

<b>Meeting</b>	OLC Board	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>	3
		<b>Paper No.</b>	120.2C
<b>Date of meeting</b>	26 May 2022	<b>Time required</b>	10 mins

<b>Title</b>	Reduction of the Pre- Assessment Pool
<b>Sponsor</b>	Sandra Strinati, COO, Operations Managers, Deborah McIntyre, David Peckham, Treena Moseley and Mark Persard
<b>Status</b>	OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

### Executive summary

The new ways of working that operations have implemented throughout 21/22 are now having a profound effect on reducing the PAP, operational delivery and the way that we improve the journey of our customers. We have seen this translate into improving results;

- Third monthly reduction of the PAP at 5646 vs a BP expectation of 5981
- 714 closures – second best monthly performance since modernising LeO after an exceptional 852 in March, business plan target was 772.
- 415 from the Front-End Team, new and ongoing initiatives.
- A combined established investigator and FET productivity of 8.57
- Investigator average case holdings exceeded the 16 expectations for the 7<sup>th</sup> month in a row at 17.67
- 40 new starters successfully inducted and entered Gradbay
- A 24% increase in outcomes on April 21, with 49.35 established investigators. 48% less than April 21
- FET exceeded expectations of 270 at 415 cases
- Operation employing an agile resource deployment model, moving resource at pace to the most appropriate areas of operations to deliver the most appropriate outcome for the customer at the earliest opportunity
- 28% shorter journey time for low complexity case in the initiatives, this equates to 37 days from the point that LeO receives all relevant paperwork.
- Continuous learning of our recruitment and onboarding process has led to 110 applicants for a Cardiff hub, with 43 candidates passing an initial sift and booking into May assessments centres.
- An exceptional March at 852 closures a record in the post modernising LeO, with April the second best at 714

This update includes initiatives that lead to operations priorities of reducing the PAP

- Initiatives impacting BAU process to deliver process efficiencies, in progress, in planning or due to start; and
- Initiative impacting people to improve efficiencies, in progress, in planning or due to start
- Technology solutions within General Enquiries Team (GET)
- Quality outcomes to our customers
- Cardiff Hub recruitment plans
- Development to combat operational attrition

**Recommendation/action required**

No action required for information only

# Reduction of the Pre-Assessment Pool

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Operations committed to updating the OLC Board on initiatives to deliver backlog recovery and reduction of the PAP to include people, process and efficiency measures.
- 1.2 Where activities can be quantified, they have been.
- 1.3 Initiatives have so far delivered on the rapid turnaround of operational performance. This sustained success is delivering not only to the improvements in the journey our customers receive, but also delivering on assurance and credibility to our stakeholders, internally and externally.
- 1.4 Reasonable Offer Made, Guided negotiation, Nudge, Early proportionality, PAP proportionality, and GETI, are now to be grouped under one Front End Team (FET) and reported as an overall closure figure.
- 1.5 There are several technological solutions within GET that are being developed, these are planned to release resource into other areas to support PAP reduction initiatives.

## 2. Front End Team Initiatives – In progress

- 3.1 From 1 April the minimum expected resolutions from Front End Initiatives changed from 75 to 270 per month.
- 3.2 FET achieved 415 resolutions, which accounted for 58% of overall closures. These new ways of operating are having a profound effect on operational delivery.
- 3.3 Of the 384 closures 91 were opportunities identified from the PAP backlog. We anticipate that these opportunities will have been exhausted by the end of 2022/2023
- 3.4 Nudge accounted for 53 of the closures, with 271 closures from Early proportionality initiatives looking at new cases prior to joining the PAP. These are now Business-as-Usual (BAU) processes which will continue after 2022/2023.
- 3.5 The level of opportunities being identified by the FET Level 2 Ombudsman are exceeding expectations, and the Resolution Centre continues to support FET with investigators to deliver on the opportunities that are being created. Across operations we have taken an agile view of moving additional staff from BAU investigations to FET, where they are best utilised and can offer the maximum value to the customer.
- 3.6 There are currently 12.36 FET investigators/GETi to achieve the 270 monthly performance. From June 2022 this will be increasing by a further 3.84 FTE, and the BAU closure expectations of 21 per month from these investigators will be added to the minimum expectations from FET.
- 3.7 Minimum expectations from FET will increase to 291 from June 22
- 3.8 Whilst 50% of FET closures are by agreement, increased investigator resource in FET will increase demands on Ombudsman for decisions. Therefore, we are currently identifying two investigators who, as part of career development, can undertake some of the ombudsman non-decision work.

Thereby increasing the capacity of our existing ombudsman to make decisions.

- 3.9 Focusing these development opportunities on non-decision work will also support BAU development of new investigators, progression of investigations and develop a talent pipeline.

### 3 Front End Team – Processes and quality

- 3.1 Collaboration between FET and GET Team Leaders is identifying smart and improved processes which will present cases to FET in a stronger position to identify opportunities, for example microenterprise information gathering before passing through for review.
- 3.2 An adapted quality framework has been drafted in collaboration with FET, Quality and the Deputy Chief Ombudsman. Approval is expected by end May, at which time we can start to gather intelligence for assurance, investigator/GETi development, and to adjust processes as part of our continuous improvement.

### 4 BAU efficiencies – In progress

- 4.1 Listening to our people – After engagement with, and feedback from, established investigators we have developed activities all designed to offer an improved customer experience the aim of which is to support PAP reduction
- 4.2 Autonomy Team - a limited trial with 1 team has started. It will test whether removing much of our formal process and giving 'signed off' established investigators, the autonomy to manage cases in the way they believe would be most efficient, then improves overall performance. This began in December and will run throughout Q4. A review of the performance of the team having applied various way of working will be undertaken in Q1 which will seek to understand not only if more customers have been helped than they would have been but also that the quality is of the standard required with enhanced quality checks taking place outside of the regular quality framework timescales
- 4.3 Specialist Law Team– We have a group of Investigators working on Probate and Personal Injury cases to assess the impact having only one type of area of law in a case holding. The expectation is that as Investigators become more specialised in these areas, they can improve the customer journey and help more customers. We have had some very positive feedback from a legal service provider that not only praised the improved service having specialists has meant to them in how it has improved Leo's service to them and their customers but also acknowledging the efforts LeO are making in addressing the challenge we have with the customer wait time in the PAP. This initiative is expected to contribute to positive results for both Business Priority 1 and 3 as we will be able to support the feedback mechanisms to the profession about how they can better manage these types of complaints at first tier. A review of the success of this initiative is taking place in QTR1.
- 4.4 Early Allocations Team – A team of investigators are currently taking cases from earliest point that they enter PAP after all FET initiatives have been

assessed as not suitable, so the most recent cases that were not eligible for inclusion in the various workstreams within the FET. The aim of this is to determine if there is an improvement to the customer journey time because the complaints are fresh in the minds of both parties and evidence its likely to be more readily available. It is also expected that parties who have not had to wait a long time will be more amenable to our process and our expectations of timescales for them to engage with responses and evidence.

- 4.5 A review of the performance of Autonomy, Early Allocations and Specialist Law Teams has started in Q1 which will seek to understand not only if more customers have been helped than they would have been but also that the quality is of the standard required with enhanced quality checks taking place outside of the regular quality framework timescales. We will report to Board on all of these activities on 30 June 2022.
- 4.6 Failure to agree scope – Scoping the initial complaint is vital and we are working with our customers to be clear on scoping, driving out ambiguity and driving up clarity and understanding with customers on what LeO can and cannot investigate. In some instances this can be challenging for customers and investigators, Where this challenge exists, complaints will be worded by an ombudsman for additional support. If after this intervention an agreement cannot be found, this will lead to a potential dismissal under scheme rule 5.7n. This is being tested on identified cases

## 5. Efficiencies and process changes now in BAU

- 5.1 Review of Request Remind Proceed Process – This review has been completed, and the implementation of agreed action will give improved guidance to investigators on how they proceed or dismiss cases where parties disengage. This work has the potential to improve customer journey times and free up investigator resources which are then reinvested into other cases. This is a planned Q4 initiative. New guidance and knowledge alerts have been delivered to operational staff.
- 5.2 Removing the requirement for Service Provider to agree complaints in all cases. This delays the early part of a case when Service Providers cannot respond to the request often due to their own work loads. Removing this step will reduce delays and improve investigation times. This action was completed in December and is now in policy and guidance. This is now live and BAU
- 5.3 Adding new complaints – This has reviewed the process of when a complainant can add extra complaints that would have been known at scoping stage of the complaint. Adding complaints that would have been known about delays investigations and creates part premature complaints that stop the investigation proceeding which elongates the customer journey time. Streamlining this process, within our existing Scheme Rules, will reduce investigation time and remove admin burden from investigators and improve the overall service to Service Providers and complainants.
- 5.4 Scoping call planning at assessment stage – accurate scoping sets the tone for the entire case, any errors at this stage compound as the cases

progresses and results in failure demand and rework. Formalising the approach will improve the customer journey, reduce rework and improve customer journey times – this will be strengthened with a review and implementation of customer communication training to new staff, with a view to rolling out to the business.

5.5 Combining Scope and evidence request – Currently we wait 7 days to allow parties to confirm complaints before sending an evidence request. GETi's have trailed removing this step, it has had no detriment and has reduced time. We plan to roll this out across operations to reduce an unnecessary admin burden and reduce investigation timelines. This is a planned action for March ensuring that data collected from GETi pilot support this action. This process was launched in April 22 and is now BAU.

5.6 Ideas Station (TIS) - To reduce the risk of disengaging staff, the TIS will now be reviewed monthly ahead of Operational Management Briefings. Reviewed ideas will be shared during briefings and followed up afterwards with the individuals proposing the idea. This approach was trialed at Mays Operational Briefing and widely received positive feedback from colleagues. This approach has the added benefit of reducing the resource requirements previously placed on operational staff to collate and review ideas.

## 6. General Enquiries Team (GET) updates

6.1 A key theme for our work in GET in this new business year is service improvement. This is a combination of looking at the use of technology to improve our efficiency and looking at reviewing and improving our current processes. This is all underpinned by supporting our team members and ensuring that they have the skills and knowledge to be confident and successful in their roles.

6.2 In April we met with our FET managers to review how we can improve some of our processes such as the microenterprises/charities process. These process improvements are aimed at reducing our customers' journey time and improving our closure rates. We are also being agile with our resourcing and redirecting some Get Advisor resources at periods in each month to support with admin related activities.

6.3 The first phase of our three-part technology transformation strategy for the General Enquiries Team is being implemented this month. The first phase focuses on the deployment of Robotic processing automation project (RPA) to introduce 100% of complaint forms being processed by RPA (currently a third of complaint forms are processed by RPA). The business transformation and project management teams have been working very closely with the GET managers and developers to complete UAT and team training in preparation for the deployment into the live environment. We will be monitoring this very closely over the coming weeks to address any issues and to embed new ways of working into the team.

## 7. People / Structure changes – In progress

- 7.1 Gradbay – we have taken feedback from previous new recruits to LeO and used this to change and develop the 2021 induction process. We previously experienced new recruits leaving LeO early and any changes therefore had an aim of improving retention and productivity at an earlier stage of their career with LeO. Our first batch of graduates moved out of Gradbay on the 1st of April to BAU teams. Of the initial 10, 6 will be moved, 2 were on extended probation and offered further support, and 2 did not pass probation. By way of comparison, 30% of the 19 July 2021 starters, either left prior to probation, failed or had their probations extended. This initiative has now been increased to include a further 3 team leaders and is part of our BAU process for induction. Feedback from recruits remain positive, and all attest to the support that the Gradbay has provided.
- 7.2 Combining the L1 Ombudsman investigator and QaF role – combining the two distinct roles will deliver a more flexible ombudsman resource. It gave us flexibility to react to changes in demand in the three core areas that L1's deliver: High Complexity complaints, Quality and Feedback to investigators and decision making. A combined team ensures that Team Leaders can use ombudsman to react to the demands of the business in a more agile way. This change took effect from 6 December.
- 7.3 Improved Induction – Induction process has been refreshed in line with November cohort feedback. System and theoretical training have been more closely aligned. This gives trainees more confidence going into the live role. We have also increased the number of experience mentors in readiness for March cohorts. Specific feedback from inductees has been that this was the one singularly most important support for them. Feedback from March cohort was positive and the induction was widely well received. We have received further feedback from March cohort that will be used to improve the July 22 Induction.
- 7.4 Improved career progression - As we adopt an agile resource deployment plan and move additional resource to FET, this places strain on ombudsman resource for decision making and QaF workloads.
- 7.5 We are currently identifying two investigators who, as part of career development, can undertake some of the ombudsman non decision work. Thereby increasing the capacity of our existing ombudsman complete decision. Focusing these development opportunities on non-decision work will also support BAU development of new investigators, and progression of investigations as they concentrate on QaF
- 7.6 Cardiff Hub strategy – Having reviewed our successful managed recruitment campaign in January. We have implemented lessons into a campaign to deliver on our Cardiff Hub strategy. Early indicators are positive with 110 applicants of which 40 have passed and booked into assessment centres running from 16<sup>th</sup> June. This volume of assessments give is the flexibility to recruit 8 -12 additional investigators.
- 7.7 Attrition – This continues to be higher than assumptions at 6 FTE investigators in April, 14 since the beginning of the calendar year. There are 3 main reasons for this;

- New starters have come to the end of probation and not achieved the required standard.
- The SRA is recruiting for a similar skillset at a higher salary. We have lost 3 Investigators and a L1 ombudsman to these roles.
- A section of March new starters on full work from home contracts have struggled with isolation and working from home having come from face to face jobs. 4 of this cohort have returned to roles with a face to face people element. These 4 people were not able to be accommodated in a LeO site

7.8 We have implemented several initiatives to learn from the feedback we are receiving from staff to combat attrition

- Recruitment in Cardiff will have a fixed day element in the office when we offer to new recruits based in this hub. This will support a culture of inclusion and support the isolation that has been felt by full working from home staff. Plans are also in place for leadership to be in attendance in Cardiff on these days to further support
- Continuous improvement of Gradbay to include daily huddles with all new starters, this includes a wellbeing champion at least 1 call per week. There is a feedback loop to ops to work on themes.
- We run a mentoring programme where established staff are on hand to support new starters with process, systems or just general queries throughout the day. This is run in addition to QaF where and duty ombudsman who are available to answer the technical questions.
- Regular feedback sessions and catch ups with the Gradbay operations manager to understand themes and drive continuous improvement.

## 8. Quality

8.1 During Q3 Operations changed the way that service quality checks were completed. Historically a Team Leader would be responsible for these checks. This leads to issues with unintentional bias as they know most of the cases, customers and investigators well.

8.2 From Q3 these checks have been taken out of the reporting line and are now being completed by an independent Team Leader. This gives us more assurance that we have a more accurate picture of quality and can address resultant themes.

8.3 There has been an increase in Reasonable Service outcomes to 68.3% from 62.7%% in Q2, this is measured against an expectation of reasonable service to the customer in 90% of those checked. There are a few contributing factors to this drop

- The change described in 7.1
- An increase in new starters
- An increase in the number of new Team Leaders

8.4 Operations Team Leaders, have made this a performance focus and we expect to see reasonable service outcomes to continue to increase through Q1.



8.5 Operations Managers have made this a key focus of performance management and support alongside performance variation.

**Operations Management Team  
April 2022**