



House of Commons
Public Administration Select
Committee

Developing Civil Service Skills: a unified approach

Fourth Report of Session 2014–15

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

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The Public Administration Select Committee

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Summary

In 2013 the Government published its Capabilities Plan, described by the Cabinet Office as a key part of the Government's overall Reform Plan. The stated purpose of this plan was to transform the Civil Service into a high-skilled, high-performance organisation that's less bureaucratic and more focused on delivering results.

The state of skills and capabilities in the Civil Service has been a long-running concern for this Committee. A number of our previous reports have highlighted this issue as critical to achieving government policy and ensuring good governance. This Report:

- explores how skills and capabilities needs and gaps are identified within the civil service;
- examines the strength of the Government's approach to training and development of civil servants;
- scrutinises the abolition of National School of Government and the performance of its replacement, Civil Service Learning;
- considers best practice in business and what can be learned from other organisations in terms of how they identify and develop skills and capabilities in their workforce.

We recommend that the Cabinet Office should have a standardised framework for auditing departmental skills levels and that the National Audit Office should be invited to carry out a Civil Service wide skills audit on a regular basis.

We fully support the proposed Civil Service Leadership Academy to address the unique challenges faced by public sector service leaders which conventional business training cannot address. We are not calling for the National School of Government to be re-established but we do, however, see a crucial and influential role for a new institution to serve as a nucleus for civil service reform.

1 Prioritising the right skills and behavioural change

The Capabilities Plan

1. The 2012 Civil Service Reform Plan states that:

The UK's budget deficit means that departments are implementing significant reductions in public spending and resources. At the same time they are supporting the Government's radical programme of economic and public service reform. All departments are already implementing substantial change programmes; but the scale of the challenges and persistent weaknesses require a reform plan that applies right across the Civil Service.¹

2. In 2013 the Government published its Capabilities Plan, described by the Cabinet Office as "a key part of the government's overall Reform Plan".² The stated purpose of this plan was to "transform the Civil Service into a high-skilled, high-performance organisation that's less bureaucratic and more focused on delivering results."³ This is the first time that such a corporate plan has been published for the whole Civil Service, though it follows a long line of reports and plans to reform the civil service. While individual departments remain responsible for identifying and meeting their own training needs, the Capabilities Plan identifies four areas that should be prioritised by all departments in addition to their own, department specific, training needs.

3. The plan, designed to mirror similar initiatives undertaken successfully by the private sector, features an increased focus on operational skills. In particular it focuses on four key skill areas:

- leading and managing change;
- commercial skills and behaviours;
- programme and project management; and
- digital skills.

4. The Cabinet Office reports that "in summer 2013, all 36 government departments undertook a baseline review of their capabilities and skills to inform their own departmental capabilities plans and published individual Departmental Improvement Plans."⁴ According to the Cabinet Office the results of this review "confirm that across

1 Cabinet Office, [The Civil Service Reform Plan](#), June 2012

2 Civil Service, [Meeting the Challenge of Change: A capabilities plan for the Civil Service](#), April 2013

3 As above

4 Minister for the Cabinet Office [CSS26]

government, the four priorities are the right ones and that all departments have capability needs in all of the four priority areas.”⁵

Welcome, but too narrow

5. Most witnesses to this inquiry agreed that the areas focused on by the Capabilities Plan warrant attention. Taking an overall view, Rob O’Neill of the FDA trade union told us these are “broadly the right priorities”.⁶ Specialists such as the Project Management Institute tell us that they were “heartened by the emphasis placed on effective project management”.⁷

6. However, we have heard from a number of witnesses that this approach is too narrow and excludes additional key skills that have broad application across government. In particular there was criticism about the lack of focus on complementary skills and specialisms needed to support the development of the four skill areas of the Capabilities Plan. Leslie Manasseh (Deputy General Secretary of the trade union, Prospect) told us that Prospect was concerned that these skills are currently being “hollowed out”,⁸ something which would eventually lead to more failed projects and programmes if not addressed. He explained that the successes of large procurement projects run by departments such as the Ministry of Defence or the Department for Transport are based not only on procurement and contracting skills, but also the skills supporting these functions; the “intelligent customer capability”.⁹

These are scientific and engineering skills that have to enable the procurement function to take place properly. You cannot have proper procurement in the defence industry unless you have an understanding of defence technologies.¹⁰

The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) has a similar message. It welcomes the fact that the Government was clearly advocating better use of digital services.¹¹ However, it warns that “for redesigning services and delivering them digitally, we expect a strong emphasis on improving the ability for the public and other stakeholders to access public data”. Highlighting the findings of the independent Shakespeare Review of Public Sector Information, carried out by Deloitte on behalf of Government in May 2013, the RSS tell us of a “generalised lack of skills and familiarity to work with data”, which may undermine such digital objectives.¹² While the RSS has worked with the Government Statistical Service to provide regular statistical training to the Ministry of Defence, Home Office, and the Department for Communities and Local Government, it tells us that the application of

5 As above

6 Q 107

7 Project Management Institute [CSS1]

8 Q 107

9 As above

10 As above

11 Royal Statistical Society [CSS8]

12 Stephan Shakespeare, [Shakespeare Review: An Independent Review of Public Sector Information](#), May 2013, and Royal Statistical Society [CSS8]

such skills was broader, more needs to be done to develop such skills “in a generic sense, across all the professions.”¹³

Knowledge management

7. Knowledge management is another skill that was highlighted to us. We recently heard from the National Archive about the mixed abilities of the Civil Service in this area, as part of our one-off hearing on the *Preservation of historical files in the Civil Service*.¹⁴ However, despite the recent Records Review by Sir Alex Allan having highlighted the generic nature of this skill, by setting out a series of related recommendations to all Civil Service departments, there is no focus on building knowledge management skills in the Capabilities Plan.¹⁵ History & Policy tell us that this omission is reflected in the absence of any Civil Service Learning (CSL) training provision in this area:

Previous incarnations of civil service training showed how both substantive historical content, and how to search and analyse the archive, could enrich policy making. The National School for Government included core historical components. CSL has no equivalent history core, which we believe is storing up a major deficit in the toolbox of skills civil servants require for excellent policy making.¹⁶

Risk

8. We have also heard warnings about a lack of focus on risk management and risk reporting at all levels within the Civil Service and the impact this is having on its ability to deliver major projects and achieve commercial outcomes. Risk management is not a focus of the Capabilities Plan, in fact the word ‘risk’ appears only once in the 27 page document.¹⁷ However, a number of witnesses stressed the need for greater development of this skill across Whitehall. The Institute for Risk Management (IRM) call the current approach “inconsistent”, stating that there is “little evidence of support for professional training and development in risk management”.¹⁸ The IRM tells us that the impact of this skills deficit has been seen in “problems with Universal Credit rollout and the Passport Office backlog which indicate that ‘optimism bias’ is winning over an informed risk review approach.”¹⁹ The CBI, which represents a number of public sector service providers from which the Government buys key services, agree with this position. They tell us that “too few civil servants have a sufficiently broad understanding of the operational and financial risks in contracting”, resulting in “imperfect contract models that raise the cost of services, as suppliers need to cover the costs of insuring against such liabilities.”²⁰ The CBI also tells

13 Royal Statistical Society [CSS8]

14 Oral evidence taken on 22 July 2014, (2014-15), HC 550, Q 1-127

15 Cabinet Office, [Records review by Sir Alex Allan](#), November 2014

16 History & Policy (H&P) [CSS22]

17 Civil Service, [Meeting the Challenge of Change: A capabilities plan for the Civil Service](#), April 2013

18 Institute for Risk Management [CSS28]

19 As above

20 Confederation of British Industry [CSS30]

us that “suppliers cite frequent problems experienced in risk reporting”, providing the following example:

On a contract, issues that a provider highlighted as “red” on the shared risk register, which required addressing further up the chain of command, were subsequently re-classified as “yellow” by contract managers in order to avoid the need to escalate. But when things (rarely) subsequently went wrong, civil servants then asked suppliers why they were not told of the issue, even though this was highlighted through the risk register.²¹

9. This example demonstrates a lack of skills relating to the evaluation and understanding of risk and missing risk reporting capabilities. The Universal Credit example IRM cite is another such project that, in addition to suffering from poor risk management, suffered from the poor communication of risk. As the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) found in its November 2013 report *Universal Credit: early Progress*:

Risk was not well managed and the divergence between planned and actual progress could and should have been spotted and acted upon earlier. The Department only reported good news and denied the problems that had emerged.²²

We asked Oliver Robbins (Director General, Civil Service at the Cabinet Office) about the omission of such skills from the Capabilities Plan. He told us:

There is a list of about another six things, just beneath the four that we have chosen to prioritise, that in my ideal world I would have every civil servant in the country looking at. However, I think it was right to choose four [...] I really want to make some decent progress on those.²³

He explained that beyond CSL there is a network of “departmental HR functions and HR directors” which is currently dealing “as best it can, with that second list of priorities below the top four”. However, Oliver Robbins states that this does not involve “trying to mandate extra courses or put enormous extra resource into them.”²⁴

10. The focus on the four key skills highlighted in the Capabilities Plan is welcome. It is acknowledged that these skills require improvement in all departments. However, overall the approach is too narrow and one-dimensional. The development of the key skills that are the focus of the Capabilities Plan will be undermined if the maintenance and development of key complementary and supportive skills, relevant to all departments, are neglected and allowed to erode.

11. We recommend that the Cabinet Office should invite National Audit Office to conduct an evaluation of the specialist skill needs generic to all departments, and expand the

21 As above

22 Public Accounts Committee, Thirteenth Report of Session 2013-14, [Universal Credit: early Progress](#), HC 619, November 2013

23 Q 251

24 Q 260

Capabilities Plan accordingly. The Cabinet Office should then ensure that all departments are required to monitor, maintain and develop resources in these areas. This in particular should include a greater focus on risk management and risk reporting skills.

Attitudes and behavioural traits

12. There is a danger skills change is not accompanied by an effort to support the right change in attitudes and behavioural traits. The International Institute of Business Analysis, UK Chapter, tell us of an interviewee who reported that the government body they work in “sent people on PRINCE2 training courses and then considered them to be project managers”²⁵ As a number of witnesses have told us, an approach based on the gaining of skills alone will not work. In addition to gaining skills, civil servants must be assisted in adapting their attitudes and behaviours. A key factor in encouraging this is fostering a culture in which civil servants feel free to adapt their behaviour in response to training; to use the new skills they have gained and try new approaches. The CBI tells us, with reference to the development of commercial capabilities, “inspiring change across the civil service requires senior leaders to give commercial and operational staff sufficient ‘headroom’ in which to operate differently.”²⁶ We asked our witnesses what behavioural traits or attitudes within the Civil Service should be encouraged, Stella Manzie told us that:

We need to encourage approachability, devoting sufficient time to staff management, including performance management, and being able clearly to express what the political and governmental objectives are in a way that is understandable not just to the most senior staff but to the most junior frontline staff.²⁷

13. The requirement for change was acknowledged directly in the, recently published, *Civil Service Leadership statement*: “we will give our teams the space and authority to deliver their clearly set objectives”.²⁸ The *Civil Service Leadership statement* has been described as a single, clear statement of “what you can expect of Civil Service leaders at all levels”.²⁹ It highlights the 3 key characteristics that an extensive Civil Service consultation indicated staff expected from effective leaders, and that Civil Service leaders have now promised to live up to. They will be:

- Inspiring—about their work and its future
- Confident—in their engagement
- Empowering—their teams to deliver.

25 IIBA UK Chapter Limited [CSS18]

26 Confederation of British Industry [CSS30]

27 Q20

28 HM Government, [Civil Service Leadership Statement](#), February 2015 and Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development [CSS4] and Public Administration Select Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2013-14, [Truth to power: how Civil Service reform can succeed](#), HC 74 [incorporating HC 664-i-x, Session 2012-13], September 2013

29 <https://civilservice.blog.gov.uk/2015/02/12/better-leadership-in-the-civil-service/>

14. Something that will hamper progress in this area is the presence of a blame culture. We highlighted the growth of such a culture in our report *Truth to power: how Civil Service reform can succeed*, a topic the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) comment on:

Operating within a “blame” culture creates fear and a sense of psychological threat, and this is likely to produce a defensive response. Practitioner studies, academic research and accepted domain knowledge [suggest] that “learning” is directly impeded if someone is under threat.³⁰

The CIPD tell us that “Ministers need to get the balance right between holding individuals accountable and stoking a national “blame” culture. Failure to get this balance right leads to unproductive learning contexts and damages organisational performance.”³¹ The Capabilities Plan does highlight the need to focus on such cultural changes and some positive steps have been made in this regard. However, as the Cabinet Office tell us, “culture change remains a particular challenge”.³²

15. We asked Bill Crothers (Civil Service Chief Commercial Officer) how he measures the effectiveness of cultural change in the Civil Service. He told us that: “you do not measure culture”:

You see the impact. I always think that you do not need to measure the wind-speed to know wind is blowing. You see the trees bending. The way we would measure the impact is we will have fewer contractual failures. That is the key.³³

16. Gaining new skills is essential for the Civil Service. The required change in associated attitudes and behaviours is a key enabling step to this. Civil servants must feel empowered to use the new skills they gain, to innovate and take risks appropriately. Progress in this area must be regularly evaluated and subject to objective assessment.

17. Future versions of the Capabilities Plan should focus more on enabling and tracking behavioural change within departments. The Cabinet Office should define, implement and monitor changes in attitudes and behaviours, using measures of engagement from the Annual People Survey, and other less formal feedback to encourage approachability, listening to the views of staff at all levels, devoting sufficient time to staff management, including performance management, and being able clearly to express what the political and governmental objectives are in a way that is understandable to all staff. This will increase focus on behavioural change and allow progress to be openly appraised.

30 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) [CSS4] and Public Administration Select Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2013-14, [Truth to power: how Civil Service reform can succeed](#), HC 74 [incorporating HC 664-i-x, Session 2012-13], September 2013

31 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) [CSS4]

32 Minister for the Cabinet Office [CSS26]

33 Q 153

2 Identifying where skills are needed

The need for better data

18. In its 2011 report *Identifying and meeting central government's skills requirements* the National Audit Office found that “data weaknesses limit the understanding that different departments have of the skills they possess, and hence the development activities that are required”.³⁴ The National Audit Office reported that as result of these weaknesses in departmental information systems “knowledge of existing skills remains patchy at a corporate level.”³⁵ This report also found that only 40 per cent of the respondents to their survey considered that their organisation “was ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ effective in maintaining information on the skills of staff.”³⁶

19. This is a view shared by the Cabinet Office. In January 2015 Francis Maude agreed that there is “much more that needs to be done” in this area, while John Manzoni confirmed to us that the Cabinet Office does “not have [...] very good cross-Civil Service human resource data.”³⁷ Asked whether better data would assist the Cabinet Office John Manzoni told us:

You are absolutely right. I have this conversation [...] all the time. I say, “Why do we not have that?”³⁸

20. The Civil Service does not have a clear picture of its current skills. It does not know who has what skills or where they sit in the Civil Service. Without this knowledge the impact of any central attempt to improve Civil Service skills will always be limited.

21. *We recommend that the Cabinet Office introduce a standardised framework for auditing departmental skill levels. This should led by the Cabinet Office and implemented by each department as soon as possible.*

Box 1: The West Coast mainline franchise competition: case study

In October 2012 the Secretary of State for Transport announced that the competition to award the West Coast mainline franchise had been cancelled because of the discovery of “significant technical flaws” in the way in which the procurement had been conducted.³⁹

Following the decision to cancel the competition, the Department for Transport (DfT) commissioned two of its non-executive directors, Sam Laidlaw and Ed Smith, to oversee

34 National Audit Office, [Identifying and meeting central government's skills requirements](#), HC 1276, July 2011

35 As above

36 As above

37 Oral evidence taken on 14 January 2015, (2014-15), HC 922, Q 27 and Hansard (2015) 7 Jan : Column 253

38 Oral evidence taken on 14 January 2015, (2014-15), HC 922, Q 54

39 Transport Select Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2012-13, [Cancellation of the InterCity West Coast franchise competition](#), HC 537, January 2013

a review of what had gone wrong. Released in December 2012, the *Report of the Laidlaw Inquiry* lists “deficiencies in organisational structure and resourcing”⁴⁰ as contributory factors to the failure of the competition. Specifically it found that “a number of senior, experienced individuals left the DfT over the course of the InterCity West Coast franchise process without being replaced” and that “the key members of the project team were relatively junior and less experienced in comparison with the bidder counterparties they were facing.”

The Laidlaw report was complemented by a further report, commissioned by the Secretary of State for Transport, from Richard Brown, the Chairman of Eurostar. Released a month later in January 2013, *The Brown Review of the Rail Franchising Programme* echoes the Laidlaw focus on skills gaps within DfT, stating that “the Department has relied too much on the legacy of commercially experienced and industry knowledgeable people from the SRA [Strategic Rail Authority]. It has not been successful in refreshing its capability since then.”

Commenting on the findings of the Laidlaw Report, DfT Permanent Secretary Philip Rutnam stated in December 2012: “We will implement all of Mr Laidlaw’s recommendations, and go further, to ensure we have the right set of skills, support and training to ensure failures like this do not happen again.”⁴¹

It is estimated by DfT that refunding bidders’ costs as a result of cancelling the franchise competition, cost somewhere “in the region of £40 million to £45 million”.

The need for more honesty

22. The example of the Department for Transport (DfT) and the West Coast mainline (see Box 1) not only demonstrates the need for better data on skills, but also the importance of basing such data on an honest appraisal of a departmental capabilities. Speaking to us about the changes that had been introduced at DfT, following the cancellation of the West Coast mainline franchise competition, the Director General for Rail, Clare Moriarty, told us that one of the main lessons learnt by the Department “was that we simply did not have the dedicated resource”.⁴² Reporting on the changes that had been introduced since, Ms Moriarty said:

Every single franchise competition now has a franchise project team leader at a senior level. We have fully staffed and dedicated teams for each franchise competition. We have our financial, legal and technical advisers in place.⁴³

23. While DfT are now publically expressing confidence in the corrective steps that they have been able to take, recent National Audit Office reports suggest that skill gaps may still

40 Department for Transport, [Report of the Laidlaw Inquiry: Inquiry into the Lessons Learned for the Department for Transport from the InterCity West Coast Competition](#), December 2012

41 Department for Transport, [West Coast Main Line: final report of the Laidlaw inquiry](#), December 2012

42 Q 169

43 As above

exist in the Department. In its January 2014 report *Crossrail*, the National Audit Office assessed evidence collected between August 2013 and November 2013 and reported:

As with other Department for Transport programmes, the Department's senior representatives overseeing the programme have changed frequently, reflecting the number of programmes that the Department is sponsoring and a scarcity of staff with the right skills and experience.⁴⁴

24. In its July 2014 report *Procuring new trains* the National Audit Office examined the procurement of new trains under two recent programmes: Intercity Express (awarded in July 2012, with further awards made in April 2014) and Thameslink (awarded in June 2013). Here similar findings were reached when evidence collected between October 2013 and April 2014 was assessed:

Having enough staff with the right skills and experience is vital to manage such programmes. As we have reported on other major programmes run by the Department, the Department's teams are often stretched and this was the case again.⁴⁵

25. Both of these National Audit Office reports are based on evidence gathered only a short period after the findings of the Laidlaw report and the Brown review were published. They include the examination of programmes that began prior to this point. However, given the financial constraints that Civil Service departments are currently being asked to operate under, the potential difference of opinion that appears to exist between DfT and the National Audit Office highlights the need to ensure objectivity in any departmental skills assessment.

26. It is essential that any central audit of Civil Service skills is both open and honest. Many parts of the Civil Service currently operate under severe resourcing constraints. However, without an honest appraisal of where skill gaps lie, further failures, such as the cancellation of the West Coast mainline franchise competition, are unavoidable. Short-term presentational gains should not be given preference over long-term cost for the taxpayer.

27. We recommend that the Cabinet Office ask the National Audit Office to carry out a Civil Service wide skills audit on a regular basis. This will ensure that results are robust and based on an honest and realistic appraisal of current departmental capabilities.

44 National Audit Office, [Crossrail](#), HC 965, January 2014

45 National Audit Office, [Procuring new trains](#), HC 531, July 2014

3 Getting leadership right

28. In our 2010 report *Good Governance and Civil Service Reform* we cited Professor Andrew Kakabadse, Professor of International Management Development at Cranfield University, as identifying the “quality of leadership and management” in Whitehall as the critical requirement for success in the Government’s plans for major public service reform.⁴⁶ He stated that “having a clear vision concerning how to meet departmental priorities while being stringent over costs and also while motivating people, captures the nature of the leadership challenge facing the senior management of Whitehall.”⁴⁷ The independent *Women in Whitehall* report authored by the Hay Group on behalf of Cabinet Office similarly acknowledged the unique challenge facing Civil Service leaders:

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 [in] almost any other organisational setting.⁴⁸

29. Stella Manzie told us that:

In our research, we used this phrase “dancing on ice” to describe the partnership between a politician and somebody like a Permanent Secretary. What that means is that you have dual leadership going on. The politician is always in the ascendant; however, there are times when the politician will be in the front, but, for example, with the staff of a large Government Department, you would want the Permanent Secretary to be giving key messages about what the political objectives that have come down from the politician are and how, managerially, those need to be carried through.⁴⁹

30. In their research paper, *Dancing on Ice: leadership with political astuteness by senior public servants in the UK*, Professor Jean Hartley and Stella Manzie describe the challenge of dual leadership in Whitehall:

[S]enior public servants work in a context of dual leadership—where they exercise leadership in their own right, with authority over an organisation and its staff—but they must also subordinate their own leadership to that of the politician, who has the final democratic authority. They have to be flexible, sometimes taking the lead, sometimes offering advice in the background to the politician and sometimes being nearly invisible.⁵⁰

46 Public Administration Select Committee, Eleventh Report of Session 2010–12, [Good Governance and Civil Service Reform: ‘End of Term’ report on Whitehall plans for structural reform](#), HC 901, July 2011

47 As above

48 Hay Group (Cabinet Office), [Women in Whitehall: culture, leadership, talent](#), September 2014

49 Q16

50 Manzie, Stella and Hartley, Jean, [Dancing on Ice: leadership with political astuteness by senior public servants in the UK](#), 2013, The Open University Business School, Milton Keynes, UK.

31. The phrase “dual leadership” quoted above draws attention to the complexities of leadership within the Civil Service.⁵¹ It is notable that the Civil Service Leadership Statement makes no reference to the leadership of Ministers.⁵²

32. However, in addition to recognising the extent of this leadership challenge, the Hay Group reported that there is more to do in developing the skills required to meet it. It found that for the majority of Senior Civil Service staff the “fact remains that leadership is crowded out by other activities” and that amongst this group “capability is inconsistent”.⁵³

33. The Cabinet Office appears to understand that the challenge facing Civil Service leaders is unique and that there is more to do in this area. Speaking to us about his new role as Chief Executive of the Civil Service, John Manzoni told us that “the Civil Service is a big and complicated organisation, and big and complicated organisations require confident leadership. They require a sense of being on the front foot—a sense of being in control of their own destiny. My observation is that we are not where I think all of us would like to be in that matter.”⁵⁴

The current approach to leadership development

34. Preparing people for leadership is covered by the Capabilities Plan, which identifies both 'leading and managing change' and 'programme and project management' as two of its four priority areas. Colin Talbot, Professor of Government at the University of Manchester, told us that he believes the current approach is not good enough:

We are probably the weakest country, certainly among the big OECD states, in terms of having a system for developing our senior public leaders, not just senior civil servants.⁵⁵

The result of this weakness is visible to many of those working in the Civil Service. Only 43% of respondents to the 2014 Civil Service People Survey rated the theme of 'leadership and managing change' positively. 'Pay and benefits' was the only theme which was given a lower rating by civil servants.⁵⁶

35. The Cabinet Office tell us that currently leadership training is provided through Civil Service Learning, some departments, and some professions.⁵⁷ However, despite an apparent abundance of leadership training, we have heard a number of concerns relating to the accessibility of such schemes. Karen Foster of PCS told us that “Leadership in change and management”⁵⁸ is one of the courses that PCS provides for a number of its members. She reported that this course is “very, very popular because they [PCS members] are not

51 As above

52 HM Government, [Civil Service Leadership Statement](#), February 2015

53 Hay Group (Cabinet Office), [Women in Whitehall: culture, leadership, talent](#), September 2014

54 Oral evidence taken on 14 January 2015, (2014-15), HC 922, Q 5

55 Q 4

56 Cabinet Office, [Civil Service People Survey 2014: Civil Service benchmark scores](#), November 2014

57 Cabinet Office [CS535]

58 Q 120

getting the opportunity to do that kind of learning in the workplace."⁵⁹ Echoing the findings of the Hay Group, that Civil Service leaders have difficulty in making time for leadership skills development, the FDA told us that “surveys of SCS members show that over 40 per cent of our members do not feel they have adequate opportunity to enhance their skills or competencies, due to lack of time, and due to lack of resource.”⁶⁰ Rob O’Neill of the FDA stated:

These are the people who are managing change right across the Civil Service, and have been over the last few years, managing the cutbacks that have been made, and quite often they feel that they do not have the time, or that there is not the recourse available, to allow them to do that.⁶¹

36. The PCS told us that similar problems exist in the lower grades of the Civil Service. Karen Foster reported that the standard allocation of five days training a year is “very often used for business critical training”, meaning that opportunities to develop future leadership skills are often forgone.

37. This apparent bias towards current and future Civil Service leaders being required to simply ‘learn on the job’ was commented on by Professor Talbot. In written evidence to us, Professor Talbot identifies that experiential learning, or the “convention of moving aspirant leaders around between different (mainly policy) jobs which they do for relatively short periods (typically 2-3 years at most)” has historically “been the principal way of developing civil service leaders.”⁶² Professor Talbot states that as a result of this over-reliance on experiential learning, there are benefits that could be gained from conceptual, reflective and experimental learning that are currently being missed by the Civil Service. In particular, Professor Talbot tells us that higher education institutions have been almost completely absent from top leadership development in the Civil Service. He reports that, while individual academics have on occasion been brought into courses, the UK has not implemented or made use of the sorts of advanced degree courses (such as Masters in Public Administration or Public Policy) that are prevalent in many other OECD countries:

In the United States, for example, there are 250 or so of each. We have been extremely weak in this country in that area, across the whole of the public service and specifically for the Civil Service.⁶³

38. Examining the unique nature of the leadership challenge faced by civil servants, in their written submission to us Stella Manzie and Professor Jean Hartley drew on their research into leading with political astuteness.⁶⁴ In assessing how senior civil servants acquired such skills, Manzie and Hartley observe a similar heavy reliance on experiential learning and a

59 As above

60 As above

61 As above

62 Professor Colin Talbot, University of Manchester [CS29]

63 Q 9 and Professor Colin Talbot, University of Manchester [CS29]

64 Manzie, Stella and Hartley, Jean (2013). [Dancing on Ice: leadership with political astuteness by senior public servants in the UK](#). The Open University Business School, Milton Keynes, UK.

distinct absence of conceptual and reflective learning (see Box 2). They find that most of those interviewed, as part of this research, had gained these skills “through a combination of personal qualities and experience”.⁶⁵ On the presence of alternative forms of learning they find that:

Most of the interviewees acknowledged was that there had been little overt discussion in any context of issues such as the ethical issues and the specifics and ambiguities behind leadership in a political environment, let alone formal training or development.⁶⁶

Box 2: Learning for leaders

Professor Colin Talbot explained in his written evidence that it is useful to divide approaches to developing leaders (any leaders) into four broad types (based on a specific approach to how people learn):

- Experiential learning;
- Reflective learning;
- Conceptual learning; and
- Experimental learning.⁶⁷

Experiential learning is simply ‘learning on the job’—gaining knowledge and skills by simply doing the job, and possibly by observing those around you doing similar jobs. Historically this has been the principal way of developing civil service leaders. The convention of moving aspirant leaders around between different (mainly policy) jobs which they do for relatively short periods (typically 2-3 years at most).

Reflective learning is an approach that involves individuals engaging in roles and then reflecting on what did and did not work. Most often this involves some sort of mentor who helps with the reflection and is akin, in some ways, to an apprenticeship. The approach has a well-developed theoretical and research base and is widely used in professional development: teaching, medicine, nursing, architecture, etc.

Conceptual learning is the more traditional training and educational, classroom-based, style of development in which participants acquire knowledge, concepts, and theories from more knowledgeable teachers or trainers. This was described as “the forte of the Civil Service College, and its successor organizations”, which provided this sort of development to tens of thousands of civil servants. Of course there has always been a lot of non-Civil Service College provision of such training and development: in-house courses run by departments and agencies; external courses from a range of providers; and higher education courses linked to qualifications.

65 As above

66 As above

67 Professor Talbot [CSS29]

Experimental learning originated in the ideas of a British educational innovator, Reg Revans, in the post-War National Coal Board. Revans pioneered ‘action learning’, an approach which involved managers engaging in ‘active experimentation’ in their jobs and then discussing the results with a group of peers (‘action learning sets’ in the jargon). There have been many variants on this idea and the practice has waxed and waned several times over the past half-century, but it still has many adherents.

A lack of clear leadership

39. Where steps are being taken to introduce alternatives to experiential leadership training, the current approach itself appears to lack leadership. The Major Projects Leadership Academy has often been cited during this inquiry as an example of a scheme successfully providing leaders with access to non-experiential leadership learning (see Box 2). Its creation and success are very welcome. Yet we have also heard from Bill Crothers, the Chief Commercial Officer, about his intention to set up a similar academy focused on commercial skills, and from John Manzoni about the need to establish a “high-end leadership academy”.⁶⁸ Such intentions are also very welcome. However, we have not heard how this new academy landscape will be coordinated, or who is responsible for overseeing their collective development.

40. We asked Bill Crothers if he perceived a gap in the way the Civil Service is seeking to address cross-profession and cross-departmental leadership skills training. In response he told us about the closer working that had been achieved between the Civil Service professions in addition to the improvements that have been seen in communication between functional leads, such as himself and Julian Kelly.⁶⁹ He told us about the positive impact that John Manzoni’s new role, as the Chief Executive of the Civil Service, has had in trying to introduce closer integration between these functions. These are all positive messages, which were later echoed by Sir Jeremy Heywood and John Manzoni himself. However, while stronger and more connected functions can be seen as an encouraging step, it was not clear to us who, in all of this, is responsible for ensuring that the shared leadership skills needs of these functions are being met. The Cabinet Office recently published its Civil Service Leadership Statement.⁷⁰ This highlighted the three key characteristics that civil servants have indicated they “expect from effective leaders” and that “Civil Service leaders promise to live up to”.⁷¹ The Cabinet Office reported that “the Statement will be supported by a new 360-degree reporting mechanism”, which, for the first time, will provide staff with “the opportunity to assess their leaders and measure their performance against the values set out in the Leadership Statement.”⁷² These are positive steps, which in particular should assist in addressing staff engagement issues. However,

68 Oral evidence taken on 14 January 2015, (2014-15), HC 922, Q 27

69 Q 151

70 Cabinet Office, [Better leadership in the Civil Service: a statement of intent](#), February 2015

71 As above

72 As above

again it is not clear to us who it is that is responsible for driving this forward or accountable for its success or failure.

41. Dominic Cummings (former Special Adviser to Michael Gove MP) posed the question to us “Who is incentivised to force people to face reality? [...] You guys in Parliament do not have these sorts of mechanisms”.⁷³ When we discussed with Stella Manzie the idea of a Civil Service parliamentary scheme that allows young Members of Parliament to gain real life exposure to how Government Departments work, she told us this was a good idea.⁷⁴ Based on a similar principle, the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme has for over twenty years offered members of the House of Commons, House of Lords and European Parliament experience of spending a number of days with the armed forces over the course of a year.⁷⁵

42. From Chris Last we heard about the “the Senior Leadership Committee”, which is made up of “senior permanent secretaries” and is the “customer guiding mind” ensuring that a full spectrum of learning for leaders is carried out.⁷⁶ From Oliver Robbins we heard about the “cross-Civil Service senior committees” which sit below this and “look at each level of the development offer” to ensure the right people are gaining access to it.⁷⁷ The existence of such structures is positive. However, the direct accountability and leadership of them was not clear to us. John Manzoni has told us that he is “ultimately” responsible for delivering the training strategy outlined in the Capabilities Plan.⁷⁸ When we asked Oliver Robbins specifically “who is the guiding mind behind the leadership training of the Civil Service?”, he replied that “the plain answer to that is it is probably some combination of me and Chris [Last].”⁷⁹

43. In times of significant financial constraints, good leadership is the key enabling factor that will allow the Civil Service to continue to deliver the Government’s objectives. The Cabinet Office rightly appears to be focusing on skills in this area. However, despite this focus, we have learned that leaders are not getting access to the sort of training they require. The ongoing need for the Civil Service to do more with less applies to all elements of its operation, including training. However, where possible, greater efforts should be made to provide access to, and space for, conceptual, reflective and experimental learning.

44. There are two aspects of civil service leadership which are in tension with one other. The first is the observation made by the Civil Service Chief Executive, John Manzoni, that “the Civil Service ... requires confident leadership”... and “a sense of being in control of their own destiny”. The second is that Civil Service leaders must subordinate their own leadership to that of the Minister, who has the final democratic authority.

73 Q 231

74 Q 32

75 Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme, www.af-ps.info, 2015

76 Q 282

77 Q 286

78 Oral evidence taken on 14 January 2015, (2014-15), HC 922, Q 27

79 Q 284

Thus senior civil servants work in a context of dual leadership. This makes Civil Service leadership complicated and potentially confusing. This underlines the importance of leadership with political astuteness. People find it difficult to address this issue due to its sensitivity yet there has not been much structured, taught discussion of these complex issues and their interaction with policy and management. However, it is vital to address this issue. The steps which are being taken to improve the leadership training offer are encouraging, but more should be done to ensure that this approach is coherent and that momentum is maintained.

45. We therefore fully support John Manzoni's intention to establish a Civil Service Leadership Academy. This should be a place in which Civil Service leaders can reflect and build upon their experiential learning. In establishing this academy we recommend that the Cabinet Office consult academics to ensure that this institution provides Civil Service leaders with effective access to conceptual, reflective and experimental learning. It must address the unique challenges faced by public service leaders, which conventional business training cannot. This should also provide a central focus for the other leadership academies already being established for the NHS, Police and Major Projects, and any others being proposed, such as for commercial skills, which will have to educate public service leaders to deal with similar challenges.

46. To develop better understanding between politicians and Civil Servants, there should also be a Civil Service Parliamentary Scheme set up by the Cabinet Office, similar to the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme. As well as giving MPs experience in Whitehall departments and educating future ministers, it would expose civil servants to politicians as part of their career development. There should be more reciprocal secondments of potential Civil Service and Diplomatic Service leaders to the offices of MPs, shadow ministers, and to select committees.

47. We recommend that the Chief Executive of the Civil Service be made clearly accountable for understanding the current leadership skills provision across all departments, driving improvements in it and ensuring that the approach is coherent, efficient and effective.

4 Attracting and retaining the right skills

48. In its civil service pay guidance for 2014-15 the Treasury states that “public sector pay awards will be limited to an average of up to 1 per cent in 2015-16”.⁸⁰ As part of this inquiry we have sought to understand more about the effect of this on the capabilities of the Civil Service.

49. In its June 2013 report *Building capability in the Senior Civil Service to meet today’s challenges* the National Audit Office reported that “owing to the pay freeze, and changes to pensions and benefits, the total reward for senior civil servants has been reduced by around 17 per cent in real terms over four years.”⁸¹ The CBI tells us that due to such reward gaps “there is a frequent flow of civil servants taking their expertise out into the private sector, meaning these skills are lost from the civil service.”⁸² Rob O’Neill, Assistant General Secretary, First Division Association (FDA) told us that such retention problems are only set to get worse as the economy recovers. Reporting on the results of a survey the FDA had carried out of Civil Service HR managers, Mr O’Neill told us that “they are quite clear that, as the economy picks up, their problems are going to rise and that we are going to start to see people leaving the Civil Service more”.⁸³ This warning was based in part on the fact that the Civil Service now “increasingly prioritises skills that are very prized in the private sector”, such as “digital and commercial skills”.⁸⁴

50. We have also heard how the current pay policy is affecting the career choices made by those who choose to stay in the Civil Service. In a private seminar with members of the CBI we were warned that the unavailability of pay rises in post is acting as an incentive for Civil Servants with valuable specialist knowledge to move out of post in search of promotion, harming corporate memory. This is a problem that is acknowledged by John Manzoni at all levels in the Civil Service. He told us that:

If you are a young person of 25 years old and you have just had a child and you want a new mortgage, and the only way you can get more money is to do another job in government, you are going to go and do another job in government. The unintended consequence of that particular policy is that it encourages people to move around [...] I do not need evidence to tell me, frankly, that that is wrong, because I can just see it. We have to solve that problem.⁸⁵

51. When asked what steps the Civil Service might take to address such problems, Mr Manzoni told us “we are already in a conversation”, but warned that this is taking place in

80 HM Treasury, [Civil service pay guidance 2014-15](#), March 2014

81 National Audit Office, [Building capability in the Senior Civil Service to meet today’s challenges](#), HC 129, June 2013

82 Confederation of British Industry [CSS30]

83 Q 127

84 As above

85 Oral evidence taken on 14 January 2015, (2014-15), HC 922, Q 45

the “context of a real and understood set of constraints”.⁸⁶ We suggested that Mr Manzoni time these conversations so that any findings are ready to put in front of a new Minister after the general election. He told us that “that is the intent.”⁸⁷

52. The Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service told us that in his opinion: “overall, pay levels are okay.” He added that “if you look at our surveys of staff opinion, people are increasingly concerned about pay and benefits, but I do not think it has reached critical levels”. Here Sir Jeremy’s focus appeared slightly narrower than that of his Chief Executive:

I look particularly at the highest-performing civil servants in the highest Civil Service job levels: directors-general, directors and deputy directors. I look at the most talented in that group, and our turnover rate—our resignation rate—amongst that group of people whom I am very keen to keep is down below 3% per annum, which is a very low attrition rate for your stars. It is something I look at on a monthly basis, as you would imagine. It is on my dashboard.⁸⁸

53. A focus on the most talented is understandable. However, Professor Colin Talbot warned us that most of the damage being caused by the current lack of competitiveness with the private sector is occurring in lower ranks. Reporting on the results of interviews he had conducted with members of the Senior Civil Service, Professor Talbot told us that the “evidence we are getting from them is that, particularly in policy areas, experienced policy-maker civil servants have been leaving in droves”.⁸⁹ He warned that this is currently resulting in the creation of “huge gaps” in the middle of the Civil Service “around grade 6 or 7”.

54. The Cabinet Office states that “from April 2013, a Pivotal Role Allowance has also been available to departments to retain niche skills and those responsible for delivering the most important and complex projects across government”.⁹⁰ Information requested from the Cabinet Office shows that thus far, this facility has been used 25 times, suggesting its ability to reduce the possible hollowing out of skills at lower levels is limited.⁹¹

55. The need for pay constraints is a reality that the Civil Service will continue to face. At present the Civil Service appears able to retain its most talented leaders, which is essential and encouraging. However, the impact of these leaders will be limited if the right skills do not remain at their disposal. Warnings that skills at mid-management levels are being significantly hollowed out are worrying. It was clear to us that the introduction of the Pivotal Role Allowance, intended to retain key people, was a token gesture, not a sufficient response to this challenge.

86 Oral evidence taken on 14 January 2015, (2014-15), HC 922, Q 67

87 Oral evidence taken on 14 January 2015, (2014-15), HC 922, Q 70

88 Oral evidence taken on 27 January 2015 (2014-15), HC 669, Q 386

89 Q 36

90 Minister for the Cabinet Office [CSS26]

91 Cabinet Office [CSS35]

56. The modern Civil Service is increasingly charged with finding more intelligent ways of solving problems and making efficient use of funding. The Government should ensure that this approach is continually applied to its policy on Civil Service pay. If this is not done the Civil Service will needlessly lose expensively gained skills and knowledge, which it will struggle to replace.

57. We welcome John Manzoni's suggestion that the Civil Service is continuing to explore ways in which constrained resources can be best used to ensure that vital skills are retained at all levels. The Civil Service need a pay and reward system that will retain people in the jobs in which they are most needed and will extend job tenure to make the most effective use of experience. We recommend that this work is prioritised so that a range of effective proposals are ready for Ministers to consider at the beginning of the next Government.

5 Civil Service Learning and the delivery of training

The creation of Civil Service Learning

58. The National School of Government (previously known as the Civil Service College and the Centre for Management and Policy Studies) was formerly part of the Cabinet Office. It was responsible for running training courses for civil servants and had a dedicated training facility at Sunningdale Park, near Ascot, in addition to centres in Edinburgh and London. The NSG was closed on 31 March 2012. In outlining its approach to training under the current Capabilities Plan the Cabinet Office states that “the Civil Service has moved away from residential and classroom learning, to a modern offer which combines face-to-face courses with online training, coaching and other materials to support workplace learning. This shift has been driven by the creation of Civil Service Learning (CSL) in 2012.” According to the Cabinet Office, CSL is responsible for directly delivering 30 per cent of the learning which is “generic” to the vast majority of civil servants.⁹² This includes subjects such as “customer service or people management”. The remaining 70 per cent of “learning spend” is “devoted to technical and business-specific training”, which “remains the responsibility of departments and/or professions to meet their business needs, supported by Civil Service Learning”.⁹³ However, departments or professions wishing to procure any such non-generic training, at a value greater than £10,000, must do so via CSL. The Cabinet Office states that this “offers value for money and minimises duplication.”⁹⁴

59. As a result of “a combination of outsourcing provision, competitive pricing and reducing internal fixed costs” the Cabinet Office reports that an annual saving of “over £100 million on total learning and development spend” is now being achieved when compared with 2009/10.⁹⁵ The Cabinet Office states that to ensure that quality is maintained under such reduced spending, regular evaluation and benchmarking has been carried out of the service provided by CSL since 2012. The results of this apparently indicate “strong, positive support for both the quality and cost of the Civil Service Learning offer.” In particular:

On quality, as at June 2014, drawing on over 1.3 million pieces of feedback from learners and line managers:

- 97 per cent reported that the learning met its objectives;
- 97 per cent agreed that skills had been acquired as a result of the learning; and

92 Minister for the Cabinet Office [CSS26]

93 As above

94 As above

95 As above

- 85 per cent of line managers confirmed that their team member’s behaviour or skills had improved as a result of the training they had done.⁹⁶

The Cabinet Office also highlights that while CSL is available to all Civil Servants, the NSG previously had a reputation for being “accessible only to senior staff, specialists and those who could afford the high costs”.⁹⁷ As a result NSG training was only accessed by “around 30,000 civil servants a year”.⁹⁸

The current delivery of training

60. Significant reductions in spending, greater accessibility of training and overwhelmingly positive feedback should be cause for celebration. However, this evaluation of the service provided by CSL is in contrast to a number of views we heard. Prospect told us that overall satisfaction with CSL is in fact much lower than that reported by the Cabinet Office:

Civil Service People Survey recorded a significant drop in satisfaction with learning and development from 2010 onwards before a slight recovery this year, but still below the level of satisfaction in 2009. This echoes the finding of a survey on training, for Civil Service World in 2013, which found that satisfaction with training had slumped over the last three years; just 31 per cent of respondents felt that training had improved in their organisation, with 52 per cent believing that it had deteriorated.⁹⁹

61. Such views are also more in keeping with those held by the leadership of the Cabinet Office itself. The Cabinet Secretary told us that he is “sceptical” about what he describes as such “North-Korean-style” feedback.¹⁰⁰ Francis Maude told us that he rated the performance of CSL as only “six-ish” out of ten.¹⁰¹

62. We heard a number of specific criticisms relating to this low level of overall satisfaction. One concern was an over-reliance upon, and inappropriate use of, e-learning. Hilary Spencer (Director of CSL) told us that e-learning made up around half of all training undertaken by civil servants “over the last year”.¹⁰² CSL has a particular responsibility for the provision of training relating to the four priorities of the Capabilities Plan. However, the applicability of e-learning to key leadership skill areas such as project delivery and change leadership has been questioned by a number of witnesses. The Civil Service College (a private sector provider of training) tells us that “while e-learning may be a cost-effective method”, this approach tends to be more suitable for “imparting uncontentious knowledge and basic training” of simple tasks.¹⁰³ They commented that it is “much less effective at

96 As above

97 As above

98 As above

99 Prospect [CSS14]

100 Oral evidence: Whitehall: capacity to address future challenges, HC 669, Q388

101 Q 327

102 Q 265 (“Over the last year, 1.2 million hours of face-to-face learning were undertaken by civil servants and 1 million hours of e-learning were done by civil servants, in terms of the balance of face-to-face and e-learning.”)

103 Civil Service College [CSS12]

developing the skills, expertise and culture required to lead and manage change in the complex situations, full of uncertainty, which are more typical of where civil servants, especially those in senior positions, find themselves operating.”¹⁰⁴

63. Dominic Cummings strongly agreed with this position:

To actually practice leadership, to practice taking decisions in risky situations with massive complexity, you cannot do that, certainly with current technology, on some kind of e-learning course that a civil servant over there logs onto during lunch break, and does for half an hour [...] These people have to be immersed, in my opinion, in real problems, real case studies, success and failure.¹⁰⁵

64. Hilary Spencer acknowledged that there are some skill areas “particularly in the leadership space” which “do not lend themselves to our standard understanding of e-learning”. However, access to CSL is currently password protected, meaning that external parties, including academics, are unable to assess how this point of view translates into the split between e-learning and other forms of learning.

65. On the use of extended residential training courses and engagement in conceptual and reflective learning, Ms Spencer told us that “there is quite a lot of evidence that says our capacity to retain a certain amount of information and then put it into practice is reasonably limited”.¹⁰⁶ As a result “the amount of information that you would get in an eight-day period does not lend itself to that sort of practice and reflection.”¹⁰⁷ Hilary Spencer also reported that the information being imparted on such courses is “often perceived by participants to be quite abstract” meaning that they “find it hard to understand how it would apply to their role.”¹⁰⁸

66. Any over-reliance on e-learning may be symptomatic of a lack of dedicated space in which other forms of training can be carried out. The Cabinet Office reports that vacating permanent training locations has allowed the Civil Service to reduce its training spending.¹⁰⁹ However, in a meeting with us, representatives of the Canada School of Public Service referred to the importance they placed on having a separate and neutral space, away from the work place, for training. In particular they stressed the positive effect of this protected environment on the willingness of Canadian civil servants to share ideas and speak freely about the experiences they had gained in their roles. Since the closure of the NSG the Civil Service no longer has such a dedicated training facility. As Paul Grant (a former employee of the NSG and now provider of training services to CSL, via Capita) told us, this means that many civil servants are now required to train in an environment that may well not be conducive to learning:

104 As above

105 Q 215

106 Q 267

107 As above

108 As above

109 Minister for the Cabinet Office [CSS26]

Where are they doing the e-learning? They are probably doing it in the office, where there are all sorts of distractions. I know from my experience of running these courses that where there is pre-course work, whether it is e-learning or whether it is doing pre-course reading, when they turn up on the course it is absolutely evident that they have learnt almost nothing from that pre-course work.¹¹⁰

67. CSL does make use of hired venues for the face-to-face training courses it runs. However, most are hired rooms in London, within close reach of trainees' departments. Paul Grant tells us this often fails to provide sufficient isolation from the work environment meaning that participants are "at the beck and call of their line managers, who regularly demand that the participant return to the office to work on some urgent, though not always important, business."¹¹¹

Box 3: European Union related training

Adam Steinhouse (formerly Head of Training on the European Union at the NSG) told us that the current EU training offered to civil servants is an example of how the scope and delivery of generic training has changed under CSL.

Adam Steinhouse reported that training on the European Union was previously managed by a dedicated team made up of six lecturers: two university lecturers in addition to four secondees from government departments. This full-time team was then supplemented by a wide range of experienced EU practitioners and academics.¹¹² Around 1,000 officials attended programmes each year and the school offered training products for those wishing to build on working knowledge of the institutions in additions to those seeking to gain a more general understanding of EU Institutions.¹¹³ Mr Steinhouse reported that courses run by the NSG also focused on the behaviours required to influence EU institutions, making use of face-to-face training and specific case-studies.¹¹⁴

Adam Steinhouse reported that "since the closure of the NSG, as far as I am able to ascertain, the training offer to UK civil servants has consisted of only one short course about the EU once per quarter, as well as a limited e-learning programme on the institutions and history of the EU."¹¹⁵

Procuring training

68. In addition to concerns about how training is delivered, we heard concerns that the CSL procurement processes are unnecessarily disincentivising the creation of new training courses. Peter Thomas of the Institute for Government told us that one of the greatest

110 Q 214

111 Paul Grant [CSS19]

112 Dr Adam Steinhouse [CSS24]

113 As above

114 As above

115 As above

contributing factors to the reduction in training spending via CSL was that the procurement process it manages is “a complete pain in the neck to go through”.¹¹⁶ He told us that good Civil Service managers, who want to get good developmental support, will always be happy to present the required business case. However the current CSL process is such that “after six or seven months, they think, ‘I cannot do it anymore.’”¹¹⁷ Mr Thomas commented that the centralisation of control under CSL has resulted in the setting of a “very high bar for making anything happen”.¹¹⁸ He told us that “such an approach will reduce spend, but you are not improving the quality of training and development”.¹¹⁹

69. The Royal Statistical Society provided an example of this “high bar” in action. They tell us that the Civil Service “currently lacks a centralised offer of statistics modules or courses which could be made available across all professions through Civil Service Learning.”¹²⁰ However, despite recognising this need, they tell us that “it is currently overly complex for the RSS and other external providers to list and offer these courses through Civil Service online and Capita.”¹²¹

70. The establishment of CSL marks a significant shift in the training approach of the Civil Service. This shift has allowed training budgets to be reduced significantly and has provided a greater number of civil servants with access to generic training. However, we have also learned that it has resulted in a lighter and narrower training provision, and the loss of a dedicated training facility. For many skills, particularly those requiring interpersonal skills, the introduction of a strong, and potentially misplaced, dependence on e-learning is no substitute for the face-to-face residential learning and mentoring they replaced. The Cabinet Office describe this reduction in spending as a “saving”. However, it is not clear how the impact of these changes has been assessed. Given some of the concerns that we have heard during this inquiry, and the key role now played by CSL, it is important that the true costs and benefits of this new approach are properly assessed.

71. We recommend that the National Audit Office carry out a value for money study of Civil Service Learning, with particular emphasis on the way it meets the unique demands made on public service leaders. This will provide an impartial view on the quality of the service it provides and its impact on Civil Service skills. In particular this should examine the consequences of the loss of dedicated training spaces, the current use of e-learning and the effectiveness of its procurement procedures.

116 Q 88

117 As above

118 As above

119 As above

120 Royal Statistical Society [CSS8]

121 As above

6 Learning from mistakes and seizing future opportunities

72. Throughout this inquiry we have heard from academics, business representatives and civil servants about the great importance of learning both from what is working well and from mistakes, capitalising on corporate memory and adopting an outward and forward-looking approach. However, from each of these groups, we have also heard about numerous Government failings in these areas.

Learning from mistakes

73. In their written evidence the ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) stated that “the continuous churn of civil servants and increasing departures of senior civil servants poses significant problems to the delivery of good governance and corporate memory. It inhibits the ability to learn from mistakes and stifles the dissemination of best practice.”¹²² The Employment Related Services Association (ERSA) agree with this, commenting on its experiences of the Department for Work and Pensions’ procurement process, an area focused on by the Capabilities Plan, and telling us that this “capacity has been reduced over an extended period by a high turnover of key civil service personnel.”¹²³

74. Speaking at Civil Service Live in 2013, Treasury permanent secretary Sir Nicholas Macpherson acknowledged the Civil Service’s weakness in this area, commenting that that poor institutional memory within HMT, in particular, means that the “endless reinventing of wheels is very likely”.¹²⁴ Despite such acknowledgement we have been told about the Civil Service’s diminishing ability to take steps to counteract this. The Academy of Social Sciences highlighted to us the 2012 report *Where Have All the Files Gone? Lost in Action Points Every One?* by Michael Moss.¹²⁵ According to the Academy, this report found “a marked deterioration in record-keeping practices” in the Civil Service, meaning that “when civil servants leave, their knowledge and relationships are lost”.¹²⁶ They tell us that examples of this has been seen “in rail planning and housing”.¹²⁷ Professor of History at Cambridge University, Simon Szreter, also told us that very few Civil Service departments have the right skills in place to ensure the maintenance of corporate memory. He reported that there is a “real issue about historical understanding and training.”¹²⁸ He added that “in a couple of Departments of State—the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence—they

122 ACCA [CSS23]

123 Employment Related Services Association [CSS31]

124 *Civil Service World* ‘[Macpherson: Whitehall must sharpen corporate memory](#)’, 12 July 2013

125 Moss, Michael (2012) ‘Where Have All the Files Gone? Lost in Action Points Every One?’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 47

126 Academy of Social Sciences [CSS6]

127 As above

128 Q 14

employ historians; I think they are the only Departments that do so.”¹²⁹ Dominic Cummings agreed with this view, commenting that “there has been an appalling destruction of libraries in Whitehall: the DfE [Department for Education] library was destroyed, the Foreign Office library was destroyed.”¹³⁰ He added that such behaviour is indicative of a system that “is parochial not just about the outside world, but [also] about its own past.”¹³¹

Learning from one another

75. In addition to a lack of ability to retain and learn from their own corporate memory, witnesses have told us about the inability of Civil Service departments to learn from the rest of the Civil Service, or the outside world. The British Psychological Society warns in their evidence of the dangers of groupthink, leading to situations where the “desire for agreement overrides motivation to appraise alternatives”.¹³² While Ian Richardson of the IRM spoke of the importance of skills, such as risk management, which allow organisations to disrupt “perfect-place arrogance”.¹³³ Reflecting on his time in the Department for Education, Dominic Cummings told us how he had witnessed such behaviour within the Civil Service:

In meeting after meeting if you say, “Who has already solved this problem and how can we steal what they have done?”, which is a very standard question to ask in the private sector, everyone looks at you as if you have asked an extraordinary question.¹³⁴

76. We have witnessed his apparent inability of departments to look outwards and learn from best practice first-hand. Speaking about the lessons learned at DfT, following the cancellation of the West Coast mainline franchise competition, Clare Moriarty told us they had distilled the results of the Laidlaw Report into “something we called the Laidlaw prescription”.¹³⁵ The Department saw these lessons as so important that they were printed on to cards so that staff could carry them with them at all times.¹³⁶ However, when asked how such positive lessons are being transferred to the Cabinet Office, Bill Crothers stated:

The problem is that there are too many of them. I do have a group who work for me who read any old PAC [Public Accounts Committee], PASC [Public Administration Select Committee], etc., reports that concern commercial, which they try to abstract, distil and send around to people. That one I missed.¹³⁷

129 As above

130 Q 187

131 As above

132 British Psychological Society [CSS5]

133 Q 93

134 Q 221

135 As above

136 Q 161

137 Q 165

77. In addition to these failings, we have also learned about related functional gaps created by the closure of the NSG. In addition to its core training function, the NSG also acted as a learning bridge, across Government and with organisations outside Government. For example, during a recent visit to the Ministry of Defence’s Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC), we heard about the role that the NSG had played in the Strategic Trends Programme, a project that engaged departments across Whitehall to consider the future challenges and opportunities Governments may face in 20 to 35 years. This role is no longer performed now that the NSG has closed.

78. Adam Steinhouse also highlighted the role that the school played in learning from, and informing other EU member states. He tells us how he had previously represented the NSG at network meetings of the Directors of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration. However, since the closure of the NSG “the British have not been represented for the past three years”:

As a special favour I was invited a few weeks ago to the Rome meeting. It is linked to each presidency. I was put after Ukraine, but without a flag.¹³⁸

Mr Steinhouse tells us, that while the UK Civil Service is unable to recognise the value of such networks “the Swiss have offered to take the place of the British in hosting the possible 2017 meeting.”¹³⁹

79. The inability of the Civil Service to learn from success and failure is recognised by the Cabinet Office. Francis Maude assessed the ability of the Civil Service as “not very good”, while Oliver Robbins, when asked if the Civil Service has the right skills in place to facilitate such learning, stated “not always, no”.¹⁴⁰ Despite this acknowledgement, it is not entirely clear what steps are being taken to address this. Suggestions made by Oliver Robbins that steps are being taken by the different professions networks to learn from such events, are encouraging. However, it is not clear how this work is initiated, or how it is coordinated to ensure that certain lessons are not missed. When we put to him the idea that Civil Service Learning could act as a store of what has worked and not worked, as a coherent cross-Government resource, Francis Maude described this as a “very interesting nascent recommendation”.¹⁴¹ The inclusion of the ‘Innovation Award’ in the 2014 Civil Service Awards, described by Francis Maude as the award for “best failure”, is an example of steps being taken in the right direction.¹⁴² However, it is telling that Mr Maude himself states that he was eventually “not quite brave enough”¹⁴³ to use this title.

80. There is currently an institutional gap in the Civil Service. Individual Civil Service departments are achieving successes and making mistakes and learning from both, but there is no institutional recognition of this vital function. There is nobody responsible

138 Dr Adam Steinhouse [CSS24]

139 As above

140 Q343 and Q297

141 Q 348

142 Civil Service Awards, [Winners](#), November 2014, and Q 345

143 As above

for gathering and disseminating this learning and ensuring that other departments benefit from it. At a time when Government needs to find better and more effective answers for the problems it faces, the Civil Service should demonstrate a much stronger institutional ability to learn lessons from itself and the outside world.

81. We recommend that the Cabinet Office should establish a new function dedicated to ensuring that the Civil Service gathers and disseminates the lessons of both success and failure. This function should be resourced to allow it to seek out the most valuable lessons being learned across the Civil Service and the private sector and to ensure that these are fed into the training of civil servants.

7 A unified approach

82. As part of this inquiry we have identified a number of gaps in the Civil Service's current approach to skills and made recommendations to address these. Given our remit to consider the Civil Service as a single system, it is natural for us to consider in this Chapter how these might also be drawn together to ensure coherence and value for money.

83. Firstly, we have identified a need for a greater focus on leadership training that is not purely reliant on 'learning on the job'. Civil Service leaders need space for, and access to, additional forms of learning to allow them to reflect on their experiences, learn about new concepts of leadership, and experiment with these. In this regard, John Manzoni's suggestion of establishing a leadership academy is welcome.

84. Secondly, we have found that the Civil Service needs to do a better job of learning from success and failure. We therefore recommend that a new central Civil Service function should be established, and provided with the right skills to carry out this role. This function should seek out the most valuable lessons being learned across the Civil Service, in addition to the private sector and public sectors of other countries, and feed them into the training of civil servants.

85. There are many synergies between these two recommendations. Lessons learned across the Civil Service and private sector are of greatest relevance to the leadership of the Civil Service. And this leadership itself will have many lessons of its own to share. The combination of these two functions into a single entity is therefore a logical step. It will allow for the sharing of lessons, greater coherence in the work of both functions, and economies of scale.

86. Where should such a body sit? Given current Civil Service learning provision, the most obvious answer is within CSL. CSL reporting lines are split between the Cabinet Office and the Home Office (where the organisation is physically located). However, should CSL be combined with the two new functions above, then the conglomeration of these three entities into a single separate body is a further option to consider.

87. Providing such a new body with a permanent physical base may also bring benefit to each of these functions. It would provide the body with greater independence and visibility, making it a more obvious receiver of lessons from across the Civil Service. It would also respond to the concerns we have heard about the detrimental impact of the current lack of a dedicated training facility on skills provision.

88. Finally, we have also identified a need for clearer leadership of the Civil Service's leadership development. As a result we recommend that a single, accountable individual, visible across the Civil Service, be made responsible for implementing the Civil Service's aspirations to world-class leadership. Should a new single body be created, then a clear reporting line between this body and this person should also be considered.

89. We are not calling for the National School of Government to be re-established. We do however see a crucial and influential role for a new institution which brings together

all our recommendations and could serve as a nucleus for other initiatives to promote Civil Service reform. Any such body that might combine all of our recommendations should aim to meet the Cabinet Office's objective of introducing greater value for money to the Civil Service's skills provision.

90. We recommend that the National Audit Office conducts a value for money study of CSL and to review the impact it has had on Civil Service skills. As part of this work we also recommend that the National Audit Office and subsequently the Cabinet Office consider the costs and benefits that might be gained from:

- *Consolidating CSL with both:*
 - *The proposed new leadership academy; and*
 - *The proposed new function for gathering and disseminating lessons from mistakes and failure both inside and outside the Civil Service*
- *Establishing these consolidated entities into a single body, and providing it with permanent premises in which training can be delivered.*
- *Providing this organisation with a reporting line to the Chief Executive of the Civil Service whom we recommend should be made clearly accountable for understanding the current leadership skills development that is offered across all departments, driving improvements in it and ensuring that the approach is coherent, efficient and effective.*

Conclusions and recommendations

Risk

1. The focus on the four key skills highlighted in the Capabilities Plan is welcome. It is acknowledged that these skills require improvement in all departments. However, overall the approach is too narrow and one-dimensional. The development of the key skills that are the focus of the Capabilities Plan will be undermined if the maintenance and development of key complementary and supportive skills, relevant to all departments, are neglected and allowed to erode. (Paragraph 10)
2. We recommend that the Cabinet Office should invite National Audit Office to conduct an evaluation of the specialist skill needs generic to all departments, and expand the Capabilities Plan accordingly. The Cabinet Office should then ensure that all departments are required to monitor, maintain and develop resources in these areas. This in particular should include a greater focus on risk management and risk reporting skills. (Paragraph 11)

Attitudes and behavioural traits

3. Gaining new skills is essential for the Civil Service. The required change in associated attitudes and behaviours is a key enabling step to this. Civil servants must feel empowered to use the new skills they gain, to innovate and take risks appropriately. Progress in this area must be regularly evaluated and subject to objective assessment. (Paragraph 16)
4. Future versions of the Capabilities Plan should focus more on enabling and tracking behavioural change within departments. The Cabinet Office should define, implement and monitor changes in attitudes and behaviours, using measures of engagement from the Annual People Survey, and other less formal feedback to encourage approachability, listening to the views of staff at all levels, devoting sufficient time to staff management, including performance management, and being able clearly to express what the political and governmental objectives are in a way that is understandable to all staff. This will increase focus on behavioural change and allow progress to be openly appraised. (Paragraph 17)

The need for better data

5. We recommend that the Cabinet Office introduce a standardised framework for auditing departmental skill levels. This should be led by the Cabinet Office and implemented by each department as soon as possible. (Paragraph 21)

The need for more honesty

6. It is essential that any central audit of Civil Service skills is both open and honest. Many parts of the Civil Service currently operate under severe resourcing constraints. However, without an honest appraisal of where skill gaps lie, further failures, such as the cancellation of the West Coast mainline franchise competition, are unavoidable. Short-term presentational gains should not be given preference over long-term cost for the taxpayer. (Paragraph 26)

7. We recommend that the Cabinet Office ask the National Audit Office to carry out a Civil Service wide skills audit on a regular basis. This will ensure that results are robust and based on an honest and realistic appraisal of current departmental capabilities. (Paragraph 27)

A lack of clear leadership

8. In times of significant financial constraints, good leadership is the key enabling factor that will allow the Civil Service to continue to deliver the Government's objectives. The Cabinet Office rightly appears to be focusing on skills in this area. However, despite this focus, we have learned that leaders are not getting access to the sort of training they require. The ongoing need for the Civil Service to do more with less applies to all elements of its operation, including training. However, where possible, greater efforts should be made to provide access to, and space for, conceptual, reflective and experimental learning. (Paragraph 43)
9. There are two aspects of civil service leadership which are in tension with one other. The first is the observation made by the Civil Service Chief Executive, John Manzoni, that "the Civil Service ... requires confident leadership"... and "a sense of being in control of their own destiny". The second is that Civil Service leaders must subordinate their own leadership to that of the Minister, who has the final democratic authority. Thus senior civil servants work in a context of dual leadership. This makes Civil Service leadership complicated and potentially confusing. This underlines the importance of leadership with political astuteness. People find it difficult to address this issue due to its sensitivity yet there has not been much structured, taught discussion of these complex issues and their interaction with policy and management. However, it is vital to address this issue. The steps which are being taken to improve the leadership training offer are encouraging, but more should be done to ensure that this approach is coherent and that momentum is maintained. (Paragraph 44)
10. We therefore fully support John Manzoni's intention to establish a Civil Service Leadership Academy. This should be a place in which Civil Service leaders can reflect and build upon their experiential learning. In establishing this academy we recommend that the Cabinet Office consult academics to ensure that this institution provides Civil Service leaders with effective access to conceptual, reflective and experimental learning. It must address the unique challenges faced by public service leaders, which conventional business training cannot. This should also provide a central focus for the other leadership academies already being established for the NHS, Police and Major Projects, and any others being proposed, such as for commercial skills, which will have to educate public service leaders to deal with similar challenges. (Paragraph 45)
11. To develop better understanding between politicians and Civil Servants, there should also be a Civil Service Parliamentary Scheme set up by the Cabinet Office, similar to the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme. As well as giving MPs experience in Whitehall departments and educating future ministers, it would expose civil servants to politicians as part of their career development. There should be more reciprocal

secondments of potential Civil Service and Diplomatic Service leaders to the offices of MPs, shadow ministers, and to select committees.(Paragraph 46)

12. We recommend that the Chief Executive of the Civil Service be made clearly accountable for understanding the current leadership skills provision across all departments, driving improvements in it and ensuring that the approach is coherent, efficient and effective. (Paragraph 47)

Attracting and retaining the right skills

13. The need for pay constraints is a reality that the Civil Service will continue to face. At present the Civil Service appears able to retain its most talented leaders, which is essential and encouraging. However, the impact of these leaders will be limited if the right skills do not remain at their disposal. Warnings that skills at mid-management levels are being significantly hollowed out are worrying. It was clear to us that the introduction of the Pivotal Role Allowance, intended to retain key people, was a token gesture, not a sufficient response to this challenge. (Paragraph 55)
14. The modern Civil Service is increasingly charged with finding more intelligent ways of solving problems and making efficient use of funding. The Government should ensure that this approach is continually applied to its policy on Civil Service pay. If this is not done the Civil Service will needlessly lose expensively gained skills and knowledge, which it will struggle to replace. (Paragraph 56)
15. We welcome John Manzoni's suggestion that the Civil Service is continuing to explore ways in which constrained resources can be best used to ensure that vital skills are retained at all levels. The Civil Service need a pay and reward system that will retain people in the jobs in which they are most needed and will extend job tenure to make the most effective use of experience. We recommend that this work is prioritised so that a range of effective proposals are ready for Ministers to consider at the beginning of the next Government. (Paragraph 57)

Procuring training

16. The establishment of CSL marks a significant shift in the training approach of the Civil Service. This shift has allowed training budgets to be reduced significantly and has provided a greater number of civil servants with access to generic training. However, we have also learned that it has resulted in a lighter and narrower training provision, and the loss of a dedicated training facility. For many skills, particularly those requiring interpersonal skills, the introduction of a strong, and potentially misplaced, dependence on e-learning is no substitute for the face-to-face residential learning and mentoring they replaced. The Cabinet Office describe this reduction in spending as a "saving". However, it is not clear how the impact of these changes has been assessed. Given some of the concerns that we have heard during this inquiry, and the key role now played by CSL, it is important that the true costs and benefits of this new approach are properly assessed. (Paragraph 70)
17. We recommend that the National Audit Office carry out a value for money study of Civil Service Learning, with particular emphasis on the way it meets the unique demands made on public service leaders. This will provide an impartial view on the

quality of the service it provides and its impact on Civil Service skills. In particular this should examine the consequences of the loss of dedicated training spaces, the current use of e-learning and the effectiveness of its procurement procedures. (Paragraph 71)

Learning from one another

18. There is currently an institutional gap in the Civil Service. Individual Civil Service departments are achieving successes and making mistakes and learning from both, but there is no institutional recognition of this vital function. There is nobody responsible for gathering and disseminating this learning and ensuring that other departments benefit from it. At a time when Government needs to find better and more effective answers for the problems it faces, the Civil Service should demonstrate a much stronger institutional ability to learn lessons from itself and the outside world. (Paragraph 80)
19. We recommend that the Cabinet Office should establish a new function dedicated to ensuring that the Civil Service gathers and disseminates the lessons of both success and failure. This function should be resourced to allow it to seek out the most valuable lessons being learned across the Civil Service and the private sector and to ensure that these are fed into the training of civil servants. (Paragraph 81)

A unified approach

20. We are not calling for the National School of Government to be re-established. We do however see a crucial and influential role for a new institution which brings together all our recommendations and could serve as a nucleus for other initiatives to promote Civil Service reform. Any such body that might combine all of our recommendations should aim to meet the Cabinet Office's objective of introducing greater value for money to the Civil Service's skills provision. (Paragraph 89)
21. We recommend that the National Audit Office conducts a value for money study of CSL and to review the impact it has had on Civil Service skills. As part of this work we also recommend that the National Audit Office and subsequently the Cabinet Office consider the costs and benefits that might be gained from:
 - Consolidating CSL with both:
 - The proposed new leadership academy; and
 - The proposed new function for gathering and disseminating lessons from mistakes and failure both inside and outside the Civil Service
 - Establishing these consolidated entities into a single body, and providing it with permanent premises in which training can be delivered.
 - Providing this organisation with a reporting line to the Chief Executive of the Civil Service whom we recommend should be made clearly accountable for understanding the current leadership skills development that is offered across all departments, driving improvements in it and ensuring that the approach is coherent, efficient and effective. (Paragraph 90)

Formal Minutes

Tuesday 10 March 2015

Members present:

Mr Bernard Jenkin, in the Chair

Mr Nigel Evans
Paul Flynn
Mrs Cheryl Gillan

Kelvin Hopkins
Greg Mullholland
Mr Andrew Turner

Draft Report (*Developing Civil Service skills: a unified approach*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 90 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fourth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, (Standing Order No. 134).

[Adjourned till Tuesday 17 March at 9.30 a.m.]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [Committee's inquiry page](#).

Tuesday 28 October 2014

Question number

Professor Simon Szreter, Director, History and Public Policy, Cambridge University and King's College London, **Professor Colin Talbot**, Professor of Government, University of Manchester, and **Stella Manzie CBE**, Honorary Senior Research Fellow, The Open University

[Q1-62](#)

Peter Thomas, Senior Fellow, Institute for Government, **Mike Emmott**, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, and **Richard Anderson**, Chairman, Institute of Risk Management

[Q63-105](#)

Tuesday 25 November 2014

Rob O'Neill, Assistant General Secretary, First Division Association (FDA), **Leslie Manasseh**, Deputy General Secretary, Prospect, and **Karen Foster**, Learning and Education Officer, Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)

[Q106-132](#)

Clare Moriarty, Director General, Rail Executive, Department for Transport, and **Bill Crothers**, Chief Commercial Officer, Cabinet Office

[Q133-180](#)

Dominic Cummings, former Special Adviser to Michael Gove MP, **Paul Grant**, former Senior Lecturer, National School of Government, and **Dr Adam Steinhouse**, former Head of the School for European Studies, National School of Government

[Q181-233](#)

Monday 15 December 2014

Chris Last, Head of Civil Service Human Resources, Cabinet Office, **Oliver Robbins**, Director General for the Civil Service, Cabinet Office, and **Hilary Spencer**, Director, Civil Service Learning

[Q234-301](#)

Rt Hon Francis Maude MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General

[Q302-355](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the Committee's [inquiry web page](#). CSS numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 A. Ashraf & R. Athreya ([CSS0007](#))
- 2 Academy Of Social Sciences ([CSS0006](#))
- 3 ACCA ([CSS0023](#))
- 4 Adam Steinhouse ([CSS0024](#))
- 5 Association For Project Management ([CSS0021](#))
- 6 BCS, The Chartered Institute For IT ([CSS0015](#))
- 7 Cabinet Office ([CSS0035](#))
- 8 CBI ([CSS0030](#))
- 9 Chartered Institute Of Arbitrators ([CSS0009](#))
- 10 Chartered Institute Of Personnel And Development (Cipd) ([CSS0004](#))
- 11 Civil Service College Limited ([CSS0012](#))
- 12 Employment Related Services Association ([CSS0031](#))
- 13 FDA ([CSS0020](#))
- 14 History & Policy ([CSS0022](#))
- 15 Ian Richardson ([CSS0002](#))
- 16 IIBA UK Chapter Limited ([CSS0018](#))
- 17 Institute Of Risk Management (IRM) ([CSS0028](#))
- 18 NHS Leadership Academy ([CSS0010](#))
- 19 Paul Grant ([CSS0019](#))
- 20 Prof Colin Talbot ([CSS0011](#))
- 21 Prof Colin Talbot ([CSS0029](#))
- 22 Project Management Institute ([CSS0001](#))
- 23 Prospect ([CSS0014](#))
- 24 Royal Statistical Society ([CSS0008](#))
- 25 The British Psychological Society ([CSS0005](#))
- 26 The Civil Service ([CSS0026](#))
- 27 The Civil Service Commission ([CSS0017](#))
- 28 The Infrastructure Forum ([CSS0003](#))
- 29 The National Association Of Independent Schools & Non-Maintained Special Schools (Nass) ([CSS0016](#))
- 30 The Open University ([CSS0025](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/pasc.

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2014–15

First Report	Who's accountable? Relationships between Government and arm's-length bodies	HC 110
Second Report	Appointment of the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments	HC 759
Third Report	Leadership for the long term: Whitehall's capacity to address future challenges	HC 669
First Special Report	Business Appointment Rules: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2012-13	HC 563
Second Special Report	Too soon to scrap the Census: Government and UK Statistics Authority Responses to the Committee's Fifteenth Report of Session 2013–14	HC 601
Third Special Report	More Complaints Please! and Time for a People's Ombudsman Service: Government Responses to the Committee's Twelfth and Fourteenth Reports of Session 2013-14	HC 618
Fourth Special Report	Caught red-handed: Why we can't count on Police Recorded Crime statistics: UK Statistics Authority Response to the Committee's Thirteenth Report of Session 2013-14	HC 645
Fifth Special Report	Statistics and Open Data: Government Response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2013-14	HC 620

Session 2013–14

First Report	Communicating statistics: not just true but also fair	HC 190 (HC 573)
Second Report	Public engagement in policy-making	HC 75 (HC 986)
Third Report	The role of the Charity Commission and "public benefit": Post-Legislative scrutiny of the Charities Act 2006	HC 76 (HC 927)
Fourth Report	Engaging the public in National Strategy	HC 435
Fifth Report	Appointment of the Chair of the Committee on Standards in Public Life	HC 516
Sixth Report	Government Procurement	HC 123 (HC 105)
Seventh Report	Migration Statistics	HC 523
Eighth Report	Truth to Power: how Civil Service reform can succeed	HC 74 (HC 955)
Ninth Report	Latest proposals for ministerial involvement in permanent secretary appointments: PASC's recommendations	HC 1041
Tenth Report	Statistics and Open Data: Harvesting unused knowledge, empowering citizens and improving public	HC 564

	services	
Eleventh Report	The failure of the Cabinet Office to respond to our Report on the Business Appointment Rules	HC 1156
Twelfth Report	More complaints please!	HC 229
Thirteenth Report	Caught red-handed: Why we can't count on Police Recorded Crime statistics	HC 760 (Cm 8910)
Fourteenth Report	Time for a People's Ombudsman Service	HC 655
Fifteenth Report	Too soon to scrap the census	HC 1090
First Special Report	Public Trust in Government Statistics: A review of the operation of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007: Government and UK Statistics Authority Responses to the Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2012–13	HC 77
Second Special Report	Special advisers in the thick of it: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2012–13	HC 515
Session 2012–13		
First Report	The Big Society: Further Report with the Government Response to the Committee's Seventeenth Report of Session 2010–12	HC 98
Second Report	The Honours System	HC 19
Third Report	Business Appointment Rules	HC 404
Fourth Report	Appointment of the Chair of the Charity Commission	HC 315-I
Fifth Report	End of term report: 2011–12	HC 316
Sixth Report	Special advisers in the thick of it	HC 134
Seventh Report	The Honours System: Further Report with the Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2012–13	HC 728
Eighth Report	The Role of the Cabinet Secretary and the Resignation of the Chief Whip	HC 864 (HC 968)
Ninth Report	Public Trust in Government Statistics, A review of the operation of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007	HC 406 (HC 77)
First Special Report	Public Appointments: regulation, recruitment and pay: Government Response to the Committee's Fourteenth Report of Session 2010–12	HC 18
Second Special Report	Leadership of change: new arrangements for the roles of the Head of the Civil Service and the Cabinet Secretary: Further Report: Government Response to the Committee's Twenty Third Report of Session 2010–12	HC 313
Third Special Report	Strategic thinking in Government: without National Strategy, can viable Government strategy emerge? Government Response to the Committee's Twenty Fourth Report of Session 2010–12	HC 573
Fifth Special Report	The Prime Minister's Adviser on Ministers' Interests: independent or not? Government Response to the Committee's Twenty Second Report of Session 2010–12	HC 976

Session 2010–12

First Report	Who does UK National Strategy?	HC 435 (HC 713)
Second Report	Government Responses to the Committee's Eighth and Ninth Reports of Session 2009–10: Goats and Tsars: Ministerial and other appointments from outside Parliament and Too Many Ministers?	HC 150
Third Report	Equitable Life	HC 485 (Cm 7960)
Fourth Report	Pre-appointment hearing for the dual post of First Civil Service Commissioner and Commissioner for Public Appointments	HC 601
Fifth Report	Smaller Government: Shrinking the Quango State	HC 537 (Cm 8044)
Sixth Report	Who does UK National Strategy	HC 713
Seventh Report	Smaller Government: What do Ministers do?	HC 530
Eighth Report	Cabinet Manual	HC 900 (HC 1127)
Ninth Report	Pre-appointment hearing for the post of Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman	HC 1220
Tenth Report	Remuneration of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman	HC 1350
Eleventh Report	Good Governance and Civil Reform: 'End of Term' Report on Whitehall plans for structural reform	HC 901
Twelfth Report	Government and IT—"a recipe for rip-offs": time for a new approach	HC 715
Thirteenth Report	Change in Government: the agenda for leadership	HC 714
Fourteenth Report	Public Appointments: regulation, recruitment and pay	HC 1389
Fifteenth Report	Smaller Government: What do Ministers do? Further Report with the Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2010–12	HC 1540
Sixteenth Report	Appointment of the Chair of the UK Statistics Authority	HC 910
Seventeenth Report	The Big Society	HC 902
Eighteenth Report	Change in Government: the agenda for leadership. Further Report	HC 1746
Nineteenth Report	Leadership of change: new arrangements for the roles of the Head of the Civil Service and the Cabinet Secretary	HC 1582
Twentieth Report	Government and IT—"a recipe for rip-offs": time for a new approach. Further Report	HC 1724 (HC 1930)
Twenty-first Report	Future oversight of administrative justice: the proposed abolition of the Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council	HC 1621
Twenty-second Report	The Prime Minister's adviser on Ministers' interests: independent or not?	HC 1761
Twenty-third Report	Leadership of change: new arrangements for the roles of the Head of the Civil Service and the Cabinet Secretary. Further Report	HC 1914
Twenty-fourth Report	Strategic thinking in Government: without National Strategy, can viable Government strategy emerge?	HC 1625