[5.1] Operational Flexibility

On an on-going basis, you will be expected to have flexibility to provide continuity in respect of quality of service if actual volumes prove to be higher; and manage staffing levels appropriately if actual volumes are lower. You will also be required to demonstrate your flexibility in response to requested change during the life of the contract e.g. extending delivery hours. Your response should cover how you will address any planned and unplanned volume fluctuations on an intraday, intra week and intra month basis whilst maintaining quality of service and should include your typical lead times in which to handle increases in demand and in response to change in accordance with the timescales specified by the Authority. The response should also take into account any seasonal requirements.

Please describe, from a quality and volume perspective, and in detail:

- How you will undertake planning and manage capacity and performance, throughout the life of the contract allowing for forecast tolerances and response to requested change;
- Your manpower planning processes set against the context of delivering planned and unplanned volumes of work and in response to requested change;
- Your manpower planning processes in response to higher than anticipated levels of staff absence and attrition and response to requested change, taking into account daily service performance and including any lead in time for securing additional resource under your speed to competence assumptions.

Supplier Name	*G4S*	**Package**	*Package A*

Present your response, within these pre-set margins in Arial font size 12 up to **6** sides of A4 **excluding** the question text and these instructions.

We have developed our resourcing model to provide DWP with significant flexibility to change volume and service requirements without impacting quality. On our current DWP Contact Centre contract, {Redacted}we have successfully responded to policy changes which increased volumes by over 50% while ensuring that we met all our quality requirements. Our processes also allow for significant fluctuations within the day and week, including planned peaks. Currently we receive 25% of call volumes on a Monday. In January on our {Redacted} service {Redacted}. We will use the same underlying processes to manage change and quality for DWP Contact Centres Package A.

1. **Our Flexibility to Respond to Change During the Life of the Contract**

We recognise that a significant level of change is possible through the life of the contract driven by policy, demographic and technology change. We will handle the volume change as follows:

■ Volume changes – as part of all of our contact centre services we manage planned and unplanned volume changes on an intra-day, weekly and monthly basis. Our DWP resourcing model gives the flexibility to deliver up to 111% of the daily forecast allowing significant intra-day flexibility. In section 4 we describe our capacity management processes for planned and unplanned volume changes. In the case of weekly or monthly changes our limiting factor is the space available. {Redacted}.

■ Hour changes – We will work with the DWP to identify the hours of operation which best meet caller needs and provide best value for money for each service line. This includes extending delivery hours. We currently operate DWP services from 08:00-20:00 Mon-Fri, 09:00-16:00 Saturday. We can roster staff to meet extended opening hours using the processes in section 4: e.g. {Redacted}. We have found that having extended shits (e.g. 4 x 10 hours) are popular with staff as it allows for a four day week.

■ Service changes – Using our Quality Framework we will work with DWP Operational Excellence Directorate to identify and roll out service change (see section 6 below). This includes change identified by our Continuous Improvement processes and changes as the result of DWP policy change. {Redacted}. 2. **Capacity Planning**

Our Forecasting and Scheduling Unit will be responsible for capacity planning throughout the life of the contract. We will use {Redacted} Workforce Management (WFM) tool for capacity planning and scheduling – this is an industry leading tool and is integrated with our {Redacted} telephony service, allowing real time data to be used to drive intra-hour staffing level changes, as well as supporting long term forecasting, staff scheduling and rostering. The capacity planning processes include:

■ 12 month seasonality forecast – We will produce a rolling 12 month forecast based on historic actuals (and DWP's initial forecast at Go Live). This will allow us to identify seasonal patterns/expectations far in advance of them occurring.

■ Six month HR plan – We will schedule staff rosters on a rolling six monthly basis using actuals and forecast volumes. This will allow us to identify any skills or recruitment gaps. We will then increase or reduce recruitment, and increase cross training of staff, to meet the forecast staffing levels. The forecast will take into account any protected shift patterns of TUPE staff.

■ 13 week look ahead – Every 13 weeks we will formally review the forecast with DWP, for example to identify any policy or media activity which would change the expected volumes. We will also review any activity which could affect Average Handling Time.

■ Operational monthly reviews – The {Redacted}will work with the DWP team to review day to day volume fluctuations – this includes agreeing the 28 day locked down forecast or responding to changes in the forecast as the result of a valid reason using the planned change processes.

■ Day to day capacity planning – The {Redacted}will have a daily briefing with the Forecasting and Scheduling Team to review weekly and daily performance against SLAs. They will update the daily plan to meet short term peaks and troughs in volume e.g. calling in or re-shifting the {Redacted} (see section 5) or reducing or increasing the planned amount of off the phone activity for the day.
■ Live planning – {Redacted}.

3. **Capacity Management**

In addition to the Agent management processes described below we manage the capacity of four other areas:
■ Premises – We will use our existing DWP approved call centre premises at Wath-upon-Dearne. Package A lines will be primarily delivered from the first floor (currently vacant) which has capacity for 245 seats. {Redacted}. ■ IT – We will install sufficient IT infrastructure (Desktops, Phones, DWP Equipment) to operate the Package A peak volumes +20%. If volumes are forecast to drop we will discuss with DWP the redeployment of DWP equipment, thus extending the return on investment of those assets
■ Telephony – we are using a cloud based Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) telephony solution from {Redacted}, which includes the Call Recording System. We have a licence model for Agent numbers – our telephony solution is virtually unlimited and can be extended or reduced readily by paying/not charged for more or less lines.
■ Training – Our {Redacted} will manage an on-going training plan linked to the Six Month HR Plan. Her team includes {Redacted} who train Agents, floor walk and manage continuous improvement. We will run Train the Trainer programmes on an on-going basis to ensure there are a sufficient number of qualified trainers to train and monitor Package A staff. We will have four large training rooms as well as five breakout areas for 1-2-1 coaching and remedial training.

4. **Manpower Planning Processes to Deliver Planned or Unplanned Changes**

During the planning phase described above we analyse the forecast call volumes, AHT and service level (PCA) to calculate the amount of work to be performed at 15 minute intervals. To identify the number of staff required we take into account holiday, breaks and expected sickness levels. We have then assumed {Redacted} of the time that an Agent is available for work they will be on the phone or in after-call work. This allows {Redacted} for training, 1-2-1s, performance reviews, down time and waiting between calls. This productivity rate provides the right balance between cost effectiveness and a quality service. It also ensures that staff do not 'burn out' hence reducing the quality of calls and increasing attrition.
{Redacted}. Throughout delivery these plans will be constantly reviewed to identify any variance, aiming to identify and plan for change as quickly as possible and minimise unplanned change. For example our Forecasting and Scheduling team complete a monthly review of the historic accuracy of the forecasts, the actual performance achieved (including actual AHT) and actual seasonal fluctuations to identify any requirement to update the forecast. Tools to address planned increases include: {redacted}
Our constant review processes mean the majority of change will be managed during the planned increase/decrease process. Unplanned change is therefore mostly at the intra-day level. The {Redacted}, supported by a {Redacted}, will be responsible for adjusting staffing levels in real time to meet unplanned increases and decreases. The telephony system will provide real time alerts based on actual volumes allowing us to move Agents within each group of lines, and alert Team Managers of the best time for off the phone activity, coaching sessions and teams meetings. To address unplanned increases we can:
Minimise shrinkage and reduce off the phone activity – at hourly and daily level e.g. reschedule breaks, reschedule call monitoring sessions or 1-2-1, or move Agents from back office tasks to inbound lines.

These processes will allow us to meet our service levels up to 110% of call volumes forecast within the day. Should volumes rise significantly above 110% of forecast we can also use measures which reduce callers' wait time e.g. using IVR messaging to divert calls or using automated messaging to allow callers to request a call-back.
To manage unplanned decreases we: {redacted}

5. **Your Manpower Planning Processes for Higher Staff Absence and Attrition**

We monitor absence and attrition rates on a daily and weekly basis to consistently drive down absence rates. This has been proven on our {Redacted} which is below industry average. Our manpower planning processes depends on how long levels are higher than anticipated: {Redacted}.
To address any increase in the long term: ■ Increase recruitment levels - we have a rolling recruitment process allowing to increase levels quickly; ■ Update our staff engagement strategy to identify and address any reasons for attrition; ■ Use exit interviews, to identify and rectify any negative trends. For example, in our Wath-on-Dearne site we increased the entry point salary to align with local rates, which was successful in retaining staff; ■ We implement a quarterly bonus schemes for adherence and attendance; ■ Staff with 100% attendance in a year qualify for a higher pay increase; ■ We have a culture of promotion and development within; for example in the last year 80% of promotions on the Wath-Upon Dearne contact centre site were from existing staff.
Lead times for securing additional resources: We expect speed to competence to be less than 4 weeks (for all the lines) – until this we have a more intensive call monitoring regime and higher levels of coaching. The table below shows the lead times for securing additional staff. {redacted}.

6. **Delivery of a Quality Service**

G4S will operate a Quality Framework which is aligned to the overall DWP quality framework. We were the first commercial organisation to adopt this outside of DWP. The Quality Framework will cover all aspects of the DWP Package A quality delivery, including quality standards, assurance and improvement. The key principles of our approach are: ■ Risk Based; ■ Uniting; ■ Preventative; ■ Three lines of assurance; ■ Holistic; ■ Objective and impartial; ■ Tailored. It follows the 7C's of a good quality service: ■ Correct; ■ Complete; ■ Consistent; ■ Courteous; ■ Comprehensive; ■ Capable; ■ Compliant.
Quality will be the responsibility of everyone and everyone will be trained in quality. The {Redacted} will have overall responsibility for quality. Day to day quality activities will be undertaken by the {Redacted} and a team of {Redacted}.
Our Quality Framework identifies the activity we need to complete with every Agent to monitor, review and continuously improve quality. This ensures contractual standards such as four call monitoring sessions for each Agent a month on Pension Credit Claims line as well as the activity required by the Quality Framework such as weekly coaching sessions. To ensure we can deliver the programme when volumes increase we have processes for both planned and unplanned increases. Maintaining quality during planned increases:
■ We use a maximum ratio of one {Redacted} – this ratio provides {Redacted} with sufficient capacity to provide intensive support to new Agents who are in the Development Centre (prior to completing probation). We will recruit or promote additional TMs to support with quality activity as volumes increase.
■ {Redacted} - We will have sufficient LDOs to support new Agents or Agents who are underperforming. For example they oversee our four week Quality Improvement process which supports any Agent who is underperforming by identifying the reason for poor quality and putting in place a plan to address within four weeks. We have a team of six {Redacted} – this includes officers dedicated to Package A and additional officers who will be available to

support short term increases in volume. Should volumes increase in the long term we will recruit additional {Redacted}.

■ Constant analysis of productivity levels – we have planned periods of higher productivity which are sustainable for a limited period of time. Requiring Agents to work consistently at {Redacted} increases attrition and reduces quality (particular the accuracy of data capture). Our {Redacted} constantly monitor productivity to ensure we have sufficient capacity not to require Agents to operate at over {Redacted} productivity. This allows us to schedule sufficient Agents to ensure productivity levels allow for consistent high quality.

■ Automatic scheduling of quality activity to ensure maximum efficiency – quality activity is schedule for all Agents to take account of contractual and G4S specified quality requirements including the call monitoring requirements of each line. Our scheduling system automatically identifies the most efficient time to schedule this activity without breaking our minimum requirements, e.g. it will be schedule for low volume period for example on Fridays.

Maintaining quality during unplanned increases:

■ Automatically ensuring adherence to quality standards – our system will enforce the completion of minimum quality activity within the defined period ensuring all Agents have the minimum coaching and support even during unplanned volume increases. Written feedback will be provided from all {Redacted} and entered on the scorecard. Agents will be able to review their scores outside of peak times.

■ Real time coaching – if we have unplanned spikes in volumes we can provide real time coaching (for example for new Agents). During this coaching the {Redacted} will provide support to Agents by listening live to the call and providing advice that only the Agent can hear. This also allows us to manage high volumes as the result of policy change – for example on our {Redacted} Contract we had a policy issue requiring immediate changes to our scripts. We worked with the client to immediately identify the appropriate response. Agents were briefed by an {Redacted} using a quick training session. {Redacted} used real time coaching to ensure we gave accurate information despite significantly increased volumes.

■ Extended hours – the first floor will be dedicated to DWP Package A. We can extend hours of delivery with minimal notice to allow us to complete quality work outside of working hours – for example 1-2-1s and training.

Flexibility to meet change to service requirement

{Redacted} is responsible for ensuring we maintain quality during changes to our services. She will work with DWP to identify and roll out change as the result of changes in policy, call types/flows or digital evolution using the following process:

Step 1 – Define targets: Updated quality targets will be identified and agreed. These will be a combination of the SLA/KPIs, First Call Resolution measurement and our own internal quality targets.

Step 2 – Measure: Our IT and telephony systems will generate real-time information on the Agents' activities – e.g. calls handled, AHT, wrap time, rest time, whilst quality scores will be input into the quality database from Team Manager scorecards. We will undertake internal audits and benchmarking to help ascertain the quality of service. We have staff trained to undertake customer satisfaction surveys as part of our {Redacted} service.

Step 3 – Assess: We will use the above to generate statistics on our performance. This will cover performance at an hourly, daily, weekly and monthly level. The Operations Manager will ensure we are delivering against the service levels. The quality team will ensure that we meet quality targets. This will involve an analysis and review of all call monitoring and consideration of any trend and training needs. This will be reviewed at a monthly quality forum held jointly with the DWP where corrective action and training needs identified.

Step 4 – Review and Improve: We operate a Continuous Service Improvement (CSI) process. Agents will be encouraged to provide ideas for improvement, with a bonus available for

implemented ideas. The CSI process will review operational activities and identify areas for improvement. We measure the impact – monitoring the benefits, lessons learned and best practice and evaluate delivery e.g. collection of MI, internal audits, surveys, complaints, G4S and DWP audit.