



Executive Advisory Body

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 04 June 2024
Subject	HR Report
Agenda No.	Meeting 44
Paper No.	3.1
Prepared By	People Services
Purpose	Discuss

1. Background

- 1.1. We have presented some of the key areas of work across the People and Place function for the attention of Executive Advisory Body.
- 1.2. The detailed data on workforce composition as at the end of December 2023 is available in the published dataset which can be found at [Social Security Scotland - Social Security Scotland – workforce information: December 2023](#). Data for period ending 30 March 2024 will be published in June and has been used in the report and withheld under Freedom of Information on the basis it is exempt under section 22 (1) – future publication.

2. Key points

- 2.1. Headcount has [REDACTED] since April 2023, with fluctuations over the course of the year reflecting peaks in demand. Revised staffing principles have been developed to align with strategic workforce planning to ensure that our headcount is affordable over the longer term and allows us to deliver organisational priorities.
- 2.2. As part of this work, Deputy Directors will be asked to ensure that alternative options to fill posts have been considered prior to any recruitment. This may include redeployment of existing staff, consideration of whether the work still needs to happen or could be moved elsewhere or whether the post could be filled on a temporary basis rather than permanently.
- 2.3. We are working closely with finance colleagues to provide updated longer term joint budget and headcount information to help decision making on staffing affordability.
- 2.4. Implementation of the new Oracle Enterprise Resource Planning tool has been confirmed for October 2024. This will have impacts for our processes including onboarding new starts as existing systems will be closed to prepare for the cutover to the new system.
- 2.5. There will also be impacts on colleagues for processes such as requesting leave, managing flexitime or making changes to their hours. We are working



- with Scottish Government to align our communications to ensure that colleagues have sufficient notice to allow them to prepare for these changes.
- 2.6. The implementation of Oracle will also bring some changes to HR policy and process around topics such as performance management, recording of gifts, hospitality and outside interests and the move from the Skills for Success competency framework to Success Profiles. The latter will impact on recruitment and development and will require upskilling for colleagues and line managers.
 - 2.7. Accessibility challenges with the system remain and we are working closely with Scottish Government colleagues to mitigate or remedy these.
 - 2.8. Work is also taking place to deploy a new operational resourcing tool to assist with large-scale recruitment. This will be implemented alongside Oracle.
 - 2.9. While we have plans in place to help colleagues adjust to this significant volume of change, advice or suggestions from Executive Advisory Body members would be welcome.
 - 2.10. Aligned to the implementation of Oracle and as part of the pay award for Scottish Government Main, we will move to a 35 hour week from October. HR Business Partners are working closely with divisions to assess the impact this will have, particularly on our front-facing client services. Evidence from elsewhere shows that reductions in working time have led to productivity increases which help to offset the loss of time worked and we are working to ensure that the impact on our organisation is minimised.
 - 2.11. We have seen an increase in office occupancy since the formal announcement that we expect colleagues to attend their normal office base two days per week. Whilst this is still not at the level to indicate all colleagues are fully participating, there has been a significant increase in attendance.
 - 2.12. We continue to have discussions with the trade unions who, whilst reasonably supportive of the overall message, do not agree with some aspects of the implementation.
 - 2.13. Learning is being developed for the rollout of additional benefits this year and next. This continues to be challenging due to delays with operational guidance which is required to design the learning. We continue to work with Programme colleagues to improve this process.
 - 2.14. Work continues on streamlining our management learning offer to ensure it meets our needs and is available in a format which is clear and easily accessible for colleagues.
 - 2.15. During Learning at Work week, over 3,000 colleagues signed up to 25 different workshops and short learning events across a variety of topics ranging from learning about frontline operations to running inclusive meetings or learning about the role of trade unions. Feedback from the week has been very positive.
 - 2.16. We have seen an [REDACTED] in sickness absence to [REDACTED] average working days lost as at the end of March 2024. To help address long term sickness absence, a specific team was formed within People Advice to focus on this. This has helped us to work more closely with colleagues, returning some



to work with others having left the organisation. The duration of our longest absence has now significantly shortened and we would therefore hope that by the end of the next reporting period, we would see the average working days lost decrease.

- 2.17. We continue to focus on colleague wellbeing, with the Wellbeing Advisors now offering increased counselling sessions in-house as well as developing and delivering interventions to address stress, anxiety and other factors which are the main causes of our absence.
- 2.18. Work on developing a performance culture across the organisation continues with very positive outputs from the pilot in Child Disability Payment seeing increases in case throughput and colleague engagement. This approach is now being rolled out in other areas of the organisation, including Adult Disability Payment, Finance and Corporate Services and People and Place Divisions.
- 2.19. The People Plan is currently being revised with engagement sessions taking place with colleagues over the summer and a planned publication date of September 2024.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1. Executive Advisory Body is asked to note the work taking place across People Services.
- 3.2. We would appreciate any suggestions or advice members may have regarding communication of the significant changes which are due to take place over the next few months.



4. GOVERNANCE CHECKLIST

Please ensure that you detail which Corporate Plan Strategic Objective the paper contributes to. These strategic considerations should be used to assist you with the content of your paper.

Strategic Objective	Contribution
Helping to deliver a social security system with dignity, fairness and respect.	The activity outlined in this paper helps us to equip our colleagues to deliver a social security system with dignity, fairness and respect at its heart.
Supporting people in Scotland to access devolved benefits that they are entitled to.	
Running our service in a responsible way.	Improving the alignment between budget, headcount and staffing principles will allow us to ensure value for money.

State here how the paper considers these areas and any consultation undertaken in the agency. Only complete the section(s) relevant to your paper.

Strategic consideration	Impact
Environment	Not Applicable
Governance	Alignment of staffing principles, budget control and headcount will contribute to more effective governance.
Data	Not Applicable
Finance	Alignment of staffing principles, budget and headcount will contribute to more effective budgetary controls.
Staff	Paper outlines some key issues impacting on colleagues.
Equalities	Some of the issues highlighted impact on equality for colleagues eg implementation of Oracle.
Estates	Management of headcount has the potential to impact on usage of our estate.
Communications and Presentation	We are working with communications colleagues both within the Agency and wider Scottish Government around messaging for colleagues.

An Impact Assessment must be carried out during the development of all new Agency policies and services and when making significant changes to policies and services. The Corporate Assurance team should be involved from an early stage to provide guidance and advice relating to completing impact assessments.

[Impact Assessment Saltire Page](#)

General Impact Assessment Queries: Corporateassuranceteam@socialsecurity.gov.scot

Equality Impact Assessment Queries: Corporateassuranceteam@socialsecurity.gov.scot

Please complete the below table.



Type of Impact Assessment	Required (Y/N)	If No - briefly state reason e.g. Not relevant/Not eligible – agreed with Deputy Director	If yes – briefly state progress to date, highlight any significant issues.
Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)	N	N/A	
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Y	There will be data protection considerations arising from Oracle implementation. This assessment is the responsibility of Scottish Government as system owner.	
Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)	Y	There will be equality considerations arising from Oracle implementation. This assessment is the responsibility of Scottish Government as system owner.	
Fairer Scotland Duty assessment	N	N/A	
Future proofing legislation	N	N/A	
Human rights in policy making	N	N/A	
Islands Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA)	N	N/A	
Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA)	N	N/A	