

Meeting Title:	Citizens Advice – Trading Standards Working Group
Date:	Thursday 3 rd November 2016
Time:	10:30 – 13:30
Location:	200 Aldersgate London
Attendees	<p>Citizens Advice: Jon Walters (JW) Karen Wilkinson (KW), Allison Dunstan (AD), Michele Shambrook (MS) Mel McGinn, Beth Yamamoto Stewart Gibson CAS, Sophia McGuigan CAS, Leanne Dullard (Agilisys) Carol Rice (BEIS) Gina Green, Bucks and Surrey TSS (Trading Standards South East), Rebecca Webb - Kent TSS, Pam Wood - Lancashire TSS, Simon Sumner - Staffordshire TSS (rep CEnTSA), Tracey Johnson - Gateshead TSS (rep NETSA), Stewart Gibson (CAS), Sue Bunney - Essex TSS, Georgina Heath - Lincolnshire TSS, Ken Daly (National coordinator- Scotland), Liz Smeed, Camden TSS, (LOTSAs), Dai Jones, TSS Wales (rep WHOTS),</p>
Apologies	<p>Ivan Hancock - Dorset TSS (rep SWERCOTS and ACTSO), Pamela Stewart - (CAD), Leah Shaw - Norfolk TSS (EETSA), Kim Stephens, Andrew O’Connell, Scottish Gov, Kate Davies, Oxfordshire TSS, Angela Currie - East Riding TSS,</p>

UPDATE AND ACTIONS FROM THIS MEETING

1. Welcome and introductions

Jon Walters (JW) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone introduced themselves.

2. Outstanding actions carried forward from previous meetings

All actions completed

3. Consumer Education update including an update from the Campaigns team
See Consumer Education slide presentation attached, which Mel McGinn presented.

Beth Knight-Yamamoto from the Campaigns team - attended the meeting and went through an update on the recent and forthcoming work of the campaigns team – National Consumer week.

Adviser magazine discussed and copies made available at the meeting.

National Consumer Week (NCW)

Agreed to start on the 28th November which is Cyber Monday. The focus will be on electronic goods/redress and will include general advice and safety. The title is “Being Switched On”

Educational resource and materials available on request from CitA. Materials available include:

A concertina leaflet which includes top tips and will be useful for TSS and there are also posters, social media and briefing packs.

Consumer Education resources include a number of activities to be used with service users/ clients/ students etc. These incorporate messages from CTSI, TSS, RMA, NTS Ports and Borders as well as information from the CITA research.

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/campaigns/current_campaigns/switched-on/

Beth reported ongoing issues with the Citizens Advice webpage development which is delaying the changes to the format of the pages and also new content being added. Beth is hoping it will be resolved before NCW or materials will only be

available to access on the campaigns page.

Smart meter resources were used as part of a campaign at the beginning of the year but now available across the consumer network, on request at the moment until web issues are resolved. Beth also mentioned her team is working on Online markets, a subject being developed with the Campaigns Wales team in Cardiff. Beth also went on to mention that there is development of the Digital Money Coach, consumer section too.

Carol Rice added that there was an NCW event happening on the 29th Nov. Beth added it is envisaged that the attendees to this event will follow the client pathway.

The event is being held in Parliament on the 29th of November with the Minister for Consumers, Margot James

The minister is very keen on supporting this event and is due to attend.

Chris Fay from the Chartered Trading Standards Institute also has some materials for National Consumer Week and can be contacted.

<http://www.tradingstandards.uk/events/NationalConsumerWeek2016.cfm>

Karen W added that various comms had been sent to the centres to cover NCW so the advisors are briefed in advance.

Carol Rice asked if CEP's are working on NCW? Mel McGinn answered CEP's are keen to work with TSS and attend any regional events and they have a toolkit available.

Jon asked the group if there was any regional events happening?

Liz Smeed mentioned that the Consumer Empowerment Alliance have resources available, there is a cost involved to register with them, but they produce lots of materials

Camden TSS have a Campaign "Know your rights" running Nov through to March.

Georgina Heath asked if there was a link available for resource – Mel will send out the link to Ops and this will be distributed

Action: NCW Resource link to be distributed to the TSWG to be supplied by Mel McGinn

Discussion took place regarding events and Carol Rice made the point that this is a collaborative event.

Dia Jones – Funding for Consumer education in the Landscape review passed to CitA – so Wales and Regional TSS's look to Citizens Advice for materials and resources. This was acknowledged.

Mel McGinn - if any TSS wanted to write an article for the “Advisor” Magazine this would be very welcomed.

Also we would welcome any feedback on NCW resources, materials, support etc so that we can put right anything that has not gone so well or not been provided.

4. Performance and operations update (JW) and (MS)

See slide presentation attached, presented by JW.

The service is entering the transition phase, as the move from the current supplier in England and Wales to the Citizens Advice network commences.

JW explained that there have been a number of challenges to performance since the previous meeting.

Volumes of contacts to the service have been well in excess of forecasted demand - approx. 109%.

While service levels within the service have been impacted by these areas, answer rates and other performance areas, such as quality, client satisfaction, all remain above targeted levels.

Contingency arrangements are in place to support performance and a number of processes and initiatives have been enacted to support performance of the centres.

JW asked Leanne Dullard to explain to the group, the process in which the staff/advisors have been informed and consulted about the contract coming to an end in March 2017. Leanne explained that the key messages were cascaded at the same time to each centre and support has been arranged for staff for the consultation process and retention bonuses have been offered to retain staff.

JW confirmed that BEIS/Carol has been kept fully informed of all actions.

JW went on to discuss the performance figures for Sept (see attached presentation)

Tracey Johnson - noted that her service had seen a couple of complaints from consumers who have had to wait for their calls to be answered and have given up holding. JW acknowledged that the wait times are higher than Citizens Advice

would like usual but were averaging 2 mins which compares favourably with other helplines.

Karen – we have not seen any significant rises in complaints and none recent upturn in complaints relating to calls being abandoned or clients being unable to contact the service through increased wait times.

Carol – What are the complaint levels like?

Karen explained that the centres would deal with initial first stage complaints and that Ops deal with escalated complaints. Leanne added that on average the centres would deal with 30 complaints a month and to put that in perspective on average the service would answer and advise approx. 80,000 clients a month. Karen added escalated complaints are on average 10 complaints a month.

It was then discussed within the group whether it would be a good idea to add complaint figures to the dashboard.

Carol Rice – Have the abandonment rates seen a rise?

JW – yes there has been a rise in abandonment rates – and Jon went through the figures on the presentation and explained that we do have contingency plans in place to ensure client journeys are still good.

We want to recognise urgent calls and to answer these as priority e.g. vulnerable and criminal cases and there are a number of options we can take which will be covered off later on.

Tracey Johnson – we have looked at recent call volumes and have noticed a drop and asked could this be because of clients abandoning if abandonment rates increasing.

Liz Smeed added that her service had also noticed this.

Michele S answered although we are busier than we are normally and this is shown on the above average on forecasted volumes, quite a few of these calls can be caused by clients calling back.

Michele remains confident that clients are receiving the advice they need.

CAD Update

Stewart Gibson began by reiterating that the consumer service is a GB wide service

CAD currently takes 15% of the volume of calls across the service and they have experienced the same increase in call volumes as Agilisys have in England and

Wales.

CAD has stabilised and is currently performing to KPI's.

Scotland has its own challenges, but not the same challenges as seen by Agilisys.

Client Satisfaction

The most recent qualitative survey was completed in August and September, surveying 1,859 clients in total

Overall satisfaction has marginally increased, to 84% of respondents being satisfied or very satisfied overall

Survey results, and after call survey data, will be monitored closely during the transition phase to inform contingency planning and client journey evaluation

In addition BEIS carried out an evaluation of the consumer service which looked at the value for money the service provides and the key drivers for its use, earlier this year. A report was produced that reflected favourably on the service and BEIS also ran a survey around client satisfaction earlier in the year.

Carol mentioned that the intention was not to publish the results, although the results were very favourable but she Carol may be able to pull together the top level highlights in the form of bullet points to share with the group.

Michele – The report showed that the clients are receiving the support they require and need.

The purpose of sharing this is to endorse what has been said today and also to reassure the group that we are keeping a very close eye on performance.

There are always periods of uncertainty and challenges, but we want to protect the service.

It has always been Citizens Advice intention to bring the consumer service in-house and have the network deliver the service and Michele wanted to take this opportunity to say thanks to Leanne and her teams at Agilisys for all their hard work and support delivering the service for us.

We know how vital the service is to TSS and to our partners, from client satisfaction to gathering intelligence.

Client satisfaction and quality remain good; BEIS have standards that we have to adhere and to deliver to and I am sure that they will be watching us carefully.

Michele added that she would be very happy to attend the group meeting again if required to do so.

JW - The dashboard figures will be released soon, although they will be in a different format than previously and will be included in the updates we send.

Not releasing the last month's dashboard figures was due to us adapting the format of the dashboard to enable us to release to the group while we are going into transition. The dashboard is likely to be included in any updates released. It's a good idea to add complaints to the dashboard.

Action: To look at adding complaint figures to the dashboard.

Referrals are at an all-time high.

A referral Improvement project was led by Karen W who took the group through recent performance levels and acknowledged that since the start of the project, referrals levels performance has increased by 10%

Tracey Johnson – Yes there has been an increase in referrals, but had reports from her area that lots of these cases had caused problems as quite a few referrals were sent when they should not have been, with a commitment to contact.

This was discussed and Tracey was asked to send Ops feedback on specific cases when this sort of thing happens again so the issues can be identified and action taken.

Karen reassured the group that in discussions with the suppliers when we monitor referrals and improvement rates, that there was no point in driving referral rates so high and sending through poor quality or inaccurate referrals. Karen emphasised that we do not want or intend this to happen as its time wasting for all concerned. However, as an aside to this, we have always advised the advisors if in doubt send it rather than miss a case.

Michele – Requested that referral data be broken down by region and analysed and then to be distributed to the group.

Michele added just before she left the meeting that she is excited at working together in relation to the new model, building new relationships and continuing to d

deliver a high standard service. Thanks to ACTSO as they assisted us with sitting on the selection panel and assessing in the bidding process.

Michele then asked the group to make contact with anyone within the ops team if they had any concerns or feedback or if they felt that they needed assistance; we need to work together.

Website Volumes:

September saw a slight decline in the total number of page views and users accessing consumer content on the Citizens Advice website

Nonetheless overall the trend across the year to date is relatively stable

Reporting issues to Trading Standards and contact information for the consumer

service continue to be the most visited pages, with varying trends on each page in the last period.

5. Transition (JW)

See slide presentation attached, presented by JW.

Citizens Advice continue to assess applications for the consumer service from the network

Following scoring of the written applications we are now in the process of inviting those that have progressed to presentation sessions, and then site visits for a proportion of these.

A big thank you goes out to Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers, who has been represented on presentation panels, Gareth Walters (Monmouthshire TSS) and Deana Perchard, (Halton TSS). Deana has provided some thoughts on the process and her experience in the attached presentation.

Once the process concludes communications will be issued in relation to the identity of the new Delivery Centres.

JW – today I can say that the two Larger Lots Delivery centres have been decided:

Manchester

Gateshead in partnership with Sheffield

From January, additional advisers will be trained using the existing materials and assessment methods

During this time, the implementation team will work closely with each of the new

delivery centres to ensure they are operationally ready to deliver

New centres will go-live in a phased approach from February onwards

Agilisys will continue to deliver the service through to July 2017, to provide resilience and assist in a smooth transition

Post July 2017 the service will be delivered exclusively by the Citizens Advice network.

If you need to make contact with the transition team over any concerns or question you may have - Email at:

consumer.transition@citizensadvice.org.uk

6. Consumer Codes project

See slide presentation attached, presented by JW.

Changes to the consumer service case management system (Flare) went live on Monday 3rd October. Advisers can now select from the new code families and record additional information against cases:

Detriment type and detriment value

Suspected scam / Not suspected scam

Additional complaint type

Additional trader (this could be recorded previously but the data wasn't sent to partners).

Unforeseen technical consequences of the changes being replicated on historic data resulted in some delays to referrals and notifications on Monday 3rd October. Apologies for this.

There were some general queries about the nature of the changes but the main problem related to TS using the Idox Uniform system. Development to their connectors was delayed and there was a lack of communication to their customers about the scheduling of changes. This meant that referrals or notifications containing new data did not import into their system

An announcement has now gone onto the Uniform customer area with details of how to update their connectors.

Portal reports have been updated to reflect the code changes to complaints codes and goods and services codes and comms are due to be sent out very soon on this.

A discussion took place around how TSS would practically use the detriment data.

Simon Sumner stated that they intended to use it as an additional tool to look at which businesses to focus TSS activity on. Dai Jones agreed with this as did the room after further discussion.

Georgina Heath asked if the guidance created to assist the contact centre advisers on the new codes could be circulated to attendees and also put on the partner pages too. TSS will cascade to the relevant TSS officers for info. JW stated the thought that this is currently on the partner pages but we would check and circulate to be thorough.

Action: AD to circulate the guidance on codes for advisers to TSWG attendees and check if is on the partner pages.

JW promoted the partner pages at the close of this discussion on codes and

commended that the group have a look as they have been revamped and contain a lot more content now that previously.

7. ADR Workshop

It has been discussed previously at this group that it would be beneficial to hold a session on ADR.

JW explained that three representatives from ADR schemes we work closely with are joining us, to bring their own perspectives and answer questions.

The group split into sub groups and the speakers rotated, having around 15 minutes with each sub group for questions and answers.

Today's speakers:

Debbie Enever: Head of External Relations (Government, Regulator and Media) - Financial Ombudsman Service

Kevin Grix: Chief Executive and Chief Ombudsman at the Furniture Ombudsman and Dispute Resolution Ombudsman

Holly McAllister: Head of Customer Service and Quality - Motor Codes

These sessions were well received by the group and literature was handed out.

8. AOB

Tracey Johnson asked about the marketing of the tel number for the consumer service after transition?

JW answered there will be scope for promoting the number but unsure on what will happen yet.

The next meeting dates given out room 1 booked for next year also – dates provided

Next meeting room 1 Aldersgate, this was booked for 18th Jan 2017 but this is going to change to the Thursday 26th Jan 2017 in room 1.

JW closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

JW closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Summary of Actions from today's meeting:

No	Action	Owner
1	Action: Resource link to be distributed to the TSWG to be supplied by Mel McGinn	MM/AD
2	Action: To look at adding complaint figures to the dashboard.	JW/KW
3	Action: AD to circulate the guidance on codes for advisers to TSWG attendees and check if is on the partner pages.	AD