

# The Context for Civil Service Reform

Data and case studies to accompany  
the Civil Service Reform Plan

June 2012

# Introduction

This document, which accompanies the Civil Service Reform Plan, sets out the context for reforming the Civil Service.

*The Context for Civil Service Reform* includes a range of data and analysis on the Civil Service, together with case studies of best practice from across departments. It seeks to describe the challenging environment in which the Civil Service is operating, the current size, shape and perceptions of the Civil Service and a brief overview of previous reforms. Departmental case studies demonstrate the innovative work which is already taking place across the Civil Service.

For further details of the reform agenda, the Civil Service Reform Plan can be found at: [www.civilservice.gov.uk/reform](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/reform)

A challenging operating environment

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The size and shape of the UK Civil Service

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Perceptions of the Civil Service

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Background to reform

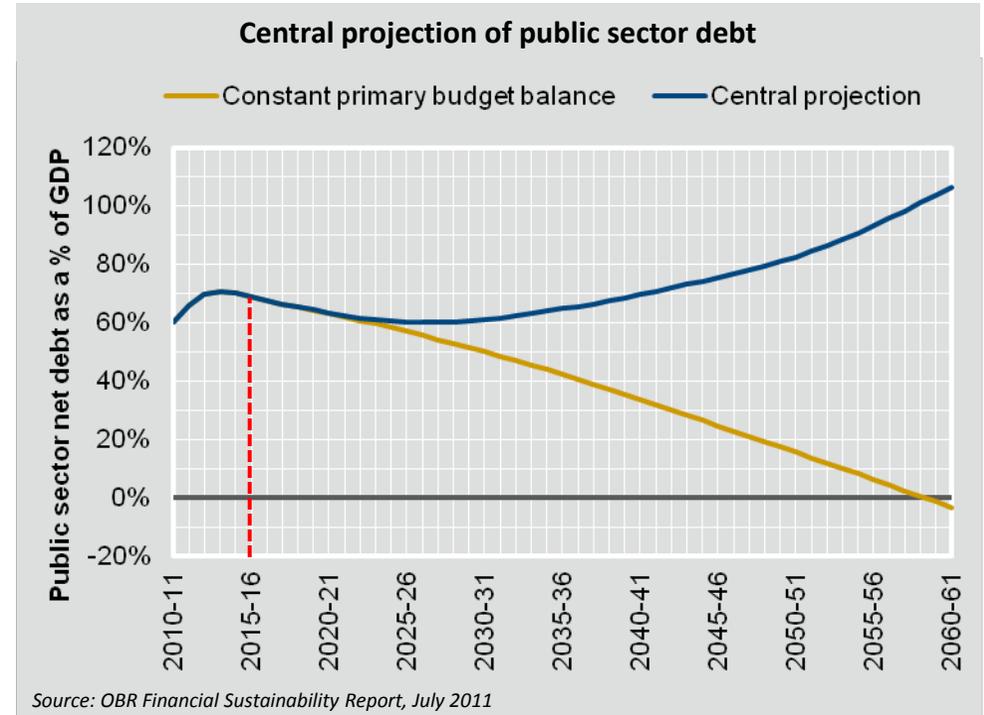
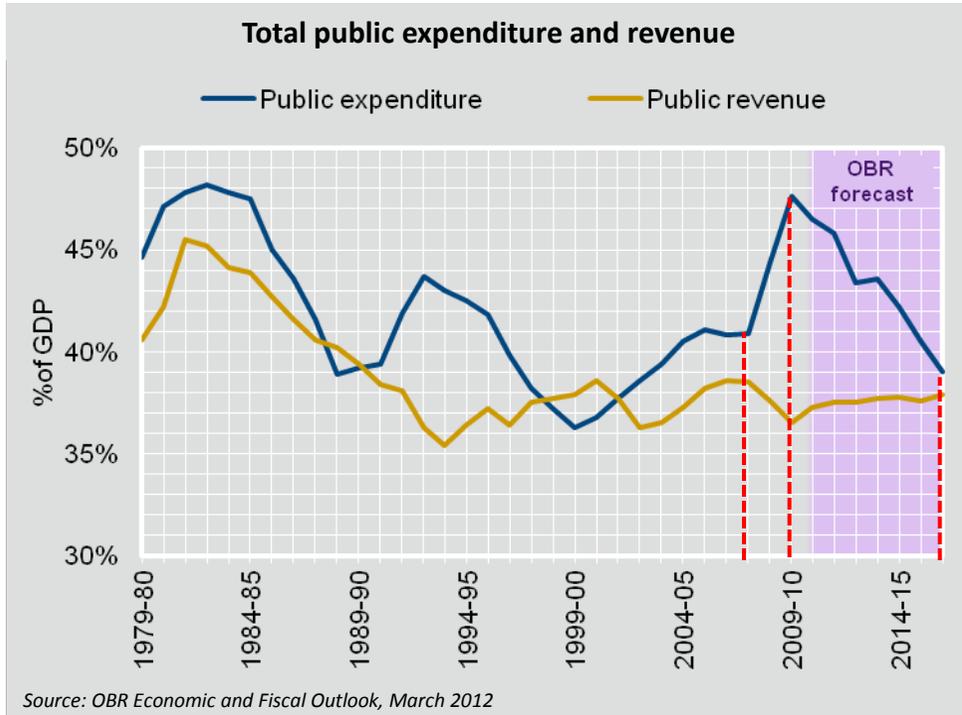
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Best practice examples

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# A challenging operating environment

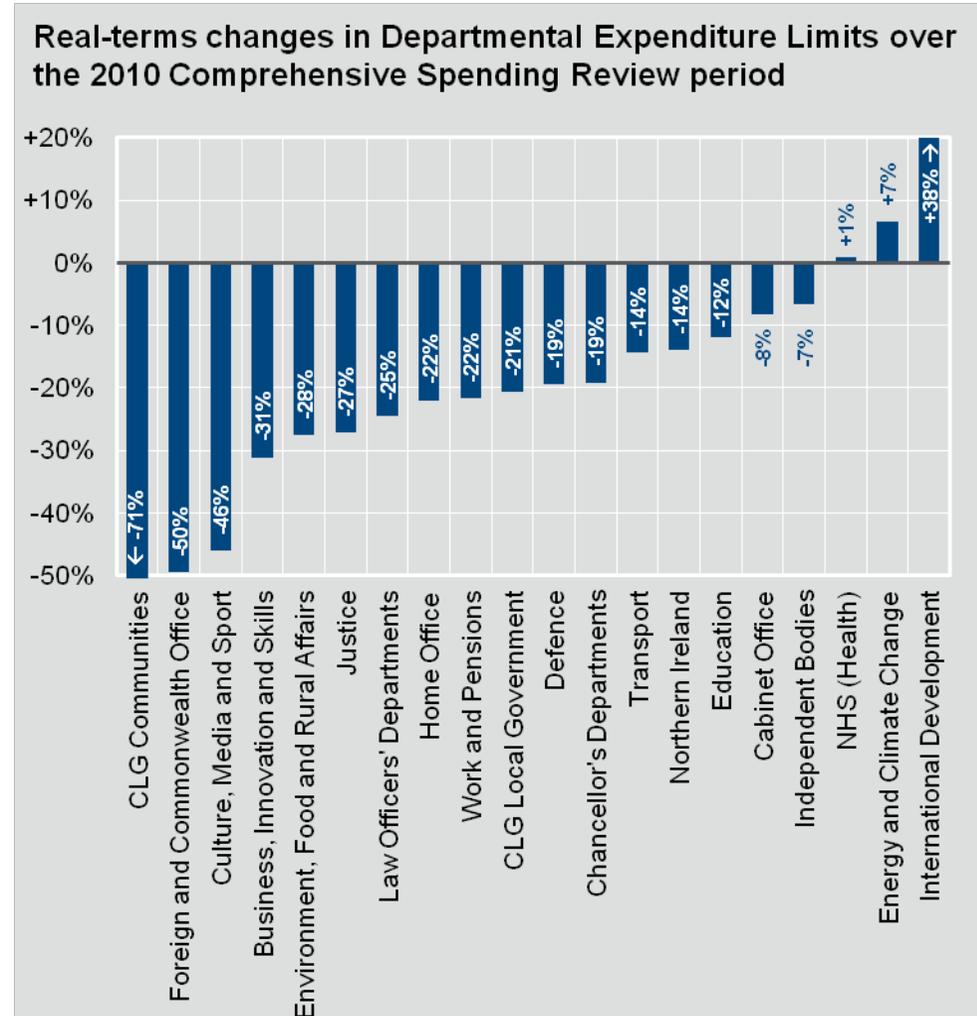
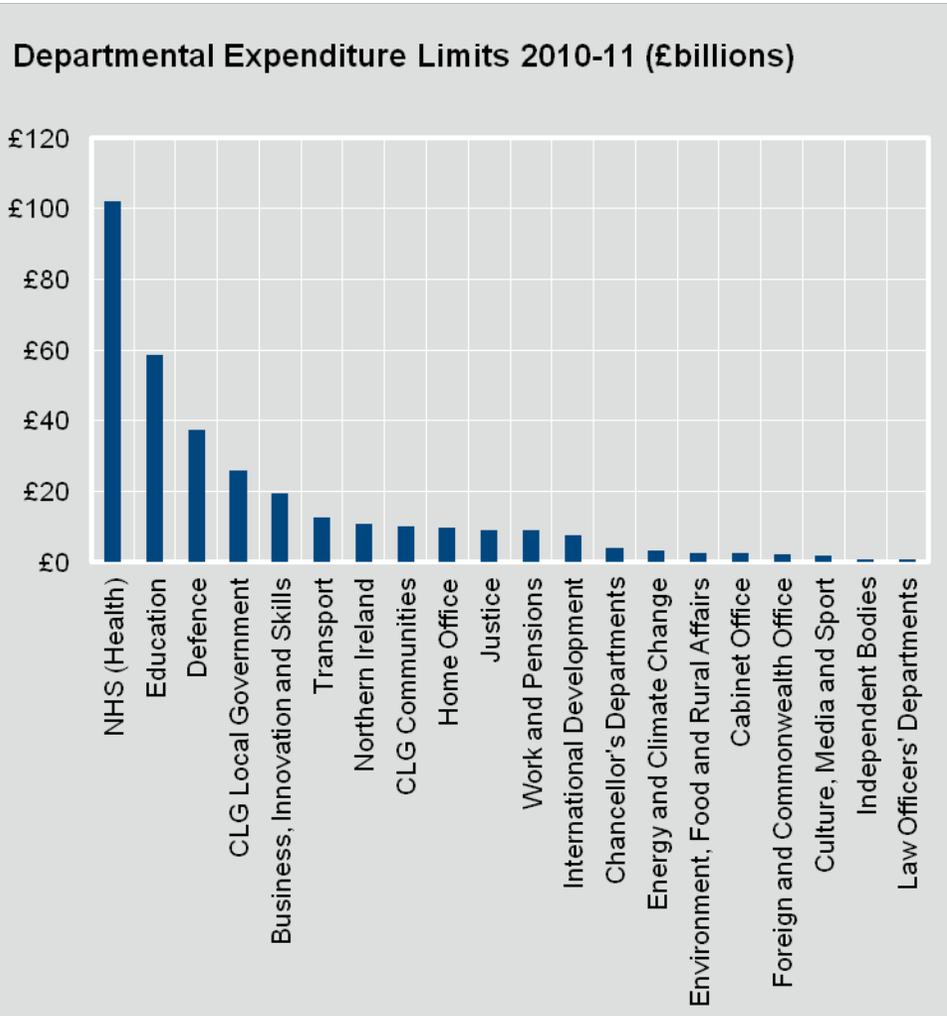
# The Office for Budget Responsibility has highlighted the long-term challenge for fiscal sustainability...



- Between 2007-08 and 2009-10, public expenditure rose by 7 percentage points, from 41% to 48% of GDP. Public revenue fell from 39% to 37% of GDP.
- The Office of Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) forecast that by 2016-17, public expenditure will fall to 39% of GDP and revenue will rise to 38% of GDP.

- The primary budget balance is public revenue minus public expenditure (excluding debt interest).
- In their July 2011 *Fiscal sustainability report*, the OBR projected a positive budget balance for 2015-16. If this were achieved and maintained, public debt would eventually be eliminated by 2059-60 (shown by the yellow line in the graph above).
- However, the OBR's central projection was for public debt to rise significantly by 2060-61, reaching 107% of GDP, with demographic changes being a significant driving factor.

...and the 2010 Spending Review set the challenge for departments to reduce their expenditure.

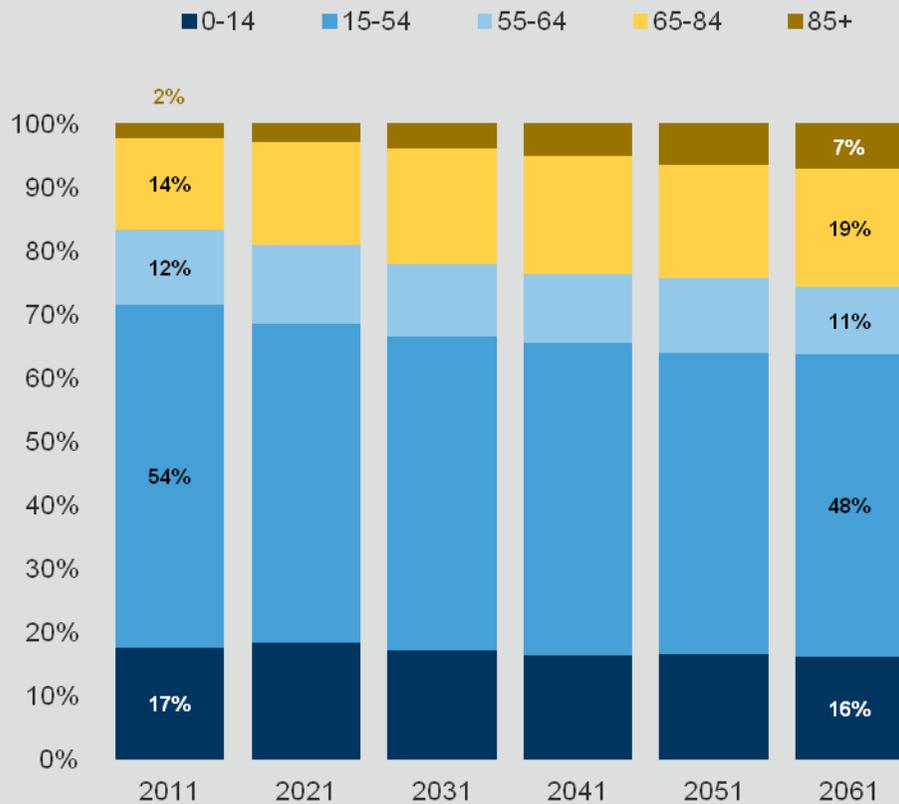


Source: HMT (2011) Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2011 (July release), London: HM Treasury

Note: DCMS DEL reductions include Olympics related expenditure. Excluding Olympics related expenditure, the DCMS DEL reduction over the 2010 Spending Review period is 24%.

# The Civil Service also needs to respond to complex social and environmental challenges, such as:

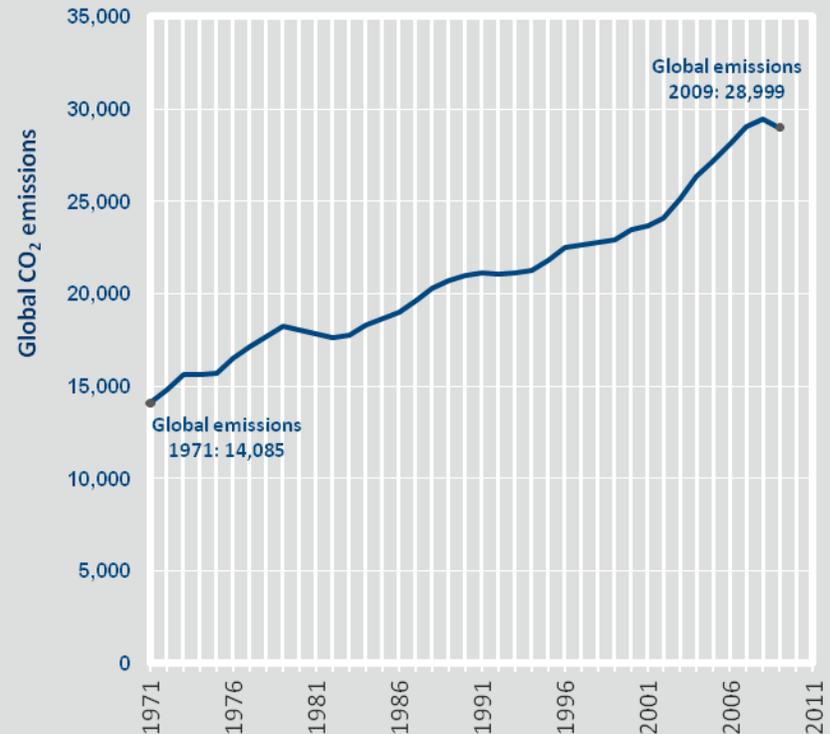
an ageing society...



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011 population projections

...and climate change.

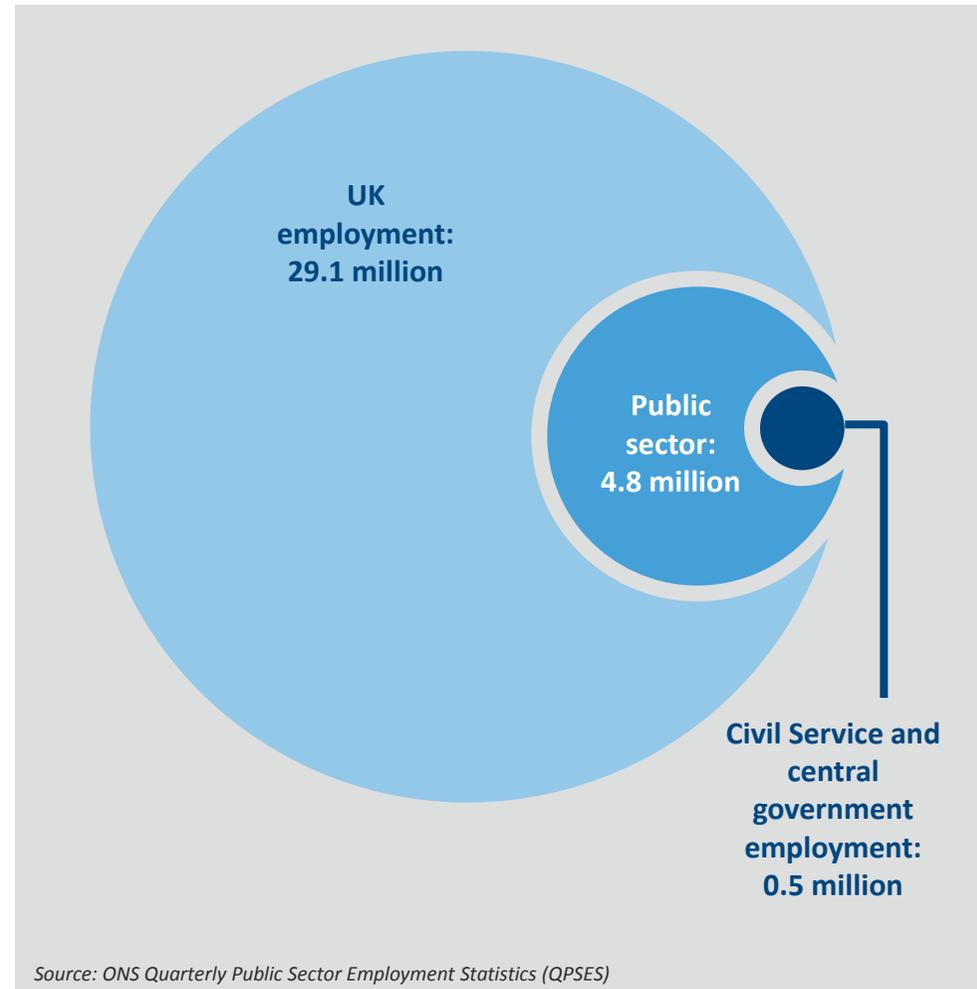
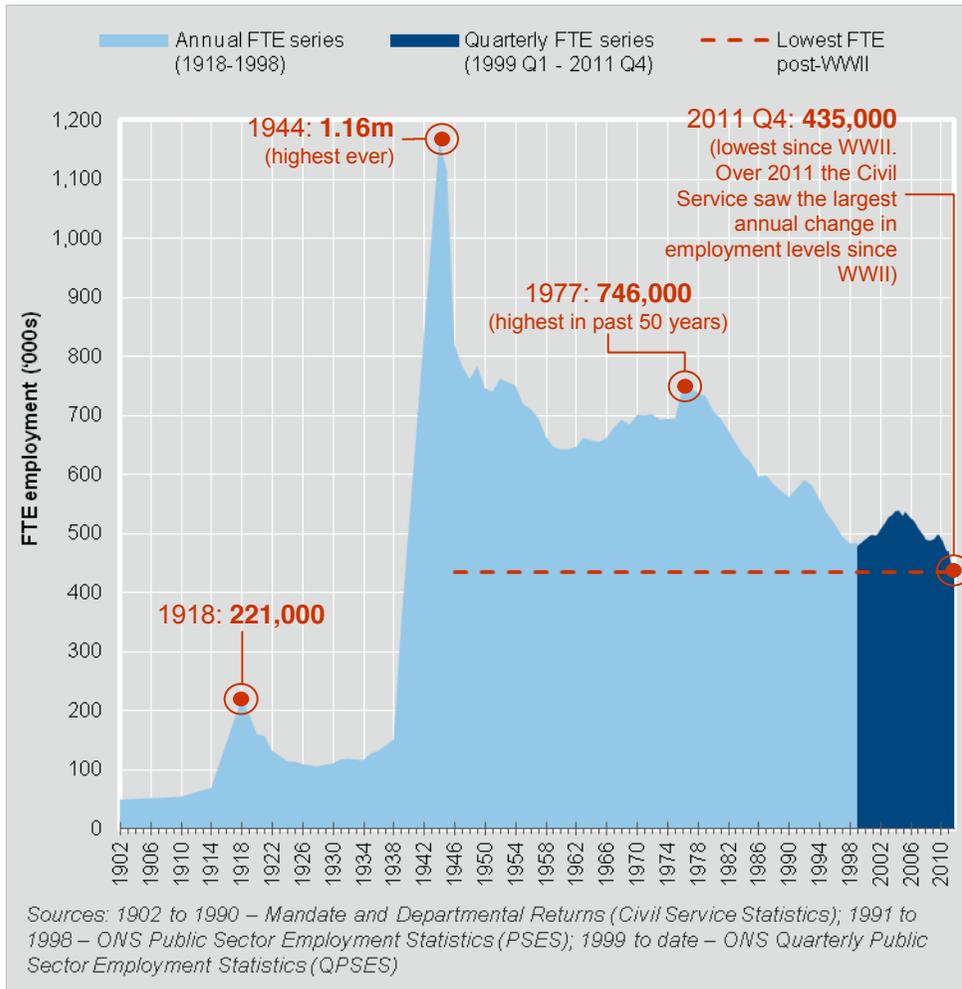
Carbon Dioxide emissions from fuel combustion 1971-2009  
(million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>)



Source: International Energy Agency, 2011 CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions From Fuel Combustion

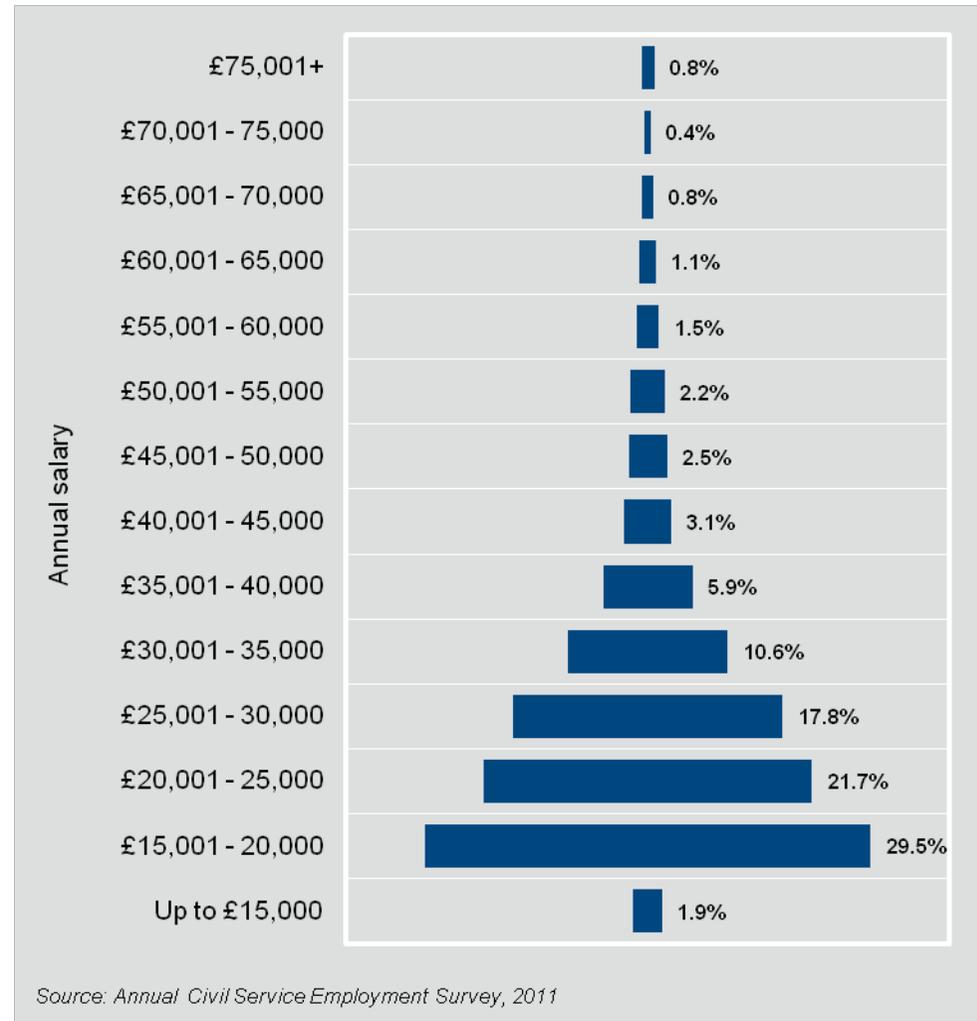
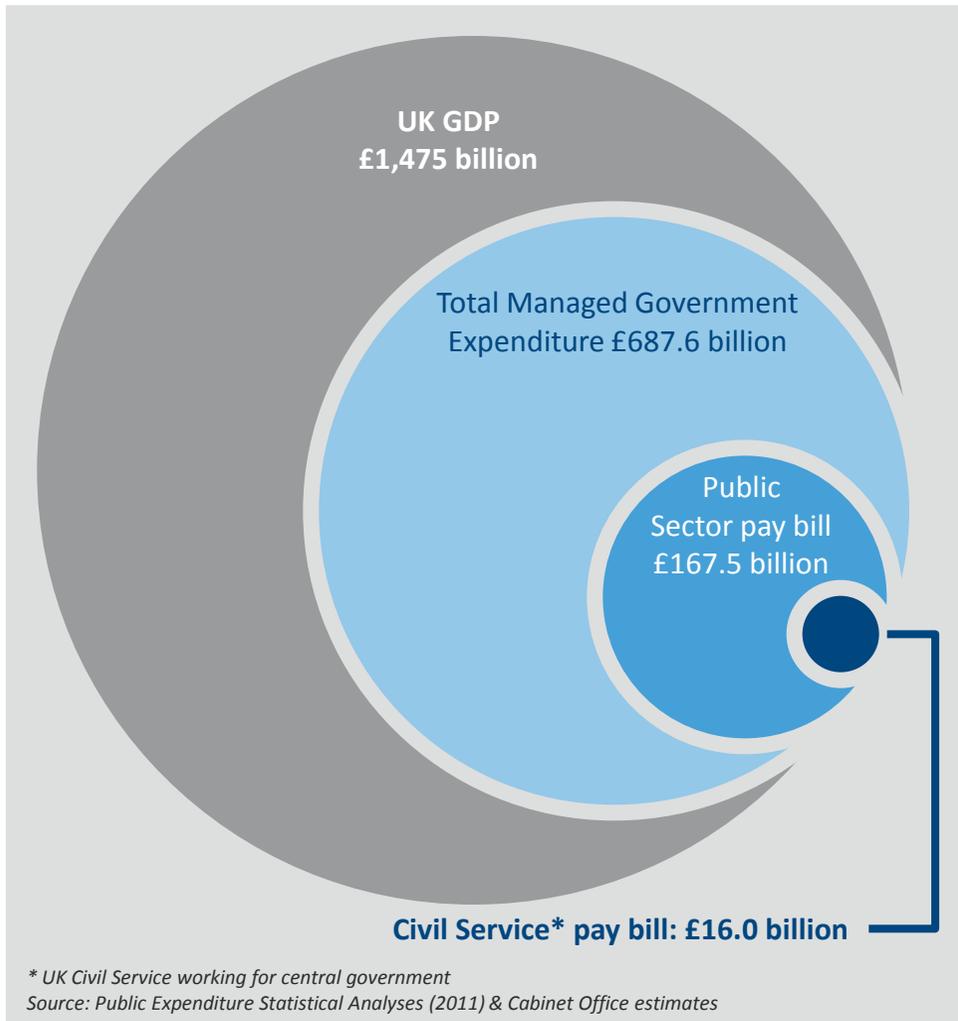
# The size and shape of the UK Civil Service

# UK Civil Service employment comprises less than 2% of UK employment, and now stands at its lowest level since the Second World War.



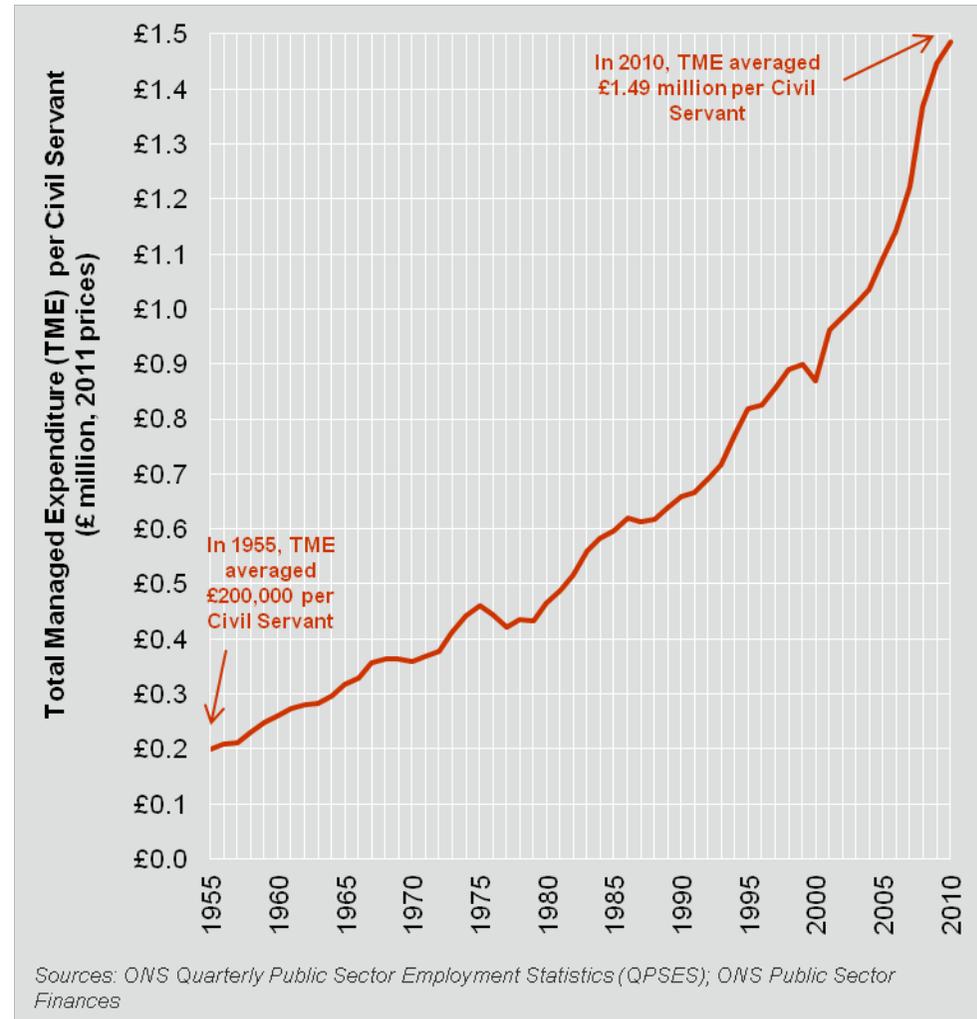
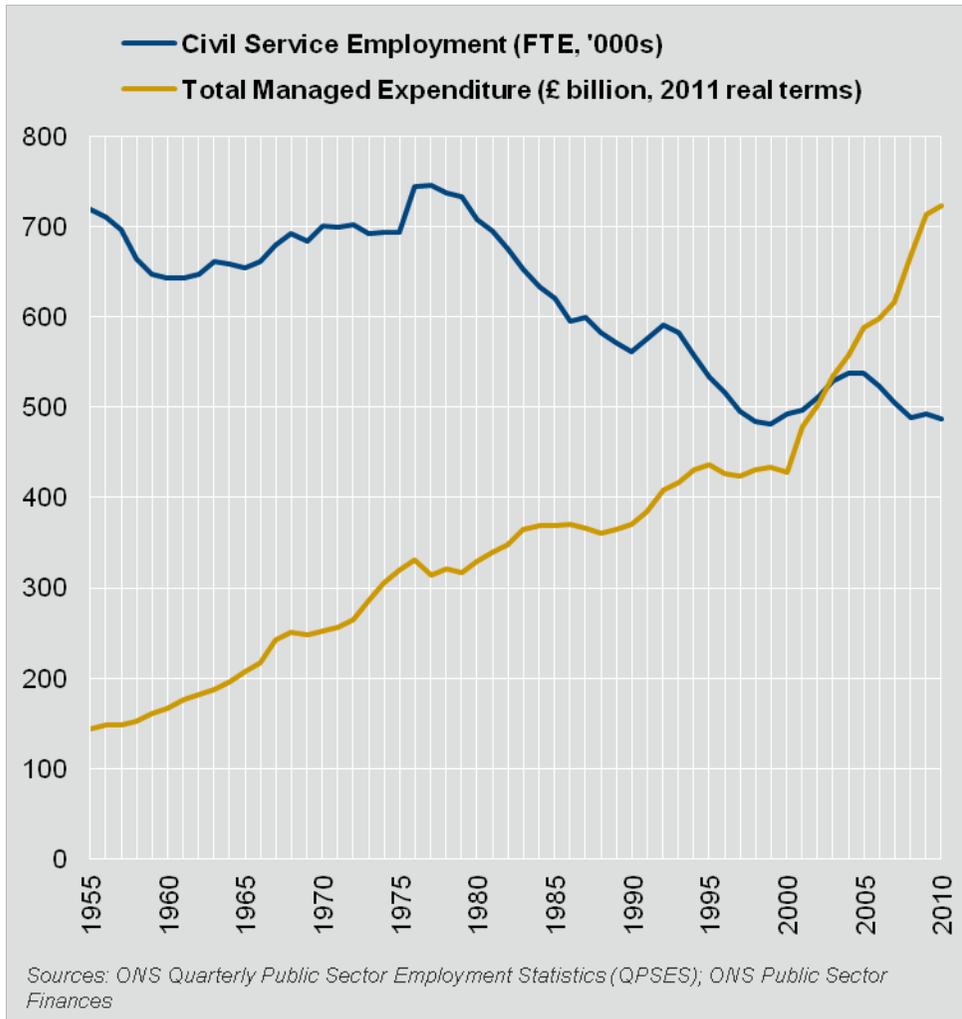
FTE: Full-time equivalents are based on converting a part-time employee's hours into a full-time employee's equivalent. They provide a better indicator of total labour input than a headcount.

# The Civil Service pay bill represents 2% of managed expenditure<sup>1</sup>, with more than half of civil servants paid £25,000 or less...



<sup>1</sup>Total Managed Expenditure covers spending by the whole public sector, central government (including devolved assemblies), local government and public corporations. It does not include financial transactions such as lending or buying of shares.

...and while the number of civil servants has fallen, the expenditure they manage has increased.

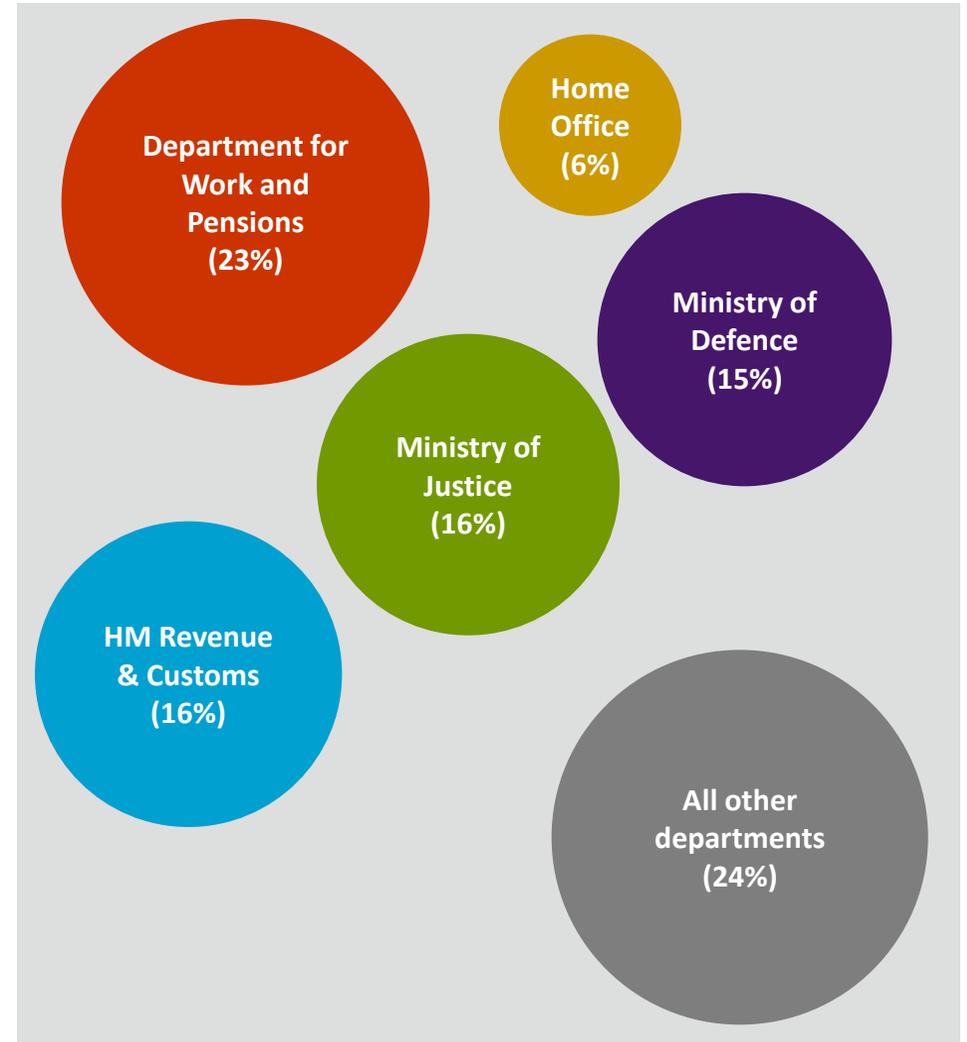


# Departments vary greatly in size: the five main delivery departments employ over three quarters of the Civil Service workforce...

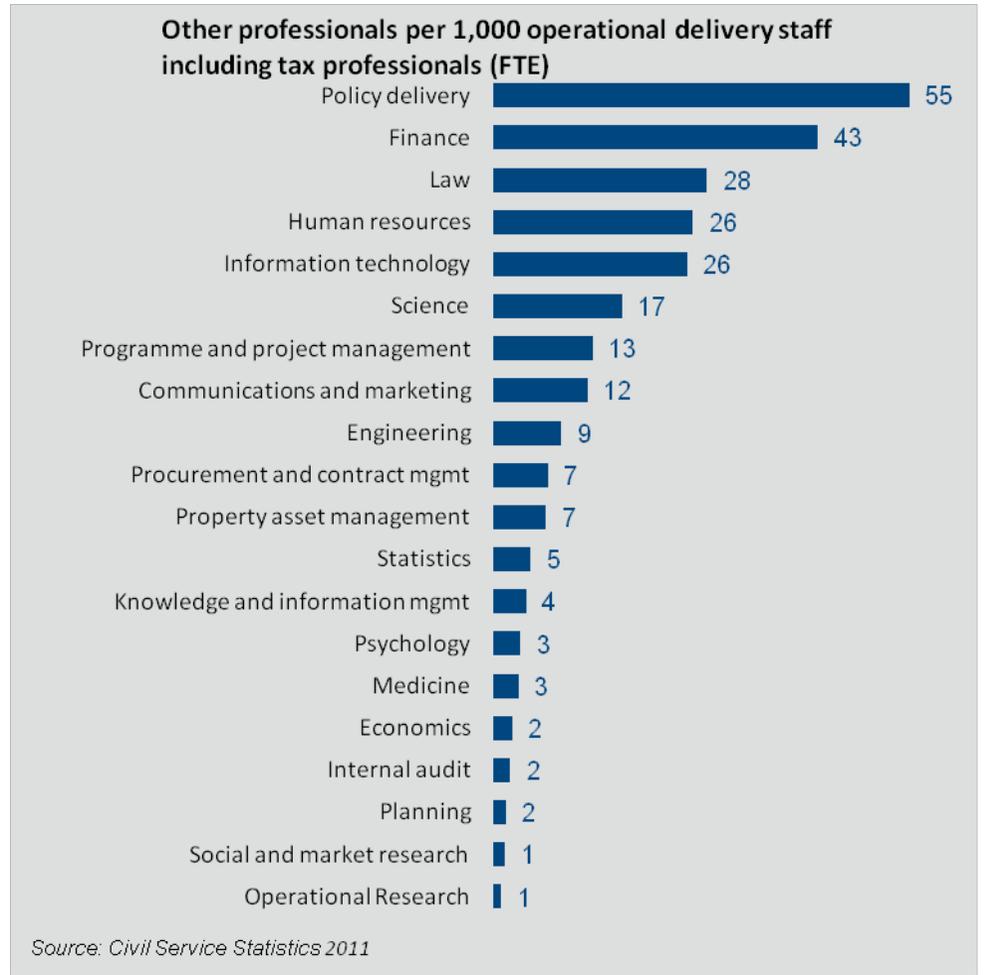
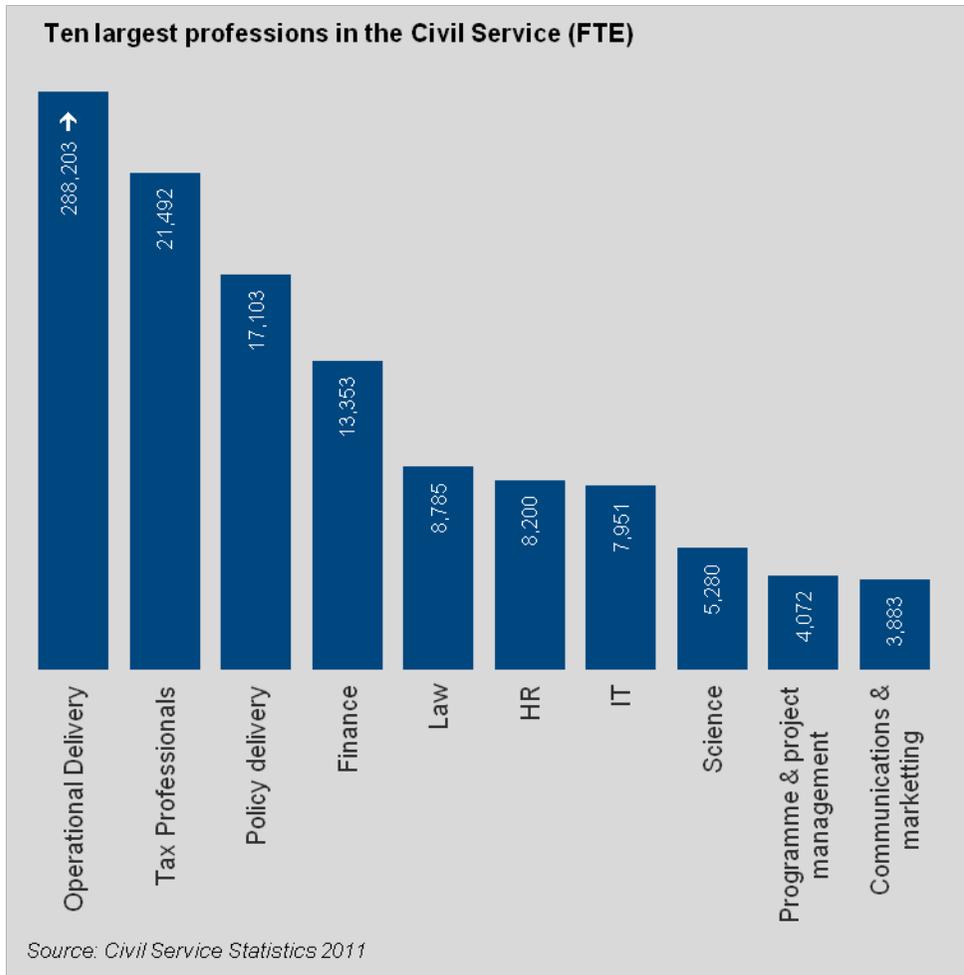
Civil Service FTE employment by Department (including agencies)



Source: ONS Quarterly Public Sector Employment Statistics (QPSES), Q4 2011

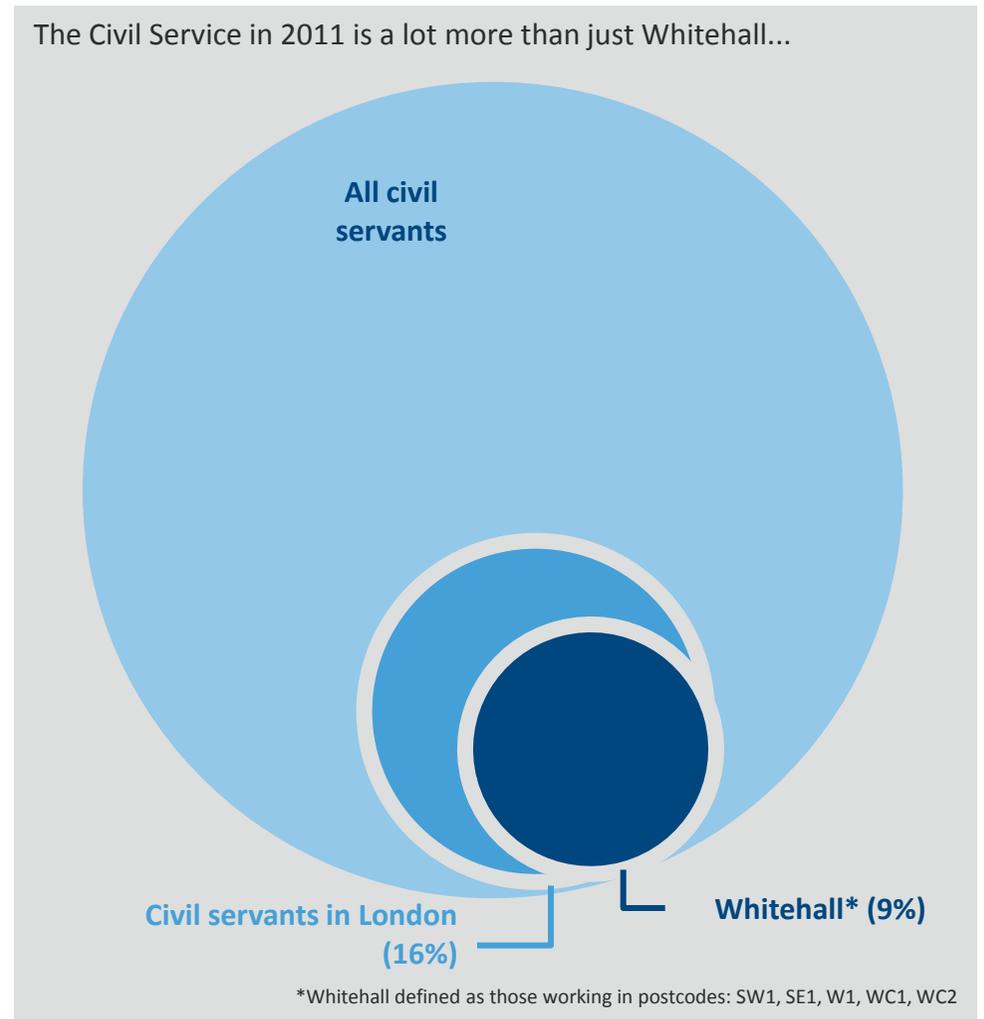
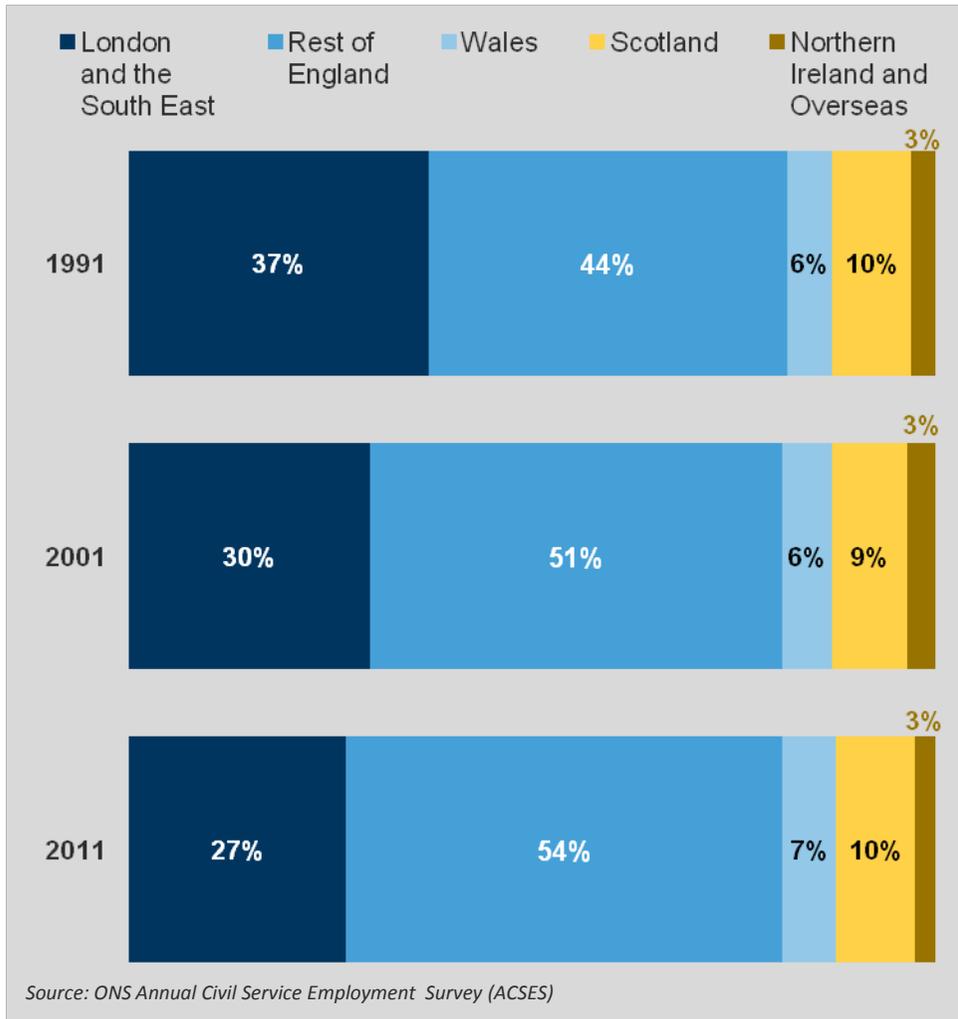


...with over 70% of civil servants working in an operational role...



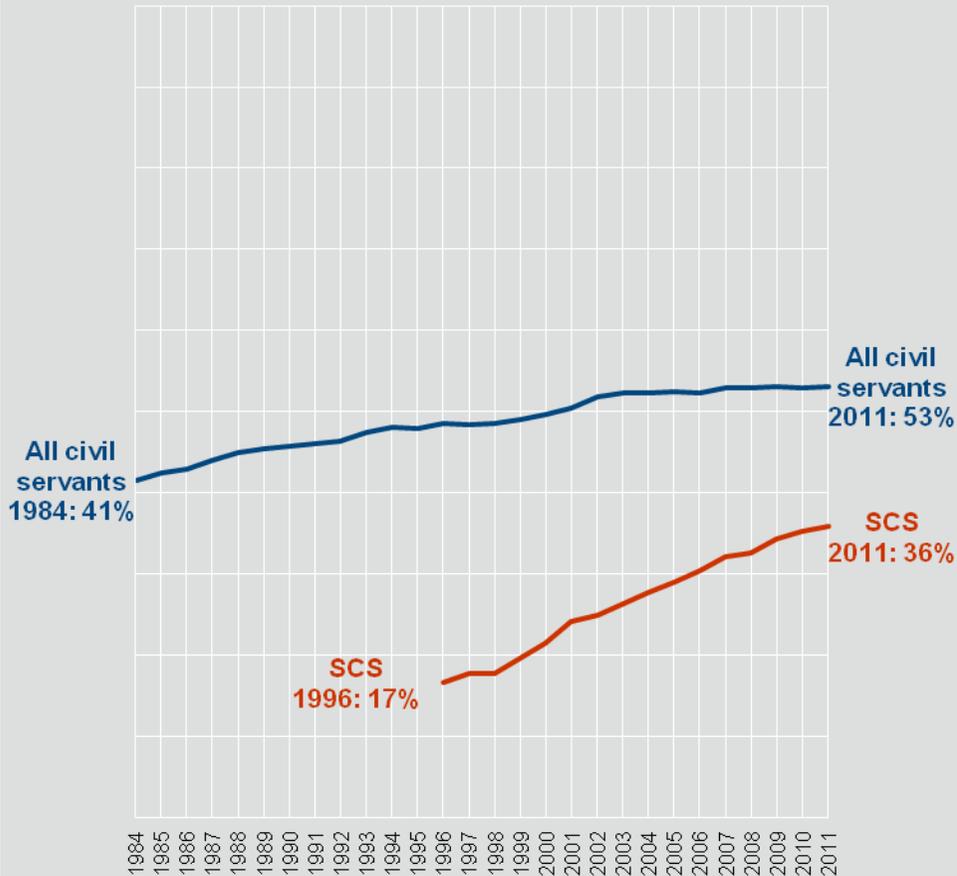
The right-hand graph shows the number of staff within each professional group divided by the number of operational staff (those working in the operational delivery or tax professions) then multiplied by 1,000. For example, there are 309,695 operational and tax professional staff and 17,103 policy delivery professionals – which equates to 55.2 policy professionals for every 1,000 operational staff (in FTE terms).

...and more than 7 in 10 working outside London and the South East, a proportion that has steadily increased over the past twenty years.



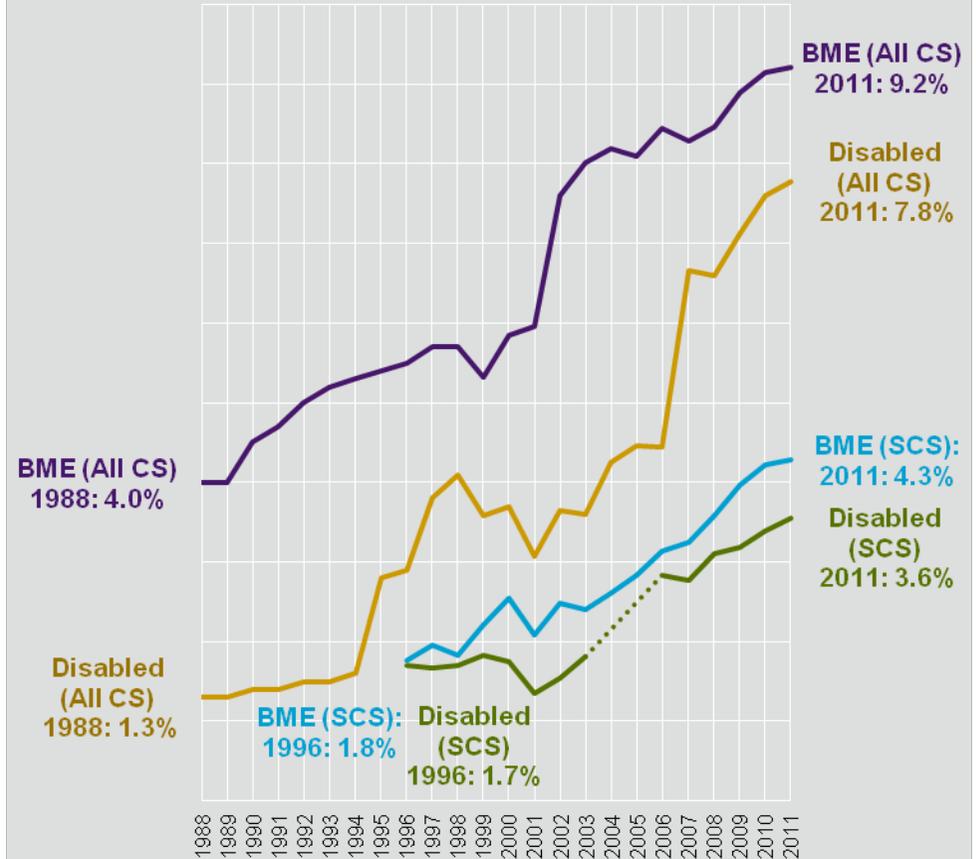
# Over the past 30 years the diversity of the Civil Service has increased, with similar trends in the Senior Civil Service...

**Women in the Civil Service (% of all employees)**



Source: Civil Service Statistics, and Cabinet Office SCS Database

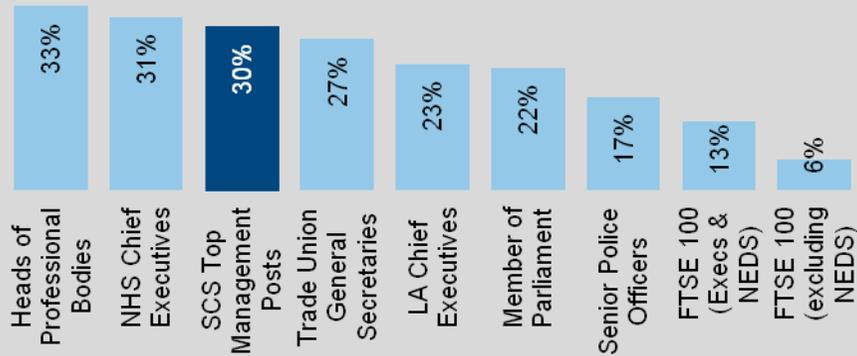
**BME and disabled staff in the Civil Service (% of all employees whose status is known)**



Source: Civil Service Statistics, and Cabinet Office SCS Database

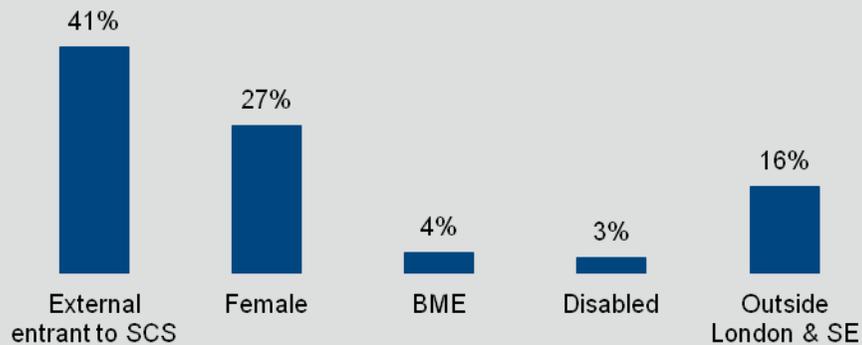
...and women now hold 30% of the most senior roles in the Civil Service, double that reported in FTSE100 companies.

### Women in top management positions<sup>2</sup>



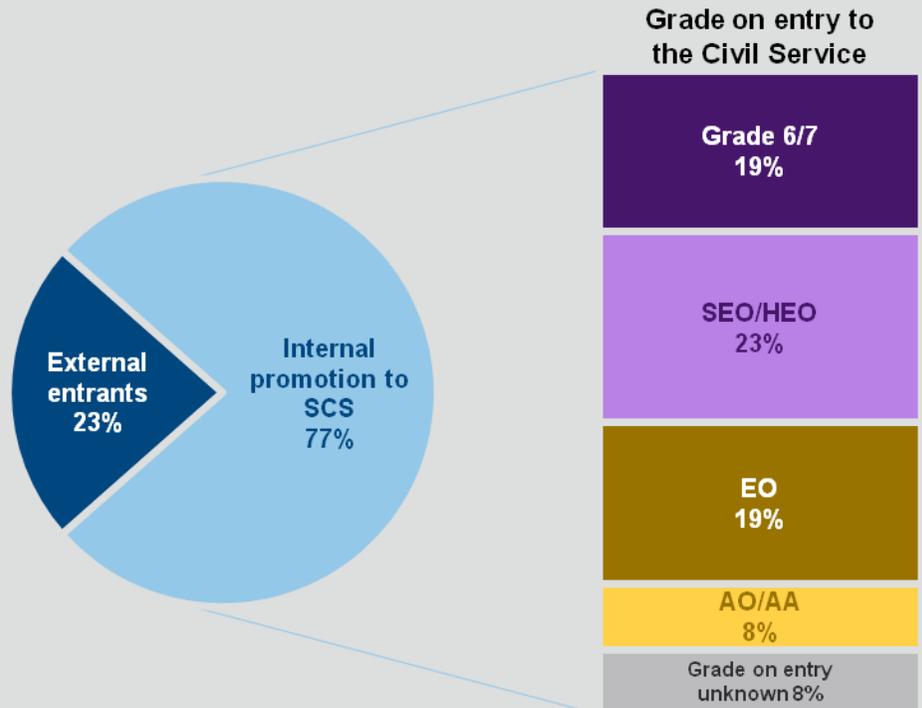
Source: Sex and Power who runs Britain in 2011; The Female FTSE Index 2011; SCS Database

### Profile of the Top 200 group of senior civil servants



Source: Cabinet Office SCS Database, April 2011

### Route of entry to the SCS

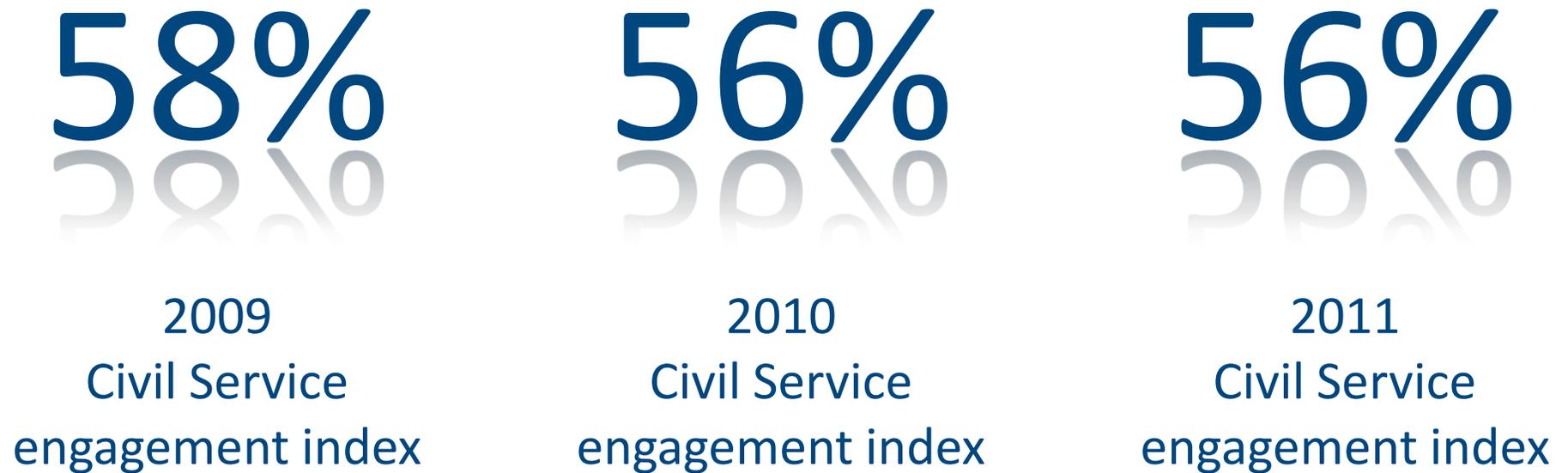


Source: Cabinet Office SCS Database, April 2011

<sup>2</sup>SCS Top Management Posts are posts by Director (SCS Pay Band 2) level and above.

# Perceptions of the Civil Service

The cross-Civil Service engagement index<sup>3</sup> remained broadly similar between 2009 and 2011.

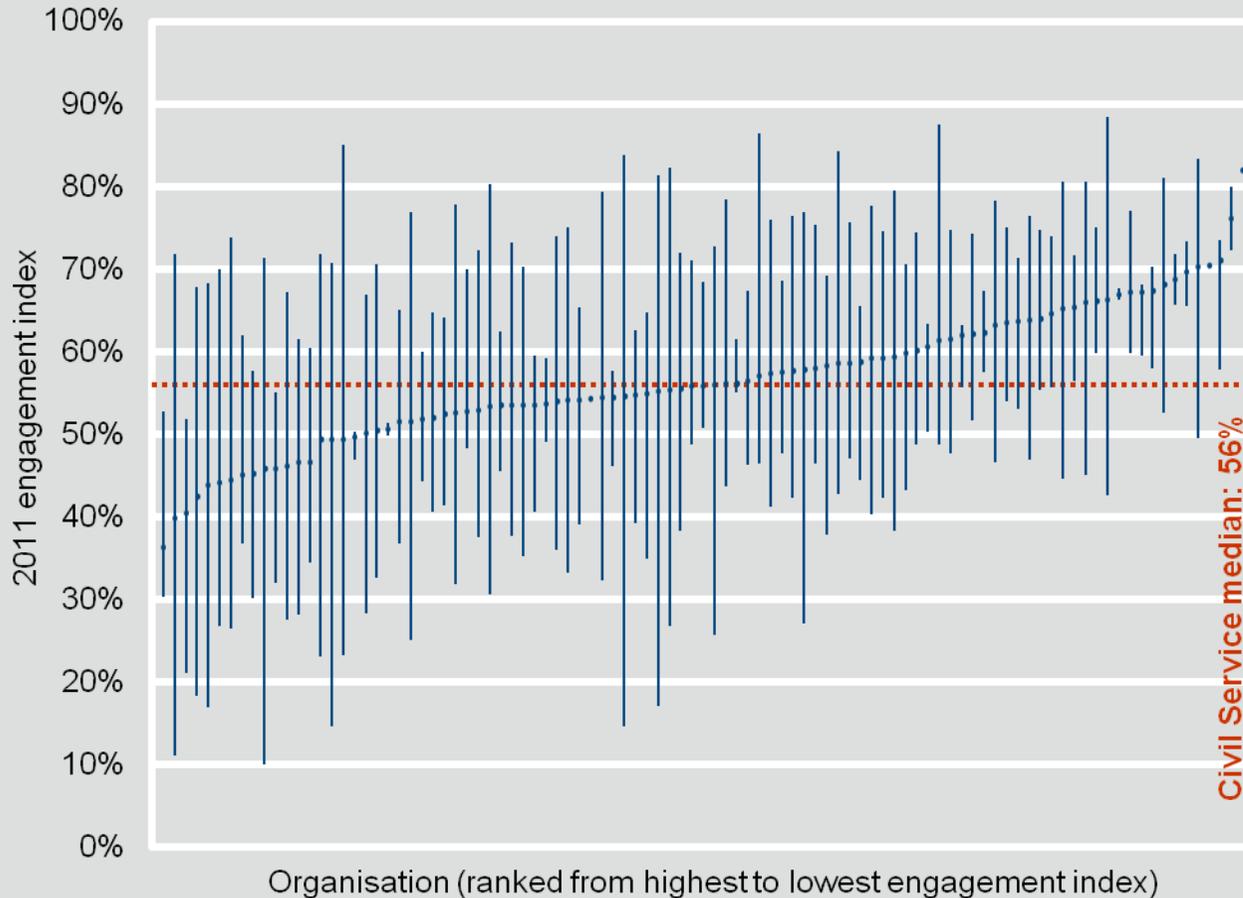


<sup>3</sup>The engagement index is a weighted average of responses to five questions from the Civil Service People Survey. The index measures civil servants' emotional response to working for their organisation (their government department or executive agency, etc). Evidence from the private sector and wider public sector shows that organisations with higher levels of engagement typically have high levels of organisational performance, including higher levels of innovation and reduced sickness absence.

Source: Civil Service People Survey

# There is a great deal of variation both within and between organisations.

Civil Service engagement index by organisation



Each blue dot represents one of the 97 organisations that participated in the 2011 Civil Service People Survey.

The vertical lines show the highest and lowest scoring business units within each organisation.

The highest scoring business unit has an engagement index of 88%. 27 other business units have a score over 80%.

The lowest scoring business unit has an engagement index of 10%. 14 other business units had an index score below 20%.

Source: Civil Service People Survey, 2011

## There has been little change across the nine other themes of the Civil Service People Survey in the last year.

	CSPS 2009	CSPS 2010	CSPS 2011
My work	75%	71% ↓	71% →
Organisational objectives and purpose	81%	81% →	81% →
My manager	64%	64% →	64% →
My team	76%	77% ↑	77% →
Learning and development	50%	43% ↓	43% →
Inclusion and fair treatment	74%	73% ↓	73% →
Resources and workload	72%	73% ↑	73% →
Pay and benefits	37%	37% →	31% ↓
Leadership and managing change	38%	37% ↓	38% ↑

Source: Civil Service People Survey, 2011

The 49 questions from the Civil Service People Survey fall within the following nine themes. The benchmark scores for the whole Civil Service have changed little in the last three years.

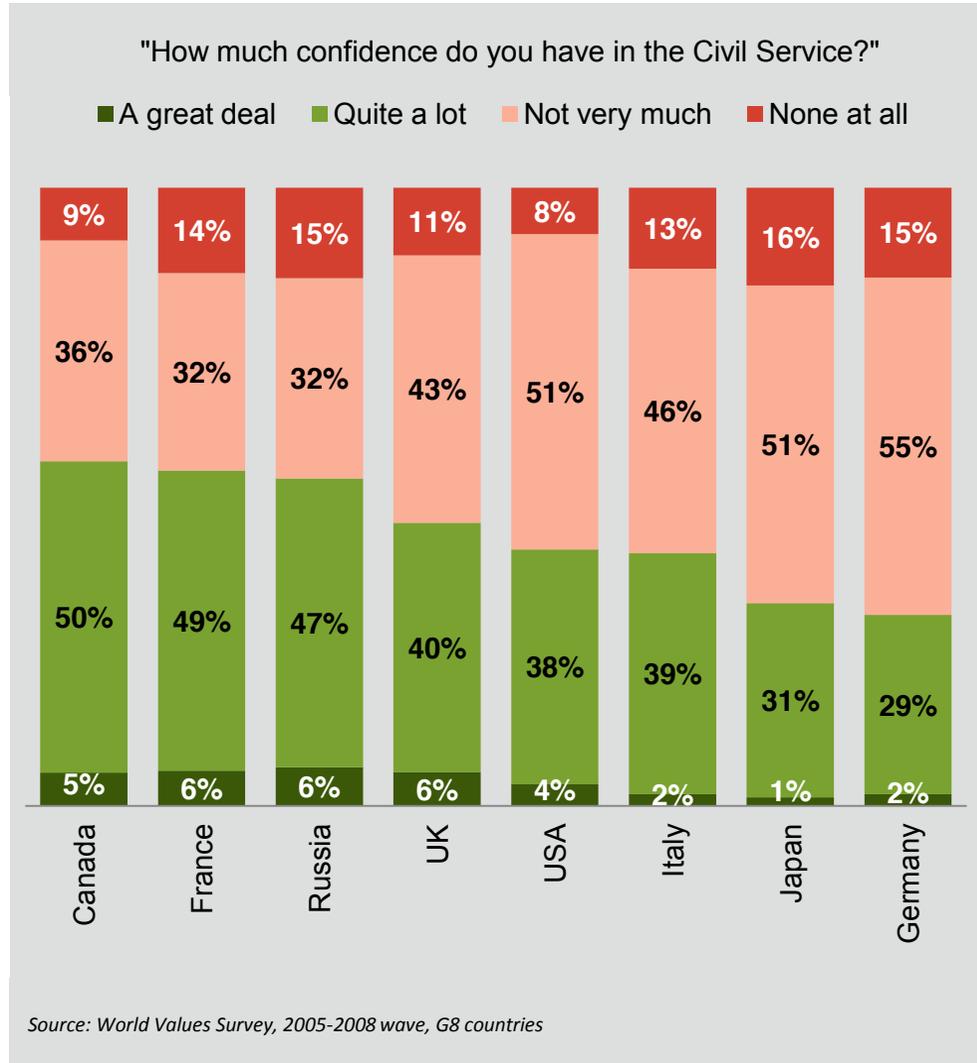
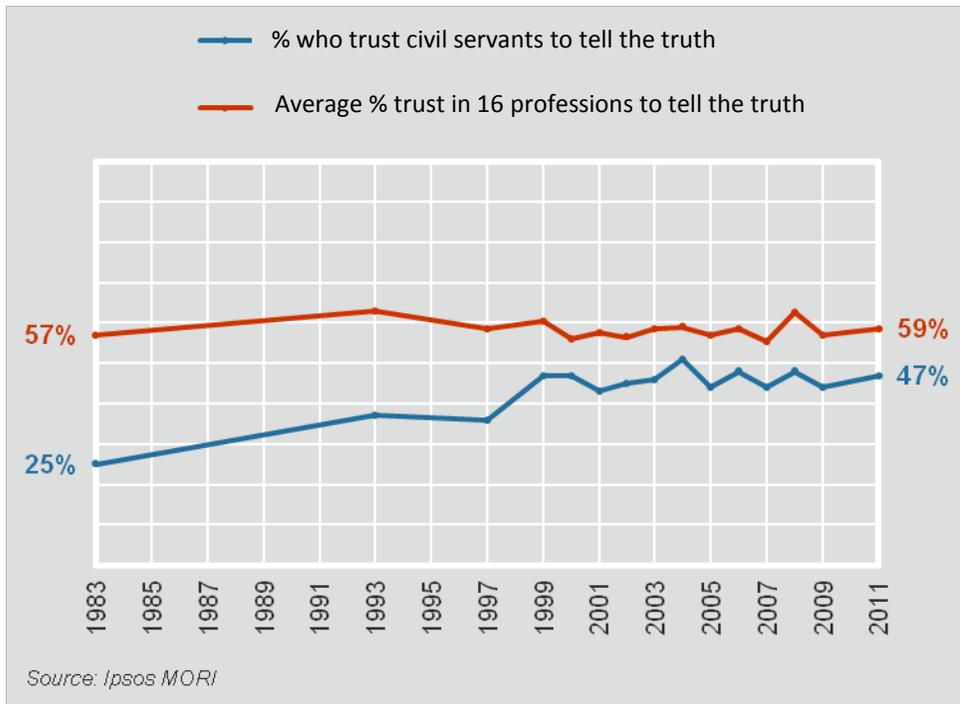
Civil servants have high perceptions of their work, their organisation's objectives and purpose, their team, inclusion and fair treatment and resources and workload. Scores for immediate managers are broadly positive and have remained unchanged over the three years the survey has been running.

Perceptions of learning and development dropped by seven percentage points between 2009 and 2010 but are unchanged between 2010 and 2011. Meanwhile perceptions of pay and benefits and of leadership and managing change have remained low.

# Public trust in civil servants has increased since the 1980s and is broadly comparable with that in other G8 countries.

The IPSOS MORI Veracity Index (*below*) shows the UK public's trust in civil servants to tell the truth increasing substantially in the 28 years to 2011. This increase is greater than for any other profession in the index.

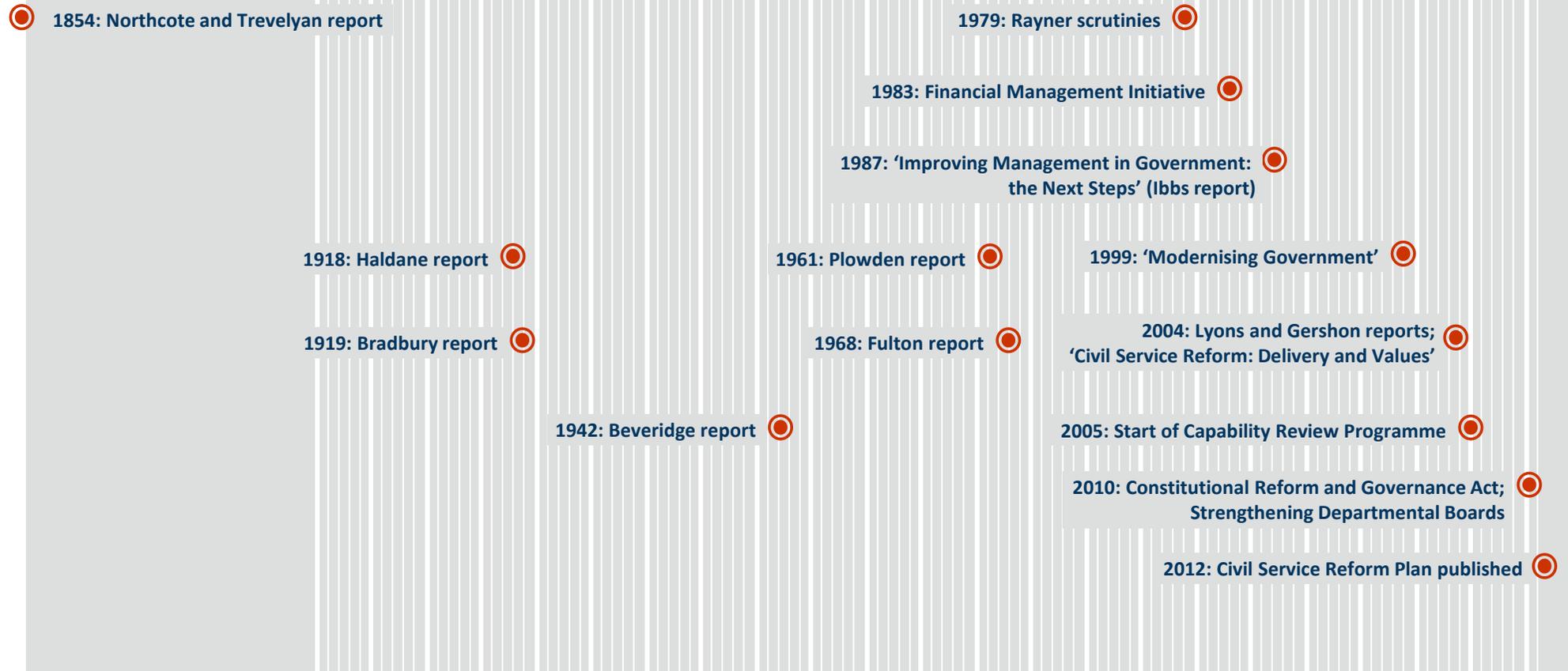
The World Values Survey (*right*) shows that confidence in the UK Civil Service is broadly comparable with other G8 countries.



# Background to reform

# The modern Civil Service has continually evolved...

1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010



# ...reforming various aspects of the Civil Service.

Reform	Objectives
<b>1979</b> Rayner scrutinies	In 1979 the Efficiency Unit was established by Sir Derek Rayner to scrutinise government work and propose solutions to improve efficiency.
<b>1983</b> Financial Management Initiative	Following this the Financial Management Initiative was launched in 1982 in a White Paper, requiring civil servants to take greater budget responsibility.
<b>1987</b> 'Improving Management in Government: the Next Steps' (Ibbs report)	The Ibbs report proposed that the Civil Service should be divided into a small, policy making core and a set of delivery agencies in order to improve services and costs. It also highlighted the need to focus on issues such as performance management.
<b>1999</b> 'Modernising Government'	'Modernising Government' set out an ambition to improve policy making, focus services on their users and deliver high quality, efficient public services. It committed to using modern IT in government, increasing diversity and strengthening performance management and innovation, whilst stating a need to deliver policy in a coordinated way across departments.
<b>2004</b> Lyons and Gershon reports	The Lyons report recommended the relocation of 20,000 civil servants from London and the South East, aiming to bring growth to relocation areas and to drive savings. The Gershon report proposed that efficiency savings should be made through better use of resources, by merging departments, sharing functions, better procurement and headcount reductions.
<b>2005</b> Capability Review Programme	The Capability Review Programme aimed to improve the capability of the Civil Service and help departments to act on key, long term development areas. The programme was designed to assess all the major Whitehall departments against a common framework, to publish the results and hold permanent secretaries and boards to account for capability improvement.
<b>2010</b> Constitutional Reform and Governance Act ; Strengthening departmental boards	The Act put into statute the practice of appointing civil servants on merit, overseen by the Civil Service Commission. It enshrined in legislation the Civil Service Code and the values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality. Departmental boards were strengthened by appointing high calibre non-executives with experience of running complex organisations outside government. Secretaries of State began chairing departmental boards, bringing together the departments' political and official leadership.

Sources: *The Lyons and Gershon reviews and variations in civil service conditions*, Oonagh Gray, 2006; *Gershon But Not Forgotten*, Grant Shapps, 2007; *Whither the Civil Service?*, Ruth Winstone, 2003; *Civil Service Reform*, Oonagh Gray, 2010; *Session 1997-98 Report, House of Lords Select Committee on the Public Service*, 1998; *Pre-Budget Report 2008: Facing global challenges: Supporting people through difficult times*, HM Treasury, 2008; [www.accountspayablenews.org/latest-news/90-the-gershon-review.html](http://www.accountspayablenews.org/latest-news/90-the-gershon-review.html); [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmtreasy/483/48305.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmtreasy/483/48305.htm); [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmtreasy/520/52002.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmtreasy/520/52002.htm); [www.civilservice.gov.uk](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk)

# In response to the 2010 Spending Review, departments have already implemented structural reforms.

As part of their report, *Good governance and Civil Service reform* (2011), PASC<sup>4</sup> asked departments, ‘**What structural reforms, if any, will be required as a result of the reductions in running costs arising from the spending review?**’. Responses included:

“The Strategic Defence and Security Review and the Spending Review set the **Ministry of Defence** challenging targets for efficiencies and staff reductions, both military and civilian. Delivering these while continuing to support and sustain the front line capability set out in the SDSR will require substantial changes in how the department is structured and the way we work.”

“The **Ministry of Justice (MoJ)** is following an ambitious programme of reform over the Spending Review period, during which £2bn of savings will be made. [These will be achieved] by taking a new approach to delivery of public services, delivering our services more efficiently, and reducing MoJ’s headcount and estate.”

“A more efficient use of **HM Treasury** infrastructure, compressing the department from five to three floors of the 1 Horse Guards Road building, and renting the remaining space to the Cabinet Office.”

“There has been a sustained effort in the **Department for Communities and Local Government** to achieve efficiency savings, such as through the renegotiation of key contracts expected to deliver savings of around £11 million in 2011-12.”

<sup>4</sup>Public Accounts Select Committee (House of Commons)

# Best practice examples

Reflecting the five themes of  
the Civil Service Reform Plan

# Clarifying the future size and shape of the Civil Service

## Partnerships with NGOs to deliver consular services, FCO, Nov 2010

### **Issue**

• FCO consular staff provide support to British nationals in difficulty abroad, with a focus on the most vulnerable. However, they cannot provide direct financial assistance, nor are they trained to provide long term support.

### **Action**

- By creating partnerships with trusted NGOs, FCO can provide a safety net to Britons in distress abroad, and help them access continued support on their return to the UK. Consular staff can refer British nationals to organisations such as Missing Abroad, Heathrow Travel Care, Victim Support National Homicide Service and Prisoners Abroad.
- Where there is a particular need, organisations such as Age Concern España and Royal British Legion are hosted in FCO offices abroad to provide access for those who need their services.
- Arrangements are also in place to assist prisoners without other means of support and to support the families of murder victims.

### **Result**

• Through these partnerships the FCO supports providers of complementary services which lie outside the scope of the Department.

## Telephony Integration Project, HMRC, Oct 2011 - present

### **Issue**

• Fluctuating telephone demand requires flexible use of resources.

### **Action**

- HMRC rolled out 2,100 seats of contact centre capacity into five sites across the UK which had previously only dealt with correspondence and exceptions.
- This will allow HMRC to balance deployment of available resources across the 'front' and 'back' office in a way that drives up performance, in line with the commitment made by ministers.

### **Results**

- This strengthened Civil Service capabilities, supporting a step-change in HMRC's ability to deploy resources more flexibly. This enables the Department to work more efficiently and do a better job for customers.
- While the immediate benefit is in helping to improve call handling performance, the strategic aim was to eliminate the distinction between 'front' and 'back' offices across a large chunk of the Department's routine Self Assessment and PAYE business – paving the way for a significantly more flexible operating model.
- By the end of 2014-15, nearly two thirds of the people working in Personal Tax will be in flexible, telephony enabled seats.
- The Trade Union side has so far been supportive of the changes, seeing them as a way of demonstrating that, with the right investment and leadership, the public sector can deliver commercial standards of performance across its own far broader customer base.
- In breaking down the distinction between front and back offices, and creating a more flexible operating model, this is potentially a trail-blazer for large operational functions across the wider Civil Service.

# Improving policy making capability

## **Animal Health and Welfare Board, Defra, Nov 2011**

### **Issue**

- It was necessary to build partnership and trust between Government and industry in order to drive better outcomes on animal health and welfare.

### **Action**

- Defra created an internal board comprised of external experts and practitioners as well as Defra officials that makes direct recommendations on strategic policy and delivery to the Minister.
- The chair and non-executive members are appointed for a fixed term through a transparent and open process, with positions publically advertised.
- The board aims to put recommendations to the Minister that are agreed by all executive and non-executive members. The Minister has undertaken to explain publicly his reasons if he does not accept a recommendation from the board.
- The non-executive board members have responsibility for creating strong two way communication channels with stakeholder groups.

### **Results**

- The board brings practitioners into the heart of Defra's strategic policy and delivery decision-making.
- It aims to secure strong practitioner buy-in to policy and active partnership in delivering outcomes.

## **'Global Food and Farming Futures' Foresight Report, Government Office for Science (GO-Science), Dec 2008 – Jan 2010**

### **Issue**

- The global population, which is set to rise to nine billion or more by 2050, must be fed sustainably and equitably.
- This is a complex policy area, affecting a wide range of stakeholders over an unusually long time frame.
- The GO-Science Foresight Report provided objective evidence to support policy-making.

### **Action**

- GO-Science commissioned a major two year scientific study which explained the need to urgently redesign the global food system.
- GO-Science also conducted futures analysis to mitigate against longer-term risks which will affect stakeholders across and outside government.
- 'The Future of Food and Farming' report sets out evidence for the Government, for others in the UK and for the international community, which they can consider when developing policy on anticipating risk.

### **Results**

- The Foresight Report has significantly influenced major strands of government and other stakeholder action.
- This includes Defra's 'Green Food Project' and 'Natural Environment White Paper'; the food strategies for Welsh Government, and for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland; and various work by major international stakeholders such as the OECD, EU Commission and the UN.

# Implementing policy and sharpening accountability

## Big Society Bank, Cabinet Office, Jan 2011 – April 2012

### **Issue**

• Social enterprises, mutuals and other social sector organisations need support to grow so they can create jobs, promote enterprise and help to address some of society's most entrenched problems.

### **Action**

- The Coalition committed to establishing a Big Society Bank to increase the supply of capital to these organisations.
- In Feb 2011 the Cabinet Office team published a social investment strategy, identifying key market failures, policy responses and the overarching design principles for a new, independent private sector social investment wholesaler, Big Society Capital.
- Ministers and officials then worked with social investment experts to develop an outline business proposal and drew on external commercial advice to help enshrine key policy and financial objectives.
- Officials worked in a highly collaborative way with the start-up company, drawing on and learning from their strengths.

### **Results**

Big Society Capital was successfully launched in April 2012 as the first social investment wholesaler of its kind in the world. Initial investments to support the social sector were made as soon as the capital became available.

## Payment by Results, MoJ, Sept 2010 onwards

### **Issue**

• MoJ needed to drive reductions in reoffending by enabling innovation in a cost efficient manner.

### **Action**

- MoJ allowed the providers of offender services the freedom to innovate to deliver results, paying them according to the outcomes they achieve, and opening up the market to diverse new players who bring fresh ideas.
- MoJ tested the approach through a pilot programme and commissioned the first ever Social Impact Bond.
- They explored the scope for new delivery models which draw on the strengths of the public, private and voluntary sectors in communities and aim to stimulate social investment.
- 10% of the funding of the Doncaster Prison Payment by Results scheme depends on outcomes and 100% of the MoJ's funding of the Peterborough Social Impact Bond depends on outcomes.

### **Results**

• Where used for appropriate services and outcomes, Payment by Results contracts allow government to transfer the risk of failure to providers, and to give providers freedom and incentives to drive innovation and an outcome focussed approach.

# Building capability by strengthening skills, deploying talent and improving organisational performance across the Civil Service

## Learning and Development Strategy, BIS, Jan 2011-Mar 2012

### Issue

- A much smaller, de-layered BIS urgently needed to decide which skills and knowledge would be crucial for delivering success. BIS People needed to work and learn more flexibly, innovatively and collaboratively.
- BIS therefore required a much clearer learning and development strategy which got attention and traction throughout the year. BIS needed to embed that learning and to visibly close priority skills gaps.

### Action

- BIS conducted wide consultation, including 'open to all' workshops in the Innovation Space, one-to-one interviews with DGs, Heads of Professions and HRBPs, reviewing staff survey results and skills data, horizon scanning and consulting Unions.
- They developed a strategy to clearly state the Department's priority areas for skills development, to focus on learning throughout the year, and to explain the range of available learning opportunities.
- For the first time this has clarified the key development needs for a successful career in BIS.
- It aimed to offer a range of opportunities which are attractive to all learning styles and grades, moving towards self-managed learning rather than simply offering training courses.

### Results

- The strategy is still in its early stages but there has been positive feedback for the use of partnerships between the L&D team and professionals and specialists, which shares the specialist skills of both parties to provide effective, targeted learning opportunities.

## Role of the Manager, HMRC, April 2010 - present

### Issue

- 2009-10 staff feedback indicated that managers needed help understanding and demonstrating their leadership, and that they lacked confidence in 'owning' the business' performance challenges, and making them relevant to their teams.

### Action

- The Director General for Benefits & Credits led a workshop on 'The Role of the Manager' for senior officers and higher grades. Master classes were then held for managers across B&C on subjects such as performance management and communications.
- The workshops aimed to increase managers' awareness of their roles and personal management styles, how they were a part of the HMRC management team, and how they could improve their communication, connecting the workshop with the delivery of business performance measures.
- The sessions used themes from *Apollo 13* and *La Bohème* to emphasise that while senior management provide a framework for the department's strategy, individual managers should interpret that and make it relevant and engaging for their teams.

### Results

- 85% of managers at senior officer grade or above attended the workshops, with many delivering subsequent sessions down their own management chains.
- In the People Survey results the employee engagement index increased by 10%, and staff felt they had a clearer understanding of HMRC's objectives than they indicated previously.

# Creating a modern employment offer for staff that encourages and rewards a productive, professional and engaged workforce

## People Strategy, Scottish Government, May 2011 onwards

### Issue

- Scottish Government needed to recognise the importance of high staff engagement, support a cultural shift to enable people to work differently together, and embed consistently high standards of people management and development.

### Action

- The People Strategy was developed through consultation with employee groups and drew on the experience of external organisations.
- The strategy, only two sides long, forms a 'deal' between individuals and the organisation, setting out the actions for 'me', 'my team', 'my organisation' and 'my Scotland', the latter promoting corporate social responsibility and deepening links across the public sector.

### Results

- Awareness of the strategy is growing, with 5,199 webpage hits, 562 newsletter subscribers and 250 people attending staff events.
- Staff have seen concrete outputs: talent and promotion announcements, made in the context of the People Strategy, have attracted huge interest, with nearly 2,000 staff reached through awareness sessions.

## Operation StepChange, DfT, Dec 2010 onwards

### Issue

- 11m ticket holders will need to access the Olympic and Paralympic Games via public transport, while business keeps going in London.
- This will require civil servants to change work and travel patterns. DfT wishes to create a legacy of flexible working in the Civil Service.

### Action

- The team challenged DfT staff to consider how they commute. They focussed on engaging staff and planning small changes to commuting which will have a huge impact on transport demand when scaled up.
- They then ran a cross-government test, Operation StepChange.
- The team worked closely with the Minister for the Cabinet Office to ensure strong synergy between this work and wider Civil Service reform, covering IT, building use, security and working style.
- It changed the team itself: staff now 'hotdesk', working in ad hoc teams based on their projects, and promoting remote working.

### Results

- The DfT test, Operation Footfall, delivered a 69% positive change, and Operation StepChange received near-comprehensive sign-up.
- The team received press coverage and presented its work in the Civil Service as a benchmark to London employers at major business events.

