

# Financial Ombudsman Service Limited

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## MINUTES

MINUTES of the meeting of the directors, held at held at South Quay Plaza, 183 Marsh Wall, London, E14 9SR on Tuesday, 17 September at 13.30

Present	Nick Montagu (NM)	chairman
	Maeve Sherlock (MS)	director
	Gwyn Burr (GB).	director
	Alan Jenkins (AJ)	director
	Julian Lee (JL)	director
	Pat Stafford (PS)	director
In attendance	Natalie Ceeney (NC)	chief executive and chief ombudsman
	Tony Boorman (TB)	deputy chief executive and deputy chief ombudsman
	Liz Brackley (LB)	strategic service development director
	Julia Cavanagh (JC)	finance & performance director and company secretary
	Caroline Wayman (CW)	legal director
	Richard Thompson (RT)	lead ombudsman (for file review)
	Alison Hoyland (AH)	board secretary & head, CEO's office (minutes)

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### **Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **0/1309 Executive update**

The Board noted the update from members of the executive on their respective areas, with some further discussion on the following:

#### *FCA*

The regulator had made a number of recent announcements relevant to the ombudsman service and its work, including about a review it planned to undertake of firms' complaint handling and about a market study into the cash savings market.

#### *Ombudsmen appointments*

The Board noted the latest ombudsmen appointments.

#### *internal audit*

PricewaterhouseCoopers UK LLP had been reappointed as internal auditors, following a tender process.

#### *publishing decisions*

Ombudsmen decisions were now being published on the service's website, as required under recent legislative changes. Feedback from stakeholders so far had been largely positive, with most welcoming the increased transparency of the service's work.

### **1/1309 Minutes and approvals**

The Board approved the minute of the Board meeting held on 23 July, and noted the minute of the Audit Committee held on 17 July.

### **2/1309 Matters arising**

#### *next external review*

Following a tender process involving the chairman, and MS as critical friend, a provider had been appointment to lead the work on the next external review. The review would be focusing on the future: exploring the ombudsman service's environment – the attitudes and behaviour of the people and organisations that shaped it, and how they

were likely to change over the coming years. The Board would be kept up to date as this work progressed, particularly on what it meant for developing the service so that it could continue to meet the demands and needs of its customers.

#### *health & safety*

JC provided an update on the ombudsman's performance against key health and safety risks, as well as assurance on the 'Legionella' checks that had been carried out.

#### *access and inclusion*

A new diversity and inclusion manager, Fatima Choudhury, had been appointed to take forward internally-focussed diversity and inclusion work. Fatima was settling in well and one of her first objectives would be to pick up the action from the July Board on the disability status of staff. This work, and further analysis of issues around the employment of disabled workers, would come back to the Board in JW's Q3 'people' report.

#### *Institute of Customer Service*

The ombudsman service would be taking part in the ICS Business Benchmarking survey in October, which would look at customer satisfaction across a number of aspects of its customer service, for example, call handling, enabling it to compare itself to the UK average for all service organisations. The ombudsman would be included in the category for national public service providers.

#### *2012/13 directors' report and financial statements*

The report had been filed at Companies House and published on the ombudsman's website.

Other matters arising were picked up in the substantive business before the Board.

### **3/1309 File review**

**fos/13/09/03**

CW outlined the results from the annual case file review which the executive team and other senior ombudsman staff had undertaken, together with members of the Board. These annual reviews presented the Board with the opportunity to see at close hand how individual cases had been handled and the 'quality' of the service provided. The review focussed on the 'customer service' element of the quality assessment framework. The exercise also sought views on the overall handling of each case and on ways in which the ombudsman service might change what it did to enhance or improve the service it provided.

The Board discussed the themes which had emerged from the review, noting a great deal of consistency between reviewers on how well they thought the cases had been handled, and in turn what good looked like. Insight from the exercise and the lessons to be learnt reinforced the service's strategic outlook and its commitment to continuing to develop its service to meet the needs of its customers.

#### **Any other business**

##### *2014 Board evaluation*

The next evaluation of Board effectiveness would be conducted by an external party, in-line with the established practice of an independent review every three years. NM was currently meeting with a number of interested parties and exploring options; the chairman would keep the Board updated.

##### *FCA and ombudsman Board dinner*

Final preparations were being made for the FCA and ombudsman Board dinner on 25/9.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 17.00