

**Note of the Senior Management Team Meeting
held on Tuesday 25 October 2016**

Present:

Jim Martin	Ombudsman (Chair)
Niki Maclean	Director
Emma Gray	Head of Communications and Engagement
John Stevenson	Head of Complaints Standards

In attendance:

Fiona Paterson	Senior Personal Assistant (Secretary)
Jamie McGrandles	Executive Casework Officer

Apologies:

None

1. The meeting opened at 10:00 with no apologies. The note of the meeting held on Tuesday 16 August 2016 was approved for publication with minor amendments. The actions held over from previous meetings, including AAC, internal audit and external audit, were reviewed and progress noted.

2. Team managers' updates

Advice Team

Carol Neil, Advice Team Manager, informed the meeting of the outcomes from the three-month prematurity study and the follow-up actions. It was noted that there was still a high number of premature complaints received from prisoners which could be improved by better signposting by the Scottish Prisons Service (SPS). Suggestions for change had been discussed with the CSA and Comms Teams for raising with the SPS. A very positive impact had been noted with Business Stream, whose premature rate had had dropped to 40% for the first 6 months of this year (50% 2015-16), and a significant reduction in MSP/MP premature complaints.

CN shared some positive feedback received from a complainant and a BUJ. Additionally, the tool developed and used by team members to support them during calls where there is a reasonable adjustment request has proved very popular when shared with other organisations, for the confidence it gives the staff member when having these types of conversations.

Early Resolution Team

Kathleen Steindl, Early Resolution Team Manager, and George Hunter, Assistant Manager, informed the meeting of the challenging period within the team while introducing the new investigation activity levels and moving staff between teams to resource the changes in process. Addressing the holding bay remains the team's priority.

Investigations Team

Judy Saddler, Investigations Team Manager, informed the meeting of a significant improvement in the amount of casework awaiting assessment as the team returns from the summer leave period. JS provided an update on the issues with the provision of clinical advice

by PHSO, and the increase in the concerns with the quality of advice and the handling of personal data. JS also shared current trends and issues noted in investigations.

3. Internal Audit

The Director updated the meeting on progress with internal audit engagements for 2016-17 and the SMT reviewed the actions from the Payroll report.

4. Financial Monitoring Report

The SMT reviewed the current expenditure against budget and agreed that any surplus should be managed towards an overtime initiative for casework in quarter four.

5. Risk Management

The SMT reviewed the current issues under close management.

6. Performance report

The SMT were updated on significant actions undertaken since the previous update. In particular, the following was noted:

SO1: Complaints and investigations

SMT discussed in detail additional management options for the early resolution holding bay cases. JMcG shared his initial analysis of the cases within the holding bay and was requested by the SMT to undertake further analysis of the remaining cases, in preparation for an overtime initiative. They also discussed the increase in decisions revised under the review process, while noting that this is on a very small number of cases.

SO2: Scottish Welfare Fund

Alison Jack, Scottish Welfare Fund Team Manager, informed the meeting that QA of cases had formally started and the findings will be available at the next meeting, and that the team will be undertaking training to assist their working with vulnerable customers. AJ shared casework trends and the implementation of casework discussions to clarify the Act and regulations to ensure consistent decision-making across the team.

SO3: Simplification

The SMT were informed of the outcome from the recent recruitment exercise for the CSA officer.

SO6: Engagement, learning and improvement

The SMT noted the Organisational Learning from CSCs reports for Q1 and Q2 for publication. The SMT reviewed the Customer Survey report for 2015-16 and responded to the points for consideration as outlined by EG. Possible future changes to the survey will be taken forward in Q4 to ensure alignment with the final standards that are currently being finalised by the Ombudsman Association and BSI.

The meeting closed at 13:00