

CASE STUDY

Turning review files into actionable insight

A national financial advice firm replaced a slow, low-value outsourced review process with TCC's Spotlight Review, a proportionate, outcomes-focused service that increased review capacity, sharpened adviser feedback and turned file findings into meaningful management information.

50%
faster with Spotlight

Less than 3 hours
to mobilise

The challenge

The firm had outsourced file reviews for several years, but senior leaders were increasingly dissatisfied. Reviews took too long, outputs lacked depth where it mattered, quality varied between reviewers and adviser feedback was often too generic to support improvement.

Reporting created a further problem. MI largely counted files and outcomes without explaining what was driving them, making recurring issues across products, advice journeys and adviser populations difficult to identify. The compliance team spent significant time interpreting comments and rebuilding reports before sharing them with committees or senior management.

The firm wanted an outsourced partner that could provide robust, independent assurance without repeating every element of the advice process. It needed greater review volumes, faster feedback and clearer insight into trends and root causes. Complex and higher-risk cases still required full scrutiny, but the one-size-fits-all model was consuming resource without producing proportionate value.

Our approach

We began with a short discovery and test-and-learn period, working with the firm's compliance team to understand its advice standards, product range, risk appetite and review pain points. Together, we agreed a risk-based model that directed straightforward, non-complex advice to a Spotlight Review while retaining full-scope suitability reviews for complex or higher-risk cases.

- Our Spotlight Reviews focused reviewer attention on the core suitability outcomes and evidence most relevant to the customer's needs, objectives and circumstances

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- The review form removed lower-value duplication and process replay, giving reviewers more time to apply professional judgement
- Consistent ratings and concise rationales made it easier to see why a file was suitable, required development, was unclear or was unsuitable
- Where a case was unclear, the output set out what further evidence or action was required

Feedback, reporting and continuous improvement

A dedicated project manager established clear service levels, reviewer calibration, quality assurance and a monthly cadence. Case clinics and a transparent appeals process gave advisers and compliance colleagues a constructive route to discuss judgement calls, resolve uncertainty and turn reviews into practical learning.

We also redesigned the MI around the questions leaders needed answered. Rather than simply reporting pass rates, the analysis highlighted recurring suitability issues, emerging risks, adviser and product patterns, remedial actions and potential root causes.

Monthly trends and themes discussions helped the firm focus guidance, training, supervision and deeper review activity.

Outcomes

TCC's Spotlight Review increased capacity while protecting suitability judgement, helping the firm complete more non-complex reviews within existing resources and return feedback quickly enough to influence adviser behaviour and customer outcomes.

Feedback also became more useful. Advisers received concise, case-specific explanations rather than generic commentary, while unclear cases had a clear route to resolution. Regular case clinics strengthened alignment, reduced unproductive debate and supported more consistent interpretation of advice standards.

Most importantly, file reviews became a source of intelligence rather than a retrospective compliance checkpoint.

The firm could identify recurring issues, separate isolated errors from wider themes and target training, oversight and control improvements more effectively. Senior stakeholders received clearer evidence of customer outcomes and a more relevant view of developing risks across the advice business.

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