

**Minutes of the Office for Legal Complaints (OLC)
Remuneration and Nomination Committee Telephone Meeting
Wednesday 2 January 2019
15:00 – 15:30**

Present:

Dr Bernard Herdan, Chair
Dr Jane Martin
Elisabeth Bellamy

In attendance:

Rob Powell, CEO

Board Secretary:

Kay Kershaw

Purpose of the meeting:

This telephone meeting had been called to discuss the results of the 2018 Civil Service People Survey. A paper setting out the results of the survey and the verbatim comments from staff had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting.

Discussion:

The CEO opened the discussion by stating that the survey results were disappointing, but not entirely surprising. There was a disparity in responses between operational and corporate areas of the business, with scores from the ombudsman and operational management cohorts being particularly concerning and substantially lower than those from other areas of the business.

Overall, the scores for leadership and managing change, organisational objectives and purpose and learning and development were significantly lower than the previous year. Scores in all areas had fallen although the overall engagement index had increased by 1% from the internal Pulse survey undertaken in May 2018.

The CEO reported that the downward trend in scores for leadership and managing change and organisational objectives may be attributable to the scale and extent of organisational changes that had taken place over the 12 months through the Modernising LeO Programme and the introduction of additional new ways of working following the arrival of the new Chief Ombudsman two months before the main changes went live. The effect of this scale of change, and the layering of changes meant it was likely that staff had been confused about the overall vision and direction.

The survey responses highlighted that staff were concerned about the lack of consultation and communication about some of the changes and as a result some staff did not properly understand the rationale for the changes or how they would contribute towards organisational objectives. In addition, there was a general theme that staff felt concerned about a perceived loss of autonomy.

The survey results for learning and development had been concerning and confusing. Over the last 12 months operational staff had received a considerable

amount of training. Guidance for operational staff has been improved and now includes guidance on how to manage workloads and case progression. There had been an issue with some unsatisfactory telephone training delivered by an external provider, but this had been promptly addressed by the development of an in-house training package which had been rolled out to staff and was well-received. Work is underway by the Management Team to try and better understand this element of the survey result to enable us to take effective action.

The survey results have been discussed in detail by the Management Team and the refreshed Staff Council which had been formed since the survey took place and it was agreed that a soft plan of action will be put in place to address the issues raised in the survey and this will be taken forward with Staff Council.

The priority will be to address the issues around leadership and development, change management and improving communications and engagement channels and improve the feedback culture. Initial plans include:

- The CEO had challenged members of the Management Team to show leadership rather than management, including being more visible around the office, particularly on the first floor.
- Introduction of a documented approach to change management in LeO.
- The re-purposing of Wider Leadership Team and LeO Live meetings as part of a more strategic internal communications and engagement approach.
- Mandatory 2019-20 business planning sessions to inform staff of the organisation's future direction.
- Additional training for staff and Line Managers to ensure that they understand a feedback culture and their roles in delivering this.
- Consider a strategic review of pay and benefits to increase progression opportunities and improve recruitment/retention.
- A zero tolerance statement being issued around bullying and harassment and mandatory training to be rolled out to all staff.
- The Head of HR to meet with Ombudsman and members of the operational management team early in 2019 to explore their responses to the survey.

Other issues raised in the survey will be addressed through the 2019/20 business plan.

The CEO was in the process of drafting an informal action plan in response to the survey results to agree with Management Team and discuss with Staff Council. He noted that without more effective leadership, management and staff engagement, particularly on the operational side of the organisation, it was unlikely the results would change dramatically next year.

In discussion, Members agreed that the survey results had been disappointing but were unsurprising in the context of an Ombudsman scheme. They expressed particular concern about the verbatim comments relating to the management of poor performance and how the responses to the 2017 survey had been dealt with.

Members felt that it was vital that the organisation's senior management, including Board Members, were more visible to staff in order to demonstrate their commitment to the leadership of the organisation and addressing the concerns that had been raised.

They noted that the Modernisation Programme had demanded much of the Management Team's attention over the last year and welcomed the actions now being taken to improve their visibility to staff.

The Chair noted the LeO Live meetings had provided a forum for Board members to engage with staff in the past. The introduction of fortnightly face to face briefings had been well-received by staff and changed the nature of LeO Live. Members welcomed any new opportunities to engage with staff and to demonstrate their commitment to the leadership of the organisation.

Members felt that improvements to staff engagement were essential in order to ensure that staff had opportunities to respond and comment on any proposed changes.

It was felt that the organisation should not rely solely on Staff Council to provide feedback on any proposed changes. Instead, Staff Council should consult with the wider staff to inform the organisational response. Specific actions could be allocated to Staff Council to take forward. Work on communications should consider those working from home and also involving Board members.

It was suggested that a 'you said, we did' style of management response to staff consultations would give credibility to the actions subsequently taken by the Management.

Members discussed the effectiveness of the coaching culture, and felt this needed to go beyond 121s and 'side by sides'. The role of the Team Leader was essential in this process.

Summary and actions

Following discussion, Members felt that the organisation should give careful consideration to the way that change would be effected going forward and staff should be included more in any decisions made, even if this were to slow down the pace of change.

They noted the actions being taken by the Management Team. The CEO agreed to share the Management Team's report reporting.

Overall they felt that the actions proposed to respond to the survey results should be focussed and avoid introducing any further changes.

The CEO agreed to share his final priority actions in response to the survey results with RemCo and to ensure that the Board had oversight of the progress being made to address the issues raised. Initially, an update would be appended to the executive report. This should summarise actions being taken and how success will be measured.

ACTION: CEO to share the final priority actions in response to the survey results with RemCo and to ensure that the Board had oversight of the progress being made to address the issues raised.

It was noted that RemCo might want to undertake a more detailed review of management responses to the survey at some point in the future.