A Day in the Life – Insight Manager

In this series of blog posts, we are speaking to members of the Lending Standards Board (LSB) to understand more about what brought them to the organisation and the role they play within it. In our first instalment, we spoke to one of our Compliance Managers (CM), Mark Walker.

Today, we are speaking to Jess Roberts. Jess is the Insight Manager at the LSB. The Insight team are responsible for supporting firms to embed the Standards and Codes through the dissemination of insight and training, raising awareness, and new registrant firm engagement.

How long have you been at the LSB and what was your background before?

I joined the organisation in October 2019. Before working here, I was a partnership manager at the debt advice charity, The Money Advice Trust. This involved partnering with banks and building societies to improve how customers in financial difficulties were treated. It was a great experience for this role as working collaboratively to improve outcomes is pretty much what the Insight Manager role is all about.

What does your average day look like?

As an Insight Manager, it is my role to support registered firms in meeting the Standards of Lending Practice and other Codes that the LSB oversees. How we in the Insight team do this varies, and no two days are the same!

For example, at the moment I am gathering insight by reviewing how vulnerable customers are supported through the recoveries journey. It’s my responsibility to plan what the work will look like, work with the registered firms involved in it, and then to deliver the work itself. This will mean a mix of reviewing information about the process or speaking to individuals in the firm to learn what happens on the first line. I will then write an insight report on what we have seen, so registered firms can learn about delivering better customer outcomes through practical, real-life examples.

Another strand of work I am regularly involved in is delivering training to firms. Training sessions can go across all of the areas we cover in the Standards and Codes, and so it is up to me to make sure that training is accessible, engaging, and increases the knowledge of those attending. Usually we would do face to face training sessions, but during the pandemic we were able to deliver them virtually.

So can registered firms contact you if they need assistance with implementing the Standards or have other queries about best practice?

They definitely can and we encourage firms to do so. The Insight team offers each registered firm one piece of Insight work a year that is delivered and designed specifically for them. The firm has the choice of what this is, for example, it could be additional training on supporting those in difficulties or something like working with the firm's compliance function to consider how it oversees adherence to the Standards. Any registered firm can contact us, explain what they are interested in, and we will work with them to provide support in the best way possible. From a compliance perspective, registered firms also have a dedicated Compliance Manager, and they can contact their CM with any questions or issues whenever needed.

What sort of thing can the Insight team do for registered firms?

As I mentioned, we offer training on any area related to the Standards or Codes. This can be delivered to the first line or perhaps in a 'train the trainer' model, to increase the knowledge of those who then go out and further educate their colleagues. We also run forums, roundtables, and events which are designed to share knowledge and best practice. Firms can attend these, for example, our Emerging Risk Forum, and speak to other colleagues across the industry to share insight on what is affecting customers and best practice examples of how to support them.

One major strand of what we do in Insight is written research and thought pieces. Some of these are targeted at both registered and non-registered firms, and these can be accessed through the public side of our website. We also produce work purely for registered firms, allowing them to get our views and thoughts on how to improve customer outcomes through quality service delivery. These pieces are accessible to registered firms through the secure, firm-only side of our website. Finally, we are always happy to discuss any of our work with registered firms, answer queries, or brainstorm ideas on how to best approach issues and improve outcomes.

What do you enjoy most about the role?

What I really enjoy about the role is trying to think of innovative ways to spread the message about the Standards and Codes. We want the insight we provide to be interesting to all levels of the registered firms, from senior management when thinking about implementing their overall strategy, to the advisors supporting customers on the first line. To do this means having a mix of channels when delivering insight and considering what is the best medium for certain messages.

For example, I recently finished working on a 'Lunch 'n' Learn' podcast with the Head of Insight at the LSB, Anna Roughley. It was the first time I had done any recorded work like that, and so it took some getting used to hearing my voice being played back to me! But I think that it was a great way to discuss a topic like empathy and it allows both registered and non-registered firms an opportunity to hear how to make the most of customer interactions.

Do you have any tips for anyone reading from a registered firm?

My only tip would be make the most of your registration by contacting us and seeing what we can do for you. There is a real flexibility built into how the Insight team can work with any registered firm, and this allows us to design work with their needs in mind. Whether you want to learn more about a particular area, have questions about a process or approach, or want support educating colleagues about the Standards and Codes, get in touch and we'll be happy to help.