

<i>Meeting</i>	OLC	<i>Agenda Item No.</i>	4
		<i>Paper No.</i>	103.3
<i>Date of meeting</i>	26 March 2020	<i>Time required</i>	15 Minutes

<i>Title</i>	Executive Report
<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 updates Board on key issues from the Chief Ombudsman. Performance and finance updates are covered in separate items on today's Board agenda.
Recommendation/action required
Board is asked to NOTE the issues highlighted in the paper.

26 March 2020

Executive report

1. Period since last Board

We are now operating in accordance with our business continuity plan and I will give Board a formal update at the meeting. Staff are naturally anxious but responding well to the changing conditions. Their health and well-being is our priority, alongside supporting the national response to the crisis, even as we seek to maintain our service to customers.

The current situation has resulted in us moving to a largely remote working function. Whilst plans are in place to support continued delivery the following issues are already beginning to impact:

- Service provider availability, access to evidence and time to engage with LeO constrained
- Complainants, not unreasonably, deprioritising engagement with LeO
- Staff members or immediate family becoming unwell and requiring care and attention
- School closures affecting availability/flexibility of staff

At time of writing, however, we had not seen any fall off in initial contact. We anticipate both volume and timeliness deterioration resulting from the crisis and will work to model those once we have settled into the new ways of working.

Performance through February continued to be suppressed by the impacts of the previous attrition and the corresponding mix of new starters to experienced staff, but the work on improving the front end proceeded well. This will be slowed by the fall back to only permanent staff earlier than anticipated in March, due to the crisis, but sufficient has been done to remain on track. The business risk and management resource related to temporary front end staff on remote working is not proportionate to the in-month benefit.

Other key issues to draw to Board's attention are:

- Independent Review is complete and we await findings, staff have engaged positively with the reviewer.
- The payroll audit resulted in a request for assurance from MoJ and I have also brought that to the attention of the Chair of Audit.
- Budget sign off is with LSB Board on 26th March. We have had representations on behalf of their members from CLC for a reduction in the proposal, in light of COVID-19 impacts.
- Alongside many other organisations, we have experienced some limited downtime and challenges with Microsoft products and our Skype system.
- I have used the Board delegated authority (September 2018) to enact the one year extension to our contract with Softcat, who provide our IT Infrastructure Services.