

**Notes of the informal meeting of the
Office for Legal Complaints (OLC)
Monday 21 January 2013
11.30am – 15.30pm
Baskerville House, Birmingham**

Present:

Elizabeth France, Chair
Tony Foster, member
David Thomas, member

Comments invited from:

Professor Mary Seneviratne, member
Margaret Doyle, member
Maureen Vevers, member
Rosemary Carter, member
Karen Silcock, member

In attendance:

Adam Sampson, Chief Ombudsman

Apologies:

None

Board Secretary:

Andy Taylor

Preliminary issues:

The scheduled OLC meeting was cancelled due to poor weather conditions. However all members had advance sight of all papers and were invited to comment by 21 January 2013. This record is a note of the comments received in lieu of members attending in person and is in accordance with the published OLC Rules of Procedure, in particular rule 36.

Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed and thanked those in attendance.

Item 2 – Minutes of previous meeting

2. The minutes of the meeting of 17 December 2012 were noted and approval to be confirmed at the February meeting.

ACTIONS

- The Secretary to carry forward the approval of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2012 to the February meeting.

Item 3 – Matters arising & action points

3. Members noted those items where action had been completed and that others were included as agenda items. No further comments were received.

Item 4 – Comments received regarding items presented for information.

4. The items presented for information were noted. No comments had been received in advance of the meeting for circulation.

Chief Ombudsman's report

5. The Chief Ombudsman's report was noted and in response to questions from members the Chief Ombudsman confirmed:
 - the Chief Operating Officer would report to the Chief Ombudsman;
 - an effective process would be embedded to ensure that internal and external communications were consistent in tone and content;
 - cross team contributions into the quality framework would be vital, especially from the ombudsman team;
 - service complaints marked for the attention of the service complaint adjudicator would continue to be administered and reviewed by the compliance team for the time being;
 - ombudsmen have been allocated to the CMC and knowledge roles; with the remaining members of the team allocated to a specific 'village'. All ombudsmen would be expected to continue making routine decisions and at the same time contribute to staff development and supporting the leadership of villages or carrying out the other identified roles. On average, it is expected that a 60/40 split will be required;
 - once a new Head of Knowledge and Quality is in post, further consideration would be given to how equality and diversity might be best embedded across the organisation.

Register of hospitality offered and received

6. The paper was noted and no comments were received from members, with approval to be confirmed at the February meeting.

ACTIONS

- The Secretary to carry forward the approval of the register of hospitality offered and received to the February meeting.

Register expenses

7. The paper was noted and no comments were received from members. The register was approved for publication on the main website.

ACTIONS

- The Secretary to publish the register of hospitality offered and received on the main website.

Finance report

8. The paper was noted and no comments were received from members. The Chair reminded those in attendance that the draft budget will be presented to the LSB at their meeting on 18 March. In view of the recent change to the meeting date, the Chair is no longer able to attend and recommended that a member should attend along with the Chief Ombudsman and Chief Operating Officer in her absence.

ACTIONS

- The Secretary to contact members for a delegate to attend the LSB meeting on 18 March 2013.

Item 5 – General Counsel update

9. Members noted the paper and acknowledged the revised presentation format and content. This was considered helpful and the good progress made by the general counsel team was also noted.

Item 6 – KPI report

10. Members noted the KPI report and members were disappointed to see that, Ombudsman work in progress had risen substantially over the last two months. The Chief Ombudsman advised that work in progress figures had been influenced by long term sickness in the ombudsman team coupled with a rise in the number of cases being referred for final decision which will need to be explored to see whether it was exceptional. A recovery plan was being implemented and work in progress was expected to be back at normal levels by the end of March. This would be closely monitored by the executive and by the board.

Item 7 – Customer satisfaction update

11. The paper was noted and no comments were received from members.

Item 8 – Community engagement and equality and diversity update

12. The paper was noted and no comments were received from members.

Item 9 – Scheme rules and CMC update

13. Members were provided with copies of recent communications relating to CMC's prior to the meeting. The Ministry of Justice had confirmed that work was in hand to draft clauses to be included in appropriate primary legislation to create a charging mechanism which was separate from the levy.

Item 10 – Service complaint report

14. The paper was noted and no comments were received from members.

Item 11 –Business plan open day update

15. The paper was noted and the revised proposals welcomed. Members were invited to provide any additional comment to the Head of Policy and Communications by Friday 25 January at the latest.

ACTIONS

- Members were invited to provide any additional comment to the Head of Policy and Communications by Friday 25 January at the latest.

Item 12 – Any other business

16. The Chair requested the internal communication issued to all staff about CMC's should be forwarded to members for information.

ACTIONS

- The Secretary to forward a copy of the internal communication issued to all staff about CMC's to members for information.

Next meeting

17. The next OLC meeting will be held on 25 February 2013 at Baskerville House, Birmingham and will include an open session between 12 noon and 2pm.

Andy Taylor
Board Secretary
22 January 2013