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From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service
Sir Andrew Turnbull KCB CVO

25 April 2003

Dear Colleague,

IMPROVING LEADERSHIP IN THE SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE

To transform public services, we need excellent leadership in the Civil Service: it is crucial to meeting current demands and crucial for delivering the kind of Civil Service I have said should be our aim in 2005 (see my letter of 5 September 2002 to all civil servants <http://intranet/miscellaneous/siraturbull/Template.htm>). This must involve all members of the Senior Civil Service.

This is the first of a series of messages from me to all SCS members, designed to make sure we are all up to date with developments.

If we are to deliver the very challenging results that the Government and public expect of us, we urgently need to improve our leadership capacity and to develop the competence and skills that will enable us to do this well. In doing so, we must tap into the talent that is already there, but which we are not using to maximum effect.

The Civil Service Management Board has asked a small group of Permanent Secretaries and other leaders from within the Service and from outside to consider how we move quickly to achieve this goal.

I have asked the group to:

- i. establish a clear picture of **what successful leadership looks like** for us in the Service and the processes we should use to recruit, identify and develop the talent we need; and develop measures so that we can track whether we are making progress;

/ii. examine the

- ii. examine the investment we are making in the **development of leaders** - now and for the future. We need to ensure that we invest in people's development earlier than we do at present, that people get the right experience through their career management, and that we give people responsibility when they are ready for it, not just when the right space emerges. We also need to ensure that we are getting the balance right between leadership development provided by departments and that provided by the centre;
- iii. look at how we apply the SCS **performance management** system to ensure that we use it to support a high performance culture where we expect everyone to work continuously at improving their performance and developing themselves, that we confront issues we have evaded in the past and that we are frank about people's future prospects; and
- iv. challenge our assumptions about a lifelong **career in the Service** and the incentives that support those assumptions and to examine our expectations about career paths in the SCS, including length of tenure in post, how we can use people's experience and skills in less conventional postings, and how we can encourage people to move in and out of the Service more readily than in the past.

I have asked the group to report to CSMB in July. In the meantime, we will keep you in touch with progress and their emerging proposals. It is important, in developing its proposals, that the group can take account of the views of individual SCS members as well as the unions. If you would like to contribute views on any aspect of the agenda, please email: improvingleadership@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely
Andrew Turnbull

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From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service
Sir Andrew Turnbull KCB CVO

04 July 2003

Dear Colleague,

IMPROVING LEADERSHIP IN THE SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE

In my letter of 25 April, I described the work that is going on to improve our leadership capacity and to develop the competence and skills that will enable us to deliver the challenging results that the Government and public expect of us. I explained that a Civil Service Management Board Sub-Group would be taking forward work to:

- i. establish a clear picture of what successful leadership looks like;
- ii. examine our investment in the development of leaders;
- iii. change our approach to performance management to support a high performance culture; and
- iv. challenge assumptions about a lifelong career in the Service and examine how we refresh talent at senior levels both by bringing in and bringing on talent.

I am very happy with the way the Sub-Group's work is progressing. They have illustrated how the leadership of the civil service should evolve in the attached picture (which can also be viewed at <http://intranet/phoenix/ecsl.htm>). This emphasises that we need to combine our traditional strengths, such as integrity and responsiveness to events, with newer approaches, such as personal leadership, customer orientation and a focus on outcomes.

You will see that the goal is to create inspirational, visible leaders taking personal responsibility for delivering results effectively and swiftly, working in teams that are more than the sum of their parts, and across traditional boundaries, focused on strategic outcomes, matching resources to business priorities, honest, courageous and realistic with staff and Ministers, constantly learning.

/Things are

Ref: AO2003/816

Things are already changing in this direction. But the Sub-Group are clear, as am I, that we need to go much further in order to achieve this goal. They have been examining how we can achieve:

- i. **More active organisational and personal performance management** – supported by greater clarity of expectations and regular honest feedback, more clarity on how we will reward people who perform and a simplified performance appraisal process;
- ii. **More active career management** – supported by postings that are time-limited, and more flexibility in design of job to reflect career/life stages. This will also mean supporting people to move out of the Service either to redirect their careers or to develop the skills and experience they need to move on to bigger roles; giving people the opportunity to update their skills; and bringing in skills and experience from outside where we need to;
- iii. **More investment in development** – with greater clarity on how we use Departmental, corporate and external development to support individual and Departmental needs; and more active investment in the development of high potential staff to bring on talent more quickly.

There will be a discussion of the programme by the full Civil Service Management Board on 23 July. I will write again when the work is further advanced, and I can set out the practical implications of the work.

I am grateful to those who responded to my previous letter. We have followed up many of the suggestions and offers. You can email me any further reactions to: improvingleadership@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk.

I am sending a copy of this letter, as before, to all members of the SCS through their Heads of Department.

Yours sincerely
Andrew Turnbull

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From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service
Sir Andrew Turnbull KCB CVO

22 September 2003

Dear Colleague,

IMPROVING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN THE SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE

Leadership capacity in the Service is critical to our success in delivering the challenging results that the Government and the public expect of us. We need a step change in the quality of leadership to ensure we deliver on PSA targets, improve the quality of our strategies and policies, and our success in delivering major programmes and projects.

--- The Civil Service Management Board met at the end of July to discuss the conclusions of our sub-group whose work I described in my earlier letters to you of 25 April and 4 July. Attached is a paper which sets out our decisions and invites your views on how we implement the actions proposed.

Evolving Civil Service Leadership

You will have seen before the diagram which is attached to the consultation paper (circulated with my 4 July letter) which illustrates the kind of leadership we should try to develop in the Civil Service. It sets out the traditional strengths that we need to keep hold of and reinforce (such as integrity, neutrality, competence in managing the business of government, our ability to respond quickly and effectively to events) but shows that there is also a greater demand for newer approaches (such as a focus on outcomes, risk management, creativity and innovation), where we need to develop.

We are looking for a combination of these skills and qualities in our leaders - visible leaders who inspire trust, who take personal responsibility for delivering results effectively and swiftly, who work together in teams that are more than the sum of their parts.

/To improve our leadership

To improve our leadership effectiveness, we need to improve our own performance and how we manage the performance of others, demonstrate our personal commitment to delivery, and show our determination continually to develop the new skills and experience demanded by the changing leadership requirement.

To help achieve this, CSMB agreed that we should:

- i offer more and better quality training and development opportunities to staff at or approaching SCS level;
- ii introduce a new high potential development scheme to equip the best for top posts;
- iii improve the approach to performance management, by simplifying the process, using better evidence, and adopt a more systematic approach to improving the lowest performers; //
- iv improve the reward and incentives package;
- v introduce time-limited postings; //
- vi develop more flexible employment patterns in the SCS by encouraging new career options; and //
- vii develop more active exit strategies. //

In taking forward these actions, CSMB would welcome your views on how we implement particular aspects of the decisions. The paper attached sets out a number of specific questions.

Making this work is a challenge for us all. It affects us both as individual performers and as managers. Some of the impact of previous initiatives has been lost because we have avoided difficult issues, particularly when it has involved people dealing with other people. I and my CSMB colleagues firmly believe that this programme of action will mean that we are supported to become better leaders, and that we are better at growing our own successful leaders for the future. In the process, we become part of a stronger Civil Service. //

Though further work needs to be done – not least in relation to the feedback received - I hope that the process of considering these issues will encourage you to think about your own personal position and perhaps use your October mid-year review meetings with your manager as an opportunity to discuss what it means for your development, what it means for where you want to take your career and what new opportunities it presents.

Responding to the consultation

Departments and agencies will be co-ordinating the consultation exercise and feeding back results to Cabinet Office (Corporate Development Group) by 4 November. Your Department/agency will let you know how they propose to go about this in your own organisation.

I look forward to seeing your responses. This is an opportunity for you to comment on proposals which will have a major impact on the Service, and on us all as individuals.

*Yours sincerely
Andrew Turnbull*

Andrew Turnbull