

## **Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission Board**

### **Summary Minutes of the Commission Board Meeting 19 December 2008**

#### **Members:**

Janet Paraskeva – Chair  
Deborah Absalom  
Rosemary Carter  
Stephen Geraghty  
Bill Griffiths  
Alan Hardy  
Heather Jackson  
Susan Park  
Maeve Sherlock  
Keith Woodhouse

#### **Also attending for Item 1**

Richard Arthur. Outgoing Chair,  
CSA Board  
Bryan Foss Non-Executive  
Member, CSA Board

#### **Apologies for Item 1**

Sue Jillings  
Peter Holden  
Non-Executive CSA Board Members

Paul Wright – Commission lawyer  
Brenda White – Board Secretariat

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the Commission's London Office and extended a welcome to Richard Arthur, outgoing Chair of the CSA Board and Bryan Foss a member of the CSA Board who joined the meeting to facilitate the smooth transfer of information between the former CSA Board and the new Commission Board.
- 1.2 The Handover Report prepared by the CSA Board for the Senior Accountable Officer for CSA was agreed by all present to be a helpful document with useful recommendations from the CSA Non-Executive Committee. The CSA Board Chair recognised the improvements made within CSA including the achievement of key targets and acknowledged the role played by strong leadership. CSA Board members were pleased to see members of that leadership team now leading the Commission.
- 1.3 The Commissioner expressed his thanks to the CSA Board who had worked very well as a team appointed to advise the Chief Executive on running the CSA. The Commission Board has a different role which includes setting policy and strategy and will concentrate on building the future scheme whilst keeping service levels high and learning from mistakes.
- 1.4 The Chair expressed thanks to Richard Arthur and Bryan Foss for attending and to all CSA Board member colleagues for the information and support provided.

## **2. Minutes and Matters Arising from 25 November Meeting**

- 2.1 The minutes were agreed as a full and correct record of the November meeting.
- 2.2 There were no matters arising.

## **3. The Commissioner's Report**

A detailed report covering key business issues was issued in advance of the meeting; the main discussion points included:

### **Welfare Reform Bill**

- 3.1 The Government's welfare reform white paper *Raising Expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future* was published on 6 December. It confirmed the intention to introduce a full child maintenance disregard to all income related benefits from 2010. It also proposed to extend the time bar for Commission-led prosecutions for information offences from six months to twelve and a power to enable the Commission to make an administrative order to disqualify a non-resident parent from holding a passport where they wilfully refuse to maintain their children.
- 3.2 The Joint Registration of Births proposal included in the white paper is not something that the Commission has proposed although it is often linked to Commission Business.

### **Commission Business Performance**

#### **CSA Performance**

- 3.3 The Commissioner remains confident about achieving end year targets although performance data this month shows a fall back. There is a fall back against trends at this time each year on the children benefiting caused by removal of 16-19 year olds leaving full-time education. The Board discussed whether the planned raising of the school leaving age would have an impact. Child Support legislation includes in its definition of a qualifying child those over 16 but below age 19 in full time education, so it should not have an impact. The legislation for the future scheme raises the age to 20 in line with child benefit legislation.
- 3.4 Uncleared applications are reducing and the target to achieve £1,080m for maintenance collected and arranged is on track. This year the Commission is collecting far more money overall.

## **Child Maintenance Options**

- 3.5 Referrals from Jobcentre Plus to Child Maintenance Options have increased. Child Maintenance Options agents are referring direct to CSA those callers who wish to apply for statutory maintenance.

## **Financial Management**

- 3.6 The Commission remains in budget.

## **Recruitment and Organisation Update**

- 3.7 Activity to populate the Commission's Organisation Structure is progressing well. Formal interviews for phase 1 begin mid-January with the selection process completing for most roles in mid to late February.

## **Communications Update**

- 3.8 A review of the Child Maintenance Options leaflets has been completed with a target audience of CSA and non-CSA customers across the UK.

## **4 Update from the Audit Sub-Committee**

- 4.1 The Audit Sub-Committee met for the first time on 3 December. The Committee's role is to provide independent oversight of the Commission's control processes (especially financial control); risk management; security and corporate governance.
- 4.2 The Committee agreed to retain the services of the DWP internal auditors, Risk Assurance Division (RAD) for the 2009-10 year.

## **5 Targets**

- 5.1 A paper presented to the Board provided background information covering the target setting process from 2005 to date and reported that target achievement is on track for this year.

## **6 Measurement and Evaluation**

- 6.1 The Board discussed the measurement, data, analysis and research required to assess the progress towards:
- a) Meeting the Commission's statutory objectives
  - b) Successfully fulfilling the Commission's core functions
- 6.2. Evaluation and measurement activity is designed to provide both an assessment of long term strategic performance and management information to allow short term assessment of activities and projects.

- 6.3 Currently, performance data is assured in accordance with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) protocols and published quarterly. Once published this data is used widely and can be referenced publicly.
- 6.4 There are currently measures for how CSA meets its statutory objective but measuring the service from a customer's point of view is less tangible and will rely more on evaluation and research.

## **7. Spring Regulations**

A range of measures were discussed and will be put to Ministers for consideration.

## **8. AOB**

- 8.1 The next meeting of the Board will be on Tuesday 20 January.