

## Our people

Following the introduction of a new organisational structure in 2007–08, this year has been focused on delivery – supporting staff to maintain performance levels under pressure of high demand, while continuing the evolution of our performance management processes.

As documented throughout this report, our people have responded to the exceptional market conditions, while focusing on targets and rates and maintaining service levels across all channels. Elsewhere, we acknowledge the pivotal role played by our partners in enabling us to maintain high levels of customer service. But the contribution of our own staff also deserves recognition: they responded quickly and effectively to the constant changes of the second half of the year, meaning that every aspect of our business was able to cope with the challenges we faced. Underpinning all of this was the sense of team spirit within NS&I.

We have reviewed the results of our annual employee Pulse Survey in detail and have chosen to highlight here three areas where there has been a significant change against last year's scores.

This year, 58% of our staff stated that they believe they have the opportunity for personal development and growth (against 70% last year). In response to this, we are continuing to work with all staff to focus on their ongoing personal development.

We are continuing to develop our non-pay-based recognition framework in response to a decrease in the number of staff stating that they are satisfied with the recognition they receive for doing a good job (60% this year, 69% last year).

Engagement with our overall business goals has continued to be exceptionally high – particularly when compared with financial services industry benchmarks. We are particularly pleased that the number of staff stating that they understand how their work contributes to the success of their team has risen significantly (93% this year, 84% last year). Other key indicators from the Pulse Survey are shown opposite.

While clearly this reflects well on each individual, it also serves to underline the impact of our organisational restructuring. This clarified roles and responsibilities, enhancing internal accountability and knowledge-sharing. The benefits of that became clear during the 'flight to safety' as teams were confident in making decisions and taking action quickly. The

same values are clear in the continued progress against the key projects which make up the **NS&I adding value** strategy.

### Learning and development

To embed those values further in the organisation, we spent time defining the skills and behaviours that would help take the business forward. We refined our learning and development programme to focus on the leadership qualities required in the future and on embedding our brand behaviours – pace and confidence, delivered with a human touch – in the leadership team. We are working with all of our staff to enable them to better identify and work towards learning goals that reflect our overall business needs. However, in 2008–09 we did not make the progress we had planned because of the demands of the 'flight to safety'.

Our approach is deliberately broad, using the full spectrum of learning and development opportunities. For example, we have made it possible for employees to choose volunteering activities as part of their personal development plan as this is often an excellent route to build self-confidence, encourage decision-making and develop team-working skills.

### Communication and teamwork

Throughout the period of high demand which followed the wider financial uncertainty last autumn, we remained committed to effective staff communications. This was vital to ensure that everyone in the organisation was kept aware of how the business was performing and how external events were affecting us. Staff could then use this knowledge effectively in their own roles.

Clearly, management has an integral part to play in this and we were delighted that our Pulse Survey recorded some 77% of staff agreeing strongly that they have confidence in senior managers. This compares very well to industry benchmarks, and is an indicator of how effective communication has been during the last, often challenging, year.

### Supporting our wider team

As detailed elsewhere in this report, the staff of Siemens who work with us have made – and continue to make – an

enormous contribution to our success. During the last year, we have examined ways to strengthen our partnership at the people level. As a result of this, we are developing plans to improve communication between NS&I and Siemens staff,

in particular focusing on ensuring that the Siemens team are kept up to date with progress towards our **NS&I adding value** strategy.

## Pulse Survey

This year's Pulse Survey results, under key survey headings, were as follows. Last year's scores are included in brackets for comparison.

### My job

- 76% of respondents feel able to achieve a healthy work–life balance (82%)
- 90% understand how their work contributes to the success of the organisation (88%)
- 93% understand how their work contributes to the success of their team (84%)
- 76% feel their job makes good use of their skills and abilities (79%)

### Communication and teamwork

- 87% of respondents are aware of the organisation's long-term goals (90%)
- 70% feel it is safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done at NS&I (74%)
- 72% feel that their immediate line manager communicates effectively with them (73%)

### Reward, recognition and participation

- 60% of respondents are satisfied with the recognition they receive for doing a good job (69%)
- 57% are satisfied with their total benefits package (59%)

### Career development

- 70% of respondents feel they are given a real opportunity to improve their skills in the organisation (77%)
- 58% believe they have the opportunity for personal development and growth (70%)

### Customers

- 92% of respondents believe that NS&I is committed to serving its customers well (92%)
- 91% believe the company is committed to customer satisfaction (90%)

### Senior management

- 77% of respondents have confidence in NS&I's senior management (75%)
- 76% believe that senior managers are sufficiently visible within the organisation (69%)
- 76% feel that senior management provides effective leadership (69%)

### Equality

- 83% of respondents believe they are treated with fairness and respect in the organisation (91%)
- 85% feel that NS&I respects individual differences (eg cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas) (89%)

### Brand values

- 98% of respondents understand NS&I's brand values (92%)

### Overall perceptions

- 98% of respondents say they are happy to go the extra mile at work when required (97%)
- 89% would be happy to recommend NS&I's products and services (91%)
- 83% would recommend NS&I as a good place to work (88%)

## Pulse Survey

The table above shows some of the key results from our latest Pulse Survey (2008). It is clear that long-term confidence in the organisation and its management remains high and overall job satisfaction is good. Responses to questions testing levels of employee engagement are particularly high.

This year the Pulse Survey was conducted online for the first time. Previously the survey has been by phone. This led to a drop in response rates (92% to 80%) but this remains a high figure compared to other organisations in both government and financial services.