

Note of the Senior Management Team Meeting held on Tuesday 27 September 2016

Present:

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

In attendance:

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

Apologies:

John Stevenson	Head of Complaints Standards
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1. The meeting opened at 10:00 with apologies from John Stevenson. 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

Investigations Team

Judy Saddler, Investigations Team Manager, informed the meeting of significant casework and key challenges facing her team in the upcoming months. JS noted that the team's productivity had been steady, comparable to last year, although it was going to prove quite a challenge to meet the Performance Indicator 1.3 due to many factors; including the profile of casework transferred into the team and the various changes to team members which has presented a challenge for casework allocation. It was suggested that an extension of the overtime initiative may assist with moving some of the cases ready for drafting.

Additionally, it was noted that many cases coming to investigation have had remedies implemented by the authority, reducing the number of cases going to public report. However, some significant concerns on various cases across sectors were shared with the SMT. The learning and improvement unit have had some cases with intractable recommendations transferred for their intervention.

3. Performance report

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

SO1: Complaints and investigations

SMT discussed case workflow and resourcing options in detail. The on-going issue with the performance statistics was noted. The Ombudsman requested this issue be resolved as a priority.

The Ombudsman requested JMcG to draft guidance on how to demonstrate we have considered an alternative remedy exists, including legal proceedings, when assessing a case for investigation.

The SMT discussed in detail the proportionality guidance review. The Ombudsman requested the legal group to prepare a discussion paper around the topic.

SO2: Scottish Welfare Fund

The SMT noted the updates on the SWF Case Handling Guidance and approved the recommended changes. The Ombudsman noted the excellent stakeholder meeting which he attended.

SO5: Accountability and best value

The SMT noted the draft Climate Change Duties report and accompanying internal audit consultancy report that informed the finalisation of the paper. The Head of Communications and Engagement will review the report before publication in November.

The SMT reviewed the proposed Health and Safety questionnaire for staff and made recommendations for inclusion and improvement.

SO6: Engagement, learning and improvement

The SMT noted the Learning and Improvement Unit's paper on recommended topics for a thematic report and agreed on the topic for the first report.

Gary Elliot informed the SMT of the findings from the Customer Surveys undertaken in Q3 and Q4. The SMT approved the recommendations tabled.

The SMT noted the annual report on Customer Service Complaints prepared by Paul McFadden, which will be published on the website.

4. AOCB

The Director informed the SMT that the finance paper has been delayed due to IT issues, but in broad terms, we are £56k underspent, which is normal for this time in the budget cycle.

The meeting closed at 12:30