



OJC
Office for
Judicial
Complaints

Office for Judicial Complaints



**Corporate Plan & Business Plan
2007 - 2010**

2007 - 2008



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Foreword



I am pleased to present the second Business Plan for the Office for Judicial Complaints (OJC). The plan incorporates our corporate aims over the coming three years as well as our detailed intentions for this financial year.

The Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice share responsibility for the system governing the consideration and determination of complaints about the personal misconduct of all judicial office holders in England and Wales and some judicial office holders who sit in Tribunals in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The role of the OJC is to handle these complaints and provide advice and assistance to the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice.

The OJC aims to ensure that complaints about the conduct of judicial office holders are fully considered in an independent, fair and transparent way, by a professional and skilled staff. This business plan sets out our objectives and targets and details how we plan to build on the successes and lessons learned during our first year, by concentrating on improving the timelines and effectiveness of our processes and the service that we provide to the diverse communities.

Dale Simon
Head of the Office for Judicial Complaints



1 The Senior Management Team



Pennie Turrell
Deputy Head of the OJC



Alison Green
Joint Head of Casework Management Team



Jane Burfitt
Joint Head of Casework Management Team



Philip Hales
Head of Customer Service & Business Development



2 Purpose

As of 3rd April 2006, under the terms of the Constitutional Reform Act, the Office for Judicial Complaints (OJC) is:

- Required to consider all complaints and disciplinary conduct matters against Judicial Office Holders in accordance with regulations made under the Act. This includes consideration of the merits of the complaint and recommendations on appropriate action
- Jointly responsible to the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice

3 Our Vision

What we aim to achieve

We aim to provide a professional and independent service that is able to support the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice in the effective and fair handling of complaints against judicial office holders by well motivated and skilled staff.

We will achieve our aim by:

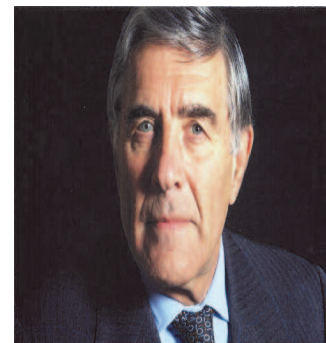
- Providing a timely consistent, transparent and informative service to all users.
- Continually improving our service by ensuring all our staff have the required knowledge and skills.
- Ensuring that all complaints and conduct matters are dealt with in accordance with the timescales and procedures laid down in the regulations.
- Providing a quality support service to Investigating Judges involved in the

consideration of complaints and conduct.

- Facilitating Review Bodies, providing support to all Review Body members and the people that they are dealing with.
- Reviewing our internal processes and resources throughout 2007/08, to ensure the most efficient and effective service delivery.
- Seeking feedback from our users at appropriate times in order to develop and improve our service.



Rt Hon Jack Straw MP
Secretary of State & Lord Chancellor



Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers
The Lord Chief Justice



4 Our Values

Customers

We put our customers and the people who we come into contact with at the heart of what we do.

Leadership and Teamwork

We create an environment in which our people can deliver successfully and are encouraged to develop themselves and the organisation. Teamwork with our partners is essential to success.

Independence

We will work with honesty, integrity and independence, ensuring that we are independent and impartial in our decisions.

Diversity

We recognise that we are all different and believe these differences benefit our organisation and our customers.

5 Stakeholders

Our main stakeholders are:

- The public who use our service
- Judicial Office Holders
- The Lord Chancellor
- The Lord Chief Justice
- Staff working in Courts and Tribunals
- The Judicial Appointments and Conduct Ombudsman



6 Improving Complaint Handling

Changing how we work

The OJC has reviewed its processes and as a result is implementing a number of changes to the way that information is collected and monitored on our computer system.

We have prepared a detailed handling manual for our staff and will monitor its effectiveness during the course of the business year.

We will monitor our performance against our targets and publish this on our website. We will also maintain records of any complaint about the standard of service that we provide to users.



7 Customer Participation

It is essential that our customers are actively involved in the development of our services. To this end we will evaluate the results from our recent customer questionnaire, and implement any changes identified by our clients, to inform the service we provide.

We have established a group of critical friends and are initially involving these people in examining our information leaflets. We will ensure that we use our critical friends to evaluate any new initiatives that we propose to make which impact on the public.

Promotion of services

We will promote the service we offer in a variety of ways. We will:

- Make our services known through our website
- Ensure that leaflets setting out the service we offer are available in all Courts and Tribunals
- Produce new leaflets that will cover complaints against Coroners
- Continue to promote our services with professional bodies, such as the Law Society and Bar Council

Charter Mark

During the period of this Business Plan, we will continue to work towards achieving Charter Mark, the UK Government's national standard of customer service for organisations delivering public services. It is our intention to apply for Charter Mark in 2009.

Diversity

We serve a diverse society, one that is made up of men and women; people of different races, cultures and religions; people with and without disabilities as well as people of different ages who may be heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and others with many differences. We will recognise, respect and value diversity in all that we do.



8 Performance Targets

We have learnt from our experience of the past year and have a range of targets that deal with each aspect of our work.

PT 1 - To continue to increase the awareness and understanding of the role and responsibilities of the OJC by 31st March 2008.

	Key Activity	Target	Resource / Cost (where applicable)	Outcome
1.1	To review and redesign our leaflets to ensure that they are user friendly for our customers, with particular emphasis on blind and visually impaired clients.	Use critical friends to evaluate our leaflets by 1 st October 2007	Critical Friends Group and Business Team (£7,000 if reprinting needed)	The production of high quality leaflets that are better focused on meeting the needs of our clients. To introduce any recommended changes by March 2008.
1.2	To issue a new leaflet that explains what the OJC can do in respect of complaints involving Coroners	Publication and distribution of leaflets by 1 st August 2006.	10 staff days (printing costs £1,000)	We will receive fewer contacts from people unaware of the role and scope of the OJC. Fewer people will be misdirected Elsewhere before they lodge a complaint with us against a Coroner.
1.3	To undertake a further programme of visits to stakeholder groups to promulgate understanding and awareness	To complete at least 10 visits in the financial year.	10 days of Head of OJC time 10 of senior management team.	Greater awareness among stakeholders of what the Office for Judicial Complaints can do.



8 Performance Targets

PT 2 - To provide a timely, consistent, transparent and informative service to all users.

	Key Activity	Target	Resource / Cost (where applicable)	Outcome
2.1	Provide a prompt service to users	Meet time-scales as set down in the regulations	All OJC staff	The OJC will meet the timescales for dealing with complaints as set out in the rules and regulations.
2.2	Provide a quality service	Ensure that staff have the skills needed to deal with complaints effectively	All OJC staff	A training needs analysis will be prepared by 1 st September 2007, with any training needs identified, undertaken or arranged by 1 st March 2008.
2.3	Staff equipped with the skills to do the job	Training needs analysis to be prepared by the 1 st September 2007	Staff as required	A training needs analysis will be completed by 1 st September 2007, outlining staff training needs. When implemented staff will have greater skills to meet client needs.



8 Performance Targets

PT 3 - Ensuring that all complaints and conduct matters are dealt with in accordance with the timescales and procedures laid down in the regulations.

	Key Activity	Target	Resource / Cost (where applicable)	Outcome
3.1	Establish a comprehensive casework manual	To be available to all staff by the 1 st July 2007	Staff and senior management team	Comprehensive guide for staff on the handling of complaints. All staff to be fully aware of the processes involved in dealing with a complaint.

PT 4 - To continue to improve our processes following the review undertaken in 2006/07.

	Key Activity	Target	Resource / Cost (where applicable)	Outcome
4.1	Ensure that all staff are aware and able to operate the new computer processes.	August 2007	Training manager	Introduce training manual by 1st August 2007. Review staff's individual performance in 1-2-1 meetings with managers on a quarterly basis.
4.2	Provide better services through our website.	June 2007	Imaginit consultants £2,000 (estimate)	Improved usability of website and access to electronic forms. Introduction of a web based feedback questionnaire. Improved accessibility and functionality for users of our website.
4.3	Enhance our computer system to make it more user friendly and improve accuracy	Revised system to be amended and reintroduced by August 2007	Consultancy advice and training and guidance from staff £20,000 (estimate)	Improved functionality and ease of use for staff. Information on the computer system is accurate and does not require manual updates or corrections each month.



8 Performance Targets

	Key Activity	Target	Resource / Cost	Outcome
4.4	Introduce a Health and Safety Plan for our business and monitor Health and Safety objectives.	1 st September 2007	Business team and senior managers in conjunction with health and safety advisors	A safe working environment. Working environment meets departmental standards.
4.5	Introduce operational standards for the business.	1 st September 2007	Casework managers and senior management team.	Comprehensive list of standards. All staff are aware of the operational standards required from each aspect of the work allowing them to be more aware of their responsibilities.
4.6	Introduce clear levels at which work can be conducted.	1 st September 2007	Staff as required	Staff understand that what they are doing is to an appropriate level. Credit given for work completed at a senior level
4.7	Conduct a staff satisfaction survey and implement changes to address any concerns.	1 st March 2008	Senior Management Team	Prepare a report of the findings by 1 st February 2008. Prepare an action plan to take the findings forward by 1 st March 2008.

PT 5 - To obtain more information concerning the diversity of our clients and use that information to improve the service that we provide.

	Key Activity	Target	Resource	Outcome
5.1	To evaluate the information that is received from our customer questionnaire.	1 st August 2007	Business Team	Prepare an action plan to introduce any changes from the evaluation report by 1 st February 2008.
5.2	Introduce changes recommended by our equality group.	31 st March 2008	Equality Group and senior management team.	Improve OJC working environment.



8 Performance Targets

PT 6 - To improve the service that we provide to complainants.

	Key Activity	Target	Resource / Cost	Outcome
6.1	All clients to receive regular updates on the progress of their complaint.	Updates to be provided every 20 business days by 1 st October 2007	Consultant to improve computer system to allow this to be effectively monitored	Report to be provided on our level of achievement and included in quarterly reports from September. All cases to provide updates to clients.

PT 7- To measure the cost effectiveness of our performance.

	Key Activity	Target	Resource / Cost	Outcome
7.1	Establish a system of unit costs based on the work undertaken in the first year of the OJC.	1 st January 2008	Business Team	Establish a simple system of unit costing which can be used as a baseline to drive efficiency and effectiveness.

PT 8 - To measure our performance in the way that we handle Review Body cases.

	Key Activity	Target	Resource / Cost	Outcome
8.1	To supply Review Body members with all of the case papers allowing sufficient time for the consideration of papers.	Provide papers at least 5 working days before they are due to meet for the first time. By 1 st May 2007.	Business Team	All papers to be provided 5 days before Review Body meetings resulting in good relations with Review Body members.
8.2	Improve communication with Review Body Lay members by way of newsletters and creation of a discussion point on our website.	Produce two newsletters in the coming year and amend website by 1 st October 2007.	Business Team to design newsletter in house. (£1200 for website development)	Lay Members to be kept up to date on developments with Review Bodies and to have a forum for debate/advice.



8 Performance Targets

	Key Activity	Target	Resource / Cost	Outcome
8.3	Introduce a discussion point on our website for use by Lay Members.	1st October 2007.	Business team with support from website developer.	Operational website discussion forum. Improved management of Review Bodies.

PT 9 - To review the Judicial Discipline (Prescribed Procedures) Regulations 2006.

	Key Activity	Target	Resource / Cost	Outcome
9.1	Determine the scope of the regulatory review.	20 th May 2007.	All costs limited to staff and judicial involvement.	Terms of reference to be decided and agreed upon.
9.2	Submit revised Regulations and Rules to the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice.	20 th July 2007	All costs limited to staff and judicial involvement.	New Regulations provide a more effective service. Regulations meet the requirements of the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice.
9.3	Lay the Statutory Instrument before Parliament.	1 st October 2007	All costs limited to staff and judicial involvement.	New Regulations to be considered by Parliament.
9.4	Implement the changes set out in the revised Regulations and Rules.	31 st March 2008	All costs limited to staff and judicial involvement.	New Regulations will provide improved service to customers and streamlined processes.



9 Service Standards

Defining Service Standards

We aim to provide a service of excellence by improving the availability of information to potential users and by giving complainants, Judicial Office Holders and other users regular and timely updates, at least every month, on the progress of a complaint, except in exceptional circumstances*.

Customer Participation

We have established a group of Critical Friends who are representatives from a number of our key stakeholder groups and include Judges, Tribunal Presidents, Coroners and the Bar Council. We will use this group to evaluate our leaflets and website during the business year. The group will also be used to test new initiatives before implementation.

Website

Our website will be revised to improve the way that it works and the information it provides. Information held on the site will be revised throughout the year to ensure that it provides accurate and up - to - date information on our services. We will also add advice on how to complain about the conduct and behaviour of Coroners.

10 Service & Business Improvement

Improvements

A programme of improvements has been prepared for the financial year, key elements of which are listed below.

- Improving our IT systems to enable more accurate recording of data.
- To put into effect improvements identified during our recent Health & Safety audit.
- Introduction of Unit Cost measurements system to enable more accurate year on year Performance comparisons.
- Introduce improvements to our service based on customer feedback questionnaires, where appropriate.
- Review the use of flexible working patterns to ensure the most effective use of staff resources.
- Increase the efficiency of the Review Body process by introducing remote working and video conferencing technology.

** For instance, where there is an investigation being undertaken by an external organisation such as the Bar Council or Law Society, which can take many months. In these circumstances all parties will be made aware of the expected timescales.*



11 People and Learning

Staff Recruitment and Retention

In 2007/08 we aim to recruit and retain staff to the necessary level to deliver our business effectively. We will continue to review the staffing levels of the unit to ensure that they are set at the appropriate level to meet workload.

Learning and Development

A review of training needs for each member of staff will be undertaken, to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to complete their jobs. Individual training programmes will be agreed with each member of staff for the period of this business plan to enable customers to be provided with a service of excellence.

Leadership

Effective leadership is a key component to the success of this unit. We will ensure that our senior management team are equipped with all the skills needed to lead our staff and provide our customers with a service of excellence.

Recognising Success

We will recognise and reward staff for exceptional performance.

12 Structure and Staff Resources

The current staffing by grade (staff on temporary promotion are shown in their substantive grade) as at 1st April 2007:

Grade	Numbers
SCS	1
Band A	4
Band B	3
Band C	5
Band D	3
Band E	1

In addition we will use Agency staff during the year during peak periods and to assist with Review Bodies during the year

Paybill £700,000

Other running Costs £400,000

Total **£ 1,100, 000**



13 Budget

Budgeting System

The budget for the OJC is set annually by the MOJ, after discussions with the OJC and evaluation of projected workloads for the coming year.

The budget for 2007/8 was set on the basis of a 10% increase in overall workload during the year, starting from a baseline of 1673 complaints, which was the number received during the last financial year. The increase is based on trends identified over the last two years which show an annual 8% increase in complaints received by the OJC's predecessor, the Judicial Correspondence Unit.

The budget was also agreed on the basis that additional operational requirements such as reporting, budget management and risk analysis, as well as the production of annual reports, would be absorbed within existing resources by increased efficiency.

Summary Financial Statement

Summary financial statements will be available on our website and by request from:

customer@ojc.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: 020 7189 2936

Minicom: 020 7189 2941

Annual Report

An annual report will be available on our website and by request from:

customer@ojc.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: 020 7189 2936

Minicom: 020 7189 2941

14 Risk Management

The effective identification and management of risk is an important aspect of management. A risk log has been prepared and is monitored and adjusted monthly. We ensure that all risks are owned by a member of our senior management team and that each risk is reconsidered on a monthly basis. We use our risk management systems to support better decision making through a good understanding of our risks and their likely impact.



15 Our Relationship with the MoJ's Strategic Objectives

The purpose of the MoJ is to improve the justice system for the public. The OJC supports this purpose through its contribution to three of the MoJ's Strategic Objectives.

Strategic Objective I: To provide criminal, civil, family and administrative justice systems that command public respect and confidence; and

Strategic Objective III: To enable the development of democratic institutions of government that command public confidence.

Strategic Objective IV: To create a modern, efficient and effective department that has the capacity and capability to deliver excellent public services.

Whilst the OJC is an associated office, we will contribute to these objectives by establishing an effective complaints system which wins the confidence of both the public and the judiciary.

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