

Intake Team Operations Manual

Version Control

Date	Version	Details
16 October 2013	1.0	Drafted by Jonathan Buckley
13 February 2014	2.0	Added quality monitoring and CQC guidance.
15 May 2014	3.0	Amended wrap up reasons, CAU's, sickness absence and part time staff and public holiday entitlements
15 May 2015	4.0	General wording review; added flexible working, removed statement or reasons review, removed scanning, amended call flowchart; removed external hyperlinks
15 July 2016	5.0	General wording review; amended language regarding new phone system, added Administration Assistant Role and duties, added joint working instructions, moved quality definitions to Q&S manual
4 November 2016	5.1	Added section 5 regarding 'escalations' and 'managing individual behaviour'. Added section 4.2 regarding 'sending material'

Contents

Introduction	5
1 Managing Workflow	5
1.1 Case Ownership	5
2 Handling Telephone Calls	6
2.1 Queuemetrics	6
3 Handling Electronic Contacts	7
3.1 Distribution and recording of electronic contacts	7
4 Handling Written Correspondence	9
4.1 Distribution and recording of written correspondence	9
4.2 Sending material from Intake	10
4.3 New complaints received outside of Intake process	10
5 Managing Difficult Situations	11
5.1 Escalations	11
5.2 Managing Individual Behaviours	11
6 ECHO	12
6.1 The 'Reason for contacting the LGO'	12
6.2 Notes and Analysis	12
6.3 Naming of documents	13
6.4 Linking/Relating Cases	13
6.5 'Child Involved' Button	13
6.6 Signposting	14
6.7 CQC Referrals	14
6.8 Joint Working Transfers	14
7 Quality Monitoring	15
8 Managing Resource/Absence	15
8.1 Shift Rota	15
8.2 Breaks	16

8.3 Flexible Working.....	16
8.4 Leave Guidance	18
8.5 Sickness Absence	19
9 Communication	20
9.1 Daily Communication	20
9.2 Team Meetings.....	20
10 Information Security	20
10.1 Overnight Processes	21
10.2 Call Recordings	21
Appendix.....	22
1 Workflow.....	22
2 Queuemetrics - Work Status	24
3 Call Outcomes.....	25

Introduction

This document is complimentary to the Intake Manual. Whereas the Intake Manual provides the public with an overview of Intake decision making, this document also provides details of operational procedures within Intake.

Its purpose is to provide more detailed insight into to the distribution and handling of complaints within the Intake Team as well as guidance on specific Intake practices.

1 Managing Workflow

The Intake Team Leaders (ITLs) are responsible for the flow of the work to the Advisers.

There is a daily requirement to allocate the administrative tasks (i.e. written and online complaints). Advisers are, wherever possible, assigned these responsibilities in advance and on a rotational basis.

The administrative rota is published alongside the Intake Team's shift rota. Three Advisers will be placed in the 'admin group'. There will also be a reserve in case of Adviser absence. The rota is subject to change depending on Adviser availability and contact volumes.

The focus for the remaining Advisers is to answer the phones, although the admin group will also be expected to handle overflow phone calls.

The admin group is usually the responsibility of the ITL who is on the earlier shift pattern.

The ITLs manage the progression of the work and are accountable for ensuring that this work is completed within the agreed service standards/arrangements. They will respond to fluctuations in volumes as they see fit and will decide on how best to allocate resources in order to optimise performance.

In order to achieve this, particularly during busy periods, it is also expected that the ITL will do a proportion of both the administration and the phone work. The type and volume of their work is discretionary but at the very least they are expected to make decisive interventions in order to support the Advisers and maximise performance.

1.1 Case Ownership

Advisers do not have their own caseload. When an Adviser creates a case in ECHO the case ownership is automatically assigned to that Adviser. However, the Adviser is not expected to deal with any subsequent calls or correspondence. Advisers will ensure that comprehensive notes are recorded in 'Notes and Analysis'.

It is expected that the recipient of any additional communication will take the case and deal with it appropriately.

There is no requirement for Advisers to amend case ownership at any stage.

2 Handling Telephone Calls

2.1 Queuemetrics

Queuemetrics is Intake's call management system. It controls the queues and the flow of calls to the team and all transactions are dealt with via this software. The following sections provide an overview of how the Intake Team manages the calls they receive.

2.1.1 Call Queues

Queuemetrics is configured with two call queues. These are called 'Intake LGO' and 'Intake LGO Admin'. Advisers will need to routinely use Queuemetrics to place themselves into the correct queue(s).

Advisers with primary responsibility for phone duties must make themselves available in *both* queues using Queuemetrics.

Admin group staff will make themselves available in the 'Intake LGO Admin' queue only. Calls will initially arrive in the 'Intake LGO' queue and will search for an available Adviser. If the call remains unanswered after 40 seconds it will then overflow into the 'Intake LGO Admin' queue and will search for all available Advisers.

This overflow arrangement allows the admin group the opportunity to complete their admin tasks but still gives us the opportunity to answer calls within the target 60 seconds.

See also:

- [Intake Manual](#)

2.1.2 Adviser Status

Advisers are required to log in to Queuemetrics in time for the beginning of their shift. An Adviser will make them select the 'available' status. This should be their primary work status throughout their shift.

If an Adviser needs to make themselves unavailable, such as for training or taking a break, then they must select the proper work status in Queuemetrics.

See also:

- [Appendix 2 - Table of work statuses](#)

2.1.3 Call Outcomes

At the end of each call, Advisers will need to enter an 'outcome' on screen and this is done via their call outcomes lists in Queuemetrics. An Adviser must select the appropriate outcome which best explains the reason for the last call.

Advisers should only choose one outcome reason per call. This is essential because the outcomes allow the creation of reports regarding the proportions of the types of calls received.

See also:

- [Appendix 3 - List of Outcomes](#)

2.1.4 Call Recording

Queuemetrics records all calls to and from Intake. Calls are retained in Queuemetrics for 6 months and are deleted automatically.

See also:

- [Section 10 – Information Security](#)
- Information and Records Management [on staff intranet]

3 Handling Electronic Contacts

3.1 Distribution and recording of electronic contacts

Completed online web complaint forms arrive in the Intake outlook mailbox. Advisers in the admin group will accept and administer these complaints giving priority to dealing with the oldest first.

SMS call backs and joint working team transfers will also arrive in the Outlook mailbox. Again, the admin group will action these contacts with priority given to oldest first.

The ITL will regularly check the inbox and the progress of the admin group.

ITLs are responsible for recording the volume of online correspondence received and the associated outcomes.

At the end of the shift each Adviser will report the number and type of decisions to the ITL. This is recorded on the online complaints spreadsheet to ensure the completion of work and for reporting purposes.

If both ITLs are absent, an Adviser will deputise.

3.1.1 Accepting Web Complaint Forms

The following is step by step guide to accepting web complaint forms. All web forms are received in the Intake Outlook Mailbox, and the following steps should be taken.

- No data should be transferred between cases unless we are certain that the person affected/representative are a named person on the original complaint. If there is any doubt, we must not transfer the data until we have clarified with the person making the complaint. All discussions should be recorded in Notes and Analysis.
- Forward the web form to the ECHO email address, this can be done one at a time or in batches.
- In ECHO click on incoming forms and the web-forms are displayed as a list.
- Before the web form is accepted, a postcode search must be completed to check for previous or continuing complaints.
- To accept a form, select the tick boxes next to the forms and click accept. This will create a reference and a new tab for each form.

- The contact details will need to be checked and corrected so they are displayed in the correct format.
- The body in jurisdiction and date of complaint to the council are found in the complaints screen. This information will need to be transferred to the appropriate sections of case.
- Any information entered into the 'Reasonable Adjustments' section will need checking and correcting so that it is in the correct format.

Sometimes a customer may enter their reason for contacting the LGO in the 'special requirements' box. The Adviser will need to copy this into 'Notes and Analysis' and ensure that the 'special requirements' box only shows special requirements.

If a complaint is being referred to the BinJ as premature, then the reason for contacting LGO will pull through to the correct letters and the reasons should not be amended. The Adviser must ensure the letter to the BinJ states that the complaint has been received online and has not been amended.

If a web complaint is received that is the same as, similar to or related to a complaint that is already in ECHO, the following rules apply:

- If the old complaint was closed as 'insufficient info' any documents should be moved to the new ref and the original should be voided. Notes (including the old case reference) should be placed on the new ECHO record in order to explain the voiding of the case.
- For complaints that are closed as 'premature/advice given' a complaint form will need to be created in the new case. This complaint form will then contain the new complaint details and should be moved to the old case reference. The new reference should then be voided and appropriate action taken with the old reference.
- If the previous complaint has gone through to the teams a task should be set on the new case asking the previous investigator to review the case. The investigator will then decide if it is a new complaint and will advise accordingly.
- If a customer uses the web form to provide us with incidental correspondence then the documents should be moved to the old case reference and the new case reference should be voided.
- In all instances, we must check whether the customer has added any further information about reasonable adjustments. If they have entered information, then voiding the case will result in the loss of that data. Therefore, the adviser must ensure that information is entered into the reasonable adjustments section on the ongoing complaint

See also:

- [Appendix 1 - Workflow](#)

3.1.2 Recording/Reporting

ITLs will be responsible for recording the volume of online correspondence received and the associated outcomes.

The Advisers will communicate their outcomes to the ITL, who will then complete the online complaint spreadsheet.

4 Handling Written Correspondence

4.1 Distribution and recording of written correspondence

All correspondence sent to the LGO is received in the Coventry office. The Administration Assistant (AA) is the primary liaison for onsite post room staff.

ITLs receive all casework correspondence which they will distribute between the admin staff so that they can postcode check the work. The work is then split into ongoing intake, ongoing AT/IT and new complaints.

The new and ongoing Intake correspondence is distributed equally amongst the admin staff to be worked accordingly. Consideration is given to the proportion of work given to part time staff.

At the end of each shift the Advisers will then report the number and type decisions to the ITL. This is recorded on the written decisions spreadsheet to ensure completion of work and for reporting purposes.

4.1.1 The Role of the Administrative Assistant (AA)

The AA will be responsible for collecting post from building facilities. The AA will open all of the post and will separate casework and non casework correspondence.

Non casework correspondence will be forwarded to the appropriate party.

The AA will maintain a record of post received via recorded delivery. For each recorded item, the AA must ensure the delivery number is marked off against the details in the recorded delivery book.

The AA will deal with all the correspondence that relates to AT / IT ongoing cases.

The AA uses the high volume scanners to scan the documents and email them to ECHO. The AA will then attach each one to the relevant case records on ECHO. The documents will be renamed and placed into the Evidence/Investigation folder. A task will then be set for the case owner to alert them of the correspondence.

4.1.1.1 Postal Archives

All casework correspondence will be retained in the archive store in Coventry for 12 weeks before being destroyed.

Each day the AA will ensure that *all* correspondence is transferred to the archives. The documentation is stored in date stamp order.

For information security purposes there will be no access to the hard copy from the archive. If an investigator does require the hard copy, they must gain authority from their AO who will in turn inform the CSM and arrangements for forwarding will be made.

All casework correspondence must be sent by special delivery and a task set for the recipient to inform them that it has been dispatched.

If a mis-scan is identified, the investigator will task the AA who can access the archive and rescan accordingly.

See also:

- [Appendix 1 - Workflow](#)

4.2 Sending material from Intake

4.2.1 Distributing casework material

If there is a requirement to send hard copy, in all circumstances it must be sent by special delivery.

This includes from office to office and to home based workers.

The use of tasks in ECHO is also required to ensure that we can track when documentation is sent and received.

The sender must set a task on the case for the recipient. The task line should be amended to 'documents sent' and a note added if required. This will alert the recipient. The task must be completed upon receipt as a confirmation that correspondence has arrived.

The case history shows the setting and completing of tasks and therefore is indicative of our sending and receiving documentation.

If the correspondence does not arrive within a reasonable timeframe then the recipient can contact the sender who can then review the special delivery instructions

4.2.2 Distributing non-casework material

Items for the attention of HR comprise the majority of non-casework related items and can be sent second class in a pre addressed envelope marked for attention of HR

Other non-casework items should be sent directly using Royal Mail. Again in the pre addressed envelopes when sending between offices.

See also:

- Information and Records Management [on staff intranet]

4.3 New complaints received outside of Intake process

New complaints and resubmissions may arrive in the Assessment and Investigation Teams.

Below is a list of possible scenarios, if the Assessment or Investigation teams receive:

- A call direct to investigator because they had previously investigated a separate complaint.

The investigator will ask caller to contact Intake directly on 0300 061 0614.

- An email direct to investigator because they had previously investigated another complaint.

The email will be responded to asking the caller to contact Intake directly on 0300 061 0614 or to visit the website.

- New correspondence is attached to an ECHO record that it is considered to be a new premature complaint or a resubmission.

A task will be set on the current record for both the ITLs with an explanation of what is required, including identification of any documentation relating to the new complaint. The ITLs will either deal with the complaint or delegate accordingly.

- A new complaint that the investigator identifies needs to be raised and immediately allocated. The Team Coordinator will create the new case and arrange for allocation.

Team Coordinators will discuss anything out of the ordinary with the ITLs or the CSM.

5 Managing Difficult Situations

5.1 Escalations

An escalation is defined as an 'unresolved dispute between staff and callers which requires intervention by a line manager'.

The method of escalation to the manager can be a call transfer or a call back request depending on the circumstances.

Before escalation, the staff member must be confident that they have explored all avenues with the caller to try to satisfactorily resolve any issues.

If the caller immediately requests a manager i.e. without any prior discussion or reasoning, then the person will first offer to assist and try to resolve the situation before the call is escalated.

If part way through a call the caller specifically requests a manager, and the adviser is unable to resolve the situation, then the escalation must happen.

Escalations may need to be dealt with according to our CAU procedures. In addition, if it is deemed that there was no requirement to escalate then this will be fed back to the individual.

Prior instruction about managing a callers behaviour must also be adhered to.

See also:

- [Intake's Manual guidance on unacceptable/unreasonable conduct](#)
- Guidance on managing unreasonable complainant conduct [on staff intranet]

5.2 Managing Individual Behaviours

At times it is necessary for the LGO to take measures to ensure boundaries are in place for dealing with a particular person / scenario.

Intake line managers may also have to take separate decisions about managing behaviour. This may include restricting contact, tailoring messages or instructing staff to politely end calls.

Once a decision is taken, line managers will provide specific communication to the Intake Team at the earliest opportunity.

To ensure that a consistent approach, it is important that all staff adhere to the instruction.

At all times, the use of softer language is encouraged. Instead of saying 'I'm going to terminate the call' consider using language such as 'I'll have to bring the call to a close'

See also:

- Guidance on managing unreasonable complainant conduct [on staff intranet]

6 ECHO

Advisers are expected to create a new case in ECHO for all new enquiries. This includes, where possible, all signposting.

For any enquiry that cannot be captured on ECHO, for example where a caller is unwilling to provide the relevant information, then the Adviser must ensure that they select the correct Queuemetrics outcome reason. This is important because the outcome reports identify any shortfall in ECHO recording.

Any subsequent communication about an existing case will also be recorded and administered using ECHO. All actions on a case need to be recorded in notes and analysis.

6.1 The 'Reason for contacting the LGO'

Intake will not send complaints to Assessment without a 'reason for contacting the LGO'.

Wherever possible this should include:

- the fault that they believe the service provider has caused
- the injustice that they claim to have suffered as a direct result of that fault, and
- the remedy that they are looking for.

This should be recorded as a clear, brief summary of the complaint issues as expressed by the customer.

In all cases this reason will be recorded directly in the 'Initial Information' screen on ECHO.

Advisers are not expected to filter or refine complaints received via the online form.

Where the reason for contacting us is already clearly set out in any accompanying documents, an Adviser must insert a short summary of the issues complained about, whilst referencing the attached documents. This is essential because all other complaints data is deleted after a year.

6.2 Notes and Analysis

All notes are recorded in the 'Notes and Analysis' page on ECHO.

Every action taken by an Adviser must have an accompanying note. These notes must contain the date, the Adviser's initials and a concise explanation of the action taken about that case.

These notes are essential in order to help others understand the progression of the complaint.

Advisers must remember that copies of notes can always be requested and therefore the tone and content must be professional and relevant.

6.3 Naming of documents

All casework handlers are required to rename documents in ECHO. The document name must begin with the date in reverse order i.e. year/month/day and it must clearly explain the contents. For example - 16 06 01 Prem decision letter to PA, would refer to a premature decision letter sent to the person affected on 1st June 2016.

Complaint documents should also be placed in the appropriate folder e.g. the substantive complaint should be retained in the folder called 'Complaint'

Confidential material must be scanned in separately and clearly named as 'do not disclose' and placed in the 'do not disclose' folder.

Documents that are emailed will automatically be marked as sent but all other letters will need to be marked as sent manually.

6.4 Linking/Relating Cases

Intake may identify a number of separate complaints about the same issue that are from different people. If this occurs then all cases should be 'linked' together on ECHO using a name that references the common problem.

Preliminary post code searches may also identify customers who have made a number of separate complaints about different issues or BinJs. If this occurs then the cases should always be 'related' on ECHO using the customers' postcode (cases should never be related using a customers' name)

6.5 'Child Involved' Button

Advisers will, wherever possible, identify complaints received from Children and Young People (CYP). These complaints are from persons that are:

- aged 18 years or younger
- aged between 18 years and 25 years where there are special features in the matter indicating vulnerability (such as disability)

Where a CYP complaint is identified, the Adviser will apply the usual procedures for processing the complaint.

The 'child involved' flag in ECHO must be used where the complainant is a child or young person. This may mean that they are represented – by a solicitor, advocate,

parent, friend etc but the fundamental point is that they are themselves complaining.

6.6 Signposting

It is expected that, wherever possible, Advisers will create ECHO cases in order to keep a record of the number and type of signposts that Intake deal with.

An ECHO record must be accompanied with as many details as possible, including the BinJ and category if applicable.

For any telephone enquiry that cannot be captured on ECHO, for example where a caller is unwilling to provide the relevant information, then the Adviser must use the correct outcome code. This is important because the 'outcome reason' reports will then identify any shortfall in ECHO recording.

See also:

- [Appendix 3 - List of outcomes](#)

6.7 CQC Referrals

The Local Government Ombudsman and the Care Quality Commission both have the remit to consider certain complaints within the adult social care sector.

Both organisations receive numerous contacts for the each other. As a result, there is an agreement in place that allows 'warm transfers' whereby customers are transferred between the two organisations.

See also:

- [CQC / LGO Information Sharing Agreement](#)

6.8 Joint Working Transfers

PHSO will send joint working transfers through Egress to the Intake Outlook Mailbox. An auto acknowledgement will confirm receipt to the PHSO. These will be dealt with by the Advisers.

An ECHO record must be created, the documents must be attached and it will need to be allocated to the Joint Working Assessment (JWA) team. The appropriate letters and factsheets will be sent to the customer to confirm we have received the complaint and explain what happens next.

Intake will not accept any transfer forms that do not indicate that there is consent to share the information. A case must not be created and the documentation must be sent back to the Team Coordinator at PHSO.

It may not be clear from the transfer form or the complaint documentation who the complaint is against. The adviser will send the complaint through to JWA without a BinJ and with a note to explain why.

The date received is recorded as the date the LGO receive the transfer form.

6.8.1 Allocating to the Joint Working Assessment Team

Unlike other complaints, for joint working cases Advisers must allocate the cases to the Joint Working Assessment Team. The process is as follows.

After forwarding to Assessment the Adviser will need to:

1. Go to the Assessment screen and in 'workflow' access the allocation tab.
2. Choose 'JWA' as the allocated team.
3. Choose 'JWA' as the allocated investigator.
4. Save and exit the case.
5. Set task for Team Coordinator

7 Quality Monitoring

The Intake Team operates in accordance with the organisation's Quality and Standards Framework. As part of that Framework, the team have their own process for Quality Monitoring which ensures accountability in achieving the business objectives.

Quality monitoring will be carried out every three months and the process can be found in full [here](#)

7.1.1 Feedback and accountability

1-2-1's are to be arranged to coincide with the monitoring. All samples and scores will be fed back accordingly. Line managers will use the standards, the definitions, the complaint record, the call recording and any other relevant documents to support the feedback.

All parties are accountable for maintaining and improving individual performance and this should be managed in line with our performance management guidance.

Individual results and feedback will only be shared with the Adviser and any relevant managers. However, individual results will be collated to produce an overall team view of performance against the quality standards. Overall team performance will be published.

See also:

- Quality and Standards Manual [on staff intranet]

8 Managing Resource/Absence

8.1 Shift Rota

The shift rota is the responsibility of the ITLs. They will produce quarterly rotas at least two weeks in advance of the next rota period.

In general, except where any special arrangements have been agreed, the Advisers will work on a two shift basis in line with telephone opening hours. The first shift will work from 0830 hrs until 1600hrs and the second shift will work from 0930hrs until 1700hrs. Shift start times rotate between Advisers each week.

The ITLs will also work as part of the shift rota and will work 'opposite' shifts.

8.1.1 Shift Swaps

Advisers may need to swap their shift for a period of time. In these scenarios it is the Adviser's responsibility to find shift cover and then make a proposal to the ITL.

The ITL will then consider if there is any risk associated with the changes and will authorise accordingly.

If the Adviser cannot find cover, then the Adviser should still approach the ITL who will then assess any risks and take a decision.

Anyone swapping shift will also be expected to adhere to the break rota associated with their new shift pattern unless otherwise specified by the ITL.

8.2 Breaks

Breaks are rotated depending on the shift start time. This is to ensure that maximum cover is always available.

Advisers and ITLs will take a 15 minute break or a 30 minute lunch break between the times outlined below:

Shift Start Time	0830 hrs	0930 hrs
Morning Break	1015 – 1045	1100 - 1130
Lunch	1200 – 1245	1300 - 1345
Afternoon Break	1415 – 1445	1500 - 1530

A 15-minute buffer is built into each time-slot to allow for Advisers to complete calls. However, Advisers are expected to be prompt with their start times so as to not cause a knock-on effect for the other breaks.

During this time Advisers should choose 'Unavailable – Break' or 'Unavailable – Lunch' as the pause reason on Queuemetrics.

8.3 Flexible Working

8.3.1 Agile Working

Agile working is not an option for Advisers or ITLs. We need to ensure a continuous and effective service to our customers. The nature of the role and our infrastructure means that Advisers are unable to work from home.

The CSM will consider advance requests from ITLs to work from home for short periods. Any decision to grant such a request must be taken in line with the guidance on agile working and will be based on the task at hand.

For example, the nature of the work would need to be an administrative / management task and it could not relate to advisory duties. The ITL would need to have access to the relevant I.T. There also needs to be the correct level of management support within Intake.

Flexi-time Policy

Advisors may accrue additional hours, but no more than one additional hour in any day. This can be at either the beginning or the end of a rota pattern.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances the working day is a maximum of 8 hours.

Flexi sheets must be completed to show the accrual of hours. Flexi sheets must be given to the line manager at the end of the accounting period for approval.

Flexi-time allows for 1 additional flexi-leave day to be taken in any given accounting period. The leave may be taken as one full day or two half days.

Arrangements for booking flexi-time leave are made in accordance with the procedures for booking annual leave.

Other parameters, including credits and debits are outlined in the flexi-policy.

Staff have the option not to participate in the scheme and to simply work their agreed rota pattern.

Appointments

Advisers and ITLs should try to book medical appointments at either end of the day with as much notice as possible to their line manager. These appointments will not be to the detriment of any accrued flexi hours or annual leave.

Any medical appointments that mean the majority / full day out of the office will need to be recorded as self certificated sickness absence, flexi leave or annual leave as appropriate.

If flexi time is being taken then no additional hours can be accrued on the particular day.

Managers may request to see appointment cards or letters.

Events outside of normal working arrangements

Advisers and ITLs are expected, where possible, to arrange 'outside events' in line with their shift pattern arrangements. However, it is recognised that this may not always be possible and the lack of agile working in Intake can be restrictive.

Under exceptional circumstances, Advisers and ITLs can request time off in small blocks of between 1 – 2 hours. Anything more than this will need to be booked as half day leave.

The following parameters apply to both Advisers and ITLs:

- The person must first consider whether a shift swap is possible and to arrange as necessary. Managers must be informed of the proposed changes.
- If this is not possible, then the person must make the request (including reasons) to their line manager. This must also include a definitive time of departure and/or arrival.
- Authorisation will be given based on the guidance for booking annual leave. If necessary it will be done on a first come first served basis.
- If the request for time off constitutes an exception i.e. there are already more than 3 Advisers off or the second ITL is off, then ITLs / CSM will jointly assess the risk first before granting / refusing the request.
- ITLs / CSM will also need to consider whether the time has been or can be accrued.
- If granted, the leave will be recorded on the leave rota. Meaning that any subsequent leave requests from other Advisers would be subject to the usual scrutiny under the leave booking arrangements.

See also:

- Flexible Working Policy [on staff intranet]

8.4 Leave Guidance

All requests for leave are completed using HR21 and are subject to the organisation's normal guidelines.

Intake staff will use the following notice periods when booking leave:

- 2 weeks' notice for absences over 5 days
- 3 days notice for shorter absences

8.4.1 Leave requests outside of notice period

Although it should be avoided, it is recognised that staff may need to request leave at short notice. Leave may be granted at short notice but before doing so line managers need to ensure there is adequate cover and minimal threat to the performance of the team.

If there is concern that authorisation of leave will be detrimental to the team's performance, then there is an expectation that the line manager will discuss the request with the staff member. The discussion will alert the line manager as to the reasoning for the short notice and help them to make an informed decision.

If the same day is required staff are expected to hold a discussion with a line manager and it is unacceptable to leave a text or voice mail on the day that leave is required.

Leave may be refused if it's outside of the notice periods.

8.4.2 Leave allocation

Intake will only allow up to three Advisers to take leave at any one time.

Advisers may request that the ITL make an exception to the three Adviser rule. The ITLs will make a joint decision based on acceptable risk. They will consider shift cover, resources and the impact on team performance.

The list of possible exceptions is not exhaustive but leave will not be granted if there is deemed no substantial reason. ITLs will keep a note of the reasons for granting exceptions to ensure consistency when dealing with future requests.

Any Adviser who is refused leave will be placed on the first refusal list on the calendar should a position become available.

ITL's are also expected to take separate periods of leave in order to ensure management availability.

8.4.3 Part time staff and public holidays

Part time workers may have to accrue hours in order to ensure that they meet with public holiday / concessionary day entitlements.

Staff are required to accumulate this time owed by working the extra hours. This must not conflict with annual leave entitlements. Therefore Advisers cannot, for example, book annual leave and attend work on those days to accrue the hours owed.

The arrangements must be discussed and agreed with line managers in advance. Any time sheets and HR21 will be monitored to ensure they balance correctly.

See also:

- Leave and flexible working [on staff intranet]

8.5 Sickness Absence

The Intake team will adhere to the principles set out in the organisation's sickness absence policy.

8.5.1 Reporting

Advisers and ITLs must call their manager's direct line as soon as possible to inform them that they will be absent from work.

Text messaging or calls to ITLs on their personal mobiles is not acceptable. Third party messaging through work colleagues is also unacceptable.

Leaving a voice mail is sufficient and line managers will pick up each others voicemails in order to ensure receipt of any messages.

8.5.2 Sickness and Annual Leave

If employees are sick during holiday absence, annual leave may be reinstated subject to the provision of a medical certificate from their GP that covers the period. The same rules apply regardless of whether the absence was originally booked using annual leave or flexi leave.

If staff report themselves as being sick from work, they will not be allowed to book leave retrospectively in order to cover their sickness absence.

8.5.3 Return to work

All staff can expect to receive a return to work interview on the morning of their return. These meetings will take place in a private meeting room.

The content of return to work discussions/interviews will vary depending upon the length, type of absence and concerns in relation to your sickness record. However, in principle the manager should:

- acknowledge and welcome back to work
- find out the reason and cause for absence
- ensure fitness to return to work
- identify whether there is any support we can provide, and
- provide update on any changes or news.

See also:

- Health, safety and wellbeing [on staff intranet]

9 Communication

9.1 Daily Communication

The ITL on the early shift will take responsibility for arranging the day's resources. Each morning the ITL will send out an email briefing the team on the following:

- Previous days/weeks performance
- Any work that may be outstanding
- Adviser absence
- Embedded investigator rota
- Rota responsibilities
- Any other business

9.2 Team Meetings

Team meetings will be held within one week of the Leadership Team meeting.

Agenda's will be circulated in advance and standing items will include the team brief (see above) and an update from the CSM in relation to the Leadership Team meeting.

Minutes and actions will be published and kept in the shared drives for everyone to access.

10 Information Security

The Intake Team are expected to adhere to all of the LGO's policies relating information security and data handling.

However, there are some tasks that are specific to the Intake Team.

10.1 Overnight Processes

All Advisers should lock away any documentation in the designated cupboards. In turn, the keys to these drawers should be locked away in the central key safe.

All computers and electrical equipment should be turned off and no documentation should be left on desks, printers or scanners..

Outstanding internal and external post is to be locked away in the designated cupboards. Again, the keys to these cupboards will be locked away in the central key safe.

10.2 Call Recordings

All outbound, inbound and internal calls in the Intake Team are recorded for training and monitoring purposes. The calls are stored and retrieved from Queuemetrics.

The calls will be retained for no longer than six months and the deletion of calls is carried out automatically by the system.

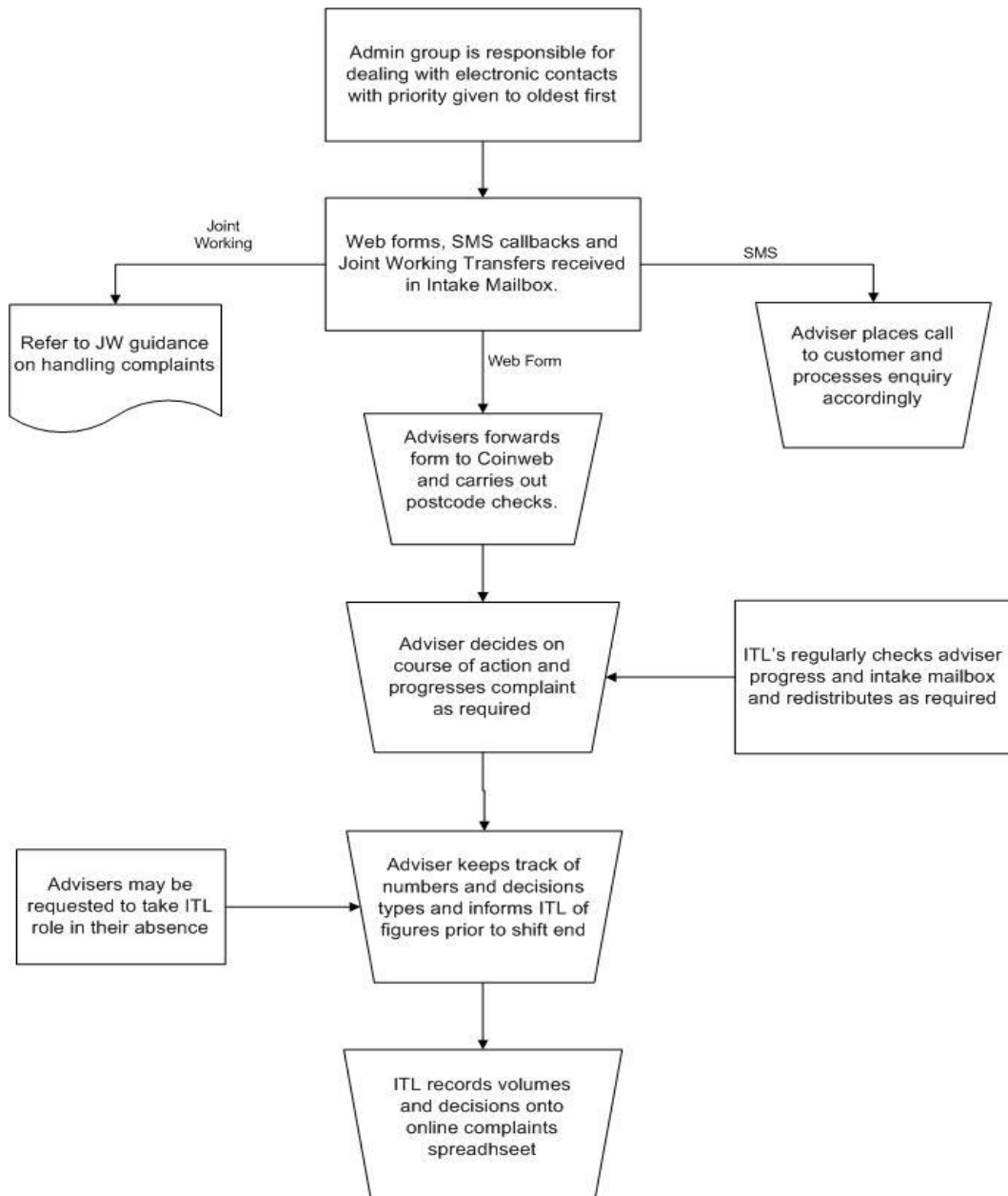
See also:

- Information and Records Management [on staff intranet]

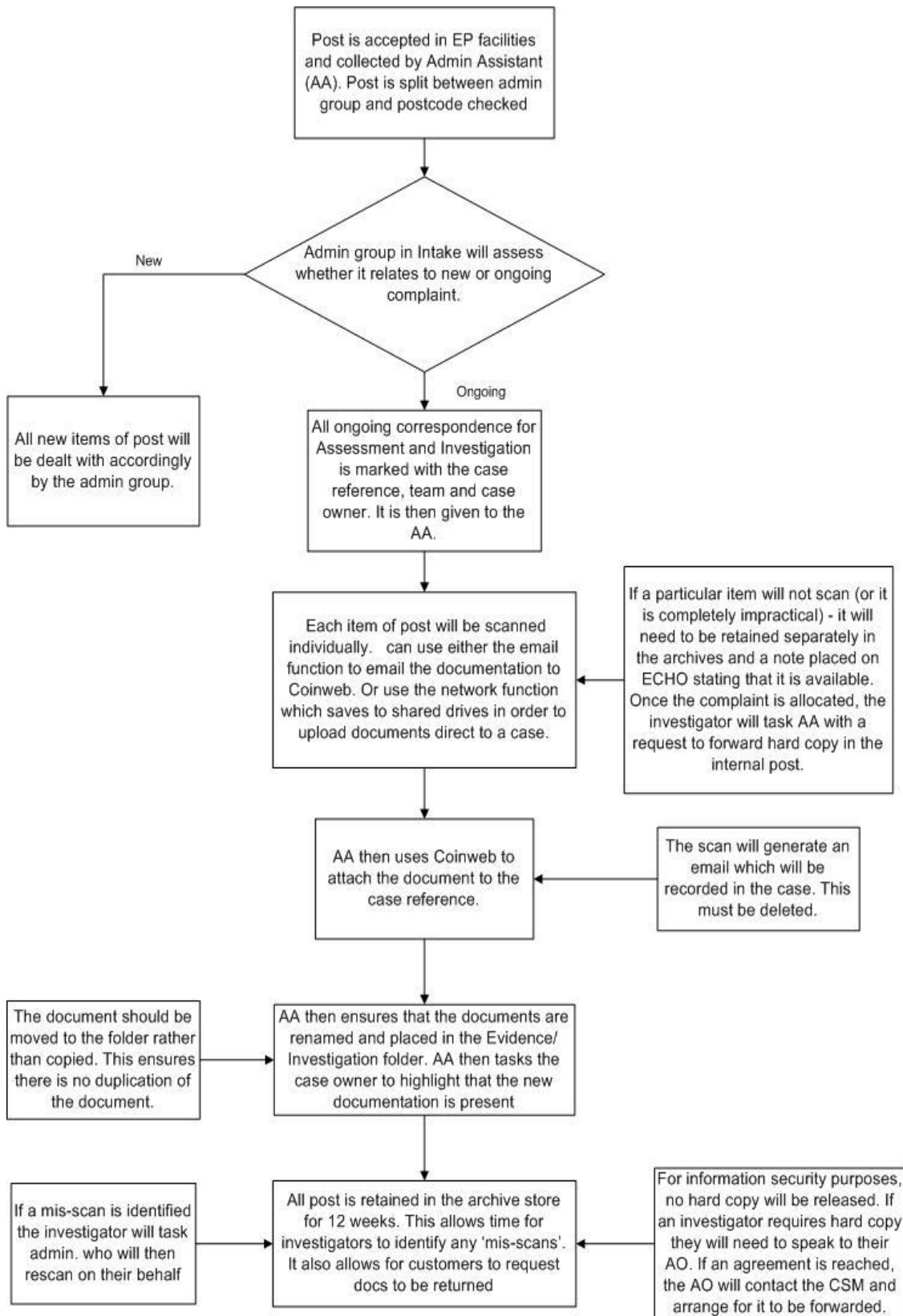
Appendix

1 Workflow

This flow chart outlines the process for dealing with electronic correspondence:



This flow chart outlines the process for dealing with written correspondence:



2 Queuemetrics - Work Status

This table outlines the different work states and when to use them:

User State	When
Admin	To be used by Advisers that have been given any personal administration time.
Available	All Advisers in the phone pod should primarily log into this state and be ready to take a call
Call Work	If further work is required following on from a phone call then an Adviser must select this user state
Meeting	All Advisers are required to log into this user state when they are in a meeting
Training	All Advisers are required to log into this user state when they are in training
Lunch	An Adviser must log into this user state when they are on lunch
Break	An Adviser must log into this user state when they are on a break
Comfort	An Adviser must log into this user state for reasons that are outside the usual breaks for example toilet, drinks

3 Call Outcomes

On completing a call an Adviser must enter an 'outcome reason'. These reasons describe the type of call they have just completed. For reporting purposes it is essential that the Adviser selects the correct outcome. The outcomes are listed below:

Wrap Up Reason	Used When
AT - Ongoing	Call either transferred to Assessment Team or relating to ongoing complaint at assessment phase
CQC – Not ECHO	Call transferred to the CQC
HOS – Not ECHO	Signposts to HOS where an ECHO record cannot be created
Intake - ECHO	All new enquiries which lead to an ECHO record being generated.
Intake - Not ECHO	New enquiry where it has not been possible to generate an ECHO record e.g. signposts where we are unable to capture info.
Intake - Ongoing	Enquiries relating to existing complaints at Intake stage e.g. ongoing premature complaints and including resubmissions.
INV - Ongoing	Call either transferred to Investigation Team or relating to ongoing investigation
Not ECHO – Non LGO	Signpost to other organisations where and ECHO record cannot be created (apart from CQC and HOS)
Not ECHO - Refusal	Caller refuses to provide details or does not want a reference
Not ECHO - Post	Caller decides to submit complaint in writing
Not ECHO - Web	Caller decides to use web form
PHSO – Not ECHO	Signposts to PHSO where an ECHO record cannot be created
Terminated	Call ended by Intake Adviser.
Transfer - Intake	Call transferred to ITL, CSM or other Adviser
Transfer - Other	Call transferred to non-Investigative function – i.e. Facilities, HR