

## **Note of the Senior Management Team Meeting held on Tuesday 10 February 2015**

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Present:

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

In attendance:

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

1. The meeting opened at 10:00 with apologies from Emma Gray, Head of Policy and External Communications.
2. The note of the meeting held on 16 December 2014 was agreed with no amendments and the outstanding actions list was reviewed.

### **3. Team Managers' Updates**

#### *Early Resolution Team*

Kathleen Steindl, Early Resolution Team Manager, was invited to the meeting to provide a Q3 update on her area of the organisation. KS highlighted that the quarter had presented challenges as there was high sickness and a retirement in the team coinciding with a high volume of complaints. Despite this, the team continued to perform well with PI-2 remaining at 88% due to great teamwork and team support. KS explained the enhanced screening of cases by herself and two experienced CRs, which she put in place to identify further quick closures following the DCR process and to provide some initial guidance to the allocated CR on what is required to resolve these cases. This additional screen was proving very helpful in keeping caseloads manageable.

KS informed the SMT of a visit to her team meeting by an Investigation Team CR to discuss what is needed on cases for transfer, and in particular, focussing on the composing of Heads of Complaint. This proved very helpful for both teams.

KS noted that the additional availability of advisers on site has greatly improved the throughput of cases. KS shared casework trends and emerging issues. She also shared specific high risk cases, and some good casework resolutions and outcomes.

KS discussed reconsidering PI-2 in light of extending the BUJ enquiry response time. Other issues she would like the SMT to revisit included the amount of internal email traffic, particularly in busy periods, and the process for postcard acknowledgement of incoming mail.

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

#### *Advice Team*

Carol Neill, Advice Team Manager, was invited to the meeting to provide a Q3 update on her area of the organisation. CN provided a review of the year's achievements and developments, including the useful fact-finding visit the team have conducted with support agencies.

#### *Investigations Team*

[Judy Saddler, Investigations Team Manager, attended the next weekly Senior Management Team meeting as was on leave 10 February. This note was taken by the Director.]

JS noted the increase in closure numbers per quarter from Q1 to Q3. In Q2 ER were able to hold more cases but transfers returned to normal in Q3 and this was having an impact on

caseloads. JS noted that CRs continue to operate individual holding bays, with cases taking time to progress to requests for advice. However, PI-3 remains high and will be met at the year end.

There are a number of emerging issue:-

- performance issues with specific bodies – these will be followed up by individual senior level meetings where appropriate;
- the time spent following up with BUJs for full confirmation of evidence of recs being fulfilled;
- provision of advice – new arrangements appear to be helping but may be worth giving consideration to additional advisers (e.g., dental, A&E)

#### **4. Annual Audit Plan 2014-15 Draft**

The SMT reviewed the draft plan as proposed by Audit Scotland and suggested minor revisions to some of the wording.

#### **5. Financial Monitoring Report**

The SMT noted the December financial position which includes an assumption of SPCB contingency funding based on communications with the SPCB to date and additional funding for SWF complaints handling and legal costs in 2014-15.

#### **6. Risk Management Report**

The SMT discussed in detail the draft Risk Interrogation Paper relating to the Scottish Welfare Fund and noted the completed report on the risk incident.

#### **7. Performance Report – Corporate Services**

The SMT noted the update on activities coming into the business planning cycle for 2015-16. The SMT discussed revising the method for tracking performance against targets on an YTD basis.

The SMT noted the on-going recruitment initiatives to appoint a maternity cover post for the FOI/DPA position.

#### **8. Performance Report – Casework**

The SMT noted the performance to the end of January and specific case issues.

#### **9. Performance Report – Policy Group**

The SMT noted the update on CSA, training, policy, and communications activities and discussed matters arising from the update.

#### **10. Service Improvement Report**

The SMT noted the requests for reviews had increased in the winter months but YTD continued to be less, both in real numbers and as a percentage of all cases closed, than the previous year.

The SMT were informed of the revised process for reporting on QA findings to staff.

The SMT approved the publication of the organisation learning report for Q3.

***The meeting closed at 13:00***