

COPFS PEOPLE STRATEGY 2021 – 2023

Introduction

Context

Our roles

About our workforce

Our vision for COPFS' people

Supporting our people – priorities for delivering on this strategic goal

Measuring success

Introduction

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) is Scotland's public prosecution and death investigation authority.

The public interest is at the heart of what we do as a prosecution service. We receive reports about crimes from the police and other reporting agencies and then decide what action to take, including whether to prosecute someone. We also investigate deaths that need further explanation and investigate allegations of criminal conduct against police officers.

By investigating and prosecuting crime in terms of our Prosecution Code, we ensure that those responsible are identified and held accountable. By investigating deaths, we ensure that appropriate lessons are learned with a view to reducing the incidence of avoidable deaths. We act to uphold the rule of law independently, robustly, fairly and effectively.

Our people understand the significant role that they play in meeting our objective to secure justice for the people of Scotland. and they understand that, for most people, the contact they have with COPFS is likely to be as a result of one of the most difficult and anxious times of their lives. Our commitment to our values of treating people with professionalism and showing respect underlines this understanding.

COPFS has set out three high-level goals in *Securing Justice: Our strategic plan for 2020 – 2023*; these are:

- Deliver high quality casework
- Support our people, and
- Improve our service

We recognise that caring for the welfare of our people, supporting their development, strengthening our two-way engagement and motivating people to achieve our goals are the most significant contributions we can make to achieving our purpose.

Our employees have a voice in our organisation. We view our employees as central to our organisational improvement and the achievement of our objectives. We want them to be involved, listened to, and invited to contribute their experience, expertise and ideas.

The people strategy describes in more detail how COPFS will meet our goal to 'support our people'. It describes the context in which COPFS people work; our vision for our people; and then in detail what we intend to achieve in support of this goal.

Context

COPFS undertakes highly complex work to prosecute crimes and investigate deaths.

In recent years our work has become more challenging due to changes in the profile and complexity of our casework. In recognition of this, the Scottish Government announced a 12% increase in the resources available to COPFS for the 2021/22 financial year, which will enable us to recruit additional people during the first half of the financial year.

The impact of COVID-19 has significantly influenced the planning and content of our people strategy.

Lockdowns, government advice to work from home, and physical distancing restrictions have all been a driving force for many changes to our working practices and processes over the past year. This has been both challenging and positive for the organisation and individuals. Over the past year we have had to fast-forward our approach to agile working and look carefully at how we support staff working remotely.

The impact of the pandemic has also further confirmed the importance of supporting the wellbeing of our workforce – many of whom have found their wellbeing impacted in some way over the past year.

Future Ways of Working is a critical project with the aim of improving working lives by supporting our employees to work as flexibly as possible, subject to business need and taking account of the particular requirements of our in-court commitments.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also been a catalyst for us to speed up our investment in technologies to support our people. This has included distributing laptops to all our staff and working across the criminal justice system to introduce digital court processes.

The priorities set out in our People strategy between now and 2023 reflect the insights and extraordinary challenges the organisation has faced since March 2020.

Our roles

COPFS is led by our Chief Executive, the Crown Agent. The Crown Agent is supported by three Deputy Crown Agents and our Deputy Chief Executive. Together, this group forms the senior executive team (SET) which has high level governance of several strategic people-focussed committees, including the Resources Committee, Workforce Planning Group and the Fair Futures and Future Ways of Working Project Boards. In turn, the members of SET are on the Executive

Board, which includes non-Executive Directors from public, private and third-sector backgrounds.

We have a range of public facing roles from the procurator fiscal who prosecutes a case in court to our Enquiry Point operators and those who respond to enquiries at public counters in our offices.

Our prosecutors in Local Court and Serious Casework functions are the most recognisable public face of the service, working with the police and other agencies and directing the investigation of crime and sudden death across cities, towns and rural communities throughout Scotland.

Our court facing teams are supported by the essential work of dedicated case preparers, investigative assistants, victim information and advice officers, fiscal officers, enquiry point operators, business management colleagues and many more.

There are specialist teams leading on a huge variety of areas including Appeals, Serious and Organised Crime, International Co-operation, Health and Safety Investigation and Wildlife and Environmental Crime, to name only a few.

We also employ lawyers specialising in civil law within the Civil Recovery Unit and the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer.

Our Policy and Engagement team leads on prosecution policy, complaints, victims' right to review, information governance, management information and media relations.

Corporate support is provided by professionals working in Business Services, including those in: Finance, Procurement, Human Resources, Learning and Development, Information Services, Communications, Business Support Services and Estates.

Everyone is focussed on our core purpose: to secure justice for the people of Scotland in respect of the investigation and prosecution of crime and the investigation of deaths.

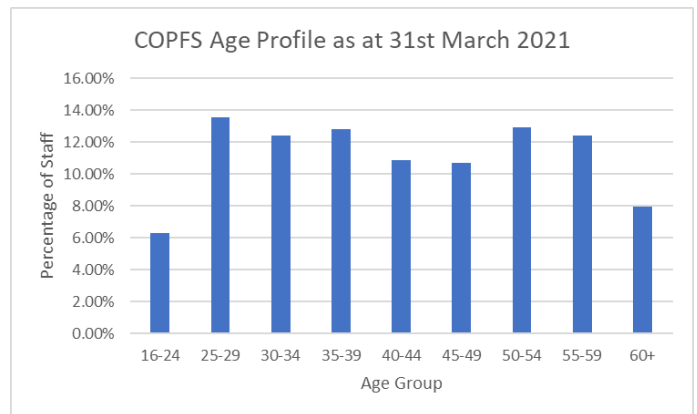
About our workforce

We employ over 1800 people across all our specialisms. Our people are based all over Scotland and come from a wide range of backgrounds and demographics, reflecting the diversity of the Scottish population. We encourage our people to work flexibly to enhance their wellbeing and we endeavour to provide policies to support them to achieve their highest potential.

Recruitment and turnover

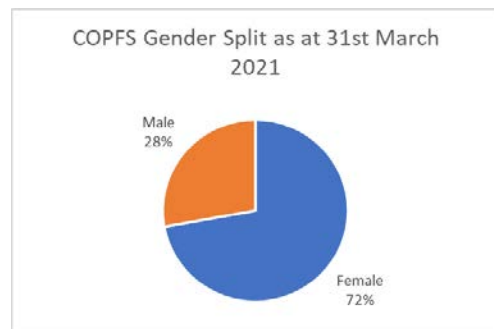
During 2021 we will recruit more than 150 new employees, bringing our permanent headcount to over 2000 for the first time. This presents opportunities and challenges for our organisation over the coming years.

Turnover remains low at just over 4% and our age profile shows that more than half of our workforce is over age 40 and a third are over age 50. We have a wealth of experience in the organisation, but we are also planning for how we bring talent with outside experience into the organisation at all levels, not least to ensure that we take opportunities to increase the diversity of people at management levels as well as at entry levels.



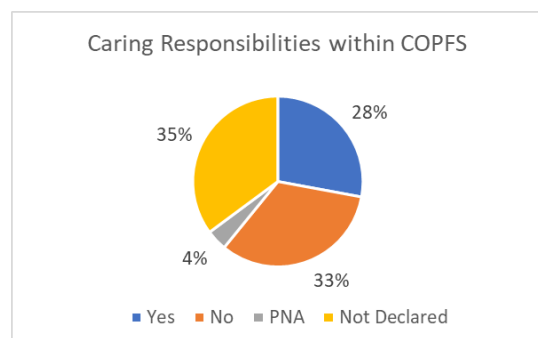
Demographics

Our workforce is mostly female, perhaps partly as a result of the higher proportion of women entering the legal profession in Scotland; but also perhaps in part due to the flexible working arrangements which include access to a range of alternative working options and flexi time, with women far more likely than men to work part-time.



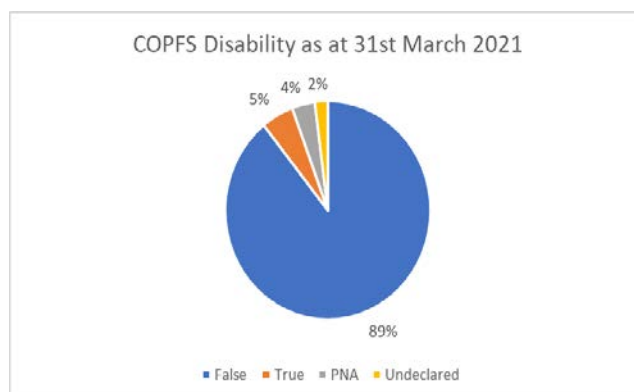
23% of COPFS employees currently work part-time; of these 10.6% are men. As more flexible and agile arrangements are put in place we will assess if there is a shift towards different working arrangements across our workforce profile.

We have a better understanding of how we can support our people to work flexibly – especially now that we understand more about the experience of large scale working at home. But there are challenges too and the development of our agile working policy will address how we approach this fairly for everyone.



Our workforce largely consists of those from a white background, with 4.1% of employees declaring they are from an ethnic minority background. We are committed to improving recruitment, retention and promotion of people from ethnically diverse backgrounds and communities.

We are a 'Disability Confident' employer. 5% of our employees have declared a disability. One of the support features for employees with a disability is our Workplace Adjustment Passport – ensuring employees with agreed reasonable adjustments to move to different functions or teams without having to re-explain or renegotiate adjustments previously agreed.



We have a longstanding commitment to LGBT equality and it is important to us that our people feel they can be themselves at work. We have a full range of inclusive policies and practices in place to support our workforce, 4% of whom identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Engagement and wellbeing

Our 2020 people survey showed our engagement index at its highest, indicating that despite the difficulties of the last year most of our people are positive about their work and the opportunities available at COPFS.

Employee wellbeing is a key priority and one where we will build on the significant work that has already been achieved over the last year. The Corporate Health and Wellbeing Committee has agreed a specific wellbeing strategy and action plans which support four key development areas which take account of the learning and experiences during the coronavirus pandemic: wellbeing, illness support, mental health support and support for caring.

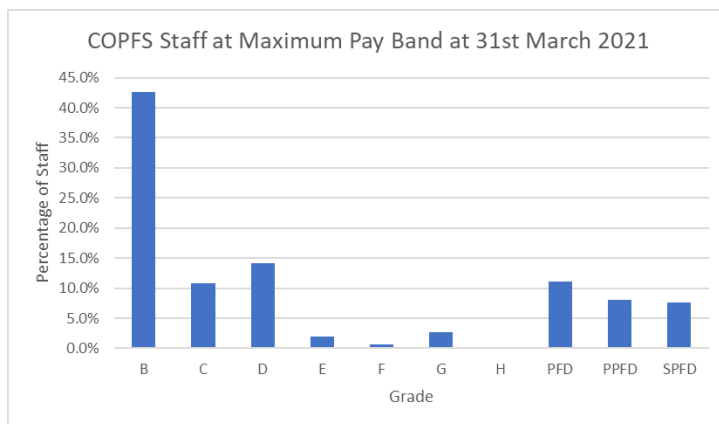
Our absence trend fell over 2020, with an average of 7.21 days lost per year per employee, down from 10.3 days in the previous year. However, long term absence continues to be a driving feature of our absence profile, and mental ill health reasons for absence have increased, both trends which many employers have seen across the last year, but which we are determined to support proactively, compassionately and fairly.

Performance

Performance management is a key priority for improvement. Quarterly conversations are the management tool we use to keep track of work objectives, career aspirations, development needs and individual wellbeing.

Reward

Improvements to pay and benefits are another high priority area over the next three years. Having secured significant funding to address pay coherence in COPFS compared to Scottish Government, we are delighted to have reached agreement with our trade unions and will implement year one of the three-year offer during 2021.



Our vision for COPFS' people

We are proud to employ dedicated people who have integrity, professionalism and empathy. We ask a lot of our people – the work of COPFS is serious and becoming increasingly complex – and in return we are committed to realising our vision for our people, which will inform our planning and decision making over the next two years.

Our vision: To build a skilled, engaged and diverse workforce, investing in staff development and strengthening our capacity to deliver an improved service.

What do we mean by the people strategy?

There are several areas of work which focus on achieving our goal of 'supporting our people'.

Supporting our people



These areas of work are connected with oversight by each head of the Business Services area (HR, Learning and Development, Corporate Communications, IT, Business Services and Estates) to ensure agreement on priorities and alignment of our resources to ensure that we accomplish our goals.

Achieving the strategy

The people strategy model is underpinned and supported by delivery and action plans across the key work areas above, managed and led at committee and project board level.



Achieving the commitments set out in the people strategy will be driven in large part by the actions and priority setting within each of the strategies and delivery plans above.

Supporting our people – our priority actions

Everyone at COPFS has a part to play in delivering the priorities in this strategy. The HR and Learning and Development teams will be key drivers of the people strategy, working in partnership with Heads of Business Management and other senior leaders to achieve our goals and priorities.

Our HR approach is that decision making should be devolved as much as possible to managers who are empowered to make decisions about their teams and staff. It is important for us that our people are entrusted with as much autonomy as possible to manage their own work for COPFS.

Set out below are the six high level priorities which will underpin our drive to achieve our strategic goal of Supporting our People. The key actions which we will take are explained under each priority.



Wellbeing will be at the heart of everything we do.

We will:

1. Prioritise agreed actions within the Wellbeing Strategy, working in partnership with stakeholders including the trade unions, COPFS Equality Ambassadors, Staff Equality Networks, Fair Futures volunteers, the Corporate Health & Wellbeing Committee and Sherifffdom Equality Networks.
2. Promote and monitor annual leave to encourage employee wellbeing while aiming to reduce annual leave carryover to an average of 7 days per person (taking account of difficulties as a result of coronavirus response).
3. Promote the range of benefits available to all staff through the Employee Assistance Programme and ensure supportive policies are in place and understood by our staff, including those for bereavement, life limiting illness, caring responsibilities and other extended time off work
4. Promote and monitor take up of Vicarious Trauma Support to ensure that all those who require it are provided with the right support.
5. Champion and support improved understanding of mental health in the workplace using the skills and knowledge of mental health ambassadors, mental health first aiders and external health providers to support employees and managers.

6. Develop and implement a new agile working policy, aligning with estates and digital strategies and workplace policies, within the context of the Future Ways of Working project, and provide training to support the implementation of the new policy; including policy changes to support flexible working, including options for changes to flexi core times and provide training and support for managers in 'remote management'.
7. Take account of ongoing coronavirus and other health and safety risks and work with the trade unions to reach agreement on appropriate support measures.



Be inclusive and encourage diversity across our organisation.

We will:

8. Continue to strongly promote diversity and equal opportunity principles in our employment decisions, actions and HR policy development, working with employee networks and external stakeholders, addressing bias whether implicit or otherwise in decision-making, using equality impact assessment and undertaking pay gap analysis.
9. Meet and exceed our public sector duties with publication of our Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report in 2021 and respect and value the contributions of individuals and teams by continuing to hold the annual Equality Conference and Equality Awards, building on the successes of our in-person and virtual events
10. Strengthen our commitment to diversity, inclusion and wellbeing with additional HR resourcing to support best practice and culture change across the organisation, including further development of recruitment diversity and inclusion action planning and engagement with external organisations.



Reward our staff as generously as we can

We will:

11. Work in partnership with the trade unions to agree pay settlement promptly and review current pay and grading structures to create the basis for an improved career structure with remuneration that is fair for our people; develop and manage JEGS (job evaluation) processes for new posts and to baseline current posts as required.

12. Help COPFS employees to understand the full benefits of the overall salary package with the introduction of an annual total reward statement.



Unlock potential and provide opportunities for professional and personal development.

We will:

13. Use the Learning and Development Strategy to support essential operational learning and development needs and develop a systematic and sustainable approach to learning and development for all, available throughout peoples' careers from the induction process onwards.

14. Continue to provide high quality traineeship and apprenticeship programmes, including scoping out the requirements for a new legal apprenticeship and launching a professional and technical apprenticeship, evaluating the success rate in each and making refinements as necessary.

15. Continue to ensure that all managers and leaders in COPFS understand and are able to model the culture change sought through Fair Futures, with a commitment to aim for an increased diversity of people in management roles.

16. Evaluate the use of our performance management approach to support engaging quarterly conversations and provide management tools to manage performance effectively, with the aim of securing 100% completion of quarterly conversations and end of year performance appraisal reviews.

17. Develop practical management skills using best practice identified by HR and Learning and Development colleagues, and increasing leadership skills through development programmes, coaching and mentoring (including two-way mentoring).



Recruit to allow us to maintain the right size of workforce to meet our obligations, limiting temporary contracts to a minimum

We will:

18. Provide HR advice to underpin future spending reviews in the period of the strategy - by collating and analysing up to date workforce metrics, developing workforce scenarios, and working with Finance and managers across COPFS to

understand potential medium-term pressures on, and potential savings in, staff time.

19. Ensure that recruitment plans are implemented each year in line with the budget to ensure financial discipline; recruiting temporary staff only for genuinely temporary roles in order to ensure maximum certainty and stability for our people; and keep the vacancy rate at the lowest possible level through regular planned recruitment combined with efficient career movement practices.
20. Develop targeted approaches for recruiting externally when necessary to the various roles across COPFS taking into account the relevant employment markets; continuing to work with relevant stakeholder groups to ensure that we attract the most diverse range of candidates possible to COPFS, linking to our recruitment diversity and inclusion action plan to ensure increased diversity in recruitment and opportunities for all.
21. Balance our desire to provide internal opportunities for our people with the need to seek new perspectives outwith COPFS. The Workforce Planning Group will identify and plan the proportion of our future workforce recruited internally and externally.
22. Implement career movement and development, career progression and the success profiles recruitment framework from July 2021, ensuring that appropriate review and evaluation is carried out.



Listen to and engage with our people, using improved technology and management information

We will:

23. Monitor and review HR and payroll systems to ensure they provide trusted HR metrics for informed management decisions; monitoring existing contracts and where necessary procure new systems following procurement rules. Specifically, implement a new Human Capital Management system during 2021-22 and assess options for the preferred procurement approach ahead of the expiry of the current payroll contract in November 2022.
24. Ensure our employees are consulted, involved, listened to, and invited to contribute their experience, expertise and ideas as we update and streamline policies and practices.

25. Maximise our new intranet that meets the needs of our employees, helps them succeed at work and improves employee engagement. The new intranet will also ensure that all HR information is as accessible as possible.

Measuring Success

We will measure our success in achieving the strategy in a number of ways:

Regular review and monitoring of actions

Improvement in our people survey engagement score – taking local and corporate action to address issues/areas of concern and build on positives.

Using specific measures to assess the delivery and effectiveness of changes we make, including HR metrics such as:

- Low vacancy and turnover rates
- Absence levels at or below government average
- Fewer employee relations cases (formal and informal) – benchmarked year on year
- Increased numbers of quarterly conversations held and 100% final year review completion rate within two months of year end.
- Improving equality trends

Using external benchmarking such as:

- TIDE benchmarking tool to help us understand progress on our equality, diversity and inclusion journey.
- Public sector benchmarking against externally published data, e.g. gender pay gap report, mainstreaming report and people survey.

Providing regular feedback on progress to everyone through our enhanced and improved internal communications.

Seeking regular employee feedback through a variety of channels, such as pulse survey, online comment or as part of impact assessment processes.

HR will also report progress in delivering the priorities in this strategy to Resources Committee on a regular basis.

Risk management

HR will monitor risks to achieving the strategy using risk methodology, working with action leads to manage arising risks, escalating issues to appropriate Corporate Risk Management owners and managers as necessary.