

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

REVIEW REPORT

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE



Treasury Solicitors

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The Assessment Network Ltd
Creating value through people

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It was clear from the review process that, despite ongoing change and ever increasing cost pressures within Central Government, Treasury Solicitors continues to maintain the high standards necessary to be recognised as an Investor in People. In particular, it was clear that not only were key processes and systems now generally embedded, but that they had led to focused outcomes which had positively impacted upon the business. In addition, the organisation had proactively reviewed matters in the light of the development issues raised at the previous assessment, and had implemented the key ones. Indeed, this is an organisation which, across some areas, does retain some comfort above the minimum demanded by the National Standard.

The organisation still, however, faces significant challenges in terms of handling the various performance, and service delivery issues in a positive and effective way; and of consolidating, and maintaining, that performance in the face of continued fundamental change and ever increasing budget pressures. There are also critical issues to be faced around continuing to develop the Managers/Team Leaders, and ensuring that the “business” has the leadership skills at all levels to enable it to manage ongoing change effectively. The need to address some succession planning issues, to further review the structure in the light of ongoing change and development, and implement a more consistent approach to client relationships will all pose additional short/medium term challenges. The importance of learning and development in helping the organisation to successfully meet those challenges cannot be underestimated. It is hoped that the feedback issues, made after a rigorous review, will both be received positively, and implemented, as appropriate.

The key findings of the assessment indicated that Treasury Solicitors continue to meet the evidence requirements of the current version of the National Investors in People Standard. The summary below represents the assessment findings within the context of identified strengths and suggestions for further development :

Key strengths and areas of good practice :

- a rigorous and sophisticated planning process with transparent and close links between the Business Plan, learning and development planning and learning and development activity. There is a regular review process which involves both the leadership team, plus the Team Leaders within the constituent Teams.
- the Plan is underpinned by a clearly defined vision and set of values which are generally well understood by staff at all levels.
- the organisation has made concerted and largely successful efforts to ensure that all staff are aware of key aims and objectives. Staff have an opportunity to become involved in both development and review processes and progress is regularly on the agenda of the regular staff meetings. In parts of the organisation, however, there is still a perception that these processes are rather more “top down” than “bottom up” – and staff involvement is heavily dependant upon the perceived capability of Team Leaders.
- a variety of practical and simple communication processes (formal and informal), which are generally consistently implemented, so that there was again a clear understanding and ownership of aims, objectives, progress and problems. There were particularly positive comments from staff about the new weekly “e-brief” – but also some concern that team meetings could “wither on the vine” in times of pressure. There were also positive comments about the “Directors Question Time” process – but see also comments below.
- a clear commitment from senior staff to adopt a consistently open approach to communications matched by an intense loyalty from the majority of staff to what they perceive as “their organisation” and thus a wish to know and be a part of what is going on.
- a generally open approach to sharing both information and knowledge and a clear perception from most (but not all!!) staff that “the organisation listens to us”. This is coupled with a perception that communications have continued to improve since the previous assessment.
- the appraisal process is seen as worthwhile by the vast majority of staff, and the organisation is generally seen to deliver on the agreed learning and development needs

identified through the process. There is a very clear alignment of this process to the achievement of key aims and objectives.

- the ongoing process of file reviews and supervision; provide an almost continuous opportunity for many staff to both review, and develop, their performance and identify any learning and development needs.
- the underpinning ethos of the organisation provides most staff with further opportunities to discuss their performance and learning and development needs over and above the formal processes. It was clear from interview evidence that many staff took advantage of those opportunities.
- the clear sense of direction and leadership evident from the Treasury Solicitor himself, coupled with his visibility and accessibility, is both universally welcomed and appreciated and clearly provides a sound basis for further continued development and change.
- the style of management supports the development of a generally positive “praise culture” within the organisation. There is regular feedback to staff, both formal and informal, a general sense of “inclusivity” and most often a feeling of “being both valued and recognised”. This, however, is currently somewhat tempered by the uncertainty felt by some staff – particularly around the perceived impact of “outsourcing”.
- the very clear sense of empowerment felt by the majority of those interviewed, underpinned by a strong ethos of continued support and encouragement.
- the organisation are to be commended for having developed and implemented a culture which is almost entirely (but again not quite!!) free of the “them & us” syndrome which often still prevails in many professional organisations.
- a very clear and genuine commitment from the organisation, to try and fulfil learning and development needs. This was clearly believed by virtually all of the staff and is underpinned by an embedded culture of coaching, mentoring and support, again both formal and informal.
- TSol should also be commended for the steps which it is taking to proactively address “knowledge management” within the organisation. Developments to date include the appointment of “Knowledge Champions”, the appointment of a dedicated PSL in one area and the development of a rolling programme of information management largely via the Intranet.
- the ethos of the organisation provides for an established learning and development culture as evidenced by the process framework and the volume of ongoing activity. There is a sound track record of internal development and promotion for both lawyers and non-lawyers.
- there is support for staff to train to externally validated standards, including established support for Trainee Solicitors, ILEX, CIPFA and NVQ qualifications – amongst others.
- a sound and effective corporate TSol Induction process. The process was regarded as effective by those interviewed and had provided a sound base of confidence and knowledge for subsequent development.
- effective evaluation processes, set within a culture of high standards of client care, process and performance improvement, and value for money. Added value is provided by the need to be seen to be achieving stringent externally imposed quality and compliance standards which are also audited e.g. through the annual assessments against the Lexcel Standard currently held by Litigation & Employment Group.

Suggested development areas and opportunities to improve :

- TSol are strongly encouraged to consider how it might build upon the progress made in involving more people in the development phase of the planning process. The current planning process has somewhat inevitably been driven “top down”, greater involvement “bottom up” would serve to further increase both ownership and understanding of the resultant strategy. The development of a “beyond 2012” document would be an ideal vehicle to start this process!!
- the significant degree of ongoing structural and organisational change which TSol has undergone in the short term has inevitably had an adverse impact upon motivation and morale in some areas of the “business”. This has been exacerbated by some unease about the likely ongoing impact of “outsourcing”.

- TSol is also strongly encouraged to keep its communications processes under continuous review as it continues to develop and change. There is currently a perception that “upward” communications can be “difficult” and not as effective as they should be in some areas. A minority of staff feel that there is no effective vehicle for them to raise concerns. There is a perception, in some parts of the organisation, that TSol is not really a “listening organisation” – this normally has a direct correlation with the perceived effectiveness of the Team Leaders in both legal and non-legal teams.
- some of the communications processes are inherently informal and the organisation is encouraged to ensure that complacency does not creep in. Staff expectations around communications are high and will need to continue to be met if the credibility of the processes is to be maintained. There was some limited evidence to suggest that the Team Meeting process could “whither on the vine” at times of work pressure. The organisation are strongly encouraged to address this issue.
- the organisation are strongly encouraged to continue to develop and refine the approach which it is now taking towards Client Relationship Management. There are likely to be some clear skills implications inherent in this approach.
- in a similar vein, the organisation are also strongly encouraged to build upon the development of “knowledge management” within TSol as outlined above. There is a critical need to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to both sustain and develop the current approach.
- whilst there was significant evidence to show that staff generally understood the “TSol Values”, it was clear from interview evidence that the organisation still has a long way to go before the majority of staff feel that they are “led and managed” through the values. The challenge now is to fully embed them into the culture and ethos of the organisation, to embed them as an integral part of the appraisal process, and to ensure that managers are appraised by how well they “live” them.
- linked to the above, is a need for the organisation to build upon the work currently being done around leadership/management competencies and behaviours. There is a clear need to define what an effective TSol Manager “looks like” and to clearly relate this to the TSol values.
- a significant number of staff believe that TSol is too “litigation centric”. The organisation are encouraged to consider this view and to take any appropriate action.
- the organisation will need to address some critical succession planning issues in the medium term. There are likely to be some very clear skills implications which will need to be addressed as part of this process.
- the organisation is also encouraged to address the skills implications inherent in the changing government context within which it operates. There are likely to be particular issues around the need to have skill sets in the business to support more proactive business development, continued use of ever more sophisticated technology, client/partnership relationship skills and the possibility of homeworking for more staff.
- linked, in part, to the above is a need for the organisation to consider the development and implementation of a more “transparent” career progression route for support staff. The development of the OTCS structure may help in this respect.
- it was also clear from interview evidence, that there are a significant number of very well qualified support staff whose expectations about developing a legal career may not be capable of being met. The organisation will need to manage those expectations very carefully, and may also wish to review its recruitment and selection policy for such positions.
- many staff have a significant concern about current workloads and the adverse effect that this is having on work-life balance. There is a perception that there is “too much work and not enough people”. This is also linked to an emerging “them and us” situation between temporary/contract staff and permanent staff.
- whilst the majority of staff do feel valued and recognised a minority do not. There is a perception of a somewhat inconsistent “praise culture” within some parts of TSol and this needs to be addressed – it is currently being exacerbated by some uncertainty about job security because of the perceived impact of “outsourcing”.
- interview evidence also suggested that a significant minority of staff felt that TSol did not always effectively manage the issue of poor performance from staff. The organisation is encouraged to address this issue.
- whilst some members of the senior team are perceived to be “visible and accessible” within the organisation, others are not perceived in anything like the same light. The

organisation is strongly encouraged to address this issue. The introduction of a formal "back to the floor" programme may be one option for consideration.

- interview evidence clearly suggested that there is a different culture within those teams collocated within their client Department, and those staff based at "OKS". Whilst this may, to some extent, be inevitable the organisation are encouraged to consider the issues raised by it.
- whilst most staff felt that the introduction of the Directors Question Time had been a "positive move", virtually everyone felt that the recent decision not to allow anonymity had been "a hugely retrograde step" as one interviewee put it. Whilst the grounds for the decision are understood, the organisation is strongly encouraged to consider this decision given the current prevailing culture within the organisation.
- there is a clear need for the organisation to ensure that all Managers understand how to effectively measure the impact of learning and development on the performance of their team; and how this measurement can then be used to help determine future learning and development activity and strategy.
- the organisation should continue to refine its KPI's, by which it can most effectively measure the impact of learning and development on its continued success.
- the organisation is encouraged to consider the future role and remit of the IIP Progress Group. In particular, whether it could play a more proactive role in championing the implementation of the "areas for improvement" outlined in this report.
- continue to replicate the very many things that you do extremely well!!

Feedback against client objectives :

- nothing additional to report.

Other comments or findings not related to the Standard :

- nothing additional to report.

Main Findings :

1. Introduction to the organisation :

There is a long tradition of legal advisers to the Crown and State, going back to probably the sixth century. The actual post of Treasury Solicitor was first officially defined in 1661. Initially part of HM Treasury itself, a permanent staff was established in 1806, and by 1842 the office was handling the legal affairs of 13 out of 23 Departments of State. Growth continued over the next 150 years and, in 1991, a major change took place when the Department was required to recover its full costs by charging other Government Departments. Finally, on 1st April 1996, the Department became an Executive Agency.

Today, Treasury Solicitors Department (TSol), provides legal services to government departments and other public bodies in England & Wales. It is one of the largest legal organizations in the UK. Ministerial responsibility rests with the Attorney General. The Department is currently organised into five Advisory Divisions, Litigation & Employment Group and the Bona Vacantia Division. The Advisory Divisions work closely with other Departments within Central Government (and are often co-located with them), advising on a wide range of legal issues including the drafting of new legislation. Litigation & Employment Group (the largest part of TSol), is itself organised into four Divisions each of which comprise a number of Teams and "mini-teams". In total there are currently 19 teams within the Group. It provides a range of litigation services for most government departments. There is a diverse range of casework – some of which is unique to government e.g. challenges to ministerial decisions through the judicial review process. By its very nature, some of the work can raise fundamental questions of constitutional importance. By comparison, the Group will also deal with more "straightforward" litigation issues, such as Employment, Immigration and Discrimination matters. The Bona Vacantia Division is a specialist part of TSol which identifies, collects and disposes of assets both of people who die intestate with no known kin, dissolved companies and failed trusts.

There has continued to be growth in employee numbers since the previous assessment, and currently the Group employs some 1000 staff, with around half employed in Litigation & Employment Group. Since the last assessment, however, TSol has taken a fundamental decision to "contract out" to the private sector some of the high volume, but low value work which it does in areas, for example, such as PI. This decision was taken, in part, to reflect the situation that TSol could not be seen to continually expand when other areas of government – many of whom are TSol's clients, are having to face significant budget reductions in difficult economic circumstances.

The assessment was carried out concurrently with the Year 2 Annual Maintenance Visit to Litigation & Employment Group against Version 4 of the Lexcel Standard. The Lexcel Standard is subject to separate reporting requirements as specified by The Law Society. This report, therefore, is concerned only with the Investors in People element of the joint assessment process.

2. Assessment and client objectives :

The following objectives were agreed with the organisation for the review :

- to carry out a rigorous concurrent assessment against both the Investors in People and, for Litigation & Employment Group, Version 4 of the Lexcel Standard, in order to decide whether both National Standards continued to be met.
- in the event that either, or both, National Standards were not currently being met, to provide a detailed gap analysis which would enable the subsequent production of an Action Plan.
- to assess the extent to which the organisation had addressed the development issues arising from the previous IIP assessment.

3. Assessment methodology :

Given the joint nature of this assessment process, the Practice had prepared some significant documentation, in addition to interview evidence. This documentation included a copy of its QPP Manual, a list of current matters, a copy of current the Business Plan and the "Towards 2012" Corporate Plan. In addition, I was given access to TSol's Intranet, and copies of the Induction Guide, the 2007 Staff Survey results and the results of a 2008 survey into Leadership Effectiveness. In the light of that, and the agreed assessment objectives, I decided to conduct a "traditional" joint assessment. This comprised a desk review of the QPP Manual, and other documentation and an audit of a sample of both open and closed case files. The process also included interviews with the Treasury Solicitor, five Heads of Division, the HR Director, the Business Partnership Director, and a total of 64 other staff – both legal and non-legal. These were chosen to be representative of both TSol as a whole and each of the constituent Divisions/Teams. They were also chosen to meet the needs of the Lexcel element of the joint assessment process. I was satisfied that the interview sample was valid in the context in which the joint assessment took place.

4. Summary position against the Standard

		Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Indicator 4	Indicator 5	Indicator 6	Indicator 7	Indicator 8	Indicator 9	Indicator 10
Evidence Requirements	01										
	02										
	03										
	04										
	05										
	06										

KEY:

A **RED** status indicates that a significant gap exists against an Evidence Requirement.




An **AMBER** status indicates that a minor gap exists against an Evidence Requirement.

A **GREEN** status indicates that the Evidence Requirement is met.

A **BLUE** status indicates that the Evidence Requirement does not apply to your organisation.

5. Findings by Principle and Indicator of the Standard

PLAN – Indicators 1 to 4





	Indicator 1: A strategy for improving the performance of the organisation is clearly defined and understood			
				
Strengths				
	1.1 Top managers made sure the organisation has a clear purpose and vision supported by a strategy for improving its performance.	100%	0%	0%
	1.2 Top managers made sure the organisation has a business plan with measurable performance objectives.	100%	0%	0%
	1.3 Top managers made sure there are constructive relationships with representative groups (where they exist) and the groups are consulted when developing the organisation's business plan.	100%	0%	0%
	1.4 Managers could describe how they involve people when developing the organisation's business plan and when agreeing team and individual objectives.	100%	0%	0%
	1.5 People who are members of representative groups could confirm that top managers make sure there are constructive relationships with the groups and they are consulted when developing the organisation's business plan.	85%	15%	0%
	1.6 People could explain the objectives of their team and the organisation at a level that is appropriate to their role, and could describe how they are expected to contribute to developing and achieving them.	91%	6%	3%
Areas for development	See Below.			

- TSol has a clearly stated purpose, mission and set of values which are clearly outlined both in the "Towards 2012" Corporate Plan and the annual Business Plan documents which are available to all staff, and are also on the Intranet. The clear purpose is supported by the commonly called "3 B's" i.e. that TSol will be "the best for our people", "the best for our clients", and "the best in the business". They are further supported by a set of five core values which as the Treasury Solicitor said, "were introduced to guide us through change and deliver our challenges. We live our values not through mugs or mouse mats, but by demonstrating them in everything we do". Individual Divisions and, in many cases Teams, then use these to develop "local" goals and targets which will support the achievement of the corporate ones. There is significant emphasis on the need to further transform levels of customer experience, improve consistency and responsiveness, and significantly reduce the cost base whilst managing substantial growth – 7% per annum in terms of chargeable hours. The annual Business Plan then sets out required actions, establishes success criteria and includes a consideration of the required learning and development against each aim or objective. **(1.1, 1.2)**
- Despite significant ongoing change and development, TSol retains constructive relationships with its Trade Unions – and with a wide range of other "stakeholders", including its client Departments and the wider Government Legal Service (GLS). **(1.3, 1.5)**

- The current planning round has been largely driven “top down” by the senior team – predominantly through an annual “strategic awayday”, which key staff attend. However, other staff do have an opportunity to make an input to the Business Plan, and to gain an understanding of TSol’s priorities for the year. This is predominantly through the ongoing team meetings framework which will include a discussion of progress against specific goals, thus giving staff a chance to input. There is also a developing culture of consulting with staff, and encouraging them to input their ideas and suggestions. TSol recognises the need to provide a more formal and structured mechanism to enable all staff to have the opportunity to contribute and input to the Business Plan – they are currently considering their thoughts on the issue. **(1.4)**
- The vast majority of staff throughout TSol were able to put forward a very clear description of their role, how this contributes to the strategic objectives, and how their work is measured and monitored. The ongoing change and uncertainty, however, meant that a small minority were unable to do so – as outlined in some of the comments below. **(1.6)**

Quotes :

- "I'm really proud of the values we have developed".
- "We need to move from being simply client focussed, to becoming client centric".
- "The values at TSol are hugely important, and I expect everyone to live them".
- "Part of my role is to be keeper of the vision".
- "The culture of the organisation is very important to me".
- "Much of the 2012 strategy focuses on Litigation".
- "The strategic development has really been instrumental in my own personal development".
- "TSol is now an organisation which is a business – and it has to be run like a business".
- "The values really underlined what was already there".
- "We try and involve people in the business planning process – but we don't always get feedback".
- "Towards 2012 reflected a change in culture in TSol".
- "I just don't have the time to get involved in trying to understand the strategy".
- "The values are for senior staff – not for junior staff".

 Indicator 2: Learning and development is planned to achieve the organisation’s objectives				
				
Strengths	2.1 Top managers could explain the organisation’s learning and development needs, the plans and resources in place to meet them, how these link to achieving specific objectives and how the impact will be evaluated.	100%	0%	0%
	2.2 Managers could explain team learning and development needs, the activities planned to meet them, how these link to achieving specific team objectives and how the impact will be evaluated.	85%	10%	5%
	2.3 People could describe how they are involved in identifying their learning and development needs and the activities planned to meet them.	90%	8%	2%
	2.4 People could explain what their learning and development activities should achieve for them, their team and the organisation.	80%	14%	6%
Areas for development	See Below			

- TSol's learning and development needs are specified very clearly and are very firmly linked to the overall strategic objectives as outlined above. A substantial budget for learning and development is derived from this analysis and from the wider budgeting process, making use of a range of sources. There is a very clear understanding from top management about the learning and development challenges associated with achieving the "Towards 2012" strategy as some of the undernoted quotes outline. **(2.1)**
- Most Managers throughout the organisation were both able to discuss the learning and development needs that have arisen in their Divisions/Teams, and those that are likely to arise in the future because of both service delivery and structural changes, and how the impact of those will be both monitored and evaluated. **(2.2)**
- The majority of staff were able to outline the learning and development activities that they expect to complete, and were able to confirm that they are involved in identifying these through a variety of methods, including primarily the appraisal process, in some instances 1:1's, supervision and file review processes; plus keeping abreast of what is available through team meetings, LION, the Intranet, emails and the like. A minority of staff, however, felt that they were not involved in identifying development needs because their appraisal process had been "erratic" as one employee called it. In turn, this meant that they were unable to explain what any training should achieve either for them, or for TSol. The organisation is encouraged to address this issue. **(2.3, 2.4)**

Quotes :

"One of our key challenges will be to maintain our pool of talent".

"Part of my role is to ensure that we develop all of our people".

"We have arrangements in place to develop the skills that we don't currently have".

"As the Manager, I have consciously taken a decision to grow the talent we have in the team".

"Often the training is put on a plate for me".

"Its very much about learning on the job - it's the best way to do it".

"The training and development is always there on offer when you want it".

"You can't move for training here".

"They do have a lot of training here".

"The longer I'm here the more I learn".

"I wish I had more time for training".

"Leadership and Management Development is absolutely key to delivering our strategy".

"We are all required to have a learning and development plan".

"I can go to my boss about training at any time".

"Sometimes I do wonder just what I'm supposed to be achieving at a particular course".

"There are lots of in-house training sessions".





"My development really comes from me – not from TSol".

A	Indicator 3: Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the organisation's people			
		+	+ -	-
Strengths	3.1 Top managers could describe strategies they have in place to create an environment where everyone is encouraged to contribute ideas to improve their own and other people's performance.	80%	20%	0%
	3.2 Top managers recognised the different needs of people and could describe strategies they have in place to make sure everyone has appropriate and fair access to the support they need and there is equality of opportunity for people to learn and develop which will improve their performance.	100%	0%	0%
	3.3 Managers recognised the different needs of people and could describe how they make sure everyone has appropriate and fair access to the support they need and there is equality of opportunity for people to learn and develop which will improve their performance.	96%	4%	0%
	3.4 People believed managers are genuinely committed to making sure everyone has appropriate and fair access to the support they need and there is equality of opportunity for them to learn and develop which will improve their performance.	95%	5%	0%
	3.5 People could give examples of how they have been encouraged to contribute ideas to improve their own and other people's performance.	75%	15%	10%
Areas for development	See Below			

- There is generally an inclusive management style which recognises that people have diverse needs, an entitlement to be involved in their work, and a right to expect support from the organisation with their learning and development. The appraisal process extends to all staff and is generally (but by no means universally!!) perceived as being effective and supportive. In addition, the ongoing meetings and communications framework provides an opportunity for everyone to stay abreast of events, and support for learning and development is generally both consistent and accessible. **(3.1, 3.2)**
- The vast majority of Managers were also able to describe how they too try to ensure that everyone is involved and able to make a contribution, for example, people are asked to share the content and key lessons of any learning and development they undertake, so that knowledge is disseminated as widely as possible throughout the organisation. **(3.3)**
- Most (but again not all) of those interviewed indicated that access to learning and development opportunities is fair and open, that they perceive no barriers and that they feel most requests for learning and development would be seriously considered and supported – although some people perceived budgetary pressures were beginning to bite. A significant minority of staff, however, felt that TSol was not encouraging them to contribute ideas – this could often be traced back to the perceived capability of people's immediate Manager. This view was also particularly prevalent amongst non-legal staff. As some of the undernoted comments illustrate, this is an area where the organisation needs to consider how they might improve. **(3.4, 3.5)**

Quotes :

- "It would listen – but I’m not sure that they hear".
- "The non-lawyers sometimes get the thin end of the wedge in training and development".
- "On the whole you do get listened to here".
- "I’m never really sure whether they listen or whether its just a token attempt".
- "There should be much more of a feedback culture in TSol".
- "I’ve always been listened to when I’ve made suggestions".
- "We have a good open door policy here".
- "They actually encourage your feedback".
- "I made a good suggestion to my Team Leader and it got picked up and implemented".
- "My AO’s go to meetings to contribute not just to take notes".
- "You do sometimes wonder if, as a non-lawyer here, you have a voice".
- "I don't feel my suggestions are listened to because I'm only an AO".





	Indicator 4: The capabilities managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively are clearly defined and understood			
				
Strengths	4.1 Top managers could describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively, and the plans they have in place to make sure managers have these capabilities.	100%	0%	0%
	4.2 Managers could describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to lead, manage and develop people effectively.	90%	10%	0%
	4.3 People could describe what their manager should be doing to lead, manage and develop them effectively.	90%	10%	0%
Areas for development	Not applicable			

- There is a clear understanding from the organisation about what knowledge, skills and behaviours Managers need to demonstrate – although it would be beneficial if these were further developed and refined into a formal competency matrix which defined what an effective TSol Manager “looked like” (it is accepted that this is currently a “work in progress!!). Clearly this needs to incorporate the TSol values which would then enable Managers to be assessed against both performance targets and their implementation of, and adherence to, the values themselves. The capabilities include effective people management, team building, motivating staff, coaching and mentoring, accepting accountability, providing professional/technical/operational guidance and developing potential. Whilst some formal management development has been done e.g. through the Leadership Development Programme, the challenge for the organisation is to “shift up a gear” and roll out these programmes across TSol to all levels of management. **(4.1, 4.2)**
- The vast majority of staff are clearly happy with the open style and the key messages on the culture and ethos within the organisation, and have made good use of the opportunities these afford. People confirmed that they understand what they should expect from their Managers, in terms of specific processes and actions (e.g. meetings, appraisals) and general style (e.g. consultative, open, supportive), although a small minority felt that their expectations were not currently being met. **(4.3)**

Quotes :

- "For my LMT, I'm very much the coach".
- "We want to nurture and support our people – and I think we do".
- "There was a real lack of leadership and management when I joined TSol – there isn't now"!!
- "I am a mentor and sounding board for my managers".
- "I'm quite insistent on an open door policy".
- "I have been offered an external coach as part of my development".
- "My role is a mixture of enabling, coaching and mentoring".
- "My boss gives me the space to do my job, but is there when I need support".
- "I think my Team Leader only pays lip service to the staff".
- "I don't really expect anything from my boss – just as well really because I don't get anything"!!
- "My role is to make sure that my people have the tools to do the job".
- "A lot of my role is about giving guidance to others".

DO – Indicators 5 to 8





 Indicator 5: Managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people				
				
Strengths	5.1 Managers could explain how they are effective in leading, managing and developing people.	100%	0%	0%
	5.2 Managers could give examples of how they give people constructive feedback on their performance regularly and when appropriate.	90%	10%	0%
	5.3 People could explain how their managers are effective in leading, managing and developing them.	88%	10%	2%
	5.4 People could give examples of how they receive constructive feedback on their performance regularly and when appropriate.	80%	15%	5%
Areas for development	See below			

- All managers were able to explain how they strive to be effective and the actions they take to meet the expectations of staff and the shared set of values. Examples generally reflected the emphasis upon staff involvement and respect for knowledge and experience. **(5.1)**
- Most Managers could also outline how they make use of the appraisal process to give formal feedback, but also try and give feedback in appropriate meeting settings, when working with a team member on a one to one basis, or after specific events such as a client complaint or compliment. **(5.2)**
- The feedback from staff about the managers was generally good, with the majority of people generally confirming that they are able to make an input, are being given advice and guidance when required, feel that key processes are well-used, and generally feel that they are a part of the business. They confirmed that they receive feedback through various routes, and that this is generally of a good quality and is presented in a constructive way. A significant minority, however, felt that their manager and/or their

manager’s manager were not effective and were perceived as “poor” people managers. A significant minority (often the same people), also felt that this group of Managers were poor at providing feedback whether through appraisals, or other methods. Whilst some of these issues are perhaps the result of current change and uncertainty, the organisation do need to address this issue – by far the majority of critical comments came from support staff rather than professional/technical staff. There is currently something of a mismatch between the perceptions/understanding held by some Managers and those held by the people who are being managed by them!! (5.3, 5.4)

Quotes :

- "Part of my role is to give my people the right opportunities at the right time for them and for TSol".
- "I feel very comfortable in my ability to do the Team Leader role".
- "I'm allowed the freedom and flexibility to manage my team".
- "My boss is very good at sharing knowledge with me".
- "People like getting feedback – particularly positive feedback".
- "I try and be very open with my people about how I have made decisions".
- "Interpersonal skills are not my Managers greatest strength - they don't come naturally to her".
- "My management style is to try and involve my people – that way they buy in to what needs to be done".
- "You don't get much support when you are short staffed".
- "Trying to get my Team Leader to make a decision is well nigh impossible".
- "There is a lot of talk in our team - but precious little action!!".
- "The appraisal is really my time for me and my boss to talk about me".
- "I have been impressed with the appraisal process".
- "I got some good feedback from my last appraisal".
- "The feedback has been very positive".
- "The appraisal is a live document throughout the year".
- "You don't always get feedback on how well you are doing".
- "My boss is a real leader and quite, quite inspirational".
- "I get a great deal of pleasure in seeing people develop and move on".
- "I try and challenge people outside their comfort zone".
- "My boss doesn't inspire me at all – in fact she takes my confidence away".

	Indicator 6: People’s contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued			
				
Strengths	6.1 Managers could give examples of how they recognise and value people’s individual contribution to the organisation.	96%	4%	0%
	6.2 People could describe how they contribute to the organisation and believe they make a positive difference to its performance.	94%	6%	0%
	6.3 People could describe how their contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued.	85%	10%	5%
Areas for development	See below			

- Almost all Managers interviewed outlined how they try to ensure that people feel that their efforts are recognised and that they feel valued, and all spoke about involvement, empowerment and respect for

individual capability and knowledge. Examples included using meetings to share successes, the reward and recognition framework, pro-actively creating a sense of teamwork and shared goals, allowing people to make an input and implement new ideas etc. (6.1)

- Again, however, there was a something of a mismatch between the perceptions held by Managers and those held by other employees – again particularly support staff. It was clear that a minority of staff do not currently feel valued in the organisation, and this is illustrated by some of the quotes below. Again, whilst some of this feedback is probably down to the uncertainty that some staff were feeling at the time of the review, some of it is also down to the perception held by some staff that some managers are either poor people managers, and/or are not able to manage people effectively because of the perception that the organisation will not support them if they try and tackle poor performance. (6.2, 6.3)

Quotes :

"By and large I feel valued yes".

"I always try and give praise where praise is due".

"I am forever thanking my team for their contribution".

"I feel that what we do goes largely unnoticed by the organisation"!!

"My boss is good at saying when I've done well".

"You really do get recognition here when you do good work".

"There is a proper effort to communicate the Business Plan so we know how we fit in".

"It's a very fair place to work".

"The values are very much encouraged".

"My Manager lives the values".

"When you do well here people tell you".

"If I do a good job then I'm told I've done a good job".

"We don't get as much recognition as I feel we should".

"The vibes is good in TSo!"!!

"You get feedback here - that makes me feel valued".

"The power of a thank you is really immense".

"In my team the culture is all about getting kicked up the backside".

"My boss doesn't live the values".

"My boss is a real people person and that makes me feel valued".

"I feel valued - but I'm not always made to feel valued".

"Sometimes I feel valued - most of the time I don't".

"I like the values.....but they still have a long way to go to live by them".

A	Indicator 7: People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision making			
		+	+ -	-
Strengths	7.1 Managers could describe how they promote a sense of ownership and responsibility by encouraging people to be involved in decision-making, both individually and through representative groups, where they exist.	98%	2%	0%
	7.2 People could describe how they are encouraged to be involved in decision-making that affects the performance of individuals, teams and the organisation, at a level that is appropriate to their role.	86%	12%	2%
	7.3 People could describe how they are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility for decisions that affect the performance of individuals, teams and the organisation, at a level that is appropriate to their role.	86%	12%	2%
Areas for development	See below			

- All Managers confirmed that they use a range of situations to try and involve people, and that this extends from "Team" issues, through to individual issues (such as new ideas people raise, their input to the 'things we could do better' etc). There is again, however, something of a mismatch between interview evidence from Managers and that obtained from other staff. A minority of staff were pretty clear that they were neither encouraged, nor involved, nor able to utilise their experience and ability with an appropriate amount of autonomy, both in planning and decision-making and, on a daily basis, within the role they perform. (7.1, 7.2, 7.3)

Quotes :

"We have an open door policy here that actually works!!".

"We share an awful lot in the team".

"One of our mantra's is "for goodness sake share it"".

"We discuss ideas regularly within the team".

"I have always been encouraged to put ideas forward".

"It really feels like you are being listened to here".

"We are very much encouraged to participate in team meetings".

"They are a very open organisation for a government department".

"Since we have all gone to the Team Meetings, we have felt much more involved in the team".

"I feel included in what the team does".

"Our team meeting minutes are not always circulated as well as they might be".





"On the whole the organisation listens.....whether it ever does anything about it is entirely another matter".

"I'm hardly ever involved in anything".

"I think I could offer TSol so much more and I'm frustrated that they don't seem to want to know".

"Shorter team meetings would be nice".

"Communications have much improved.....but there is still a long way to go".

 Indicator 8: People learn and develop effectively				
				
Strengths	8.1 Managers could describe how they make sure people's learning and development needs are met.	90%	10%	0%
	8.2 People could describe how their learning and development needs have been met, what they have learnt and how they have applied this in their role.	100%	0%	0%
	8.3 People who are new to the organisation, or new to a role, could describe how their induction has helped them to perform effectively.	90%	10%	0%
Areas for development	See below			

- The organisation uses a variety of systems and processes to make sure people's learning needs are met. These include, appraisals, supervision, the file review process, the meetings framework, debriefing after training, cascade training sessions, feedback from complaints and compliments, mentoring and coaching (both formal and informal), and the ongoing review of the achievement of priorities from the Business Plan **(8.1)**
- All staff were able to give examples of learning and development activities they have undertaken, and were able to discuss what impact this has had and how they think it has influenced their work. **(8.2)**
- Staff who were new to the Firm, or to their role, generally gave very positive feedback about the support they have been given to adapt to new requirements or take on board new duties (again as indicated by some of the undernoted quotes). This particularly applied to views about the corporate TSol induction 0 views about Induction into Teams were more mixed. It was clear, however, that the level of coaching, mentoring and support generally works very well and enhances the initial support offered to all new staff – at whatever level. **(8.3)**

Quotes :

- "This is the first job that I've had that's had a proper Induction process".
- "There was a good Induction - I felt it went really well".
- "The Induction was pretty comprehensive - I couldn't really fault it".
- "There was a very structured Induction to TSol as a whole, and to my Team".
- "I had virtually no Induction into my team – it was virtually hello now get on with it".
- "There is a lot of good stuff you pick up on the job".
- "There is a lot of shared knowledge and experience in our team".
- "A lot of my development is around learning on the job - I have learned a huge amount from my manager, and from my peers".
- "I have learned a huge amount since I've been here".
- "My NVQ has really made me feel really good about my job".
- "We get ongoing training all the time".
- "We have had a lot of training in the last 12 months - and I've passed my NVQ".
- "You learn very quickly here.....or you die"!!!

REVIEW – Indicators 9 to 10

A	Indicator 9: Investment in people improves the performance of the organisation			
		+	+/-	-
Strengths	9.1 Top managers could describe the organisation's overall investment of time, money and resources in learning and development.	90%	10%	0%
	9.2 Top managers could explain, and quantify where appropriate, how learning and development has improved the performance of the organisation.	90%	10%	0%
	9.3 Top managers could describe how the evaluation of their investment in people is used to develop their strategy for improving the performance of the organisation.	80%	20%	0%
	9.4 Managers could give examples of how learning and development has improved the performance of their team and the organisation.	80%	20%	0%
	9.5 People could give examples of how learning and development has improved their performance, the performance of their team and that of the organisation.	90%	10%	0%
Areas for development	Not applicable			





- The organisation tracks the expenditure on learning and development and staff costs, and both top and senior managers, and the HR/Training function, have a detailed overview of the resources committed – although not all were able to articulate it. **(9.1)**
- Similarly, most were also able to give examples of how the learning and development undertaken by staff has reflected in the achievement of aims and objectives. Those that could not, were generally new in post (and/or to TSol), and had not yet had the time to carry out an evaluation. **(9.2)**
- The general effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation processes and their subsequent linking to future planning means that the majority of managers clearly understand how evaluation of the investment can be used to inform future strategy. Indeed future strategy has continuing staff development as one of its implicit objectives. Feedback from clients/stakeholders is also reviewed for any training/learning implications and, if necessary, actions are built into subsequent development plans and activities. However, a minority of managers were not able to evidence how learning and development could be linked back into future strategy for improving performance, and/or could not evidence the link between improved individual performance and the impact on team performance. **(9.3, 9.4)**
- Most staff were able to discuss the impact of training and development upon the achievement of their objectives, and it is clear that most are aware of what they need to achieve and how their learning and development has impacted upon this. However, a minority of staff were not able to understand the link between improved individual performance and the impact on team/organisational performance. The Company are encouraged to address this issue. **(9.5)**

Quotes :

"We are not that good at evaluation".

"The Staff Survey results recognised that we are broadly doing the right things".

- "The test of whether the training works or not is the client reaction to our performance".
- "The Leadership Development Course was really good for me, and really well run".
- "One of our mantras is "learn and change - then change again"".
- "Its part of the culture to look at what we are not doing well".
- "Success will mean a very different looking organisation".
- "I still think we need a better management balance between results and behaviours".

	Indicator 10: Improvements are continually made to the way people are managed and developed			
				
Strengths	10.1 Top managers could give examples of how the evaluation of their investment in people has resulted in improvements in the organisation’s strategy for managing and developing people.	80%	20%	0%
	10.2 Managers could give examples of improvements they have made to the way they manage and develop people.	75%	25%	0%
	10.3 People could give examples of improvements that have been made to the way the organisation manages and develops its people.	76%	24%	0%
Areas for development	See below			

- TSol clearly embraces the value of continuous improvement and self-reflection, and the senior team were able to highlight at least some improvements in the way people are managed and developed. These included, the inclusion of all staff in the team meeting process and ongoing improvements in empowering and involving people, etc. **(10.1)**
- Until recently the continuous improvements outlined above were driven largely by the senior team. Many of the Team Leaders, however, are now very much beginning to “find their feet”, and this can only improve still further as more of them develop additional leadership and management skills. The organisation are aware that this is one of the key short term “people” challenges which they face. **(10.2)**
- There was ample interview evidence to confirm the improvements that the organisation had made since the previous assessment. There was, for example, a general view that communications had improved – albeit that there was room for some further improvement!! This had been complemented by more frequent and structured opportunities for both formal and informal feedback – these had been widely welcomed. Finally, most staff felt that they were now beginning to have a real influence within TSol. **(10.3)**

6. Conclusion and next steps :

Having carried out the assessment process rigorously and in accordance with the guidelines laid down by Investors in People UK Ltd., and The Assessment Network Ltd., I am satisfied beyond any doubt that Treasury Solicitors, continue to meet the requirements of the National Standard for Investors in People. Recognition is, therefore, continued until the date of the next review (which must be no later than December 17th 2011), subject to no changes occurring in the interim which might put continued recognition at risk.

I would like to thank all of the staff interviewed for their courtesy and patience. Specific thanks are also due to Larry Devis and his colleagues in the People Development Team, for their help in ensuring that the process itself ran like clockwork. It was very much appreciated!!

7. Next review :

Recognition as an Investor in People is subject to reviews against the Investors in People Standard every three years. Therefore Treasury Solicitors will, as outlined above, be required to be assessed no later than 17th December 2011 although it is entirely possible to be reviewed prior to this date.

For guidance in respect of future Investors in People review options please contact The Assessment Network on 01480 479 222.

8. Quality Assurance :

The Assessment Network Ltd is responsible for the Quality Assurance of this assessment and will invite a representative from Treasury Solicitors to take part in a Quality Assurance Questionnaire. This questionnaire was devised and developed by Investors in People UK, with the objective of receiving client feedback in order to provide for a consistent approach to the assessment and recognition process. Further details will be forwarded by The Assessment Network Ltd in due course.

John Wooddissee
Investors in People Assessor

17th December 2008.