

Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission Board

Summary Minutes of the Commission Board Meeting 20 October 2009

Members:

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

Also attending

Bill Hearn (Item 4)
Jenny Stewart (Item 5)

Paul Wright - Commission Lawyer
Maria Jobson - Board Secretariat

Apologies:

Keith Woodhouse

1 Minutes and Matters Arising from 22 September meeting

1.1 Minutes

- 1.1.1 Subject to amendments the minutes of the 22 September meeting were agreed. The Board asked that the minutes now record less detail and reflect more on what is discussed at the meetings.

1.2 There were no matters arising.

2 The Commissioner's Report

The report provided a detailed summary of progress and developments in Key areas of the Commission since the Board last received an update on 22 September. Key points for the Board to note were highlighted as:

Child Benefit and definition of a Qualifying Child

- 2.1 The Board were updated on the paper that had been distributed prior to the October Board meeting. Dependant on parliamentary protocol the amendment to legislation would come into force in early November.

Introducing Regulations

- 2.2 It is planned to introduce regulations to allow us to offset the liabilities of clients where each client, either because of changes of care arrangements or because of split care, is required to pay maintenance to the other through the CSA. These regulations will come into force at the

end of January 2010, at the same time as regulations to allow recovery from deceased NRPs' estates. A summary of responses to the public consultation on the regulations has been drafted and it is proposed, subject to ministerial agreement, to publish it at the end of October.

Ombudsman

- 2.3 The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman has recommended the Agency pay a complainant a higher than average amount, as a consolatory payment for maladministration and distress caused and will be highlighting the case when they publish their report.

Commission Businesses

Child Maintenance Options

- 2.4 The Child Maintenance Options Service test Marketing Campaign in the Midlands has now ended. There have been record levels of inbound calls and website visits. Calls increased by 56% and website visits increased by 103%.
- 2.5 Child Maintenance Options have updated their understanding of the estimated number of children helped where one or other parent has used the Child Maintenance Options service. A proportion of Options customers, who used the service between August 2008 and May 2009, were contacted to ascertain whether they put in place an arrangement following contact with Child Maintenance Options. Following this, a further internal survey was conducted of those customers responding to the marketing campaign, so that the Commission can understand any differences in characteristics, behaviours and outcomes. This has now been completed and the findings will be reported to the Board in November.

CSA

Business Performance

- 2.6 Performance of the CSA continues to show steady improvement against targets.

Future Scheme Commissioning

- 2.7 In September the Board agreed the Commissioning Strategy and noted the selection process for, and the list of suppliers involved. The Bidder Briefing day for the short listed suppliers was held on the 8th October.
- 2.8 All organisations bidding will be asked to complete their Invitation to Tender documents by 16th November.

Media Update

- 2.9 The Commission Press Office has completed its first year of operation by recording good progress in improving media perceptions of the CSA,

maintaining the favourable reputation of the Commission and increasing recognition of the Child Maintenance Options service. The emphasis of proactive media relations work is now shifting towards national promotion of Child Maintenance Options and parental financial responsibility. Regional publicity of CSA enforcement will continue.

3 Current Scheme - Transition Strategy: (a) Communications and the Client Journey; (b) Arrears Strategy and the Residuary Arrears Service

- 3.1 The purpose of this paper was to set out the current planning assumptions for the period of transition, when CSA clients will be invited to consider their child maintenance options, and if appropriate make applications to the future scheme, while their current scheme cases close with the Agency.

Case Transition: Client Journey and Support

- 3.2 In March the Board endorsed the Transition strategy. The Board were taken through the communication approach and the campaign to support transition. The Board highlighted that the mode of delivering the messages is critical to success of the transition process.

Arrears Strategy and the Residuary Arrears Service

- 3.3 The March Board considered the collectability of the arrears of maintenance at transition and were updated on the current position.
- 3.4 Current plans show that during 2011 a Residuary Service will take over the management of arrears on cases that have been brought up to date and closed by the CSA as part of the transition process.

4 Future Scheme Programme Update

- 4.1 The Board heard that new detailed plans are being developed and current activity is progressing well.

5 Update from the Audit Committee

- 5.1 The Chair of the Audit Committee updated the Board on the recent activity of the Audit Committee. The next Audit Committee is in November and an update will be given at the December Board.

6 Any Other Business

- 6.1 The Board discussed the November and December Board Agendas. The December Board will have an earlier start.
- 6.2 The next meeting of the Board will take place on 24 November.