

Internal Audit Review – Review of HR Service Desk (PSNI 1718-33) – Value Enhancement

*Police Service of
Northern Ireland*

April 2018

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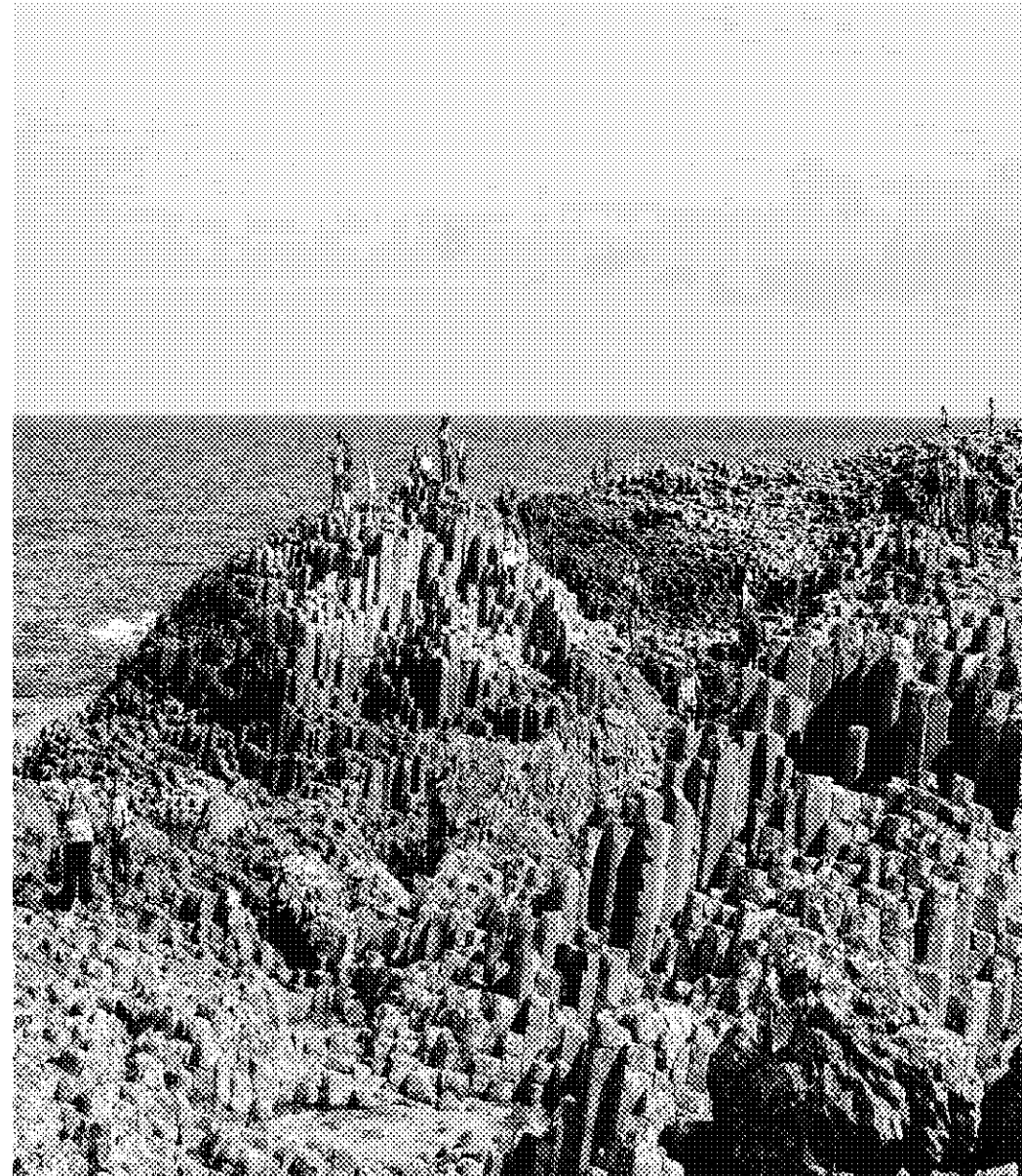
To: [REDACTED] / Head of Human Resources

From: [REDACTED] Head of Internal Audit



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Introduction

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1. Introduction

Scope

PwC were engaged by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) as part of the 2017/18 internal audit plan, to:

- Critically review the current functionality of the HR Knowledge Centre; the HR Service Desk; and how queries are handed-off to other HR teams within the PSNI.
- Engage with PSNI staff members / stakeholders to discuss the current functionality of the HR Service Desk and consider the future structure proposed by [REDACTED] (G7 HR Operations).

This was an advisory review, therefore no opinion was provided.

The current HR Service Desk is lead by the G7 HR Operations and is supported a HR Operations Manager. The day to day operational delivery of the HR Service Desk is provided by 14.35 FTE (6 full-time staff and 11 part-time staff) and is managed by 2 EOIs and an EOI.

Approach

The following approach was adopted:

1. *Understanding the current 'as is'*

- Conduct a desktop review of relevant information regarding the current structure and strategic context
- Meet with senior managers to discuss the current structure and future option to be considered during the review

2. *HR Knowledge Centre*

- Conduct a desktop review of the user functionality and content of the HR Knowledge Centre

3. *HR Service Desk*

- Conduct a desktop review of management information and listen to typical calls
- Conduct a detailed review of the three typical enquires received with regards to the end to end user experience
- Conduct workshops with the HR Service Desk staff members and the HR Partners
- Conduct meetings with relevant HR teams within PSNI to understand how the service desk works with other teams

4. *Process map*

- Map the current and future proposed processes for internal recruitment (local selection), request for additional resources and grievance

1. Introduction

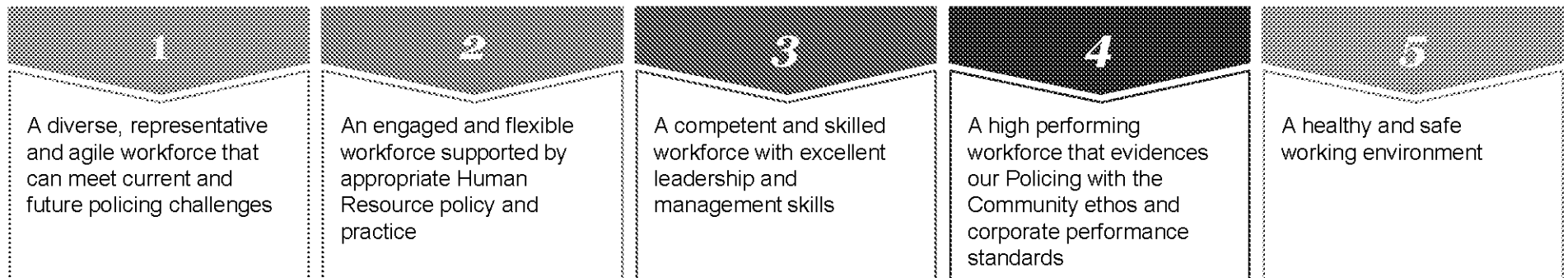
Strategic context

“Keeping people safe is what we do, and policing within the community is how we do it”

The PSNI’s vision is to have a workforce that is:

- Inspirational, resourceful, flexible with a ‘can do’ attitude
- Motivated, talented, competent and skilled
- Dynamic and responsive to meet the changing needs of local communities
- Diverse and representative of Northern Ireland communities and
- Confident in building and sustaining partnership working

To achieve the People Strategy for 2015-2019, the PSNI has defined 5 broad strategic aims, which are illustrated below:



The current strategy also details desired outcomes and key objectives to support the delivery of the strategic aims outlined above. Two outcomes which we believe are relevant to the review of the HR Service Desk they are:

- Line Managers are supported in meeting their managerial responsibilities
- Effective and timely people management processes

1. Introduction

Our understanding of your current structure

We understand that following the rollout of a devolved HR structure in 2002 for HR Managers, and in 2007 with the Heads of HR being appointed to District and Department Command Teams, the structure was focused and structured locally and this led to inconsistencies across Districts and Departments. We understand that local agendas had on occasion driven HR priorities without always giving consideration for the wider corporate picture or strategic agenda.

The HR structure was reviewed in 2012 and the following objectives were set for this project:

1

"To radically transform the current HR Service delivery model of the PSNI to achieve value for money, consistency and corporacy in delivering organisational objectives."

What you wanted to achieve

Some of the targets associated with this objective were; to reduce HR headcount; deliver a fundamental review of HR policies and procedures prior to establishing an HR service centre; and undertake job evaluation of key HR roles within the structure. The projected benefits associated with this objective included clarity on the roles and responsibilities of HR, efficient and effective use of resources, improved service delivery, and increasing confidence in policies and procedures.

2

"To implement an effective HR service model which provides Line Managers with appropriate HR advice and support, at the right time and at the right level, to enable them to effectively manage their people"

What you wanted to achieve

Some of the targets associated with this objective were; to achieve an initial 70% baseline satisfaction level from users of the HR service after 6 months, rising to 80% after 12 months; to identify and plan for Line Management and HR staff training requirements and; to develop a communication strategy for the HR Change Programme.

3

"To achieve an HR Service that represents value for money"

What you wanted to achieve

Some of the targets associated with this objective were; to embed and review key performance measures of HR service delivery within 6 months of going live and; to agree a redeployment programme with HR Resourcing by 31 January 2013 to identify those for redeployment by 30 June 2013.

1. Introduction

Our understanding of your current structure

As part of the review, PSNI researched HR structures of similar police services as well as private organisations and a range of options were considered. The option which was chosen was:

Establishing an HR Service Centre, a Transaction Centre and clearly define the corporate HR portfolios.

There were 3 key elements to the proposed new HR structure:

- 1. Establish a dedicated Service Centre – act as a first contact point for any officer or support staff with an HR query, providing consistent levels of advice and support on HR matters to the whole organisation*
- 2. Centralisation of HR administrative tasks – streamlining HR processes leading to a more ‘user friendly’ set of HR guidance, enabling officers and staff to deliver job roles with increased confidence*
- 3. Identify the corporate HR portfolios – enabling officers and staff to understand the core demands of HR and how they deliver support in front line policing*

We understand that it was PSNI’s vision for the Service Centre to act as the first contact point for any officer or support staff with an HR query, providing consistent levels of advice and support on HR matters to the whole organisation. It was also envisioned that it would support Line Managers in their day to day decision making on people management issues. It was originally proposed that this centralised team was made up of both a HR Service Centre and a Transaction Centre. It is our understanding that since the change was implemented, the transaction element of the ASO role and the phone desk have been amalgamated to form one HR Service Desk with multi-skilled ASO’s.

Key findings

2

2. Key findings

For the purpose of this report we have detailed our key findings (from the desktop review, observations, discussions and workshops) under the following four headings:

- ***HR Knowledge Centre***
- ***Management information***
- ***HR Service Desk***
- ***HR Partners***

HR Knowledge Centre

Our approach to reviewing the HR Knowledge Centre was threefold – firstly we analysed a number of policy documents which were obtained from the HR Knowledge Centre and Police Net. Secondly, through the assistance of PSNI staff members, we observed how the HR portals operate, and thirdly we spoke to PSNI staff members about their experiences of the using the different portals that are currently available.

User functionality

From our analysis we understand there are two different HR portals that officers and staff members can avail of, namely the HR Knowledge Centre and Police Net. We understand that both portals are only accessible through a PSNI desktop, however an app is currently being developed so that officers and staff members can access the HR Knowledge Centre through their work mobile phones.

On the HR Knowledge Centre there is a search function at the top of the homepage, which allows the user to type in a key word. The one drawback of this search facility is that it can either generate a large volume of information or no information at all. We tested the functionality of the search facility alongside one of the ASOs, and typed in ‘eye care’, to which no information was found. We note that eye care is a typical enquiry received by the HR Service Desk from officers.

If a user wants to log a call (enquiry) on the HR Knowledge Centre they have to stroll down to the bottom of the homepage to do so. This could be a potential reason as to why one of the top three most popular articles on the HR Knowledge Centre is “How to raise a call (enquiry) on HR Knowledge Centre”. In addition, when logging a call (enquiry) the user must select a category in which to log their call under. Feedback we received during our review indicated that officers and staff members might not be using this service as they don’t know what category to log their call under, as some of the headings are not self-explanatory.

2. Key findings

HR Knowledge Centre continued

Content of the HR Knowledge Centre

It was apparent from the outset that there was a lack of consistency between the HR Knowledge Centre and the Police Net portals. The HR Knowledge Centre has a search facility whereas the Police Net portal contains three different A-Z guides:

1. On the homepage of the Police Net portal there is a section titled “Human Resources”, within this tab there is an A-Z guide
2. Within the above A-Z guide under “P – Police Staff Handbook” there is a second A-Z guide for staff members only
3. There is a third A-Z guide within “Corporate Policy” under Service Policy and Service Instructions

When reviewing the policies contained within the above A-Z guides it was not always apparent from the initial read if the individual HR policy related to officers, staff members or both officers and staff members. We understand that this has caused confusion in the past e.g. staff members are entitled to hospital leave whereas officers are not.

It also came to our attention during the review of the Police Net portal that the HR policies aren’t necessarily listed in alphabetical order. For example if a user was looking for information on maternity leave typically they would check for the relevant policy under the letter “M”. However this was not the case, in fact the maternity leave policy was listed under “E” for equality and diversity.

Both portals also appeared to have out of date policies. For example at the time of our review the temporary promotion policy on the HR Knowledge Centre was out of date. We also received similar feedback from staff members, including HR Partners who use the policies on a regular basis, *“policies are sometimes updated with no communication”, “we are not always informed of what version we are on”, “some policies are still in draft, which one are we following, makes us look unprofessional”*. In addition there were some policies contained on one portal and not on the other. For example, we understand that the most up to date version of the IPR policy is available within the A-Z guide under the “Corporate Policy” tab within Police Net, but not available on the HR Knowledge Centre.

The disparate approach to accessing HR policies across a number of online portals and guides makes it difficult to access ‘one version of the truth’ and undermines the objective of self-service.

It is interesting to note that there is a function on the HR Knowledge Centre which allows users to rate their experience. Out of 26,136 hits on the portal, 351 users casted their vote rating their experience, with the average vote registering “Somewhat helpful”.

2. Key findings

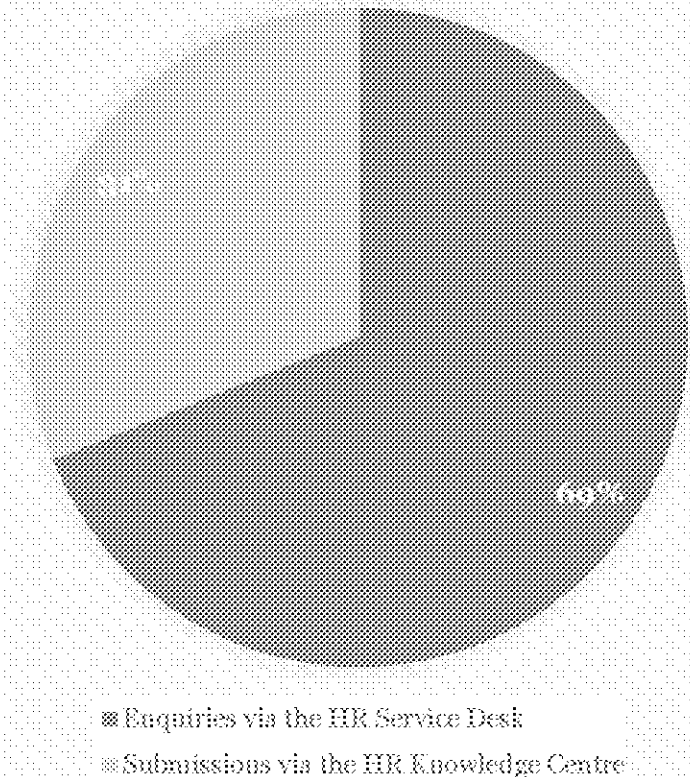
Management information

As part of this assignment, to review the HR Service Desk, we analysed management information data to obtain insights into how the HR Service Desk and HR Knowledge Centre are used by the business.

We were advised by the PSNI that the statistics were derived from the SDM and open scape systems and relates to the period from 2 May 2017 to 12 March 2018. In addition we were advised that the statistics relating to the submissions via the HR Knowledge Centre should be treated with the caveat, that there is likely to be reasonable margin for error, as that the system does not allow for detailed reporting. It is also important to note that the total number of enquiries received by the HR Service Desk does not potentially provide a full picture of the activity, as currently the management information system does not capture outgoing calls from the HR Service Desk.

During discussions with staff members from the PSNI it also became apparent that enquiries can also come from a number of other sources i.e. email enquiries sent directly to specific ASO's within the HR Service Desk and physical drop-ins to the HR Service Desk (typically in relation to retirement enquiries), which may not be captured in the management information. It was also evident during the review that on occasions not all enquiries are being logged onto the system. When we asked why this was the case we were advised that typically this was either due to the ASO not having enough time to log the query or Police/staff members didn't know how to log a query. It is interesting to note that one of the top three articles searched of on the HR Knowledge Centre is "How to raise a call on the HR Knowledge Centre".

Analysis of enquiries received via the HR Knowledge Centre and HR Service Desk



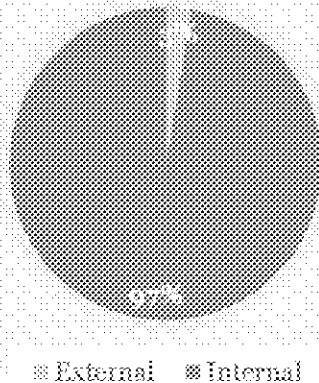
2. Key findings

Management information continued

The pie chart below relates to the number of incoming calls received by the HR Service Desk from the 2nd May 2017 to 12 March 2018. A total of 36,824 incoming calls were received by the HR Service Desk during the defined period of time. It is interesting to note that only 3% (987) of incoming calls to the HR Service Desk were external to the PSNI, compared to 97% (35,837) of incoming calls coming from within the PSNI.

We were also provided with statistics relating to the average contact time for both external and internal calls (which can be seen in the second table below). Taking the average total contact time (2:25 minutes) and the number of inbound calls received during the period 2nd May 2017 to 12th March 2018, we thought it would be interesting to calculate how many ASOs the PSNI would need to staff the volume of incoming calls received during this period of time. Based on the statistics and a 260 day working year, we calculated that a 1.5 FTE could deliver, working 7.5 hours per, day 5 days a week, the total number of incoming calls (35,837). However it is important to note that this calculation does not include outgoing calls nor does it reflect the frequency of calls at different times of the day, week, month. No information was available to analyse staffing working patterns against volume of calls.

Analysis of incoming calls received by the HR Service Desk



	Average number of inbound calls received by the HR Service Desk
Daily	164
Weekly	821
Monthly	3,682

	Average Contact Time (mins)
External	01:17
Internal	02:27
Average Total Contact Time (mins)	02:25

2. Key findings

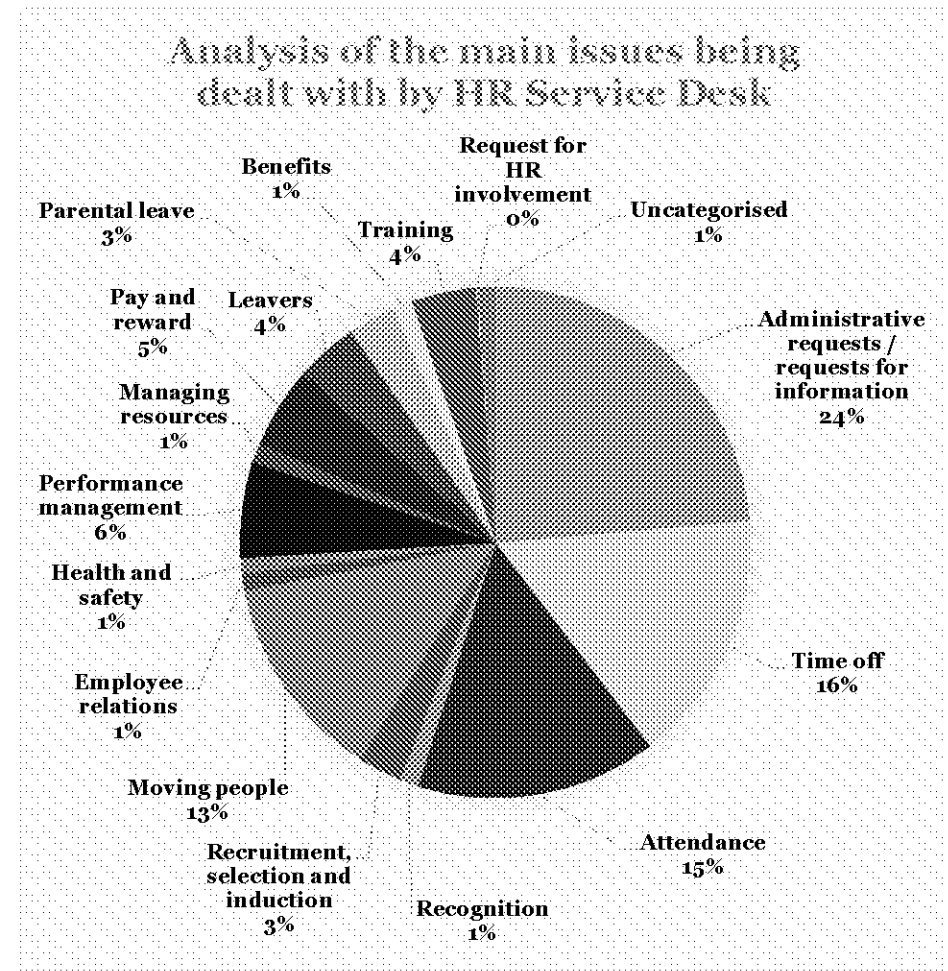
Management information continued

The pie chart on this page illustrates the main issues which are dealt with by the HR Service Desk. For the purpose of this analysis we categorised the 115 specific enquiries under a number of key headings, with the assistance of the HR Service Desk's EOI.

It is interesting to note that the largest type of enquiries received by the HR Service Desk can be categorised under the heading 'Administrative requests / requests for information'. The type of enquiries received under this particular heading range from name changes to reporting structures (line management). This evidence was reinforced by members of the HR Service Desk, who also pointed out that many of these enquiries such as change of name and reporting structures, could be updated by individual users if they have (limited) access to the HR systems.

The second largest category being dealt with by the HR Service Desk is 'time off'. These enquiries range from flexible working to special leave. Our observation from this is similar to that previously mentioned – is there an opportunity to direct more enquirers to the HR Knowledge Centre for self-service. We would question if all of these enquirers need to speak with an ASO in the HR Service Desk to resolve their enquiry.

It is interesting to note that if Line Managers completed administrative tasks and basic information was easily accessible on the HR Knowledge Centre there is the potential to significantly reduce the number of enquiries received.



2. Key findings

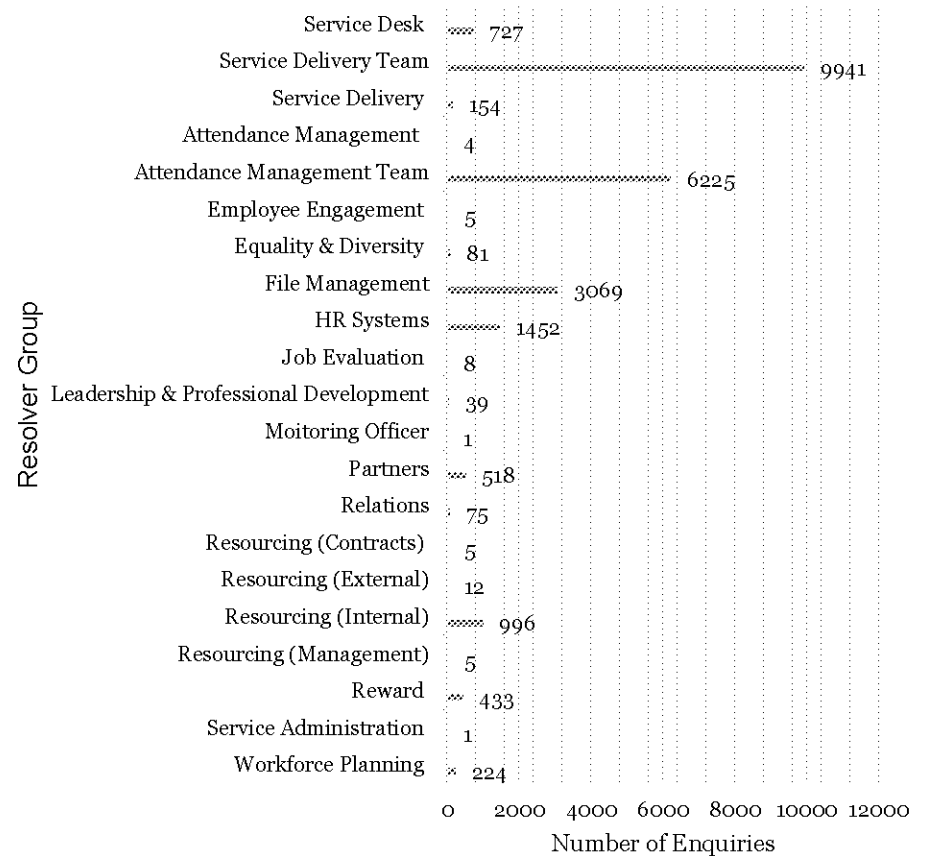
Management information continued

We also examined the number of enquiries resolved by individual HR teams. It is interesting to note that out of 23,975 enquiries, 41% of enquiries were resolved by the Service Delivery Team, with a further 26% having been resolved by the Attendance Management Team and 13% by File Management.

Unfortunately it is unclear from the management information to what extent the HR Service Desk have been involved in the resolution of the other enquiries. For example it is likely that in some instances that the HR Service Desk have been involved at some stage in resolving attendance and resourcing enquiries from the business.

From the Outline Business Case we understand that it was anticipated the HR Service Desk would handle circa 3,500 telephone enquiries per month. Reviewing the current management information over a 10 month period the HR Service Desk received 35,837 incoming calls, which equates on average to 3,583 per month. Although the anticipated and actual monthly telephone enquiries appear similar, it is important to note that the current management information only relates to incoming calls and not all the calls received are necessarily HR related, as we have been advised that switchboard typically send queries they are unsure about to the HR Service Desk.

Enquiries by Resolver Group



2. Key findings

HR Service Desk

In addition to the desktop review, stakeholder consultations and observations we conducted of the HR Service Desk, we also designed and facilitated a workshop. This was a 2 hour workshop with a number of ASOs being represented from the HR Service Desk, along with the two EOIs and an EOI. The purpose of the workshop was to gain insights into how the ASOs perceived working within the HR Service Desk, as well as what currently works well and what could be improved upon within the HR Service Desk. From the outset of the workshop there was scepticism among participants as to why the workshop was being held. A number of the participants advised that they had been through a similar process previously and their comments hadn't been acted upon then, so what made this process any different.

For the first exercise we asked participants to split into 2 groups. We presented each group with a mix of 40 both positive and negative words which could be used to describe any organisation. We asked each group to pick the top 10 words they felt described the HR Service Desk within the PSNI. The diagram below illustrates the words used to describe the HR Service Centre, along with comments made during discussions:



NB: The words that were ranked the highest are shown as the largest, and the smallest words are the lowest ranking.

2. Key findings

HR Service Desk continued

We were also keen to understand from the perspective of the HR Service Desk what they believe works well and what could be improved upon. The conversation from the outset centred around their dissatisfaction. When discussing what works well, the group couldn't agree – a number of the ASOs believed that teamwork within the HR Service Desk was strong, describing how *“when one member of staff is off work, the others will share out their workload”*. However other participants strongly disagreed with this statement and commented that *“work is not fairly allocated”* and that others *“don't pull their weight”*. A number of the ASOs went on to say that they didn't think that the current arrangement with regards to the allocation of work was fair i.e. each ASO is responsible for particular names/numbers. The ASOs said that they believe that they provide good customer service to the end user.

The discussion then turned to what didn't work so well within the HR Service Desk. At this point the ASOs became very vocal at expressing their views. They advised that when the HR Service Desk was established they were told that it would not just be them answering telephone calls, *“other ASOs of other teams would also pick up calls, but that never happened”*. It was interesting to note that there were a number of ASOs during the workshop indicated that they didn't mind working on the phones, as it gave them variety in their day to day work. However this was not a view echoed by all ASOs, with many saying they didn't like answering phone calls. The ASOs went on to say that their current Job Description is a standard AO Job Description and that it does not fully reflect the current role and responsibilities they undertake, *“there is a lack of understanding of what we actually do – we are a miscellaneous team”*. They also expressed the view that *“senior management don't even know what we do”*. They suggested that a more defined Job Description could possibly ease the confusion over who is responsible for what. The ASOs were also frustrated by the lack of perceived development opportunities for them to avail of, *“ASOs in other teams get to do secondments”*.

Lack of communication was also a theme drawn out during the workshop with the HR Service Desk. There was a sense of frustration with regards to the lack of communication from senior management, HR Partners and other HR teams. In addition they highlighted the difficulties that the lack of communication presents, including *“sometimes they'll (HR Partners) send an email out and tell people to contact HR for more information, but they don't give us any notice of this”, “the other teams within HR do not communicate well with us...they turn the volume on their phones down so that we can't direct calls”*. We got the sense that the HR Service Desk feel unappreciated and demotivated. This was also reinforced by what we heard from other staff from within the HR function with one saying *“they are nobody's child”*. There was also a sense from the ASOs that they want to feel “included” and “supported”. One participant suggested that there is a *“them and us culture”* within the HR function.

The ASOs also indicated that the current operating hours (8.00am to 5.00pm) for the HR Service Desk isn't working well. They advised that originally the operating hours were 9.00am to 5.00pm, however a pilot was introduced extending the operating hours from 8.00am to 5.00pm. We also learnt that although this was a pilot scheme it is now the core operating hours for the HR Service Desk, however the ASOs were not advised of this permanent change. It is also interesting to note that the 8.00am start appears to be covered on an ad hoc basis i.e. that is if an ASO happens to be in the office from 8.00am they will cover the phones until other ASOs arrive in later. If there was a more robust self-service facility available then operational hours for the HR Service Desk could be reviewed and even reduced. However this should not be considered until significant improvements are made to the HR Knowledge Centre.

2. Key findings

Analysis of enquiries received by the HR Service Desk

As part of our approach we listened to 32 historic calls from the HR Service Desk and a day observing the ASOs taking live calls. From the historic calls that we listened to, 17 calls were resolved during the initial conversation, 9 calls weren't resolved and either an ASO from the HR Service Desk or caller had to make a follow-up call. The remaining 6 calls were transferred to other teams within the HR function – unfortunately the recording function is only available for the HR Service Desk therefore we were unable to confirm if the users enquiries were resolved.

From reviewing the historic calls it was evident that the majority of calls relate to one of the following:

- Clarification from the caller that their understanding of a PSNI policy is correct
- Seeking a form
- Requesting an update of Line Manager on the HR system

It was evident when reviewing the historic calls that the majority of them could have been resolved by the ASO referring the user to the HR Knowledge Centre. It is interesting to note that in a number of calls, the enquirer was asking for a particular form e.g. eye test form, pension form, form 90 - again these callers could have been directed to the HR Knowledge Centre. This is reflective of the analysis undertaken of the main issues being dealt with by the HR Service Desk on page 13 of this report.

In addition to listening to the historic calls we also spent a day observing the ASOs in the HR Service Desk to get an understanding of how they operate on a day to day basis. We understand that there are always 4 ASOs on the phones to handle incoming enquiries. It was evident that during busy periods those ASOs who aren't dedicated to taking calls on a specific day can observe on their computer the number of calls coming into the HR Service Desk and can therefore pick up calls to help manage peak demand when necessary. During our time observing the HR Service Desk it also became apparent that ASOs not only receive enquiries from incoming calls and those allocated to them by the management team, but individuals can also receive emails to their work email addresses.

We also reached out to a number of users of the HR Service Centre to ascertain their experience of using the service. It is interesting to note that their queries were transactional/operational in nature e.g. updating sickness records, notification of duty credits, annual leave and special leave.

2. Key findings

Three typical enquiries

As part of our review we conducted a detailed review of 3 enquiries with regards to the end to end user experience, they included:

- Internal recruitment (local selection)
- Request for additional resources
- Grievance

To conduct this aspect of the review and map out the processes for the above enquiries, we undertook a desktop review, as well as consulting with a number of senior staff from within the HR team which included a number of HR Strategic Leads. The process maps illustrating the current processes can be found in Appendix A.

It was interesting to note that the current process for internal recruitment (local selection) is the same process that was used 6 years ago, according to senior staff within the HR function. We understand that during the structural change, the management of the internal recruitment (local selection) process was given to the Line Managers at local level. The intention of the revised process was designed to be self-service and the Line Managers would have been provided with off-the-shelf materials that they could have used during internal recruitment (local) processes e.g. sample interview questions, scoring frameworks etc. However we understand that this approach was not embraced by the PSNI and the HR Partners reassumed responsibility of the management of the internal recruitment (local) process, as they did prior to the changes.

When reviewing the current process for internal recruitment (local selection) we observed on paper a comprehensive and robust process. It wasn't until we spoke to staff within the HR function that we appreciated that this comprehensive process was to fill short-term posts, which could be for less than a 3 week period. It was also interesting to hear from staff within HR that they thought the standard selection method currently used for the internal recruitment (local selection) i.e. interviews, *"wasn't fit for purpose"*. Staff advised that they believe there are more effective and efficient ways to select individuals for such short-term vacancies. In addition we heard how the PSNI could be running multiple internal recruitment (local selection) processes at any one time for the same post, typically the only difference would be the location. The question was raised as to why they can't combine a number of these process, which would save time and money. Running multiple exercises may also increase the risk of inconsistent approaches in the selection methodology.

We also reviewed the current process for requesting additional resources. We understand that this process has been recently updated and now involves the Deputy Chief Constable chairing the panel that assesses each business case. On paper this process appears to be a robust and well thought-out process, with senior stakeholder responsibility. When we discussed this process with staff it was interesting to note that they believed this new process was a robust and there was more of an emphasis of justifying the need for additional resources, which may not have been as apparent in the past.

2. Key findings

Three typical enquires continued

We also reviewed the current grievance process within the PSNI. It was interesting to note that this process has a step by step guide, which is available on the HR Knowledge Centre. The guide also has links embedded into the document, including a grievance form; grievance summary report; benefits of informal resolution; carrying out an effective investigation; roles and responsibilities at a grievance meeting; and FAQs to name a few. The user can click on the relevant links which takes them directly to the documentation, without the user having to individually search for each document on the HR Knowledge Centre. The step by step guides can support self-service, making it easier for users to access the information they require. The current grievance process is in line with the requirements laid out in the Labour Relations Agency Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, in that it has the necessary steps in the grievance process.

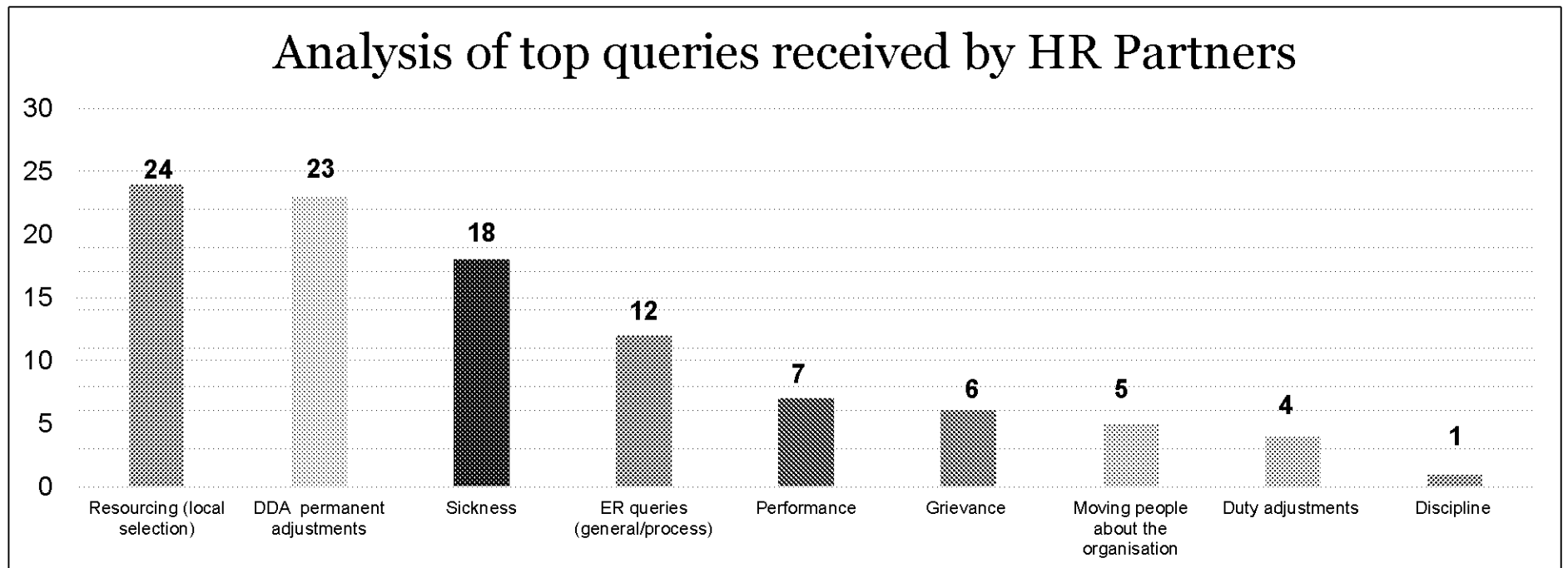
It is interesting to note that when we discussed the grievance process with staff within the HR function, they advised that the informal stage of the grievance process is not being fully utilised by the PSNI. When we questioned why this might be the case we were advised that Line Managers don't like the perceived unstructured aspect of the informal stage and there is a reluctance amongst Line Managers to manage people within their team, therefore allowing grievance issues to quickly escalate i.e. progressing to formal grievance procedure.

2. Key findings

Role of HR Partners

To gain an in-depth understanding of the HR Partner role within the PSNI we designed and facilitated a ½ day workshop. 7 of the 11 HR Partners within the PSNI participated in the ½ day workshop. The participating HR Partners ranged in experience, from those who had been the role for a number of years to those who were new to the role i.e. in HR Partner role less than 1 year. In addition to the workshop we also asked each of the participating HR Partners to take part in a short survey designed to delve deeper into their personal role and responsibilities.

In one of the workshop exercises we asked the participating HR Partners to rank their top 5 queries. It is interesting to note that the two largest responses were Resourcing (local selection) and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) permanent adjustments. We understand that there is an increasing demand on the HR Partners to manage DDA permanent adjustments within the PSNI, with many saying it is “*a ticking time bomb!*”, as there is a greater awareness amongst officers of their rights and the obligations of the employer, the PSNI. The graph below illustrates the top queries received by HR Partners.



2. Key findings

Role of HR Partners continued

We were also keen to understand where the queries received by the HR Partners originated from. The table below illustrates the source of work and the typical types of queries received.

Source of work	Typical types of queries received
Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourcing • Guidance on policies and procedures • DDA queries • Performance issues
HR Service Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transactional case work
Senior Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General queries/advice
DP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of bullying and harassment, discipline and grievance cases
Attendance Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance dismissal • DDA

We are aware from the Service Level Agreement for HR Partners 2017-2018 that the aim of the HR Partner role is to provide a single point of contact for specialist HR advice and guidance primarily focused at Chief Superintendent/G6 level. From speaking with the HR Partners we are aware that some also provide HR advice and guidance to lower ranks, this is especially the case when they are out on the ground with officers. It was interesting to note that some of the HR Partners direct these lower levels to the HR Knowledge Centre whereas others answer the query. When we probed as to why this was the case they indicated that they could answer the query in a few minutes whereas the officer would have to try and navigate the HR Knowledge Centre which would take them more time to do. There was also the view that at times some of the HR Partners found it difficult to say “no”, particularly when the officer was in front of them.

A further more detailed review was completed in January 2018 ‘*Survey Responses in relation to HR Partner arrangements*’ in relation to the attainment of feedback from nominated managers on the effectiveness of the new HR Partner arrangements. It is interesting to note from this review that management advised that they use HR Partners for local resourcing; succession planning; and attendance management, which is reflective of what we heard from the HR Partners during our workshop. Management were also asked to identify any factors that they considered inhibit the performance or effectiveness of the HR Partner. Responses included, the lack of clarity between what is the responsibility of the branch SMT and the HR Partner, which can lead to confusion, and solutions are not always unique but often bureaucratic in nature, leading to a reduced flexibility. It is interesting to note that the HR Partners are also mindful of the need to provide more innovative and bespoke solutions for the PSNI. The survey also asked management how they requested assistance from the HR Partners, the majority advised they either directly emailed or verbally asked the HR Partner for assistance, with only 18% logging their request via the HR Knowledge Centre, which is reflective of what we have found during the review of the HR Service Desk.

2. Key findings

Role of HR Partners continued

We were also interested in understanding what the customer's needs are with regards to HR support within the PSNI. During the workshop we asked the HR Partners to consider their service users and to outline their key HR requirements. We then asked the HR Partners to work as a group to categorise each of the requirements they previously identified. Once categorised, we discussed whether or not adequate time was being assigned to each of the key requirements. The results can be viewed in the table below:

What does my customer need?	Time I currently spend	Time I should spend
Duty adjustments	Spend more time than I would like	I would like to spend less time
Bespoke selection process	Spend less time than I would like	I would like to spend more time
Coaching	Spend less time than I would like	I would like to spend more time
Operational advice	Spend more time than I would like	I would like to spend less time
Strategic advice	Spend less time than I would like	I would like to spend more time

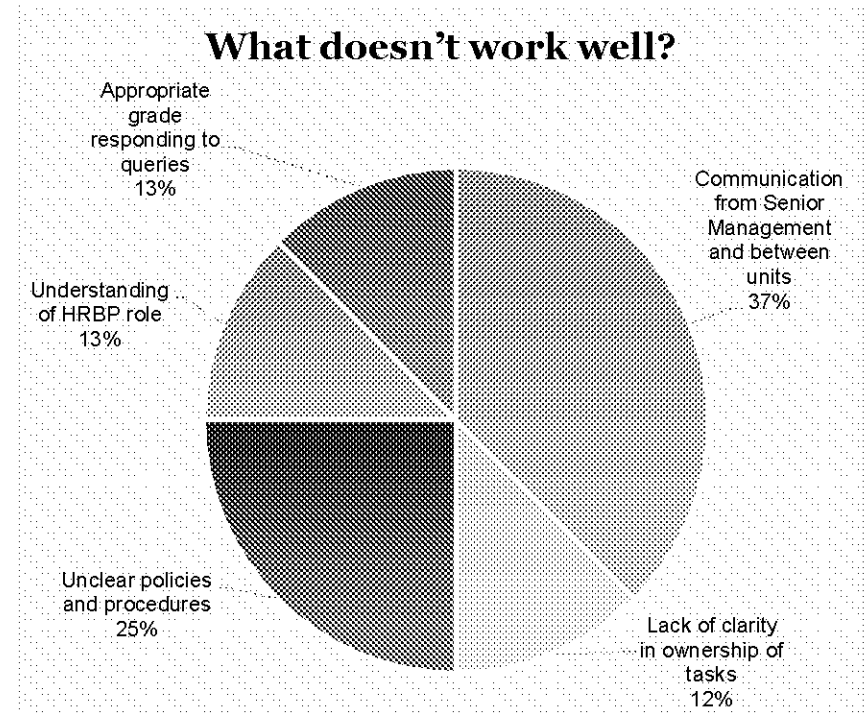
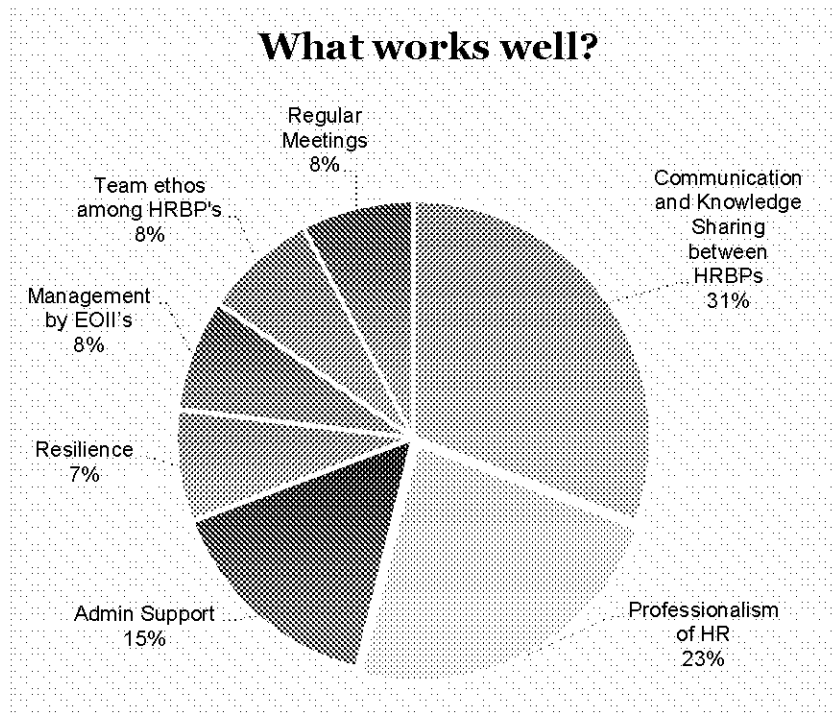
It is interesting to note that the HR Partners feel they are spending too much time on duty adjustments and operational advice, whereas they want to be spending more time in designing and developing bespoke selection processes which are fit for purpose, coaching Line Managers and providing more strategic advice to the business.

We were then keen to understand what benefits the HR Partners felt they could achieve if they did 'more' of what adds value and 'less' of the operational and transactional tasks. One such benefit was that Line Managers would be supported at the right time and at the right level, to enable them to effectively manage their people. The HR Partners also felt that working more strategically would allow them to identify strategic issues and bring in Grade 7 colleagues to support on workforce planning, succession planning, coaching, and learning and development. The HR Partners went on to say that in providing more strategic HR advice they would feel more engaged in their role and motivated to deliver. It was also interesting to note that the HR Partners felt that if the HR Service Desk had more personnel (in-between ASO and HR Partner) that could answer less transactional queries and more operational queries that this would allow them to focus on providing more strategic advice and coaching to Line Managers.

2. Key findings

Role of HR Partners continued

When speaking to the HR Partners, their enthusiasm for delivering an excellent customer service was apparent. There also appears to be a good sense of team spirit/working within the HR Partner community. When asked in the survey “*what works well?*” HR Partners advised that “*the support and team spirit amongst HR Partners and sharing of ideas*” and that they are “*in the same office so can easily communicate with colleagues*”. However it is interesting to note that although the HR Partners believe there is good communication between the HR Partner community they don’t have the same perspective of communication between senior management and other HR units. This was reflective of comments made in the workshop when HR Partners expressed the view that “*policies are sometimes updated with no communication*”, “*we are not always informed of what version we are on*”, “*some policies are still in draft, which one are we following, makes us look unprofessional*”.

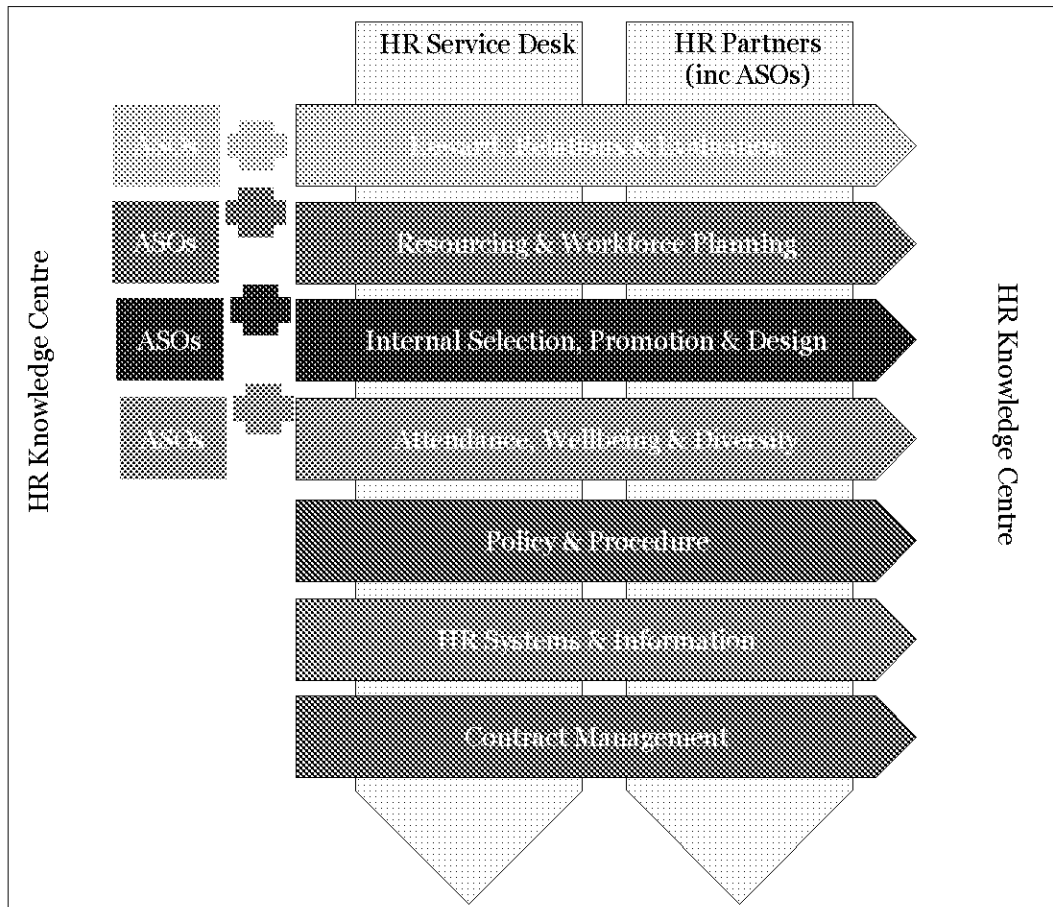


Key areas for improvement

3

3. Key areas for improvement

As part of this review, we have been asked to consider the following structure which has been proposed by the G7 HR Operations:



The new structure would seek to restructure the current service desk team by allocating some of the ASOs to each of the functional teams. A small service desk team would be retained to direct queries to each of the functional teams. There would be no change to the role of the HR Partners and they will receive administrative support from the ASOs in each of the functions.

Given the challenging hand-offs between the current HR Service Desk and the functional teams and the engagement issues facing the current team, we recognise this as a valid proposal however it is also important to recognise that there are a range of underlying issues which would need to be resolved for this or any new structure to be successful.

On the following slides we will outline key areas for improvement which should be addressed and form a fundamental part of the solution.

The initial consideration should be to clarify the operating model for HR in PSNI, including the customer journey, the range of services provided and how they will be provided. There are also a range of challenges relating to the 'self-service' provision of HR information, clarity of policies and process and the line management capability and willingness to complete their people management role.

We will also provide some guidance on short term and longer term actions to address the areas for improvement.

3. Key areas for improvement

1. Clarity regarding the HR operating model

The type of HR services provided by companies varies in nature. This can range from a full HR service to self-service HR where the customer typically uses technology to access HR solutions. It is important to recognise that PSNI is unusual in that most organisations don't provide the extensive HR operational support services that PSNI HR provides to Line Managers.

In conducting this review we were not clear as to how the customer within the PSNI should access HR and what level of support they should expect. It was evident that currently within the PSNI there are various entry points for customers to access HR solutions. This includes access via the HR Knowledge Centre; HR Service Desk; HR Partners; and functions within HR. For example when a customer has an attendance query do they call the HR Service Desk; a HR Partner; the Attendance, Wellbeing & Diversity branch or obtain the relevant information via the HR Knowledge Centre. There is ambiguity regarding the escalation process for each HR subject area, for example, should the HR Service Desk deal with minor queries relating to attendance, however any major queries should automatically be escalated to the Attendance, Wellbeing & Diversity branch. This is something the PSNI need to consider as currently it appears individuals within the HR function are not clear of their individual responsibilities.

It is also interesting to note that a number of the benefits detailed in the Outline Business Case for the new structure have not been realised and a number of the risks have manifested. For example it was envisaged that the new structure would introduce one entry point into HR and would assist in the provision of more consistent, corporate advice and support to staff and Line Managers, however this does not appear to be the case following our review. In addition a risk identified in the Outline Business Case, was that the over-reliance of Line Managers in the old structure could manifest itself in the new structure, which appears to have happened. The step by step guides has the potential to provide greater clarity with regards roles and responsibilities and to support self-service.

This seems like an opportune time to consider with the senior leadership team the way forward for the HR function within the PSNI, including the determination of the level of service they would like to offer. It is also important to take cognisance of the cost associated with the type of HR service which could be offered across the PSNI i.e. the more enhanced the service the more costly it will be. Once senior leaders within the PSNI have agreed the vision for the HR function, engagement with officers and staff should support the design of the new operating model. Once the HR operating model has been agreed, a detailed implementation plan should be developed. This should include support post implementation to embed new ways of working and fully realise the vision for HR and ultimately the PSNI vision for its workforce.

When considering the future operating model for HR and optimal structure, due consideration should be given to good practice models, including the Ulrich HR model and the potential use of technology to maximise the efficiency and accessibility of HR services.

3. Key areas for improvement

2. Clarity of roles and responsibilities within HR

The Outline Business Case for the creation of the HR Service Desk outlined a number of beneficiaries, including HR staff. It was envisaged that HR staff would benefit from a more structured approach to HR service delivery with clarity on roles and responsibilities as the service had become unclear and disjointed. We understand from conducting this review that the ASOs in the HR Service Desk currently have a standard AO Job Description. When conducting the ASO workshop it was apparent that they feel that the current Job Description does not fully reflect the current role and responsibilities they undertake.

It is interesting to note that we received similar feedback from the HR Partners in terms of clarity of their role. They advised that although in their Service Level Agreement for HR Partners 2017-2018 that states the aim of the HR Partner role is to provide a single point of contact for specialist HR advice and guidance primarily focused at Chief Superintendent/G6 level, this is not what happens in reality. It also came to light during the review that there doesn't appear to be a clear understanding of handoffs and who is responsible for dealing with certain HR queries.

The Outline Business Case also envisaged that HR staff would benefit from a coordinated approach to their personal and professional development within a structured performance framework across the whole of the HR function, which in turn would enhance skills, knowledge and capabilities of the staff working within the new structure.

Going forward the creation of the HR operating model will help provide a level of clarity with regards the roles and responsibilities within the HR function. The PSNI may also wish to consider developing role specific Job Descriptions, particularly for the HR Partners and ASOs within the HR Service Desk. Irrespective of whether or not role specific Job Descriptions are developed, it is important for the PSNI to communicate across the business the roles and responsibilities. This should also help with customers understanding the various hand-offs within the HR function.

3. Key areas for improvement

3. Line Manager role

The Outline Business Case for the new structure outlined a number of beneficiaries, one such beneficiary was Line Managers. It was envisaged that the Line Managers would be given professional HR advice and support to enable them to effectively manage their people. The relevant policies and processes would have been reconfigured into a user friendly format showing clearly what action and decisions are required of Line Managers. It was also envisaged that there would be an improvement in line management's capability and confidence in dealing with people management issues through this process. People management would typically be an important component of a Line Managers role, with HR focus on day to day operational matters declining within industry.

During the review we received feedback from a variety of sources all advising that Line Manager capability hasn't improved. As a consequence significant support is required by HR. When we asked why Line Managers weren't managing their people effectively, no one had clear reason. It is interesting to note that although some Line Managers are dealing with difficult circumstances in their day to day work environment e.g. advising a member of the public that their loved one had been killed in a car accident, when it comes to managing staff they are reluctant to do this and rely heavily on the support of HR. During the workshops with the HR Partners they were keen to do less of the operational HR activities which in turn would free them up to provide coaching for Line Managers, which over time should lessen the dependence on HR for day to day management activities.

As part of this review we listened to historic calls and live calls received by the HR Service Desk. It was interesting to note that a large number of these calls are transactional in nature, this includes management reporting amendments. We understand that Line Managers are unable to make such changes on the current HR system for governance reasons. We understand the need for protecting information of this nature, however the HR Service Desk could be prone to the same issues as a Line Manager amending the reporting structure e.g. are they checking the Line Manager has the authority to change the reporting structure etc.

Going forward the creation of the HR operating model will help provide a level of clarity with regards the roles and responsibilities within the HR function, as well as for Line Managers. However the PSNI may wish to consider providing formal training to Line Managers supported by coaching from the HR Partners. The introduction of one set of HR policies and procedures will also assist in reducing Line Managers reliance on HR operations for guidance and support. The PSNI may also wish to consider providing Line Managers with restricted access to the HR system so that they can make transactional amendments e.g. updating management reporting structures. Governance arrangements can be put into place around this form of access to prevent any misuse.

3. Key areas for improvement

4. Process

As part of our assignment we conducted a detailed review of 3 enquiries with regards to the end to end user experience, they included:

- Internal recruitment (local selection)
- Request for additional resources
- Grievance

We understand from speaking to senior staff within the HR function that following the structural changes, the internal recruitment (local) process was intended to be managed by Line Managers within the business. The process was designed to be self-service and the Line Managers would have been provided with off-the-shelf materials that they could have used during internal recruitment (local) processes e.g. sample interview questions, scoring frameworks etc. However this approach was not embraced by the business and the HR Partners reassumed the responsibility of the internal recruitment (local) process as they did prior to the changes. It is also interesting to note that a major aspect of the HR Partners current responsibilities is managing internal recruitment (local).

In addition we heard feedback from a number of sources that the method of selection during internal recruitment (local) is not *“fit for purpose”*. The rationale for this was that typically Line Managers don't want to consider selection methods outside of that previously used e.g. interviews, due to the litigious environment within the PSNI. It was interesting to hear from HR professionals that the selection method i.e. interviews was over engineering a process that should be relatively straightforward given that the roles were for short periods of time e.g. 3 weeks.

Going forward the PSNI may wish to consider how they could streamline the current process for internal recruitment (local). It is also interesting to note that there may be an opportunity to combine a number of these internal recruitment (local) processes into one process i.e. those at the same level, requiring the same skills and competencies. Undertaking these activities may reduce the amount of time the HRPBs currently spend on internal recruitment (local) processes, allowing them to concentrate on more strategic HR activities. In addition the PSNI may wish to consider if conducting interviews is the best selection method of this type of recruitment. The PSNI may wish to consult with customers regarding any changes to the internal recruitment (local) process given how the previous approach was received.

Currently on the HR Knowledge Centre there is a comprehensive step by step guide on the PSNI's grievance procedure with links embedded into the guide for ease of reference. It is interesting to note that when we discussed the grievance process with staff within the HR function, they advised that the informal stage of the grievance process is not being fully utilised by the business.

The PSNI may wish to consider duplicating the current step by step guide for the current grievance procedure across all of the key HR issues. This document describes the process in relatively simple terms, as well as providing links to important documentation relative to the process. It is important that the PSNI communicate any such changes across the HR function and business to ensure all staff are using the updated policy.

3. Key areas for improvement

5. HR portal

In conducting this review it became apparent that there wasn't one version of the truth with regards the HR policies and procedures within the PSNI. Currently policies and procedures are available to officers and staff members on two different portals i.e. the HR Knowledge Centre and Police Net. It is our understanding that some work has been carried out to update and consolidate policies on the HR Knowledge Centre but it was apparent from our review that gaps remain. The grievance procedure, for example, has a step by step guide on the process. The guide also has links embedded into the document, including a grievance form; grievance summary report; benefits of informal resolution; carrying out an effective investigation; roles and responsibilities at a grievance meeting; and FAQs to name a few. The user can click on the relevant links which takes them directly to the documentation, without the user having to individually search for each document on the HR Knowledge Centre.

In addition to the HR Knowledge Centre there is also Police Net, which currently hosts three different A-Z guides. The PSNI may wish to consider the need for both portals as both contain different and conflicting policies which is adding to the confusion amongst customers and HR staff. We also understand from our discussions with HR staff that it is difficult to manage the Police Net portal as it is not a HR system, therefore updating policies or removing outdated policies is not a straightforward process.

The core purpose of the HR Knowledge Centre was to allow for users to self-service. However if the user can't find what they are looking for on the HR Knowledge Centre or have a query relating to a particular policy there are two options. Firstly they can phone the HR Service Desk and seek assistance, or secondly they can log a call on the HR Knowledge Centre. A user can log a query on the homepage of the HR Knowledge Centre, however this function is at the bottom of the page and isn't immediately obvious.

Going forward the PSNI may wish to consider if it is appropriate to have two portals containing HR policies and procedures. Benefits of having one portal containing all the HR policies and procedures include reducing the confusion amongst users as to which policy is the most up-to-date and applicable to them and it would be easier to maintain. It is also important for the PSNI to consider who would have ultimate accountability for managing the portal. Presently the two portals are managed by two different Departments and it is evident that the one portal that HR don't have accountability for isn't regularly updated with the most recent policies, thus causing confusion amongst the customer population.

3. Key areas for improvement

6. Employee engagement

Research has repeatedly pointed to a relationship between how people are managed, their attitudes and behaviour, and business performance. No matter what the business or organisation, employers want engaged employees because, as well as being happier, healthier and more fulfilled, they are more motivated and deliver improved business performance. Having a disengaged workforce can bring huge risks such as demotivated or disengaged staff. In our experience having a disengaged workforce can also hamper organisational change, therefore wider alignment with strategy and engagement with the organisation is also important.

It was evident from our discussions with staff within the HR function that staff members within the HR Service Desk appear to be disengaged. There was also a sense of underlying tension between the ASOs, which manifested itself when we talked about team work during one of the workshop exercises.

The ASOs also commented on the lack of communication from others within the HR function. There was a sense that they were always the last to know about what was happening within the HR function. The HR Partners also raised similar concerns about lack of communication between the HR teams, they advised that on occasion key policy changes are not communicated to them and at times the first they hear about the change is in front of senior police officers.

Going forward it is important for the PSNI to ensure that the HR Service Desk and HR Partners have the full complement of tools they require to fully deliver the required level of customer service i.e. having a HR Knowledge Centre that has update to date policies and procedures. The PSNI may also wish to consider reviewing how key messages are communicated across the various teams within the HR function.

It was apparent from the workshop with the ASOs that they are frustrated by the lack of perceived development opportunities for them to avail of, “ASOs in other teams get to do secondments”. The PSNI may wish to review the development opportunities across the HR function, to ensure equality of opportunity for all. The HR Partners also expressed a keen interest in expanding their skills set. In particular they are keen to get involved in more strategic HR including workforce planning, succession planning, coaching, and learning and development.

Next steps

4

4. Next steps

To support the HR team address the key areas of improvement, please see short and longer term suggested actions. Priority however should be given to agreeing the HR operating model, which in turn should be run in parallel with the short-term actions below.

Short-term

Proposed actions

Clarity interim roles and responsibilities

Agree interim specific role description for ASOs and HR Partners.

Collate current versions of all policies

Create a folder which contains the current version of all policies from the HR Knowledge Centre and Police Net and agree a process for updating HR staff with future changes.

Add the top 10 requested forms onto the homepage of the HR Knowledge Centre.

Quick wins to reduce contact with the HR Service Desk

Review the top reasons why people contact the service desk, e.g. process for changing management structure, moving the link for logging a call from the bottom of the screen and provide greater definition for the categories.

Communication to officers and staff regarding the HR Knowledge Centre

Consider methods of communicating (e.g. email, PSNI magazine, forums, engagement with the Federation) to all officers and staff regarding how to use the HR Knowledge Centre, log a call and how to access the top requested forms, e.g. eye test, pension form, form 90.

Reduce hand-offs for resolving queries

Consider amending process so that when queries are transferred to other teams all communication is dealt with by that team – reduces handoffs and potential time and effort to resolve.

4. Next steps

To support the HR team address the key areas of improvement, please see below suggested short and longer term actions:

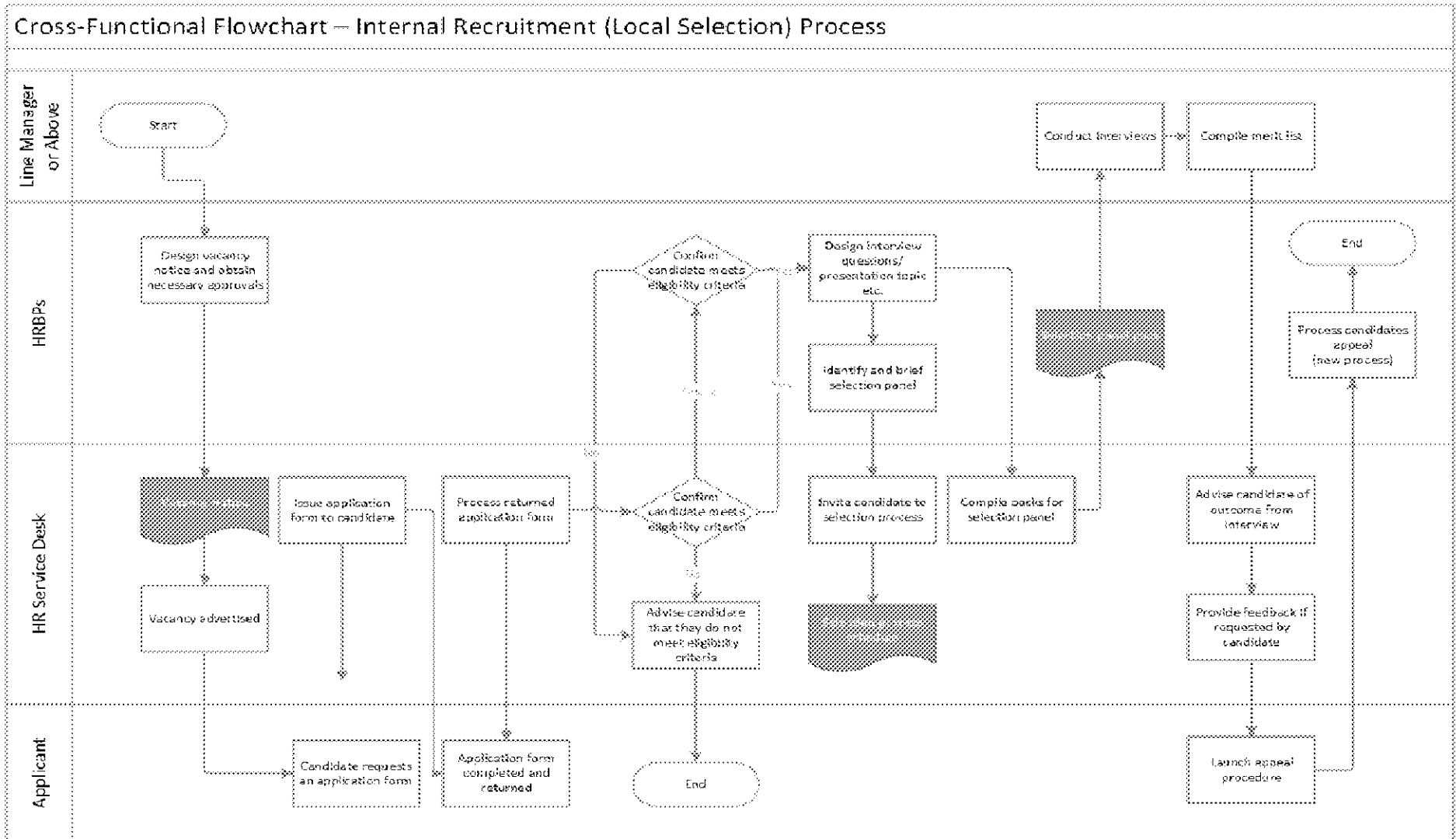
Long-term

Proposed actions

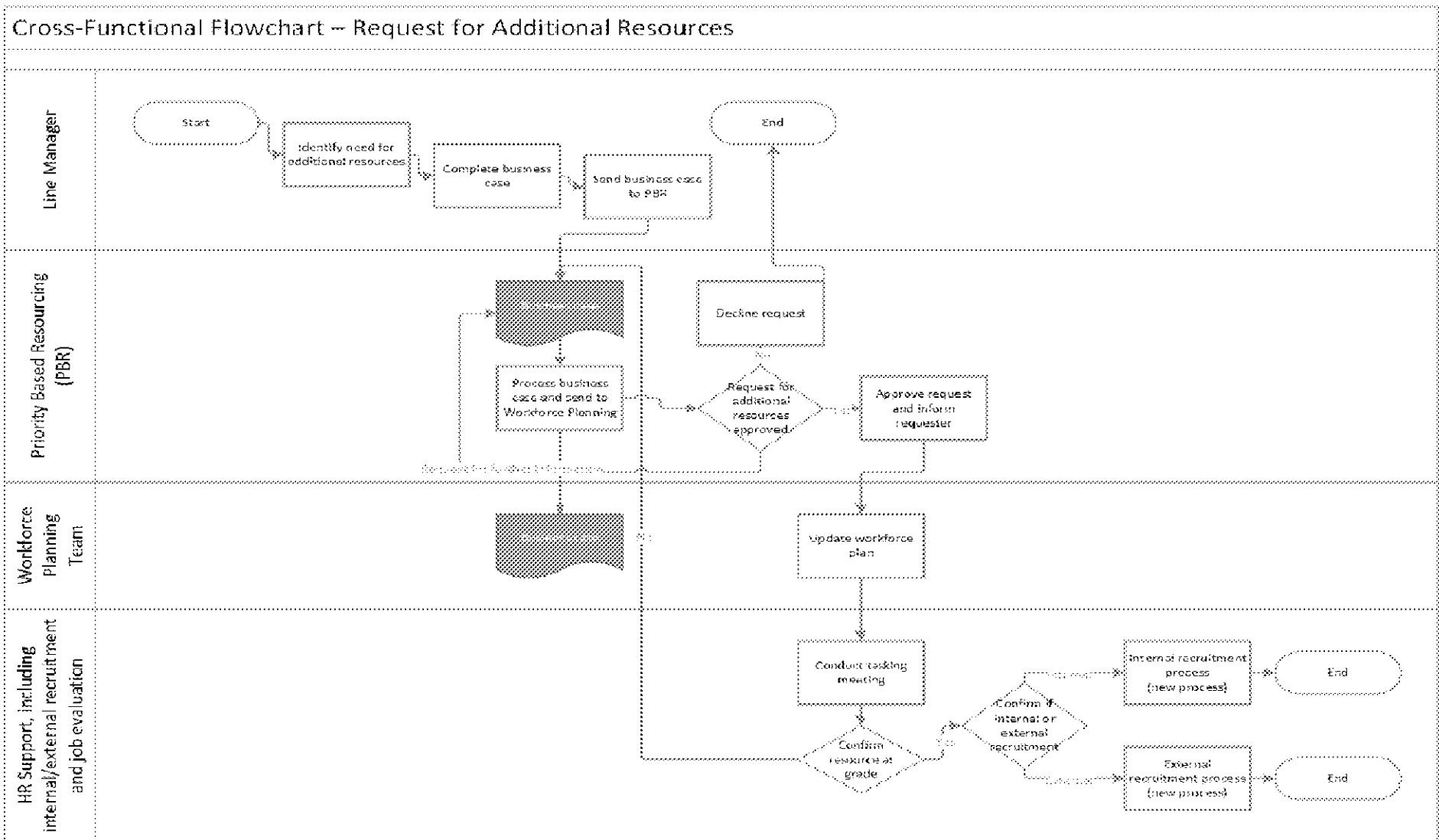
Agree HR operating model	Senior leaders agree the operating model for HR, including the customer journey, the level of support to be provided to Line Managers, the type of HR advice to be given (operational v's strategic), role of Line Manager in completing HR processes, investment in digital to improve self-service, and the provision of management information to enable the successful tracking and monitoring of the service being provided and to what extent this service is being met.
Review organisation design	When the operating model has been agreed, it is recommended that PSNI complete a strategic organisation structure review. A revised structure should seek to align the management structure, roles and responsibilities, governance arrangements, KPIs and measures, policies, procedures & processes, infrastructure (accommodation and systems) with the agreed strategic priorities.
Process improvement	Review of HR processes to take into consideration the findings and key improvement opportunities highlighted in this report. This could include consideration if the internal recruitment (resourcing) process is fit for purpose and how to improve the informal grievance process.
Line management	Line management capability is key to improving consistency and the quality of people management across PSNI. It is unclear as to whether there are capability gaps, capacity issues or an unwillingness to complete the line management role. A review should be completed to identify the root cause of the problem and interventions managed as part of a change programme.
Self-service facility	To support line managers and staff access the required information and complete tasks, the system should hold accurate information, be accessible and easy to use with the necessary governance arrangements. A review should be completed with users to identify specific areas for improvement.
HR Partner role evolution	The current HR Partner role is focused on providing operational HR support and as the provision of self-service improves, there is an opportunity to reposition the role to provide more strategic advice. This is likely to require upskilling of HR Partners and clear communication with senior leaders across PSNI.

Appendix A

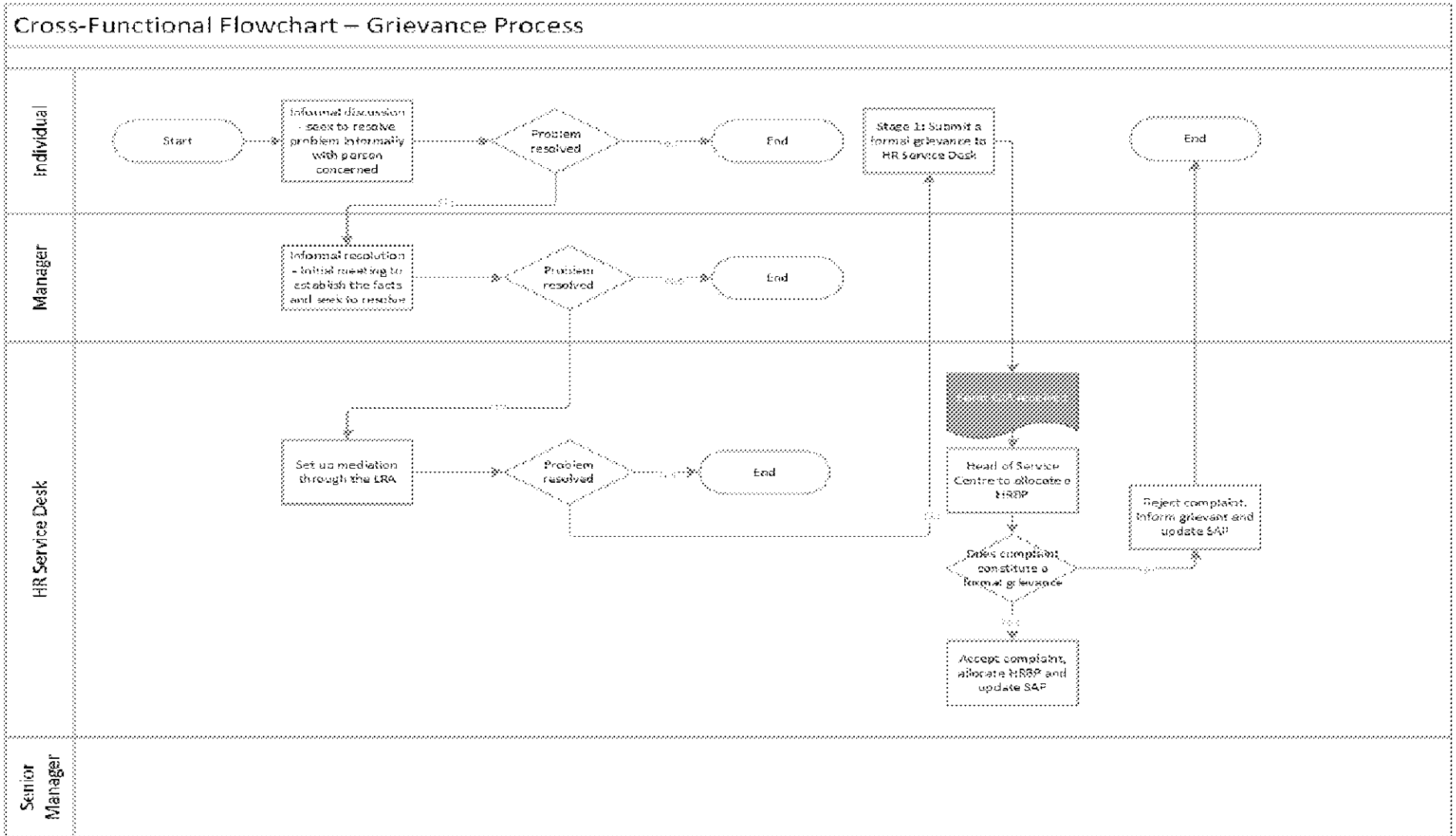
Process map – internal recruitment (local selection)



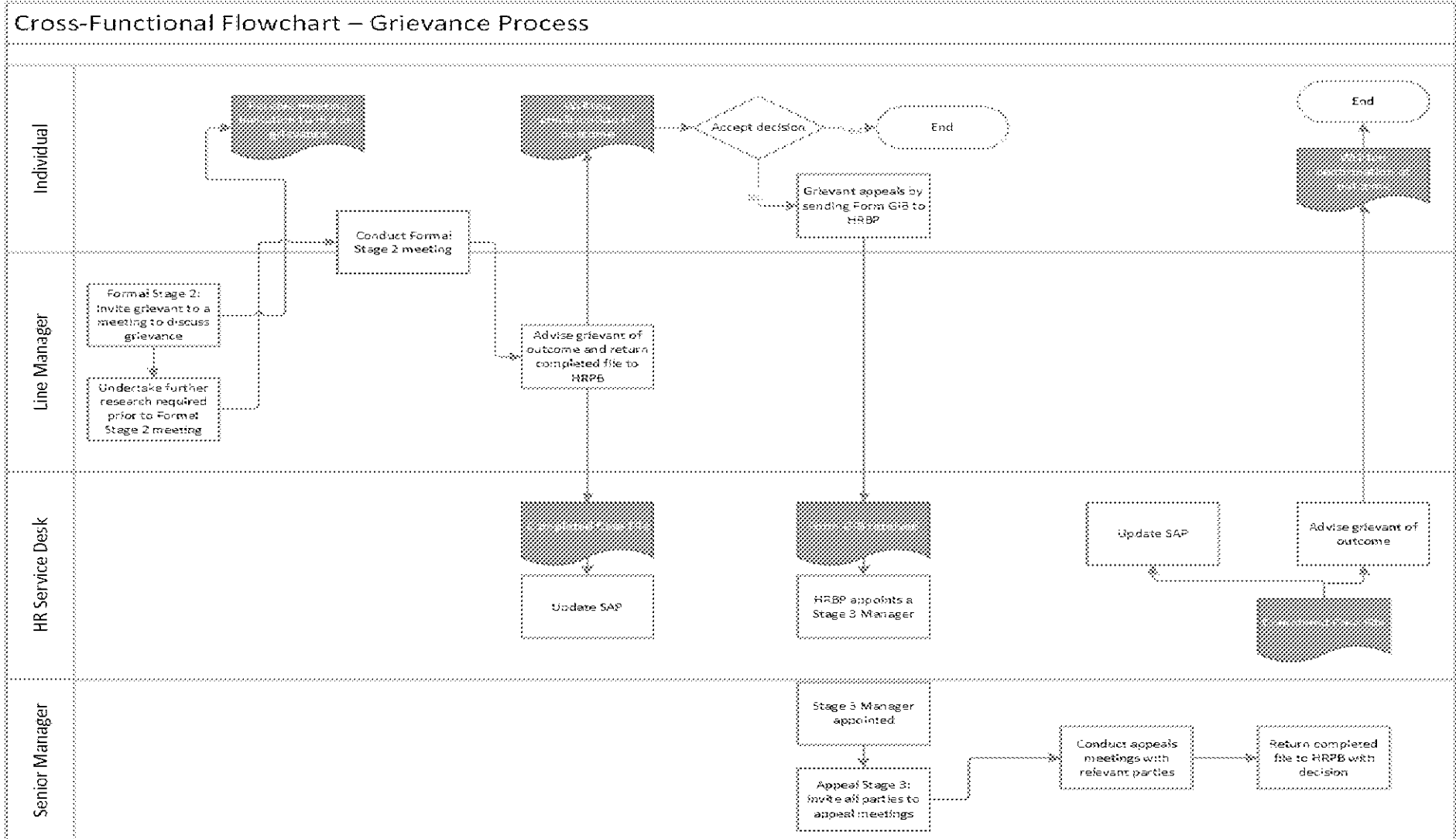
Process map – request for additional resources



Process map – grievance



Process map – grievance continued



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