

Our business plan
2014-15





Our business plan 2014-15

This business plan sets out our direction and what we will achieve in the coming year. We have written it in the context of our five-year plan.

Our aims – what we are trying to do as an organisation – remain unchanged. This plan sets out what we will do in 2014-15 to help us achieve them.

Our five aims

- Aim 1: Make it easier for people to find and use our service
- Aim 2: Help more people by investigating more complaints and providing an excellent service for our customers
- Aim 3: Work with others to use what we learn from complaints to help make public services better
- Aim 4: Lead the way to make the complaints system better
- Aim 5: Develop our organisation so that it delivers these aims efficiently and effectively.

More impact for more people

Building our capacity

Increasing our influence

2014-15 priorities

Investigations and resolutions

We will modernise our processes, investigate more complaints and improve the quality of our service.

Aim 2

Workforce

We will resolve pay issues and improve engagement.

Aim 2

Systemic investigations

We will define our approach and undertake three systemic investigations, including follow-up on our reports on sepsis and midwifery.

Aim 3

Ombudsman reform

We will influence reform for a single public services ombudsman.

Aim 4

Improving the public services and health complaints system

We will work with our partners to improve public sector complaint handling so that it is easier for people to make complaints.

Aim 4

2014-15 projects

▶ Human factors

We will embed 'human factors' in our own work and encourage other organisations to use it.

Aim 2

▶ Transforming our IT

We will replace our casework management system and develop digital services.

Aim 5

▶ Working closely with the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

We will find ways to provide a more joined-up service and we will progress at pace to converge our two organisations.

Aim 4

Two overarching objectives for 2014-15

- ▶ We will build our capacity so that we can take on many more investigations and provide a better service for complainants.
- ▶ We also plan to increase our influence. We aim to make a tangible difference in public sector complaint handling by learning from complaints and developing a public services ombudsman.

Five business plan priorities

- ▶ We have already started to introduce new ways to modernise our service, our investigation methods and practice. We will update the way we assess cases and cut the time it takes to investigate them. We will ask for feedback from people who complain to us, the organisations we investigate and our partners, and use that feedback to improve. We will also publish our service promises, measure ourselves against them and share how we are doing. All of this will mean that we will be able to investigate 5,000 complaints, up from 2,199 last year, and give our customers a better quality of service.

- ▶ We will improve employee relations and staff engagement. We will introduce a new system for pay and reward, which will include a fair and consistent performance management system.
- ▶ We will increase the impact of our work by continuing to focus on big and repeated service failures.
- ▶ We will shape the debate and influence legislative reform to bring about a better system for complainants, including a single public services ombudsman. We believe that a single public services ombudsman for England will be easier for people to access and use, and will help public services improve and evolve.
- ▶ We will work across government, with partners like Healthwatch England, the Care Quality Commission and the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), to improve the health and public services complaints system. We will work with the Department of Health complaints programme board and Healthwatch England to develop a vision for complaint handling that will be led by patients. We will also contribute to the Cabinet Office review of cross-government complaint handling.

While doing all this, we will continue with 'business as usual': carrying out investigations for complainants, publishing information on our work, and driving improvements in public services.

Three key projects for 2014-15

A new casework system and digital services

We will replace our casework management system with a simpler, more flexible one. As part of this project, we will look at setting up a web portal for the public and an interface with the LGO. Our new system will help staff move from using paper to working electronically.

Working closely with the LGO

As part of our commitment to creating a single public services ombudsman, we will work with the LGO to find ways to provide a more joined-up service.

We have established a Joint Convergence Board to bring our two organisations closer together on key aspects of services and work. This is in preparation for creating one public services ombudsman in the future. We will bring our wider casework policy into line with each other, where possible. We will converge with some of the LGO's casework processes, and will offer similar levels of service. Our new casework management system and digital services will take into account our needs and those of the LGO.

Building human factors into our investigation processes

'Human factors' is a tool that uncovers the 'why' of an incident or accident. Organisations can use human factors to find the underlying causes of mistakes and so stop them happening again. In 2014-15, we will introduce human factors thinking into our own casework, when appropriate. We will also encourage the NHS in England to use human factors, and will expect service providers to use human factors and root cause analysis for very serious complaints, where appropriate.

Looking ahead

We want to increase external awareness of our services and help more people complain to us (Aim 1), but we must build our operational capacity and improve our customer experience first. We need to get new core processes and new systems in place.

That is why we are focusing on Aims 2 to 5 this year:

- ▶ investigating more complaints and improving our service
- ▶ learning from complaints to make public services better
- ▶ making the complaints system better and
- ▶ being more efficient and effective.

Alongside our priorities and 'business as usual' work, new and sometimes urgent things will emerge and affect our ability to deliver this plan. We will keep looking at what we need to do and are able to do, and review our plan when the need arises. We will also update and publish our revised five-year strategic plan in the autumn.

By the end of the year, we will have firm foundations in place to deliver our aims. We will be in a position to investigate more cases and harness more learning from our casework to make public services better.



If you would like this document in a different format, such as Daisy or large print, please contact us.

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