

GOC Performance Report: Jan – Mar 2020

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Quarter 4 - Performance overview

HIGHLIGHTS

- 13% **reduction in overall FTP caseload** in quarter (31% reduction in 19-20)
- 16% reduction in **investigation caseload** (47% for 19-20)
- **Open Triage case median** on KPI track (8 weeks)
- 81 **case examiner decisions** contributing to a decrease in **median age of open investigation cases**
- Completed **OCCS procurement**
- First **remote hearing** completed
- **Median time complaints held in hearings** down to 25 weeks
- 29% of interim orders held '**on the papers**' against 10% target
- Publication of new **registrant guidance on disclosing confidential information**
- **Covid-19 communications** – publication of joint regulatory statement, dedicated COVID-19 webpage, weekly registrant emails
- First weekly **Covid-19 update email for registrants** sent on 31 March – increased open rate (52.73%) and click rate (12.02%), compared to general February registrant e-Bulletin open rate (38.25%) and click rate (6.73%). Open rate and click rate is above the non-profit industry standards of 25.17% and 2.79%
- Over 1,204 **registration applications** processed within target timeframes
- Annual renewal successfully completed:
 - Fully-qualified – 97.7%
 - Body Corporate – 96.5%

CHALLENGES

- **Open and closed cases** at stages 2 to 4 remain high – this reflects that the residual caseload is now formed of a greater percentage of more complex cases
- Although all other **open and closed medians** projected to improve through 20-21, performance against **78-week end-to-end median** expected to remain static as older cases progress to closure
- With the **stage 2 caseload greatly reduced**, focus is on improving time taken to **progress cases through stage 3** (FTPC preparation), and ensuring that sufficient stage 3 cases are **progressed to stage 4** before 30 September in order to facilitate achievement of the 20-21 FTPC hearings objective.
- We anticipate that there may be some impact from **Covid-19** in terms of obtaining patient records, but magnitude subject to length of current restrictions.
- Four **part-heard hearings** this quarter impacting on closed case volumes
- Expected **service bundles** not materialised impacting on ability to **schedule** anticipated increase in **hearings**
- Continuing to engage key stakeholders in co-design of **ESR deliverables**; outcomes for registration, standards for approved qualifications and assurance design.
- Revised IT strategy – completion of strategy document delayed due to Covid-19

Quarter 4 - Strategic projects delivery update

Education Strategic Review

Delivery: **On track**

CET Review

Delivery: **On track**

Jan-Mar

Hosted 5.5 of 6 EAG meetings co-designing outcomes, standards, and assurance.

Day 2 of EAG 6 cancelled due to Covid-19

Roundtable exploring funding options held and report drafted

Meetings held with CoO, AOP, FODO, ABDO, etc.

Apr-Jun

EAG 6 rescheduled for 5th May

Key documents continue to be drafted by correspondence.

Jan-Mar

New scheme policy development – preparing the consultation document

Apr-Jun

Consultation on CET reforms re. freeing up the system, mandatory reflection, and re-branding

Key activities

- Expert Advisory Groups continue work on-line. Current focus is drafting outcomes, standards, and assurance method
- Roundtables engage with stakeholders across the sector on issues key to successful implementation; including student placement, funding, and undue influence
- QAA engaged to review outcomes & standards
- Beginning collaborative work to co-commission evidence RQF level for DO and Optoms

Risk to delivery

- Stakeholder capacity for engagement due to Covid-19 significantly reduced, and SPA's capacity to work with employers and wider stakeholder community to prepare new qualifications for approval potentially significantly impaired, depending on length of emergency.

Key activities

- Public consultation document drafted outlining new CPD model for 2022

Risk to delivery

- Covid-19 situation may impact on external stakeholders' ability to engage with consultation
- Legislative reform required to re-write CPD rules to underpin new scheme
- Outcomes of ESR project will have direct impact – close co-operation between both projects in progress
- This a large programme of interrelated work and the outcome of one project may impact on the deliverables of another

Objective	Deliver a strategic review of optical education and training and implement changes	Implement changes to ensure the CET scheme operates effectively, can accommodate rapidly changing scopes of practice and changes to undergraduate education
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Quarter 4 - Strategic projects delivery update

Legislative Reform

Delivery: **On track**

Business Standards

Delivery: **On track**

Jan-Mar

Engage with Government and prepare for implementation of legislative changes

Apr-Jun

Engage with Government proposals re. FTP and Governance
Identify other legislative reforms required and share with DHSC

Jan-Mar

Implementation of business standards

Apr-Jun

Key activities

- Have prepared priorities for legislative reform and continue to review detailed plans for FTP and Governance reforms
- Continue to liaise with DHSC re legislative reform but now uncertain timetable due to Covid-19 situation

Risk to delivery

- Precise implications need to be worked through and timetable for legislative reform remains uncertain, especially due to the Covid-19 situation

Key activities

- Ongoing communications developed with Comms team and published on microsite
- Project closure documentation to SMT in May

Risk to delivery

- Ongoing need to raise awareness of the new standards to ensure positive impact and avoid an increase in regulatory work at a later date if the standards are not observed

Objective

Engage with Government's programme to improve legislation and allow us to operate more efficiently and effectively

Develop new standards for optical business registrants which reflect good practice and are flexible enough for care to evolve

Quarter 4 - Regulatory functions delivery update

Standards

Delivery: **On track**

Education

Delivery: **On track**

Continuing Education and Training

Delivery: **On track**

Jan-Mar
Vision and driving / confidentiality guidance consultation report
Develop unlicensed medicines guidance

Apr-Jun
Vision and driving / confidentiality guidance

Jan-Mar
Conduct 4 visits

Apr-Jun
Conduct 6 visits
Close annual monitoring

Jan-Mar
c.1200 CET approvals
Support registrants, providers and approver
Train CET approvers

Apr-Jun
c.1100 CET approvals
Support registrants, providers and approvers
Train CET approvers

Key activities

- Guidance on disclosing confidential information published in Feb 2020
- Contributed to external working groups on frontline complaints handling and College of Optometrists guidance
- Initial research to support development of guidance on whistleblowing/Speaking Up
- Position statement on lissamine green (unlicensed medicine) published

Risk to delivery

No significant risk at present

Key activities

- Phase 1: (Triage of notifications of temporary changes for approved programmes) 100% complete.
- Phase 2: (Notifications of temporary changes - triage of additional information) 83% complete
- We will be conducting our first remote QA visit in May.
- This year's Annual Monitoring Review report is being finalised.

Risk to delivery

- There are significant risks due to Covid-19 for HE which will impact on workforce supply and mode of delivery. These are being actively monitored by the QA team.

Key activities

- Confirmation sent to 981 registrants (4.25%) that they had not met their annual target by December 2019.
- Average 378 general approvals per month (1,136 in total), with 96% resolved within 10 working day KPI. Additionally, 162 registrant-led peer reviews reviewed with 91%, meeting KPI.
- 364 Annual Provider fee invoices sent out in January, first reminder sent out in February. March removals halted due to Covid-19 situation.
- Support given to both registrants and Providers on possible amendments to CET delivery due to Covid-19 situation.

Risk to delivery

- No significant risk at present

Quarter 4 - Regulatory functions delivery update

Registration

Jan-Mar

Registrant Renewal – c.25,000
Removal of 174 registrants
Responded to c.328 declarations
c.800 outbound calls to support registrants with renewal
c.203 non-UK applications

Delivery: **On track**

Apr-Jun

Extra time for renewal given to registrants – deadline 16 April
(Increased levels of restoration applications anticipated)
Open Student Renewal in June
Register data-cleansing in preparation for opening Student Renewal in June
Finalising declarations received during renewal
Start working on the H:drive in preparation for SharePoint
Content review and update of Registration webpages on optical.org following renewal

Fitness to Practise

Jan-Mar

c.75 investigation decisions
Complete procurement of OCCS service
Procurement for auditor of decisions

Delivery: **behind schedule**

Apr-Jun

Work towards 210 substantive CE decisions
Clinical contract review
Online complaint form
Customer feedback processes
Defence Stakeholder Group meeting
Structure review
Commence audit of decisions

Key activities

- Annual renewal closed: 97.7% of fully-qualified (22,958) & 96.6% of BC (2731) registrants completed renewal. 135 Individuals and 38 BC registrants removed for failure to apply.
- c.3000 inbound calls & c.800 outbound calls – these were handled by the team working remotely, calling registrants in highly demanding circumstances.
- C.3,509 registrant emails responded to during this period
- 890 Independent prescribing renewal applications processed
- 605 low income fee applications processed.
- Responded to 328 declarations
- 242 fully-qualified applications process & 270 misc. applications.
- 203 Non-UK (EEA) applications in progress – no applications outside of the directive's timescales (122 EEA & 81 Non-EEA)
- 165 international enquiries forms received

Risk to delivery

- Covid-19 impact: spike in registrant queries during renewal; v high volumes of emails requiring individual responses, against a backdrop of office closure and uncertainty among registrants (whether to renew). Staff working remotely. IT and support systems effectively tested, team issued laptops and softphones. >800 outbound calls made at end of renewal to support registrants

Key activities

- Triage pilot now embedded as BAU and have achieved and sustained our revised eight-week open median
- 13% decrease in overall open caseload since last quarter
- 16% decrease in investigation caseload since last quarter (42% since the start of the year)
- 81 CE decisions including 63 substantive
- 12 cases closed by FTPC
- FTP decisions Audit procurement process commenced
- OCCS procurement completed

Risks to delivery

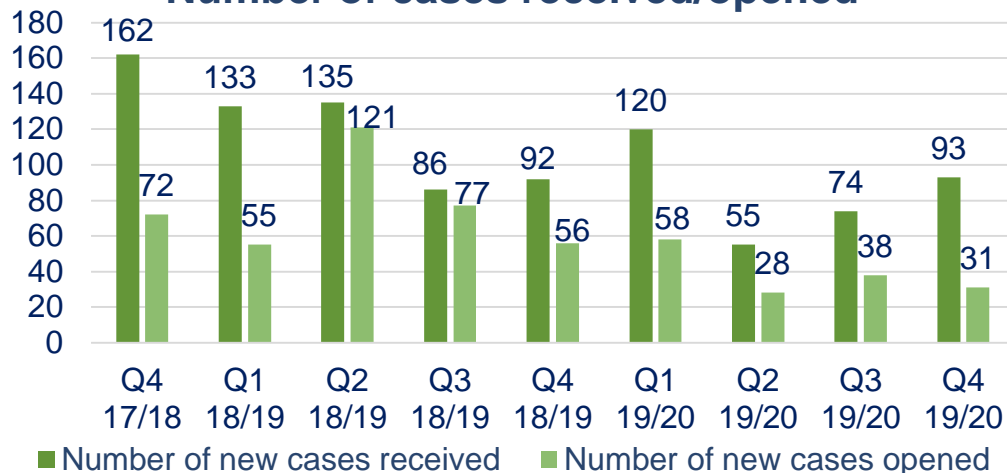
- Impact of Covid-19 on sustaining current improvements. Increased likelihood of pushing realisation into Q1 2021-2022
- Open case median in investigations remain the primary focus for Q1 (20-21). We note the potential impact on registrants and businesses in providing timely information during the Emergency*
- Delayed service of cases on hearings continues to be a risk to delivery against overarching KPI. We require service of minimally c.15 cases in Apr/May supported by a targeted focus on our post case examiner (stage 3) investigations*

Registration Performance Measures	18/19 Q3	18/19 Q4	19/20 Q1	19/20 Q2	19/20 Q3	19/20 Q4
95% of all new entries to the register are accurate	95%	95%	95%	95%	96%	97%
90%* of forms completed within deadline	95%	93%	95%	92%	97%	98%

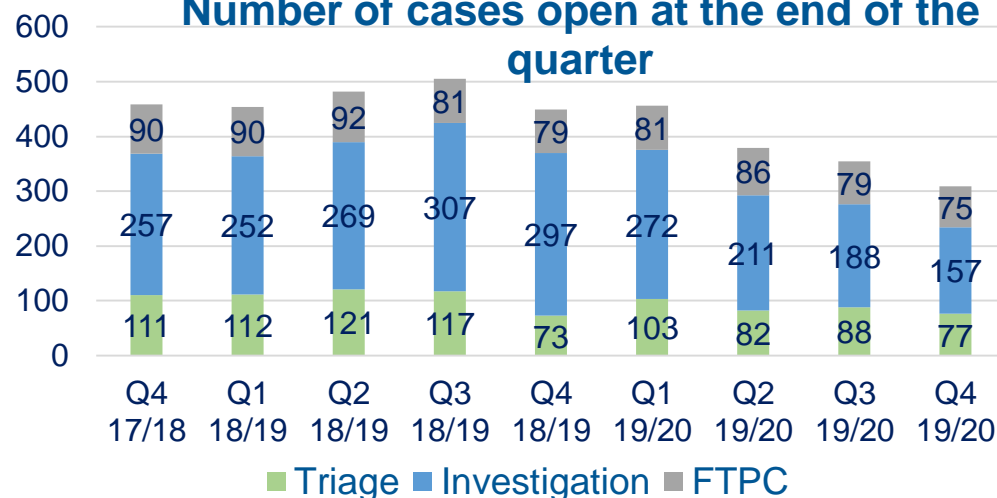
Quarter 4 - Performance update - Fitness to Practise

Open caseload analysis

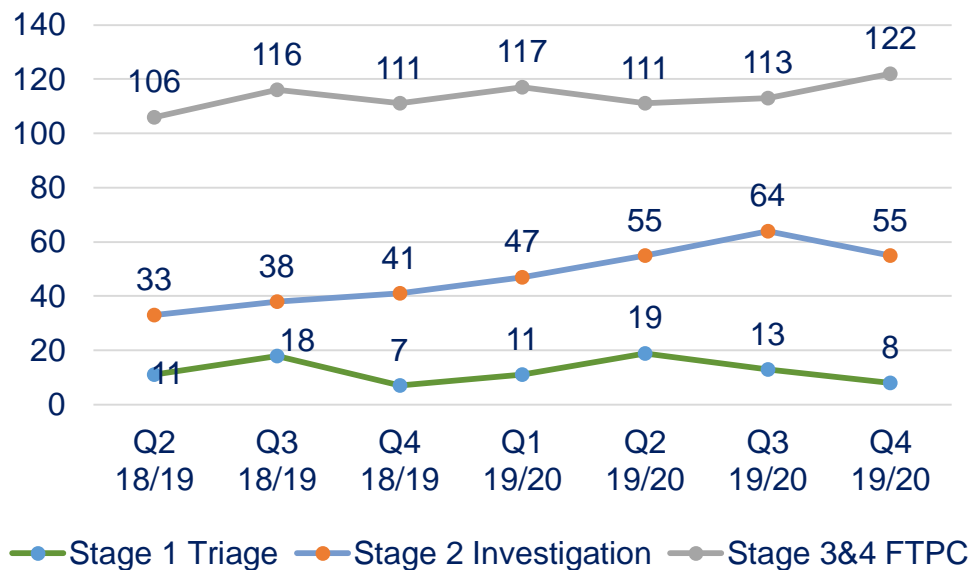
Number of cases received/opened



Number of cases open at the end of the quarter



Open Case Age (median) weeks from date of complaint



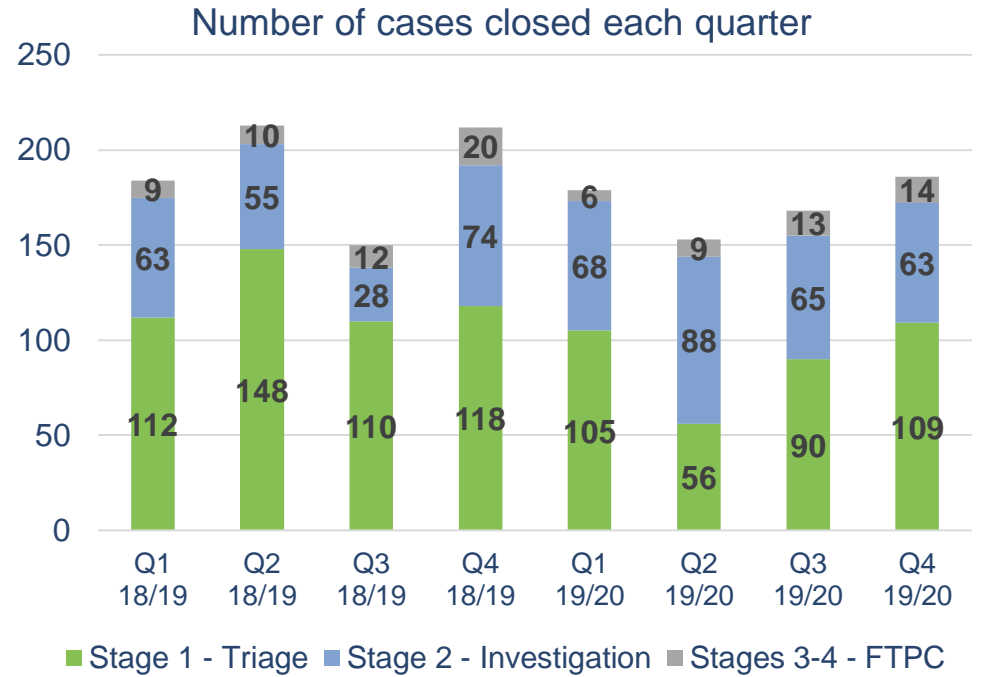
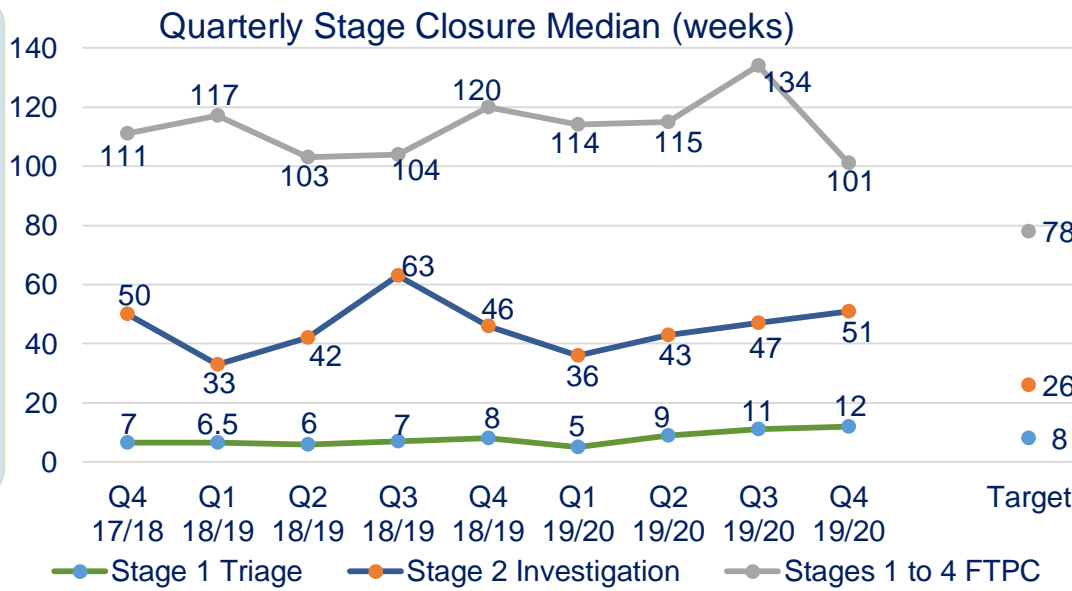
- A positive end to the year with a sustained drop in our open caseload – (31%) overall and 47% in stage 2 investigations – and improved median timelines at the front end of the FTP process. We credit this to a combination of our enhanced acceptance criteria and our targeted review of stage 2 investigations, and increased case clinics.
- We met the revised triage open median of eight weeks and expect this will be sustained subject to any unexpected Covid-19 impact.
- The investigation open median has decreased this quarter and we believe this will continue to slowly reduce over the next few months. This reflects the work done to progress concerns through to case examiners – 81 this quarter resulting in 63 final decisions.
- This has had the projected and logical effect of pushing the Stage 3 and end-to-end open median age profile of open cases at the latter stage of the process to an all-time high and we expect this to rise further as more legacy cases filter through to the FTFC.
- We have not met our expected disclosures on hearings this quarter – 19, against a projected 34 – and this remains our primary focus for Q1 and Q2. We have worked at overcoming challenges around obtaining hospital records but accept that far more work is needed here. We anticipate some delay over the next few months due to the impact of Covid-19 on the NHS workforce and will keep this under review over the next few months.
- Disappointingly, we have to report a miscount in our Q2 open case age median for stages 3&4. Reported as 97 weeks instead of 111 weeks as amended here.

Quarter 4 - Performance update - Fitness to Practise

Closed caseload analysis

Stage 1 = Triage, Stage 2 = Investigation (CE decision), Stage 3 = Hearing prep, Stage 4 = FTP Committee decision)

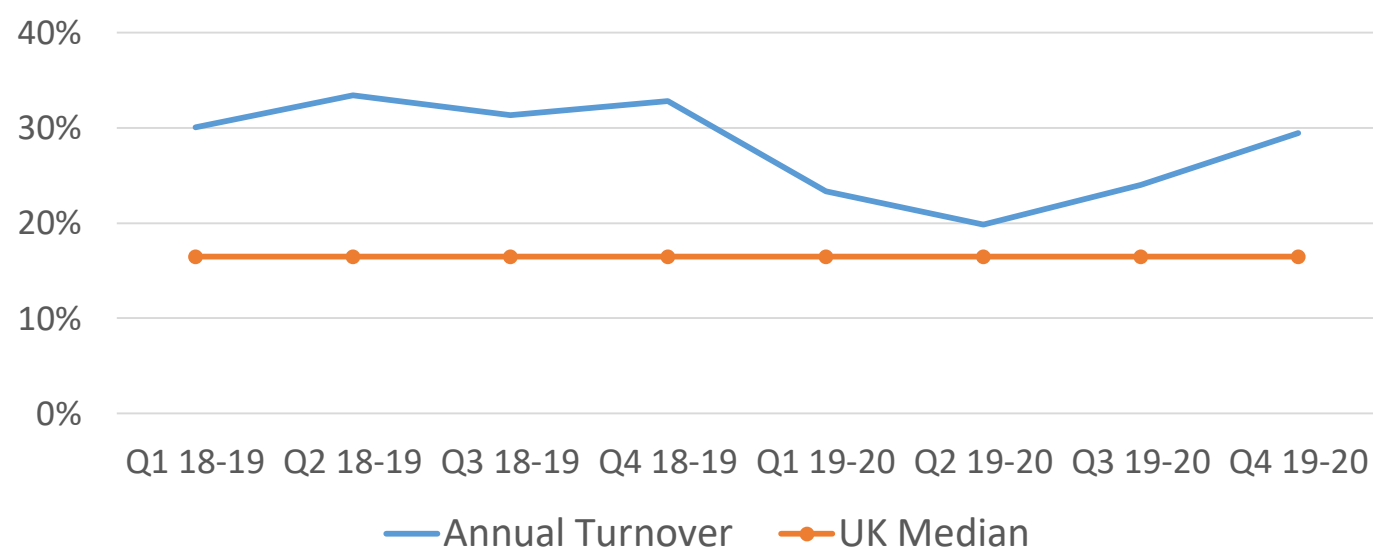
- As projected, we have seen a further increase in our **triage closed median** due to the focus on legacy concerns. We continue to expect this to drop and then plateau from Q1
- Similarly, the **investigation closed median** has risen in line with our projections and we expect this to remain high throughout Q1. We had expected this to drop and then plateau in mid-Q2 but are mindful of the potential impact of Covid-19 on our ability to progress cases as effectively as they might have so will keep this under review.
- While the quarterly **end-to-end median** looks positive, this is as a result of a number of our oldest cases going part-heard, or not progressing due to the Covid-19 impact during March. Subject to when these might be re-scheduled we remain relatively confident that the projected dip will occur during Q4 (rather than end of Q3) but this does mean we may now slip into Q1 of 2021-2022 in reaching our end-to-end 78-week median.



- In line with our projections last quarter, we have achieved a 20% increase in **triage decisions**. We have an opportunity to capitalise on the anticipated dip in new concerns over the next few months and continue to progress more cases to decision, more quickly.
- We have sustained the closure rate in our **investigations** which is positive given that we are now working through our more tricky legacy cases. We are seeing some positive signs in our monthly reporting and will aim to continue this over the next few months
- The **FTPC** closed 14 cases these quarter contributing to a year end total of 42, seven below our revised business plan objective of 49. This was due in the main to fewer cases being disclosed to the hearings team throughout the year than projected. In addition, March saw a number of cases being adjourned due to the impact of Covid-19. This area remains our core priority for Q1 and Q2 and we will be re-forecasting our projections over the next few weeks.
- We will also be exploring the potential benefits of restructuring some of our teams to provide more targeted support for the case preparation stage of the process.

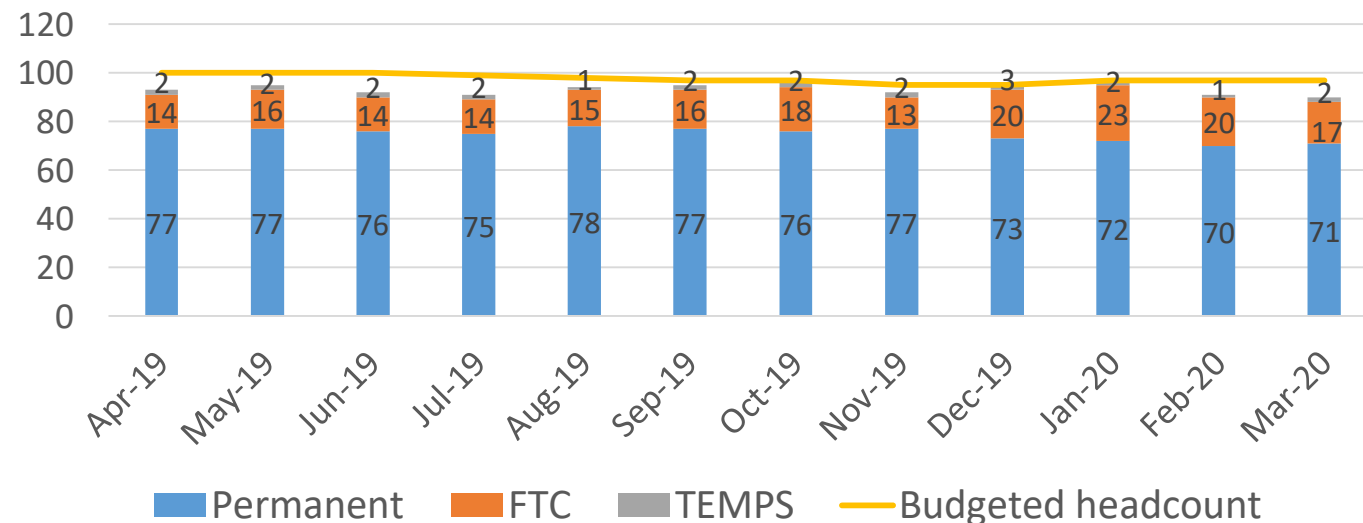
Quarter 4 - Performance update - Human Resources

Rolling 12 month Staff Turnover - Last 2 Years



- Turnover remained elevated this quarter, largely due to the ongoing use of fixed-term contract (60% of this quarter’s leavers). All bar one of the remainder left for career progression reasons.
- The results of the staff survey were shared with the staff and the new Staff Engagement Plan launched. A number of actions under this plan have already been completed, despite Covid-19’s impact.
- We also saw the beginning of the Covid-19 impact, with recruitment largely suspended, resulting in a drop in headcount. Two staff were recruited via agencies to fill urgent requirements, but others have been filled through internal transfers or left vacant during the lockdown period.
- The main focus in the HR function for the present is safety and well-being of staff during the pandemic and normal project work is likely to slip as a result of this and the constraints of working remotely.

Headcount – Last 12 Months



Quarter 4 - Performance update - Finance

We have consistently performed better in financial position than budget and forecasts (before portfolio gains and losses).

Financial Performance - 12 months to 31 March 2020

