



Information Commissioner's Office
Promoting public access to official information
and protecting your personal information

Minutes

Operations Management Committee

Monday 18 June 2007, Wilmslow

Members Present:

Simon Entwisle	(SE) – Chair	Jane Durkin	(JD)
Marie Anderson	(MA)	Mick Gorrill	(MG)
Mike Collins	(MC)		
Andy Cryer	(AC) – Item 4	Jonathan Kay	(JK) - Secretariat

Apologies & Introductions

There were apologies from Rob Parker, Traci Shirley, Ged Tracey, and Vicky Best. MC was attending for VB.

1. Minutes of previous meetings – 29 May 2007

1.1. The minutes were agreed with minor amendments.

Action point 1 – JK to ensure the agreed minutes are added to the ICO website and key messages to the intranet.

2. Matters arising/actions outstanding – 29 May 2007

2.1. Outstanding action points from previous meetings were discussed.

2.2. **26/03/07– AP4:** VB to circulate proposed ICO equality and diversity group membership and its draft strategy. **OMC heard that the first meeting of the group had now taken place and that an all-staff notice including membership details will be placed on the intranet.**

2.3. **29/05/07– AP2:** SE to discuss possibility of a “Blitz” week with RJT and GS. **OMC heard that “Blitz days” were now being considered, and noted the high rate of referral on allocated decision notices (DNs). SE would examine referral criteria.**

- 2.4. **29/05/07– AP3:** PA to circulate the revised telephone 'line to take' on Subject Access Requests to Banks. **OMC noted this item as complete.**
- 2.5. **29/05/07– AP4:** FS to update OMC of developments with the TPS pilot, the first report being to the August OMC. **OMC heard that this item had been entered into the work programme and noted it as complete.**
- 2.6. **29/05/07– AP5:** FS and RP to liaise regarding an Intranet item to raise awareness of the CRSC. **SE noted that the notice had now been drafted, and would be placed on the Intranet as soon as possible.**
- 2.7. **29/05/07– AP6:** SE to discuss representation of the Legal Services department on OMC with NT. **OMC noted this item as ongoing.**
- 2.8. **29/05/07– AP7:** All members to forward suggestions for the terms of reference by 01 June. **OMC noted this item as complete.**
- 2.9. **29/05/07– AP8:** All members to forward items for the work schedule to JMK. **OMC noted this item as complete.**

3. Performance issues & operational risks

- 3.1. **Freedom of Information.** SE noted that as the OMC meeting was being held earlier than normal this month, the usual dashboards were not complete. 230 cases had been received in May, and 207 closed. SE noted that because of conflict between existing reports and the new version of the Case Management and Enquiry Handling (CMEH) system, accurate figures could not be guaranteed until new reports were written. These would be ready by the end of July.
- 3.2. There were 642 cases awaiting assignment, and 592 under investigation. 23 DNs were signed during May, but 38 still awaited signature. The information on DNs awaiting sign off has now been amended to show the number of cases awaiting signoff without including cases currently on hold.
- 3.3. OMC discussed the delegation of DN signature authority, and MA noted that she would discuss this with GS next week.
- 3.4. **Regional Offices** MA noted that the Northern Ireland Regional Office (NIRO) was on target to close 15 cases this month. The backlog transferred from Wilmslow had been reduced to 25. The Cardiff dashboard was not available, but indications were that it would meet its target this month.
- 3.5. MA also noted that in dealing with cases NIRO had experienced a tangible difference in attitude between Northern Ireland public authorities, and mainland UK ones with the NI authorities being more co-operative. OMC noted that the 20-day response period of the

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) could usefully be shortened, and that a review of the MoU was needed.

Action point 2 – SE to investigate the review of the memorandum of understanding.

- 3.6. **Data Protection.** OMC heard that the Customer Service Team was still working to catch up after the CMEH problem in May. As a result of efforts to reduce their backlog, telephone service had been reduced to an 85% standard to free up team members.
- 3.7. **Subject Access Requests to Banks (SARBs).** JD informed OMC that arrangements were now in place to signpost complaints to the Financial Ombudsman's Service (FOS). The FOS are better placed to assist complainants in getting charges refunded, which is the principal motivation for most complainants, and something that the ICO has no power to remedy.
- 3.8. OMC heard that this new procedure should help reduce the burden that SARBs has placed on CAD, but that RAD still planned to undertake bank inspections. OMC noted certain sections of the media and other parties continue to advise bank customers to make a Subject Access Request and complain to the ICO, rather than complain direct to the FOS.
- 3.9. **Telephone Preference Service (TPS) Complaints.** JD noted that the pilot of TPS' repeat caller complaints will start in mid-July. The cases that the ICO will receive should be ready-to-enforce, and cases that are not will be returned.
- 3.10. **Notification fee income.** SE noted that there had been a reduction in fee income so that with the increased receipts in the first quarter, income was now only on track to cover the projected budget.
- 3.11. A press release is being prepared to accompany the forthcoming non-notification campaign for employment agencies.
- 3.12. OMC also heard about a recent successful prosecution of a bogus DP agency which had resulted in jail sentences.

4. OMC Requirements for Financial Reporting

- 4.1. OMC thanked AC for attending and discussed financial reporting with a view to identifying what financial information would help them as managers.
- 4.2. AC noted that many of the available financial reports were historic, and so might be of limited use to OMC for planning purposes.
- 4.3. OMC heard that whilst a salaries report by department does exist, its value is affected by pay deals agreed late in the year which are backdated and distort the figures. Overtime and travel expense reporting information was captured by Home Office Pay and Pensions Scheme (HOPPS), the previous pay provider. The provision of this information is being discussed with their replacement Capita.

- 4.4. It was noted that devolved budgeting would promote transparency and understanding of the budgeting process. However, OMC agreed that this was not yet a practical method to manage the budget. OMC noted that a spreadsheet on the Intranet would help to provide staff with a better picture of the budgeting process.
- 4.5. SE noted that the expenditure report provided to the Executive Team (ET) might assist OMC, and agreed to circulate it to members. AC commented that experience of reporting to ET had demonstrated a difficulty in providing a commonly-desired level of detail. AC could propose a report for OMC, and amend it according to member's suggestions.

Action point 3 – AC to create a draft financial report for OMC.

Action point 4 – SE to copy ET reports to OMC members for information.

5. HR issues update

- 5.1. MC gave an update of current HR issues.
- 5.2. **Pay.** The latest salary run had few errors and OMC agreed that the performance so far was a great improvement over HOPPS.
- 5.3. **Pensions.** Pension statements have now been issued, and a number of uncorrected errors have become apparent. We will be asking for confirmation of changes from the new provider Capita.
- 5.4. The launch of new “Nuvos” civil service pension scheme for new starters noted at the last meeting has been postponed by one month.
- 5.5. The first meeting of the Equality and Diversity group had proved very productive. The group will meet monthly and report in the OMC meeting following through the HR update.
- 5.6. OMC discussed **temporary student employees**. MC stressed that if funding comes from the general salaries budget, then HR should make any decisions about recruitment. OMC agreed that any decision to take on a student should be prompted by business need and filled through the normal recruitment channels.

6. Policy Committee Update

- 6.1. JK gave an update of the activity of the Policy Committee (PC).
- 6.2. PC had not met since the last OMC meeting as the June meeting had been cancelled. OMC heard that a PC funded seminar on Identity Management had since taken place at the Oxford Internet Institute, and that the revised CCTV Code of Practice had been circulated for internal review prior to its public consultation.

7. Annual Report

- 7.1. SE introduced the final draft of the 2006/07 ICO Annual Report, and asked members to review operational elements to identify any issues that might arise for the launch of the report. RP will collate questions, answers and comments.

Action point 5 –All members to forward operational questions and suggestions arising form the Annual Report to RP.

8. Staff Suggestion Scheme meeting minutes

- 8.1. OMC examined the draft minutes of the Staff Suggestion Committee, and was pleased to note the first meeting of the new Suggestions Committee.

9. OMC work schedule and timetables

- 9.1. OMC noted the work programme and schedules.

Action point 6 – JMK to update the work schedule with suggestions from MA.

10. Any other business

- 10.1. SE commented that the closure figure for FoI cases in June so far was 135, and that if this rate remained consistent June closures would be in line with predictions. Output could be improved if the focus on signing DNs is successful.

- 10.2. MA noted the thanks of NIRO to MG and his team for their recent assistance in relation to non-notification and section 77 of FoIA.

11. Key Messages

- 11.1. OMC agreed the key messages as:

- **Decision Notices** OMC discussed methods to reduce the number of Decision Notices awaiting signature, including “Blitz” days, delegation of signing authority, and referral criteria.
- **Subject Access Requests to Banks** OMC heard that following discussions with the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS), we have agreed a procedure to signpost complaints to the FOS as they are best placed to help complainants to get charges refunded.
- **Notification** OMC heard that fee income was currently on track to increase by around 2%. This would cover the current budget, but would provide no additional DP income for funding additional projects not currently covered by the business plan.

- **Financial Reporting** - OMC discussed financial reporting with a view to what reports would help them in planning.

12. Date and location of next meeting

- 12.1. The next meeting will take place at 10.00 am on Wednesday 25 July in the Wycliffe Conference Room. Papers are due to CSU by 2pm on Thursday 19 July 2007.

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