

Russell
McLeagh

Our culture transformation

Two years on from the Dame Margaret
Bazley Report

July 2020



Our goal

To create meaningful, sustainable culture change. To have an open and collaborative culture that is truly inclusive, where everyone is heard and feels valued. A culture where all our people can thrive.



“Our vision and commitment is to create an environment where everyone can thrive. Our culture transformation programme has been about ensuring every aspect of our firm and the way we work is aligned with that vision. We want all our people to say they are proud to work at Russell McVeagh and believe this is the best place to achieve their career goals.”

JO AVENELL, CEO

“We remain committed to implementing all of Dame Margaret’s recommendations, and have achieved a huge amount in a relatively short period of time. Implementing her recommendations and achieving culture change is not a quick process or an easy one. Culture change is and will continue to be ongoing, and requires our continued commitment and determination. We have learnt many lessons, and we will continue to do so.”

MALCOLM CROTTY, BOARD CHAIR



Our key areas of focus

From the 48 recommendations

➔ Transformational culture change

➔ Clear expectations, policies and processes

➔ A culture of respect

➔ Growing great leaders

➔ An inclusive, collaborative, speak up culture

➔ Effective governance

➔ A fair and consistent way of managing and recognising hours of work

➔ Supporting change in the profession

Our journey in brief

Board and partners accepted all of Dame Margaret's recommendations and committed to culture transformation

Engaged Benestar as an independent counselling and EAP service

Independent Disclosure (Whistleblower) Service and other speak up channels established

Respect workshops to embed our culture of respect

People and Transformation Committee established

Developed a process for recognising hours of work

Regular staff engagement pulse surveys commence

Public update on our progress

Consultation on formal trial policy for recognising hours

July 2018

Culture transformation programme established

Unconscious bias training module rolled out

Values defined and launched

Leadership attributes defined

Firm strategy development

Two year reflection and progress review – staff consultation and engagement

Policies developed and communicated

Implemented governance changes

Diversity and Inclusion strategy drafted and committees formed

Rainbow Tick re-accreditation

Partner performance expectations reviewed to reflect values, leadership attributes and strategy

CEO appointed

Highlights



Policies and processes

Established the policies, processes and speak up channels to support our culture transformation



Values

Collaboratively defined our values to articulate who we are and what we stand for



Leadership

Defined leadership attributes, revised partner performance expectations and invested in leaders



Managing hours, supporting wellbeing

Established processes and policy to manage and recognise hours of work and support overall wellbeing



Diversity and Inclusion

Developed a D&I programme with support from external partners. Delivered through five workstreams led by staff



Strategy

Put culture at the heart of our business strategy

Engaging our people

Our people have played a huge role in our transformation. Many of our initiatives have been led by staff and we have focused on consulting and engaging with our people along the way.



Increased communication

We have held quarterly meetings with all staff as well as regular updates via email and video.



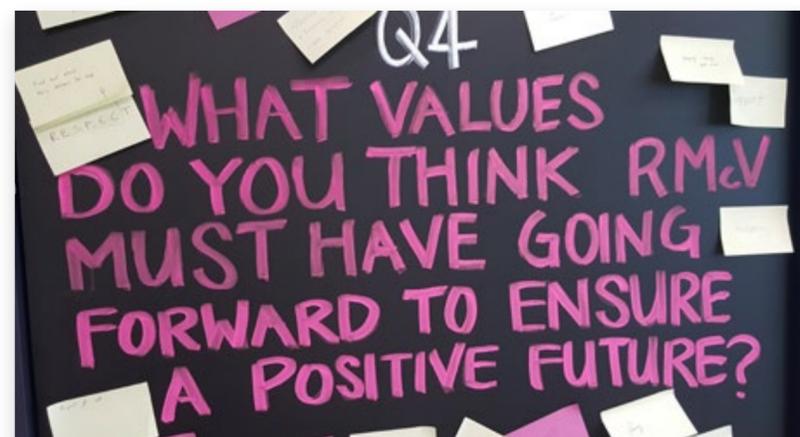
People Action Groups

Many of our policies and processes were designed by cross-functional groups of staff with support from subject matter experts.



People & Transformation Committee

Nominated by their peers, the PTC is a group of staff from across the firm who have played a key role in our transformation.



Consultation and Feedback

We have provided a range of opportunities for staff to provide feedback – these include pulse surveys, policy “open homes” and workshops.



Two year progress review

We wanted to give all staff the opportunity to have input into our review of progress two years on. This included a series of workshops attended by almost all staff, follow up team discussions and a feedback channel.

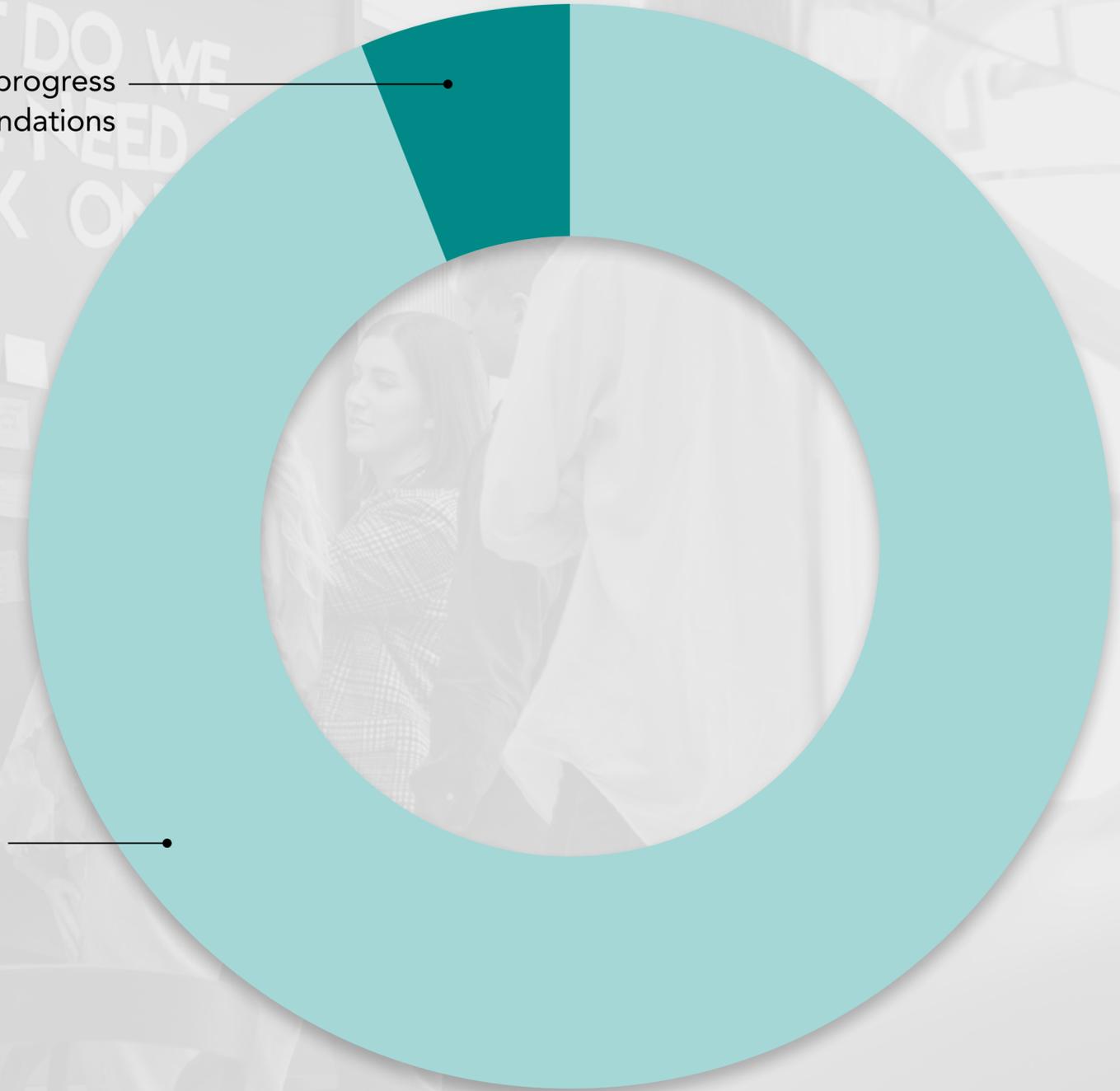
Summary of recommendations

“We have undertaken a significant programme of work and addressed the majority of Dame Margaret’s recommendations. The steps we have taken will provide a strong foundation for our ongoing culture transformation. We will continue to adapt and evolve as circumstances change.”

JO AVENELL, CEO

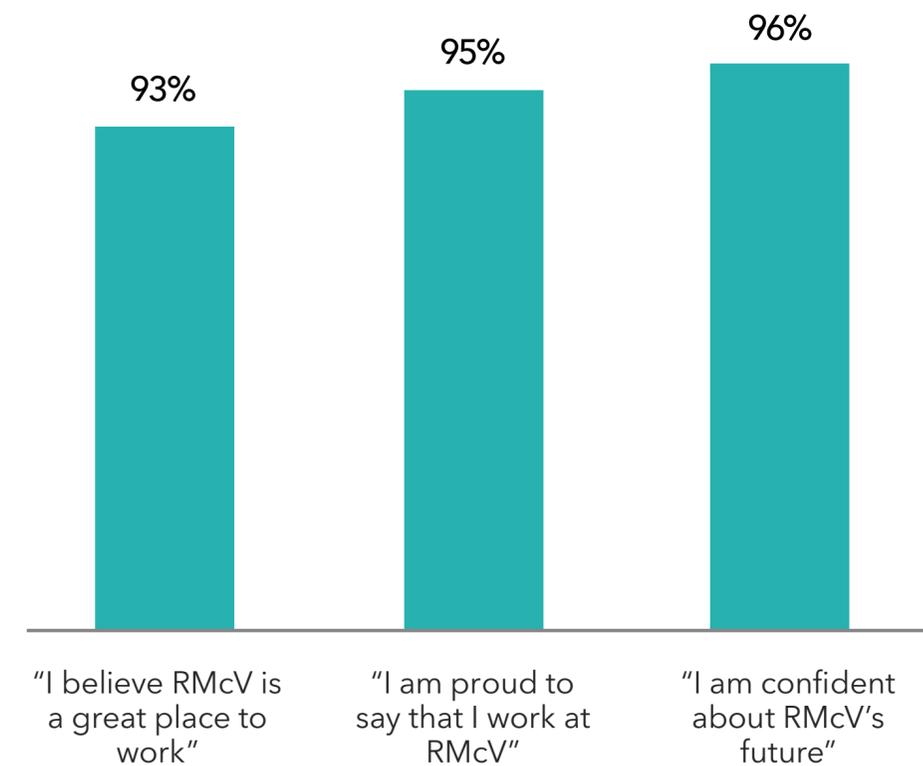
In progress recommendations

90% + recommendations addressed



What our people are saying

Firm-wide staff survey results, May 2020



What's working well?

"I really like the culture in general and the lack of hierarchy."

"Everyone feels they have value within their team and the firm. When you feel respect and give respect, it really drives you to do your part for the firm."

"There's a real sense that the firm is prioritising the health and wellbeing of its staff and that the firm is living and breathing it."

"I love the adaptability of the firm during this time and the friendly and connected culture even through remote working."

"I feel supported and valued at the firm. I appreciate the consultation on policies, the transparency on strategies, and the time and resource the firm is putting into recognising the issues in Dame Margaret's report, and responding. I feel as though the firm has made real progress on cultural issues, and this hasn't come at the expense of really exciting work. The firm has taken a lot more responsibility for the behaviour of individuals within it, and this has allowed for material, firm-wide change."

"I love how we are a team, working together, nobody gets left behind."

"Wellington Office has a great working environment. I feel like every person is valued within their role and there is no sense of feeling 'lesser than' as a non-legal member of staff."

"I think the firm has adapted very quickly to the current situation and shown how resilient and flexible we can be."

What should we focus on going forward?

"Ingrain our values even deeper into everyday firm life. More firm-wide updates – they are great and foster that feeling of community."

"Monitoring policies and making sure they're implemented consistently across the firm."

"Implement the reward and recognition programme."

"Keep up flexible working post COVID-19."

"Doing more to change the culture of the profession."

"We need to show that giving feedback in a constructive way will bring positive outcomes. More and more examples of this will encourage people to give more feedback."

What we've learned

Take ownership and responsibility

Embed culture in business strategy and transformation

Prioritise – you can do anything but not everything at once

Have courage to make brave decisions

Create an inclusive environment where it is safe and encouraged to speak out

Leaders must be on board to role model and drive change

Be transparent and bring people with you on the journey

Culture change takes time – Dame Margaret recognises this is a 10- year journey

Communicate, take feedback and listen

What's next?

What's next? Real culture change takes time. We know that we have more to do and that culture change is never really finished.

Our current areas of focus include:

Continuing to embed our speak up, listen up culture

Implementing our D&I strategy

Leadership development at all levels to build on partners' leadership training programme

Leveraging flexible ways of working

Defining our vision for the next phase of our culture transformation

Supporting progress within the wider profession



WHAT POSITIVE CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN IN THE LAST 2 YEARS?

WHAT DO WE STILL NEED TO WORK ON?



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