

Note of the Senior Management Team Meeting held on Tuesday 7 February 2017

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
Rachel Nicholson	Executive Casework Officer

Apologies:

None

1. The meeting opened at 10:30 with no apologies. The note of the meeting held on Tuesday 12 January 2017 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. Internal Auditor's Report

The SMT reviewed the annual assurance by the Internal Auditor and noted that the recommendation is the standard form of Governance Statement in the SPSO's report and accounts for year to 31 March 2017 could be signed. The Director outlined for the SMT the changes to the activity plan for 2017-18 and detailed the focus for the performance reporting audit, which will be the main activity for the year.

3. Financial Monitoring Report

The SMT reviewed the current expenditure against budget. The Director confirmed that the January figures would be available for the AAC meeting, and that we continue to be on target for expenditure against the budget and cashflow. She confirmed that we won't be drawing on any further contingency funds, as we have been able to absorb these unbudgeted liabilities into the approved budget. The Director confirmed that any surplus may be managed towards an overtime initiative for casework in February and March.

4. Risk, Incidents and Issues Management Report

The SMT noted the high risks have remained stable with no new risks emerging to the end of the business year, and discussed emerging issues for the coming business year which will be considered during the planning process.

5. Performance report

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

SO1: Complaints and investigations

The Director informed the SMT that the slowdown in closures is, in part, a result in the loss of 2FTE CRs this year. The critical PI-1.2 measure is expected to be available for year-end when the formula issue is resolved by the contractor. It is expected to be low this year, based on the number and age of cases in the holding bay, and no more could be done with the current resource levels.

The Director updated the SMT on the progress in forming the Professional Adviser function and the current discussions with PHSO on access to their database. It was noted that Gibraltar would like to access this function when it becomes available.

The SMT noted the QA final report for Q2 2016-17.

SO3: Simplification

The SMT were updated on the preparation for receiving social work complaints, including that the Professional Advisers are preparing a knowledge base and internal training days to be held in March/April.

SO4: Good Practice

The SMT were updated on the local government annual performance data collection, and noted the Improvement Report was still not published due to the delay in data submission by one large Council. The Network sub-group are addressing the ownership and timeliness issues for future reporting.

SO5: Accountability and Best Value

The SMT were given an outline of the initial findings from the staff survey, which indicate an improvement on previous years' results, despite the resource restrictions. Additionally, we are currently undertaking reaccreditation for IIP, with 25 members of staff to be interviewed. The SMT were informed that the phenomenal level of recruitment undertaken in the year was not sustainable, and other HR projects have been side-lined for this important work.

The SMT gave thanks to the staff that supported the Case File Project for the Historical Child Abuse Inquiry.

The SMT were updated on the overflow accommodation project.

SO6: Engagement, learning and improvement

The Head of Engagement and Communications commended the SMT's appearances before the Scottish Parliament Committees. They have led to very positive representation in the public space.

The SMT were updated on current LIU projects and targeted work, in particular, the awareness raising to protect the interests and support the complaints of vulnerable persons, in particular, prisoners, the elderly and ESL groups.

The SMT noted the Q3 report on Organisation Learning form Customer Service Complaints.

The meeting closed at 13:45