



JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS AND CONDUCT OMBUDSMAN

BUSINESS PLAN

2017- 2018

Introduction

The Ombudsman is independent of Government, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the judiciary. The Ombudsman's Office is an Arms Length Body of the MoJ, but acts autonomously under the Ombudsman's direction. The Ombudsman and his Office supports the MoJ's Corporate Strategy to deliver a transformed justice system and a transformed department that is more efficient, more effective, less costly and more responsive to the public.

The Ombudsman provides an independent "second tier" complaint investigation function. By identifying and highlighting areas of concerns and redress, he aims to be a catalyst for improvement in "first tier" complaint handling processes by the JCIO, JAC, Tribunal Presidents and Magistrates Advisory Committees.

The purpose as an independent Ombudsman is to undertake independent investigations into complaints to ensure that the processes for applying for Judicial Appointment and for dealing with complaints about judicial conduct are applied correctly and consistently. We aim to deliver an effective, responsive and professional service, in a timely, consistent and transparent manner. It will be a challenge to deliver our business in a time of significantly reduced resources across the public sector; as a result there is a need for us to accept a greater level of risk in what we do.

Paul Kernaghan CBE QPM, Judicial Appointments and Conduct Ombudsman
How we will achieve this

John Critchfield, Head of Office
Annex A

Our strategic aim in undertaking independent investigations into complaints is to ensure that the processes for applying for Judicial Office and for dealing with complaints about Judicial conduct are applied correctly and consistently. We will deliver an effective, responsive and professional service in a timely, consistent and transparent manner.

Our business objectives	To provide a timely, consistent and transparent service to all our users.	To continue to improve our processes and our service delivery, to ensure we deliver an effective, responsive and professional service to all our users.	To deliver our business in the most cost effective and efficient manner, and to operate efficiently.
Our outcomes	People are aware of our service, and come to us at the right time, in the knowledge that we will undertake an independent investigation. Enquiries and complaints are handled promptly. Decisions and recommendations are clear, impartial and evidence based.	We have effective and efficient systems in place. We have a positive working environment where our staff are well trained and motivated. We provide excellent customer service.	We operate and deliver within budget. We are effective in managing our risks and our information. We have good relationships with all our stakeholders.
Our indicators	<p>To acknowledge receipt of all new complaints and correspondence from complainants, within 5 working days of receipt (100%).</p> <p>To deal with 90% of all correspondence received within 15 working days of receipt.</p> <p>When a preliminary investigation is required to establish if the potential complaint warrants a full investigation we will conclude this evaluation and provide a full reply within 30 working days/6 weeks from receipt of the complaint file from the First Tier Investigating Body, in 90% of cases.</p> <p>When a case is ready for investigation we aim to keep all complainants fully informed on a monthly basis in 98% of cases.</p> <p>We will publish our performance against these indicators in our Annual Report</p>	<p>We will keep our working practices and processes under review, striving for continuous improvement, in order to deliver the best possible service to our customers.</p> <p>We will ensure our leaflets and Website are up to date and reflective of our organisation. We welcome feedback from our customers about how we could improve our service, and will learn from any complaints that we receive about our service, doing our best to put things right.</p> <p>We will work creatively to build and maintain our capability to deliver a service that is efficient, responsive and professional. We will have the right people, processes and supporting infrastructure in place; value diversity and the importance of a work-life balance; identify and address any gaps in training and knowledge. We will ensure that our staff maintain a high level of skill in Complaints Handling and Investigations.</p>	<p>Budget We will operate within our budget; we will effectively manage financial pressures and risks to achieve our business objectives, re-profiling expenditure plans, reviewing responses to risks, and reporting any significant consequences on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Governance We will operate in accordance with the relevant governance arrangements as agreed with the Ministry in our Memorandum of Understanding, which sets out the related roles, relationships and responsibilities of the Ombudsman, the Head of the Ombudsman's office, and the Ministry.</p> <p>Working constructively with our stakeholders We have established constructive working relationships with the MoJ, the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office (JCIO), the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC), the Judicial Office, Tribunal Presidents, Magistrates' Advisory Committees and all our external stakeholders. We will continue to strive to maintain this position.</p>

SUMMARY OF FORECAST EXPENDITURE 2017-18

Ombudsman and staff costs	388,850.00
Office expenditure, including publications, IT, postage Service costs, including stakeholder engagement	16,150.00
Training and development, including travel and subsistence costs	7,000.00
Total	412,000.00

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

