

<i>Meeting</i>	OLC	<i>Agenda Item No.</i>	4
		<i>Paper No.</i>	92.3
<i>Date of meeting</i>	10 December 2018	<i>Time required</i>	30 Minutes

<i>Title</i>	Executive Report
<i>Sponsor</i>	Rob Powell, Chief Executive and Rebecca Marsh, Chief Ombudsman
<i>Status</i>	OFFICIAL
<i>To be communicated to:</i>	Members and those in attendance

Executive summary
<p>This paper updates Board on key issues arising since the October Board meeting.</p> <p>The monthly performance and finance updates, including KPI tolerances, are covered in separate items on today’s Board agenda.</p> <p>This paper provides a consolidated executive view, comprising separate reports from the CEO and Chief Ombudsman, supported by a summary of our meetings with key stakeholders, as set out in Appendix 1.</p> <p>A short update on the Customer Assessment Tool appears in Appendix 2.</p>
Recommendation/action required
Board is asked to NOTE the issues highlighted in the paper.

10 December 2018

Chief Executive and Chief Ombudsman executive report

1. Activity on Chief Ombudsman priorities

The Chief Ombudsman's focus continues to be on performance, as we are still challenged in delivering closures and there remains variable performance across teams. This is compounded by exits and re-allocations and in impacting the volume of people waiting at the front end. Key activities include:

- the Customer Assessment tool (CAT) has started to deliver clear benefits, although initial indications are that we may have tapped into a latent seam of demand and further increased the volume of files awaiting assessment; more detail is available in **Appendix 2**;
- introduction of ombudsman triage of files awaiting assessment, which has already identified potential early interventions / resolutions and assisted in refining CAT;
- rebalancing investigator and Level 1 case holdings to assist with closures and the pull through of work;
- workload management guidance rolled out to support case progression;
- acceleration of Team Leader development focussed on effective performance management, alongside new reports and MI which provide direct assistance;
- Level 1 development programme scoped and shift in Level 2 role to support throughput and quality;
- completion of review of the supervision model outputs, identifying the immediate changes we can make to the business process to support improvement;
- Vulnerability Champions created in GET to support customers in either raising their complaint to the firm, or in bringing their concerns to us; and
- the majority of cases have now transferred from CMS1, removing concerns about dual running.

2. External affairs update

Appendix 1 summarises stakeholder meetings since the last OLC meeting. Wider stakeholder issues appear in the separate horizon scan paper. Key activity included:

- a meeting with Professor Mayson to discuss his review of legal regulation;
- a letter to Paul Phillip CEO of the SRA about changes to the SRA handbook;
- a discussion with Baroness Deech;
- our regular 'six-way' meeting with the LSB; and
- a presentation to the Legal Service's Consumer Panel.

An internal audit of stakeholder engagement secured the highest rating of 'substantial assurance'. We spoke at 7 external events in October and November. We are in the

process of finalising a thematic report on immigration complaints and are developing an updated version of our costs report to tie in with the new transparency rules.

3. IT update

There have been two outages since the last Board. The first on 26 October was an hour-long Azure tenancy outage that affected SQL servers (impacting CMS1 and CMS2 in particular) for many Microsoft customers. The second was a four-hour issue on 9 November that impacted CMS1 and CMS2 functionality because the SharePoint search index reached its memory capacity.

The CAT tool has been launched successfully and Phase 1 of the BI/MI project has now completed. This new solution provides priority KPI reports and the ability to run ad-hoc queries. A lunchtime demonstration will be provided during today's lunch break.

The case transfer from CMS1 to CMS2 has been proceeding in line with the planned schedule, with just 88 cases remaining to be transferred (as at 16 November). Those leading the work are confident that all will be done in good time so as not to impact the technical aspects of decommissioning CMS1 or the mandatory CRM upgrade to v9, which is due to complete in mid-January 2019.

We are currently mobilising a project to consolidate our Azure Cloud environments into the newer one (Azure Resource Management) in Q4. This will provide savings of c£46K per annum and introduce greater robustness and resilience for CMS, including high availability that would eliminate the cause of the second outage experienced this period.

4. Estates update

Another MoJ ALB successfully moved into half of the first floor on 19 November.

5. HR update

Senior operational management structure

Following the new Chief Ombudsman's arrival and the departure of the previous Director of Operations, we have been operating an interim management structure as part of a strategic shift towards an ombudsman-led structure based on three hubs: operational delivery, operational support and operational transformation.

A review of the structure has been carried out, and RemCo have approved a plan to move to a permanent structure of three operational hubs lead by 'Head Ombudsman'. One of the posts has been advertised internally, while the other two saw our two permanent Senior Ombudsman automatically transfer in. The changes were announced to staff on 23 November.

Significant casework, sickness and turnover

October's annual sickness rate was 4.4%, an increase on last month and higher than the comparable period last year. Long term sickness has increased to 2.8% which is similar to the same period last year. Annual voluntary turnover for October increased to 18.5%.

There is a significant HR caseload at present including a number of formal performance support cases, probation cases, grievances and an attendance management case.

The MIND Index Survey is live, and we will complete our submission by 7 December.

Publication of the Civil Service survey results has been delayed across the Civil Service whilst additional quality checks are made on some new aspects of the survey. We will report the results to RemCo as soon as the current embargo is lifted.

Recruitment

An internal campaign for L1 Ombudsman identified no appointable candidates. We successfully appointed 7 Call Handlers, appointed to the Assistant HR Business Partner role and a fixed-term Business Analyst following the resignation of the current post-holder. Significant planning has begun for an escalation of the current 'always on' Investigator campaign and a specific campaign for a new intake in March/April 2019 is voluntary.

Reward & recognition – Celebrating success

Q2 quarterly awards saw an increase in quality of nomination – we have informed Board of recipients. Instant recognition awards went live in October with 9 awards so far.

Learning and development

October saw mop-up sessions on Effective Telephone Skills and Applying Standards. Our HR team hosted an interactive session as part of October's LeO Live to inform ongoing work, reported to RemCo, on improving the Performance Impact Framework. Three new development team leaders started a development programme in November. We are evaluating the 6 week mindfulness programme and may repeat in the New Year.

Other HR issues

Our payroll service has now transferred to Coventry City Council and the first pay run was made at the end of November.

The new Staff Council is now in place and met for the first time on 12 November. On 28 November, RemCo received and approved the final race action plan which flowed from the work with MoJ's specialist Project Race team.

6. Legal update

We have circulated a legal update separately under legal privilege.

Appendix 1 – list of key external meetings and events

Date	Meeting	Scope/key issues
18/10/2018	CEO and Head of Finance meeting with Bill Loft, MoJ Senior Finance Business Partner and David Bartlett of the MoJ Partnership Team	General update on financial matters and opportunities for LeO and the MoJ to work more collaboratively on finance
22-23/10/18	CO attended a conference run by the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman	A two day event to highlight the important role played by Own Initiative investigations in tackling issues of systemic maladministration and injustice.
23/10/2018	CEO attending six monthly business assurance meeting with Alison Wedge of the MoJ	Strategic updates (Mayson, Cabinet Office, SRA handbook), horizon scanning, performance (with Neil Buckley of the LSB), finance, risks, Accounting Officer issues
05/10/2018	Joint meeting with Alan Eccles, the Public Guardian, and Karen Kneller, Chief Executive of the Criminal Cases Review Commission	Shared issues and collaboration opportunities
05/11/2018	Management Team discussion of race action plan with Yvonne Dowie of MoJ's project race	To discuss the findings of the MoJ Report and action plan content
07/11/18	Chief Ombudsman introductory meeting with Professor Mayson	This was an initial discussion to explore how the Legal Ombudsman may be able to assist the review.
07/11/2018	Chief Ombudsman met Baroness Deech	General discussion on legal regulation and ombudsman issues.
12/11/2018	CEO, CO and OLC Chair attending six-way meeting with LSB	Performance, voluntary assurance, strategic issues, Board effectiveness review and 2018-19 budget
15/11/2018	Chair, CEO and CO meeting with Jim Martin, Chair of the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission	Shared issues, learning from LeO's recent experience, SRA handbook changes and implications of the review of Scottish Legal Regulation for the SLCC
19/11/2018	CEO attended CIPD event on the West Midlands Leadership Commission report, <i>Building inclusive leadership in the West Midlands</i>	Increasing diversity of leadership in the West Midlands
23/11/2018	CEO attending joint Association of Chief Executives and Public Chairs Forum event with Sir Amyas Morse, Comptroller and Auditor General	Private seminar with C&AG setting out his vision of public sector audit, highlighting key lessons and current issues for leaders of public bodies
27/11/2018	Strategic Service Review Board meeting with Joe O'Brien and Carla Gill of Version 1	Six monthly strategic review of performance, forward work plans and strategic issues affecting both organisations
27/11/18	Ombudsman forum - autumn meeting hosted by FOS	General discussion on Ombudsman based issues
28/11/2018	RemCo to RemCo event	Shared learning event between RemCos – OLC, Gambling Commission, Leasehold Advisory Service and CCRC
06/12/18	Meeting with Paul Philip, SRA CEO	To discuss the changes to the SRA Handbook

Appendix 2 - Update on the Customer Assessment Tool

The Customer Assessment Tool (CAT) went live on 8 October 2018, we are now at the stage in which we are able to reflect on the impacts to our service since its go live:

- Since 8 October the CAT jurisdiction questions have been visited 3354 times, of which 2042 visits resulted in progression to the complaint form and a subsequent 547 complaint submissions. We are creating further analytics on the website to understand why only 547 complaint forms are completed, given that 2042 people reach the complaint form stage.
- Initial data shows that complaint submissions from CAT have a 75% conversion rate to assessment cases, compared to just 18% of enquiries received through other channels. Similarly files closed as requiring further information is 6% for those complaints received via CAT compared to 25% of complaints received through other channels.
- In the first month we saw an increase in the volume of incoming calls to the general enquiries team (GET) from 4938 in the previous month to 5110. From feedback we understand this increase to be primarily down to customers calling to gain confirmation that we had received their submissions through CAT.
- Live chat volumes increased from 143 in September, to 214 in October. This increase is also likely to be as a result of customers seeking reassurance that their complaint had been received.
- At this stage, there is not enough data for us to determine whether CAT is accessing a latent demand or is channel shift.
- Feedback from GET has been positive with advisors stating that it takes less time to set up a file and progress it if the complaint has been received through CAT.

From the feedback we have received so far we have made a number of changes to CAT, which we hope will further enhance the internal and external experience. These are:

- In response to the increase in call volumes to GET we have added an auto acknowledgement response which is sent to customers after they have submitted their complaint. This should help reduce phone and live chat contact.
- We have made the submission of certain documents such as complaints correspondence mandatory, to further assist in gaining the right information first time. This will positively impact on the conversion rate.
- There has been a change to the first question, in order to effectively signpost consumers seeking legal advice at an earlier stage.
- In response to feedback from the Legal Services Consumer Panel, we have altered the wording about CAT on our website to be more customer friendly.

A number of vulnerability champions have been selected within GET, they will be able to support vulnerable customers with completing the complaint form, or even assist them with making their complaint to the firm.

CAT Stats

MONTH

1

8 Oct - 5 Nov 2018

Number of unique visits to CAT jurisdiction questions.

 **3354**

 Average time spent on page: **1 min 18 sec**

Number of downloads of old complaint form in previous period **2056**

Top out of jurisdiction landing pages

<i>Need to give provider 8 weeks to respond</i>	345
<i>Don't know if provider is regulated</i>	338
<i>Must have been through provider's complaint process</i>	235
<i>Not authorised persons</i>	98
<i>Unsure if received final response</i>	67
<i>Closed firm</i>	40
<i>Happened more than 6 years ago</i>	32

Number of those visits that resulted in progress to complaint form.

 **2042**

 Average time spent on page: **8 min 26 sec**

Number of CAT complaints submitted.

 **547**