

**Note of the Senior Management Team (SMT) Meeting held on  
Thursday 19 December 2013**

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Present:

Jim Martin	Ombudsman (Chair)
Niki Maclean	Director
Emma Gray	Head of Policy and External Communications
Paul McFadden	Head of Complaints Standards

In attendance:

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

1. The meeting opened at 11:00 with no apologies.
2. The note of the meeting held on 13 November 2013 was agreed with no amendments and the outstanding actions list was reviewed.

**3. CSA, Policy and Communications Update**

The SMT noted the developments and progress made in the Complaints Standards Authority, the Training Unit and in policy and communications. The SMT discussed the meeting with the Scottish Government team responsible for SG complaints. The Scottish Government are establishing a cross-SG complaints group which will focus on improving handling of and learning from complaints across the organisation. They also agreed to consider support they could provide for implementing the CHP and monitoring complaints handling across the Central Government agencies sector.

The SMT discussed the informal sample assessment of reporting requirements by Local Authorities and it was agreed that the Ombudsman would speak with the Chair of SOLACE to discuss next steps.

**Action 1:** *FP to arrange a call for JM with the Chair of Solace.*

The SMT discussed the current position for social work complaints. The Ombudsman asked to be updated on the agreed recommendations for social work complaints early in the new year.

**Action 2:** *PM to update JM on the Government's position on social work complaints before 4 February.*

**Action 3:** *JM to email to Paul Gray and Annette Bruton and invite for a meeting early in the new year.*

The SMT were informed of the Scottish Prison Service audit and the SPSO's advisory role on complaints handling in the audit.

**4. Complaints and Investigations Monthly Performance Update**

The SMT noted the casework performance for November and discussed progress against the performance indicators in relation to the year-end position.

**5. Corporate Services Update**

**Finance:** The SMT noted expenditure against budget year-to-date and the predicted year-end position. The Ombudsman and Director will ensure there is best use made of any forecast

underspend to meet any resourcing requirements. In light of the current financial position, the SMT agreed to extend the overtime initiative until the end of March.

*Human Resources:* The SMT noted the successful outcomes of the recent recruitment drive for the Advice team. The new recruits are expected to be in post by mid-January. The SMT noted the additional recruitment requirements that will be undertaken in Q4 for two Complaints Reviewers and a communications officer. The SMT were informed that pay negotiations are still ongoing. The SMT noted the staff survey will be issued in February prior to the IIP renewal in March.

*FOI/DPA:* The SMT noted the Q2 statistics were submitted to FOISA in line with the new reporting requirements.

*Retention and Disposal Policy:* The SMT noted the recommendations following the review of the Retention and Disposal Policy, and discussed the proposal to ensure all sensitive information collected during the course of an investigation is removed and destroyed before the case file is moved into the office cellars for long-term storage (three months after last post-closure activity). To implement this efficiently and effectively, the SMT asked that these documents are kept in a separate file from the other casework documents to allow quick and thorough disposal.

The SMT agreed this proposal and requested that the guidance on file management is updated to reflect this decision.

**Action 4:** *FP to review the file management guidance and update staff on the new procedures.*

*ICT:* The SMT discussed the detailed proposals and recommendations on four ICT projects and agreed the following:

- Scanning: Implement a three-month pilot exercise to scan all cases closed at Advice from February 2014. If successful, extend the pilot to all cases in the Prison sector.
- Laptop audit proposal: Replace five desktop PCs with docked laptops for identified users and retain only one pool laptop. Replace the training unit blackberry with a MiFi wireless device.

[Note: The SMT agreed this replacement exercise should be undertaken in the 2013-14 budget.]

- Call recording: Review and amend existing policy and procedures, then submit the revised documents for legal advice to see if they will meet our statutory obligations.
- SharePoint for Records Management: Commission CAS to set up and host a SharePoint system for electronic management of non-casework material to meet our statutory obligations.

The SMT were also updated on the progress of implementing the HR IT system and a project that will pursue safe ways to share information electronically.

***The meeting closed at 13:15***