

# STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FORUM

## Minutes of Meeting at 10:30 on 15 December 2009

### 1. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes agreed as accurate.

#### Matters arising – Action points update:

- New Freedom of Information Scheme – JC to look at comparable schemes in other organisations. **Completed.** JC noted that all other schemes publish their staff organisation structure on their website. Some similar organisations include every staff member in our chart, though we had said we would probably not want to do that. Our current scheme is available to view on our website by following the publications link.
- JC to liaise with CG regarding Action plan on how to tackle FOI issues. **Completed.** Action plan will be implemented in early 2010.
- I.T. Exit plan: JC/CG to review and construct an understandable version and ask DWP Commercial to look over. JC to circulate by email to MT once JC and CG have reviewed. **Completed.** Comments were sent to Siemens who have not yet responded. We have had a change of account manager which maybe contributing to the delay in response.

**AP:** JC to chase Siemens again.

### 2. Internal audit reports

Three audits were carried out in November consisting of:

- follow up on payroll
- follow up on financial reporting
- data security

Level of assurance regarding payroll was “reasonable”; data security was “limited” (largely due to the requirements being new).

Data Security - seven recommendations were made mainly to do with documentation and guidance, which are due to be implemented by the end of Feb 2010.

### 3. The Pay and Grading Review

A selection of staff across the office were interviewed by one of two assessors. Two requests from staff to be interviewed (in addition to those chosen) were

received and granted. A questionnaire has been issued to other Ombudsman organisations. The responses are due by 7 January.

JC and AJLK meeting with DWP policy team on Thursday 17 December, but with an expected cap of 1% recommended across the public sector it does not leave much room to manoeuvre.

JC liaised with TPR regarding how they redesigned their Pay and Grading when they were first established. Completed.

#### **4. IIP**

AJLK sent comments on draft report and draft action plan to IIP assessor but had not received a response.

**AP:** AJLK to chase up. (Response since received)

#### **5. Compliance with Framework Agreement**

JC showed the team the framework agreement. It is also available to view on our website. It outlines our relationship with DWP and includes our management statement and financial memorandum. In a nutshell it explains how the office is required to function.

Internal Audit recommended at an earlier governance audit that we should document how we are complying with the statements included in this document.

**AP:** JC will design a table highlighting the main aspects of the agreement. This can be completed quarterly to show what actions we are taking to ensure we are following the correct procedures stated in the document. To be completed by the end of January and to be ready to use before the next meeting.

#### **6. Risk Register**

The team discussed the Risk Register and identified necessary changes/updates.

**AP:** JC to update and circulate agreed changes.

**AP:** JC to issue a reminder about using the requisition form in the correct manner

#### **7. Any other business**

Customer survey – JC met with DWP and researchers from two companies hired to carry out the survey. They will be looking to gain feedback on four main stages of an investigation:

- 1) Sift
- 2) Accepted for investigation but awaiting allocation
- 3) During Investigation

#### 4) Case closure

It will also include information regarding race, gender and disability that can be used as evidence when carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) on our policies and procedures. Our first EIA was produced by Natalie this week (with Helen's help) and is currently being reviewed by DWP. The team thanked Natalie for her efforts.

It is expected that the questionnaires will be issued by March and results collated by May.

The same research companies are also working with TPAS and aim to gather feedback regarding customers' experiences with both organisations.

The survey will be sent to both applicants and respondents.

**AP:** SMT to hold a meeting soon to discuss what might be included.

AJLK said that the SMT should be thinking about a three year strategy plan for the office. The team plans that are due for mid January can be worked into this.

**AP:** AJLK, FN and TK to discuss next week.

#### 8. **Date of next meeting**

16<sup>th</sup> March 2010 – 10:30am (TBC)