

Note of the Senior Management Team Meeting held on Tuesday 15 August 2017

Present:

Rosemary Agnew	Ombudsman (Chair)
Niki Maclean	Director
John Stevenson	Head of Complaints Standards

In attendance:

Fiona Paterson Senior Personal Assistant (Secretary)

1. The meeting opened at 10:00 with no apologies. The note of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 July 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 Audit

The SMT reviewed the final report from the internal audit of Payroll. It was noted that the three recommendations covered specific single oversights, and not systemic or process issues. Overall, for annual assurance purposes, the controls over separation of duties and payroll processes were scored as satisfactory.

3. Financial Monitoring Report

The SMT reviewed the current expenditure against budget and were updated on the progress of the external audit for 2016-17. The SMT noted the final draft of the SPSO Annual Report and Accounts will be forwarded to the auditors following the SMT final review.

Action 1: The Ombudsman requested that the finance paper Key Points includes the expected year-end position.

The Ombudsman recorded that she had informed the SPCB of the reason for the staff underspend due to the vacant position in the Senior Management Team, and her reasoning for pausing on refilling the post to allow her some flexibility for staff planning considerations. The remaining underspend may cover some maternity leave costs.

4. Risk, Incidents and Issues Management Report

The SMT noted that there continued to be no critical risks identified on the Risk Register that might affect the SPSO's ability to achieve its agreed Business Plan. It was also noted that no reports in relation to fraud or control failures been identified since the last meeting.

The SMT discussed the high level risks and adjusted the scores based on where there had been movement, and split Risk 1.1 to better identify the risk issues. A new risk was added with the start of the project to move office accommodation in 2018. The SMT agreed this new risk would be appropriate for the Risk Interrogation Paper to be prepared for the AAC meeting.

Action 2: The Ombudsman requested that the full risk register is brought to every meeting.

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 SMT discussed the process and reporting of recommendations and requested a summary of recommendations made by type.

The SMT noted the QA reports on Casework for Q4 2016-17 and SWF for Q1 2017-18.

SO2: SWF

The SMT discussed the two issues that have been noted in recent cases and the actions taken to highlight these concerns to the relevant bodies.

SO3 Simplification

The SMT discussed the Integrated Joint Boards implementation of the model Complaints Handling Process. The Ombudsman has asked to be kept up to date with any non-compliance.

JS shared the initial analysis of the complaints handling marker which will be reported to each sector as feedback. Emerging trends show timescales and communication issues at Stage 2 to be the most prevalent topics. Quarterly reports on this analysis will be brought to the SMT.

SO4: Good Practice

The SMT discussed the timetable to update and refresh the performance indicators for CHP to include outcome measures.

SO5: Accountability and Best Value

The SMT noted an offer had been made for HR Maternity Leave cover, and approved the publication of the Climate Change Report.

SO6: Engagement, learning and improvement

The SMT discussed the timetable for final comments on the Annual Report and expected publication date.

The meeting closed at 12:30