



BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2024-25

**Delivering Economic Growth
through Better Workplaces**

April 2024

VISION: To be widely recognised as Northern Ireland’s leading authority in promoting productive working relationships for the benefit of individuals and organisations and to support the creation of a thriving and inclusive economy.

PURPOSE: To improve employment relations, promote best employment practice and resolve workplace disputes through the delivery of quality, impartial and independent services.

VALUES: To achieve our vision and purpose, our values are to be:

Progressive – forward thinking, outward looking, and creative, harnessing all insights to find better ways to support the economy and society;

Ethical – always acting with integrity, impartiality, equity and utmost professionalism, and demonstrating openness and accountability;

Exemplary – challenging ourselves to be the best we can be and a role model in employment relations and equity, diversity and inclusion; and,

Responsive – listening to all our customers and colleagues and adapting to ensure our services meet their needs.

These values underpin all that we do.

FOREWORD

This Business Plan implements the fourth and final year of the Labour Relations Agency's Corporate Plan for 2021-25.¹

The three previous years of the Corporate Plan have been hugely successful for the Agency in a difficult operating environment. In 2021-22, the challenge we faced was emerging from the pandemic and supporting economic recovery. Throughout the subsequent two year, the challenges evolved with the cost of living crisis and consequential impact on industrial relations, with a large number of pay-related disputes and demand for the Agency's collective conciliation services never higher. Nevertheless, our staff responded magnificently and worked tirelessly to work with parties to resolve individual and collective disputes and provide advice and thought-leadership on good employment practice.

A particular highlight in 2023-24 was the outcome of the formal review of the Agency by the Department of Finance. This resulted in a hugely positive endorsement of the work of the Agency, particularly the support we are providing to economic growth in NI.

Our Business Plan for 2024-25 sets out an exciting – if daunting – programme of work. Of particular importance will be the implementation of the Good Employment Charter for Northern Ireland, which we developed during 2023-24, and completing the programme to transform the way the Agency is structured and our ways of working for the benefit of both customers and staff. However, the prospect of conciliating a huge volume of holiday pay cases presents a substantial risk; one that could overwhelm the Agency and our ability to deliver this plan. We are working closely with DfE to ensure that holiday pay conciliation is adequately resourced and other risks associated with this are mitigated effectively.

We commend this Business Plan to you.



Gordon Milligan
Chairperson



Don Leeson
Chief Executive

¹ Available at: <https://www.lra.org.uk/publications/corporate-plan-2021-25>.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Agency is a publicly funded body established by the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, and continued by the Industrial Relations Order (Northern Ireland) 1992. We are independent of, but accountable to, the Department for the Economy.

Our independent Board, comprising members drawn from business, trade union, employment law and academic backgrounds, establishes the Agency's strategic direction. Board members are public appointments, usually appointed by the Minister for the Economy.

We currently employ the equivalent of 65 full-time staff who operate from two locations – our Head Office in Belfast and a Regional Office in Derry/Londonderry. The Agency operates a hybrid working policy, which allows staff to work from the office and remote locations, including home, depending on business need.

This Business Plan has been prepared on the basis that the Agency's budget baseline for 2024-25 is uplifted in line with inflation, and funding to support post-EU Exit economic growth continues. Moreover, it is predicated on additional funding being provided by DfE to meet anticipated demand for holiday pay conciliation. In the event of any funding shortfall, the activities within this Business Plan may need to be prioritised during the year and/or curtailed.

Services

The Agency provides a range of **advisory services** to promote good employment practice and advise employers and employees on their rights and responsibilities. These services include:

- **Workplace Information Service (WIS)** – this is a confidential information and advice line (telephone number: 03300 555 300) for employers, individuals and their representatives.
- **Briefings, seminars/webinars, and workshops** – these are aimed at disseminating information and promoting good practice on a range of employment issues and enhancing the employment relations skills of line managers.
- **Document Service** – this online service allows employers to compile workplace documentation – from written statements of employment particulars through to employee handbooks – with guidance on compliance and good practice.

The Agency also provides a range of confidential **dispute resolution** services designed to deal with problems that arise in the workplace. These include:

- **Conciliation** – this service seeks to find a mutually agreeable solution to an employment problem or dispute where an individual could make a claim to a tribunal. There are three aspects to this:
 - **Early Conciliation** – potential tribunal claimants are required to notify the Agency of a dispute and consider conciliation before submitting a tribunal claim;
 - **Post-claim conciliation** – once a tribunal claim has been submitted, the Agency continues to be available to the parties to settle their dispute through conciliation; and,
 - **Employer-led conciliation** – the Agency provides a service to employers who wish to avoid the risk of a tribunal claim by using conciliation to resolve an employment matter.
- **Arbitration** – where a solution to a problem or disagreement to an individual dispute cannot be found, and the parties wish to avoid a tribunal, our arbitration service provides a quick, confidential, non-legalistic process to resolve the matter. Arbitration decisions, and remedies that flow from these, are legally enforceable in the same way as tribunal decisions.

An adjunct to Arbitration is the Independent Appeals Service, which facilitates second stage appeals for a number of public bodies, mainly in the education sector.

- **Mediation** – this is an effective process for restoring positive working relationships, using a mediator to work with those in conflict or dispute to find a mutually agreed resolution to overcome their differences.
- **Collective Conciliation** – this service aims to help employers and trade unions resolve disputes typically affecting larger numbers of employees.

Influencing the employment relations policy agenda

As well as being a service provider, the Agency has a key role in working collaboratively with and providing platforms for representative bodies of employers and employees to facilitate discussion and seek to influence employment relations issues at a strategic level. These bodies include the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Chambers of Commerce, Institute of Directors (IoD), and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU). We also work across all sectors, including the public, private, education and research, and voluntary and community sectors.

The Agency chairs and facilitates two key fora of stakeholders:

- **The NI Employment Relations Roundtable** – this promotes the strategic importance of strong and equitable employment relationships and industrial relations to economic competitiveness and social wellbeing.
- **The NI Engagement Forum on Covid-19** – established in March 2020 at the request of the NI Executive, the Forum provides advice on Covid-19 matters as they apply to workplaces and the labour market.

Following a review of these fora, and with partner and stakeholder agreement, they are being merged to create a new forum. This brings together the key social partners to discuss and provide advice to Government on key labour market and workplace issues. Establishing this new forum will be a particular priority in 2024-25.

In line with a commitment in the Executive Strategy for Ending Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG), a new cross-sectoral workplace forum (including unions, Labour Relations Agency, employers' organisations and other professional bodies) will be established by the Agency in partnership with The Executive Office (TEO). This will develop workplace policy toolkits/guidance and to promote workplace training/best practice in professional standards on ending violence against women and girls.

THE PLANNING CONTEXT

Political matters

The return of the Executive and Assembly in February 2024 is expected to herald the return of political stability. Importantly, there is cross-party consensus on the need to prioritise resolution of long running public sector pay disputes. Given the inherently political nature of these, the Agency has hitherto been limited in our ability to facilitate resolution; the more positive political context is expected to make resolution more likely.

There is also cross-party consensus on the need for a Childcare Strategy for NI, together with a focus on creating more affordable childcare provision. Affordable childcare is widely seen as crucial lever for a more cohesive and inclusive labour market, and therefore will support economic growth. The Agency's work to showcase best practice in respect of flexible working

Economic matters

Despite continuing economic turbulence caused by global matters, such as climate change and wars, the labour market remains relatively buoyant.²

Rising inflation and labour shortages have led to increased pay demands and industrial unrest across the UK. The Agency has experienced substantial increases in demand during the last three years for our collective conciliation service to help resolve pay disputes and we have worked with our sister body Acas on matters pertaining to UK wide disputes. A difficult public expenditure environment has contributed to protracted collective disputes in the public sector.

The Minister for the Economy outlined a new economic vision for NI on 19 February 2024.³ This sets four key objectives as part of a new Economic Mission:

- Increase the proportion of working-age people in 'Good jobs';
- Promote regional balance;
- Raise productivity; and,
- Reduce carbon emissions.

The Agency has a critical role to play in supporting the first and third of the Minister's new Economic Mission, which are interrelated.

The Agency commissioned research to substantiate and articulate the correlation between good employment relations and productivity. The Agency also commissioned research on the cost of conflict to employers.⁴ The Agency will continue to use these research reports to evidence the importance of good employment relations to economic growth and the importance of the Agency's services.

This is particularly important because NI productivity levels continue to be well below the UK average and Ireland; recent reports suggest this is currently as much as 11%⁵ and 40%⁶ respectively.

² See: <https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/economy-and-labour-market/labour-market-report-january-2024.html>

³ See: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/news/statement-minister-murphy-economic-vision>.

⁴ Available at: <https://www.lra.org.uk/Latest-News/estimating-costs-workplace-conflict-northern-ireland>.

⁵ See: <https://www.productivity.ac.uk/research/northern-ireland-productivity-dashboard-2023/>.

⁶ See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-63779243>.

Following a major employment relations conference, which the Agency organised in February 2023, the Agency is developing a Good Employment Charter for NI. This is based on core criteria developed by the Carnegie Trust.⁷ Importantly, it aligns with the Minister's aspiration for more 'good jobs' and inclusivity measures of work quality.⁸ It also builds on lessons learned from charters developed elsewhere in the UK, for example, the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.⁹

Finalising implementation arrangements for the Charter will be a key feature of the Agency's work in 2024-25.

Societal matters

Social partnerships are expected to continue to feature strongly during 2024-25.

The establishment of a new forum – a merger of the Employment Relations Roundtable and NI Engagement Forum on Covid-19 – will be a particular focus. The new forum, as with the antecedent fora, will be facilitated by the Agency. Bringing together representatives of employers and employees, it will be focused on strategic labour market and workplace issues.

The Agency has been closely involved with TEO and other stakeholders in the co-design of the EVAWG Strategy. As a result, the Agency has been tasked with establishing a new forum to tackle sexual harassment and other forms of violence against in workplaces.

Technological developments

The use of a range of technology platforms has proved successful in allowing the Agency to grow service delivery options and reach our customers in increasingly effective ways. The Agency will continue to build on this success in 2024-25 by expanding our digital presence through increased digital outreach, webinars, podcasts and online clinics.

Following a review of the Case Management and Record System (CMRS) and Early Conciliation web portal in 2023-24, a project will be progressed to upgrade these to ensure they meet defined business and customer needs.

On-boarding to IT Assist remains a key strategic aim for the Agency. Completion of this exercise is contingent on the CMRS upgrade and DfE approval.

⁷ See: <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/measuring-good-work-the-final-report-of-the-measuring-job-quality-working-group/>.

⁸ See: <https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/economy-and-labour-market/work-quality-northern-ireland-july-2021-june-2022.html>.

⁹ See: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/economy/greater-manchester-good-employment-charter/>.

Legal developments

With the return of the Executive, new employment legislation is expected to be developed by DfE. The Agency expects to play a key role in advising the Department on legislative changes, facilitating consultation on these with key stakeholders, and supporting implementation through guidance.

Resolution of the tribunal claims regarding incorrectly calculated holiday pay, following judgement in the case of Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) v Agnew (Alexander) and Others in October 2023,¹⁰ will be a substantive matter in 2024-25. The judgement is expected to result a surge in demand for the Agency's conciliation services from over 40 employers seeking to settle claims from circa 30,000 employees.

Planning for this is at an advanced stage, with a business case to fund a resourcing requirement of over 20 additional staff submitted to DfE

Environmental matters

Accommodation matters and agile working practices will continue to be a key focus for the Agency in 2023-24 and will support 'greener' working practices.

With the Agency now firmly established in our new Head Office within James House in central Belfast, the focus will shift to future accommodation options for the Regional Office. The relocation of Head Office to a more energy-efficient building has also facilitated a move to less paper-based ways of working with a significant reduction in paper and print-cartridge consumption. We will continue to encourage a paperless approach in 2024-25.

The Hybrid Working Policy, allowing staff to spend a proportion of their time working from home, is being finalised following completion of the pilot exercise and careful evaluation of the results in 2023-24. Our primary objective will be to maintain delivery of high quality services to our customers, while allowing our people to achieve a balance that works well for them. Our approach to hybrid working to date is already delivering benefits in reduced commuting and business travel, thus contributing to a lower 'carbon footprint'.

Corporate Plan for 2021-25

This Business Plan operationalises the fourth and final year of the Agency's Corporate Plan for 2021-25.

The Corporate Plan is underpinned by the five corporate strategies of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, People, Digital, Communications and Business Intelligence.

¹⁰ Available at: <https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/uksc-2019-0204.html>.

We will refresh our approaches and develop new operational work plans in support of each of these key strategic areas.

A number of reviews of services, including independent appeals and mediation, were concluded in 2023-24. Implementation of these reviews will be a priority in 2024-25.

Proposals for a future delivery model were agreed in 2023-24 to ensure that our staffing and management structures are fully optimised to deliver on all of our corporate ambitions. This transformation programme, which includes restructuring and new ways of working, will be implemented in 2024-25.

This delivery model was endorsed by the ALB Review of the Agency. This review, which was conducted by the Department for Finance's Business Consultancy Service, concluded in December 2023 and also made a number of recommendations. The key recommendation was for the Agency to continue to expand engagement with private sector organisations.

A separate review of the Senior Leadership Team's capacity to meet to increasing demands on, and expectations of, the Agency emanating from the ALB Review and holiday pay conciliation has been commissioned

A new Corporate Plan will be developed during 2024-25 for the next four-year period.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2024-25

Strategic Theme 1: Improving organisational performance and responding to the needs of individuals through expert employment relations advice and support.

1.1 Provide effective guidance on employment relations issues to individuals and organisations.

Objectives for 2024-25

a) Respond effectively to callers to the Workplace Information Service.

Performance measures:

- Number of enquires received/handled.
- Average waiting time (*target: less than one minute*).
- Lost call rate (*target: no more than 5%*).
- Number and % of contacts reporting that information provided helped them to decide what to do next.

b) Focus advisory services to support implementation of the relevant aspects of DfE's Economic Mission, and those employers and employees hit hardest by the current cost of living crisis, through the development of delivery partnerships with statutory, employer and industry bodies, and trade unions.

Performance measures:

- Number of active delivery partnerships.
- Number of joint events delivered.
- Stakeholder and customer satisfaction with the quality of the events.
- Number and % of customers reporting greater confidence in dealing with employment relations matters as a result of attendance at events (*target: at least 90%*).

c) Increase key digital content through the development and delivery of a programme of good practice seminars/webinars, videos and podcasts to give employers, employees, and their representatives, greater confidence in dealing with employment relations matters.

Performance measures:

- Number of seminars/webinars developed.
- Number of events delivered and recorded webinars viewed.

- Number of participating organisations in webinars.
 - % planned events delivered.
 - Customer satisfaction with the quality of the events (*target: at least 95%*).
 - Number and % of customers reporting greater confidence in dealing with employment relations matters as a result of attendance at events (*target: at least 90%*).
- d) Provide managers with practical skills and confidence to create positive and productive working relationships and environments through the LRA Certificate in Line Management Practice to encourage employers to adopt good practice in managing employment relations.

Performance measures:

- Number of line managers undertaking the LRA Certificate in Line Management Practice.
 - % of line managers achieving the LRA Certificate in Management Practice.
 - Customer satisfaction with the quality of the events (*target: at least 95%*).
 - Number and % of line managers applying learning/skills in the workplace as a result of completing the LRA Certificate in Line Management Practice.
- e) Provide employee representatives with the knowledge, practical skills and confidence to support the creation of positive and productive working environments by encouraging employers to adopt good practice in managing employment relations.

Performance measures:

- Number of employee representatives undertaking training.
 - Customer satisfaction with the quality of the events (*target: at least 95%*).
 - Number and % of employee representatives applying learning/skills in the workplace as a result of completing training.
- f) Continue to promote the Agency's online self-help Employment Document Toolkit to support legislative compliance by employers and encourage good practice in employment relations matters.

Performance measures:

- Number of customers using the Toolkit.
- Customer satisfaction with the quality of the Toolkit.
- Number and % of customers reporting greater confidence in applying revised documentation as a result of the Toolkit.

- g) Deliver targeted sectoral-based good work practice facilitation services.

Performance measures:

- Number of projects registered.
- Number of collective agreements/policies facilitated.
- % projects completed.
- Customer satisfaction with the quality of the service.
- Number of more effective protocols and policies in place.
- Number and % of customers reporting a more positive employment relations environment and reduced likelihood of disputes occurring.

- h) Continue to provide thought-leadership on contemporary employment issues through the development and promotion of best practice policies, articles, publications, media engagement and podcasts.

Performance measures:

- Number of policies, publications and podcasts developed and promoted.
- Number of website page views and document downloads.

1.2 Help prevent and resolve individual and collective workplace disputes.

Objectives for 2024-25

- a) Deliver an Early Conciliation service that reduces the number of claims heard by an employment tribunal.

Performance measures:

- Number of employee and employer-led notifications received.
- Number and % of EC notifications settled.
- Customer satisfaction with the service provided.
- Number and % of EC notifications not resulting in a tribunal claim.¹¹
- Number and % of cases not proceeding to tribunal hearing (*target: no more than 20%*).
- Number and % of tribunal days saved.

¹¹ Measured by analysing the number of EC certificates issued in the period ending six months before the current reporting period and the number of tribunal cases received during the current reporting period associated with those certificates.

- b) Contribute effectively to DfE's Year 3 review of Early Conciliation – timetable to be determined by DfE.

Performance measures:

- Partner satisfaction with the quality of the Agency's input.

- c) Respond effectively to demand for conciliation to resolve holiday pay disputes.

Performance measures:

- Number of holiday pay cases received.
- % of cases settled.
- Customer satisfaction with the service provided.
- Number and % of cases not proceeding to tribunal (*target: no more than 20%*).
- Number and % of tribunal days saved.

- d) Deliver effective support for the Judicial Mediation pilot exercise operated by the Tribunal Service.

Performance measures:

- Partner satisfaction with the quality of the Agency's support.

- e) Deliver an effective collective conciliation service to facilitate the resolution of collective workplace disputes.

Performance measures:

- Number of collective conciliation cases received.
- % collective conciliation cases undertaken.
- % resulting in a settlement to resolve the dispute (*target: 70%*).
- Customer satisfaction with the service provided.
- Number and % of customers reporting higher levels of engagement/trust following collective conciliation.

- f) Progress recommendations emanating from the Agency's Article 86 review of collective bargaining arrangements in the local government sector.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met;
- Stakeholder satisfaction with the quality of the Agency's input; and,
- Take-up of the Agency's recommendations.

- g) Develop and publish a code of practice and/or guidance on collective bargaining **by September 2024**.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with the quality of the code of practice.

- h) Develop, **by September 2024**, a training workshop for employers and trade unionists on effective collective bargaining.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.

- i) Deliver an effective mediation service to facilitate the resolution of interpersonal workplace disputes within the context of devising a future mediation strategy for the Agency based on available resources.

Performance measures:

- Number of requests received.
- % resulting in agreement to resolve the dispute (*target: 80%*).
- % of requests undertaken.
- Customer satisfaction with the service provided.
- Number and % of customers reporting better working relationships following mediation.

- j) Develop, **by September 2024**, a Mediation Strategy to ensure that the Agency contributes effectively to the resolution of interpersonal workplace disputes.

Performance Measures:

- Timetable achieved; and
- Efficiencies/process improvements identified.

- k) Work with the Mediators' Institute Ireland and Mediation NI to deliver a conference and other promotional activities in **October 2024** to highlight the value of mediation in creating harmonious and productive workplaces.

Performance Measures:

- Customer satisfaction with the quality of events.
- Partner satisfaction with the quality of support.

- Number and % of customers reporting greater confidence in dealing with employment relations matters following attendance at the event.

l) Deliver an Arbitration and Independent Appeals Service that meets agreed performance standards.

Performance measures:

- Number of arbitration and independent appeals cases received.
- % of arbitration and independent appeals cases completed.
- Customer satisfaction with the service provided.
- Number and % of customers reporting a difference in behaviours/attitudes following an arbitration or independent appeal hearing.

m) Implement, **from April 2024**, the outcome of the Independent Appeals Service review to ensure the most effective use of Agency resources, in line with customer needs.

Performance Measures:

- Timetable achieved.
- Efficiencies/process improvements achieved.

n) Work with DfE's to review the Statutory Arbitration Scheme – timetable to be agreed with DfE.

Performance measures:

- Partner satisfaction with the quality of the Agency's input.

o) Work with key delivery partners in line with agreed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), including developing new MoUs with the Equality Commission and the Office of The Industrial Tribunals and The Fair Employment Tribunal.

Performance measures:

- Partner satisfaction with the quality of the Agency's input.

Strategic Theme 2: Working with stakeholders and delivery partners to evidence and promote the economic and social return from good employment relations and shape public policy.

2.1 Work with strategic partners to facilitate discussion and collaboration on matters relating to employment relations public policy, skills and research.

Objectives for 2024-25

- a) Provide effective leadership and support to a new stakeholder workplace forum to support good employment practice and a cohesive labour market.

Performance measures:

- Stakeholder satisfaction with the Agency's input.

- b) Establish, in partnership with The Executive Office (TEO), a cross-sectoral workplace forum (including unions, employers' organisations and other professional bodies) to develop workplace policy toolkits/guidance and promote workplace training/best practice in professional standards on ending violence against women and girls – timeline to be agreed with TEO.

Performance measures:

- Partner/stakeholder satisfaction with the Agency's input.

- c) Support DfE with the development of an Employment Rights Bill, in line with timetable agreed with DfE.

Performance measures:

- Partner/stakeholder satisfaction with the Agency's input.

- d) Develop a code of practice and/guidance on flexible working and showcase good practice, building on the Agency's March 2024 conference – timetable to be agreed with DfE in light of legislative plans.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.
- Partner/stakeholder satisfaction with the Agency's input.

- e) Further develop partnership arrangements to progress collaborative projects with Acas and the Workplace Relations Commission.

Performance measures:

- Stakeholder satisfaction with the Agency's input.

2.2 Develop and promote an Employment Relations Model for Northern Ireland.

Objectives for 2024-25

- a) In partnership with DfE and stakeholders, implement the agreed model for a Good Employment Charter for NI – timetable to be agreed with DfE.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with the Agency's input.

- b) Develop and deliver guidance and other materials on areas covered by the agreed model for a Good Employment Charter for NI **by March 2025**.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.
- Customer satisfaction with the quality of the guidance.

2.3 Evidence the economic and social return from good employment and industrial relations practice.

Objectives for 2024-25

- a) Promote research on the extent to which good employment relations supports improved productivity and the cost of workplace conflict.

Performance measures:

- Stakeholder satisfaction with the Agency's input.

Strategic Theme 3: Optimising the contribution of staff and resources to deliver our statutory functions through effective leadership and governance practices.

3.1 Ensure the effective development of Agency staff and systems to deliver our statutory functions.

Objectives for 2024-25

- a) Ensure, **by March 2025**, implementation of the recommendations from the Alb Review of the Agency.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.

- b) Implement, **from October 2024**, organisational restructuring and new ways of working as agreed as part of the Transformation Programme.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.
- Number and % increase in employee engagement.

- c) Implement, **by September 2024**, the findings from a review of the Senior Leadership Team capacity and structure.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.

- d) Recruit, **by June 2024**, a panel of new Arbitrators.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.

- e) Develop, **by June 2024**, an action plan to implement the 2024-25 elements of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for 2023-25 to support the Agency's development as an exemplary employer.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met for development of action plan.
- Action plan implemented.

- f) Develop, **by June 2024**, an action plan to implement the Year 4 elements of the People Strategy for 2021-25.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met for development of action plan.
- Action plan implemented.

- g) Develop, **by June 2024**, an action plan to implement the Year 4 elements of the Communications Strategy for 2021-25.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met for development of action plan.
- Action plan implemented.

- h) Develop, **by June 2024**, an action plan to implement the Year 4 elements of the Business Intelligence Strategy for 2021-25.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met for development of action plan.
- Action plan implemented.

- i) Develop, **by June 2024**, an action plan to implement the Year 4 elements of the IS Strategy for 2021-25.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met for development of action plan.
- Action plan implemented.

- j) Develop and consult on a Disability Action Plan for 2024-2027 **by September 2024**.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with the plan.

- k) Complete, **by March 2025**, the upgrade of the Case Management and Records System (CMRS) and web portal.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.

- l) Manage, **by March 2025**, the on-boarding of the Agency's IS Managed Services to IT Assist or other appropriate shared service provider.¹²

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.

- m) Implement, **by August 2024**, a new intranet.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.
- Number and % increase in employee engagement.

- n) Review and, where appropriate, upgrade/replace the Agency's website **by March 2025**.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.
- Accessibility standards achieved.

- o) Renew, **by June 2024**, the lease for the Agency's Regional Office.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met.

- p) Migrate secretariat support for the Industrial Court to the Certification Office from April 2024 and review the effectiveness of the transfer of responsibilities **by March 2025**.

Performance measures:

- Timetable met
- Stakeholder satisfaction with new arrangements.

¹² Migration to the IT Assist environment is subject to business case approval by DfE. In the event that IT Assist is unable to on-board the Agency, or does not offer best value for money, another shared service provider will be identified.

3.2 Deliver excellent governance in the management of the Agency's resources in line with the requirements placed on public bodies

Objectives for 2024-25

- a) Ensure the effective quality management of the Agency's resources.

Performance measures:

- Number of internal/external/ISO 27001 audit recommendations implemented.
- Number of Customer Service Excellence Award non-conformities v conformities.
- % of internal/external/ISO 27001 audit recommendations implemented
- ISO 27001 retained.
- Customer Service Excellence Award retained.
- liP Status maintained/improved.
- Internal customer satisfaction with Corporate Services.

- b) Achieve a budget outturn (resource and capital) of 99%.

Performance measures:

- Number of invoices paid.
- % of invoices paid within 10 working days (target: 90%) and 30 calendar days (target: 100%).
- % of budget spent.
- Annual report and accounts certified without qualification.

- c) Development and consult on a Corporate Plan for 2025-29 **by March 2025**.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.

- d) Develop, **by March 2025**, a scheme of delegation in preparation for new legislation clarifying the roles of Board and staff members.

Performance measures:

- Timetable achieved.

e) Ensure Board effectiveness.

Performance measures:

- Compliance with recommended practice.¹³
- Board member satisfaction with their development.

¹³ Board Effectiveness – A Good Practice Guide, NIAO, June 2022 (available at: <https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/board-effectiveness-good-practice-guide-june-2022>) and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Effectiveness Checklist, NAO, September 2017 (available at: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Self_Assessment_Checklist.pdf).

PERFORMANCE SCORECARDS

Advisory Services

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?	HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?
<p><u>Good Practice Seminars/Briefings/Workshops</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events delivered • Number of participating organisations • Number of line managers undertaking the LRA Certificate in Line Management Practice <p><u>Document Reviews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number registered <p><u>Good Employment Practice Projects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects registered • Number of collective agreements/policies facilitated <p><u>Partnership working</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of partners worked with • Number of joint events held <p><u>Workplace Information Service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of enquires received/handled 	<p><u>Good Practice Seminars/Briefings/Workshops</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % planned events delivered • % of line managers achieving the LRA Certificate in Management Practice • Customer satisfaction with the quality of the events <p><u>Document Reviews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction with the quality of the service <p><u>Good Employment Practice Projects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % projects completed • Customer satisfaction with the quality of the service <p><u>Partnership working</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % planned events held • Partner satisfaction with the quality of the Agency's input • Customer satisfaction with the quality of the events <p><u>Workplace Information Service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average waiting time • Lost call rate
<p>IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of customers reporting greater confidence in dealing with employment relations matters as a result of attendance at events • Number and % of line managers applying learning/skills in the workplace as a result of completing the LRA Certificate in Line Management Practice • Number and % of customers reporting greater confidence in applying revised documentation as a result of document reviews • Number of more effective policies in place • Number and % of customers reporting a more positive employment relations environment and reduced likelihood of disputes occurring • Number and % of Workplace Information Service contacts reporting information provided helped them to decide what to do next 	

Dispute Resolution Services

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?	HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?
<p><u>Individual Conciliation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of employee-led cases received • Number of employer-led cases received <p><u>Collective Conciliation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of collective conciliation cases received <p><u>Mediation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of requests received <p><u>Arbitration and Independent Appeals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of arbitration and independent appeals cases received 	<p><u>Early Conciliation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of employee-led cases completed • % of employer-led cases completed • Customer satisfaction with the service provided <p><u>Collective Conciliation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % collective conciliations cases undertaken • % resulting in a settlement to resolve the dispute • Customer satisfaction with the service provided <p><u>Mediation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of requests undertaken • % resulting in agreement to resolve the dispute • Customer satisfaction with the service provided <p><u>Arbitration and Independent Appeals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of arbitration and independent appeals cases completed • Customer satisfaction with the service provided
<p style="text-align: center;">IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of notifications settled. • Number and % of EC notifications not resulting in a tribunal claim. • Number and % of cases not proceeding to tribunal hearing • Number and % of tribunal days saved • Number and % of customers reporting better working relationships following mediation • Number and % of customers reporting higher levels of engagement/trust following collective conciliation • Number and % of customers reporting a difference in behaviours/attitudes following an arbitration or independent appeal hearing 	

Corporate Services

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?	HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?
<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of performance reviews conducted on time • Number of days spent on learning and development • Number of return to work interviews conducted within three working days <p><u>Finance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of invoices paid <p><u>Quality Improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of internal/external/ISO 27001 audit recommendations implemented • Number of Customer Service Excellence Award non-conformities v conformities <p><u>Communications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of external events and exhibitions • Number of social media posts • Number of news releases/press statements • Number of pages of new/refreshed web content 	<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of performance reviews conducted on time • % of days lost through sick absence • % of return to work interviews conducted within three working days • Level of employee engagement <p><u>Finance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of invoices paid within 10 working days and 30 calendar days • % of budget spent • Annual report and accounts certified without qualification <p><u>Quality Improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of internal/external/ISO 27001 audit recommendations implemented • ISO 27001 retained • Customer Service Excellence Award achieved/retained • liP Status maintained/improved <p><u>Communications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of engagement with social media • Reach of social media posts • % increase in social media followers • Proportion of coverage • % increase in website usage <p><u>Overall</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal customer satisfaction with Corporate Services
<p style="text-align: center;">IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % increase in employee engagement • Number and % increase in attendance at work • Number and % increase in public awareness of the Agency and its services 	