

**Response to a Question Pursuant to Rule 14
of The Rules of Procedure of the States of Deliberation and their Committees**

Subject: States of Guernsey Workforce

States' Member: Deputy Robert Murray

Date received: 19th January 2021

Date acknowledged: 20th January 2021

Date of reply: 17th February 2021

Questions and Responses

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the questions. The responses are set out below.

Question 1

What are the month by month figures, broken down between departments, of the number and percentage of each department's Established Staff who were not required to attend their offices to work from home between 1st April 2020 and 31st December 2020?

Response

The data does not exist in the form requested to enable a detailed response to this question. When the first lockdown was announced, all Established Staff were asked to adhere to the direction of the Civil Contingencies Authority, and work from home where it was possible to do so. In the event that working from home was not possible, many continued to attend their place of work (some on split-shifts) in accordance with Public Health guidelines, in order to maintain the provision of critical services.

Workforce reporting during the first lockdown period shows the progression of staff deployment as the restrictions eased during the various phases. The reporting was conducted on the basis of service areas rather than employee groups as this was of more concern to service delivery. In April there were over 1,500 employees working remotely, and by the end of July, after we had exited lockdown, that number was down to 400.

Once lockdown eased, and a return to the office was possible, the States promoted a hybrid model of working, with many staff spending time working from home as well as in the office. This has helped to prepare for transformation in that the organisation is now capable of working in a more agile manner, plus we have a greater understanding of potential

opportunities to rationalise the estate by not only working differently but being able to deliver a better customer experience.

Now that we are in a second period of lockdown, this hybrid approach has proved advantageous in that it has helped the organisation to become practised at working from home, which meant that it was better prepared for the second lockdown, not least because of the continued roll-out of IT to support more agile working.

It is important to note that staff working from home are simply carrying out their duties from a different location and, in all other respects are very much “at work”.

Question 2

Of those Established Staff not working from their offices during the said period, please confirm (a) for how many working days said staff did not have online access to their office computer systems, again broken down between departments, and (b) the total pro-rata salary cost to the taxpayer of those lost days of productivity?

Response

There was only one major incident affecting States of Guernsey IT services during this period which had an impact on staff productivity; there were no specific major incidents affecting remote workers and system availability remained at more than 99.5% over this period. This was a cyber-attack in November 2020 that has already been reported in the media. The attack was serious and mitigated in less than a week, compared to c12 weeks in 2017 when the last similar attack occurred. The rapid mitigation was because of new escalation measures with the UK National Cyber Security Centre and new technical measures deployed as part of the SMART Guernsey strategic partnership. Staff allocated Laptops as part of the COVID 19 response could access States of Guernsey (SoG) applications and systems throughout the response to the pandemic allowing them to fulfil their roles. Prior to Future Digital Services (FDS) and the IT Transformation programme commencing, the ratio of Desktop computer to Laptop computer across the entire SOG was 80% desktop and 20% laptop. The IT transformation programme commissioned as part of the FDS contract addresses this ratio with 90% of staff operating on laptop devices with only 10% operating from desk top devices upon its completion (due late 2021). Desktop users will be limited to those whose work role tasks require access to high powered devices, for example to manipulate mapping data.

Throughout the first period of the pandemic (late March – June 2020) the IT function sourced some 700 laptops in advance of the timescales detailed within the IT transformation programme (which would have been bought as part of that programme) to allow more staff the ability to operate away from the office. In that period 532 (see note) were configured and distributed across all business areas in the States of Guernsey, including to some elected members, in a safe and appropriate manner, this allowed for circa 86% of services to be maintained across the States on legacy infrastructure never designed to afford such technologically advanced solutions.

Question 3

How many Established Staff were furloughed during 2020, and from which departments?

Response

No Established Staff (or anyone from the States workforce) was furloughed during 2020. However, where the opportunity existed steps were taken to bring zero hour contracts to an end and the non-renewal of fixed term contracts. Other cost-cutting measures included the introduction of a restriction on the payment of overtime (other than in areas of the business where this was a contractual entitlement such as Health & Social Care and Law Enforcement), and more stringent controls on recruitment.

Question 4

How many Established Staff have lost their jobs on performance grounds between 1st January 2013 and 31st December 2020?

Response

The following numbers of Established Staff have lost their jobs on performance grounds between 1st January 2013 and 31st December 2020.

2013	12
2014	11
2015	14
2016	15
2017	18
2018	15
2019	8
2020	11
TOTAL	104

In addition to the above numbers on average eight to ten established staff per year do not pass their six month probationary period and leave States of Guernsey employment.

Question 5

How many Established Staff are required to meet clearly defined Key Performance Indicators, other than mere length of service, in order to receive incremental salary increases or promotions through the various pay grades?

Response

The grading of Established Staff is linked to a salary scale which is separated into pay bands. Within these bands there are generally three pay points but on the senior office bands there are five pay points. The range of pay points within each grade recognises that someone who has been in a role for a number of years is expected to be performing at a higher level than someone new into the role, by virtue of the former's greater experience. Internal appointments are almost invariably made to the bottom point of the relevant pay scale (unless the appointee is already above that point, in which case he/she will transfer on existing salary). Established Staff will generally progress through these pay points each year, until they reach the top of that pay band, so for most Established Staff that is two increments. If performance is unsatisfactory then progression to the next increment can be stopped. Owing to their length of service, currently, around 70% of Established Staff are at the top point of their pay band.

Established Staff have set objectives within their job description and as part of the Personal Impact Programme (PIP). The PIP is an annual cycle of objective setting and review, including regular 1-2-1 meetings with their line manager.

Career development including promotion and/or transfers within the pay bands is an important part of any employee's journey and is actively encouraged by the employer in order to ensure that the workforce remains highly skilled and motivated. This is achieved on merit usually through an evidenced based selection procedure.

Question 6

Please confirm the total annual pay increase awards made to Established Staff between 1st January 2013 and 31st December 2020?

Response

The total annual pay increase awards for the Established Staff agreed by the States through Policy & Resources (formerly Policy Council) which acts as 'employer', between 1st January 2013 and 31st December 2020 is as follows. As will be seen, over this period pay increases have fallen below inflation.

	Established Staff Pay Increase	RPI X (as at March)
2012	3.7%	3.2%
2013	2.5%	2.3%
2014	0.5%	2.2%
2015	2.2%	0.8%
2016	0.0%	0.5%
2017	1.0%	2.9%
2018	2.0%	1.9%
2019	2.4%	2.1%

2020	2.0%	2.5%	
2021	0.0%	1.7%*	*Forecast
Total	16.3%	20.1%	

Question 7

Please confirm how many Established Staff have retired, entitling them to draw all or part of their pension entitlements, and have then been re-engaged on a contractual basis? Are such staff included in the Established Staff figures in the States Accounts once they have been re-engaged on a contractual basis? What was the total remuneration cost of such re-engaged staff during 2020?

Response

A total of four Established Staff who had retired were employed to varying degrees during 2020. Three of the staff responded to a call for help during the Island’s initial response to the pandemic and were employed as temporary resources. All would have been included in the Established Staff figures in the States accounts. Due to the very small number of individuals concerned and the ability for them, by default, to be identified, it would not be appropriate to provide details of their remuneration costs during 2020.

Question 8

Please confirm whether it is the case that a large order of laptops placed with Agilisys in October 2020 remains unfulfilled some 3 months later, and that as a result there are numerous teachers needing to share laptops with each other, as well as civil servants unable to work remotely with fit-for-purpose laptops with appropriate data security protection built in?

Response

A small order of 14 Chromebooks for Education was delayed owing to global supply chain issues for that model. These issues occurred as a result of demand outstripping supply for that particular model: alternatives have been procured. Indeed, throughout the period March 2020 – January 2021 many large orders have been placed and fulfilled in good time by leveraging supply through channel and direct procurement chains.

All devices procured by the States of Guernsey come with the TPM chipset installed which allows BitLocker to be installed. BitLocker allows solid state drives and traditional rotating drives to be encrypted, the user is required to enter a pin code to unlock the device before getting to the log on screen for Microsoft Windows. This renders the device useless in the event of loss or theft. All connection to the States infrastructure is secured using industry standard technologies such as Microsoft Direct Access, Microsoft Always on VPN or Checkpoint VPN which encrypts data from the device to the service.

Education services were provided with IT infrastructure under the GILE contract and the refresh of all devices for teachers, students, and classrooms are part of the Education Digital

Road Map, which has been delayed for various reasons including the pandemic. Short term tactical issues arising from requests from Education have been rapidly addressed through the use of Minor Capital. Teachers who required and requested devices throughout lockdown have been supplied with devices from IT Transformation stock.

Question 9

Please confirm whether it is the case that, under the States contract with Agilisys, all computer hardware for the public sector can only be purchased centrally via Agilisys, and that the profit margin earned by Agilisys can be as much as 200% over and above the cost of exactly the same hardware if purchased elsewhere such as Amazon?

Response

This is not the case. The contract is non-exclusive in its nature: currently all States of Guernsey devices are procured through Agilisys using an on-Island company, Resolution IT. The profit margins suggested are significantly overstated. Agilisys are restricted through the Master Services Agreement (MSA) in terms of the profit margins that can be made which are all detailed in Schedule 7.1 of the contract. Hardware procurement is a commodity-based transaction and falls under IT BAU Services where Agilisys profit is limited to a percentage that falls well below the industry standard for transactions of this nature. Full disclosure of these details could be made upon the request of a Deputy, if the Deputy agrees to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) due to the commercially sensitive nature of the information. There are also provisions within the MSA to protect the States from Agilisys earning 'Super Profits' such as those suggested in the question. Amazon prices are retail prices which are driven by demand and can exceed what the States pays by as much as 200%. In addition, all States devices sourced through Resolution IT come from HP direct and are accompanied by a HP Care Pack - 3y Next Business Day Onsite warranty defined as:

The on-island warranty agent will attend site as per warranty agreement to resolve hardware issues or install replacement parts. Faulty units will be collected from the address given at the time of the support call being logged. This can be a home address or an office address. The equipment will be returned to that address.

These are not the same terms as a consumer could achieve on Amazon or any other consumer web site when purchasing devices of similar specifications.

Question 10

Notwithstanding that there is no pay rise for established staff in 2021, how much will the salary bill for established staff rise by in 2021 as a result of automatic intergrade incremental increases?

Response

Based on the current Established Staff workforce, the total costs for incremental pay increases in 2021 will be £497,705. It is important to stress that these are the gross increases. The net impact could be positive depending on turnover within the Established Staff group which currently is running about 12%. New starters will invariably join on lower grades (generally the first point of a pay banding) which will reduce these projected costs accordingly.

Question 11

How many civil servants remain working from home and for what reason?

Response

Human Resources are monitoring workforce deployment weekly during the current lockdown period. Information is analysed by service area rather than by employee group as the focus is on maintaining service delivery.

Out of the total workforce there are around 2,000 front line workers which includes Nurses, Police, Guernsey Border Agency, Fire Fighters etc. These are working on site as normal. There are just over 1,100 non front line employees working on site as normal, this will be a mix of Public Sector Employee, Established staff and Teaching staff. Whilst the schools remain not fully open, there are around 1,800 employees working from home (often referred to as 'working remotely'), these will be largely Established and Teaching staff. The reasons for working remotely are set out below. Of the total workforce 99.7% are currently employed either in their normal role or redeployed elsewhere.

Following the lifting of the first lockdown there was still an emergency situation in place and it was important that the organisation learnt some of the lessons from the lockdown period, hence the development of a number of trials to look at rotational working for office based workers. All employees that needed to be in the workplace, for access to legacy systems for example, have been able to do so whilst others developed a system of mixed (rotational) working that enabled them to attend the workplace when they needed to be on site for collaboration and meetings, whilst retaining the ability to work remotely. The trials were aimed at evaluating better utilisation of the States property portfolio and consolidating public services to deliver a better customer experience.

This approach has had a number of benefits, chiefly in terms of an almost seamless move to remote working in the second lockdown, but also in reducing the number of potential Covid cases (amongst the workforce) in the second wave. A further key benefit has been the reduction in sickness levels. Across the organisation this has fallen by 9%, but in Established Staff there has been a 35% reduction over the year. A significant contributing factor in this reduction will be staff continuing to work when based remotely albeit that they might have symptoms of, say, a cold, but otherwise feel well, whereas if they had been office based they would have been encouraged to stay away from the workplace in order to minimise cross infection.

Question 12

What IT facilities does the States of Guernsey use to monitor the work and relative productivity of staff working from home?

Response

The States of Guernsey does not use IT applications to monitor the work and relative productivity of staff working from home. However, this does not mean that good working practice is not being followed. As indicated earlier, Established Staff have set objectives within their job description and as part of the Personal Impact Programme (PIP). The PIP is an annual cycle of objective setting and review through formal appraisals and regular 1-2-1 meetings with their line manager. Such meetings are conducted via Teams when staff are working from home/remotely.

Question 13

In the last 4 calendar years, how many staff have received a redundancy or severance package equating to more than the equivalent of their 6 month's salary? Have any staff received more than the equivalent of their 6 month's severance pay? If so, why?

Response

There is a fundamental difference between a redundancy and severance package. Redundancy is a contractual entitlement resulting from the actions taken by an employer to make a substantial change to an individual's role and responsibilities or a cessation of the role altogether and this carries with it specific costs to the employer, whereas a severance (termination agreement) relates to situations when the employer determines the need to bring a contract of employment to an end subject to terms.

In the last four calendar years, seven staff have been made redundant all of whom received a contractual redundancy payment equating to more than six months' salary. Only one member of staff received a severance (termination) package equating to more than the equivalent of their six months' salary (the statutory minimum award) and this was owing to the fact that the settlement package included a contribution towards their relocation costs.

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