

Quarter 3 Board Report People and Business Support October to December 2020

Agenda Item 6a Paper Ref 04a

Paper for the Board

This paper is for Assurance and Noting

Sponsor

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Reviewed by

Colum Conway, Chief Executive, Executive Officer

1. Summary

This report provides an update to the Board on people and learning and development matters. The area to note is the increase in sickness absence and we would welcome suggestions from Board members on what more can we do in this area.

2. People

- 2.1 Our anticipated FTE headcount for FY 2020 was 210; as of 31 December, our FTE headcount was 216 (Annex A, table 1) with an additional 6 posts to be recruited that will take the total to 222. The headcount has been increased to increase capacity in investigations and registration. Increased payroll costs have been offset against savings in other areas including travel and subsistence. 31% of people are on fixed term contracts and we know we carry a risk that people may leave to secure a permanent role; of our two leavers in this quarter, one was the end of a fixed term contract and the other was on a fixed term contract who secured a permanent role elsewhere. Our planning for financial year 2021-22 includes giving people assurance as soon as possible about their contracts.
- 2.2 The 22 people who have joined us had a comprehensive induction as well as the opportunity to meet our Chief Executive. We have seen four internal promotions and one lateral move that reflects our ongoing commitment to developing our people.

- 2.3 We have been concerned to see our sickness absence increase (Annex A, table 2). This is despite a sustained focus on wellbeing in one-to-one meetings, teams and across the organisation and replacing sickness absence meetings with wellbeing meetings. The increase is driven by a small number of prolonged absences that are stress-related and in one case, work-related stress. Individuals have been well-supported by their line managers and HR colleagues. Our Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programmes have provided additional support. Planned phased returns are in place with reduced hours and workload to ensure people are well-supported. We strive to provide the right support at the right time and to advise and guide our managers.
- 2.4 Our Applause instant voucher recognition scheme empowers anyone to nominate anyone or group up to a value of £100. In the last three months, 129 vouchers have been issued to people for a range of 'above and beyond' actions, which are importantly aligned to our values and behaviours. This has enabled us to retain visibility of the continued hard work across the organisation and counteracts remote working constraints. In December we moved the approval process from the Executive Leadership Team to an Applause panel of representatives from across the organisation who meet monthly to consider nominations. Improvements they have made include developing guidance in what makes a good nomination.

3. Enable, our new corporate system

- 3.1 We are at a critical stage in the transition to a new corporate system that brings together finance, commercial, HR, and learning and development into one system. In December we began testing the system ahead of full end to end testing. Our collaborative weekly joint project meetings with our supplier mean issues are swiftly identified and resolved. Sponsorship is with the Executive Director for People and Business Support and the Executive Leadership team have regular updates.

4. Learning and Development

- 4.1 We have sustained our investment in learning and development and continue to flex and adapt (Annex B) so that we can provide development opportunities virtually. There is good take up across all directorates. The learning and development team lead the facilitation of internal courses and support delivery by subject matter experts in for example data protection, information technology and reflective sessions which are facilitated by the Regional Engagement Leads and echo the expectations we have for social workers' CPD.

5. Annexes

Annex A: People

Table 1: FTE on 31 December 2020

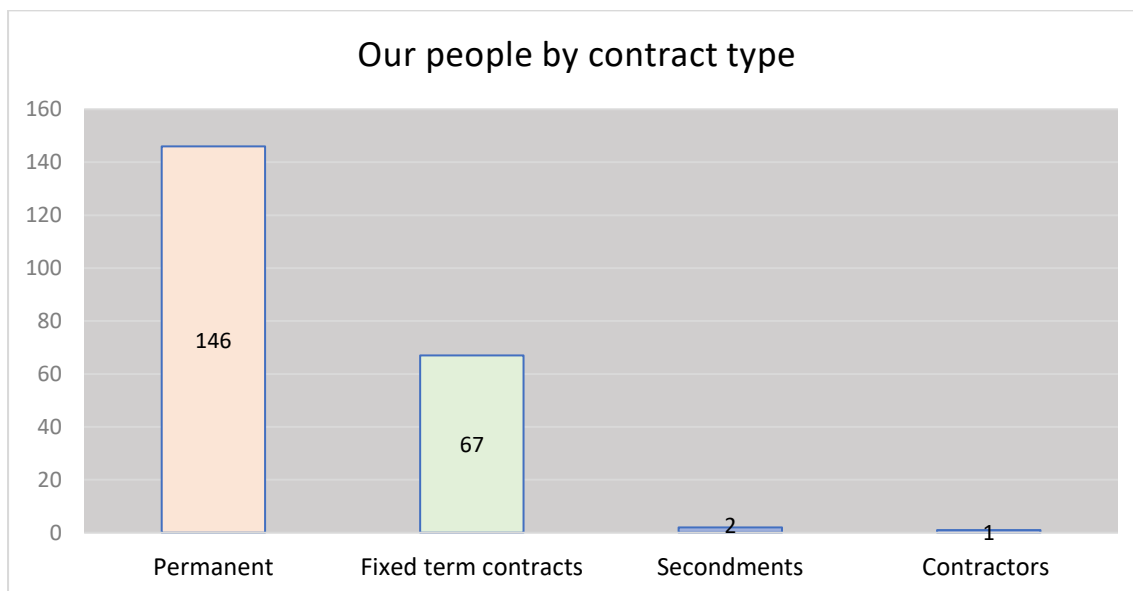


Table 2: Sickness absence

Month	Number of days absent	Average per employee	Trend
October 2020	28	0.1	↓
November 2020	41	0.2	↑
December 2020	63	0.3	↑

Annex B: Learning and development



42 different
courses attended



62 sessions
delivered



351 hours of
learning



23 internal
courses for
groups, 19
external courses
for individuals



386 attendees

Includes:

- Manager's forum bitesize
- Essential skills, giving and receiving feedback, and coaching skills
- Partner training for EQA Inspectors and CPD Assessors
- Social work learning programme sessions
- The importance of equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Reflective practice sessions
- Lived experience for leaders
- CMI level 5 award in managing equality, diversity and inclusion
- Digital graphic design
- BCS practitioner certificate in data protection

Focus on reflective practice sessions

Reflective sessions are about listening and sharing. The aim of the sessions is to help people feel supported in their roles, with a focus on some of the more emotional aspects of working for the regulator of social workers in England.

Launched
April 2020

18 sessions

99
attendees



The reflective session was really helpful in allowing me to process my experiences and feelings around a certain topic in a positive, open and supportive environment, the experiences of others were also reassuring and refreshing to hear."

Highlights:

- Attendees across all directorates
- Diverse topics, with strong links to EDI and mental wellbeing