



Board – 25 July 2017	
Title	2017 Staff Survey Findings and Approach
From	Dave Caton, HR Director
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Status	For information
Agenda Item / Status	12 Open

APPENDIX

A Key Highlights

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This paper is intended to inform the Board of the key findings of the 2017 Staff Survey as carried out by BMG, independent survey providers. A copy of the full 87 page BMG Report will be made available at the Board meeting on 25 July 2017.
- 1.2 To outline the steps already taken to communicate this to all ONR staff together with the actions taken and planned to address key areas.

2. Context

- 2.1 The 2017 Staff Survey was launched on 24 April and closed on 12 May. Overall, 564 employees were given the opportunity to complete the survey and a total of 525 responses were received, giving an outstanding response rate of 93% (an increase of 1% on 2016).
- 2.2 The ONR Employee Engagement Index (EEI) score (taking into account average scores for pride and advocacy, intention to stay and motivation to strive) has improved since 2016, from 68% to 70%. This score was also better than the Public Sector Benchmark (PSB) figure of 67% and compares to the best in class or upper quartile benchmark of 77%. This has been driven up by high levels of staff intending to stay at ONR for the next 1-3 years (92%) and who are committed to helping ONR achieve its goals (91%).
- 2.3 Of 88 comparable questions to the 2016 survey, 44 measures have improved, 43 have stayed about the same, and one has deteriorated (fewer staff having a clear understanding of goals and objectives – see section 3.2).
- 2.4 Particularly pleasing was the score relating to the number of staff who thought ONR responded to the 2016 Survey – this increased from 7% last year to 36% in 2017 – with a further 48% believing that further action will continue in response to this latest survey (this is 8% above the PSB).

3. Summary of Key Findings

3.1 Positives areas identified from the survey:

We have improved our results in all 10 of the themes within the survey since 2016 (ranging from 2% to 16% improvement). Highlights include -

Executive Management Team (EMT)/Regulatory Management Team (RMT) – the Top 7 improvements all relate to views of the EMT/RMT, demonstrating impressive gains over the last 12 months - there is greater clarity of vision from leadership (now ahead of PSB), greater visibility & accessibility, overall greater confidence in the decisions made by EMT/RMT. Positive views of leadership have improved overall by 16% points with the Leadership index increased to 52% - above our target and at the upper quartile.

Commitment – there is a high level of commitment from ONR employees, with 91% saying they are committed to helping ONR to achieve its goals; 86% have good corporate awareness; 90% are aware of the standards of behaviour expected of them. There has also been an improvement in the proportion of staff who feel sufficiently informed about ONR's plans - up 14 points to 79%.

Career and Development Managers (CDMs) – 71% of staff agree that their CDM gives them regular feedback on how they are doing – 8% higher than PSB and compares well with upper quartile / best in class of 75%.

Work/Life Balance – 73% agree that ONR supports a balance between work and personal commitments – 5% higher than PSB and within 2% of the upper quartile

Health & Safety - the focus on health and safety comes through strongly in the results, with 86% of staff saying the work of ONR impacts positively on public safety and they are satisfied that their personal safety is treated seriously at work. 86% of staff are also aware of how to report accidents and incidents.

Locations – more positive responses were received from staff working in Bootle and Cheltenham and this was particularly evident among newer staff (up to one year). London based staff were not as positive in their responses and we have asked BMG for further information / breakdown so that we can analyse the reasons and resolve any issues relevant to each site.

3.2 Areas of concern

While the majority of the lowest scoring indicators have improved over the last 12 months, we started from a low base and they still remain below the PSBs and the level we aim to be. The key areas that we need to address are -

Feeling Valued - only 39% of staff feel valued by ONR (up 7% from last year but still 13% below PSB). We know that staff are three times as likely to feel valued if they feel able to speak up and challenge how things are done than those who do not; as are staff who feel their opinion is sought on changes that affect them. We have scored low in these areas and these remain a priority.

Managing Change - despite being one of the most improved areas, 'Managing change' is still the lowest scoring theme with just 21% of staff feeling we manage change well. The recently established Programme Management Office (PMO) is responsible for assuring quality delivery of our change management process, so we would hope this will help us improve significantly in this area.

Retaining Talent – only 9% of staff believe we effectively capture and retain the knowledge of staff that leave the organisation and only 19% think ONR does a good job of retaining its most talented people. In respect of retaining knowledge, we recognise and share this concern with the rest of the industry. This is a key objective that has now been included in our Corporate Plan and Strategic Improvement Projects, in particular Knowledge Management and ONR Academy. With regards to retaining our best people, this figure is below the PSB by 10% yet we continue to have a low attrition rate.

Challenge - although views of leadership are improving, only 24% of staff feel comfortable expressing views that contrast with the EMT/RMT, and 38% feeling able to speak up and challenge the way things are done (9% points below the PSB). We need to understand what's getting in the way and remove the barriers to facilitate open and honest discussion – right across ONR.

Hygiene Factors - improvements are required in the areas of IT and Communications. Our initiatives will help us achieve significant step changes as well as better results in 2018. Also, it is believed that regular, reliable and accurate communications will help to engage staff more.

Goals & Objectives – only one indicator has significantly deteriorated since the previous survey: fewer members of staff have a clear understanding of the goals and objectives of their Division/Directorate (72%, against 83% in 2016). However, this survey coincided with the implementation of significant structural changes so it is not surprising that some level of uncertainty has been reflected in the feedback.

Bullying, Harassment & Discrimination - it is also worth noting that there has been a slight increase in the numbers reporting having experienced bullying, harassment or discrimination at work (16% - benchmark is 12%) and just under half (40%) of staff would not feel comfortable about reporting such activity. We are developing an appropriate response as part of our Diversity and Inclusion action plan, which includes a proposal to introduce a network of advisers who can support and be first point of contact for staff who may feel they are experiencing such behaviour.

Our work on developing a leadership behavioural competence framework, integrated into our People/HR processes, will significantly help us in our quest to eliminate unacceptable behaviours and to support colleagues.

4. Comparison to Public Sector Benchmarks (PSB)

- 4.1 ONR is equivalent to or above the PSB in 22 of the 31 areas for which a benchmark is available. For example, 80% of ONR staff feel their job security is good (compared to the 49% public sector benchmark and 68% upper quartile score), and 73% feel ONR supports a balance between their work and personal commitments (which compares to the 68% PSB and 75% upper quartile score). ONR staff are also more likely to feel they are fairly paid for the job they do (57% compared to 46% PSB).

5. Conclusion of Survey Findings

- 5.1 Overall, the 2017 Staff Survey was a positive step forward in many areas. We improved our results in all 10 of the themes and equalled or exceeded Public Sector Benchmarks in 22 out of 31 areas. However, there are a number of concerns that need addressing and where we can improve
- a) Staff feeling valued
 - b) Cross-directorate communications
 - c) Giving staff the confidence to challenge and speak up
 - d) Seeking views /opinions so staff have the opportunity to influence changes
 - e) Visibility of senior leadership
 - f) Holding all staff to same standards of behaviour standards (including tackling poor performance)
 - g) Perception that we are not retaining our most talented
 - h) improved IT and information to perform roles
 - i) Adopting a zero tolerance towards Bullying, Harassment & Discrimination

6. Communications

- 6.1 A comprehensive engagement plan to inform all internal stakeholders of the 2017 Staff Survey results has been agreed. Staff at all three sites and Trade Unions (TUs) were briefed via corporate and local briefing sessions. The focus of EMT and Directors will now be on developing and implementing the agreed actions and milestones before the April 2018 Staff Survey.

7. Actions taken/scheduled

- 7.1 HR reviewed the 2017 Staff Survey report and produced a breakdown of results and comments for each Directorate and Division. These were sent to and discussed with each Director who are responsible for developing an action plan with their teams that is tailored specifically to the issues identified for their area. These action plans are being monitored by HR and reported up to EMT.

- 7.2 Directors will be held accountable for implementing their action plans through to completion and there will be quarterly reports on progress to EMT/RMT and the ONR Board.
- 7.3 Alongside the “local” Directorate plans, there are a number of corporate initiatives that will be run in parallel to address issues such as Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination; Performance Management & Leadership, Management and Behavioural Competencies; IT enhancements; and streamlining policies and procedures.
- 7.4 HR and BMG will hold Staff Focus Groups across ONR to ensure there is a wider review and deeper understanding of the key issues and input into potential solutions. The remit for these focus groups will be to try and “get under the skin” of the results/figures and to identify the cultural issues and barriers that exist.
- 7.5 Staff Survey Assurance Group (SSAG) is a group of staff that independently reports to the Chief Executive on their assessment of progress in response to the Staff Survey. They will continue to play a key role in providing staff with a voice and platform from which they can contribute their views on the approach and impact of the actions being delivered. TUs will be kept informed and their views/comments sought alongside other groups.
- 7.6 The above approach focuses on engaging with staff at a deeper level and “getting under the skin” of the statistics / results so that cultural issues and barriers can be identified. If successful, we will then be able to address the core issues, implement long term solutions and achieve a significant step change.

8. **Next Steps**

- 8.1 Further updates will be provided to the ONR Board on a quarterly basis, the next one being due in September 2017.

Dave Caton
HR Director

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