

Note of the Senior Management Team Meeting held on Tuesday 18 March 2014

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 10:30 with no apologies.
2. The note of the meeting held on 6 February 2014 was agreed with minor 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 Care Inspectorate regarding the scope of CHP and signposting to SPSO for that sector. Further discussions are planned to clarify the challenges and potential solutions for health and social care integration. The SMT noted the Further Education network group has now been established. The SMT noted that assessment of Local Authorities' compliance with the requirement of the CHP on quarterly reporting is underway. The SMT discussed the observations made about the Scottish Prison Service's complaints handling in the SPSO's advisory role during the SPS audit.

The SMT were updated on discussions with the Scottish Government about the options for the Scottish Social Welfare Fund from April 2015 following the recent consultation exercise, and the planned timetable for introducing a Bill to Parliament. The SMT noted the Scottish Government held a roundtable discussion about the proposal for a consumer ombudsman. The SMT were informed of the proposal to introduce a customer experience measure for Scottish Water linked to complaints escalated to the SPSO.

The SMT were informed of the Parliamentary Committee discussions around a petition urging the Scottish Government to preserve an independent Scottish Administrative Justice Council.

4. Corporate Services Update

Finance: The SMT noted expenditure against budget to end February and the predicted year-end position. The SMT were informed of the initial advice received that the SPSO would be exempt from VAT. We are awaiting the formal note to inform the SPCB.

Business Planning: The SMT discussed the business plan proposals from each area of the business for 2014-15. These proposals will be finalised for the next SMT meeting, with the accompanying Risk Register.

Internal Audit: The SMT reviewed the final reports on Procurement and the Records Management Plan. The final report for IS Installation is expected before year-end.

File location audit: The SMT were pleased to note the improved results of this year's file audit and discussed in detail the findings.

Human Resources: The SMT were informed that IIP accreditation had been received and the IIP report would be analysed alongside the staff survey results and an action plan prepared for 2014-15. The SMT noted the successful outcomes of the recent recruitment drive for complaints reviewers and communications officer. The new recruits are expected to be in post by end- April.

Health and Safety: The SMT noted the results of the audit carried out by Law at Work and the minor actions for completion.

FOI/DPA: The SMT noted the Q3 statistics were submitted to FOISA in line with the new reporting requirements.

5. Complaints and Investigations Monthly Performance Update

The SMT discussed the casework performance for February, in particular, the progress against the performance indicators in relation to the year-end position.

Further detailed discussion took place about how to clearly explain cases closed under the Duty CR pilot in the annual report.

6. Service Improvement Update

The SMT noted the quality assurance reports for Q2 casework and for Q2&3 Professional Advice. The SMT discussed the feedback mechanism for Professional Advice QA.

Following the review of the DCR pilot, the SMT noted the next steps would be to seek two full-time volunteers to work as Duty CRs with no caseload, and a third volunteer available for cover, starting as soon as possible in April.

The SMT agreed to pilot for a six-month period the option of creating a complex investigations unit, lead by PM.

The SMT discussed the Customer Journey actions tabled to them for approval. They were:

- a) improved use of telephone system e.g. through personalising messages
- b) refresh templates, leaflets and postcards in line with recommendations – in particular to re-focus on providing assurance and giving the right information at the right time
- c) change reference to stages rather than teams
- d) change of name from service delivery to customer service in all internal and external documentation/job titles where relevant
- e) refresh and build understanding of customer service standards
- f) increased focus on customer service targets, comparable to productivity targets by supporting managers to build service skills into performance management framework
- g) wider review of public report format to be undertaken
- h) measuring customer service delivery through QA, SDC's satisfaction surveys and through performance framework

The meeting closed at 12:15