

<b>Meeting</b>	OLC	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>	7
		<b>Paper No.</b>	88.7
<b>Date of meeting</b>	4 June 2018	<b>Time required</b>	15 minutes

<b>Title</b>	Communications and engagement strategy 2018-19
<b>Sponsor</b>	Rob Powell, CEO and Rebecca Marsh, Chief Ombudsman
<b>Status</b>	OFFICIAL

<b>Executive summary</b>
<p>Board have fed back a number of times – both at full Board and ARAC – that they would like the OLC to have a more strategic communications and engagement strategy. This was also a key theme of the 2017 Board effectiveness review.</p> <p>Specifically, Board asked us to segment and analyse our stakeholders more precisely, and set out principles/criteria to govern our choices about how we target limited resources to maximise our influence and impact with stakeholders.</p> <p>The communications and engagement strategy produced in 2017-18 was appended to the Chief Ombudsman’s report in September 2017.</p> <p>Building on that strategy, the external affairs team has developed a Communications and Engagement strategy covering the period 2018-20 which has been more closely aligned with the OLC strategy and business plan.</p> <p>It includes detailed segmentation of stakeholders, a SWOT analysis, criteria to help target decisions about whether to accept external stakeholder engagement events and a detailed programme of work for 2018-19 to support delivery of our business plan.</p> <p>This paper summarises the communications and engagement strategy for Board. It covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategic and stakeholder analysis, and</li> <li>• aims and themes of the strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendation/action required</b>
Board is asked to <b>APPROVE</b> the high-level communications and engagement strategy for 2018-19.

4 June 2018

## Communications and engagement strategy 2018-2020

### 1. Introduction

The central focus of our communications and engagement will be to build trust and confidence in the OLC and Legal Ombudsman scheme in support of the OLC's strategy.

This means demonstrating that we deliver our statutory objectives, achieve fair and reasonable outcomes, share learning from our work to improve first tier complaints handling and are seen as a well-run public body.

Over the last 18 months the Legal Ombudsman has made good progress re-building its external reputation and profile. Nevertheless, current operational performance challenges mean further work is required to build and maintain trust and confidence.

### 2. Strategic and stakeholder analysis

The main strategic drives for our communications and engagement strategy relate to:

- the changing legal services marketplace and regulatory change;
- ensuring a smooth transition of the CMC jurisdiction;
- building trust and confidence in a challenging context for Ombudsmen; and
- the need for a clearer corporate narrative and better targeting stakeholder engagement and communications to maximise impact.

We have also analysed our main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in terms of communications and engagement.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved external engagement and profile</li><li>• Willingness of stakeholders to engage with us</li><li>• Positive reputation for existing feedback and professional learning courses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small executive and external affairs teams</li><li>• Absence of formal corporate narrative and criteria to prioritise engagement and communications</li><li>• Structures to support sharing learning and feedback</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Willingness and skills of Board members to support stakeholder engagement</li><li>• Engagement with regulators and other bodies to progress CMA recommendations</li><li>• Appetite from regulators and other bodies to hear about trends and issues from our complaint handling</li><li>• Refresh of website</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Loss of trust and confidence as a result of poor performance</li><li>• Performance issues compromising feedback to the professions</li><li>• Inability to amend Scheme Rules because of lack of legislative time</li><li>• Impact on our jurisdiction from regulatory changes</li><li>• Lack of understanding of the role of Ombudsman schemes</li></ul>

### 3. Stakeholder segmentation

We define a stakeholder as:

*'An individual, group or organisation who has an interest in the OLC and LeO. In particular they may have power or influence over the running of the OLC, make decisions which affect the scheme, or be impacted by the decisions we make and how we run the scheme.'*

We have identified seven main groups of stakeholders: government; approved regulators; representative bodies; networks; Ombudsman; consumer and service providers.

We have segmented our stakeholders using a Boston matrix which maps stakeholders by power over us and influence in us. We have developed targeted plans to engage key stakeholder groups identified by this exercise.

### 4. Aims and themes of the strategy

Based on this analysis, the strategy is based on three aims which support all four of the OLC's strategic objectives, in particular objectives 2 (Understand the legal service and CMC environments, and feed back to improve standards) and 3 (develop the scheme and service we provide):

- ensure key external stakeholders have the trust and confidence in our ability to deliver an improved performance;
- build strong external relationships (at a variety of levels) which both inform our knowledge of developments in the sector and support our ability to develop the scheme when it is required; and
- work towards being known within the legal services sector for the quality of our feedback work and support given to sector to improve their customer service and complaints handling.

Five themes will underpin delivery of these aims, as set out below.

Themes	Intent	Rationale
Build and maintain trust and confidence	Develop a clear corporate narrative that is regularly updated and documents our ongoing journey; highlighting our successes alongside the challenges we are addressing, and that is thoughtfully communicated to external stakeholders.	An agreed narrative will help to influence how we are portrayed externally, and ensure that key stakeholders have a shared understanding of our position.
Engage stakeholders	Clear stakeholder segmentation, understanding of priorities and strategies for working with each stakeholder group. Positive relationships which support delivery of our objectives.	Allows effective delivery of messages and clear understanding of groups needs. Importance of regular feedback from stakeholders to monitor impact of our work.
Maintain scheme relevance	Dialogue with relevant stakeholders on projects (scheme rules / publishing decisions/ horizon scanning) which ensure the scheme is working as required, and address issues which could affect our operation (regulatory changes, discussions with insurers).	Important to engage with stakeholders to have a clear understanding of what is happening in the wider sector, build support for policy initiatives and inform of scheme changes.
Develop targeted feedback programme	Establish a feedback programme that draws on our learning and research, meets the needs of core stakeholders group, and is delivered in partnership with regulators and professional associations.	Feed into our regulatory objective by supporting the profession to respond to complaints effectively.
Enhance external communications	Refine existing channels for delivering key organisational messages to groups, in particular consumer awareness and service providers.	Effective channels are vital for a small organisation to deliver messages quickly with maximum impact and minimum resources.

## Next steps

Subject to comments from Board, the external affairs team will progress implementation of the actions set out in the detailed communications and engagement strategy. Progress will be measured via the Balanced Scorecard and updates will be provided in both the CEO and Chief Ombudsman's reports.