

Meeting	OLC Board	Agenda Item No. Paper No.	9 114.7
Date of meeting	17 May 2021	Time required	20 minutes

Title	Performance and People
Sponsor	Sandra Strinati, Chief Operating Officer
Status	OFFICIAL

<p>Executive summary</p> <p>This paper provides the OLC Board;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of performance for March and April 2021; • details of recruitment into operational roles; • people related activities; • feedback from 360 feedback and from the inaugural Call the Leaders; and • appendix A shows the flyer for that engagement event <p>Performance data for March and April 20201</p> <p>March saw us finish case closures at 122% of the assumption figure. We achieved or exceeded the January, February, and March, Q4 20/21, assumptions for case closures. At 5.75, Investigator productivity in March was the highest for 15 months. In April it was 5.01, this compares to 4.0 in April 2020. The closure assumption for April was 473 and we ended the month on 488, despite fewer available working days due to Easter and school holidays.</p> <p>PAP is largely as expected and stands at 4840 on 1 May, the complexity composition is 51% low, 47% medium and 2% high.</p> <p>We have experienced resource issues in the General Enquiry Team and as a result for the 1st time in 12 months have breached the requirement to clear all emails within 31 days. A recovery plan is place which is showing improved results.</p> <p>100% of Investigators are now considered 'established' although it should be noted that 16% of that cohort are extended probationers whose outputs are lower. This is because probation was exceptionally extended into the second year of employment due to Covid-19.</p> <p>Current performance areas of focus include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project managing the work for the PAP backlog, which is an item on the May OLC Board agenda, starting workstream activity and considering activities suggested by LeOs workforce; • doing more with the resources we have and turning the conversation with our people towards behaviours and outcomes; • recruitment, we started 21/22 10 investigators down on our complement. That equates to a deficit of 63 planned closures each month which are baked into the
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21/22 Business Plan. Recruitment could not start for those investigators until LeO had financial certainty. Significant recruitment is underway.

People activity

Recruitment into operational roles

Recruitment is a huge investment of operational and corporate resource to advertise, sift, assess, and interview new recruits. It is worth noting that we are in competition with others recruiting locally for investigation staff some offering higher levels of remuneration. It's possible we will lose both applicants, and existing staff to our competitors.

Operations

- We need 18 investigators – 85 have applied
- We need 8 GET advisors – 17 have applied
- We need a minimum of 2 Team Leaders – 37 have applied
- We need 2 Level 2 Ombudsman roles – 67 have applied

Assessment Centres began weekend 8 May and the process will continue until 28 May. If internal applicants are successful, that in turn will create more vacant roles but will be good for our people.

Corporate recruitment

Recruitment Activity	
Operations	
Investigators (18) Team Leaders (2/3) L2 Ombudsman (2)	Assessment Centres running between 8-28 May
Corporate	
Finance Manager	Offer made and accepted – direct candidate. Start date TBC
GET Advisor	6 offers made
Inbound call handler	3 offers made, second round of interviews on 12 May
Performance & BI Manager	Interview held 10 May
Paralegal x2	Advert went live 5 May for two weeks
Project Manager	Appointed to start in May-
EDI Manager	Appointed to start in May
Risk Manager	Appointed and started in April

Junior Investigator – proposed new role

We will take a proposal to the June RemCo about a new role which we propose will sit between the GET Team and the Investigator Team. This will fulfil the aims of the consultee feedback of;

- doing more with what we have;
- will be a less costly resource;
- will allow investigators to be more productive; and
- and will provide a career pathway from GET to the investigator role.

Wellbeing

April was Stress Awareness month and the Network Lead held a daily blog with input across the organisation and signposted to Civil Service resources to support individuals through difficult times.

Days lost through sick absence increased very slightly in April against the KPI of 10 days after 2 months of stability. It is worth noting that if Covid 19 absence was subtracted from the 2021 figures, April 2021 would have a lower level of lost sick absence days than in April 2020.

- March '21 10.96 days 32.6% (81) related to mental health issues/10% Covid 19
- April '21 11.24 days 39.7% (92) related to mental health issues /10% Covid 19

There has been a change in how absence is identified, the use of 'other' has been replaced with categories of illness, this may account for increased reporting of mental health related absence.

Attendance Management workshops will be held in May and June to support Team Leaders in their leadership role.

Attrition – permanent voluntary leavers

March 2021 attrition 9.9%

April 2021 attrition 9.1%

This is a slight increase from January, 9.1% and February 2021 9.5%

People Plan

Work has continued since the last OLC Board meeting on 31 March, the first Programme Control Board has met and the rephased Plan and workstreams are in the table below

Annex B shows the progress and action in a RAG status. Phase 1 is tracking at an amber status. We will of course continue to keep Board updated.

Activities in hand;

Comms and Engagement Workstream – Staff Survey action plans are being developed with Operational and Corporate managers in May and June 2021.

Recruitment and Induction Workstream - charter will be sent to the Executive for review in May 2021 and work has focused on operation recruitment.

Pay and Reward – In February 2021 RemCo requested development of a Recognition scheme that supported the Business Plan – this was an additional workstream added to Phase 1 and is in development for completion in June.

Job Design and Organisation Structure – work is underway to finalise the job descriptions in group 1 (Investigators and 2 Level 1 Ombudsman roles). Scheduling for group 2 jobs is in progress.

Employee Relations - Flexible Work Policy has been brought forward to support Future Ways of Work post-Covid and this workstream charter will be submitted to Exec for review

in May 2021. Absence Management workshops have been rescheduled to commence in June with Operations managers and Team leaders.

People engagement – 360 feedback

I sought feedback from colleagues at all levels across the Legal Ombudsman and I present some quotes, just for information and assurance to the Board that things are going in the right direction.

‘I am hopeful for the future of LeO and I think that from everything I’ve seen from you and Paul we’ve got safe hands on the tiller now’;

‘the future of LeO is really bright with both you and Paul in post’;

‘I have been here 10 years and seen 6 leadership changes – this time feels different, you have created safe space for conversation, open, honest, - balanced people and performance’;

‘every time we get new leadership its hard to know what to expect, history has taught me not to set myself too many expectations but you have provided a freedom we didn’t have before, removed shackles and opened us up to change and possibilities’;

‘you have started to build a stronger and more effective team to support our customers’;

‘really lifted my spirits about the role I do’;

‘culture has changed from can’t do to can do’;

‘in my 35 years this is the best line management I have had, we are a stronger, higher performing and happier team’;

‘human, compassionate, breath of fresh air, treat me as an individual not just a cog in a wheel’;

‘genuinely want to listen to staff about their concerns and ideas for improvement and willingness to meet to discuss concerns, refreshing’;

‘changing things for the better and getting stuff done’; and

‘people who weren’t engaged are now coming up with ideas and feel listened to for first time in years’.

People engagement – Call the Leaders

The Chief Ombudsman Paul McFadden and I held our first ‘Call the Leaders’, a three-hour open session where any member of staff could call about anything. The flyer for this session is at Annex A. We plan to repeat this quarterly to supplement the other engagement activities we have in place. Feedback from the sessions were;

- feels different’
- feel very optimistic’
- feel like people care about me again’,
- hardest job ever but the best’,

- workload now feels in control',
- managers amazing, nothing too much trouble',
- can really feel improvement',
- optimistic for 1st time in long time',
- junior investigator is brilliant move'
- been away now I'm back I can see big shift in how we are working'; and my favourite!
- previously people felt, what's the point, now those same people say, they're really listening to us

Recommendation/action required

Board is asked to **note** the paper.

Performance and People

Performance March and April

General Enquiry Team (GET)

The General Enquiry Team has had some resource issues this month and as a result the Operations Manager (OM) has set a recovery plan to bring back into line the outstanding customer emails. For the 1st time in 12 months the team have breached the requirement to clear customer emails within 31 days. The OM and I have confidence that we will manage to more usual levels by the end of May and there are already early signs of improvement.

Resolution Centre

Closures exceeded assumptions for the fourth month in a row, April actual closures were 488 against an assumption of 473. Investigator productivity stands at 5.01. The overall picture is a positive one despite a backdrop of increased annual leave due to Easter holidays, school holidays and fewer working days available.

We have also seen a positive trend in investigator case holdings from 13.28 to 15.64 per investigator. This indicates a further shift in investigator capacity, away from the reduced Covid levels of the last 12 months, this generally, and historically, results in increased productivity.

16% of the investigator cadre are on extended probation but are accounted for within the Agreed Data Set as established due to length of service. Performance management was paused but has restarted with this cohort.

Customer journey times - whilst we have seen timeliness increase across all complexities, this can be attributed to the resolution of older cases.

PAP

The OMs will present at the May OLC Board the plan for tackling the queue of customers awaiting allocation of an investigator - which has doubled in 12 months. We now have a Project Manager and are looking forward to presenting clear work streams to the Board.

There are a range of potential solutions which have suggested by stakeholder and our own staff via the Ideas Station. We are engaging our people in work streams and trying to ensure that everyone feels like they have a stake in the success of the reduction.

IT doesn't easily support us in segmenting the PAP or interrogating data, we have dedicated staff cleaning the data in order to support this, but it also why we are

trialling and piloting as well as sampling cases in the backlog. The backlog stands at 4840.

Comparative data table below showing data from between September 20 – date.

Measure	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	Trend
Customer Journey Time (Avg. Low Complexity)	222	220	232	248	270	279	285	301	
Customer Journey Time (Avg. Medium Complexity)	312	346	323	325	362	377	372	397	
Customer Journey Time (Avg. High Complexity)	676	612	545	458	681	623	616	684	
Rolling Annual Turnover Rate	17.1%	14.6%	14.6%	10.6%	9.1%	9.5%	9.9%	9.1%	
Rolling Annual Turnover Rate - Investigators	20.4%	17.8%	176.9%	11.8%	10.9%	12.6%	12.6%	12.8%	
Sickness - lost days per head	11.1	10.96	11.3	11.38	11.45	11.04	10.91	11.24	
Volume of cases awaiting assessment (PAP) - at end of month	4,160	4,330	4,356	4,500	4,513	4,637	4,829	4,840	
Productivity per (established) investigators	4.29	4.18	4.59	3.63	4.30	4.43	5.75	5.01	
% established / developing investigators	65%	67%	73%	73%	83%	82%	82%	100%	
Cases accepted for investigation	407	442	504	347	454	438	469	468	
Cases resolved after investigation	385	396	437	363	468	466	552	488	

The Board may want to note that as May has 2 Bank Holidays and more school holidays the closure assumption of 520 will be an operational stretch.

Recruitment

We start the new business year 10 below the forecast investigator headcount. Recruitment planning and implementation began at the weekend 8th May and remains on course to bring investigator numbers to expected levels by July 2021.

It is led by the Operations Managers and for the first time the Team Leaders were involved in writing the assessment and questions and are leading the panels.

We are recruiting for;

- Investigators x 18;
- GET call handlers x 8;
- Team Leaders x minimum of 2; and
- Level 2 Ombudsman 2;

Filling the immediate roles is our tactical solution, but we are also considering our long-term strategic solution. Having better knowledge of leavers and our workforce planning will link to our quarterly rolling recruitment which will ensure that gaps which we currently experience will be minimised.

We are considering how we induct and integrate new recruits; we will also consider how we segment work to maximise productivity at an earlier stage.

People Strategy

Wellbeing

Average employee sick days lost per head was 10.96 in March 2021 and 11.24 in April 2021. This is against a KPI target of 10 days.

Sickness absence has increased in April following a two month drop. Mental health continues to be a main reason for non-Covid-19 absence in April. Sickness absence levels would be lower than April 2020, if Covid-19 absences were not taken into account.

In March Mental Health was 32.6% (81 days) CV19 was 10% (25 days)

In April Mental Health was 39.7% (92 Days) CV19 was 10% (23 Days)

The reason for the increase in mental health could be attributed to more specific reporting was put in place in April for absence categories which now means all absence has to be identified (i.e no category for "other absence")

In April the Leo Wellbeing Lead highlighted Stress Awareness Month and launched a daily blog which focuses on managing stress this included a range of online resources from the Civil Service to support colleagues with stress and Mental Health. The response to this has been positively received by colleagues and has been measured by feedback received from the Wellbeing Lead.

Absence Management Workshops with Operational Managers and Team Leaders have been rescheduled to take place in June. This is due to resource availability.

People

Recruitment

The HR/OD team have continued focus on supporting the organisation with both BAU and progressing the People Plan.

As a result of budget approval of the 2021/22 Business Plan there has been significant work in recruitment to resource both immediate recruitment needs and the recruitment of additional investigation teams. Recruitment for Operations has been carried out in collaboration with both Operation Managers and Team Leaders. Assessment Centres for May are being supported by fully briefed assessors from Operations and Corporate. A summary of Recruitment Activity is identified below.

Recruitment Activity	
Operations	
Investigators (18) Team Leaders (2/3) L2 Ombudsman (2)	Assessment Centres running between 8-28 May
Corporate	
Finance Manager	Offer made and accepted – direct candidate. Start date TBC
GET Advisor	6 offers made
Inbound call handler	3 offers made, second round of interviews on 12 May
Performance & BI Manager	Interviews two held 10 May
Paralegal x2	Advert went live 5 May for two weeks
Project Manager	Appointed to start in May-
EDI Manager	Appointed to start in May
Risk Manager	Appointed and started in April

Lead time for recruitment from advert going live to start date has increased from January 2021 from 9.5 weeks on average to 12.5 weeks in April 2021. This reflects the need to re-advertise certain roles with specialist advertisers and recruitment agencies e.g. Risk Manager, IT SQL Specialist and Finance Manager.

Quality and Complaints – work is underway in reviewing the business requirements in maintaining team at budgeted headcount levels.

Attrition

In March 2021 attrition was 9.9% and in April 2021 9.1% (attrition is all permanent voluntary leavers). This is a slight increase from January 2021 at 9.1% and February 2021 9.5%. This is due to increased voluntary resignations in investigator and corporate roles from January and February 2020.

People Plan

Since the last Board report in March 2021 work on the People Plan has continued and also focused on providing structured reporting. The first Programme Control Board was held on 29 April 2021 and a summary of the re-phased plan for all Projects and Workstreams in Phase 1 is in the table below. The programme is currently tracking at amber status for Phase 1.

Actions to mitigate against amber and red RAG status as follows:

- **Comms and Engagement Workstream** – Staff Survey action plans are being developed with Operational and Corporate managers in May and June 2021.
- **Recruitment and Induction – Workstream** charter will be sent to the Executive for review in May 2021 and work has focused on operation recruitment.

- **Pay and Reward** – In February 2021 RemCo requested development of a Recognition scheme that supported the Business Plan – this was an additional workstream added to Phase 1 and is in development for completion in June.
- **Job Design and Organisation Structure** – work is underway to finalise the job descriptions in group 1 (Investigators and 2 Level 1 Ombudsman roles). Scheduling for group 2 jobs is in progress.
- **Employee Relations - Flexible Work Policy** has been brought forward to support Future Ways of Work post-Covid and this workstream charter will be submitted to Exec for review in May 2021. Absence Management workshops have been rescheduled to commence in June with Operations managers and Team leaders.

Appendix A

Call the Leaders

Paul and Sandra would love to hear from you and have kept their diary free on **7 May** between 2pm and 5pm. Why not give either one of them a call and have a chat. They'd be happy to hear;



- How you're feeling and handling life as we emerge from lockdown;
- What's going well in LeO;
- What's going less well for you in LeO;
- What you think of your role in delivering the 21/22 Business Plan;
- What would you like to see us as leaders to do more, or less, of;
- What more we could do for our customers; and
- What are you proud of.



So go on..... drop them a teams call



Appendix B

Phase 1: Progress and actions to address RAG status

Dashboard		Phase 1 of the People Plan is tracking as amber. This is primarily due to resource and capacity constraints which has resulted in a lack of baselined plans and approved charters. Work has continued within the workstreams and as part of BAU which is the main reason for plan progression. There is further work to be done on Business Plan alignment as well as a clear distinction between BAU and Project activity.	
People Plan Project	Status Update for workstreams in Q1 @ 29 th April 2021	Next steps	
Comms and Engagement- Staff Survey	Staff Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project charter drafted Interviewed and offered EDI Manager Staff Survey analysis complete Raw staff survey data shared with Managers. Action plans and documents to support are behind schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exec to review Project Charter – 16th June Ops Managers to progress with initial conversations based on raw data – 2 meetings to be held by HR with Ops managers & corporate managers by 21 May to develop Staff Survey Action Plans Business Plan ownership to be aligned with People Plan – by 13th May 	
Talent and Career Development	Job Design and Organisation Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behind schedule with reviews and JD revisions Approach to JD review has been revised and facilitators scripts updated and shared with People Plan Delivery Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduling of Jobs and those included in workshops in group 2 available from w/c 17th May Host remaining L1 ombudsman investigator workshop by 28th May – HR to complete 3 JD's and person specs (investigator and 2 L1's by 28th May Moderation reviews of investigator and L1 JDs w/c 7th June 	
Talent and Career Development	Simplify the Behavioral & Competency Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competency Frameworks workstream charter drafted and reviewed at PCB Approach paper for current appraisal process complete - using the current Continuous Conversations format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Charter for Competency Frameworks to be reviewed by Exec on 19th May Gain agreement on approach & Commence planning 	
Performance and Training	Implementation and evaluation of Team Leaders development programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training on track – due to complete in June Appraisals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach paper for current appraisal process complete - using the current Continuous Conversations format (no longer in PP scope) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TL development programme post course evaluation to be reviewed by HR and completed in June – Appraisals Communications and managers guidance to be drafted for current appraisal process and dates TBC Business Plan ownership to be aligned with People Plan 	
Employee Relations	Actively Managed Case Management Workbook <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case management workbook underway and part of BAU. Exec reports have been developed Issue with CipHR case management as upgrade has been pushed out to August & this will impact HR ability to report on cases efficiently and could delay training to Team leaders Flex working policy is dependent on long term planning & CT decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project charter and plan to be approved- Flexible working policy submitted to Exec 19th May Exec Continue to challenge CipHR upgrade date with supplier Impact of being unable to be pull upgrade forward to be defined 	
Recruitment and Induction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project charters developed - Project plans drafted – awaiting sign off by HR Operational recruitment process amends in line with latest Ops Campaign All detail on revised Induction received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Charter to go to Exec 19th May Workstream group to meet and agree changes to plan by beginning of June Plan any amends post review in line with next round of recruitment Ongoing feedback and continuous improvement 	
Pay and Reward	Reward and Recognition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brought forward at RemCo's request in February to reflect a scheme that supports the business priorities for 21/22 Positioning paper agreed in April to be shared with People Plan Delivery Group in May via a facilitated session by HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR to develop design principles agreed framework with People Plan Delivery Group w/c 10th May Develop awards available in line with budget w/c 17 May Share with Management Team 26th May and agree with Exec (out of Committee) before 2nd June 	