

Note of the Senior Management Group Meeting held on 16 March 2011

Present:	Jim Martin Niki Maclean Emma Gray	Ombudsman Director of Corporate Services (Chair) Head of Policy and External Communications
In attendance:	Paul McFadden Gillian Lafferty Fiona Paterson	Complaints Standards Authority Manager Executive Casework Assistant Senior Personal Assistant (Secretary)

Actions

1. The meeting opened at 10:00 with no apologies.
2. The notes of the meetings held on 24 February 2011 were agreed with no amendments and action points held over from previous meetings were reviewed.

3. Strategy Group Update

The Group were informed that the Model CHP Guidance and analysis of the responses was published at the end of February and issued to all BUJs. The Group were updated on current undertakings to initiate model CHPs with primary stakeholders.

The Group were informed that two SPSO staff from the Advice team and the Investigations team have been identified to spend some time at the Waterwatch office and shadow the staff in the handling of water complaints.

The Group were informed of the delay to the start date of the secondee to the CSA role and it was hoped the issue that had arisen would be cleared in the next week.

**NM &
EG**

The Ombudsman congratulated the team on the excellent output for the month.

Action 1: Discuss the division of role and responsibilities for the training coordinator between external training and internal learning and development.

4. Corporate Services Update

Finance

The Group noted the current financial position and predicted year-end under spend. The Group were informed that work was currently being undertaken to ensure the relevant financial information will be publicly available from 1 April 2011 in line with the new Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act publication requirements.

Investors in People

The Group were informed that the SPSO have successfully achieved IIP status. Only verbal feedback has been received from the assessor at this stage, the written report will follow by the end of March. The SPSO are also committed to a continuing improvement meeting with the provision of action points for further ongoing improvements which will reflect the SPSO strategic plan.

Business Plan

The Group finalised the Strategic Plan 2011-2015 and the Business Plan 2011-12.

Action 2: Finalise the Operational plans and performance measures and targets for circulation by the end of March **EG, NM, PM**

Action 3: Circulate the Strategic Plan, Business Plan, Operational Plans and Measures to the managers and Service Improvement Group in April. **FP**

Action 4: Finalise the Executive Summary with annual figures for tabling at the next SMT. **NM, FP**

Action 5: Circulate the Risk Register to teams for review and comment by all staff. **NM, FP**

5. Complaints and Investigations Update

The Group noted the steady increase in open cases and cases over KPI. The Group also noted that following the publication of the May compendium there will be no investigations over 12 months old.

Action 10: Prepare an executive summary to attach to the front of the final report. Once checked by EG, circulate to managers and staff representatives for any final comments. Publish in management section of internet site. **FP**

Complaints Handling Guidance sections A-D, including Advice and Investigations, has been approved for issuing to staff.

The meeting closed at 12:30

6. SMT Decisions taken outside of the monthly meeting

Thursday 31 March 2011

6.1 Press analysis and recommendations

The SMT noted the media evaluation and agreed to the 4 recommendations, which have been incorporated into the communications plan for 2011-12.

6.2 Casework Guidance

Due to annual leave cover commitments, the SMT agreed to sign off sections E and F of the Guidance at the end of April.

6.3 HR Matters

6.3.1 The SMT agreed to reconfirm to staff the interim structure with the responsibilities of the Director of Complaints and Investigations split between the Ombudsman and the Director of Corporate Services. To confirm, this is as follows:

Ombudsman:

- all escalated casework (including signing off public reports and decisions with recommendations as well as challenges);
- sourcing of professional advice; and
- liaison with stakeholders.

Director of Corporate Services:

- delegated responsibility for all escalated casework in the Ombudsman's absence
- performance management of teams;
- quality assurance; and
- management and development of casework processes.

6.3.2 Following the decision to transfer the Training Unit across to the Policy team and in order to continue to support this current structure, as well as reviewing where different tasks fall within the coming year's business plan, it has been agreed that responsibility for knowledge management will also be moved over to the Policy team, with line management of the Casework Knowledge Manager falling to the Head of Policy and External Communications.