

Women in Whitehall

Culture, leadership, talent



CabinetOffice

05 | 2014

Creating an environment for talented women to succeed

Final report

CONFIDENTIAL

Acknowledgments

We are very grateful to the many people who helped shape this research project over a tight two month time period. It is of note that many senior colleagues freed their diaries to contribute to the work, reflecting the importance with which they view it.

This includes the 69 interviewees, including a number of Ministers, Special Advisers, Non-Executive Directors and 10 Permanent Secretaries. Additional thanks are due to the 791 respondents to our online survey, 61 attendees of focus groups, and 5 female Director Generals who reviewed our recommendations.

Additionally we were helped enormously in the running of the project by civil servants Deborah Brooks, Becca Taber and Becky Wyse who enabled easy access to the right people and materials, as well as wise counsel on a number of topics.

The Hay Group project team were supported by the People Development Team throughout the research, particularly by running the focus groups, supporting key meetings and reviewing materials.

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1. Executive Summary

This is the final report of a research project into the blockages facing talented women succeeding in the Senior Civil Service (SCS). It sets out the opportunity and challenge facing those with an appetite to unleash the potential of many more staff who want to serve HM Government and our Country.

The report builds on the Interim Report presented to Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude, on 23rd April 2014. Since then we have discussed the findings with Civil Service leaders, tested the recommendations with a group of five female Director Generals, conducted further interviews and collected evidence of best practice from other governments and leading employers. We have also included additional data analysis to understand more clearly the gender diversity journey the SCS has been on in recent years. What follows therefore is a comprehensive and standalone report with detailed recommendations designed to help readers ‘see’ how practical improvements could be made.

To enable ease of navigation, the changes and additions to the Interim Report are as follows:

1. A slightly updated chapter on the opportunity and challenge for the Civil Service, incorporating new and richer data gathered in this phase of work;	➤ Fast forward to Page 6
2. A new chapter highlighting best practice from other governments and leading employers around the world;	➤ Fast forward to Page 23
3. A detailed recommendations chapter setting out in full how the Civil Service should take forward this agenda; and,	➤ Fast forward to Page 30
4. An evaluation framework which sets out indicators of progress that should be used to track improvement over time	➤ Fast forward to Page 53

The Interim Report provided a clear diagnosis of the significant challenges facing the Civil Service in removing the blockages preventing talented women from succeeding. In essence, we found that the culture and leadership climate are preventing talented women from progressing into more senior roles. When combined with current pay constraints this means that the talent pool from which leaders can recruit is significantly smaller than it could be which, in turn, will be constraining performance. More positively, we found that women entering the SCS possess exactly the leadership capabilities required to progress into more senior roles and they have the ambition to be promoted in equal measure to men. The challenge therefore is how do you to create the conditions in which this talent can prosper?

We viewed this challenge through three lenses; policy, practice and perception. In summary, overall policy intent is broadly in line with best practice and, with minor amendments, could become leading edge. Line manager practice, especially at Director and Deputy Director levels is variable leading to experiences of leadership and talent as something of a lottery rather than a core part of everyone’s job. However, we found that the area requiring most work is changing people’s perceptions. At present many people, and women in particular, do not believe the rhetoric on policy, promotions, or what is valued in the SCS. Accordingly, many choose to opt out.

Hence in developing recommendations we have attended to what we believe are threshold requirements for positive action for women. But it is not just about women. This work should be seen as a catalyst to stimulate the renewal of the leadership and climate within the Civil Service so that it is a place where all can prosper and recruitment panels are spoilt for choice by the calibre and diversity of the talent available. To move the debate forward and into practical action, we make 17 detailed recommendations grouped under the following broad headings.

- **Recommendation 1: Establish a more inclusive leadership climate by improving clarity of purpose, vision and values for the Top 200.** This will create the context and environment in which leaders (both Ministerial and Civil Service) are able to go the extra mile and work towards common goals. It is aimed directly at mitigating against some of the current aspects of poor culture and placing a higher value on the role of leadership within the SCS.
- **Recommendation 2: Reduce the variability in SCS leadership capability so that the best talent can prosper.** This is about raising the standard of SCS leadership so that more people are invested in talent spotting and development and that leaders can see what they need to do to improve performance in an objective and benchmarked manner.
- **Recommendation 3: Clarify accountability for leadership behaviour.** At present this accountability is diffuse, spread amongst leaders (in departments and corporately), amongst some in the Cabinet Office and in HR or specialist roles. By improving talent governance arrangements, increasing organisational development capability and sharpening accountability, greater ownership of this agenda will be achieved.
- **Recommendation 4: Gather and publish data on gender diversity as a driver for reform.** Using the principles of transparency, and 'comply or explain', the gathering and publication of diversity data is a powerful driver for reform. This should be mandated, together with dissemination of existing best practice.
- **Recommendation 5: Continue, and develop further, positive action initiatives for women.** We recommend a range of initiatives, largely building in the work undertaken by Sarah Healey, but also including new ideas such as greater use of Non-Executive Directors in mentoring women.

Taken together they have the potential to transform the quality of the leadership, culture and talent pipeline in the Senior Civil Service. It is of note that, historically, the Civil Service pioneered many of the leading people practices now used across the UK. The recommendations in this report provide a pathway to enable decision-makers to demonstrate once again how it can be in vanguard of organisational development. That is what civil servants, women and men, expect from a world-class employer, but as importantly it is what taxpayers deserve.

On the pages that follow we set out the opportunity and challenge for the Civil Service, the research objectives and design and summarise our findings. This is complemented by an external review of leading practice from other employers and pulled together into a comprehensive set of recommendations.

2. Context: the opportunity and challenge for the Civil Service

The business and moral case for having gender equality in the workforce is clear

- Scores of reports have been published on this topic. Below are some of the headlines and common themes.
- We know that better gender diversity delivers better business results, for example:
 - Grant Thornton’s research shows that companies with more women in top positions achieve 16 per cent higher return on sales and 26 per cent higher return on invested capital¹.
 - McKinsey’s ‘Women matter’ report shows that companies with three or more women in top management functions deliver 10 per cent better return on equity².
 - Alexander Mann’s £5 billion estimate of the value of improving the talent pipeline for women³.
 - The Women and Work Commission found that unleashing women’s full potential could be worth as much as £23 billion a year to the Exchequer⁴.
- The scientific case for gender equality in the workplace has also been won; there are no significant differences in cognition that give males an advantage⁵.
- The social case is less clear; perceptions and expectations are far more persuasive than objectively measured differences between men and women. However, there are statistically significant data to show that perception of gender is a powerful determinant of attitudes. Moreover, these attitudes are sustained through a culture of ‘one of us’; people apply to work in fields of endeavour in which they share the same values and are likely to have success. For example, it is perhaps unsurprising that the number of female SCS roles in the DoH and DfE is considerably greater than in the MOD.

Gender diversity is one of the great organisational challenges of our time.

Everyone accepts the business case for gender diversity, everyone agrees it is the morally right thing to do yet very few, if any, major employers have made sufficient progress to reap the identified benefits.

The current challenge: the Civil Service is losing talent

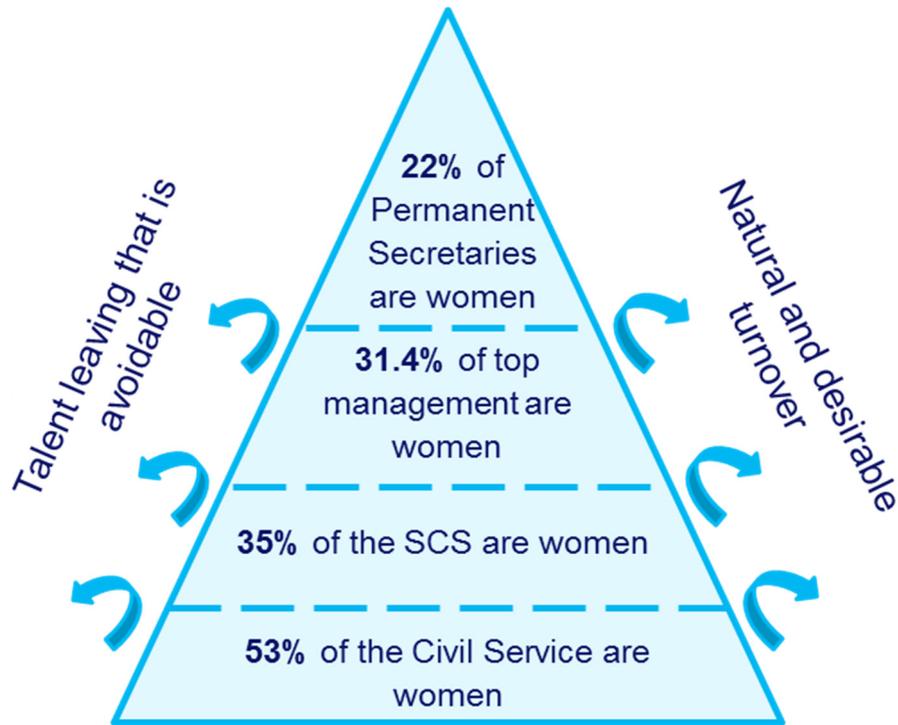


Figure 1: Current Civil Service workforce breakdown by gender

There is considerable variance between departments. DfE is the only department where the number of female employees exceeds the number of male employees. Elsewhere men predominate especially in MoJ, MOD, and FCO. However, while some departments not only have fewer women to start with, they are also losing more and promoting fewer e.g. the Home Office.

To gain an understanding of the underlying reasons for this, we examined a range of data gathered by the Civil Service.

The 2013 People Survey

We analysed the results of the 2013 Civil Service People Survey, particularly looking at the data for the SCS in main departments broken down by gender. The full set of data for this group has been included at **Appendix B** of this report and includes the scores from previous People Surveys from 2009 onwards for comparison purposes.

In 2013, the statements were rated very similarly by male and female respondents, with women tending to rate the statements a couple of percentage points higher than their male counterparts. The survey therefore provided little insight into the barriers or concerns that women in particular are experiencing in the SCS.

However, it is worth noting that these results showed that, other than pay, 'leadership and managing change' is the area where both men and women feel the Civil Service is weakest.

Other data provided by the Civil Service

We are grateful to the Civil Service for making data available to us on gender breakdown by department and grade, gender breakdown of SCS staff leaving the Civil Service and leaving particular departments, and the overall balance of men and women in the SCS over the past ten years; this is in addition to the wealth of qualitative data and policy documents we have been supplied with to support our research.

Interview data suggested that it is also the case that some women are not putting themselves forward for more senior jobs. Our aim was to support this with quantitative data, such as the number of male and female applicants for promotions and the success rates of each group, and information from exit interviews such as reason for leaving. The intention was to understand whether women are ‘opting out’ of applying for promotion or whether they are applying without success (and at what stage of the selection process they are unsuccessful).

The information we requested was not available and we understand that this is not collected and recorded. To inform future research and to monitor the success of the gender diversity strategy, we have included among our recommendations on Page 33 that more data be gathered and published both to increase transparency and drive reform.

Workforce modelling

To help understand the scale of the challenge we also undertook some workforce modelling to see the impact of positive action on workforce demographics. In summary, if the Civil Service were to insist that from today the proportion of new roles to be filled by female candidates be increased by 5% per annum (assuming 5% turnover) then parity would be achieved in 2025 by which time 80% of all promotion successes / posts would need to be filled by women. If we were to be even more aggressive and insist that the proportion filled by female candidates increase by 10% per annum then parity would be achieved by 2022 by which time 96% of all posts would need to be filled by women.

This suggests that setting targets is necessary, but not sufficient, to stimulate the scale of change required.

Progress is still better than most other employers and numbers of female leaders as a proportion of the whole are increasing slightly

The diagram below shows the percentage of women in senior positions in a selection of organisations and sectors in the UK. The Senior Civil Service is behind only secondary education and public appointments in terms of the ratio of senior male to female employees, and is ahead of the whole UK workforce.

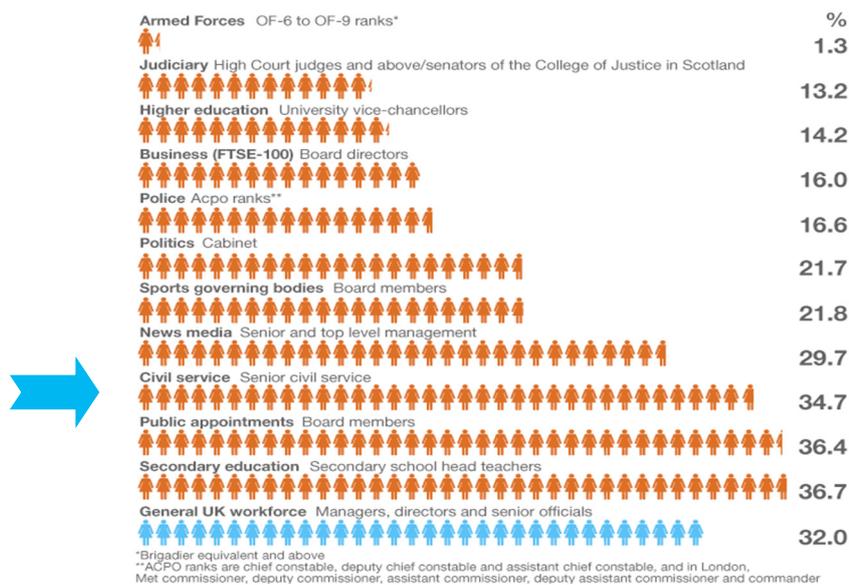


Figure 2: Comparison of SCS vs. other employers on gender diversity [Source: BBC⁶]

Male/female gender breakdown over time

Data provided by the Civil Service shows that, in the past ten years, the percentage of female SCS staff has increased slowly but steadily. The below graph contains data for the whole SCS from 2003 to 2013.

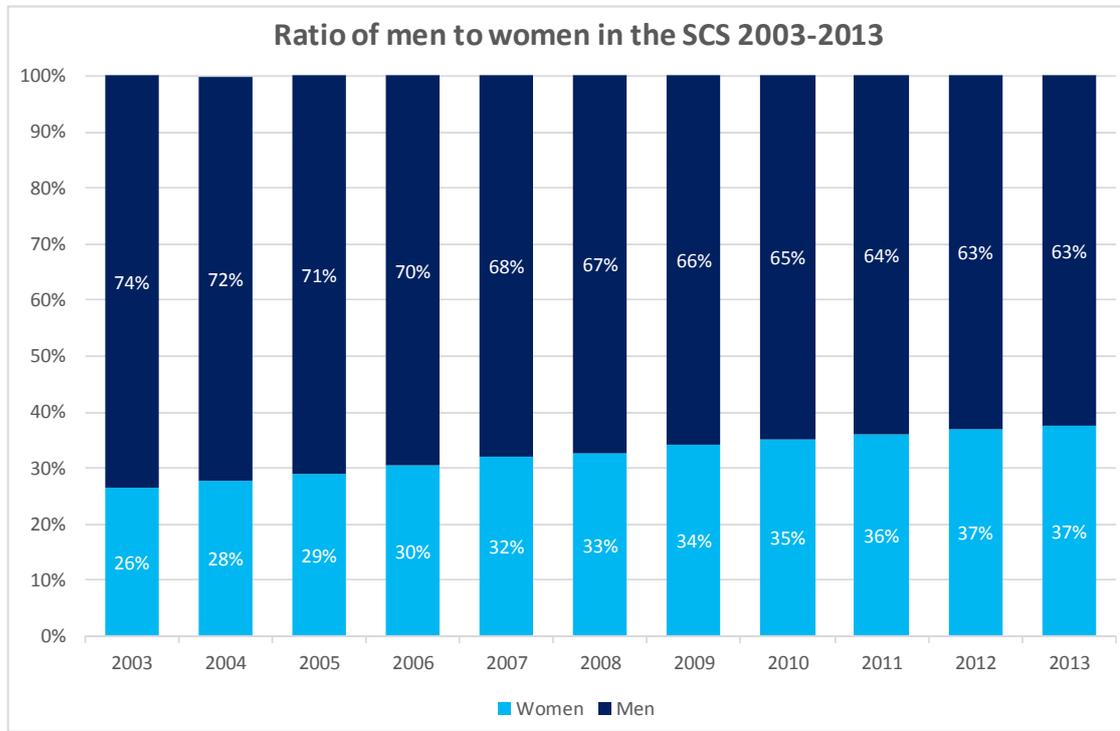


Figure 3: Ratio of men to women in the SCS 2003 - 2013

We also reviewed the change in gender breakdown over time by SCS grade (please refer to Page 37 of the Appendices to see this information in graphical form). At Deputy Director, Director and Director General and above levels, the percentage of women versus men has increased steadily since 2005. The balance is less favourable at more senior grades and there is clearly still much progress to be made to reach gender parity, particularly at DG level and above, but it is encouraging at least that the balance for each grade is getting better over time, not worse.

A study of the data on men and women leaving employment with the SCS showed that there is little difference between the two groups. In absolute terms there are more men leaving the SCS than women but this is to be expected given that the total headcount of men is also much greater. As a percentage of the total headcount for their gender, the figures are broadly similar with a slightly higher turnover of male employees.

Conclusion: The current challenge is not just about women, it is about work

- Hay Group's brief was to uncover the blockages to progression facing senior women in the Civil Service. Whilst we have used gender diversity as the lens through which to see the issues, we expect that the findings are equally applicable to other groups of staff too. Having completed the research, we feel the real challenge facing Ministers and those leading the Civil Service is as follows:

- | |
|---|
| 1. The Civil Service is losing significant talent due to its culture and ways of working. |
| 2. This is a deep seated and systemic challenge requiring a profound change in leadership capability. |
| 3. There is a risk that if this is not addressed the Civil Service will no longer be fit for purpose. |

- On the following pages we provide evidence and observations in support of these statements.
- Most similar research projects (and there have been many) across all sectors of the economy focus on problem definition and building a business case. In our view, insufficient attention to date has been spent on practical recommendations to seize the opportunity to help organisations evolve. We address this directly in **Chapter 6: Recommendations**.

3. Research objectives and design

Your statement of requirements set out clear expectations for the project. They are copied below:

- Provide a hard hitting diagnosis and analysis on issues preventing the most talented people succeeding in the Civil Service at Grade 7 and above.
- Recommend a specific set of actions on how to improve gender diversity at senior levels that will form the basis of a new Diversity Strategy and refreshed Talent Strategy. In particular:

1. Examine current practice in how the Civil Service identifies, develops, deploys and promotes its talent including: recruitment, retention, performance management, selection for senior posts and how workplace practice affects progression at all levels.
2. Evaluate the success of current interventions in removing blockages to progression and make recommendations for any changes needed. This should include an analysis distinguishing between what happens in principle and in practice.
3. Highlight learning from other major employers who have tackled this issue successfully and provide understanding of how this learning could be applied to the Civil Service.
4. Recommend an action plan to remove blockages to talent succeeding. This will address identified problems faced by the Civil Service and inform a refreshed Talent Strategy.
5. Ensure findings are prepared in time to support senior officials in the preparation of a new Diversity Strategy that reflects the research.

Conceptual approach

- In order to examine the root causes of the blockages facing talented women in the Civil Service, we gathered and analysed the data based on three themes:

Policy intent	The strategies, policies and direction set by those running the Senior Civil Service in order to build an effective organisation(s).
Practice	The translation of intent into practice by leaders and managers within the Senior Civil Service.
Perception	People's perception is their reality of their experiences in the Civil Service and we wanted to test employees' interpretation of policy and practice.

Research undertaken

All work below has been completed between 4th March 2014 and 8th May 2014. More detailed analysis from some of these activities can be found in the Appendices.

Target group	Dataset	Purpose
Senior stakeholder interviews	26 including 10 Permanent Secretaries, Sir Jeremy Heywood, Sir Bob Kerslake, Lord Browne, other SCSs and Ministers. <i>See Appendix A for full list</i>	To understand direction of travel and policy intent
HR professionals interviews	Chris Last, William Hague, James Norton, Jeanette Durbin, Rochelle Fisher, Janet Hill, Debbie Alder, Debra Lang	To understand current policy intent
Analysis of existing documentation	24 documents reviewed. <i>See Appendix B for full list</i>	To understand impact of current practice and policy intent
Analysis of best practices in diversity and talent management from major employers globally (private and public sectors)	A wide range of sources from published studies to individual company case studies and Hay Group's own library	To benchmark current policy and practice against the wider market and identify those approaches which the Civil Service can learn from
Analysis of workforce data	A wide range of data provided by HR and the Cabinet Office	To understand impact of current practice
Line manager interviews at Director / Deputy Director grade	15 complete	To test practice
SCS pulse survey	791 respondents	To test perception
Focus Groups of Grade 5/6/7 staff	197 staff invited to focus groups 61 attendees <i>Led by PDT</i>	To understand perceptions
3 hour behavioural event interviews* with Grade 6/7 women	10 complete	To identify high performing behaviours in women

* An in-depth (2.5-3 hour) interview which asks candidates to re-tell experiences that fit certain probes such as "tell me about a time that you were successful". As the candidate re-tells the experience, an assessor listens for behavioural competency evidence and probes at certain points to ensure they understand exactly what the person did and his/her thinking behind why they did what they did. This serves as the primary source of evidence when evaluating a candidate for competencies, critical success factors, and potential. The technique uses a set protocol, rules and guidelines to ensure consistency and to structure the interview; a scoring technique is used to analyse interview data for evidence of competencies.

4. Findings: Overview

- In order to analyse the data, we undertook two ‘concept formation’ days with Hay Group experts in relevant fields, and the People Development Team, to understand the data and draw insights. This was complemented by a review of publicly available literature on the topic, for example, including a recently published study of the same topic undertaken by the Australian Government⁷. Putting it all together we have identified eight inter-related findings:

1.	There has been good recent progress on talent management processes.
2.	HR policies largely support women but their application varies by department and manager.
3.	Women are less satisfied with the application of policy than men.
4.	Talented women want to progress in the SCS and offer compelling leadership capabilities.
5.	Significant numbers of people (men and women) are choosing to opt out of more senior roles in the SCS.
6.	The rhetoric does not match reality on skills and behaviours.
7.	Leaders aren’t leading.
8.	The SCS culture is described by many as a ‘bear-pit’.

- We conclude that organisational performance is being held back by a leadership climate in which some groups of staff are unconsciously discriminated against; what some would call institutional bias.
- Between the presentation of the Interim Report and this report we tested the findings with a number of prominent Civil Service leaders including Sir Jeremy Heywood, Sir Bob Kerlake, Jon Thompson and Oliver Robbins. Whilst we experienced a challenge in terms of tone of language, a desire for greater data analysis and an understandable need for specific recommendations, all the stakeholders we interviewed broadly accepted the thrust of the findings above and want to take action to improve the leadership, culture and talent pipeline within the SCS.
- We have elaborated on each of these headline findings on the following pages.

1. Good recent progress on talent management processes

- Civil Service policies and mechanics on talent management and gender diversity are broadly in line with good practice. Circa 7% of all SCS staff are involved in them (c. 242 out of c. 3,500 SCS staff are on CS HPS talent programmes). The new future and senior leaders' programmes are welcome additions and progress has been made to strengthen the corporate talent offer. This should pay dividends in the medium term.
- In Hay Group's online survey 47% of respondents stated that promotion decisions are made fairly which, although low, is 7% greater than high performing companies in our database.
- However, **talent governance needs more energy, more objective data, more focus.** Interviewees involved with these fora stated that they do not meet frequently enough, do not have sufficiently high quality data and conversations are not rich enough.

"The Senior Leadership Committee is too detached, does not meet frequently or formally enough; it needs revamping."

SLC Member

"Talent processes are good, but they need much more heart."

Director General

- The career implications of not being on a talent programme are unclear and there is a potential 'halo effect' if you are.
- Talented individuals that may be facing blockages will almost certainly be managed by those who are not on talent programmes. Increasing the capability of all SCS leaders should be a priority as good line management has been shown to be a key factor in retaining talent.
- More fundamentally, talent management processes appear to be operating in a wider organisational vacuum. Translation of future business requirements into a talent strategy for the most senior roles is not clear. The current 'C21 project' to define current and future organisational culture will be of value here but currently there is no obvious answer to the question '**what are we developing talent for?**'

2. HR policies largely support women but application varies by department and manager

- HR policies like flexible working, part time working, and job sharing and compressed hours are positive. They are broadly in line with leading practice. However, the interpretation of these policies by department and line manager varies enormously. For example on return to work after maternity leave, our online survey identified lack of contact while away and frustration with IT, whilst some respondents had very supportive managers.

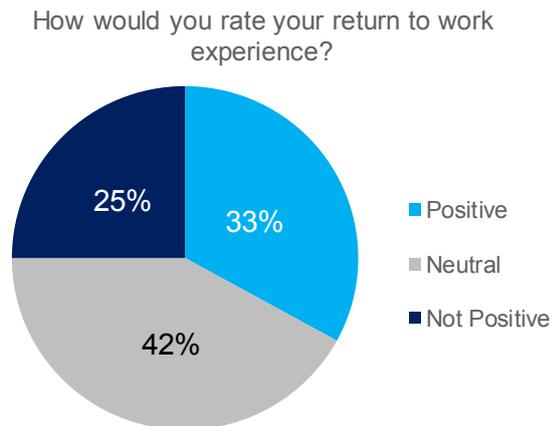


Figure 4: Survey breakdown of return to work experiences

- Interview evidence shows that the years between 28 and 40 are critical to building a reputation. Also those that step off the career track (maybe for childcare) are not seen as 'serious' and do not get picked up for talent programmes.
- People don't believe what the policies say when it comes to promotion.**

"I did apply for a job at a senior grade and was told afterwards by the DG that I did not get an interview because I would have performed better than preferred candidate – it was his turn for promotion ... I have not applied for anything since."

Female survey respondent

"There is the stated way that promotions are made (competence based) and the way that they are really made (personal recommendation and cronyism) - sometimes the two happily overlap but often the latter approach is used but made to look like the former. And I'm speaking as someone who has very much benefited from the current system."

Male survey respondent

"HR sends me all this paperwork but it makes no sense to me; I know what I am looking for in a person and recruit for it."

Senior stakeholder

3. Perceptions of policy application vary significantly by gender

The below graph uses data taken from Hay Group’s online SCS Pulse Survey, which all SCS staff (male and female) were invited to complete as part of the research for this project.

It shows the difference between male and female responses to certain key questions, and for comparison includes data points for the high performing norm of private sector organisations.

From this graph it is clear that women in the SCS are significantly less convinced that certain Civil Service policies and values are being applied than their male counterparts. High performing company benchmarks (comprising organisations such as Deutsche Bank, Vodafone and Nestle) is shown for comparison.

The survey had 791 respondents in total.

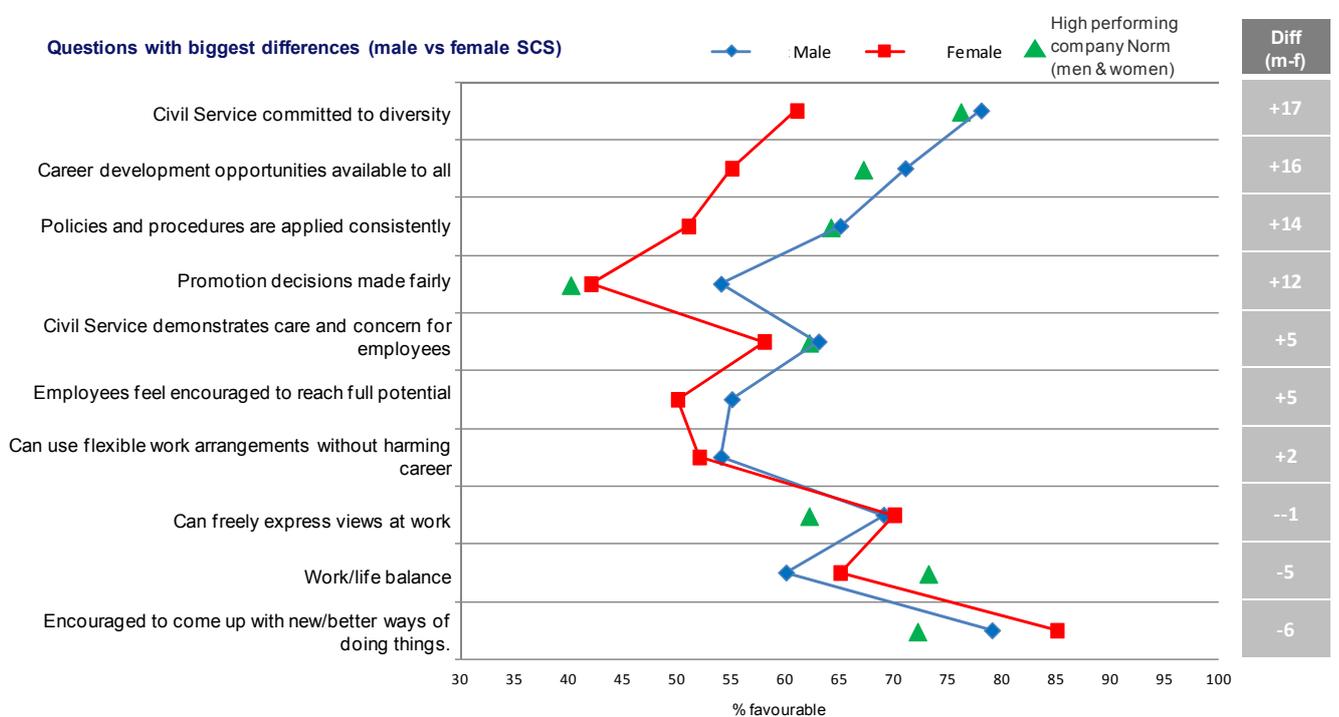
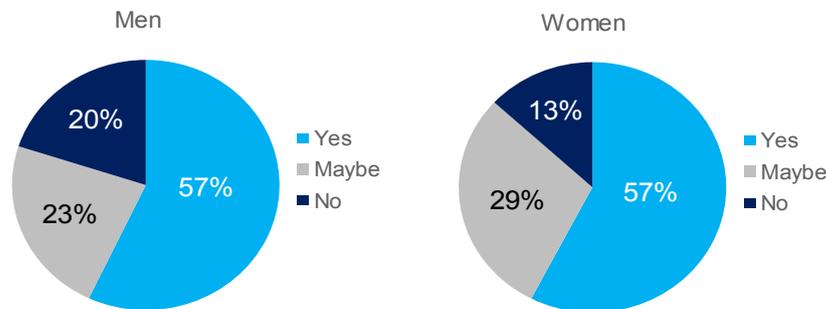


Figure 5: Benchmarked survey questions on perceptions of policy application

4. Talented women want to progress and offer compelling leadership capabilities

- The behavioural event interviews with 10 talented women at Grade 6 and 7 highlighted the following common behavioural competencies: achievement, team leadership, impact and influence, self-confidence, integrity and being very values driven (they want to make a difference). In short, women want to and are able to deliver, but they are also good at bringing people with them and have authenticity.
- Other Hay Group studies into the differences between male and female leaders have similarly shown that successful women typically display a broader range of leadership styles than men. We are not aware of any evidence to suggest that they are any better, or worse, at the core Civil Service business of policy making.
- Furthermore, the online survey showed that, within the SCS, men and women are equally driven to progress into more senior roles.



Are you interested in progressing to a more senior leadership role?

Figure 6: Attitudes to promotion

- Therefore, if the talent pool of men and women entering the SCS are equally capable, and equally committed to progression, **we are led to ask what it is in the climate that prevents them reaching the most senior roles.**

5. Significant numbers of men and women are choosing to opt out of more senior roles in the SCS

- The online survey and focus groups consistently showed that some people are choosing not to apply for more senior roles. The reasons for this include:
 - Work life balance. 100% of female focus group members mentioned work life balance as a concern.
 - A perception of the need to compromise personal values (see People Survey results⁸). This was also a key finding from related work conducted in the Home Office⁹.
 - Lack of role models who they identify with. This is evidenced by the limited number of Director General and especially Permanent Secretary level roles filled by women.
 - Their perceived lack of fit with the culture (see Finding 8).
 - Pay and reward (from the People Survey and focus group findings).

“I was offered the opportunity to go out on secondment at Director level, and this promotion was blocked by my line manager on the grounds that the team was too busy and could not spare me. This is in the context of a moratorium on promotion opportunities to Director level inside the Department. I have been told that there will be promotions becoming available in 18 months’ time; as a result I am looking to leave in the next 6 months.”

Survey respondent

“To my great regret, when bright young G6s and G7s ask me how they can actually advance their careers, I have been telling them to go out on secondment, or to leave outright, as I see no scope for advancement in the Department in the next 12 months (minimum).”

Survey respondent

“My current line management chain is female and without exception they work extremely long hours including weekends. This is clearly the expectation of senior leaders in this organisation.”

Survey respondent

“I would not want to join the culture. It's really insidious and I have witnessed too many women fail. Women I have admired, women who have succeeded previously. All torn apart, all gone. It's a hideous male macho culture at the top... It's the first time in 25 years I have seen it this bad. I don't want to join that.”

Survey respondent

- Whilst it is desirable to have natural turnover and for some staff to stay in their current role, the wealth of data in support of this finding strongly suggests that some talent is going to waste.
- In sum, **many conclude that the reward is not worth the investment.**

6. Rhetoric does not match reality on skills and behaviours

- In our view the Civil Service is unconsciously alienating a proportion of its talent, in particular the talent dedicated to public service and with the front-line, operational and project skills it requires (which are often the things that women value too). The following diagram describes today's situation:

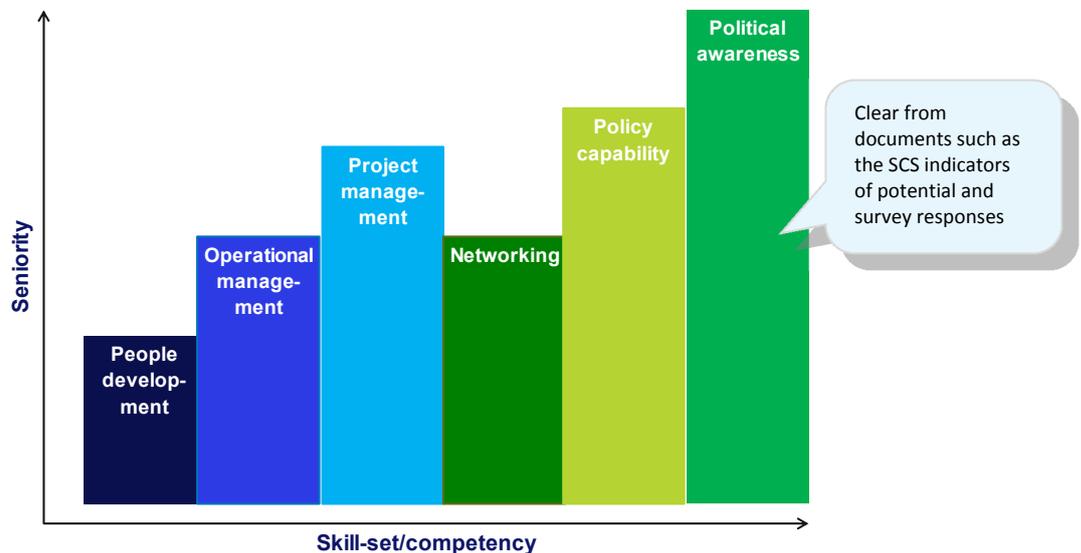


Figure 7: Schematic of what gets valued as one becomes more senior

- Work currently underway to increase professionalism and increase frontline / private sector experience has the potential to help enormously here. Currently, however, the corporate aspect of a role within the senior leadership (cf. professional expertise) is missing. As one Director General stated, *“the Civil Service needs to understand the difference between talent i.e. future leaders, and high performance and professional expertise”*.
- So while progress has been made on strengthening the ‘corporate centre’ in this Parliament, the leadership behaviour and role definition of those at the centre still requires further work. In particular, survey respondents, focus group attendees and interviewees all report mixed messages about what success looks like and what gets valued: the espoused language and literature is medium term, making change happen and focusing on real world outcomes. However, what people see in practice is leaders with an ambition to make a short-term impact and be close to their Minister in the knowledge that they will likely move jobs in the next couple of years.
- The real challenge here is to define more tightly the leadership requirements of SCS roles and accountability. Progress has been made at Permanent Secretary level on this, but at Deputy Director and Director level the pull to focus on policy is felt more strongly. At present, much like attitudes to promotion, members of the SCS do not believe the rhetoric about what skills and behaviours are required to get on.

“The service, politicians, and their advisors are used to behaving and doing things in a certain way and therefore promote based on what they know and do. This involves... promoting these good task achievers rather than great managers or leaders.”

Survey respondent

7. Leaders are not leading

- The nature of the Civil Service’s departmental structure with Accounting Officers, Ministers, Committees and Boards, together with a hugely diverse portfolio of responsibilities, makes the role of leadership perhaps more challenging than almost any other organisational setting.
- But if anything this makes leadership more important than ever. The Civil Service has recognised this and has put additional effort into it. However, the fact remains that leadership is crowded out by other activities for the majority of SCS staff and capability is inconsistent. As one interviewee noted *“at departmental level we have 10 people reviewing the performance and potential of 600”*. The evidence in support of this is significant, ranging from the People Survey results to verbatim comments, to focus group data. We concur with the 2013 NAO report on SCS capability¹⁰ that states *“the SCS is not yet a unified leadership group”*, and the more recent Institute for Government report on leading change in the Civil Service¹¹.
- This lack of leadership has a number of significant consequences in relation to this project:
 - It means that talented women (or others) are not necessarily spotted, mentored and developed; application of the 9 box grid is optional for some departments. We know that the Home Office, for example, has been trying to understand the benefits and limitations of the 9 box grid as a talent tool as they are aware that some talented individuals are being missed as part of the current process.
 - It creates an organisational vacuum where success is individually defined over the team (see *next page*). In environments such as this, studies have shown that men tend to be promoted more than women.
 - It leads survey respondents to emphasise role modelling values and working together as the two most important aspects of making a more senior leadership role more attractive. There is a desire for greater authenticity (also showing in the People Survey results). One interviewee commented *“the skill of the senior Civil Servant is to say one thing and do something completely different”*.

<i>What would make a more senior leadership role more attractive?</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Senior leaders are supportive and role model our values	69	64	77
A culture where shared responsibility and working together is more highly valued	57	49	65

Figure 8: Percentage of survey respondents who selected this option (from 11)

“The SCS needs to understand that the very nature of our constitution means that the interface between the SCS and the elected government might be robust. It is up to the SCS to develop leaders at different stages of their careers to manage these relationships and to support them in the process.”

Permanent Secretary

8. An SCS culture described by many as a ‘bear pit’

- On transitioning into the SCS, many women (and men) experience a culture which they define as a ‘bear-pit’ and in which they find it harder to stand out from the crowd without compromising their values.
- SCS culture is certainly not homogenous, but at more senior levels there are common features that focus group members and survey respondents identified. They defined this culture as: individualistic, arrogant, detached, macho, competitive, smart, sharp elbowed, contrary to the Civil Service values and heavily networked.
- The SCS indicators of potential¹² could be seen as having unconscious bias within them (some language especially – e.g. “willingly grabs accountability” and “doesn’t fade under the spotlight”). Whilst they may be an accurate reflection of what it takes to get on in the current environment, we would question whether they are fit for purpose for the future Civil Service.
- Analysis of some initial work completed as part of the C21 project to define current and future culture shows that ‘intellect, and very talented individuals’ are features to be retained, yet leadership does not feature as either something to be retained, nor something to be changed.
- Finally, interviewees and survey respondents perceived (validly or otherwise) that two female Permanent Secretaries who recently left the Service, were seen to be scapegoats for failing to deliver.

“Things have changed again particularly over the last 5 years...I have seen the culture become more and more macho. The rise of certain individuals, male, white and hugely opinionated, who do not like anyone questioning them, challenging them has put us back to the dark ages. Women are back to being told they are mouthy, aggressive or not leaders when they disagree or display softer inclusive leadership skills. I have worked at senior level in three departments and have seen this in all.”

Survey respondent

“Long hours, machismo and presenteeism is still very much part of the culture for both genders, particularly in SCS feeder grades 6/7 where officials are really trying to make a name for themselves.”

Survey respondent

“The culture in the SCS is very cut-throat and underhand. It is not open and truthful. Honest conversations are not had because if they were to be had you might reveal your hand and undermine your longer term position or get caught out. It’s too risky to be truthful. This has created a culture where things aren’t questioned and challenge can get you into trouble. It’s a relationship business rather than a delivery business.”

Survey respondent

Concluding remarks from the research findings

We conclude that organisational performance is being held back by a leadership climate in which some groups of staff are unconsciously discriminated against; what some would call institutional bias.

1. Given the findings highlighted in this report we conclude that the Civil Service is unintentionally capping the potential of many of its talented people, including many women.
2. Every female focus group raised unconscious bias amongst leaders in the Civil Service and amongst Ministers as a concern. There is plenty of global research to show that senior people in organisations like to recruit in their own image, and it seems the Civil Service is no different in this regard.
3. Whilst the focus for this work is gender diversity, the evidence suggests that these observations apply equally to other groups of staff who do not thrive in the current prevailing culture.
4. Training may provide part of the answer, but this could be seen as an excuse – a way of saying *'it is not my fault'*. Such training may build awareness, but the more fundamental questions relating to leadership and culture must be addressed if the Civil Service is to continue to lead the way on diversity and talent management.
5. It is a fact that, given current pay constraints, the Civil Service is already losing some talent to other sectors. Whilst this may be unavoidable at the current time, we see no reason why women or those from minority backgrounds should be discriminated against. In doing so, the Civil Service is unintentionally reducing its potential talent pool further still. This will have consequences for the performance of the service and be damaging to its reputation as a leading employer, and one of the most professional and respected institutions in the world.

5. Learning from other major employers

Introduction

So far in this report, the focus has been on activity and behaviour within the SCS. However, this needs to be complemented with an external perspective from other major employers around the world so that best practice can be applied to the unique context of the Civil Service. This was achieved by a literature review of relevant documents and discussion with Hay Group's client partners for major global organisations. We analysed this data firstly through the lens of diversity and then talent management.

On gender diversity

Gender diversity has been on the agenda of most major employers for several decades. Most are doing the basics, some have taken more advanced approaches and won awards from organisations such as Catalyst for doing so (the not for profit organisation with a mission to expand opportunities for women), but few have systematically addressed the fundamental organisational barriers to opportunity and progression for women. It remains one of the great organisational challenges of our time.

The basics

Most are doing the basics:

- Ensuring that recruitment and promotion materials are gender neutral.
- Ensuring that maternity policies are in place and are uniformly adhered to.
- Celebrating role models.
- Ensuring that talent management processes are largely gender neutral and focussed on competencies and performance rather than intangibles.
- Maintaining policies and training which demonstrate that their organisation takes diversity seriously.

Advanced approaches

A number of major employers have taken more advanced approaches to the subject. Efforts to improve the gender balance in these organisations focus on five key areas:

1. Investing senior leadership in the issue;
2. Improving their approach to flexible working;
3. Better supporting maternity leave and mothers and others returning to work;
4. Providing mentoring, training and networking opportunities; and,
5. The use of targets and/or quotas and the role of accountability.

Investing senior leader leadership in the issue

All experts in the area agree that without senior leaders leading efforts to improve the gender balance little happens.

- At **Unilever**, the CEO, COO and Chief Human Resources Officer have a gender balance objective in their annual performance score-card and therefore bonus. Furthermore, all senior leaders hold their direct reports to account for achieving gender balance targets¹³.
- At **Aviva**, all executive committee members each mentor a woman who is two to three levels down from them in the organisation¹⁴.
- At **PwC**, executive board members are responsible for developing personal development and career plans for two or three female junior partners¹⁵.

Improving the approach to flexible working

A more flexible approach to designing roles and scheduling work improves the likelihood that work can be carried out by a broader range of people – including women. As such, organisations have, to some degree, embraced flexible working as a way to retain talent. The barriers to the adoption of more flexible working are rarely practical. Instead a lack of imagination about how work can be delivered and a reluctance on the part of managers to have work delivered in a different way limit the uptake of flexible working practices.

- In parts of **AstraZeneca** as well as other organisations an “if not, why not?” approach to requests for flexible working has been adopted. The organisation assumes that flexible working is a good thing and is possible and managers are expected to explain why flexible working is not possible¹⁶.
- At **RBS** a “work shaped around you” approach, called “RBS Choice” has been taken. Its purpose is to encourage managers to enable flexible working (using technology where available) and the emphasis is on enabling flexible working for all employees¹⁷.
- The **US government** has introduced the Telework Enhancement Act which facilitates federal employees’ management of family obligations and enables employees to devote time to work (such as in the event of a national emergency) by supporting them in their ‘home life’¹⁸.

Better support during maternity leave and upon returning to work

Many women are lost from organisations’ talent pools because employers fail to acknowledge, plan for and facilitate changed circumstances for people returning to work. Some organisations have gone further than others to improve the experience.

- Several companies, including **IBM**, offer mothers on leave access to a specific mentor and continue with the cycle of monthly development reviews during their absence thus ensuring continuity when they return¹⁹.
- At **Ernst & Young** coaching is provided, at all levels of the organisation, for women with children. A session with a coach is held prior to maternity leave commencing, with another offered upon their return and another two within 2 years upon returning to work. The purpose of the sessions is to prepare and enable women to prosper in their career at this life-changing time²⁰.
- **Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley and Credit Suisse**²¹ have all realised that women who have previously left the workforce are a source of untapped talent and so have introduced paid short-term assignments (which may or may not lead to longer term job opportunities) to capture the attention and interest of women who might not want to or feel able to return to work full-time.
- **Australian bank ANZ**²² and **VISA**²³ both offer financial support to employees who have had children. ANZ offer a \$4,000 childcare allowance for returning parents and VISA give employees a bonus payment for each child born.

Mentoring, networking and training

Most experts agree that enabling women to succeed in today's organisations (the status quo) requires offering support and help with mentoring, networking and training. Major employers agree.

- Nearly all **FTSE 50** organisations and most major public sector organisations have a variety of female networking groups and offer mentoring and coaching schemes to women approaching the most senior level in their organisations²⁴.
- The **Austrian Government** has introduced a cross-mentoring programme where 50 of the civil service's senior women are paired with a manager (male or female) from other departments²⁵.

Targets, quotas and accountability

There are mixed views as to the effectiveness and desirability of targets and quotas. Many major employers have informal internal targets in place for different parts of their business or organisation but few have explicit shared or legally required targets. Others however have embraced this approach (or something similar) so as to 'force' the change required. All are agreed however that whilst having leaders embrace the gender balance goal is important, making people accountable for its delivery is even more effective.

- The 30% club consists of a group of chairmen from **FTSE 100** companies who have committed to achieving 30% female representation on their boards²⁶.
- 50% of **OECD countries** have gender diversity targets of some description for their public sector organisations. Most have not gone as far as Germany, Spain and Canada where gender and diversity targets have been put into performance scorecards for senior management²⁷.
- The **European Commission** has launched a variety of schemes to encourage more female appointments at senior levels. Most of these are focussed on women rather than on the institution. However all-male (or all-female) selection panels are not permitted and departments are expected to provide justification where there are no female applicants or where no woman is shortlisted for a role²⁸.
- Informally, many **FTSE 350** companies have internal targets for achieving greater diversity. However these are rarely used to assess the performance of managers.

Addressing the fundamentals

Most major employers are aware of a problem with female under-representation. Most are at a relatively early stage tackling the issue. Legal requirements mean that most have completed the basics and most much larger companies, especially those in the public-eye, have adopted some of the approaches described in the section above. Few however have taken a systematic approach to identifying the cultural barriers which are hindering female progression – and then acted upon them. Whilst no organisation has yet put diversity and talent management at the heart of a review of the processes and procedures which impact individuals' working lives and attitudes both the Australian and New Zealand governments have considered how to address the fundamentals and in the UK, **P&G** have gone further than most.

- In **New Zealand** a study by the government identified that the largest blockage to greater gender parity was the mind-set and behaviour of those involved in government. It was the view of the authors of this study that measuring and addressing this would prove more effective than adopting diversity best practice²⁹.
- In **Australia** the Treasury has adopted the 'Progressing Women Action Plan' to address the lack of women in senior positions in the department. Having found that initiatives concerning flexible working, role-models, child-care provision and the like (such as those described in previous sections) had not delivered they embarked upon a whole-scale review of the Treasury's culture. Uncomfortable truths and perceptions were uncovered but identifying these led to progress: unconscious bias training is mandatory for all managers at all levels; all managers are accountable for creating an 'inclusive workforce' and have their performance measured against this accountability; and an 'if not, why not' approach to flexible working requests has been adopted³⁰.

- At **P&G UK** a systematic review of roles and working conditions was undertaken. The goal was to see whether or not it would be possible to accommodate a broader range of roles (more part-time and shared roles), different hours (rather than 9-5) and places of work for employees so as to enable a more diverse range of people to work for them without increasing cost or failing to deliver the work which needed doing. P&G UK found that it was possible to accommodate different working practices – and therefore a wider range of people – without detriment to the business and with improvements in engagement from employees³¹.

Application to the Civil Service

Public sector organisations, including the Civil Service, pioneered much of the basic and advanced practice described above. Many of the advanced practices we have listed above are already commonplace in the Civil Service, especially those which relate to flexible working, maternity leave, mentoring, networking and training. The next step is to ensure that senior leaders are invested in the diversity agenda, accountable for delivering on it and adopting a more imaginative approach to leadership, work and people. The recommendations in this report describe how the Civil Service might go about addressing the fundamentals and if adopted would put the Civil Service at the cutting-edge of practice.

On talent management

There is no universally understood and recognised definition for the term ‘talent management’. At one extreme, to some major employers the term can mean simply ensuring that there is a process to promote people into roles, whereas at the other it is about ensuring there is a plan and scheme of work which allows the organisation to make the very most of their people during the course of delivering today’s strategy and in future at the other.

In a recent Hay Group survey of Directors and HR professionals in private, public and third sector organisations³², respondents were asked to identify their HR practices on a scale of ‘basic’ to ‘cutting edge’. For the talent management area, 35% of respondents chose ‘basic’; 7% chose advanced and none felt their practices were ‘cutting edge’. The scores for talent management were lower than for all other HR practice areas (such as learning and development, performance management and reward and resourcing and workforce planning) and it was in this area that most respondents felt more investment was required. It is safe to say that practice in talent management is varied and in many cases is in its infancy. However, we can identify basic and advanced or interesting approaches.

Hay Group is one of the world’s largest providers of advice and services in the area of talent management. Our corporate clients include RBS, Vodafone, Unilever and BAE Systems in the UK and Microsoft, Santander, Pfizer, Caterpillar and Johnson & Johnson internationally and we also work with a variety of non-corporate clients including the NHS in the UK, the Obama administration in the US and the United Nations internationally. Our experience suggests there is a spectrum of developing practice as described below. We have indicated in blue where, based on our experience to date, we believe you are today:

Area of talent management	Basic	Advanced	Cutting edge
A Practices which focus on strategic orientation of talent			
Talent strategy	Talent plan aligned to corporate strategy	Talent strategy and business strategy are integrated	Strategic choices informed by talent insight and forecasting (for example resource-based strategy formulation)
Employer brand	Have one	Are the employer of choice for talent needed today	Employer brand and proposition shifts to fit changing business requirements
B Practices which indicate an ability to know what talent you need, what you've got and what it's good for			
Ability to attract talent	Can attract for most roles	Generally able to attract talent	No issues. Roles filled internally
Ability to select talent	Subjective. Line manager views predominate	Talent discussed in talent forums and relies on objective data	Talent dialogue permeates organisation. Measures calibrated and shared across organisation and benchmarked externally
C Practices which enable you to build talent capability			
Development of talent	Tactical. No ROI	Significant investment. Some ROI	Linked to strategy and deliver tangible benefits and ROI
Measurement of value	In place but not linked to ROI	Investments known. Some ROI	Selected investments driven by strategy and operations with ROI known
D Practices which enable you to get talent to where it is most needed			
Retention of talent	Can retain selected talent	Can retain most talent	Retain all talent and proactively manage turnover
Ownership and leadership	HR owned	Senior manager owned. HR supported.	Core to senior management roles supported
Systems to support	Limited and unconnected	Integrated	Flexible with industrial scale capacity

Figure 9: Table of talent management practices. Assessment of Civil Service practice is shown in blue.

The current position of the Civil Service is similar to that of most private sector organisations and ahead of the majority of other public sector organisations. Most major employers still primarily focus their talent management efforts on senior leaders (focussed on selection, retention, succession planning and development), on high-potential employees (focused on selection and development) and specialists with hard to find skills (focused on attraction and retention). The use of equivalent tools to those found in the Civil Service Talent Toolkit e.g. the 9 box grid is common-place and aids these talent management activities. However there are no organisations we are aware of which display cutting-edge talent management in all of the areas described above. Some organisations are more advanced than others in their practice however:

- At **Santander** there is an explicit expectation that the business-planning and strategy cycle includes consideration of existing and required talent needs. The 'people plan' is driven by future expectations as well as current need³³.
- Senior managers at **Sky** are managed for talent purposes as one single group. As in most government departments, senior managers have the opportunity to carry out 'key actions' such as secondments and special projects. However, these opportunities are managed centrally³⁴.
- **Severn Trent** has migrated its talent management processes online enabling it to connect together performance management outcomes and talent review processes. This has enabled managers to better distinguish achievement from potential and to take ownership of talent management to a greater degree than was possible in the past³⁵.
- **Supergroup** have adopted a monthly cycle whereby manager conversations with people are based on their ABCD model (Achievements, Benefits, Concerns, Do next). The aim here is to emphasise continual improvement and to make talent management conversations part of business as usual rather than an annual or bi-annual event³⁶.
- The **US Presidential Appointee Leadership Programme**, authorised by the Presidential Transition Act of 2000, is designed to help top presidential appointees be more effective and successful in their roles. Hay Group was appointed to help with multiple phases of the programme, which aimed to create a culture of collaboration and accountability for the administration, with a focus on teamwork, building relationships and growing cross-government networks.
 - The first session of the Obama administration's programme, attended by about 60 top White House staff and Cabinet heads, was held in August 2009, and focused on how participants could work together more effectively to advance the administration's goals. During the event, participants heard from the president and vice president, and discussed how they could be more successful, both in their individual roles and as members of the president's senior team. Phase II of the initiative focussed on the next level of presidential appointees – approximately 650 individuals in various agencies and departments.
 - This work was similar to projects that are undertaken by top executive teams in the private sector and required honest and open recognition of what was and wasn't working, and what needed to be done to be more effective both as a team and as individuals³⁷.
- At **Facebook** gaining a manager position is a lateral move rather than a promotion. This enables Facebook to emphasise the importance of competence in role and maintain the interest of employees who are good at what they do but are not natural managers or leaders and so retain good people who might otherwise become frustrated and leave³⁸.
- At **IBM** those identified as talented are able to adopt a number of different managerial and technical career paths. This gives individuals a better perspective on the choices they might make and enables senior management, supported by HR, to map future requirements with reference to individuals rather than 'names on a sheet of paper'³⁹.
- At **IBM** formal workforce planning takes place based on a five year plan and a one-year outlook⁴⁰.
- At **Dorothy Perkins** talent management practices more typically used at senior levels were amended and developed to suit store managers. The best leaders as measured by reference to their leadership style had 12% higher sales growth, 10% more operating savings, 35% lower stock loss, 17% lower staff turnover and 40% lower absenteeism levels⁴¹.

- Until recently, **National College of School Leadership** measured the ROI on participants in its talent programmes. Secondary schools supported by National Leaders of Education improved GCSE results by nearly twice as much of those not receiving this support⁴².

Application to the Civil Service

The existing approach to talent management in the Civil Service mirrors that of many other major employers. The policy approach, governance process, tools developed and the programmes ran are similar to those used in other major employers. Where the Civil Service most obviously differs from other major employers is that talent is not managed centrally with resources shared across the organisation. With such a high dependence on its people there is an opportunity for the Civil Service to better manage talent (in line with the approach described in the cutting edge category above) so as to deliver a better, more cost-effective service to the government and tax-payer and a better experience of work for both talented women and men.

6. Recommendations

Overview

In this chapter we set out the five clusters of recommendations with more detailed actions beneath. To create these we have drawn on the findings of our research on the Senior Civil Service and learnings from other major employers, as well as developing current best practice within the Civil Service.

They were tested and subsequently developed with a group of five female Director Generals on 6th May 2014.

Recommendation 1: Establish a more inclusive leadership climate by improving clarity of purpose, vision and values for the Top 200

The role of the Civil Service leader is currently not clear. This leads to inconsistency in leadership impact throughout the SCS. By leadership we mean the ability of your Senior Civil Servants to set direction, create and lead high performing teams, influence ministers, collaborate with others (both in and outside the HM Government) and successfully lead and develop individuals. Until this role is clarified and understood by all, leadership activities will continue to be crowded out by the many other demands on time. Furthermore, the question of ‘talent for what?’ will remain unclear, impacting on the ability of the Civil Service to take a strategic approach to talent management. In order to address these challenges we make the following recommendations:

- 1.1 One of the challenges facing senior civil servants is that they are pulled in many different directions due to the absence of what most organisations would describe as a corporate strategy which senior leaders can align themselves with. Whilst our democratic constitution does not easily allow for such a formulation, it is of note that there is no committee of the Cabinet charged with oversight of the corporate leadership of the Civil Service. Whilst the Civil Service Board provides executive oversight, collective Ministerial oversight, corporate leadership expectations and opportunities for collaboration are less clear. **A committee of the HMG’s Cabinet may offer such a forum** and, within this, talent and diversity would be a key agenda item. As an alternative, the lead non-executives could be engaged more actively in this agenda.
- 1.3 The focus for this research has been gender diversity and, within that, the role of leadership and culture has been highlighted as a major finding. However, it has not been possible to **examine in sufficient depth the role of Ministerial leadership in setting the climate within the SCS**. This is something interviewees and survey respondents repeatedly referred to as a major factor in creating the SCS climate and culture. Therefore, a project should be undertaken to complete this piece of work so that Ministers and Civil Service leaders can work together to create clarity and direction for SCS staff.
- 1.4 **Establish a training programme for shadow Ministers and backbench MPs** on (1) leadership in government and (2) the gender and diversity challenge facing the Civil Service. This would serve the purpose of helping any incoming administration understand their leadership role for the Civil Service more clearly.
- 1.5 **Civil Service leaders should be more demanding of the Top 200 and carve out more time dedicated to corporate leadership activities**. There is a need for the Top 200 to create the environment in which all talent can prosper. The Reform Plan provided the basis for some of this work, but the next step is to create a stronger sense of purpose that has enduring value to the SCS beyond the political cycle. For example:

- More opportunities should be created for the Top 200 to meet and develop corporate and inclusive approaches to (1) governance (2) leadership (3) talent & workforce and (4) what it means to be a civil servant in the 21st century.
- The findings of the C21 programme should help determine the future shape of the Civil Service. A practical outcome from this work needs to be a set of job descriptions for SCS roles that articulates clearly and consistently the leadership work that needs to be done at all levels from Pay Band 5 to Permanent Secretary. Equally, the cultural findings of this research should be built into any wider programme.

1.5 **Establish symbolic measures that signify the importance of being part of the Top 200 and SCS.** Very practically, this might include establishing distribution lists and communication channels (email etc.) for the SCS and separately for the Top 200.

Recommendation 2: Reduce variability in SCS leadership capability so that the best talent can prosper

People entering senior line management roles need to undergo a comprehensive development programme to be able to manage their people well. Civil Service Learning already provides this type of support and it should be mandated to help leaders understand what good leadership looks like in the SCS. It should also include modules on understanding unconscious bias. Beyond this, there is a requirement to make greater use of supporting processes and systems. For example, the unique contribution that a people manager brings to the Civil Service needs to be recognised and rewarded through the performance management system.

This project has shown that there is variability in the application of promotion processes, in particular there is evidence of individuals being promoted into management roles solely because they are high performers in their area of expertise. This needs to become much more balanced with the capability of those who demonstrate the behaviours and personal values needed to successfully manage others. Current pay and reward mechanisms may mean the only promotional route for experts is to go into line management. Hence, it may be necessary to look for a different approach to pay and reward that can recognise the equal contribution of expertise leaders and people leaders to the Civil Service (often called 'Y-shaped' career paths). Specific recommendations are:

- 2.1 One of the most critical building blocks leaders need to help develop talent is an **objective measure of the capability of the SCS**. Whilst 9 box grid approaches go some of the way to achieving this, it still lends itself to gaming the system and cannot be benchmarked externally. Leading organisations across the world invest much more heavily in the assessment of the climate individual leaders are creating and challenge them to improve it (climate has been shown to impact organisational performance by up to 30%; it is the closest thing to a profit and loss account for your people). This in addition to behavioural assessment using 360 degree feedback which together provides a more rounded and genuine assessment of performance and potential. For example, some departments (like DfE) already have systems to support 360 degree feedback and these could be deployed universally. Equally, there is also rich data available from the People Survey that could be incorporated into performance management conversations with senior leaders. From an understanding of your SCS bench-strength, it will be possible to create and implement bespoke plans for development and change. This should be piloted in one department initially to prove the concept and will provide you with an objective measure of where you are now and the gap between current capability and the capability needed in the future.
- 2.2 Despite the public commitments already made, **we believe that the diversity and talent management strategies should be combined**. As the learning from major employers showed, most large organisations have some form of diversity strategy. This usually stems from the need for a framework to guide and support good practice and deter discrimination or bias. Diversity is also about accessibility to the physical environment (such as buildings), services and information provided in a variety of formats. In government it is also about ensuring that policy and legislation is free from discrimination. In short, this is about creating a culture of genuine inclusion at all levels and not just managing and reporting on targets achieved through the introduction of HR policies and procedures.

By contrast, talent management is concerned with changing leadership behaviour – the thoughts and actions that, consistently, over time, become organisational culture. Talent management is

more than something “to do,” it is something “to be,” a way of working and achieving both near and long-term success. A progressive step for the Civil Service would be to recognise that diversity is an overarching principle for achieving cultural change, and the values you hold as an employer, with a variety of strands to achieve its implementation. One significant strand is the implementation of talent management initiatives to help to change the leadership mind-set and behaviours in relation to the way people are recruited, managed and nurtured from the top down. Specifically, a combined strategy would cover all staff and include topics such as:

- Workforce planning to match future business requirements
- Values and behaviours
- HR policies and procedures to support recruitment, retention, professional development, leadership/high potential development, performance management, feedback / measurement
- Research/best practice
- Talent management initiatives for the Top 200
- Talent management initiatives for the rest of the organisation
- Policies to create inclusive and accessible services, and respond to legal duties
- Indicators of progress for each department in terms of race, gender etc.

Recommendation 3: Clarify accountability for leadership behaviour

This was the theme that the sounding board of five female Director Generals felt was the most critical to get right. In recent times, most of the infrastructure and processes have been put in place to provide the basis for improved leadership accountability. However, now is the time to use this to put energy, passion and time behind these mechanisms so they can have an even greater impact.

It is not currently clear who drives the people agenda in the Civil Service. Whilst in principle there is a hierarchy from the Civil Service Board all the way through to HR and line managers, there is no collective ownership of the diversity, talent and cultural change agendas; they are split across teams and individuals. We know from our annual survey of the ‘Worlds Most Admired Companies’⁴³ that successful companies ensure that the ownership of the agenda rests with the Chief Executive and the executive committee, and is supported and delivered through a strategic HR function. Specific recommendations are:

- 3.1 The establishment of the revised talent governance arrangements was a positive step forward in creating the conditions for talent management discussions. However, this now needs to be taken to the next level by using much more rigorous and evidence based data to support conversations (see Recommendation 2.1 for further details). **Boards like the Senior Leadership Committee and Talent Review Board should meet more frequently, with renewed vigour, and supported by better quality data.** We believe that 9-box grid talent conversations, despite their limitations, should be mandated in all departments. The research showed that talent governance for Deputy Directors and Grade 6 staff in departments is variable, often with large numbers of staff being reviewed by a very small number of people. Departments should be expected to invest more time and energy into these discussions and seek assurances that their own talent processes aren’t open to interpretation or lip service.
- 3.2 The appointment of a Director General for HR has been a positive step in the right direction and the job in hand now is to capitalise on the benefits of having a corporate approach to HR. However, **greater organisational development capability is required and built into performance metrics for the Top 200.** HR can enable this capability but cannot do it for leaders themselves. Role modelling by the most senior will have the greatest impact. For example, at the MOD, the Permanent Secretary meets with his 12 most senior colleagues for two hours each month to discuss talent and people. Other fora are used for business to be transacted. The purpose of these sessions is to manage talent, support increased engagement and oversee people development initiatives. Combined efforts resulted in SCS engagement scores doubling in 12 months.
- 3.3 This report should be shared with Minister for Women and Equalities, and the Civil Service Champion for Diversity, Sir Simon Fraser. Together with Civil Service leaders, **there is a need to launch communications about this work,** its connection with other activities and the agreed actions arising from it. SCS staff were consistent in their request for more positive messaging and communications about talent and diversity; they want the volume turned up.

Recommendation 4: Gather and publish data on gender diversity as a driver of reform

Gathering and using data to inform policy and practice makes good business sense and, when made transparent for all, can be a great driver of reform. The recently published (and government sponsored) FTSE Board report and *'think, act, report'* campaign⁴⁴ provide great examples from other sectors where this principle has been used successfully. Both of these reports have the backing of Ministers and offer advice to industry about how to improve talent and diversity practices. For this project we have tailored the approach to arrive at the following recommendations:

- 4.1 In **Appendix E** we have created a number of indicators of progress which can and should be reported upon on an annual basis. This should be **built into the new Departmental Improvement Plans (DIPs)** which would provide a way to 'mainstream' this work. Whilst the current batch have only recently been published, the pilot departments could use this report in their challenge sessions over the coming months.
- 4.2 Additionally, **mechanisms to gather and report the indicators of progress should be established**, using the wide range of networks and communities of practice already in place.
- 4.3 The Civil Service already has its own exemplars of **best practice. This should be shared and, where appropriate, adopted by other departments.** For example, in the Home Office, the 9 box grid has been embedded across the Department and is now common currency in relation to talent management and identification of high potentials. They have however recognised the limitations of the current talent management process and have piloted the use of a 360 feedback tool based on the Civil Service Potential Indicators to provide richer, more objective data on individuals. This feedback forms part of a specific 90 minute 'career conversation' with a line manager which explores the individual's career aspirations. Feedback from the pilot has been overwhelmingly positive with line managers in particular feeling more confident in the 'accuracy' of where they place individuals in the 9 box grid.

Recommendation 5: Continue and, develop further, positive action initiatives for women

Whilst the thrust of this report is focused on creating the right conditions in which all talent can prosper, it is nonetheless important to ensure that there is sufficient positive action for women to be successful and compete effectively when opportunities arise. To this end, we make the following recommendations:

- 5.1 There are over 60 non-executive directors on departmental boards, approximately one third of which are women. With their rich experience and expertise they provide a potentially significant resource to be capitalised upon to help women develop their careers. By **asking these NEDs to mentor one or two talented women** each, over 100 women could be directly supported.
- 5.2 Continue to **take forward the recommendations of Sarah Healey's work**⁴⁵. In particular:
 - All-male shortlists for recruitment purposes, should be by exception only
 - All male panels for selection should be prohibited
 - Comply or explain - where boards are not gender balanced. Permanent Secretaries to agree plans for how they are planning to improve gender balance
 - Commission CSEP to improve policy guidance for maternity leave, both for line managers and individuals. This should include expectations of both parties and offer clear guidance on return to work
 - Permanent Secretaries to each take responsibility for mentoring 2 women with potential to move from Director to Director General and/or Director General to Permanent Secretaries with aim of moving them into more senior positions
- 5.3 **Continue to roll out unconscious bias training** to the SCS and all those on recruitment panels and promote valuable development programmes such as 'crossing thresholds' to suitable staff
- 5.4 **Identify and champion role models** (linked to Recommendation 3.2 on communications). But also, ask these champions to lead and develop appropriate women's networks.

APPENDICES

- A. Interviewees
- B. Analysis of existing Civil Service data
- C. Compelling quotes from the survey and focus groups
- D. More detailed SCS survey report
- E. Indicators of Progress
- F. References

A List of interviewees

Government

Rt Hon Francis Maude MP, Minister for Cabinet Office

Rt Hon Maria Miller MP, (formerly) Secretary of State, DCMS, and Womens Minister

Sir David Normington, First Civil Service Commissioner

Lord Browne, Lead Non-Executive Director

Sarah V Weller, Lead Non-Executive Director, DCLG

Simone Finn, Special Adviser to Francis Maude

Rt Hon Theresa May MP, Home Secretary
(scheduled for 14 May 2014)

Permanent Secretaries

Sir Jeremy Heywood, Cabinet Secretary

Sir Bob Kerslake, Head of Civil Service and DCLG

Dame Ursula Brennan, Ministry of Justice

Martin Donnelly, BIS

Simon Fraser, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Lin Homer, HM Revenue & Customs

Chris Wormald, Department for Education

Sir Nicholas MacPherson, HM Treasury

Una O'Brien, Department of Health

Jon Thompson, Ministry of Defence

Tom Scholar, Prime Minister's Adviser on Europe and Head of EGIS

Mark Sedwill, Permanent Secretary, Home Office

Other SCS

Sarah Healey, Director General, DCMS

Claire Salters, CEO, Civil Service Commission

William Hague, Chief People Officer, HMRC

Janet Hill, Director Diversity and Equality

Chris Last, HR Director

Jeanette Durbin, Director, People and Change, Department for Education

James Norton, Director of Civil Service Resourcing

Debra Lang, Deputy Director, Civil Service Resourcing

Debbie Alder, HR DG, Department for Work and Pensions

Oliver Robbins, Director General, Cabinet Office

10 x talented women at Grades 6 and 7

15 x Directors/Deputy Directors (male and female)

61 x staff at Grades 7, 6 and 5 attended focus groups

5 x female Director Generals in a discussion group

B Analysis of existing Civil Service data – gender breakdown

Section 2 of this report details the analysis we undertook of existing data collected by the Civil Service on gender balance.

The chart below shows the breakdown of male and female employees at Deputy Director, Director and Director General and above levels in 2005, 2010 and 2013.

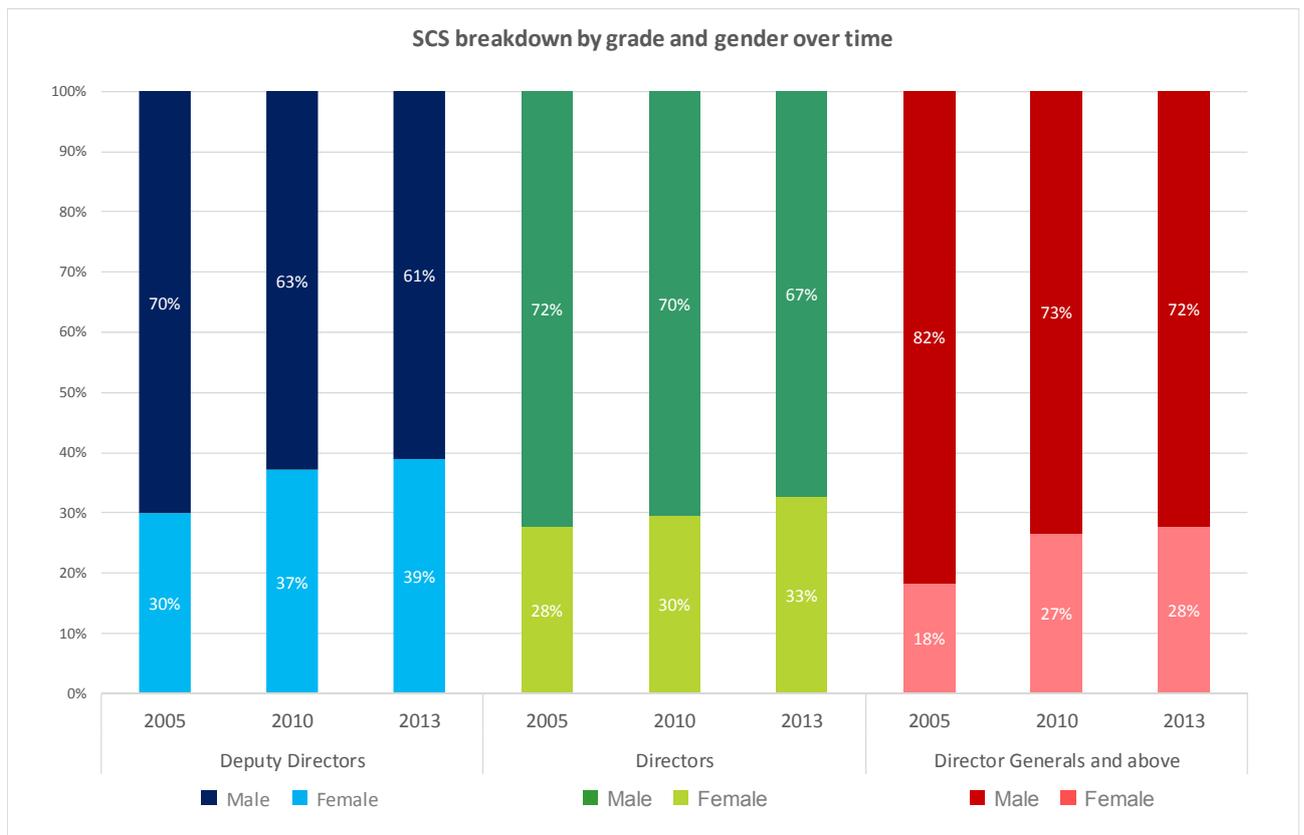


Figure 10: SCS breakdown by gender 2005-2010

At all levels, the percentage of women has increased steadily since 2005, though it is noticeably less at Director General and above than at Deputy Director level, showing that there is indeed much progress to be made to achieve gender parity at the most senior levels.

B Analysis of existing Civil Service data – People Survey 2013

Below is a screenshot of the 2013 Civil Service People Survey results for the SCS in main departments, broken down by gender.

Civil Service People Survey: results by gender for SCS in main departments, 2009-2013¹

	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Male (n=1,946)	Female (n=916)	Male (n=1,162)	Female (n=558)	Male (n=1,662)	Female (n=814)	Male (n=1,596)	Female (n=829)	Male (n=1,671)	Female (n=827)
Employee engagement index ²	71%	71%	64%	65%	66%	68%	68%	69%	70%	72%
My work	94%	93%	91%	90%	92%	91%	93%	91%	93%	93%
Organisational objectives and purpose	94%	95%	90%	89%	91%	92%	93%	93%	93%	96%
My manager	79%	78%	75%	73%	77%	77%	79%	78%	80%	82%
My team	95%	94%	93%	91%	94%	94%	94%	94%	95%	97%
Learning and development	70%	72%	58%	57%	61%	63%	64%	66%	68%	74%
Inclusion and fair treatment	89%	87%	85%	83%	87%	85%	88%	85%	88%	88%
Resources and workload	79%	78%	78%	76%	78%	77%	79%	77%	78%	80%
Pay and benefits	47%	54%	41%	50%	30%	42%	27%	33%	27%	34%
Leadership and managing change	64%	65%	54%	57%	58%	61%	63%	65%	67%	70%
My work										
B01. I am interested in my work	99%	98%	97%	97%	98%	97%	98%	97%	97%	97%
B02. I am sufficiently challenged by my work	94%	93%	92%	92%	92%	92%	94%	92%	94%	94%
B03. My work gives me a sense of personal accomplishment	93%	93%	90%	89%	91%	91%	92%	90%	92%	92%
B04. I feel involved in the decisions that affect my work	90%	88%	84%	81%	86%	85%	88%	86%	89%	89%
B05. I have a choice in deciding how I do my work	94%	94%	91%	91%	92%	91%	93%	91%	93%	94%
Organisational objectives and purpose										
B06. I have a clear understanding of [my organisation's] purpose ³	94%	95%	91%	90%	92%	92%	93%	94%	93%	96%
B07. I have a clear understanding of [my organisation's] objectives	92%	94%	88%	86%	87%	90%	91%	91%	91%	95%
B08. I understand how my work contributes to [my organisation's] objectives	95%	95%	92%	90%	93%	92%	94%	94%	94%	96%
My manager										
B09. My manager motivates me to be more effective in my job	80%	78%	78%	75%	79%	78%	81%	80%	82%	85%
B10. My manager is considerate of my life outside work	79%	79%	77%	78%	78%	81%	82%	82%	83%	85%
B11. My manager is open to my ideas	89%	91%	86%	88%	90%	90%	91%	91%	91%	93%
B12. My manager helps me to understand how I contribute to [my organisation's] objectives	79%	79%	75%	74%	76%	77%	79%	78%	80%	84%
B13. Overall, I have confidence in the decisions made by my manager	86%	85%	81%	79%	85%	82%	87%	84%	88%	90%
B14. My manager recognises when I have done my job well	86%	86%	83%	82%	85%	83%	86%	86%	86%	88%
B15. I receive regular feedback on my performance	73%	73%	67%	64%	69%	68%	71%	69%	73%	74%
B16. The feedback I receive helps me to improve my performance	73%	73%	66%	64%	70%	70%	72%	71%	74%	76%
B17. I think that my performance is evaluated fairly	74%	70%	68%	66%	71%	68%	69%	68%	72%	72%
B18. Poor performance is dealt with effectively in my team	70%	67%	64%	62%	70%	67%	73%	70%	74%	75%

My team

B19. The people in my team can be relied upon to help when things get difficult in my job	95% 94%	94% 93%	96% 95%	96% 94%	96% 97%
B20. The people in my team work together to find ways to improve the service we provide	95% 94%	92% 91%	95% 94%	94% 94%	95% 97%
B21. The people in my team are encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things	94% 94%	92% 91%	93% 93%	93% 94%	94% 97%

Learning and development

B22. I am able to access the right learning and development opportunities when I need to	79% 79%	66% 64%	70% 69%	72% 75%	78% 82%
B23. Learning and development activities I have completed in the past 12 months have helped to improve my performance	68% 73%	60% 61%	59% 64%	61% 65%	66% 75%
B24. There are opportunities for me to develop my career in [my organisation]	64% 64%	47% 44%	54% 55%	56% 58%	60% 66%
B25. Learning and development activities I have completed while working for [my organisation] are helping me to develop my career	69% 72%	60% 60%	63% 64%	66% 66%	69% 73%

Inclusion and fair treatment

B26. I am treated fairly at work	90% 89%	87% 85%	90% 89%	90% 88%	90% 92%
B27. I am treated with respect by the people I work with	96% 94%	94% 92%	94% 93%	95% 92%	95% 96%
B28. I feel valued for the work I do	85% 83%	77% 77%	81% 79%	81% 78%	83% 82%
B29. I think that [my organisation] respects individual differences (e.g. cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas, etc.)	85% 80%	82% 79%	83% 79%	84% 81%	85% 84%

Resources and workload

B30. In my job, I am clear what is expected of me	93% 93%	92% 90%	92% 91%	93% 91%	93% 94%
B31. I get the information I need to do my job well	81% 83%	82% 79%	85% 82%	84% 83%	84% 86%
B32. I have clear work objectives	89% 91%	89% 86%	89% 87%	90% 89%	89% 91%
B33. I have the skills I need to do my job effectively	96% 96%	95% 93%	96% 95%	96% 96%	95% 96%
B34. I have the tools I need to do my job effectively	79% 78%	75% 76%	75% 76%	73% 74%	74% 75%
B35. I have an acceptable workload	61% 54%	61% 56%	58% 56%	60% 55%	58% 59%
B36. I achieve a good balance between my work life and my private life	55% 50%	53% 52%	53% 53%	57% 53%	53% 58%

Pay and benefits

B37. I feel that my pay adequately reflects my performance	50% 54%	46% 52%	33% 45%	29% 36%	29% 36%
B38. I am satisfied with the total benefits package	54% 62%	45% 53%	34% 45%	31% 38%	31% 39%
B39. Compared to people doing a similar job in other organisations I feel my pay is reasonable	37% 46%	32% 44%	23% 36%	21% 26%	21% 28%

Leadership and managing change

B40. I feel that [my organisation] as a whole is managed well	60% 64%	48% 56%	53% 58%	59% 62%	63% 71%
B41. [Senior managers] in [my organisation] are sufficiently visible	71% 75%	66% 70%	69% 74%	74% 79%	78% 83%
B42. I believe the actions of [senior managers] are consistent with [my organisation's] values	70% 66%	64% 64%	64% 66%	69% 71%	73% 76%
B43. I believe that [the board has] a clear vision for the future of [my organisation]	53% 58%	43% 49%	50% 54%	56% 58%	59% 63%
B44. Overall, I have confidence in the decisions made by [my organisation's] senior managers	67% 70%	56% 61%	60% 65%	67% 70%	72% 75%
B45. I feel that change is managed well in [my organisation]	47% 48%	35% 38%	42% 46%	44% 47%	49% 53%
B46. When changes are made in [my organisation] they are usually for the better	50% 53%	35% 40%	40% 44%	43% 43%	49% 53%
B47. [My organisation] keeps me informed about matters that affect me	81% 83%	74% 75%	76% 77%	81% 82%	82% 86%
B48. I have the opportunity to contribute my views before decisions are made that affect me	68% 67%	57% 58%	65% 64%	67% 68%	70% 72%
B49. I think it is safe to challenge the way things are done in [my organisation]	71% 69%	61% 58%	64% 62%	69% 69%	72% 73%

Employee engagement

B50. I am proud when I tell others I am part of [my organisation]	76% 75%	66% 68%	70% 72%	77% 73%	78% 78%
B51. I would recommend [my organisation] as a great place to work	65% 67%	50% 53%	55% 61%	62% 62%	64% 70%
B52. I feel a strong personal attachment to [my organisation]	69% 68%	63% 63%	64% 65%	67% 66%	69% 69%
B53. [My organisation] inspires me to do the best in my job	65% 65%	54% 59%	57% 61%	60% 62%	64% 66%

B54. [My organisation] motivates me to help it achieve its objectives	66%	67%	53%	59%	56%	62%	59%	62%	63%	67%
---	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Taking action

B55. I believe that [senior managers] in [my organisation] will take action on the results from this survey	76%	82%	65%	72%	70%	76%	75%	82%	77%	86%
---	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

B56. I believe that managers where I work will take action on the results from this survey	84%	86%	79%	81%	82%	83%	86%	85%	85%	91%
--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

B57. Where I work, I think effective action has been taken on the results of the last survey ⁷	-	-	-	-	64%	64%	69%	70%	72%	76%
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Organisational culture

B58. I am trusted to carry out my job effectively	-	-	-	-	-	-	91%	90%	94%	95%
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----	-----	-----	-----

B59. I believe I would be supported if I try a new idea, even if it may not work	-	-	-	-	-	-	81%	76%	86%	87%
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----	-----	-----	-----

B60. My performance is evaluated based on whether I get things done, rather than solely follow process	-	-	-	-	-	-	81%	83%	85%	90%
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B61. When I talk about [my organisation] I say "we" rather than "they"	-	-	-	-	-	-	91%	90%	87%	90%
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B62. I have some really good friendships at work	-	-	-	-	-	-	74%	75%	79%	80%
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Future intentions

C01. Which of the following statements most reflects your current thoughts about working for [your organisation]?

<i>I want to leave [my organisation] as soon as possible</i>	4%	3%	6%	5%	6%	5%	6%	5%	6%	5%
--	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

<i>I want to leave [my organisation] within the next 12 months</i>	12%	12%	14%	16%	14%	14%	15%	16%	16%	16%
--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

<i>I want to stay working for [my organisation] for at least the next year</i>	34%	37%	32%	30%	34%	35%	34%	36%	37%	39%
--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

<i>I want to stay working for [my organisation] for at least the next three years</i>	51%	49%	48%	49%	46%	46%	45%	43%	42%	40%
---	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Civil Service Code

D01. Are you aware of the Civil Service Code?	96%	97%	95%	96%	96%	95%	98%	97%	97%	98%
---	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

D02. Are you aware of how to raise a concern under the Civil Service Code?	75%	74%	80%	81%	83%	82%	86%	87%	85%	88%
--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

D03. Are you confident that if you raise a concern under the Civil Service Code in [your organisation] it would be investigated properly?	84%	84%	80%	84%	85%	88%	88%	89%	88%	90%
---	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Wellbeing ⁴

W01. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays? (% 7-10) (0=not at all satisfied, 10=completely satisfied)	-	-	-	-	-	-	75%	76%	74%	77%
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W02. Overall, to what extent do you think the things you do in your life are worthwhile? (% 7-10) (0=not at all worthwhile, 10=completely worthwhile)	-	-	-	-	-	-	83%	83%	83%	86%
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----	-----	-----	-----

W03. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday? (% 7-10) (0=not at all happy, 10=completely happy)	-	-	-	-	-	-	69%	71%	72%	74%
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----	-----	-----	-----

W04. Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? (% 0-3) (0=not at all anxious, 10=completely anxious)	-	-	-	-	-	-	57%	56%	58%	53%
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Discrimination, bullying and harassment

E01. During the past 12 months have you personally experienced discrimination at work?	4%	9%	6%	9%	4%	7%	4%	7%	4%	5%
--	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

E03. During the past 12 months have you personally experienced bullying or harassment at work?	5%	8%	6%	9%	5%	7%	3%	7%	4%	5%
--	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

Notes

1. Except for the engagement index (see note 2) the result for each of the headline themes is calculated as the percentage of "strongly agree" or "agree" responses to all questions in that theme. The scores for questions B01-B62 are based on the proportion responding "strongly agree" or "agree". For questions D01-D02, E01 and E03 the score is based on the proportion responding "yes".

2. The employee engagement index is calculated as a weighted average of the responses to the five employee engagement questions (B50-B54) and ranges from 0% to 100%. A score of 0% represents all respondents giving a rating of "strongly disagree" to all five questions. A score of 100% represents all respondents giving a rating of "strongly agree" to all five questions.

3. Phrases in square brackets (e.g. [my organisation]) are used in the core questionnaire to indicate where participating organisations use the relevant local terms (e.g. 'the Cabinet Office' in place of [my/your organisation] or 'Senior Civil Servants' in place of [senior managers]).

4. Following a pilot in 2011, the 2012 Civil Service People Survey questionnaire also included the four subjective wellbeing questions asked by the ONS in the Annual Population Survey as part of their Measuring National Wellbeing programme.

C1 Compelling quotes

"I think that promotion decisions up to SCS1 are relatively fair and based on merit, beyond that it is a more mixed picture and there is an impression of roles being earmarked for certain individuals who are felt to have shown particular commitment. That commitment is often measured in ways that favour men/people without children - long hours, more assertive/forceful styles of leadership etc."

Survey Respondent

(Advice to someone seeking promotion to SCS) *"Regretfully, to give priority to maximising your own performance and impact as opposed to maximising that of your team: it is the former that counts in terms of advancement. Don't challenge the Board, mimic their behaviour. Make yourself as much like the current Board incumbents as possible. Model "Positive Leadership" and don't raise problems. Always focus on solutions. Don't be authentic."*

Survey Respondent

"I'm a very direct person I will have to kind of hold myself back and I think that's because of the culture in the civil service."

Focus Group

"Developing one's team/staff is not a skill most have been promoted for, so it's not a skill seen widely – but one we need to see more of."

Focus Group

"There are senior people here who are terrible at management but that's widely known and that's accepted and those people still progress to the senior levels."

Focus Group

"Gain exposure to senior people and do a good job. Be careful about speaking truth to power - it is not always the right thing to do."

Survey Respondent

"In practice, we have an often stultifying control culture: ideas need to be cleared before they can be expressed, and innovations approved before they are tried out. The corollary is that people exist in an almost repressed emotional state at work: control, process and discipline are everything."

Survey Respondent

"We're never going to have a culture in which we're able to say no to Ministers. Instead of maybe just saying no, I think we need to try and develop a culture that we say 'yes, but.....'"

Focus Group

C2 Compelling quotes

“Look at those around you who are working in those roles and think, well actually do I really want that because it does seem a lot of stress, and for me there was the tension between feeling I want to be there and I wanted to do that work and wanted the recognition and the leadership but also worrying about what came with it.”

Focus Group

“I am at a stage in my career where progression seems neither possible nor necessarily desirable.”

Survey Respondent

“I’m a grade 7 and there was a grade 6 post and I had to think really hard whether to apply for it and I realised that I didn’t apply...because I don’t want to be that sort of person.”

Focus Group

“I think there have been instances where potentially I’ve been put off applying for certain jobs because I know that it’s not going to be a 9-5, and because I have child commitments I just wouldn’t be able to do it. But that would be the same for anyone who has commitments outside work, so male or female.”

Focus Group

“My current line management chain is female and without exception they work extremely long hours including weekends. This is clearly the expectation of senior leaders in this organisation.”

Survey

“I would not want to join the culture. It’s really insidious and I have witnessed too many women fail. Women I have admired, women who have succeeded previously. All torn apart - all gone. It’s a hideous male macho culture at the top with favourites and deals in smoke filled rooms. It’s the first time in 25 years I have seen it this bad. I don’t want to join that. I have friends at the very top, I have lost friends at the very top. I am not joining that. I think the private sector is a better employer and if I decide to take the next step it will be outside.”

Survey

C3 Compelling quotes

"I have just returned from maternity leave. My previous experience of returning from maternity leave was so unpleasant that this seems positively constructive in comparison."

Survey Respondent

"There was no structured return to work support. It was up to me to raise issues – which I often did not feel comfortable doing. It was a lonely experience."

Survey Respondent

"I have felt incredibly lucky to be able to work flexibly. I know many of my mum-friends have not had that and have had to leave their careers or compromise significantly because they need to commit more to their home life. On the less positive side I think I needed more support back into the workplace. I could have done with more regular feedback on my performance from my managers in order to boost my confidence a bit."

Survey Respondent

"It's entirely of your own making/reliant on the strength of your personal relationships that you secure the right re-entry job."

Survey Respondent

"Able to return to an SCS job-share, in a front line department. A fully supportive line manager and team willing to make it work. Requires considerably more hours than we are being paid for."

Survey Respondent

"My manager has shown no interest in my experience of transitioning back to work. I was subtly encouraged to return earlier than I really wanted to."

Survey Respondent

"Keep in touch arrangements worked well. I was allowed a work laptop (and access to intranet and emails) 3 months before returning to work to enable me to apply for jobs and get up to speed with work."

Survey Respondent

"My immediate manager has been great - keeping in touch regularly, showing that I was valued and that they wanted me to return - so far my experience has been great - on a staggered return. Within the team I am comfortable but facing off to the rest of Cabinet Office I feel I have to explain my working pattern and justify when I am not around."

Survey Respondent

C4 Compelling quotes

"I was offered the opportunity to go out on secondment at Director level, and this promotion was blocked by my line manager on the grounds that the team was too busy and could not spare me. This is in the context of a moratorium on promotion opportunities to Director level inside the Department. I have been told that there will be promotions becoming available in 18 months time; as a result I am looking to leave in the next 6 months."

Survey Respondent

"I was accidentally copied in on an email between my line managers that said oh yeah we don't really approve of this working but we've said we'll honour it so I suppose we'll have to put up with it."

Focus Group

"I have done management training but neither one of my managers has in 5 years that I've worked for them."

Focus Group

"Fight your own battles - don't expect any help."

Survey Respondent

"I just don't get any guidance from him in terms of career development."

Focus Group

"The civil service needs to understand the difference between talent i.e. future leaders and high performance and professional expertise."

Director General Interviewee

"I think my boss has still got a way to go, I don't think he appreciates what's missing on the team building but he will I'm sure when the wheels fall off."

Focus Group

"My current line manager is capable but understands neither my ambitions to be the leader we need to see, nor what kind of support that requires."

Focus Group

C5 Compelling quotes

“The finance exec team has an all-day meeting in the pub for drinks with the expectation that everyone will be there – another female colleague felt quite pressurised.”

Focus Group

“I feel that he finds me threatening.....I’ll be gone soon and that’s directly a result of him becoming a manager and making me feel uncomfortable for him in the team.”

Focus Group

“Move to London, agree with what the DG/director says, don’t challenge them even when they are being ridiculous, work the way they want you to work and look for short-term success to further your/your managers career at cost of the long-term future.”

Survey Respondent

“In places, very negative, competitive, political (small p), macho and can verge on bullying. The more senior you get, I think the more you are exposed to the latter and the more you need to build up your resilience to deal with this to be successful.”

Focus Group

“Promotion is based on whether those in the top club like you or not/feel you will fit in, not skills for the post or leadership and management ability.”

Survey Respondent

“Long hours, machismo and presenteeism is still very much part of the culture for both genders, particularly in SCS feeder grades 6/7 where officials are really trying to make a name for themselves.”

Survey Respondent

“Things have changed again, particularly over the last 5 years when I have seen the culture become more and more macho. The rise of certain individuals, male, white and hugely opinionated, who do not like anyone questioning them, challenging them has put us back to the dark ages. Women are back to being told they are mouthy, aggressive or not leaders when they disagree or display softer inclusive leadership skills. I have worked at senior level in three departments and have seen this in all.”

Survey Respondent

D1 Survey results:

Introduction

As part of our research, Hay Group designed a survey for distribution to the entire Senior Civil Service to understand perceptions of the current SCS culture in relation to talent management.

The survey was open from 31 March to 6 April and invitations to participate were circulated via the HR function in individual departments. We received 791 responses; the breakdown of participation by department is provided on the next page.

The list of questions is below. Some were statements requiring participants to select an option such as 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', while others allowed free text comments. Both have been used to inform our research, and key findings are set out on the following pages.

- 1 The Civil Service demonstrates care and concern for employees
- 2 The Civil Service is committed to diversity (it values the contribution employees with different backgrounds, cultures and perspectives can make).
- 3 I believe my department's policies and procedures are applied the same way to all employees
- 4 I am encouraged to come up with new or better ways of doing things
- 5 I can freely express my views at work
- 6 We are very interested in your experiences, particularly around culture and diversity within the Civil Service. If you have any specific feedback on the questions above please write your comments in the text box below.
- 7 I am able to work in a way that enables me to meet my family and/or personal commitments
- 8 I can use flexible work arrangements (e.g. telecommuting, flexible work schedule, compressed work week) without harming my career
- 8b If you responded unfavourably to the question above, please provide more detail in the text box below
- 9 Have you been on maternity leave in the last 2 years or taken an extended career break for any other reason?
- 9b How would you rate your return to work experience?
- 9c Please share any positive experiences about your return to work, or where you feel this could have been improved
- 10 I feel encouraged to reach my full potential in the Civil Service
- 11 Opportunities for career development are available to all employees regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability
- 12 I believe that promotion decisions are made fairly
- 12b If you responded unfavourably to the question above, please provide more detail in the text box below
- 13 What are the two or three things that have most helped you to progress to your position within the Civil Service?
- 14 Are you interested in progressing to a more senior leadership role?
- 14a If yes, what attracts you in taking on a more senior leadership role?
- 14b If maybe, what attracts you and/or deters you from taking on a more senior leadership role?
- 14c If no, what is deterring you from taking on a more senior leadership role?
- 15 What practical interventions would help you progress to a more senior leadership role?
- 16 What do you think would make a more senior leadership role more attractive?
- 17 What advice would you give to a peer at your level or a more junior colleague who wants to advance to a senior role in your organisation?

D1 Survey results: about the respondents

The breakdown of participants by gender and by department is below.

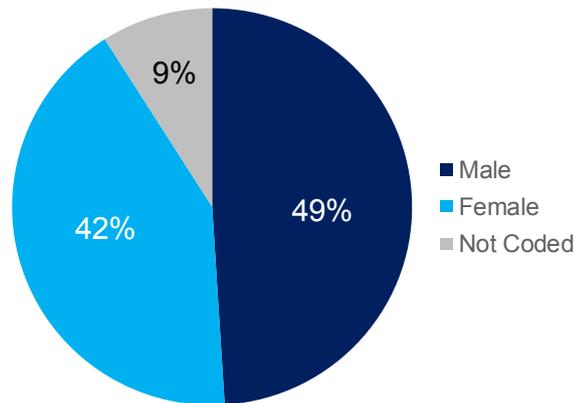


Figure 11: SCS survey participants gender breakdown

No of Responses	Department
2	Attorney General's Office; Crown Prosecution Service; HM CPS Inspectorate; Serious Fraud Office; TSol
62	Cabinet Office; Crown Commercial Service; the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel
56	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills; Companies House; Insolvency Service; Intellectual Property Office; Land Registry; Met Office; Office of Fair Trading; Ordnance Survey; Skills Funding Agency; UK Trade and Investment
33	Department for Communities and Local Government; The Planning Inspectorate
8	Department for Culture, Media and Sport; The Royal Parks
35	Department for Education
18	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency; Centre for Fisheries and Aquaculture Science; Food and Environment Research Agency; Rural Payments Agency; Veterinary Medicines Directorate
16	Department for International Development
26	Department for Transport; Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency; Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency; Highways Agency; Maritime and Coastguard Agency; Vehicle Certification Agency
7	Department for Work and Pensions
23	Department of Energy and Climate Change
46	Department of Health; Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency; Public Health England
1	Food Standards Agency
37	Foreign and Commonwealth Office; FCO Services; Wilton Park Executive Agency
126	HM Revenue and Customs
8	HM Treasury
32	Home Office; HM Passport Office
68	Ministry of Defence; Defence Support Group; Dstl; UK Hydrographic Office
89	Ministry of Justice; HM Courts and Tribunal Service; Legal Aid Agency; National Offender Management Service; Office of the Public Guardian; The National Archives
18	Another department or agency not listed here, please specify

D2 Overall strengths and opportunity areas vs. high performance norm

The below graph (also seen on page xx) shows the difference between male and female survey respondents to key questions, with data for the high performing company norm included for benchmarking purposes. There is often significant variation between the sexes: women are less satisfied around diversity, fairness of promotion decisions and consistency of policy application.

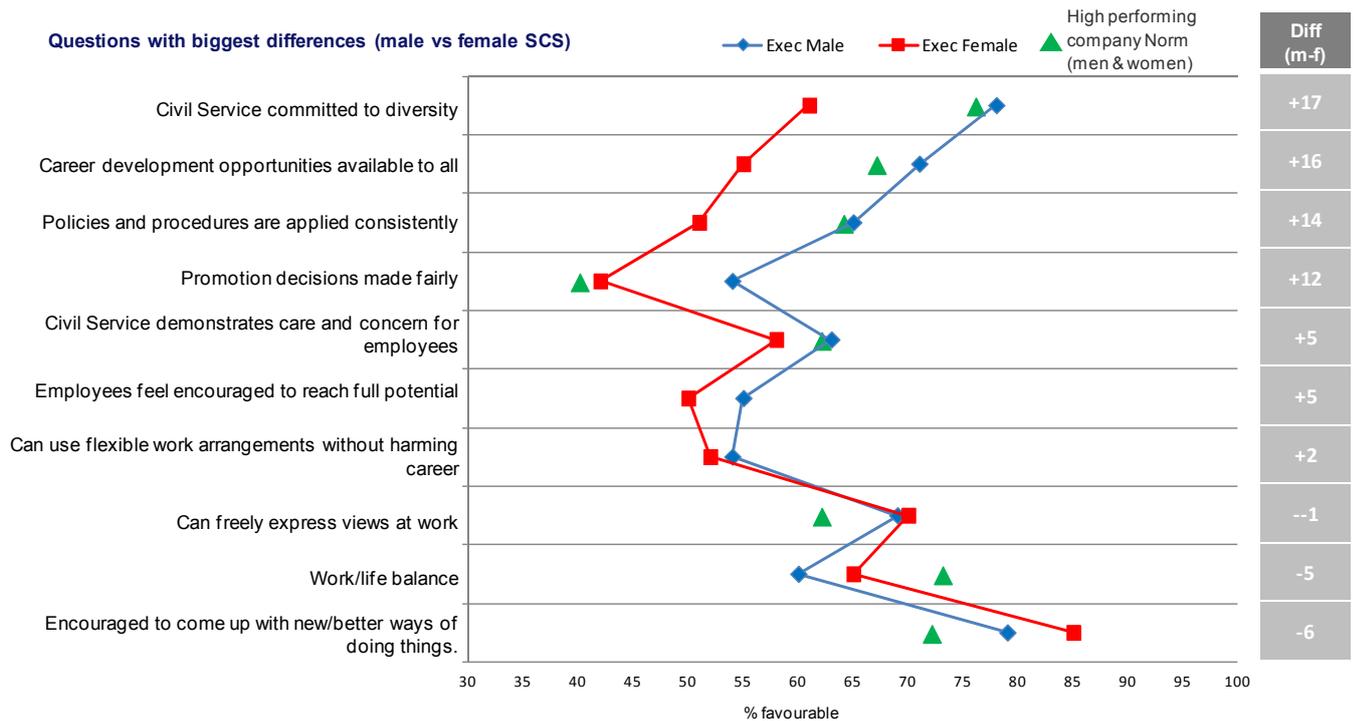


Figure 12: Benchmarked survey questions on perceptions of policy application

The questions where we see the greatest variation between SCS responses and the high performing norm are as follows.

Most above HP norm

- New / better ways of doing things (81% fav, +9 vs. HP norm)
- Promotion decisions made fairly (47% fav, +7 vs. HP norm)
- Express views freely (67% fav, +5 vs. HP norm)

Most below HP norm

- Work / life balance (61% fav, -12 vs. HP norm)
- Commitment to diversity (69% fav, -7 vs. HP norm)
- Policies / procedures applied the same way to all employees (57% fav, -7 vs. HP norm)

Note: *The High Performance (HP norm. consists of data collected over the past five years from about 45 companies around the world in a wide variety of industries. These companies have outstanding financial performance exceeding industry averages for 5-Year ROA, ROI and ROE by an exceptional 40% to 66%.

D3 Men and women are equally driven to progress

- The below charts show the breakdown of responses between male and female participants to the question, “Are you interested in progressing to a more senior leadership role?”

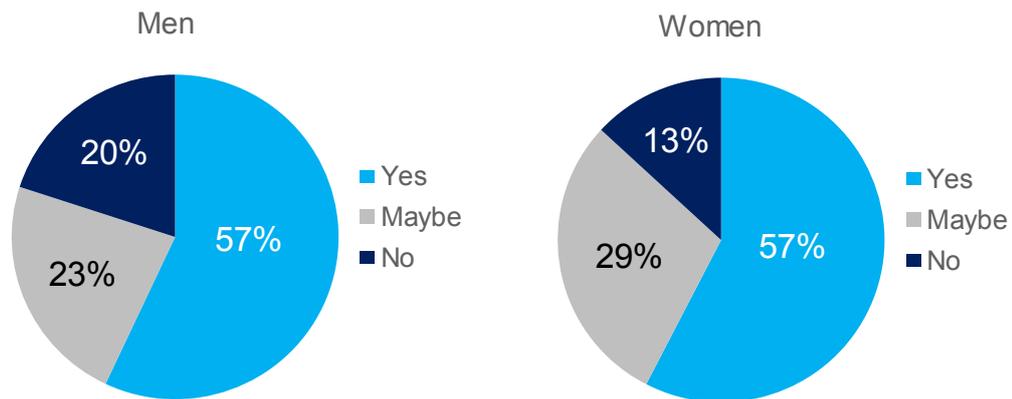


Figure 13: Attitudes to promotion

- Equal numbers of men and women in the SCS are interested in progressing to a more senior role. Interestingly, there are a higher number of men who are not interested in progressing compared to women.
- At SCS1, men and women are still equally keen to progress.
- At SCS2, 54% of men are interested in progressing whereas 63% of women said they would be interested (though it should be noted that these numbers are taken from a group of 90 males and 48 female respondents).

D4 Women are less positive about departmental policies being applied consistently to all employees, particularly SCS1 women

- The below chart shows the breakdown of responses to the question, “I believe my department's policies and procedures are applied the same way to all employees”.

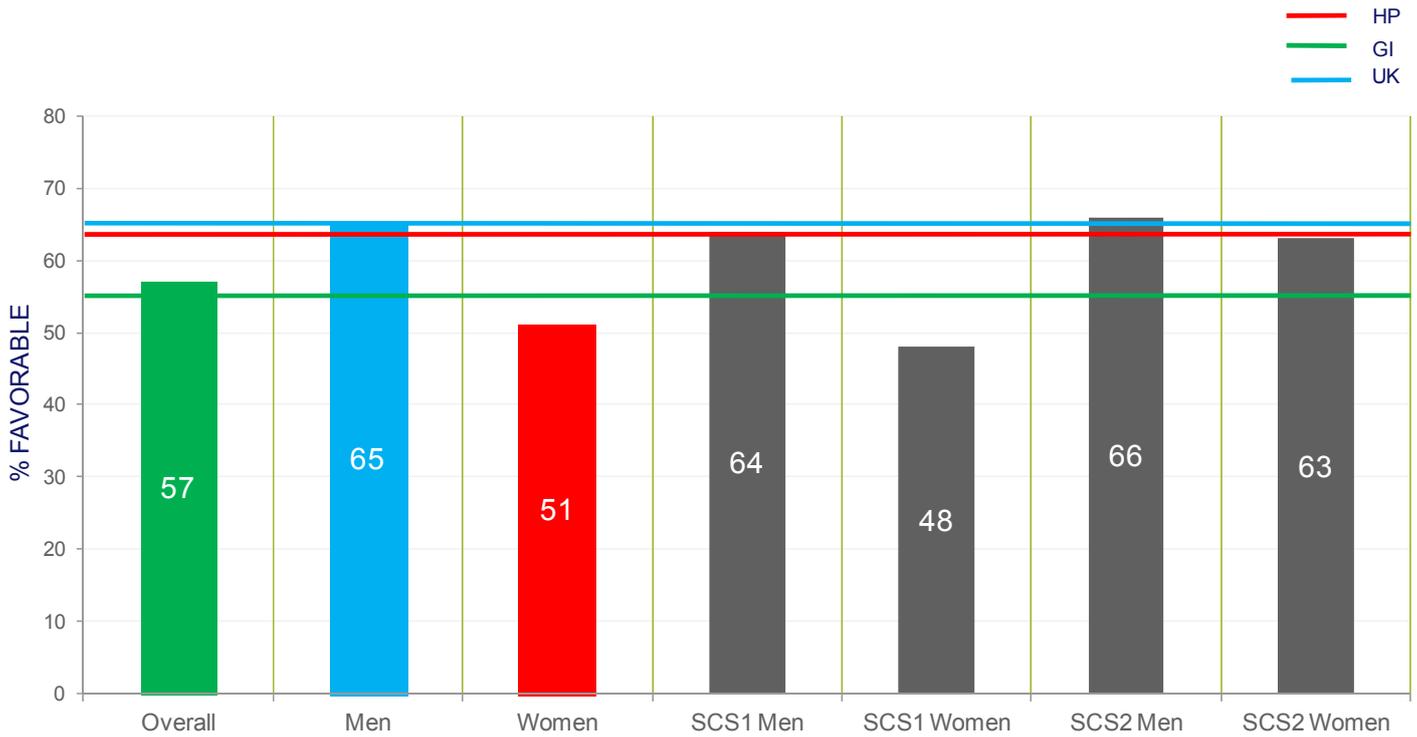


Figure 14: Perceptions on consistent applications of policies and procedures

D5 Women are less positive that promotion decisions are made fairly, except women at SCS2

- The below chart shows the breakdown of responses to the question, “I believe that promotion decisions are made fairly”

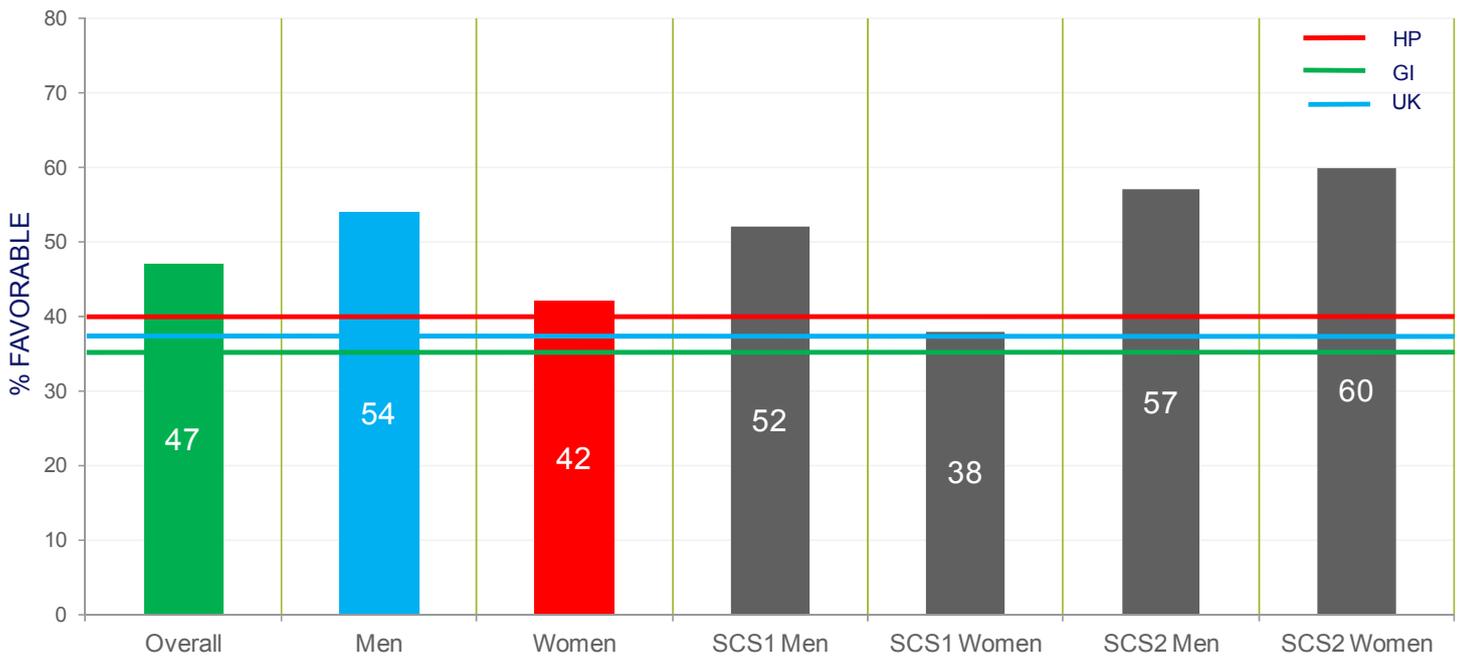


Figure 15: Perceptions on consistent applications of policies and procedures

Themes from comments

- There was a supplementary question asked alongside this, which afforded participants the opportunity to provide observations on how promotion decisions were made and cite any examples they had encountered.
- Some of the popular themes from the comments stated that decisions are made on whether your ‘face fits’ and about who you know and your networks; respondents stated that favouritism and sponsorship were more important than merit.
- Other comments stated that decisions are made before interviews and people are slotted into roles without competition; reference was made to a lack of consistency and transparency in the application of processes, as well as ministerial interference.
- It was also remarked that too many temporary promotions are handed out, those based outside London are at a disadvantage and external candidates are preferred; age is also mentioned as a barrier to progression.
- Verbatim comments are reproduced at **Appendix C**.

D6 Views about maternity leave

- 15% of women who participated in the survey said they had been on maternity leave or taken a career break in the last 2 years.
- Views about their return to work experience were very mixed, as shown below, and which suggests a lack of consistency in how this is handled across the SCS.

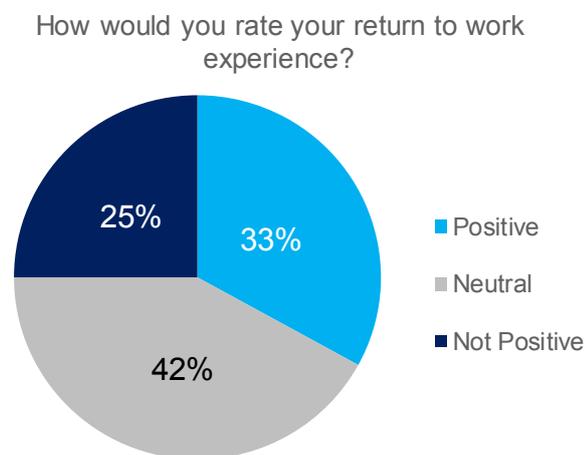


Figure 16: Return to work experiences

Themes from comments

- Again, respondents were invited to provide additional free text comments for this question.
- Some themes that were mentioned frequently include a lack of contact while away and frustration with IT systems which do not support this.
- Some participants reported they had very supportive managers while others did not; some found it hard to access development opportunities when they returned and some actually had no role to come back to, whereas others were really pushed to progress and apply for promotions. Many felt there was no structured support.
- Those who, since their return, have been working part-time or in job shares remarked that they feel they are working full-time hours in fewer days.

D7 Largely similar views around what would make a leadership role more attractive

Women feel stronger about collaboration and men need to feel they are being paid fairly for the role

What would make a leadership role more attractive?	Overall %	Male %	Female %
Senior leaders are supportive and role model our values	69	64	77
A culture where shared responsibility and working together is more highly valued	57	49	65
The workload and demands upon my time are reasonable	60	58	64
The opportunity to have greater impact	49	49	49
I feel pay adequately reflects performance	52	55	48
For my particular skill-set and those of my colleagues to be valued more highly for their shared contribution to successes	46	45	47
My colleagues are supportive	37	34	42
I am given the autonomy to get on with my job without undue interference	45	48	40
The organisation is committed to providing the development opportunities I will need	34	29	40
The organisation is accommodating to my personal circumstances	28	24	34
Other	12	12	12

Columns display % of people who selected these options

E Indicators of progress

Below we set out a framework that can be used to evaluate the ongoing impact of this programme of work. The intent is that by having this information publicly available it will support efforts to change behaviour and improve performance.

	Indicators of progress	Commentary
1	Percentage of Men & Women at SCS1, SCS2, SCS3 & Permanent Secretary. Reported at an overall level and broken down by department	These should also be benchmarked against wider public / private sector comparator
2	Promotion data by grade and department. This should include number of male / female applicants per role and number of successful applicants by grade and department	This data is not currently available
3	Gender pay gap analysis by grade and department	
4	Gather data on leavers (not by department, as currently reported) but by the whole SCS	
5	Gender breakdown of those on talent programmes	Continue as currently
6	Rather than reporting by department, for SCS staff develop management information systems that support tracking individuals' career paths and link this to cultural and business performance data (i.e. take a people centred rather than department-centred approach).	
7	Benchmark leadership capability within the SCS by grade and department	These should also be benchmarked against wider public / private sector comparator
8	Develop more sophisticated measures of organisational culture than currently captured in the People Survey	

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