



JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS AND CONDUCT OMBUDSMAN

BUSINESS PLAN

2020-2021

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. He can consider complaints from applicants for Judicial Office alleging maladministration which disadvantaged them in the selection process and complaints about the process by which concerns about Judicial Office Holders are considered under the "first tier" Judicial Conduct arrangements by the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office, Tribunal Presidents or Magistrates Advisory Committees in the first instance.

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 and to adapt to revised working arrangements necessitated by the COVID 19 crisis. It is necessary for us to accept a greater level of risk in what we do. Once the COVID 19 crisis is over we hope to improve ongoing working practices in the light of the experience gained during the lockdown.

Paul Kernaghan CBE QPM, Judicial Appointments and Conduct Ombudsman

John Critchfield, Head of Office

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.

<p>Our business objectives</p>	<p>To provide a timely, consistent and transparent service to all our users.</p>	<p>To continue to improve our processes and our service delivery, to ensure we deliver an effective, responsive and professional service to all our users.</p>	<p>To deliver our business in the most cost effective and efficient manner, and to operate efficiently.</p>
<p>Our outcomes</p>	<p>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 with appropriate information provided whilst avoiding creating unreasonable expectations of either the Ombudsman’s remit or the bodies whose actions the Ombudsman can review. Decisions and recommendations are clear, impartial and evidence based.</p>	<p>We have effective and efficient systems in place.</p> <p>We have a positive working environment where our staff are well trained and motivated.</p> <p>We provide excellent customer service.</p>	<p>We operate and deliver within budget.</p> <p>We are effective in managing our risks and our information.</p> <p>We have good relationships with all our stakeholders.</p>
<p>Our indicators</p>	<p>To acknowledge receipt of all new complaints and correspondence from complainants, within 5 working days of receipt (98%).</p> <p>To deal with 90% of all other 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</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</p>

	indicators in our Annual Report		Office, Tribunal Presidents, Magistrates' Advisory Committees and all our external stakeholders. We will continue to strive to maintain this position.
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SUMMARY OF FORECAST EXPENDITURE 2020-2021

Ombudsman and staff costs	£424,000
Office expenditure, including publications, IT, postage Service costs, including stakeholder engagement	£3,305
Legal and other professional services	£24,650
Training and development, including travel and subsistence costs	£2,045
Total	£454,000

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

