STAFF MEETING MINUTES	
IN ATTENDANCE: Gita Gutierrez (GG), Information Commissioner (IC); Answer Styannes (AS), Acting Deputy Information Commissioner (A/DIC); LaKai Dill (LD), Investigation Officer; Kentisha Tweed (KT), Investigation Officer; Ian Cameron (IAN), T/A Investigation Officer; Tikitta Suhartono (TS), Office Manager; Sheena Bassett (SB), Project Officer	**DATE:** Wednesday, 12 April 2023 **TIME:** 10:00am – 11:50am **TAKEN BY:** All

TOPIC	ISSUE & DECISION	ACTION REQUIRED
1. Welcome	The team reflected on their proud moments since the new fiscal year started.	None
2. Staff Meeting Minutes	1. The approved March 2023 meeting minutes were ready to redact for publication.	• AS to redact minutes. Then SB to upload
3. Review Team	1. Review statistics as of 31 March 2023 were as follows: ▪ Total applications: 249 ▪ Pending investigations: 48 ▪ Pending validation: 0 ▪ Closed – decided: 136 ▪ Closed – resolved: 29 ▪ Closed – invalid: 29 ▪ Closed – abandoned: 7 In March 2023, the ICO: ▪ received 2 new applications ▪ issued 2 decisions ▪ resolved 2 cases ▪ closed 1 case because it was invalid, and ▪ closed 0 cases because it was abandoned. 2. The A/DIC commended the review team for having a caseload under 50 at the end of March, the lowest since January 2020. 3. Decision 04/2023 was the first IC decision that has discussed section 4(1) since the Court of Appeal handed down its judgment. Decision 03/2023 touched on a resolution, where the public authority abandoned its reliance on an administrative ground and released the information sought. Similarly, one resolved application was closed because disclosure was made during the review and the applicant was satisfied to withdraw. The other resolved	

	application was closed because the PATI request was being addressed through a more recent IC review. 4. The Court of Appeal issued its judgment in the judicial review, affirming the IC's discretionary power to access records claimed by authorities to fall outside the Act's scope, and finding that the Attorney General's view would lead to an absurd interpretation in limiting a regulator's authority to gather the factual information needed to reach their independent decision. All were encouraged to read the judgment, especially from paragraph 77 onwards. The 2018 review has now moved ahead, with the Attorney-General's Chambers submitting an affidavit to the IC on behalf of the Ministry of Health. 5. For Workpro, LD began to re-focus on drafting the user practice notes.	
4. Finance/Administration	1. TS has worked on preparing our FY2022/23 financial returns to the Accountant General's Department, which will form part of the Government's financial statement on the Consolidated Fund. This included all staff signing off on their individual VLT reports. 2. Our FY2023/24 budget was approved at the same value as last year, despite our full staffing level and submissions for increased funds. The Court of Appeal will decide on awarding legal costs for the concluded judicial review, and the outcome will affect our FY2023/24 budget. The result may be very limited resources for outreach, training and any out-of-contract work (such as for Workpro). 3. The Ministry of Finance made a policy change to no longer allow the non-ministry offices to re-allocate funds from salaries or transfer between offices. These were key practices for the non-ministry offices to manage our budgets and meet needs. The IC is monitoring whether this policy change will infringe on her statutory independence. 4. Our FY2020/21 audit remains underway. The Auditor General's team introduced some process changes, which led to some challenges. GG, TS and AS have focused on progressing any financial tasks requiring the comptroller's guidance by the end of April. 5. The timeframe for the ICO's move to the other side depends on Estates' approval. Pending work includes installing an alarm at the exit door, staining the new entrance door, dry-walling between the pillars, and setting up a kitchen area. Our relocation costs are covered by PrivCom's budget.	
5. Human Resources	1. The IC and A/DIC will soon schedule individual performance appraisal meetings. 2. Staff were encouraged to give adequate notice for any planned summer leave, to avoid burdening colleagues. In July, GG will take core leave, with AS acting IC and LD acting DIC.	
6. Compliance	1. For our FY2022/23 KPIs, AS was able to update most of the existing guidances, though not all, by 31 March. During the 2022 annual return, SB highlighted gaps with public authorities' information statements in a spreadsheet, which AS will use for auditing them.	

	2. An outstanding compliance issue is that the Liquor Licensing Authority has asked the ICO to determine their status as a public authority for PATI purposes. 3. SB has readied the print copies of the 2022 annual report for mailing to stakeholders. 4. The IC commended AS/LD for successfully taking over the March quarterly briefing, which allowed public authorities to benefit from their technical experience with searches. Bermuda College will host a third presentation by AS/LD, which will be open to all public authorities; SB aims to reschedule it for the week of 23 April. SB also has planned for AS/LD to record the presentation with existing software. GG will discuss her revisions to the March presentation material with AS/LD, before it may be published. 5. The IC will do a PATI orientation for the Economic Development Department on 28 April.	
7. Outreach/Education	1. SB has identified two social media platforms that can be used to manage our social media. These platforms also support collecting analytics. SB also has worked on introducing more cohesive visuals on our Facebook and our website's banner. 2. The March MR is ready for GG's review and may be published by Friday. 3. SB reminded investigators that she will usually draft the press releases on decisions, based on their notes of summarising the key points. 4. SB encouraged staff to continue sending her feedback on the website. The IC must approve any content addition. 5. SB will share our master list on public authorities' contacts with the Ombudsman's Office, at their request.	
8. IC Update	1. The IC will plan our FY2023/24 priorities before the next meeting, such as whether to resume implementing FileHold for our non-review record management.	
9. A.O.B.	None were discussed.	
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Review Team	1. [redacted] 2.	

Human Resources	1. 2.	[redacted]	

APPROVAL: The ICO adopted and approved the 12 April 2023 staff meeting minutes via email on 20 April 2023.