

Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission Board

Summary Minutes of the Commission Board Meeting 20 January 2009

Members:

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

Paul Wright – Commission lawyer
Brenda White – Board Secretariat

Apologies:

None

1 Minutes and Matters Arising from 19 December Meeting

1.1 Minutes

- 1.1.1 Amendments were taken to paragraphs 3.5, 4.3 and 5.5 of the minutes of the November Board meeting.
- 1.1.2 Amendment was taken to para 3.3 of the summary minutes.

1.2 There were no matters arising.

1.3 Action Points

- 1.3.1. Summary minutes from Commission Board meetings to be published on the internet.

2 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

- 2.1 The Commissioner reported that the Government's Welfare Reform Bill, based on the proposals in the White Paper 'Raising Expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future' had its first reading

in Parliament on 7 January. The Bill also contains powers allowing the Commission to run a pilot programme to test the effectiveness of the administrative withdrawal of driving licences as a compliance measure, and to introduce this as a new enforcement tool if the pilot is successful.

Establishing the Commission – Recruitment and Organisation update

- 2.2 Interviewing for the Customer and Commissioning Director will take place in February. The CSA Finance, Performance and Assurance Director and Director of Planning and Implementation have been appointed and other recruitment activity is going to plan.

Financial Management

- 2.3 The Commissioner reported that overall the Commission remains in budget.
- 2.4 The corporate costs of services provided to the Commission by the Department for Work and Pensions are still under negotiation.

Commission Business Performance

Child Maintenance Options

- 2.5 The increased level of referrals received from Jobcentre Plus during November dropped in December but referral numbers rose again in January.
- 2.6 Refined quality targets are in place and current activity at the call centre is aimed at achieving targets set by the end of January 2009.
- 2.7 The Commissioner and Chair visited the call centre on 9 January and met with stakeholder representatives from a number of organisations. Stakeholders were very supportive of the new service and suggested some changes to information recording.

CSA Performance

- 2.8 Performance in December followed the pattern of October and November with a decline in the number of children benefiting and maintenance outcomes. Underlying this trend is the impact of S6 repeal and seasonal movement. Overall the Commissioner expects to achieve year end targets with the exception of arrears collected but overall collections should be achieved.
- 2.9 Following the repeal of Section 6, applications intake for December 2008 was 5,300 compared to 7,300 in November which was an expected seasonal dip.

Communications

- 2.10 The next Quarterly Statistical Summary is due to be published 28 January 2009. This first statistical release to be published since the handover of the CSA to the Commission will be published on the Commission website and includes the first set of data since the repeal of Section 6 i.e. Parents with care are no longer forced to use the CSA.

3 Corporate Planning

- 3.1 Board members ratified the broad outline of the Corporate Plan and agreed that the short term focus for communications and support should be addressed towards meeting the needs of those flowing in to the separating/ separated families client group.
- 3.2 The timeline for publication and clearance was approved.

4 Future Scheme timeline and IT update

- 4.1 The procurement of the Future Scheme IT is going to plan. Recommendations on the three suppliers remaining in contention for the contract will be put to Change Board at the end of January for discussion and report back to the next full Board.

5 Communications Strategy

- 5.1 The paper presented to the Board outlined a proposed communications strategy to support the Commission's vision 'Supporting separated families; securing children's futures' and strategic business objective 'to maximise effective maintenance arrangements'.
- 5.2 The first priority for the Commission is to support into effective arrangements the 300,000 families a year who are newly separating. This focus is consistent with the decision made by the Board and set out earlier.
- 5.3 The Communications Objectives were discussed by the Board who agreed that for separated parents (in all cases both parents with care and non-resident parents) the objectives are to:
- 5.3.1 Improve attitudes and behaviour amongst separated parents on sharing financial responsibility for their children;
 - 5.3.2 Ensure that there is an understanding amongst parents of the range of options for arranging child maintenance;
 - 5.2.3 Build awareness and usage of Child Maintenance Options amongst separated parents as a highly effective service;
 - 5.3.4 Promote understanding of the effectiveness of the statutory maintenance service;

- 5.3.5 Inform and shape a range of services which meet the needs of separated parents (priority groups);
- 5.3.6 Launch service improvements aimed at encouraging separated parents to take action to arrange maintenance;
- 5.3.7 The Commission will also seek to demonstrate its overall effectiveness amongst stakeholder opinion leaders as an organisation that is delivering the Governments child maintenance reforms successfully.

6 Targets

- 6.1 A paper with proposed measures for the statutory maintenance service for the 2009/10 year was presented to the Board.
- 6.2 The Commissioner explained to the Board that the target proposals have been modelled against the scenarios forecast by the Department for Work and Pensions and expressed confidence that proposed targets are achievable.

7 AOB

- 7.1 The next meeting of the Board will be on 24 February.