

Business Plan 2011-12

Driving efficiency and performance

Our Purpose, Vision and Aim

Our Purpose

We investigate complaints from individuals and businesses unhappy about the handling of their complaints by HM Revenue & Customs, the Valuation Office Agency or The Insolvency Service; and

Through constructive feedback we help these organisations achieve a better understanding of customer needs and improve complaint handling.

Our Vision

We are recognised as experts in our field, who act professionally, efficiently and add true value to the complaints handling process.

Our Aim

To provide a service that is:

- Accessible
- Clear to customers
- Flexible
- Open and Transparent
- Proportionate
- Efficient
- Delivering quality outcomes

Our strategy 2009-14

Our Vision

We are recognised as experts in our field, who act professionally, efficiently and add true value to the complaints handling process.

Strategic goals

- An informed and intelligent advocate for service improvement
- Excellence in professional complaints handling
- Trusted provider of assurance and redress.

Strategic themes

Enhancing
the customer
experience

Building strategic
partnerships and
collaborations

Promoting diversity,
equality and
accessibility

Raising
performance

Protecting confidentiality
and using information
appropriately

Delivering value
for money

Our six strategic themes

Our six strategic themes direct our approach to annual business planning.

In 2010 the Adjudicator set the priorities as:

- Eliminating the backlog of work
- Developing a clear focus on performance
- Working with the departments to ensure that complaints are dealt with efficiently and timeously.

Work in 2010-11 focused on business improvement, driving changes to working practices and maximising efficiency.

2010-11 was a very successful year with the elimination of the backlog of oldest cases as planned.

Other highlights included:

- Continuing to change working practices around Tax Credit cases and complaints involving Extra Statutory Concession A19
- Establishing new management reports and continuing to enhance the flow of management information
- Managing the training and performance of additional temporary staff resource

- Planning a staged reduction in additional complement by the end of the financial year
- Consolidating the structure of the three distinct teams; one team of specialist investigators to help the Adjudicator review and resolve the oldest cases; one team of expert investigators to examine newer complaints ready for the Adjudicator's decisions; and one team of experienced advisors to help customers understand the Adjudicator's remit, how the complaints processes work and what information is required
- Developing a new office structure ready for the start of 2011-12, including the creation of a new Quality Team
- Introducing diversity monitoring for customers
- Continuing to benchmark with other complaints organisations
- Developing relationships with the third sector
- Building on the formal audit of back end processes and developing initial process maps.

These changes enabled us to increase productivity and clear the backlog of work without any adverse effect on quality.

Our 2011-12 Business Plan continues the drive to raise performance and enhance quality.

Our Business Plan 2011-12

Strategic theme 1 : Enhancing the customer experience

Action	Timescale
Map and refine our internal procedures to make dealing with our office as straightforward and easy as possible	March 2012
Develop our first contact support to ensure we give accurate and up to date information about the departments' complaints processes	September 2011
Continue to refine the new process for handling Tax Credit complaints using customer feedback and in collaboration with HMRC Tax Credit Office	Ongoing
Develop shared reports on taxation cases, using the Tax Credit learning as a blueprint design	March 2012
Continue to capture and analyse representative customer journeys to identify areas for improvement in the handling of cases, customer communications and working practices	March 2012

Strategic theme 2 : Building strategic partnerships and collaborations

Action	Timescale
Continue to strengthen relationships with the third sector to consider issues from different customer perspectives and improve forecasting for customer need	Ongoing
Be an active member of the British and Irish Ombudsman Association (BIOA) to share ideas on working practices within the specialist complaints handling arena	Ongoing
Benchmark working practices against other Ombudsman organisations	Ongoing
Work with HMRC, the Valuation Office Agency and The Insolvency Service, at different organisational levels, to feedback learning and improve complaints handling	Ongoing
Share case studies throughout the year directly with departments and via the Adjudicator's Office website	September 2012

Strategic theme 3 : Promoting diversity, equality and accessibility

Action	Timescale
Refine Adjudicator's Office communications to reflect a modern, trusted and facilitative organisation	Ongoing
Launch an updated Adjudicator's Office website with improved navigation, readability and access	July 2012
Publish a small quantity of printed Annual Reports to ensure access to information for customers not IT enabled	July 2012
Continue to contrast customer journeys for different customer groups to identify any specific adjustments required to better meet need	March 2012
Refine diversity monitoring for customers and use the summary information to tailor complaints handling	March 2012
Explore alternative approaches for business improvement using customer feedback	March 2012
Ensure staff training and development continues to enhance skills and improve service delivery	Ongoing
Draw on the experience and insight of our customers and staff who come from diverse backgrounds to help drive service improvement	Ongoing

Strategic theme 4 : Raising performance

Action	Timescale
Refine new team structures and balance staff resources across teams	Ongoing
Consolidate waiting time to no longer than 6 months from acceptance of complaint to the start of the investigation	Ongoing
Maintain quality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of Plain English • clarity of communications • investigations in line with the BIOA and Ombudsman's Principles for Good Complaints Handling • no factual inaccuracies • sustain work at the high standard required by the Adjudicator 	Ongoing
Develop QA/QC processes on investigations to monitor quality and share good practice	September 2011
Clear traditional investigations at a minimum of 1 case closure every 5 effective staff days, subject to complexity	Ongoing
Clear Tax Credit investigations at a minimum of 3 case closures every 5 effective staff days, subject to complexity	Ongoing
Reply to 98% of First Contact Cases within 10 working days	Ongoing
Deal with 90% of investigation correspondence within 15 working days	Ongoing
Develop and refine visual management and team accountability	Ongoing
Audit monthly management reports using the internal management assurance framework	Ongoing
Build on peer mentoring and specialisms to share knowledge and develop investigation skills	Ongoing
Improve internal electronic storage of customer information and investigation papers to better support the Adjudicator's decision-making on cases	Ongoing

Strategic theme 5 : Protecting confidentiality and using information appropriately

Action	Timescale
Refresh staff on security policy, Business Continuity Plan, Data Protection, asset and risk registers	Annual
Ensure movement and storage of files is in line with agreed procedures	Ongoing
Review system access for each member of staff	Annual
Undertake an annual review of data security and the Data Guardian role	July 2012
Ensure regular liaison with the Data Guardian	Ongoing
Continue to refine Information Management procedures	Ongoing

Strategic theme 6 : Delivering value for money

Action	Timescale
Use telephone and video conferencing to maximise teamwork across locations and minimise travel costs	Ongoing
Refine the internal CAF information site to highlight key business messages	Ongoing
Manage the budget carefully throughout the year to minimise spend	Ongoing
Identify and mitigate business risks	Ongoing
Invite an external audit to identify any further areas for improvement in processes and working practices	September 2011
Predict volumes and types of complaints to match staff resources and expert skills to customer need	Ongoing
Continue to develop a cost per unit average for different types of cases to better understand how to focus resources	March 2012
Use opportunities for natural wastage to align grade mix and location to business need	Ongoing
Plan management moves to support business change	Ongoing



Issued by The Adjudicator's Office
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