

<i>Meeting</i>	OLC	<i>Agenda Item No.</i> <i>Paper no</i>	6 91.5a
<i>Date of meeting</i>	17 October 2018	<i>Time required</i>	45 minutes (as part of discussion on quarterly performance update)

<i>Title</i>	<b>Quarterly performance update – Q2</b>
<i>Sponsor</i>	Rebecca Marsh, Chief Ombudsman
<i>Status</i>	OFFICIAL
<i>To be communicated to:</i>	Members and those in attendance

### **Executive summary**

This paper summarises performance against four key quality measures for the 12 month period October 2017 to September 2018: matters sent back by the ombudsman team; internal quality reviews; service complaints; and customer satisfaction survey results.

Performance has remained relatively stable against all these measures over 12 months and reflects issues that are well known. Specifically those issues are timeliness; level of contact with the parties; and the quality of Preliminary/Case decisions prepared by investigators. Steps have been taken each quarter to address these issues and improvement work remains an ongoing priority.

The quality framework is currently under review, particularly as a result of recent changes to expectations from the new Chief Ombudsman and the work on the supervision model. The ability to measure some of the indicators has been impacted since April as a result of the new processes and Modernising LeO.

### **Recommendation/action required**

Board is asked to **NOTE** the issues highlighted in the paper.

# Update on quality performance

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## 1. Overarching summary

This paper details in the appendices the various quality measures and their underlying issues.

It should be considered in the context of:

- Some sample sizes post April are reduced as elements of the process fall outside the existing frameworks.
- Some data was not available immediately post go-live.
- As a pilot, separate supervision quality frameworks have not been created, so some quality metrics are not available for supervision at this time.

Across all the indicators, the data highlights the issues we have previously identified are still the most significant quality issues:

- Timeliness.
- Contact and communication.
- Delay.
- Quality of investigator preliminary/case decisions.
- Perceived lack of impartiality, bias (relates to effective communication & case decision quality).

We have work underway through the Operations Transformation hub, as well as from direct Ombudsman support to address these issues, but the most significant issues around delay and the historic customer experience in communication will continue to flow through in feedback until the legacy and CMS 1 workload is closed. Specifically, examples of intervention activities include:

- Training on scoping, on evidence analysis and on report writing.
- Ongoing communications training
- Direct 1-2-1 Ombudsman support and intervention.
- Case clinics by L2 Ombudsmen.
- Intensive Team Leader oversight of progression and milestone management.
- Ongoing review of communications, ensuring are complainants informed throughout, even when waiting allocation.

## 2. Next steps

The Chief Ombudsman has set up a quality committee to systematically consider the range of quality indicators, prioritise and drive improvement and assess impact.

The review of quality measurement through the frameworks going forwards is within the business plan deliverables.

# Appendix 1

## Send Backs

### See appendix 2 - graph (A)

The decline in the proportion of send backs in Q1 and 2 is a result of a significant increase in the proportion of decisions made by pool ombudsmen. A differential in the level of send backs completed by pool ombudsmen (as compared to L1 & L2 ombudsmen) was identified in Q1. At that point additional training was provided and the level of send backs by pool ombudsmen has since increased.

Key reasons for cases being sent back are: additional evidence is required; complaints or issues have been inadequately investigated; there is an inadequacy in the Investigator's written Preliminary/Case Decision that requires revision. Work is underway to provide additional ombudsman guidance earlier in the investigation process to address these issues.

Performance under the full supervision model, where the send back rate is <1%, indicates that additional ombudsman oversight has a significant positive effect on the proportion of cases sent back. The proportion of cases sent back in the CMC jurisdiction has remained consistently low, with cases being sent back due to individual shortcomings in performance, rather than there being more general trends in performance.

## Quality Reviews

### See appendix 2 – graph (B)

For the rolling 12 month period ending Q2 2018-19, quality reviews only cover cases within the 'business as usual' teams, therefore excluding cases concluded by those working with the supervision model. This will be picked up as part of the work on updating the quality frameworks, following the evaluation of the supervision model.

### Fair and reasonable outcome

The small number (37 for the 12 month period) of cases assessed as not achieving a fair and reasonable outcome largely reflect individual performance issues, which are addressed through the performance framework.

Results also indicate an opportunity for improvement through training in relation to ensuring comprehensive reasons are given for conclusions reached, and ensuring all options are explained to both parties, where cases are resolved informally. A similar training need is highlighted by the send back data. This is being taken into account in designing training provided during this financial year.

Increased ombudsman oversight of cases within teams operating the supervision model provides the opportunity to address this, and other issues, at an early stage before the customer experience is affected.

### Customer Service Principles

Key issues resulting in the standard of service falling below a reasonable level are significant periods of delay and a lack of contact with one or both parties. To address this, steps have been taken to improve communication for those awaiting allocation, to further improve Team Leader oversight of the progression of cases, including ensuring appropriate contact; provide additional

ombudsman guidance targeted at progression of cases; and provide training on scoping cases appropriately from the outset.

Outcome and service reviews are also completed for the ombudsman decision stage of the process. Performance has remained at a high level, with the vast majority of cases assessed as achieving both a fair and reasonable outcome and a reasonable service. Performance is consistently >95% for the last 12 months for the decision stage.

Quality reviews for General Enquiries Team (GET) have been limited over the last two quarters due to both staffing resource and the need to refine the initial stage of the process. The small sample size makes it difficult to draw reliable conclusions from the data. Re-design of the initial stage of the process means a corresponding need to re-design the quality measure for this work. A revised quality framework for GET will be agreed and implemented during Q3.

CMC performance has remained stable in relation to both outcome and service over the 12 month period, with performance being at over 90% for both measures in all but one quarter. Sample numbers are small for CMC, particularly over the last two quarters, which is likely to lead to volatility in the data. Given stable performance, and the planned transfer of the CMC jurisdiction, the focus of corrective action for CMC is the provision of feedback to individual members of staff.

## Service Complaints

### See appendix 2 - graph (C)

Volumes of service complaints at stage 1 have remained relatively stable over the rolling 12 month period. While there has been an increase during Quarter 2, there was a similar increase in Quarter 2 last year (38 stage 1 complaints received) and therefore this appears likely to be a cyclical variation rather than a change in the overall trend. The most frequent reasons for service complaints are delay, lack of communication and approach of staff. Delay and lack of communication are the most frequently upheld issues. The action taken to address these issues is referred to above.

Early indications are that a greater proportion of complaints are being resolved at stage 1 and 2 of the process. Monitoring of this aspect of performance will continue. An Operations Manager has been responsible for providing all responses at stage 2 from Q1, and from the end of Quarter 2 a Customer Experience Specialist is responsible for providing all responses at stage 1. These changes provide for a greater focus on resolving complaints as early as possible, and the provision of feedback to the wider organisation to prevent future complaints.

## Customer Satisfaction

### Closed cases survey – Legal

#### See appendix 2 – graph (D)

The Q2 customer satisfaction measure, which shows a significant decline, relates to cases closed between April and June 2018, and includes cases closed by the legacy team. Given the known issues with timeliness for legacy cases, some decline in satisfaction levels is to be expected. Key drivers of dissatisfaction for complainants are: the speed of the process; perceptions of impartiality / bias; being listened to / taken account of; staff communication. Key drivers for service providers are: speed of the process; continuity of staff; perceptions of impartiality/bias; staff communication.

Steps taken to address delay and lack of communication have been confirmed above. Monitoring will continue and further analysis will be completed as to the difference in satisfaction ratings between legacy and non-legacy cases. There remains a strong correlation between satisfaction with the outcome of a complaint and satisfaction with service. Concerns re impartiality and bias, while important, need to be viewed in that context and further work on effective communication will help to



address this perception.

### **Investigation stage survey – Legal**

#### **See appendix 2 – graph (E)**

Investigation stage surveys for the rolling 12 month period include cases accepted before April 2018 only. This is due to the need to design a revised sampling model for cases opened after April 2018. For this reason the Investigation stage surveys, while useful, do not provide a representative indicator of customer satisfaction at the investigation stage. Key drivers of dissatisfaction for complainants at the investigation stage have remained delay and lack of contact during the 12 month period. Delay is also a key driver for service providers, with increasing feedback about the imposition of tight time constraints for responses in comparison to case progression.

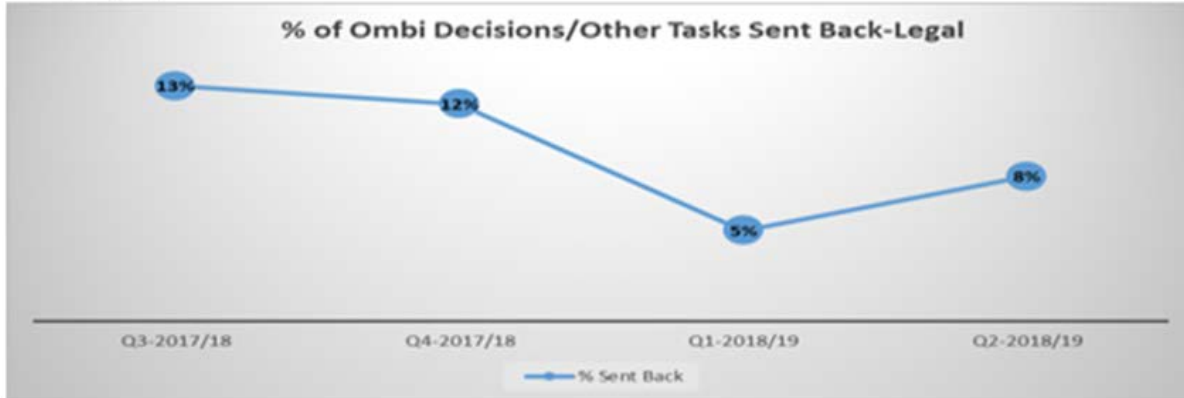
#### **Initial stage survey & CMC jurisdiction:**

Due to changes in the business process at the initial stage, survey sample sizes have reduced to a level that means reliable data cannot be obtained. Revised initial stage customer satisfaction surveys will be in place from Q3. Due to reduction in workload, sample sizes remain small for CMC surveys and mean that quarterly trends are not reliable. Results continue to be monitored and a 6 monthly report on satisfaction levels will be produced in Q3.

## Appendix 2

### Appendix

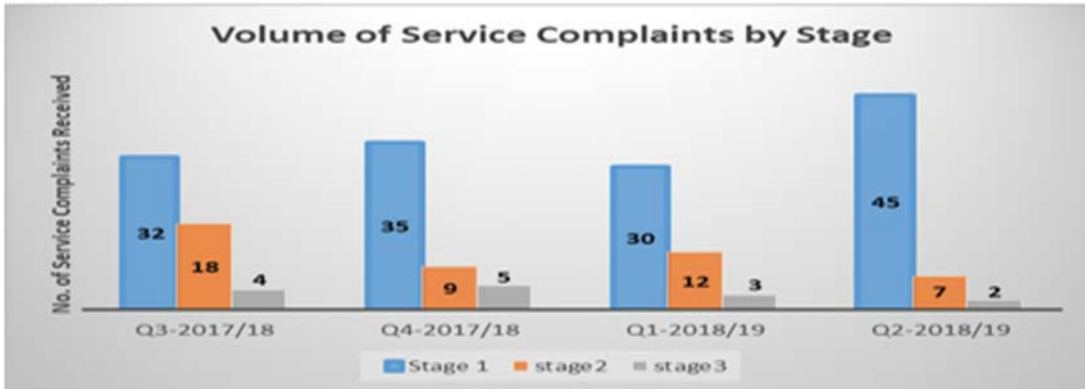
#### Graph (A)



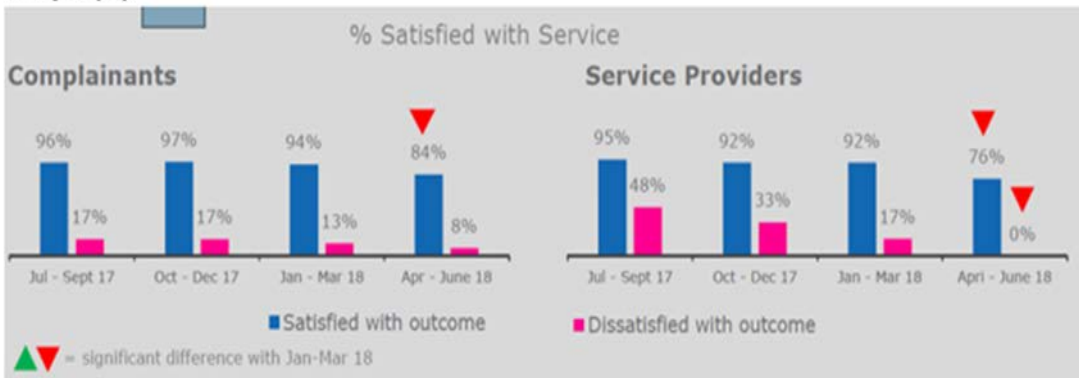
#### Graph (B)



**Graph (C)**



**Graph (D)**



**Graph (E)**

