

Minutes of the forty fifth meeting of the

Office for Legal Complaints (OLC)

Monday 20 May 2013

11.30am – 15.30pm

Baskerville House, Birmingham

Present:

Elizabeth France, Chair
Tony Foster, member
David Thomas, member
Professor Mary Seneviratne, member
Margaret Doyle, member
Rosemary Carter, member
Karen Silcock, member
Maureen Vevers, member

In attendance:

Adam Sampson, Chief Ombudsman
Rob Hezel, Chief Operating Officer
Alison Robinson, Head of Policy and Communications
Kathrine Sherrington, Head of Operations (item 8)
Freda Sharkey, General Counsel (items 10 and 11)

Apologies:

None

Board Secretary:

Andy Taylor

Preliminary issues:

The quorum requirements for the Board meeting were met.

There were no declarations of interest.

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 22 April 2013 were approved for publication.

ACTIONS

- The Secretary to publish the approved minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2013.

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.
4. The Chief Ombudsman updated members on progress since the last meeting in respect of staff training regarding case fee administration and will consider publishing guidance on the main website in due course.
5. The Chair reminded members of the Annual Report event on 13 June 2013 and agreed that the OLC meeting to be convened on the same day will be an informal meeting unless any substantive items are required for formal decision.

Item 4 – Comments received regarding items presented for information.

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

Chief Ombudsman's report

7. Members noted the monthly report.
8. The Chief Ombudsman advised members of a recent tripartite meeting with the Parliamentary Ombudsman and Financial Ombudsman. The output of the meeting will be used to inform a discussion paper at the September strategy meeting.
9. Members were advised that the Treasury and Ministry were still working to achieve a solution in respect of claims management work. Members agreed the July meeting was the key decision point in order to reasonably allow the required five month lead-in period before go-live by the end of the year. The Chief Ombudsman agreed to keep members updated with developments.

OLC member and Ombudsman registers of interest

10. Members noted the updated registers of interest and approved both for publication on the main website.

Finance report

11. Members noted the monthly finance report and no questions were raised.

Corporate risk register

- Members noted updated corporate risk register. The executive reported that the register had been discussed at the earlier audit and risk meeting. The document was in the process of being further refined to focus on key organisational risks.

ACTIONS

- The Secretary to publish the updated registers of interest on the main website.

Item 5 – Audit and Risk committee 2012–13 annual report and 2013–14 terms of reference

12. Members noted and approved the committee's 2012–13 annual report and 2013–14 terms of reference.

ACTIONS

- The Secretary to publish the 2013-14 Audit and Risk committee terms of reference on the main website.

Item 6 – Remuneration and nomination committee (RemCo) 2012–13 annual report and 2013–14 terms of reference

13. Members noted and approved the committee's 2012–13 annual report and 2013–14 terms of reference.

ACTIONS

- The Secretary to publish the 2013-14 Remuneration and Nomination committee terms of reference on the main website.

Item 7 – Response to the Public Administration Committee enquiry

14. Members were advised that an extension to the OLC submission of evidence had been sought and approved by the Public Administration Committee. Members noted the paper and were asked to provide any final comments to the Head of Policy and communications immediately following the meeting.

Item 8 – KPI report

15. Members noted the from the KPI report that Ombudsman work in progress continued to have been maintained at an appropriate level.

16. In response to questions members were informed:

- The service level in the Assessment Centre had been maintained for some considerable time; as part of the cost review, work will be undertaken to identify the required resourcing level in order to maintain an appropriate 'average'. This work will take into consideration the OLC's risk appetite.
- The conversion ratio had been investigated further by the MI team; however, it was not possible accurately to isolate the impact of changes to the scheme rules and 'premature pilot'.
- Staff training had been completed on decision-making about case fee waivers.

17. Members suggested the COO should consider providing members with a regular monthly report on similar lines to the Chief Ombudsman's report, focusing on internal developments. This may be used as an opportunity to consolidate information from other reports into a single document.

ACTIONS

- The COO to consider providing members with a consolidated report and to advise the Board Secretary of developments for agenda planning purposes.

Item 9 – Scheme of delegations

18. Members noted the paper and subject to minor amendments it was approved for publication.

ACTIONS

- The Head of Finance to update the paper and publish the revised scheme on the main website.

Item 10 – Category 1 cases for publication

19. There were no category 1 cases presented to members for consideration and approval for publication.

Item 11 – Scheme rules: successor firms

20. Members noted the paper and requested that further clarification be sought from Counsel. Following this, members asked for an update and for a clear set of guidance to be developed and published.

ACTIONS

- The General Counsel to seek further clarification from external Counsel in respect of successor firms and following this, update members with developments.

- The General Counsel and Chief Ombudsman to liaise with OLC member, David Thomas, in developing clear guidance for later publication regarding successor firms

Item 12 – OLC 2012–13 annual report

21. The Chair of the Audit and Risk committee confirmed that the financial accounts had been considered at the meeting held earlier on 20 May and were recommended for approval by the OLC. Members noted the final draft of the annual report and subject to minor amendments, members approved the 2012–13 annual report for laying before Parliament on 13 June 2013.
22. Members noted that a copy of the annual report was on the LSB agenda for 23 May 2013.

ACTIONS

- The Policy and Communications team to incorporate the minor amendments suggested by members and to provide a final copy of the document to the Ministry, LSB and Board Secretary in sufficient time for laying before Parliament on 13 June 2013.

Item 13 – Any other business

NED private meeting

23. OLC members held a private meeting without members of the Management Team or OLC Secretariat in attendance.

Next meeting

24. The next OLC meeting will be held on 15 July 2013 at Baskerville House, Birmingham.

Andy Taylor
Board Secretary
21 May 2013