

Message

From: John Bartlett [GRO]
Sent: 27/06/2024 09:56:21
To: Nigel Railton [GRO], Amanda Burton [GRO]
CC: Sarah I Gray [GRO], Christian Spelzini [GRO]
Subject: Requested Insight to Speak Up Reporting Relating to NBIT

Good morning Nigel, Amanda

Nigel, when Sarah and I met with you to brief you on A&CI's work, we discussed Project Willow 2 and the Speak Up reporting we have periodically received over the last year that gave us a qualified insight into the NBIT programme. You asked for a brief on the topics being reported to us. Claire Hamilton, the Speak Up team Manager has helpfully prepared the below which I hope is a useful summary.

WILLOW2

This is a two-strand substantive investigation relating to concerns raised by multiple Speak Up Reporters concerning NBIT. Pinsent Mason and Grant Thornton have been commissioned by POL to investigate these two allegations:

Allegation One:

- that certain POL staff were aware of problems with the NBIT system and that progress reports to senior stakeholders including Nick and GE may not have been reliable.
- In April 2024, further information received in relation to the upward passing of information and decision making at senior level in respect to known errors in the NBIT system.

It is to be determined if high severity defect information that was channelled upwards in an email to SteerCo prior to roll out may have been deliberately misleading.

Allegation Two:

- that two senior engineers "pressured" two IT security/assurance personnel to disable or waive infosec checks in NBIT's specifications to save time in the project's roll-out. (Comment: GT are focusing on evidencing/testing this and understanding the specific impact if it did occur.)

General concerns relating to NBIT team/activity raised via Speak Up

The following are grouped themes of various information passed by a variety of Reporters to Speak Up over the last year that discuss NBIT:

Behaviours

- Behaviours and activities were driven by timescales linked to bonuses rather than delivery of quality and reliability i.e. perverse incentives (comment: this is now several months old so unsure if this is still occurring but it is corroborated in the Willow2 investigation).
- Mirroring very senior staff behaviour [GRO], there was poor or lack of effective communication between key staff around governance of the programme.
- Active discouragement by senior NBIT staff relating to use of Speak Up channels (comment: one allegation was made relating to detriment resulting from Speaking Up (an offence under PIDA if proved) – this was investigated and no grounds found to support the concern).

Accenture

Collective confidential reports received raising concerns/issues about Accenture and conflicts of direct awarding by CB, with CB being ex-Accenture, without anyone looking at the bigger mapping picture of key positions/activity held/performed by Accenture:

Business Requirements Head,
Testing Head,
Coding being done,

Data Governance,
Technology manager

In particular the position of the Programme Manager is concerning to Reporters. They sit sitting over the top and is also the Accenture's Account Manager for POL and so can collect info pertinent to the bidding process – they can see what the plans are. Concerns are raised that as Accenture increases their levels of staffing around the programme POL becomes increasingly dependent upon them and loses control.

- Accenture using the power of 'osmosis' to get control of the SPM programme
- Accenture managing governance – risk of them marking their own homework.
- Accenture timesheets signed off by Accenture person, no segregation of duties
- Concerns that a diagnostic report was conducted by Accenture and that Accenture has 'worked own homework'.
- Coforge, who should be equal consultant partners, could cry foul due to direct awards to Accenture.

Reliance on third parties generally

- Need to be setting the conditions for POL to be ready to run the system once rolled out which includes POL staff gaining relevant skills, understanding and knowledge during the design and build programme. Concerns are being raised that POL has become reliant on third parties and so POL staff are not going to be able to effectively take over during the end transition.
- The matter of cost of third parties is also being raised as a significant concern – this is being compared to the NHS being reliant on Locum Staff, therefore not having the monies to continue as BAU.

Hope this assists.

Amanda – I have copied you as the Speak Up Champion.

JB

John Bartlett (He/Him)

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I work flexibly – so whilst it suits me to email outside normal working hours, I do not expect a response outside your own.