



Medicines & Healthcare products  
Regulatory Agency

# People Strategy 2023-2026

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## Enabling people to flourish

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## Foreword

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I am delighted to introduce our refreshed People Strategy “Enabling people to flourish” which closely aligns with, and supports delivering, the strategic priorities set out in our [2023-2026 Corporate Plan](#).

Our purpose at MHRA is to provide scientific expertise and decisions, support for innovation and the risk-proportionate regulation of medical products, to protect and improve public health across the UK.

We can only deliver on our shared purpose by bringing extraordinary people like you together, guided by our values and the behaviours set out in the Behaviours Framework.

With these foundations in place, now is the time to set out our commitment through our updated people strategy to work together, to make MHRA a place where all of us can flourish, irrespective of grade or job title. Our Agency should be a great place to work where we all feel supported to learn and develop our talents and collectively achieve our ambitions set out in the Corporate Plan.

The Strategy will be a living document and our Human Resources team will lead on keeping its content aligned with the agency’s priorities set out in the annual Business Plans. The focus goes far beyond HR policies, initiatives, and practices, recognising that all of us have shared responsibility for our contributions. Working together with respect, we can build an agency where continuous learning is

supported and expected. Where we all feel rewarded, developed, and enabled to deliver our best for patients and protect public health.

Delivering this Strategy together will allow us to attract and retain diverse talent to ensure we have the right capabilities across the Agency and everyone has career development routes alongside opportunities to flourish in their role. The new Agency performance dashboard will allow us to measure our progress on key elements of this Strategy at Group as well as Agency level, with clear performance measures for each of the Strategy’s themes. This will be bolstered by evaluating and actioning the feedback you give through both the People, Culture and Pulse surveys.

As we go forward together, I look forward to delivering on our ambition of enabling people to flourish which in turn puts public health first. Our success will be driven by our key asset which is you. We are all in this together.

**Dr June Raine**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

# Executive Summary

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Our People Strategy, “Enabling people to flourish” sits alongside the agency’s [Corporate Plan for 2023-2026](#). You, our people are central to everything the agency does and our commitment to keep patients safe and enable access to high quality, safe and effective medical products in the UK can only be realised by investing in all of you. This People Strategy sets out how this will be achieved.

Focused on five equal and inextricably linked themes, (attract and retain the best people, develop exceptional people and people leaders, value diversity and promote wellbeing and inclusion, invest in a healthy culture, and enable great performance and delivery), the Strategy can only succeed by realising the aspirations it sets out for all five themes. It’s all about enabling an effective partnership between the Agency and its people. The actions set out for each theme highlight how important people are to the Agency in delivering our public health outcomes. The Strategy aims to set out the opportunities for individual staff to flourish while recognising and setting out the role that individuals themselves need to play to enable this.

Enabling people to flourish also means all of us living by our values and the strategy will help us to embed the values in achieving our outcomes. This People Strategy will support us to embed the values in achieving our outcomes.

The Strategy will be reviewed bi-annually by the People and Culture Committee on behalf of ExCo, ensuring People/Culture Survey data is considered, but any published changes to the Strategy will be in line with the Corporate Plan refresh and business plan timetable.



# Enabling people to flourish

- 1** Attract and retain the best people
- 2** Develop exceptional people and people leaders
- 3** Value diversity and promote wellbeing and inclusion
- 4** Invest in a healthy culture
- 5** Enable great performance and delivery



# Attract and retain the best people

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The Agency's future depends upon attracting and retaining people with the capabilities needed to be a truly world-leading, enabling, sovereign regulator. Our recruitment campaigns will leverage our reputation and the development opportunities we offer, so we attract the best people in a competitive jobs market. Without skilled people we simply cannot deliver the right outcomes for patients and the public. Our priority is to attract and retain people in areas identified as having current or likely future skills gaps.

We seek to attract and retain people with potential and relevant experience, from a range of sectors and all walks of life. This requires us to review not just how we bring people into the Agency, but also where and how we source people and how we induct new joiners into our [One Agency culture](#). Having invested in them, we need to ensure they wish to remain working for us in the service of our Vision, whilst having opportunities to develop and follow different career paths which support personal growth. This is why we will actively promote secondments and loans across the health family.

The Agency's approach to reward and recognition will be a key factor in whether we achieve our retention and attraction aspirations. Working within Civil Service constraints, we will apply a flexible and fair approach to reward and recognition, recognising colleagues' contributions and achievements, as well as excellence, and positioning the Agency as a preferred employer across the health family. It is our aspiration to introduce a capability-based pay approach in line with what is being developed across the wider Civil Service and our original Competency Development Framework.





# Attract and retain the best people

## By March 2024 the Agency will:

- review and simplify its recruitment systems and processes to enable the best possible experience for candidates and staff, in line with Civil Service requirements and with a view to reducing the average time to fill any vacancy;
- strengthen and introduce new channels for attracting external talent, including a new graduate scheme;
- ensure an Agency-wide workforce plan is in place, aligned with both Business and Corporate plans, and with identified activities to address identified gaps;
- upskill all Senior Management Teams to work alongside HR and Finance to apply dynamic workforce planning: with a view to meeting immediate and longer-term resourcing needs;
- carry out ongoing learning needs analysis and a skills audit to increase understanding of existing capability, and address capability gaps;
- increase the number of apprenticeships in the Agency to 40, as a first step toward meeting the Civil Service target of 5% of our workforce in 2025;
- position the Agency as a great place to work through enhancing our staff offer (including role design, reward, culture) and employer brand;
- review the induction of new colleagues, to be confident of fostering a positive relationship with them from the outset.

## And in each year of the Strategy the Agency will continue to:

- make use of available pay flexibilities within the Civil Service;
- ensure performance budgets are fully utilised to recognise great performance in line with Agency values and behaviours and in line with equality and diversity considerations;
- ensure our employee benefits (non-pay) package on INsite and My Lifestyle is the best possible we can offer and staff are aware of its availability;
- engage with external education providers to enhance our apprenticeships offer and support paid internships and work placements



# Attract and retain the best people

**We all have a part to play to realise the Agency's attraction and retention aspirations and to build an environment where our contribution is recognised and rewarded appropriately.**

**As individuals, we are all expected to:**

- assess, and then seek to develop our skills/ capabilities (and those of our team if we are a manager) and submit this information as required for workforce planning purposes;
- make ourselves aware of the full content of the financial and the non pay benefits available to us;
- notice exceptional performance/ behaviours in others and acknowledge this: including when appropriate, nominating colleagues for financial awards on INsite;
- allow time at our 1-1 monthly performance review meetings to talk about developing our skills in relation to our role and our career aspirations;
- (as a recruiting manager to) progress recruitment activity in a timely way, ensuring all actions are completed accurately and within identified timescales.

**So, all of us can:**

- make best use of, and develop our own skills for the future and those of others we interact with;
- remain motivated in fulfilling our role and seek to perform to a high standard;
- be recognised for performing our role to a high standard and demonstrating the Agency's Values and behaviours;
- take full advantage of the employee offer and benefits important to us. And the Agency can:
- have confidence that it has the right capability and capacity to deliver all outcomes and attain its vision;
- improve performance with a workforce plan that mirrors the Corporate and Business plans and any ongoing changes;
- innovate through skilled and engaged colleagues.

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# Develop exceptional people and people leaders

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The Agency's core strength is its people, which is why we are investing in developing the potential of all colleagues.

A key driver of business impact is the strength of an organisation's approach to learning. As part of the Agency's journey to become a learning organisation, we will create the conditions for effective learning and growth through experience on the job and through relationships, as well as through formal training.

Recognising the challenges faced by people in delivering "the day job", our [70:20:10 approach to learning](#) allows people to prioritise their professional skills development and career aspirations, while meeting their performance goals.

We need to develop impactful, strategic leaders as well as strengthen line management capability across the Agency. We need to ensure line managers have the time to fulfil their role in developing their teams and are skilled in doing so.

We wish to be renowned for the way our leaders lead; uniting all in service of the Agency's vision, role modelling [Agency values and behaviours](#) and leading effectively through change. Using the Civil Service Leadership in Action attributes as our blueprint, our inclusive approach to leadership will allow us to identify and grow our leaders at all levels to drive leadership excellence and capability.



# Develop exceptional people and people leaders

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## By March 2024 the Agency will:

- implement and further evolve the Leadership Development Plan, encouraging all colleagues to develop and apply their leadership capabilities regardless of grade and management responsibilities;
- introduce and embed an inclusive talent management approach;
- enhance the range of core and professional/specialist learning;
- introduce a new career development approach and plan, including the review of the Competency Development Framework scheme.

## And in each year of the Strategy the Agency will continue to:

- support you to deliver, perform and excel in your role regardless of your future aspirations;
- support you in a range of core and professional/specialist learning, including with academic institutions, so you can develop required technical skills and expertise;
- provide clear, inspiring, and well-promoted leadership expectations that will build a performance culture in which delivery can be accurately measured;
- place more focus on upskilling managers to develop their people and improving access to opportunities, including internal moves to meet business need;
- signpost and promote career paths that encourage a breadth of experience and depth of expertise;
- work towards becoming a learning organisation: an Agency that continuously develops and learns from experiences – its successes and its failures – at an individual, collective and organisational level.





# Develop exceptional people and people leaders

**We, the people, are the Agency and by prioritising our development and our leadership we strengthen the Agency's reputation through improving outcomes for patients and the public.**

**As individuals, we are all expected to:**

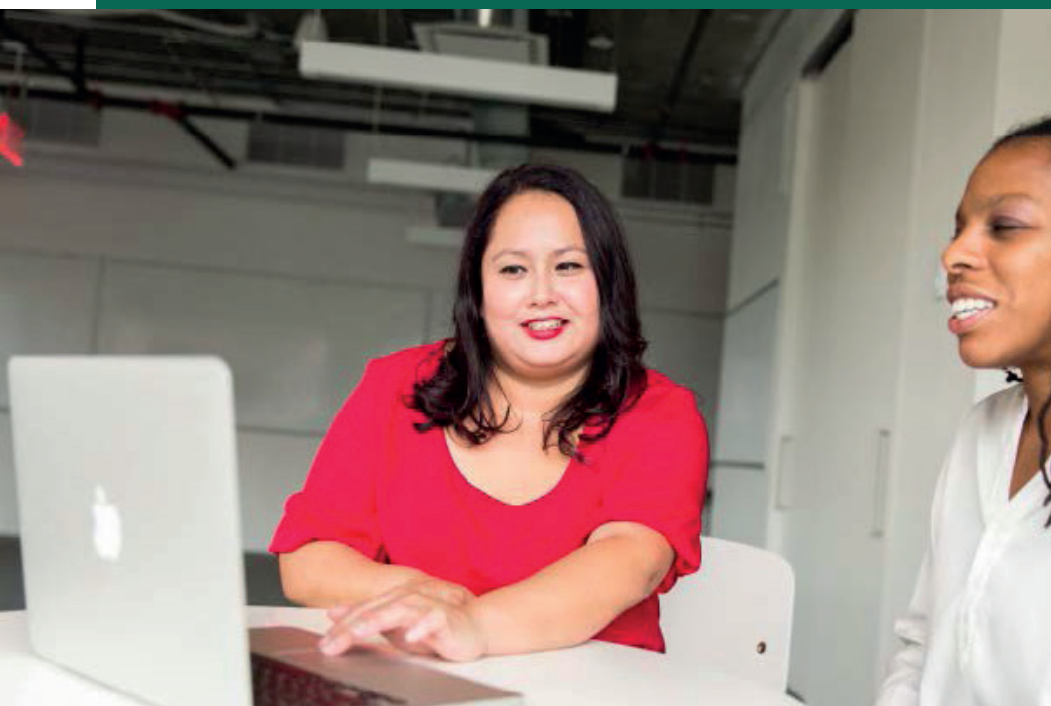
- take responsibility for our own development, (fully supported by our leaders, policies and practices) and as line managers prioritise the development of our team(s);
- prioritise time for self-reflection and to access available development opportunities (both formal and informal), and encourage other colleagues to do so too; share our knowledge and skills freely to develop others;
- seek to develop ourselves in line with the Civil Service Leadership in Action Attributes;
- seek out development opportunities and networking opportunities to unlock cross system working, both within and outside of the Agency;
- access any relevant resources and opportunities signposted in the Agency Career Development Guide

**So, all of us can:**

- be the best we can be in our role and identify a development and/or career pathway which enables us to unlock our potential;
- always demonstrate good leadership, recognising that leadership is not all about line management or seniority;
- be seen as a good leader of people; have confidence in our leaders.

**And the Agency can:**

- benefit from empowered and enabled colleagues;
- create an environment for an engaged and resilient workforce;
- be recognised for the quality of its people and leaders.



# Value diversity and promote wellbeing and inclusion

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Diversity, inclusion and wellbeing are central to the Agency's future success. We firmly believe that everyone is unique and should be respected for their differences and our Strategy focuses on making this a reality. The Strategy's emphasis on ensuring colleagues' psychological safety so individuals feel able to speak up, offer ideas and ask questions, will help the Agency and colleagues to thrive and grow together.

Building a diverse workforce means we can leverage different skills and perspectives to improve decision-making and better meet the needs of patients and the public we serve. Increasing our diversity and building an inclusive workplace will also help the Agency become more creative and innovative, as well as increasing our ability to keep attracting, retaining and growing talent from different backgrounds and with different characteristics.

The Agency's purpose is to protect and improve public health and that includes promoting and enhancing the health and wellbeing of its own people. The People Strategy shows what each of us can do to support and improve the wellbeing of everyone working for the Agency. An Executive Committee member will champion mental health to ensure visibility of progress on mental health and wellbeing in the Executive leadership of the Agency.





# Value diversity and promote wellbeing and inclusion

## By March 2024 the Agency will:

- achieve bronze standard in the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Framework; evaluate the 20:40:40 hybrid working model;
- review the make-up of internal promotions and external recruitment with the aim to better understand equity of opportunity and any barriers to this enable psychological safety in our work environment;
- address any inclusion and wellbeing concerns raised in the People Survey and Pulse Surveys and through other channels;
- ensure identified diversity strands, (Race, Disability, Gender, Wellbeing , Age, Faith and Belief, LGBT+, Carers and Social Mobility) have a senior champion.

## And in each year of the Strategy the Agency will continue to:

- further implement the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework to ensure everyone has an opportunity to reach their potential. Aiming for Gold standard by end of 2026;
- actively include colleagues from a range of sectors and all walks of life, drawing on different perspectives to encourage diverse conversations and fuel innovation;
- actively promote wellbeing opportunities and take steps to ensure colleagues' physical and mental health in the workplace;
- promote and support the creation of staff led networks, in support of shared interest in a particular area;
- actively seek and listen to all views with empathy and impartiality;
- continue to ensure the anonymity of the diversity data collected and aspire towards reaching its diversity goals;
- respond decisively to observed as well as reported incidents of bullying and harassment/discrimination.



# Value diversity and promote wellbeing and inclusion

**Our shared responsibility is ensuring every voice is heard, people are confident their unique talents matter, and due consideration is given to their individual needs.**

**As individuals, we are all expected to:**

- make time to meaningfully connect with colleagues;
- listen to others and create opportunities for everyone to have their say, encouraging and recognising the value of diverse views;
- treat everyone with respect at all times, even if we disagree with a proposal or decision;
- reach out for support to our line manager, a colleague or mental health first aider when we need to;
- champion diversity and inclusion at every opportunity, by actively creating a safe space and opportunity for all to contribute;
- fill in our diversity data when requested, even if that is selecting the “prefer not to say” option;
- raise concerns, if we have them, through an appropriate channel.

**So, all of us can:**

- speak up with confidence, knowing we will be listened to;
- know we will be always supported;
- bring our best self to work;
- contribute to a diverse team and realise the benefits from doing so.

**And the Agency can:**

- realise the full benefits from its people from a range of backgrounds and lived experiences and all walks of life, to achieve positive outcomes for patients and the public;
- act to improve diversity outcomes based on quantitative and qualitative diversity data;
- provide an open and inclusive work environment where everyone can thrive regardless of their background, working pattern or career experience and where core processes are delivered both consistently and fairly.





# Invest in a healthy culture

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Culture is hard to define. It is not a static object that can easily be measured or a problem to be addressed, but rather, a dynamic process to continually work with. How we do things across the Agency matters: our leadership and our own daily actions, behaviours and interactions with others all combine to shape not just our own experience of our culture, but also that of patients and the public.

Providing the right working environment and a great people experience is critical to the Agency's success. This impacts our ability to recruit and retain talented people which is why this People Strategy prioritises paying attention to the culture across the Agency to keep it aligned with the Agency's purpose, values and future delivery aspirations.

The challenge for every one of us is to be mindful of delivering expected outcomes in a way that sustains and strengthens a healthy One Agency culture, identified as such by all stakeholders. We co-created our Agency Values. They are the things we hold which form the foundation on which we deliver our work and conduct ourselves. They are our shared guiding principles. The Behaviours Framework in support of the Values help us understand the behaviours expected from us to shape and sustain a healthy culture and hold each other to account for doing so. and understand the desired behaviours to shape and sustain a healthy culture.

We recognise the need to address peaks in workload and will take proactive steps to allow all colleagues to recalibrate their work life balance. We aspire to a high trust culture, where everyone leads by example, shows respect and feels empowered and enabled to do our work, including demonstrating accountability and taking timely decisions. By taking steps to encourage and support these behaviours, we will attain the enabling culture that will ensure the MHRA is a great place to work while we keep patients safe and enable access to high quality, safe and effective medical products.



# Invest in a healthy culture

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## By March 2024 the Agency will:

- have implemented Culture Action Plan priorities (year 1) actions;
- have embedded the refreshed values and behaviours framework;
- ensure working long hours is the exception not the norm by encouraging open dialogue about priorities and how the work is organised within teams.

## And in each year of the Strategy the Agency will continue to:

- within its Culture Action Plan set out the required supporting culture for its people to thrive, their future success as well as that of the Agency;
- take necessary action to progress the Agency's culture, reviewing and revising planned Culture Action Plan activities over time;
- carry out regular health checks into its culture to check on progress and areas for further focus;
- ensure the Values and Behaviours' Framework remains aligned with the Corporate plan
- advocate its Values and supporting behaviours, so colleagues are aware how to role model these;
- keep policies/processes under review to ensure alignment with legislation, its culture and values as well as best practice;
- prioritise establishing an underlying culture of psychological safety and trust;
- take prompt action on People Survey/Culture Survey data and feedback.





# Invest in a healthy culture

The maintenance of culture, is the responsibility of everyone who belongs to that culture

## **As individuals, we are all expected to:**

- live Agency Values and role model supporting behaviours;
- recognise and reward colleagues we see role modelling Agency Values and behaviours to a high standard;
- notice how things are being done in our teams and talk about how these behaviours do, or do not, support the desired culture;
- challenge behaviours which don't fit with the culture we are looking to achieve;
- participate in opportunities such as reverse mentoring to help shape our culture;
- participate in surveys and feedback constructively on our experiences;
- play our part to create and maintain a healthy culture;
- champion the Agency as a great place to work.

## **So, all of us can:**

- thrive in a culture that brings us together around shared values and purpose, creating a strong sense of connection for everyone;
- feel safe to say what's on our mind and highlight where things could be different.

## **And the Agency can:**

- provide and sustain a healthy working environment which fits with Agency Values;
- be seen to be a great place to work.



# Enable great performance and delivery

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The People Strategy will enable the Agency, in delivering its responsibilities, to stay true to its core values, by creating a constructive and collaborative performance culture based on respect and integrity.

We all recognise how motivating it is to work in a place where personal growth and development is encouraged, where ownership for choices and decisions is enabled and everyone is supported to be the best they can be. “Enabling people to flourish” seeks to achieve this. Our Strategy will draw on and develop the expertise of our people, being open to innovation and learning and leading the way in regulation and science.

With new organisation structures in place, our people focus has shifted to enable the change that will enable the Agency to fully deliver through our One Agency operating model, including removing remaining silos. To be successful in our work, each of us needs to understand what and how we are now expected to achieve through our work and to be supported to undertake our work in the best possible ways. Our leaders and managers have a crucial role in establishing clear and inspiring work goals and in creating opportunities for us

to develop and apply our skills and knowledge in the most effective ways; letting us know through regular two-way conversations how we are performing.

Our new approach to learning and development will focus more on learning by doing our roles and collaborating with others, in preference to formal “classroom” learning. Targeted formal learning opportunities and professional skills training will continue to be available, to keep us relevant and future-focused.





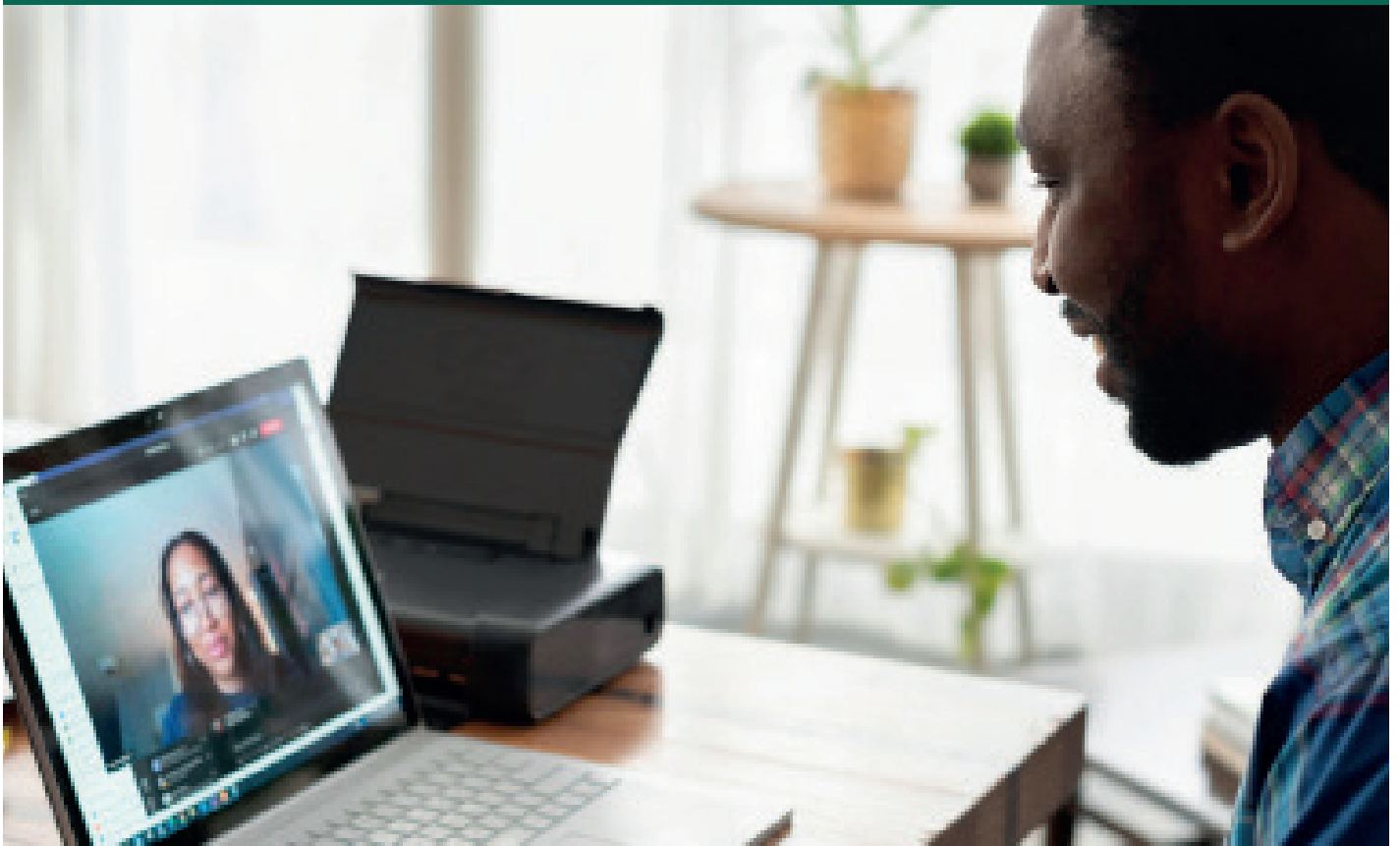
# Enable great performance and delivery

## By March 2024 the Agency will:

- introduce a “*One Agency Learning Library*” to promote learning opportunities for all aligned to culture and Corporate plan outcomes;
- roll out 360 degree feedback for staff beyond SCS;
- implement new [Cabinet Office SCS performance scheme](#) and review [My Progress Review](#) .
- set out guidance on putting together and managing multidisciplinary teams.

## And in each year of the Strategy the Agency will continue to:

- empower and support colleagues to make decisions at the right level;
- design jobs that ensure business outcomes are met while enabling personal growth;
- support colleagues to perform at their best, recognising brilliant individual and team performance; putting equal value on how colleagues achieve, as well as what they do;
- take prompt action to address performance concerns, supporting colleagues whose performance, contribution and behaviours fall below what is required;
- ensure colleagues have the time and space to learn and develop in line with the [70:20:10 model](#);
- recognising that change is a constant, engage with colleagues and signpost tools and learning in support of building resilience and working with uncertainty.



# Enable great performance and delivery

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**We will develop an environment in which everyone is able to achieve their potential and performance is evaluated fairly.**

**As individuals, we are all expected to:**

- Set aside time to explore and access the learning opportunities on offer;
- be open to learning from others, including the fresh perspectives of new colleagues
- familiarise ourselves with, and follow Agency' policies and processes as required for our roles;
- set aside time for performance reviews and meaningfully engage in performance conversations, ("My Progress Review" for delegated grades. For SCS );
- recognise and reward the high performance of colleagues more in the moment – even if only to say "thank you";
- consider feedback as a positive: give constructive feedback to others, be open to receiving feedback from others and actively seek out and act upon feedback;
- call out things that could be better or done in a different way and do so in a timely way.

**So, all of us can:**

- find our work stimulating and purposeful;
- feel empowered to make decisions;
- always perform at our very best;
- continuously improve – ourselves, our teams, our systems and processes and the services and outcomes we provide.

**And the Agency can:**

- have confidence in its decision making, timeliness of decisions and delivery of its outcomes for patients and the public;
- be recognised as a high-performing regulator across the world, thereby attracting innovation and achieving early progress in the UK ;





## Measuring success

The following measures will be monitored so that we can be confident about the effectiveness of the People Strategy:

Core Priority	Measurement	Baseline	Year 1 target (23/24)	Year 3 target (25/26)
Attract and retain the best people	Vacancy rate	19.7%	11%	11%
	Time to hire (working days from receipt of authority to advertise to offer sent and assumes 3rd party activity meeting deadlines requested)	35 days	25 days	25 days
	Annualised voluntary turnover	16.5%	13% - 15%	11%-13%
	Number of apprentices	22	40	65
	Utilisation of performance reward budget (In Year and End of Year performance awards)	76%	90%	100%
	Number of apprentices	76%	85%	95%
	Utilisation of employee benefits platform (Edenred)	estimate 70%	90% for the first 12 months. No less than 80% by end of year 3	90% for the first 12 months. No less than 80% by end of year 3
	Retention of permanent new hires	to be set in 23/24	30%	35%
Develop exceptional people and people leaders	Percentage of permanent roles filled by internal candidates	28%	40%	60%
	Increase in Leadership scores in People/ Pulse Survey	10%	30%	50%
	Increase in "Leaders walking the talk"	72%	85%	90%

Core Priority	Measurement	Baseline	Year 1 target (23/24)	Year 3 target (25/26)
Value diversity and promote wellbeing and inclusion	Completed rates for diversity characteristics (as an average across all characteristics)	72%	85%	90%
	Representation rates for diversity characteristics compared to the UK working age population (UK Census 2021)	Sex (Female) 60% Ethnicity (average across grades) 4.2%Disability 6.4% Sexual Orientation 2.9%	Sex (Female) 60% Ethnicity (average across grades) 6%Disability 9% Sexual Orientation 4%	Sex (Female) 60% Ethnicity (average across grades) 8%Disability 12% Sexual Orientation 5%
	Sickness absence rates (long and short term)	5.5 days	4.5 days	4 days
	Reduction in Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination scores (People Survey)	9%	8%	7%
	Increase in Inclusion scores (People Survey)	73%	78%	83%
Invest in a healthy culture	Increased people engagement score	54%	58%	65%
	Increase across all questions in Culture Survey to achieve 2021 Civil Service benchmarks or better	2021 Civil service Culture Survey results	Increase in positive scores across all questions	Meet 2025 Civil Service benchmarks
	Increase in all people survey themes to achieve Civil Service benchmarks or better	2021 People Survey	Meet 2023 Civil Service benchmarks	Meet 2025 Civil Service benchmarks
Enable great performance and delivery	Agency meet its targets as set out in its performance dashboard and Corporate Plan	N/A	Reference Corporate Plan	Reference Corporate Plan
	Increase in “ taking timely decisions”	11%	25%	40%
	Post-training increased confidence levels (Likert scale)	4	4.5	4.7
	Impact of training on performance, measured by feedback on applicability of new learning to role (Likert scale)	4	4.5	4.7
	Completion of performance review data on Fusion (start of year, mid-year and end year)	65%	80%	85%