

Note of the Senior Management Group Meeting held on 5 February 2013

Present:

Jim Martin	Ombudsman (Chair)
Niki Maclean	Director
Paul McFadden	Head of Complaints Standards

In attendance:

Rachel Hall	Executive Casework Officer
Fiona Paterson	Senior Personal Assistant (Secretary)

Invitees:

Carol Neil	Advice Team Manager
Kathleen Steindl	Early Resolution Manager
Judy Saddler	Investigations Manager

1. The meeting opened at 10:40 with apologies from Emma Gray, Head of Policy and External Communications.
2. The note of the meeting held on 4 December 2012 was agreed with minor amendments. There were no outstanding actions for review.

3. Team Managers' Updates

Advice Team

Carol Neill, Advice Team Manager, was invited to the meeting to provide an update on her area of the organisation. CN shared specific examples of different types of telephone calls handled within the Advice Team. She also informed the Group of initiatives, such as the support cards with helpful phrases to use during difficult telephone calls and improvements to the process for dealing with escalated calls.

The Group discussed with CN her recommendations for the proposed changes to the CR roster for the Advice Team.

The Ombudsman thanked CN for providing the update to the senior management team.

Early Resolution Team

Kathleen Steindl, Early Resolution Team Manager, was invited to the meeting to provide an update on her area of the organisation. KS informed the Group that although Q3 continued to be challenging for her team there was great progress and improvements made from Q2 and some exceptional work evidenced.

With the additional managerial assistance that will be provided to the team, KS will be introducing initiatives to the ER process and focussing on working with and providing training to individual team members. In one initiative, KS will be focussing the team on three specific times during the handling of a case – initial assessment, the initial enquiry following agreement of HOCs, and immediate action when BUJ responses have been received. Additionally, KS will be working with individuals on work planning, management and prioritising skills.

Other initiatives include focussing on completing decision letters on cases, improving phone communication, increasing the quality of cases for transfer and looking into hidden inactivity on cases.

The Ombudsman thanked KS for providing the update to the senior management team.

Investigations Team

Judy Saddler, Investigations Team Manager, was invited to the meeting to provide an update on her area of the organisation. JS noted to the Group that the team continued to build on their productivity rate despite the team absorbing two caseloads at the end of the quarter. JS noted the personal challenge of taking three new team members through their probationary period simultaneously, some with sensitive cases requiring close supervision and intervention.

The Group discussed with JS the relationship with BUJs and requested her views on flexible handling of caseloads.

The Ombudsman thanked JS for providing the update to the senior management team.

The Group discussed the points raised by the Team Managers.

4. Following agenda items

Due to the delayed start and outside commitments of the Group members following the meeting, the Ombudsman requested that the meeting adjourn and consider the A&AC papers on Wednesday 6 February ahead of the meeting scheduled for 7 February 2013.

Before closing the meeting, the Ombudsman ensured there were no other matters requiring SMT Group deliberation or decision in the additional papers provided.

The meeting closed at 12:30

Note of the Senior Management Group Meeting held on 31 January 2013

KPI Adjustment

The SMT agreed to adjust KPI-2 and KPI-3 for a 6-month period beginning 1 January 2013.