

Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Public Interests Decisions Committee (PIDCo) of the Office for Legal Complaints (OLC)

11 November 2025

Present

Rachel Cerfontyne, OLC PIDCo Chair

Patricia Tueje, OLC

Elisabeth Davies, OLC Chair

Steve Pearson, Joint Interim Chief Executive

Tobias Haynes, Lawyer

Betty Liu, Executive Support Assistant (observing)

Apologies

David Peckham, Joint Interim Chief Executive

Mike Harris, Head of Communications, Engagement, and Impact

Minutes

Kay Kershaw, Board Governance Manager

Item 1 – Welcome, apologies, declarations of interest, and matters arising.

1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.
2. Apologies were noted.
3. The meeting was quorate with a lay majority.

4. There were no declarations of conflict of interest reported.

Item 2 – Previous minutes and actions

5. The minutes of the PIDCo meeting held on 4 August 2025 were **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting.
6. There were no previous actions.

Item 3 – Feedback on the publication of the quarter two public interest decisions

7. The OLC's strengthened commitment to transparency and its more strategic use of legislative powers continued to be well received. Stakeholders and the legal press provided positive feedback, and no significant issues or concerns were raised following the publication of the quarter two public interest decisions.
8. In line with the OLC/ LeO's commitment to the wider transparency agenda, engagement would continue with stakeholders and the legal press, and consideration would be given to publishing thematic trends to maximise the impact of making ombudsman decisions available in the public interest.

Item 4 - Reflections and learning from PIDCo meetings.

9. PIDCo members shared their reflections on publishing ombudsman decisions and the lessons learned from this process. The following key points were made:
 - The papers presented at the quarter three PIDCo meeting had been accessible and easy to read, reflecting previous feedback and a commitment to continued improvement.
 - To enhance interest and engagement, it was suggested that consideration be given to including thematic context in published case summaries to show how the case aligned to broader trends observed through LeO's case work.

ACTION: The Joint Interim Chief Executive to consider the feasibility of including thematic context in the published case summaries to show how the case aligned to broader trends observed through LeO's case work.

- To maintain the volume of public interest decisions published, consideration could be given to including examples of good practice. This would require updating the policy framework and the criteria for publishing ombudsman's decisions in the public interest as well as undertaking further consultation.
- If this were pursued, it was recommended that the broader transparency agenda was also considered, including the potential publication of all ombudsman's decisions and how cases of public interest would be highlighted within this approach.
- This would be considered further, along with other reflections and learnings from the publishing decisions process and a draft list of potential future publishing criteria at a dedicated session at the quarter four PIDCo meeting. Any recommendations arising from this session would be submitted to the Board for consideration.

ACTION: The Lawyer to prepare a draft list of potential future criteria for publishing ombudsman's decisions for consideration at the quarter four PIDCo meeting.

ACTION: The Board Governance Manager to include a dedicated session on learning and reflections from the publishing decisions process on the agenda for the quarter four PIDCo meeting.

Item 5 – Consideration of proposals for Q3 publication

10. The Joint Interim Chief Executive provided an overview of nine ombudsman decisions recommended for publication, highlighting the rationale for the recommendations, the associated legal and risk assessments, and the responses received from the parties involved following LeO's notification of its proposal to publish.
11. In discussion, the following key points were made:
 - The ombudsman decisions recommended for publication were from a range of service providers and reflected a range of service issues.

- It was in the public interest to publish ombudsman decisions relating to closed firms as such information may be relevant to former clients of the firms and would provide valuable learning to the sector to help prevent similar service issues occurring in the future.
- The SRA's views on the proposed publications had been requested and were awaited at the time of the meeting. Any subsequent comments from the SRA raising concerns to the publications would be referred to PIDCo for further consideration.
- Challenges to the proposed publication of three ombudsman decisions had been raised from the service providers.
- The ombudsman decisions recommended for publication had been assessed against the four indicative criteria outlined in the policy framework for publishing ombudsman's decisions in the public interest. Under this policy, which had been subject to prior consultation, at least one of these criteria must be met for an ombudsman's decision to be published.
- Consideration may be given to refreshing and communicating the policy framework for publishing ombudsman's decisions to ensure greater clarity on the indicative criteria and the legislative powers underpinning publication.

12. PIDCo considered each of the nine cases recommended for publication to determine whether they met the indicative criteria. After a detailed discussion and careful consideration of the facts and associated risks, PIDCo concluded that eight of the nine decisions were suitable for publication.

13. PiDCo **approved** the publication of ombudsman's decisions relating to the following firms, subject to additional clarity and context being provided in the published information for certain cases:

- Butcher and Barlow
- Curtis Law
- Cuthbertson
- F W Meggitt
- Irwin Mitchell

- Lake Jackson
- Law Direct
- Stocker and Co

14. These ombudsman decisions would be published in January 2026.

Item 6 – Any other business

55. There was no other business.