

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

**4 August 2025**

### **Present**

Rachel Cerfontyne, PIDCo Chair

Patricia Tueje, OLC

Elisabeth Davies, OLC Chair

Paul McFadden, Chief Ombudsman

Steve Pearson, Deputy Chief Ombudsman

Mike Harris, Interim Head of Communications, Engagement and Impact

Tobias Haynes, Lawyer

### **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. There were no apologies.
3. The meeting was quorate with a lay majority.
4. There were no declarations or conflicts of interest reported.

### **Item 2 – Previous minutes and actions**

5. The minutes of the PIDCo meeting held on 20 May 2025 were **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting.
6. There were no previous actions for PIDCo to note.

### **Item 3 – Feedback on the publication of the quarter one public interest decisions**

7. In discussion, PIDCO **noted** that the OLC/LeO's strengthened commitment to transparency and its more strategic application of powers under the Legal Services Act 2007 had been well received, with stakeholder engagement and media coverage in response to the publication of the quarter one public interest decisions being largely positive. No significant issues or concerns had been raised and there had been clear recognition of the value of LeO's role in

helping to raise first tier complaint handling standards, and the learning derived from its work in publishing public interest decisions.

8. The publication of the public interest decisions had also attracted interest and wider commentary from compliance professionals via social media platforms, reinforcing the significance of this work.
9. There would be further opportunity to discuss the publication of public interest decisions and the broader transparency agenda at the forthcoming OLC / LSB Board to Board meeting in September.
10. The Executive confirmed that any questions and responses received from stakeholders and the media regarding the publication of public interest decisions would be collated and reviewed to identify any emerging themes and patterns and to monitor developments over time.

#### **Item 4 - Reflections and learning from the first PIDCO meeting**

11. PIDCo reflected on its first meeting and the learning derived from it. In discussion, the following points were made:
  - Information shared with PIDCo since its last meeting had provided helpful clarification regarding the statutory provisions outlined in the Legal Services Act 2027 concerning the publication of public interest decisions, PIDCo's remit, the scope of its discretion and the indicative criteria for consideration when making decisions.
  - The Executive had enhanced meeting papers in response to previous feedback to include more contextual detail and clearer articulation of the rationale for why specific cases had met the indicative criteria for publication in the public interest. Consideration would be given to further enhancing the papers to provide more clarity on the recommendations being made by the Chief Ombudsman and Deputy Chief Ombudsman.
  - Recognising the interrelationship between PIDCo and the wider transparency agenda within which it operated would be important to ensure that learning from public interest decisions was also considered in the context of thematic reviews and patterns identified across cases.
  - There was a desire for future consideration to be given to publishing cases that exemplified good practice to support a balanced approach to transparency and promote wider learning.
  - It was acknowledged that resourcing this work had presented challenges. Members were invited to consider what further support or adjustments could be made to help make the workload more manageable for all involved.
  - Members discussed the most effective approach to evaluating cases for publication, aiming to ensure decisions were both balanced and focussed. They considered the potential value of applying a strategic framework for assessing the cases that incorporated risk factors and legal advice; explored how much weight should be given to the perspectives of complainants and legal providers; questioned whether greater emphasis should be placed on high-risk cases, particularly in instances where legal advice recommended against publication; and reflected on the future strategic

direction of this process, including whether, subject to sufficient resourcing, all decisions should be published except by exception.

## Item 5 – Consideration of proposals for publication

12. The Deputy Chief Ombudsman (DCO) provided an overview of the key points of each of the ombudsman decisions that had been recommended for publication, explaining the rationale for the recommendations; the legal and risk assessments that had been conducted; and the responses received from the parties to the complaints following notification of LeO's proposal to publish the decision.
13. PIDCo considered each of the cases recommended by the Chief Ombudsman for publication in turn to determine whether they had met the indicative criteria for publication.
14. Following a detailed discussion and careful consideration of the facts and risks, PIDCo **agreed** that the criteria had been met to publish eleven of the thirteen ombudsman's decisions that had been recommended for publication by the Chief Ombudsman and Deputy Chief Ombudsman, and **approved** publication of ombudsman's decisions relating to the following firms and individuals:
  - Rowe Radcliffe
  - Mr Chandi
  - St Helens Law
  - Mr Latif
  - Veale Wasbrough Vizards
  - Allerton and Gladstone
  - Anthony and Jarvie
  - The Foster Partnership
  - Bloomsbury Law
  - Mrs Lewis
  - Twomlows

## Item 6 – Any other business

55. There was no other business.