

Dr Helen Philips
Interim Chair
Legal Services Board
One Kemble Street
London
WC2B 4AN

12 December 2017

Dear Helen

VOLUNTARY PERFORMANCE ASSURANCE REPORT TO LSB OFFICE FOR LEGAL COMPLAINTS MEETING 8 DECEMBER 2017

1. Board discussions focused on the impact of changes to the management of the increased demand we continue to experience. This has affected timeliness performance, quality and unallocated cases. Board asked the executive to include a breakdown of demand by area of law in the quarterly performance paper to be discussed at the January 2018 meeting of the OLC.
2. We were pleased to note some positive indicators:
 - a. October saw the highest number of cases resolved since March reflecting a significant change in the management approach to allocating cases. This has sought to balance case holdings, give staff greater control and accelerate the flow of case resolution.
 - b. Our ombudsman increased the number of decisions made in October and November. The new Level 1 Ombudsmen are now established and they have started to make decisions. We have also seen early impact from a pilot endorsing decisions project.
 - c. Board was pleased to note positive early feedback on another four innovative pilot schemes which commenced in November. If the initial positive impacts are sustained they will be adopted across our business processes.


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3. The volume of unallocated work remains high as a result of the high level of demand and reduced allocation targets. These have supported increased case resolution and aim to address quality issues and staff concerns about workloads.
4. In an increasingly competitive local labour market, turnover and long-term sickness have contributed to a significant increase in the number of cases being reallocated. Reallocations materially impact our ability to reduce the number of unallocated cases, which is unlikely to change without the additional resource we are seeking in our proposed 2018-19 budget.
5. Board received assurances that the volume of cases being sent back by ombudsmen to investigators should reduce as a result of the reduction in case holdings and initiatives to improve quality.
6. Our expected performance trajectory will be set through our new operational forecasting and resourcing model currently in an advanced stage of development. Board noted that sustainable improvement requires a better balance between resources and demand. Assuming demand remains in line with current forecasts, our current expectation is that:
 - a. it will take until Q2 2018-19 until timeliness starts to improve;
 - b. by Q3 2018-19 the transition team should have reduced the number of unallocated cases to a sustainable level; our 2018-19 budget proposals include provision for a time-limited legacy team to handle unallocated casework and additional core staffing to reflect increased demand; and
 - c. we anticipate improvements in quality and customer satisfaction from Q1 2018-19.

Yours sincerely



Wanda Goldwag
Chair, Office of Legal Complaints