

**From:** Scott, Joshua - UKGI[/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=0224934F23B1444386FD031B130603A8-SCOTT, JOSH]  
**Sent:** Thur 16/09/2021 9:32:25 AM (UTC)  
**To:** Cooper, Tom - UKGI[GRO]; Creswell, Carl (Services Directorate)[GRO]; Kilgarriff, Patrick (Legal)[GRO]; Taylor, Tom (Finance)[GRO]; Nick Read[GRO]; ben.foat[GRO]; benjamin.tidswell[GRO]; Watts, Alan[GRO]; Fleming, Joshua - HMT[GRO]; FlemingTaylorjobshare[GRO]  
**Cc:** brooks-white[GRO]; Wones, Eleri (BEIS)[GRO]; Jones, Ramona - UKGI[GRO]; Morgan, Simon - UKGI[GRO]; Gray, Ross - HMT[GRO]; 'jacki.adams'[GRO]; Graham Hemingway[GRO]; Chris Manamley[GRO]; rodric.williams[GRO]; Jo Fox[GRO]; Hill, Kate (Finance)[GRO]; Heath, Daniel (BEIS)[GRO]; Kate Ramsey[GRO]; Tim McInnes[GRO]; Paula Bennett[GRO]; Catherine Connolly[GRO]; Taggart, Georgia - HMT[GRO]; Mal Vujnovic[GRO]; Mackie, Robert - UKGI[GRO]; Singh, Gurdeep - UKGI[GRO]  
**Subject:** [OFFICIAL SENSITIVE] Draft Note of HSS Quarterly Review 8 Sept 2021 - Confidential

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Hi all,

Please see below a short draft note of the HSS Quarterly Review last week.

Apologies for the delay in getting this out.

Do let me know if you have any comments/amendments.

Cheers,

Josh

**Opening Remarks**

- BF gave opening remarks and noted the ongoing review of the HMBU. On the HSS, the headline is that 20% of claims – though all de minimis – have now received offers and 96% have accepted. BF noted that we should be cautious about relying on these figures re dispute resolution, which there is some concern about for future cases. BF noted that only 6 GFMs have occurred and was disappointed with progress on these disputes. BF stated he was keen to see clear process and principles re the escalation meetings that are to come.
- BF aiming for 33% claims by end Oct and 50% claimants receiving offers before POHIT public hearings. BF saw this as a very important from a reputational point. POL aiming for delivery over 50% by January 2021, and 95% of offers by October 21. Largely subject to Panel capacity and need to streamline investigations.
- Noted good progress made on SFAs. Test Case Principles almost finished and expecting finalisation by end of month.
- BF noted HSS legal costs, stating they are substantial. POL in discussion with its legal advisers and looking at process efficiencies to reduce costs where possible.

**General Discussion on Progress and Timetable**

- CC thanked BF for the update and noted it was fair reflection of the current status, especially on legal cost which BEIS is concerned about.
- Discussion on external comms, which CC noted was a well made point by BF. CC asked about the planned publication date, which he understood to be 28 September, and that it looks like it may be after publication of the Inquiry's Interim Report. CC noted it may be helpful to publish data ahead of this date if possible. BF confirmed the 28 Sept HSS publication date with every two months thereafter but agreed to discuss with CC offline. BF offered to send POL's press notice (PN) to BEIS in advance to align messaging. **TWO ACTIONS – i) CC to talk offline to POL about publication timings; and ii) POL to share draft HSS PN with BEIS in due course.**
- RM moved the discussion onto the timetable and the forecasts. BF reiterated the timetable outlined in the pack. In terms of issues to explore, BF noted a number of risks and barriers:
  - BF observed it took a long time for the test cases to be assessed;
  - There is a need to mitigate panel capacity risk e.g. additional Panel and QCs but this comes with a cost that POL are trying to manage. On this particular issue, BF stated there is a focus on speed which will impact cost, but later clarified he is looking at costs in the round and hoping to achieve cost-savings elsewhere;
  - Other area is on investigations and process efficiencies. TC noted this was discussed at the HRC, and he would be keen to have a specific discussion on the objectives in this area and see a realistic timetable. TC noted BEIS had been provided with a number of timetables which have not materialised. This was noted by BF who agreed but flagged that it was important the POL GE interrogate the data first.
- BF flagged a potential solution regarding internal POL resource. BF noted that there are currently 38 FTEs doing eligibility reviews, and 29 claim assessors. In looking at the structure, one of the questions is whether the 38 eligibility checkers can be moved to later stages to assist in claim assessment. This was noted by the group. TC requested what a flow of cases could look like, and the underpinning assumptions of what can be processed each month to assess progress against. **ACTION FOR POL – Provide BEIS with a forward look and flow of claims, how they will move through the process, how many could be assessed each month etc.**
- CC asked AW for his reflections and noted the high quality MI pack. AW understood entirely the ambition to get to 50% by end of the year but stated that it looks challenging - 700 cases in just over two months with holidays and Xmas. AW flagged a number of blockers including: 150 cases on hold pending decisions on de minimis; issues on aged balances; issues with the Official Receiver; and the level of investigation needs to be resolved – AW stated that these need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- AW flagged the three pinch points for progressing claims in his view are: i) POL investigations; ii) HSF Belfast claim assessment (AW noted they are building up the team and looking at process efficiencies); and Panel capacity esp. re QC's which is an issue until October.
- AW noted that POL is appointing a 4<sup>th</sup> QC, and that the issues raised by the CL test cases have really slowed down progress. AW said if you want to reach the target POL should focus on getting SFO cases resolved asap, and identify some cases that could go through a de minimis process or something similar. Not going to be easy but HSF/POL are working hard to meet these goals.
- BF confirmed a number of actions in response to AW's points above: POL investigations paper going to HRC next week and JA has team on track to deliver; aged balances decision expected next week and Official Receiver issue hoping to be resolved within next two weeks.
- CC thanked BF and AW for the updates and appreciated the effort all teams were undertaking to progress the HSS. He asked what can BEIS do to help? Could wider HMG secondees be brought in for example? POL to consider.
- TC flagged a note of real cautions on legal costs. He noted that he understands what POL says w.r.t focusing on delivery but from a UKGI/BEIS perspective costs have been out of control in past 12 months, which needs to be resolved, and that it is not acceptable to meet targets at the current cost tracking. BF completely agreed, and clarified that POL understood the cost challenge and is trying to strike the right balance.
- On financial exposure, TC requested that POL provide a waterfall that shows movements as financial costs evolve. Need to reference this back to the £153m provision. **ACTION FOR POL.**
- On governance, TC noted that officials are working on the criteria for standard cases that POL should seek to consult / seek approval on. TC noted that it would be preferable for the POL Board and SteerCo to look at the same cases. JS confirmed that UKGI has shared criteria for discussion and waiting on response [**NB – this has now been received and agreed at working level between POL and BEIS/UKGI**]
- In terms of POL's governance, TC asked how is the HM committee shaping up? BF responded noting that executive sponsorship will move from the CEO to BF from today; the committee will be reinstated and now POL need to operationalise the HRC ToRs. Hoping this all gets finalised in the next two weeks.
- CC noted that he was reassured by the actions being taken by BF, and that he is looking at the areas of concern flagged by SteerCo.

**Next Steps**

- CC closed the meeting, noted the various actions to be undertaken as above and thanked attendees.

END

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