Revised Complaint Handling Guidance

The Senior Management Team approved in principle the Section C2 of the Complaints and Investigations Guidance relating to the Early Resolution stage and the Naming Convention guidance ahead of the meeting of the Service Improvement Group who will provide final comments at the next meeting.

The SMT agreed that the Service Improvement Group would be responsible for the finalising of any templates to be used by the SPSO

The SMT agreed that the remaining Sections of A to D of the guidance will be prepared for sign off at the February SMT on 22 February and Sections E and F at the March SMT Group meeting.

The SMT agreed to an external review of the guidance to take place in Q1 of 2011-12. The Director of Corporate Services will submit a proposal on how to take this forward.