

Lay Observers

Business plan priorities for 2022-2025

Introduction

This business plan is designed to develop and provide the support structures and processes that allow Lay Observers to carry out their statutory function, which includes nearly 1,000 visits and monitoring activities to places of detention each year.

Consequently, the content of this plan mainly details new or continuing activities which are designed to strengthen the role of, and support to, Lay Observers. This sits in addition to a significant number of business as usual activities which take up much of the Secretariat's time and resource. Business as usual activities include such things as reactive administrative support to Lay Observers in response to queries and emerging issues. Responding to emerging issues is unpredictable and so can adversely impact response times, other business as usual activity or the delivery of planned business plan priorities. We monitor this impact regularly.

Objective	Sub-objective/activities
1. Governance	1a. strengthen and develop internal LO governance and assurance structures • Risk register review • Role description and structure of LLOs • Establish programme of regional meetings 1b. achieve statutory underpinning to ensure independence and effectiveness of the Chair and National Council • Liaison with MoJ and IMB on changes to primary and secondary legislation
2. Support for Lay Observers	2a. continued support for all members as they return to direct monitoring • Bulletins/member information letters • Up to date website • Compacts signed • Reappointments made on time 2b. continued developing of the Members Pathway • Catalogue of member pathway • Develop appraisal system • Analyse exit interviews • Provide GDPR guidance

	• Skills audit of members • Recognition awards at 5/10 years and tenure 2c. embedding the new Expectations scheme • Training on report writing and grading • Development of FAQs
3. Lay Observers training and continuous development	3a. to review and revise support and training provided as aspects of Members Pathway • evaluation of the balance between face to face and remote training; • review the Induction training process and effectiveness; • identify modules for remote CPD; • review of e-learning and role in core training; • devise a discrete blended support and training programme • devise a clear record keeping procedure to indicate engagement 3b. to provide continuous learning and development opportunities for members • develop e-learning refresher training on reappointment; • agree priority training areas for LOs linked to Expectations and grading; visits guidance; engagement with staff and detainees; report writing, abuse allegations and safeguarding • develop CPD opportunities for existing members in priority areas; • explore external training opportunities and specialist/subject matter trainers; • ensuring links between training and information; • explore the use of video learning clips • devise a programme of CPD through remote sessions and regional study days
4. Information management and monitoring practice	4a. ensure that information on the members' website is accessible, consistent and up to date. • examine and evaluate the effectiveness of the current website; • restructure the members' website including agreeing editorial process; • use analytics and member feedback to explore how to encourage member engagement; • agree priority areas for refresh and review.

	4b. developing monitoring practice • produce monitoring toolkits in agreed priority areas, with accompanying training and engagement plans and e-learning platform modules; • identify and publish examples of good practice; positive reporting and effective grading;
5. Strengthening membership	5a. embedding and developing the recruitment process • Undertake a review and respond to feedback from new LOs on the recruitment process. • review of needs and areas for development; • review recruitment process including Recruitment pack, application form and question for interviews; • consider a regular six-month recruitment campaign; • develop forward planning to ensure capacity across the country; • continued refinement of vetting process including clarifying the position on criminal convictions and conflicts of interest; • creation and training of interview panel members and chairs; • Review and revise Induction processes and effectiveness. 5b. to deliver greater diversity of LOs • review and develop training pack and video information for prospective applicants; • explore more flexible member offer (remote monitoring, shorter visits) and budgetary considerations; • explore and extend social media advertising
6. Policy, external communications and impact	6a. maximisation of the impact of individual reports and the annual report. • Support members in the writing and publicising of over 150 monthly reports; • Consider use of the consolidated reports for regular press releases and updates on respect, decency and welfare to media and other agencies such as ministers, JSC and other bodies; 6b. ensuring impact of monitoring on policy and practice • regular updates to Ministers and Justice Committee, PECS, HMCTS; • continued attendance at and reporting to the North and South Welfare Boards; • plan and deliver an event for stakeholders to showcase the work/findings of LOs; • involve stakeholders such as PECs, HMCTS, contractors in remote training sessions; • provide guidance to LOs on communication and escalation of concerns; • deliver equality and diversity project for effective monitoring of vulnerable detainees;

	• respond to parliamentary and other inquiries (e.g. mental health) • devise and deliver thematic reviews;
7. Innovation and IT	7a. to provide adequate IT solutions to increase effectiveness of secretariat and members. • ensure and effective database for secretariat record keeping; • support, contribute to and monitor training within the Secretariat; • engage with MoJ to review and improve IT tools for members; • develop the use of the STOWED network for analysing reports and trends.