



Public Accounts Committee

Performance Management Follow-Up Review

Witness: Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services

Friday, 30th June 2023

Panel:

Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central (Chair)

Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North (Vice-Chair)

Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South

Mr. G. Phipps

Mr. P. Taylor

Mr. M. Woodhams

Ms. A. Trudgeon, Jersey Audit Office

Witnesses:

Mr. I. Burns, Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services

Ms. S. Le Sueur, Group Director, Customer Services

[10:00]

Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central (Chair):

Welcome to this public hearing of the Public Accounts Committee. Today is Friday, 30th June, and we are holding a public hearing with the chief officer for Customer and Local Services as part of our review into performance management. I would like to draw everyone's attention to the following. This hearing will be filmed and streamed live. The recording and transcript will be published afterwards on the States Assembly website. All electronic devices, including mobile phones, should be switched to silent. For the purpose of the recording and the transcript, I would be grateful if everyone who speaks could ensure that you state your name and role and also speak clearly. If we

start with introductions. I am Deputy Lyndsay Feltham and I am chair of the Public Accounts Committee. I will let the committee introduce themselves.

Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:

Deputy Tom Coles for St. Helier South.

Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North (Vice-Chair):

Deputy Max Andrews, I am vice-chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. P. Taylor:

Philip Taylor, lay member.

Mr. G. Phipps:

Graeme Phipps, lay member.

Mr. M. Woodhams:

Matthew Woodhams, also a lay member.

Jersey Audit Office:

Ann Trudgeon, Jersey Audit Office.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

And we have officers.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Good morning, Ian Burns. I am the chief officer for Customer and Local Services.

Group Director, Customer Services:

Sophie Le Sueur, group director for Customer Services.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Deputy Andrews is going to start with some questions.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Thank you very much, Chair. Ian, I would like to ask, to begin this session, what are your personal objectives for 2023?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

I have 7 objectives which are agreed with the chief exec. The first one is to deliver for the Minister's delivery plan. Then to lead C.L.S. (Customer and Local Services) and deliver on our key performance indicators from a customer service perspective, deliver our financial targets and savings within budget, help raise standards across Government by supporting the mandatory training completion, completion of appraisals, and to continue our strong risk culture in C.L.S. by making sure we look after our colleagues and the public, and managing health and safety and so on. Develop our people and culture plan for 2023 to further improve colleague engagement and support our values. That will be measured through our Be Heard survey, which I am sure we will come on to. Support Ministers to maintain a practical approach with Scrutiny Panels and Back-Benchers and also to manage stakeholders in the voluntary community sector through our clusters and the like.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

How many tiers of management are there in the department that you are responsible for?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Six.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay, and how often do you communicate with those managers?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

We have a cycle where we, once a quarter, present to everybody in the department about what our ambitions are, what our goals are, and how we are performing as well as other emerging things throughout the year. At the start of the year, we set up what the department's objectives are, which of course are aligned to Minister's plans and then that helped to cascade the objectives through the department. But then every quarter we give an update on how the department is performing and what the developments are. We have a quarterly cycle. I speak to everybody every quarter. We have other forums in the department where managers can obviously meet with directors and we have other engagement tools we use to try and make sure that we understand what our staff are feeling through regular drop-in sessions in the past, but also we meet on a monthly basis now and get colleagues from across the department, say, 10 or 12, for a sort of meet-the-chief meeting.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

What about when we are looking at the relationship between yourself and the Minister, how is that then reported back to the chief executive in terms of our objectives and priorities being delivered?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

We have a Ministerial meeting once a week, which is a key vehicle for the Minister's activity, both in terms of progress and performance. But the chief exec I think asked the Minister for feedback at the end of last year for my appraisal.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

In terms of the objectives that have been set for you, have there been any potential issues that have been raised throughout this year, for instance there may be unintended consequences in terms of something that comes along and that might be then prohibiting you from being able to deliver those objectives?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Obviously with the terrible incidents at the end of last year and in January, which obviously the department was involved in the Government response. I think there was an understanding that we rightly diverted some attention on to that and still do. We support the residents of Haut du Mont, for example. But those would come up obviously in conversations with the chief exec and also through Ministers' meetings.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

When we are looking at staff who may be sitting on zero-hour contracts or who are working part-time, how do you ensure that those members of staff are appraised in terms of their performance and are they treated any differently to those who are full-time equivalents?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

No, they are not. We mainly have permanent full-time and part-time staff on fixed term contracts. I think we have one zero-hour contract, who is not used very often. It is just as a backup for something. They probably do not have a regular appraisal because they do not work very often. But everybody else will do, absolutely.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

I think I am all done there.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Just to clarify, you talked about 6 tiers of management in one of your answers; can you clarify how many direct reports you have?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Four direct reports. I have 3 directors and the head of governance.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Thank you. Also, do you have any support from within Government for yourself and your senior officers when you are setting your own objectives and doing your appraisals?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

I am not quite sure what you mean by that?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Any other support that might exist from within the central team.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

No. We set our own ... obviously I set my objectives with ... the Ministerial delivery plan was agreed with the Minister. I have to agree my objectives with the chief exec and those objectives are cascaded in the normal way that line managers would in the department.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Okay.

Mr. G. Phipps:

I will just follow up a little bit further on this process. With regard to your quarterly appraisals, how close is that link and how is that tied to your performance objectives at the start of the year? Throughout the year things change so how does that relationship between performance objectives set at the start of the year and your quarterly discussions?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

I have a formal quarterly meeting with the chief exec but I meet with Suzanne on a regular monthly basis, and more frequently if I need to. But that is where we formally go through the list of 7 objectives. And something that did not happen and nothing changed particularly in the first quarter, there is an acknowledgement about our response to the tragic events of last year, but my objectives were not changed in that sense. But if they needed to be, if it was emerging, that would be the exact forum to agree that and have a discussion around prioritisation and what might else have to give potentially. But that will be a normal conversation, no different if I was having that conversation with Sophie. If something new appeared or if there was something that Sophie needed more support with then we would have that conversation as part of our ongoing one to ones.

Mr. G. Phipps:

So you have that direct link and you bring it back, refer to those specifically.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Yes.

Mr. G. Phipps:

Does that differ much from your daily conversations or how is that different from your normal discussions? What other things pop up?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

With the chief exec?

Mr. G. Phipps:

Yes.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Probably in my meetings outside of that quarterly appraisal that it would be perhaps more focused on emerging issues or issues that undoubtedly are related in my objectives but we might just focus on one. Although I have 7 objectives, a lot of my focus is on the delivery of the 2023 Ministerial Plan, which is a significant body of work, and that obviously is the area I have most discussions with Suzanne about, as well as the Minister.

Mr. G. Phipps:

Is there a direct link or tie to your measured key performance indicators that track performance? Is that something that would commonly pop up as well in your discussions?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

That information is published quarterly. It is presented to E.L.T. (Executive Leadership Team), Suzanne sees it, the Minister sees the information before it is published, and it is accessible to everybody in Jersey because it is published online. Our quarterly K.P.I.s (key performance indicators) in the Ministerial Plan is 6 and lead to something that we obviously share with the department. The department understands them and we work towards doing them.

Mr. G. Phipps:

I just wonder if that is part of the normal conversation, you would refer to those.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Yes.

Mr. G. Phipps:

I am trying to understand how live are these things.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

An example would be in January unfortunately there was a day when we had a rather bad telephone outage for technical reasons that meant that customers were phoning us but unable to get through. So they believed that they were phoning us up and nothing was wrong but they could not get to speak to anybody. We had 500 calls I think abandoned in one day, which is very frustrating for the public. That is the sort of thing I would have raised at a one to one with Suzanne or actually let her know on the day: "We have a problem across government, nobody can speak to us." But that is the sort of thing that would affect our overall performance. If that is helpful.

Mr. G. Phipps:

I am just trying to understand the process and how that works a little clearer. We will come back to customer feedback area a little later but I will turn it over to Philip.

Mr. P. Taylor:

I am a very simple-minded sort of person. What does your department actually do? I am asking everybody this so please do not feel offended.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Not at all. So Customer and Local Services has a number of key roles. Most of what we do is what you would have previously known as Social Security, so we administer all the benefits for the Minister for Social Security. We also look after the administration of the Control of Housing and Work Law as well. We deliver other services for other Ministers, like the Housing Advice Service, and we also run the crematorium for the Minister for Health and Social Services.

Mr. P. Taylor:

It is essentially customer-facing, if I can put it that way?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Yes.

Mr. P. Taylor:

I note one of your objectives was in connection with delivery of the Ministerial Plan. We had a presentation from Tom Walker yesterday who said one of his objectives was the delivery of the Ministerial Plan. How does your relationship with that central office work?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

The Cabinet Office - I think Tom is responsible for part of the Cabinet Office - obviously deliver for us our H.R. (human resources) services, our I.T. (information technology) and communications and also provides support to the Ministers through their private secretaries. They also include policy and policy is a centralised function now but we have policy people who are working on the Minister for Social Security's delivery plan and attend that weekly meeting with the Minister. There is the Ministerial team, myself, policy experts from S.P.P.P. (Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance) and they are working on programmes. Within my leadership team, I have business partners from H.R., from I.T., and also, in effect, a business partner, a representation from policy. Although people who used to be in the department are now part of the central team we still have a very knitted and supportive policy function that helps deliver for the Minister.

Mr. P. Taylor:

Because I did not know is the reason I was asking. How many people do you have in your department?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

About 254.

Mr. P. Taylor:

It is quite a lot of people really. What sort of outcomes are you looking for?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

From those people?

Mr. P. Taylor:

Yes.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

We have clear objectives around improving service, making sure we deliver on our promises to the public, that we ...

Mr. P. Taylor:

Give me an example.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

For example, we measure customer satisfaction and we ask customers what they think about the service, we ask them about what they thought about how good was the service, how satisfied were they with it, how easy was it, and how they felt about that experience. We survey customers on an

ongoing basis and aim to get over 80 per cent of customers saying that they are satisfied with the service, for example.

Mr. P. Taylor:

I am glad to hear that. For 250 people, how many of them are on the new systems for objective setting and appraisal?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

There are about 91 per cent have had objectives agreed and signed off by their manager. They are currently having half-year appraisals.

Mr. P. Taylor:

Given the customer-facing element of the activity, how does the objective or outcome flow through to the individual person who is answering the phone?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

I can give you a couple of examples of that. First, in customer satisfaction the way we set that up, is that the feedback, although it is anonymous from the public, it is linked to the person who they saw.

[10:15]

Particularly on the phone, if you phone us, at the end of the phone call you can stay on the line, answer 3 questions, potentially leave some verbatim comment and that is linked to the individual you have just spoken to, who has answered the call. That is quite a good system. Over time the individual will know and their manager will know what sort of customer feedback that person is getting or whether they are not getting any feedback. That is also an indication of something.

Mr. P. Taylor:

What summaries do you receive in connection? Obviously a key element of the department's work is how the public feels about you, so what summaries do you receive from that feedback?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

We get detailed feedback on how we are performing and that is given out to the teams across the department. Formally, we look at it ... my leadership team look at our performance across all our K.P.I.s on a quarterly basis and look at that performance. But of course that information is flowing through the department constantly and through people's objectives. The customer satisfaction goes all the way through the department and obviously we publish those results as well. That is what the

customers think about our services, and we are encouraging other departments to follow suit. One of our roles in Government is to ... one of Sophie's responsibilities is to encourage more and more departments to follow that same sort of pattern, gather in feedback, learn from the feedback as well, and make changes.

Mr. P. Taylor:

Can you give me an example of the theme that has come from feedback which you are talking about, and what you have done with it?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Customer feedback?

Mr. P. Taylor:

Yes.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

We have recently had examples where some colleagues were not getting any feedback whatsoever, so they were answering hundreds of calls in a week but they were not receiving any feedback. So that was peculiar so we had a look about why that was, help coach the members of staff to change their approach slightly so they made sure that the customer was able to give feedback if they wanted to. That has been really helpful in expanding the number of customer feedback. That is not quite what you asked but that is the example of where we have made improvement. I do not know if you have any ...

Group Director, Customer Services:

Something like communication and style of communication is an example of where we have had feedback from customers. Our Minister was aware of this from when she joined us as a Minister, and it is a frequent theme that sometimes our communication might not have come across as empathetic as it could, sometimes it was not always easy to understand. As a direct result of that what we have done is we have a project in the delivery plan specifically targeting improving communication. That project is quite specific around benefits and contributions but we have taken it on wider as a department. We have included it as an objective for all colleagues around. We have trained colleagues throughout the department in what clear and easy communication looks like. That training is hopefully then flowing through to even when they speak to someone on the phone. A lot of our communication is via email, which is not a prescriptive template that can necessarily be fixed. That is an example of where we knew from feedback we had some challenges, and so we have developed training and we are doing specific actions to try and improve that, and we have seen improved feedback as a result.

Mr. P. Taylor:

A few process questions; how are you measuring the consistency objective setting within the 250 people?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Firstly, I have gone out and said to the department what our key goals are for the year as a department, and that helps flow people's cascade through. Obviously I have my objectives, I share those objectives with my leadership team, and through these 2 things we then cascade those objectives all the way through. A lot of emphasis is being put on the new system. The new system is an easier system to use to record appraisals but the real emphasis is not about the system, it is about the quality of conversations that take place. This is something that we have been working on and I suppose emphasising with line managers for some time, ever since I have been involved with the department. From the feedback we get from our colleagues through appraisals and other bits of feedback, I have high confidence that we are having good conversations with people, some of the time they are difficult conversations with people, which is part of an appraisal process, and that those are happening across the department and they are also being recorded in this new system.

Mr. P. Taylor:

How do you feel about consistency between the results for appraisals and what is said and written and your other evidence that you have, such as customer feedback and so forth?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

One of the things in the new system is a rating system. Against each objective you self-rate on a scale of one to 5 and the manager rates on a scale of one to 5. So in this half year, once we have completed it, I will have visibility, I would hope, on the consistency of that scoring across the department. I do not have that now because it is a half-year stage process. That will be something that will give us intelligence over how consistent that is. If we find we have a team who perhaps are performing fine but they have all been rated 5 stars versus another team that is overperforming but the agreement is only 3 stars, there will be some of that obviously to have a look at and understand.

Mr. P. Taylor:

You need to discuss it.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

You can have a look at that across the whole of Government as everyone completes their mid-year reviews.

Mr. P. Taylor:

How many contractors do you have in your 250 people? Not full-time people.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Not full-time people? You mean reduced hours?

Mr. P. Taylor:

Part-time people, people who are on zero-hour contracts.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

We do have people who are on ... the word "contractors" we normally think of somebody who is perhaps a consultant of some sort.

Mr. P. Taylor:

I am never quite sure which term to use.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Most of people are permanent staff whether they are working full-time or part-time. We do have some fixed term contracts, mainly used for when we need cover; things like secondment or maternity leave and so on. Outside of that, we have a very small number of people who are either consultants working through for a contract, deliver a service, and we might have one or 2 people who are working on a low-level contract. But they are not employees.

Mr. P. Taylor:

Are they on Connect performance?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

None of those.

Mr. P. Taylor:

So how do you manage that?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

I physically describe people over this side with my hand. None of those people will be on Connect performance. They are not employees of Government. But they of course would be held to account through their contractual arrangements to deliver. So we would raise any issues with their performance with their company.

Mr. P. Taylor:

I will pass you on to Tom. I apologise for stealing some of your thunder.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I was going to hand over to Matt actually.

Mr. M. Woodhams:

Obviously the objectives that are set for you and everybody else are part of trying to deliver the common strategic policy for the Island and what we want Jersey to be. It is partly forward facing and partly backward facing because you learn from the past and then you develop forwards. One of the most useful tools for that is understanding what the risk is that you are facing. When you know what the risk is you know what you have to do to fix it as opposed to flying blind. I go in 3s, I cannot go past 3 or I forget the first. What are the top 3 risks that you are managing?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Like most organisations in Government, cybersecurity and information security is at the top of my list. Then after that we have ...

Mr. M. Woodhams:

How does that impact you particularly?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

There are many things we can do to help keep our information and prevent the risk of a cyberattack. Much of that can be done by experience, I.T. colleagues in the centre, with Tom's team who you were talking to yesterday, but there are also things that we can do as colleagues to make sure that we take the very basic steps to keep our data safe and avoid clicking on an email that maybe is a route into something. We mitigate that risk by ensuring that we have high levels of awareness and training over the threats of cybersecurity. We also of course run through potential actions we can take should something happen, and that is also taking place at corporate level as well. So cybersecurity is one. The next one is the impact of the economic climate. If the economy were to decline rapidly particularly, then there will be a greater call on my team to deliver financial support to the public and also help people find new work, and that will also potentially impact on the well-being of the funds.

Mr. M. Woodhams:

Do you have a liaison or link with the other relevant services within Government? Because obviously you cannot just magic up cash.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

No, so for statutory benefits that would be a conversation we would have with the Treasury of course, because people ... unless you change the benefit rules you would need to continue to pay benefits and therefore the money would have to be found. An example of that, in COVID we had an extra 1,000 people who registered and claimed income support, who had become unemployed in a matter of weeks. That was a good example of how we had considered what mitigations we would put in place should the economic situation change rapidly. We were able to respond to that public demand very quickly albeit at a perhaps slightly higher risk appetite than we would have in normal things as usual. The impact on economic climate is on the department. It also applies for our resources as well because we may need more people to help handle that and provide support to the public. Resources is also a consideration in that and that will be a much trickier conversation with the Treasury.

Mr. M. Woodhams:

How do you find that because that is the perennial problem in Jersey of where do we get people?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

In a case of a rapid decline in economy it becomes a priority and therefore we would potentially stop doing other things across Government and pooling resources to help make sure that the public get the support they need. That is perhaps an easier thing to describe than the difficulties of trying to recruit. We have recruitment ... it is not one of our top risks at the moment but we have recruitment as part of our people and culture plan. We have been quite open with colleagues about what we are trying to do to improve retention but also improve our ways we recruit people.

Mr. M. Woodhams:

The third risk?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

The third risk is around the crematorium because running that service we obviously are reliant upon the cremators being operational, and obviously we have mitigations there. We have 2 cremators and we have regular servicing. The plant is old and therefore the servicing is very important to keep those cremators operating. Obviously we have plans as to what would happen; if one of them were to cease working we would get a temporary cremator in. But ultimately the plan is to have new plant and we have a capital bid in the ... we have capital monies - not bid - allocated in 2024-2025 to address that issue. Once we have clarity over the Overdale site then we will be able to get some new plant in there potentially.

Mr. M. Woodhams:

There might be a debate between you, Education and Health, who has the most public-facing side? I think between the 3 of you it might depend on what is going on at a particular moment. But between the 3 areas you have the greatest impact on how the population feels, how Government is running. Because if you have that good upfront connection you feel happy, you do not really know what is going on in the background in committees like this, in Ministerial offices, whatever. So I am talking to you on 31st December, and I say: "How was your year?" and you go: "My year was absolutely fantastic because the following happened." What was it that happened to make that year fantastic, in your ideal year?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

In my ideal year we would have lots of happy customers, as you just described. We would have lots of happy staff and I would have a very happy Minister. That would be a good place. The things that would help deliver that would be to bring the Minister's delivery plan ahead of schedule, I am sure. That is probably what she would want to see. For colleagues, it would be that I think we would be able to keep going with the progress that we have been making in terms of our engagement and making C.L.S. a better place to work. Hopefully that will come through in the latest round of staff surveys. That is about delivering on their feedback improvements to our organisation to make it a better location to work. It would be even better if we could move into the new office by the end of the year because we would have air-conditioning that worked across the organisation, and that would be a great benefit for everybody. Then our customers of course; to continue to improve our service to make ourselves accessible and consistent and very easy to do service. That is the path we are on. The big thing for us is - the big leap forward for that - is our own transform; our programme to change our current I.T. system. It is wider than just changing the I.T. system. We want to change many of our processes as well to make things much easier for the public.

[10:30]

By the end of the year we will have gone through a tender process. To make my year fantastic, that would be great if we had a brilliant supplier, a very good price who could deliver everything really quickly. If you are asking for my dream list.

Mr. M. Woodhams:

That sounds like a very positive one. We will go into an alternate world now where we have a different conversation on 31st December and I say: "How was your year?" and you go: "Oh my God, it was awful. Everything has gone wrong. Everything I wanted to do, none of it happened." What are the things that you think might derail you, cause you problems, the challenges that you might have to face? What might stop that?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Take transform, for example. We find that there is no supplier who can deliver what we wish in the financial envelope that we have then that would cause a significant challenge to the success of the programme.

Mr. M. Woodhams:

Do you have plan B?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Plan B would be to compromise on our requirements or delivery schedules. I do not think anybody particularly wants to get further funding for this project. That would be disappointing, to have to scale back, because ultimately we are trying to move forward on some good things for the public so they can access their own data, they can see their own correspondence, that we can make payments automatically rather than having people apply. There are big advantages if we get the system in that cost envelope. Yes, we have already considered of course other options in our business case and would have to fall back on some of those and perhaps even reset and reconsider what it is we can move forward on.

Mr. P. Taylor:

That is what other departments do to you so there may be issues in other departments that affect whether you have been able to deliver your objectives. What would be a bad year which was something under your control?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Transform is under my control. It is, absolutely. Obviously our colleagues from M. and D. (Modernisation and Digital) are involved in it - we would not do an I.T. project without their expertise - but I am the accountable officer for that programme.

Mr. M. Woodhams:

Do you have any other ones that are going to be those potholes you might trip in?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

You are talking about a bad year; I do not really want to tempt fate by mentioning any site security.

Mr. M. Woodhams:

If we know what the risks are that might happen ... so you have the plan B for transform, if we know what it is we know what else we might do so it is not so impactful.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

I have a meeting structure in the department for a leadership team that covers all aspects of running our organisation; so finance, risk, our people, our performance, et cetera, it is almost a scorecard kind of approach. The risk meeting is key to mitigate managing our risk and managing our organisation. Yes, that does drive us to consider worst-case scenarios and plan for that with potential mitigations and testing out whether those would work in advance. I am comfortable we have a good governance cycle and risk, in particular, is something that we use to manage the department better.

Mr. M. Woodhams:

Do you have your own risk register sitting within your department?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Yes.

Mr. M. Woodhams:

This is a question you may not be able to answer. Are they of the same criteria and standard across all departments. Is there a standard model that you follow?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

There is a system called E.R.M. (Enterprise Risk Management), and we use that. But again I would say that is important to get consistency across Government so that E.L.T. and the C.E.O. (chief executive officer) can have a view of the overall risk. Again, what is important is the quality of the conversations you have about those risks and about the risk mitigations. We have been building our awareness and the use of risk appetite over the last few years as a way of helping us test out our risks and also considering when we have a plan B or a mitigation whether we would not be happiest accepting a higher level of risk and suddenly we are ... we are not experts at that but we are trying that approach. It certainly helped us in COVID in some of our responses to say that we are happy to accept a high level of risk for this next short period.

Mr. M. Woodhams:

Final question from me before I hand back to the chair. Do you do assessments on your control effectiveness of the risks that you are mitigating?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, we do. As you can imagine, we are a financial organisation - £400 million of benefits approximately we pay out every year - so we do have controls built into the system that we have

added in but also we do sample and test out processes on an ongoing basis to make sure that the controls are effective.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Thank you. I am going to hand over to Deputy Coles.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

So I am going to take it back to more your employee objectives and appraisals. You mentioned that you had 254 employees but only 91 per cent have objectives set. Why is the gap for the other 9 percent?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

We have obviously had a look at those to understand why. There are some people who are on long-term sickness, there are some people whose manager is on long-term sickness and the system still has them as the manager, therefore we cannot complete the ... somebody else cannot complete the conversation in the system but the conversation is still happening with the person who is standing in. There are valid reasons for all of the 9 per cent like that, without going into specific detail of each person. But we have had a look at it and at the moment that is fine. Those people, as the system updates more regularly, as people return from maternity and so on, those will be completed.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

All 254 employees are within scope of Connect people?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

We do have a small number of manual workers who are outside that scope.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

You also mentioned that you only see the data updated quarterly, I think you said. Or is that just when you look at it? Because we have had other officers say that they get that information almost in real time for the appraisals and objectives.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

You can get it on real time, yes. Obviously there has been a tremendous focus for Ministers around the Connect form. I was referring to we have a formal leadership quarterly review of performance, as a board would, but it does not mean to say that we do not get far more frequent updates on our performance, on a daily basis in many cases. Connect performance is obviously something we have been looking at to help ensure that everyone has the skills to be able to use the system and

that we have been making progress. The system is one thing, it is the conversations that are really important. We have put a lot of effort in training people in the past.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Slightly off, but on the same thing, do you have much of a turnover of staff within your department?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Turnover is about between 8 per cent and 10 per cent. You would obviously get some turnover in an organisation. Quite a lot of people do move in Government from C.L.S. to different parts of Government, and even become States Deputies. So that does happen. We do look at it every month and we have our organisational development meeting. We look at our people dashboard, and that includes our leavers' feedback. We do see the feedback from some questionnaires from our leavers and understand what the reasons are for that and what, if any, we can do about it.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Any sort of common thread that you are noticing?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

It is quite a long tale for the reasons, but the single largest reason is people looking for career development and moving on outside the organisation to perhaps private sector businesses.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Then we are talking about how you measure employee satisfaction. You mentioned the conversations. Do you have any sort of markers that you use to measure your employee satisfaction within ...

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

The survey should be an annualised way of capturing our colleague sentiment in a way that can be measured and compared from year to year. We have been running surveys in C.L.S. for quite some years now. Our last survey we obviously have adapted to the current Be Heard approach. Our last survey was in October, we did a Pulse survey, and we did one the year before that and then the 2021 was Be Heard. The 2020 survey was Be Heard as well. That allows us to measure our progress but the really important thing for us is that we share those results really quickly and then engage within teams to get feedback over what the actions are. What is wrong is to get, for us as leaders, the feedback, discuss it and then work out to decide what we are going to do. This is feedback from the teams, from our employees, so we need to make sure they are involved in the actions that we need to take to address their feedback. Our last survey in October pleasingly showed improvements across every single category. We have got a good completion rate this time

in terms of people completing the survey, and I am looking forward to seeing what the results are, but we are starting from quite a good place from only a few months ago.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

How do you feel that the morale and feeling within your department is at the moment?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

In addition to the survey, the other things we do ... I mean we are quite visible leaders and sit out among the teams. We are quite approachable from that perspective. But we have been running these what we call S.L.T. catch-ups over the last few months. Where we invite, let us say, a dozen or so colleagues from across the department and have an informal conversation with people about things to do with working in a department. That gives us a sense of how people are feeling. We have done in the past drop-in sessions where people can come in on individual issues. We have H.R. who are now coming to the department every couple of months and open the doors up to anyone to just drop in. From that we also get a flavour of issues. Of course there are always things we can do to improve. But there is a positive sense at the moment that we are trying to do the right things. I think our culture plan this year is trying to address the issues from the last survey and that they believe action is being taken.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Where would you say the flavour is if you had like the flavour of dreaded coming to work, had no bad feelings about coming to work and really positively coming to work? Where do you think your morale sits in?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

There is a question like that in the survey so I will tell you in a few weeks when the results come out. I would like to think we would be the same as we were or better in October but, as I say, it has not been very long since the last survey.

Mr. P. Taylor:

Can you give me an example of an issue that came out of the last survey that you had to deal with? What was that issue and what did you do with it?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Our people and culture plan, which is based upon that, has 4 key areas. One is around recruitment, retention, well-being and management and leadership. Did you want to ...?

Group Director, Customer Services:

From a well-being perspective, what colleagues said is they felt that there had been a shift in the department since COVID. In COVID obviously we changed. While we did work and we still had quite a lot in the office, people were quite fixed and people were at separate desks. We had changed from being a department who were very much walking round seeing each other, everyone knew each other's names, we were a very sociable department. COVID had almost brought this strange sense of a lot of new people have started and people did not know each other, and they felt that while they had a good sense of team that had been lost slightly in the department. That came through loud and clear, that they wanted to feel part of the bigger department. We spoke to colleagues who gave this sort of feedback, we put the ownership in their court. Some of them have kindly taken on relaunching the social committee. We have our Team Jersey leads who have been doing some active things. Even things like now we have got a great breakout space for lunch. People have brought in some board games and things like this, which when people are having lunch they are meeting people. There has been hosted, like lunch in the park at Howard Davis Park just up the road from us, encouraging people to get away from their desk at lunchtime but they can go up and do things. These sorts of social events, that is a direct result of people saying: "I did not know other people in the department" and I think because COVID interrupted our normal flow.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

We are going to talk about the Team Jersey programme following the 2018 OneGov reforms. How do you feel that impacted the culture within your area?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

The Team Jersey programme overall I think was a success. It had a positive impact. In C.L.S. some parts of the programme we were already a bit further ahead, so in particular around the values. The values, we have long championed the values as a way of helping improve performance and behaviours and have them in the building on display, on pillars and all sorts, before Team Jersey even started.

[10:45]

One aspect of the Team Jersey programme was to try and raise everybody up to a level across Government and get a common language and a common set of behaviours. We were already perhaps beyond that but the other parts of the programme, the training around crucial conversations and cornerstones was really good. We had a high take-up from our line managers on that line manager training, and I think I can be confident that that has helped develop our cohort of line management in the department. I am sure that has partly also helped drive some of our improvements in our staff engagement survey results. As Sophie just mentioned, after that we also had a cohort of energised people Team Jersey leads who have helped us with quite a few different

aspects of our people engagement. For example, following our survey result, the Team Jersey leads will help facilitate some of the discussions around why people felt like they did when they filled the survey in and what could be done about it. That is also good use of some very talented people.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Just before we leave the topic around performance management, obviously as well as being chief officer of your department you are a member of the executive leadership team and together, as a member of that team, you are responsible for delivering Government-wide objectives. How does the work of that executive leadership team help you or not to deliver your objectives and your departmental objectives?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Probably a number of thoughts around that. So, E.L.T. operates both as a board for running the organisation for the chief executive but also as an executive management team in terms of dealing with looking at staff policies and financial matters and so on. There is a mixture between the 2. E.L.T. works collaboratively on a number of things, things like financial management, for example, and the overall government finances, how we can help support each other with money challenges and the like. But it is also a good vehicle for us to be able to encourage and promote our objectives around trying to improve the services that Government provides, helping more and more take-up of our customer satisfaction model that I described earlier, making sure that complaints ... the high visibility on our customer feedback and complaints. That is the vehicle that we particularly use for E.L.T. Obviously Ministers' legislative changes will perhaps also be discussed at E.L.T. in advance, for awareness perhaps, but like the actuarial reviews recently that was something that we obviously briefed colleagues on. We have common objectives around Trackers and the like but also around take-up of corporate training and collective performance, for example.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Now you will be aware there are some recommendations that you will be currently working on with regards previous P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) recommendations and Comptroller and Auditor General recommendations. We just have a couple of questions on some of those. Graeme, will start with those.

Mr. G. Phipps:

One last performance-related question I would like to throw out. Regarding the process, have you considered or are you implemented to any degree 360 feedback either within your group or considering it across the Government whereby there is a formal process for providing feedback upwards of how the manager is doing across the teams, et cetera. Do you have any comments or thoughts on that?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

I think it is a really good thing to do. In the last Pulse Be Heard survey we did in October we were the first department to use MC³, which is a weird sounding name, but what that really means is that a line manager with at least 3 survey responses, 3 from their line reports, would get some development feedback based upon that feedback out of the survey. It is not about performance. It is about development. Over 4 qualities they would be given feedback and I can see therefore across my line management cohort those who had enough people respond, where people's development areas were, but also where we had some strong feedback from the team in a positive way as well as identifying development areas. That is not the 360-degree feedback but that is a good start. Obviously the other side of that would be the discussions that take place in appraisals as well. There are opportunities there for people after the survey to have some real good feedback from their team. But they also have that opportunity in their conversations to ask for feedback and receive feedback from their manager. There is not a tool ... we have looked previously about doing 360-degree feedbacks and we could not find a tool at a department working with H.R. colleagues that would be cost-effective to do that. It has to be done in a certain way to give colleagues the confidence that the data is anonymous. In some cases that is something that people would be worried about. But that is not a tool that we have at the moment that will allow us to do 360 but we would like to. But the MC³ is a really good step forward. This latest survey that is open at the moment, MC³ will be available across all departments. That will be quite a big change. I had a MC³ feedback from my line reports, and Sophie and all the way down the organisation.

Mr. G. Phipps:

I encourage you to continue to look. I have experiences in the private industry and probably the best feedback I got was the stuff that came up. Good luck with that. I hope you proceed that. I would like to now focus a little bit on one of the previous P.A.C. recommendations that I was involved in. That pertained to a formal process should be initiated to ensure outstanding complaints by members of the public into any matter are in place, and you have responded that the customer feedback policy is in place, regular oversight is in place by a group of department and feedback managers. Can you just dig a little bit deeper into what is meant by "regular oversight" and how the process and the discussions you have pertaining to customer feedback, how you deal with that?

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

Sophie's really keen to answer this one.

Group Director, Customer Services:

I suppose oversight comes in, in different ways. We have detail on if we are talking feedback in terms of complaints, compliments, suggestions from our customers, that is all gathered centrally and

then it is handled and responded to by the relevant people who can look into that feedback. But what we also then have is a sort of network across Government of departmental feedback managers, and we have that ... in C.L.S. we play a role of oversight of keeping an eye on what is coming in and what are the themes, what are we learning from this feedback but also are we doing what we said. We have got a customer feedback policy that we commit to. Handling feedback in a certain way and what is important is that we can assure ourselves that we are doing what we say. Within that we have quality assurance tools that we use, such as we send people who have submitted a complaint, we send them a survey. Once their complaint has been closed, asking them how well they feel we handled their survey. We also do sampling of complaints by someone who was not involved in a complaint itself but goes and looks at a selection of complaints at random to see if there are any learnings from that. But also I suppose we have that oversight where we do formal reporting. We have monthly reports that come out to a customer experience board. On a quarterly basis there is a more formal report that does go to E.L.T. around themes, volumes, trends, that sort of thing.

Mr. G. Phipps:

I presume you are measuring and tracking some of this numerically so you can see year over year whether you are improving or not. How is the Government doing on the response to feedback from the customer, the population at large, if you look over 2, 3 or 4-year trend? Or is this something that you are just getting into.

Group Director, Customer Services:

With complaints, I think what is important is we do not focus solely on numeral data because it can be ... what we want to make sure is that sometimes having an increase in complaints logged is not necessarily a bad thing. What we are trying to do is champion. You have probably seen our ongoing feedback campaign and we have had radio adverts recently encouraging people to submit that feedback. So we do track the volume but we always try and make the point that a number does not tell you everything. I suppose alongside that we do look at ... and we have had some enhancements to our system recently which has made it a lot easier for us to report on other things such as what percentage of complaints are upheld. Are we responding to people in a timely manner? We have commitments within the customer feedback policy.

Mr. G. Phipps:

I appreciate that any one indicator can have problems with it but on balance, when you stand back and look at the overall way of tracking, how are you doing year over year and what is the trend? There are lots of initiatives, for example. You automate things for costs but that creates all kinds of problems with customers who are on computers, for example. So how are you doing? In looking at all these indicators and tracking over time, what is your view?

Group Director, Customer Services:

I think there is generally an upwards positive trend in the way we are handling feedback but equally from a customer satisfaction perspective. But there are a lot of good things that come through as well. In terms of themes, there are some common themes that I suppose they are ... they are not things that we can say we have eliminated themes around attitude behaviour, how people are feeling; that sort of remains a common theme throughout.

Mr. G. Phipps:

But can you see a direction of travel of where things are going, if it is getting better overall? Obviously you are doing a trend analysis/root cause analysis. If you are capturing complaints better you will have more reported is a good tool.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

One of the things that I would have been worried about, and we launched this in 2019, there would have been a typical sort of response to something that is going to be around for a short while until something else more important comes along the complaints would have gone up. Complaint recording would have gone up and then tailed off. We would have all potentially slapped ourselves on the back and said: "Well done, everybody, we do not get complaints anymore." But actually people have just stopped bothering in terms of recording complaints. A lot of the complaints are recorded on behalf of customers in our system, not just by the public directly. But what has happened is the number of complaints has remained robust so there is a level of complaints coming in that has meant that this is established. That is a really important test for us from the beginning, would this be a fad that would be around for a bit and people get bored with it or would it be a bit more of a cultural change that recording complaints in this way is a behaviour that is settled in departments? I think therefore we can look at that and think that is good. The culture previously in some areas was that a complaint is bad. It was going to cause a lot of problems, if I recall this complaint, better not to do that. Better not to escalate it up. But of course that is terrible for the customer who has raised that issue.

Mr. G. Phipps:

They have also done your work for you when they are bringing a complaint.

Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:

It is also terrible for the next 3 or 4 customers who experience the same poor service. Let us record it, let us see how we can resolve the issue but also what can we do about that? I think that is a better place that we are in than if it just died off.

Mr. G. Phipps:

No, I agree that if complaints fall off it could be because there is nothing being done and they are frustrated and cannot be bothered, for example. But then when you come up with changes because you hear the complaints, so what is your process of communicating across not only your own group but across the Government on changes that need to be done or learnings from complaints. How is that process or the benefit or the initiatives that come out of it communicated across the Government?

Group Director, Customer Services:

I suppose there are different ways but at a local level there is the opportunity to ... after any complaint now we log is there an improvement that can come from this which can stop this happening again? And that we can then pull themes on what are the improvements that we are seeing. Then we have a monthly meeting across Government with departmental feedback managers who discuss what are the themes that we are seeing and share learning because sometimes it might be that we have had something happening in C.L.S.; a complaint, a difficult issue, but we have learnt from it, we have improved. But by sharing that in the right form with others we can put preventative methods in, we can have training, we can do some things in other departments.

[11:00]

Then we also bring that up a level to a board level, at a customer experience board, and of course at E.L.T. as well. It depends on ... but I think the departmental feedback manager group is a really important network to just even sometimes, if there is something that has happened, they are in regular communication, they can share examples and we can put learnings in place that do not just fix it locally but can have wider impact. Going back to that communication point that I talked about earlier, that is something that started as something local in C.L.S. but now we are talking to many other departments about it, sharing that training, those sorts of things.

Mr. G. Phipps:

I think we are running out of time.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

We are. I was going to suggest that what we will do with any further questions is put them in writing to you. Thank you both for attending the hearing today. Thank you to the committee and the supporting officers. I draw this hearing to a close.

[11:01]