



Civil Service HR

*A Brilliant  
Civil Service*

Professional Career Frameworks

# Supporting integration into HR activity



## Contents

Purpose of this pack.....	3
Context .....	4
Integrating career frameworks with day-to-day activity .....	6
Joint accountability: ensuring clarity, taking opportunities.....	7
Communications: using consistent messaging .....	8
Initial integration: considering how to align to existing HR Practices .....	9
Longer-term integration: linking to wider strategy for HR .....	13
Annex A - Strategic Communications.....	15
Annex B – Building a shared narrative .....	16



## Purpose of this pack

Professional career frameworks (career frameworks) are part of far reaching changes happening across Human Resources (HR) making real improvements for civil servants.

Career frameworks set out the range of careers available, by profession, in the Civil Service. They define the skills and experience needed for professional roles. There are a number of existing career frameworks already, with more available over the coming months.

This pack has been produced for cross-government Heads of Professions, departmental Heads of Profession and Human Resources Directors to draw from. It is not expected that this pack be published. Rather, given there is already existing good practice in some areas, this pack is intended to build on this.

It can be used to underpin conversations on shared context and responsibility for communicating about frameworks and for thinking about how to integrate frameworks into the day-to-day experience of work for individuals.

The pack also provides core messages on the purpose and benefits of career frameworks. These can be used in a number of ways to support consistent messaging. There is guidance from Page 8 on positioning the communications approach, alongside or integrated with communicating on other activity.

Having this more common context, language and definitions will:

- support **joint working** to integrate career frameworks in a way that delivers benefits for the Civil Service, the professions, departments and individuals
- support a **common narrative** that the Civil Service is a good career choice where individuals become part of a profession that offers networking opportunities, career routes, training and development programmes and
- promote a **cultural shift** in how individuals think about managing their careers.



# Civil Service HR

## Context

### Civil Service context

The Civil Service Workforce Plan 20-16 to 2020 sets out the vision for a Brilliant Civil Service. It's a plan we all share in and benefit from, creating **effective leaders** and **skilled people in a great place to work**. The plan is turning great ideas into real improvements that make a difference for civil servants every day and shapes our workforce of the future.

The [Workforce Plan](#) has five priority areas:

1. Attracting and retaining people of talent and experience
2. **Building career paths**
3. Developing world-class leaders
4. Being the most inclusive employer
5. Developing cost effective and flexible reward structures

Contributing to the pillars of **A Brilliant Civil Service**, these priorities are critical to getting the Civil Service's workforce ready to respond to the challenges the UK faces now and in the future.

### Being a professional in the Civil Service

A profession is a group of individuals with common professional skills, experience and expertise. In many cases the profession may be linked to a professional body that regulates membership and governs accreditation.

For individuals, a profession can provide a career anchor and a professional community. Individuals may align to one or more professions, but will usually have one main professional anchor. This anchor will often be the starting point when planning their career and possible moves between professions.

As a professional, individuals may also work alongside colleagues from other professions in functions that deliver cross-cutting services to a department or the Civil Service as a whole.

### What is a career path or pathway?

**Career paths or pathways** support delivery of the vision in the Workforce Plan and describe where an individual's career journey is across more than one profession. They can ensure individuals have information readily available to them to make career choices and plan multi-professional careers, whatever their location.

### What is a career framework?

**Career frameworks** are a key element of supporting individuals to grow and develop their career **within** a profession, which will in turn support creating career pathways across the Civil Service.



# Civil Service HR

Career frameworks can be useful whether individuals want to move into another role laterally or on promotion or want to develop their skills further in their current role.

Having career frameworks will mean there will be one place where individuals can gain an understanding of the skills and experience needed in each role.

For some individuals thinking about their career in a professional context will be familiar and for others it will be a shift. Integrating those frameworks into the employee experience at the right points, offers a real opportunity for all individuals to actively map out their own professional career journey, as they understand how to gain skills, experience and identify the right learning for themselves in a structured way and at the right time.

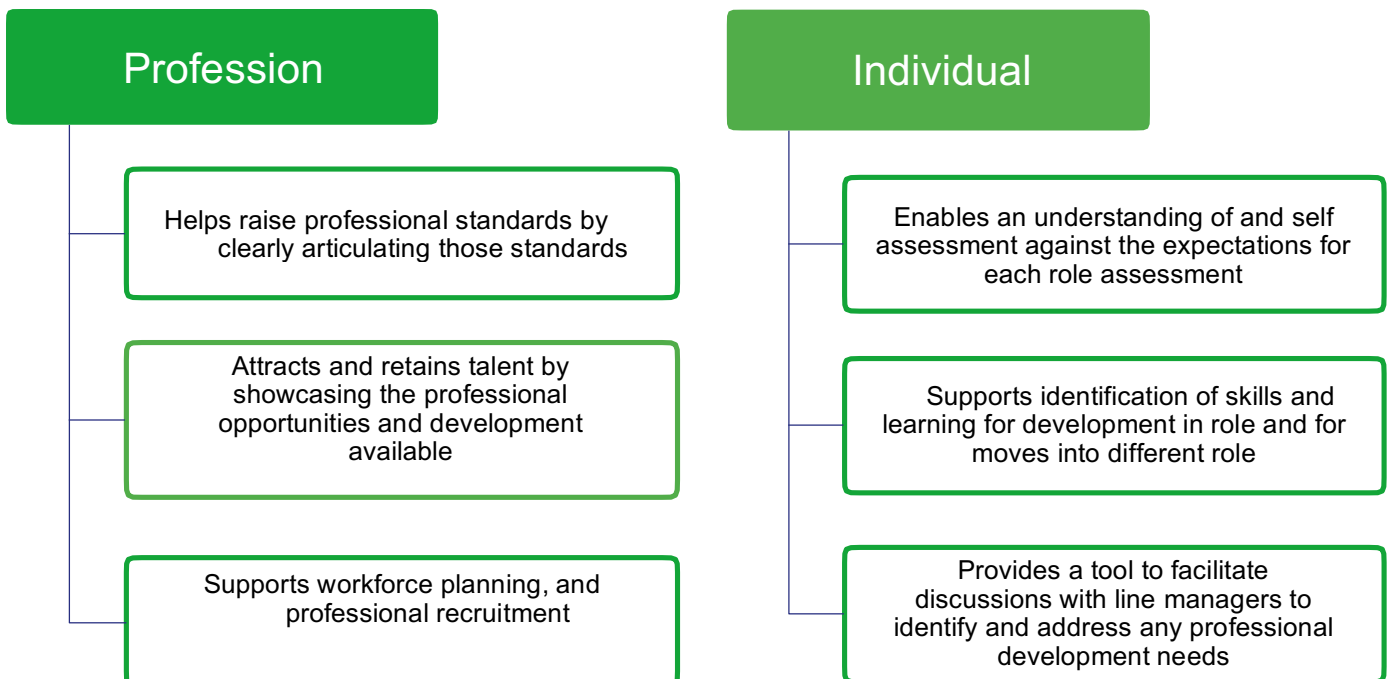
## The benefits of integrating career frameworks

The context for integrating frameworks varies. Professions are at different stages of developing and implementing frameworks, or where a framework already exists may be refreshing their approach.

There are differences in maturity of the frameworks that are available; in professional support models within departments and in departmental HR priorities.

Having consistent messaging and areas for consideration when integrating frameworks into day-to-day activity, means over time all individuals benefit from the professional offer. The benefits for professions and individuals are summarised here.

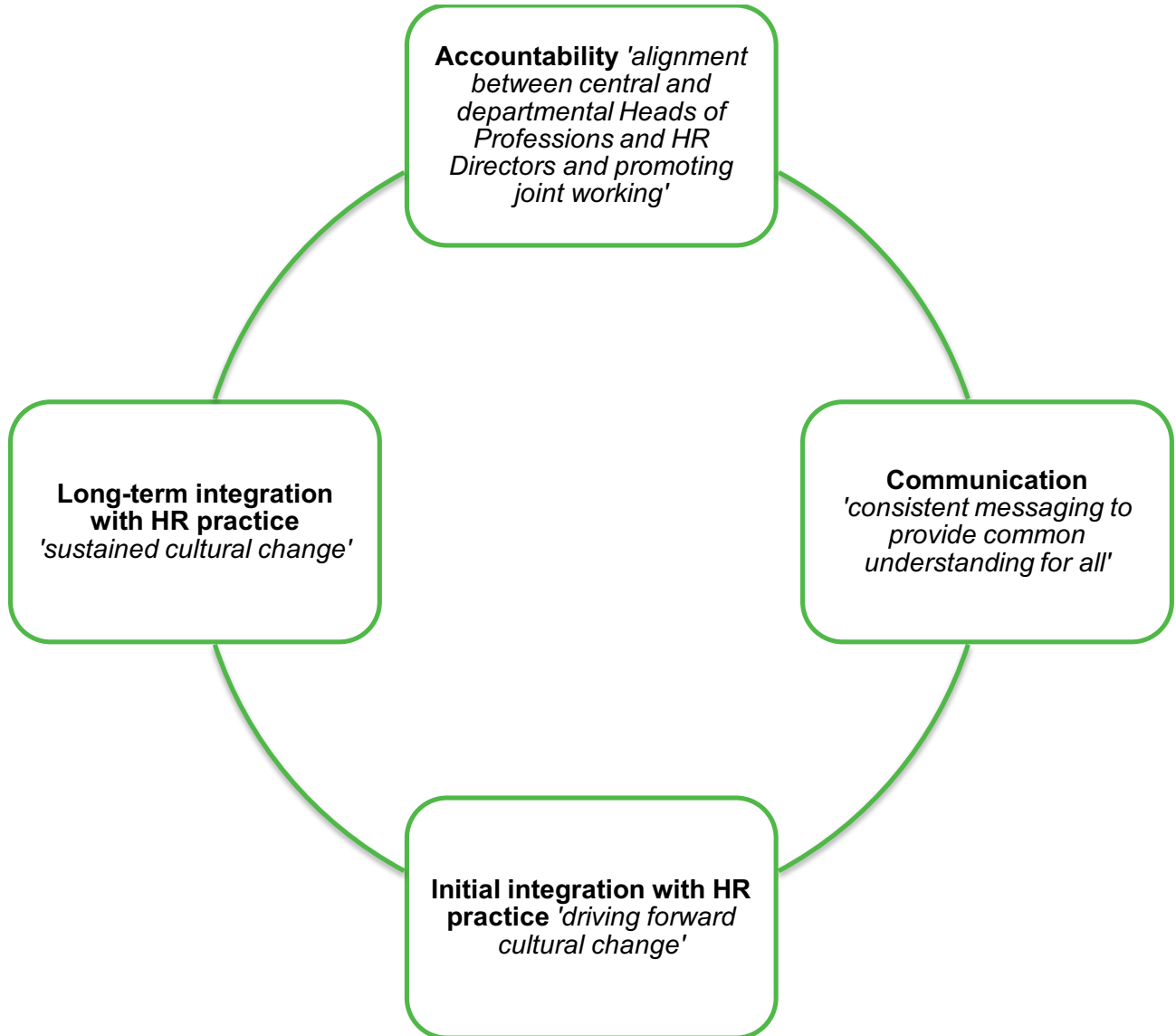
Collective action on integrating frameworks can also deliver key benefits for departments and the Civil Service. The benefits to all are also reflected as core communication messages at [Annex B](#).





## Integrating career frameworks with day-to-day activity

When integrating career frameworks, it will be helpful to consider action in the areas outlined here on an on-going basis, and the next part of the pack is divided into these sections.





# Civil Service HR

## Joint accountability: ensuring clarity, taking opportunities

There are a number of key partners who will already be working together, or will be collaborating in the future, to ensure the effective integration and take up of frameworks by individuals. These include:

**Cross-government Heads of Profession:** senior leaders in the Civil Service with accountability for setting the direction of travel across the Civil Service for their respective professions. The Head of Profession may be a combined role with that of Head of Function.

**Departmental Heads of Profession:** sit within departments and have responsibility for the development of the profession, within that department, alongside their day-to-day role. Their role is to support the direction of travel determined by the cross-government Head of Profession, and to contextualise this, where necessary, for their department.

**HR Directors:** hold accountability for the integration of all HR practices within departments. They create a coherent and strategic direction for their people. They have a pivotal role in ensuring frameworks are positioned as part of their strategy to deliver the right employee experience including where a profession may largely operate within a department.

Central and Departmental Heads of Profession and HR Directors are **collectively responsible for senior alignment of messaging** to embed professional culture, supported by the use of frameworks.

To maximise the value of having frameworks, it will be important to be clear about how the people with the accountability and interest in this work come together collectively and this might include

- agreeing an approach to joint HR/professional working at all levels if not already in place or building on any existing good practice in and across departments and professions
- ensuring that conversations on the professional and departmental needs and perspectives are collaborative and on-going and
- reflecting on how the accountability is working in practice, sense checking if the approach effectively supports the integration and use of frameworks aligned to existing practice.

*Example of good practice: Policy profession have peer review groups across departments who meet to reflect on the profession agenda in those departments. They learn from this experience to inform their next shared priorities.*



## Communications: using consistent messaging

Career framework will have the most impact when they are seen and used as a vehicle to support professional career development. Given this, it is worth thinking across HR and professional contexts about how to communicate, promote and support the use of frameworks, in particular:

- how and when to communicate most effectively about the availability and launch of new or refreshed frameworks to reach all individuals aligned with or interested in that profession
- how best to integrate messages on frameworks with other professional or departmental HR communications, particularly those focused on the employment experience and development
- how to effectively link messages and positioning of frameworks with the introduction of Success Profiles
- the potential to raise awareness of frameworks and the professional offer alongside messaging when reviewing related practices e.g. on talent or performance management
- how to align the communication of frameworks within an existing engagement strategies, for example on professional pages or departmental intranets
- where they may be opportunities and benefit from targeted joint HR/professional communications and
- how to assess the impact of communications in terms of reach and impact on individuals awareness and use of frameworks.

The following communication messaging can support the approach:

- Strategic communications at **Annex A** provides some lines to position internal communications. They provide an overarching vision and context for frameworks.
- A shared narrative at **Annex B**, to support developing a Civil Service culture where we consistently articulate the benefits of frameworks. The narrative provides messages that can be used to position a range of communications.

*Examples of good practice: Home Office and other departments link frameworks and professional information together on their intranet pages. Others are providing career stories to show the experience of being a professional in a department. HMRC has established direct links from their development intranet pages to all published professions frameworks.*





### Initial integration: considering how frameworks could align to existing HR Practices

Integrating frameworks into existing HR practices can help drive forward cultural change by connecting the professional offer to our individuals at the right stages of their working life.

There are suggestions in this pack for areas of HR practice to consider where integrating frameworks can have immediate relevance and impact. Over time this initial work can be built on, as awareness of frameworks grows.

As part of work planning, to promote the use of frameworks in HR practice, it is worth considering

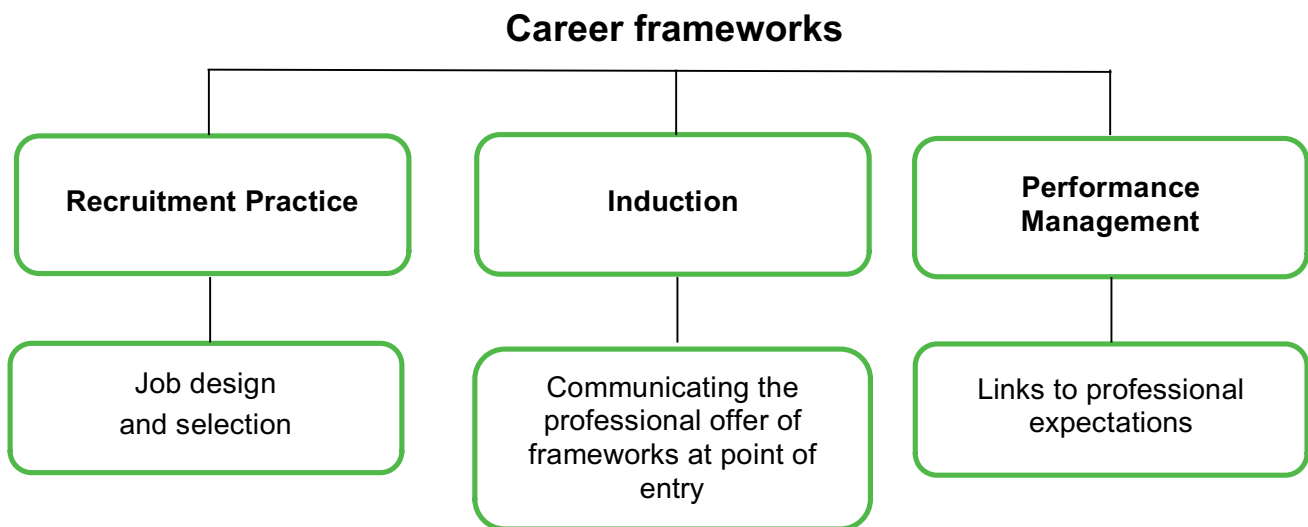
- working collaboratively in conversations between departments and professions to align the position on the use of frameworks in HR practice, mapped against individuals' career journey and experience of work
- integrating frameworks in a way that means they add value and minimises any overlap with work planned on other HR or business priorities, to prevent initiative overload
- scoping opportunities to reinforce the professional agenda and offer for individuals in on-going or new HR priority activity and
- working internally and across the department and professions to continuously share good practice and
- jointly evaluate the impact of the use of frameworks to support key outcomes for individuals.

*Example of good practice: Home Office are building their new HR Management System taking the opportunity to build in professional alignment, with roles mapped to job families along framework lines.*



## Areas to consider

The following diagram sets out HR practices that can be considered for initial integration with career frameworks.





# Civil Service HR

## Integrating frameworks into recruitment practice

Career frameworks will over time align to the introduction of the new recruitment process of Success Profiles in the Civil Service. This presents an opportunity for professions to influence and drive consistency in recruitment.

To fully realise this benefit professions can reflect the language of Success Profiles within career frameworks, i.e. technical, experience, behaviours, strengths, and ability. Vacancy holders would then be able to draw on career frameworks to more easily understand key Success Profile requirements for roles. To learn more about Success Profiles visit [Civil Service Learning](#).

Using frameworks, where available and aligned to Success Profiles, in this way can provide a source of information on profession roles, which can

- help get the professional job criteria right at the beginning of the recruitment campaign, by developing an understanding of the context of the role, to ensure we attract the right professional candidates for the role
- promote the profession and their frameworks in job adverts, acting as a lever to raise awareness of individuals of the professional context for the role and the benefits to them of that professional offer and
- add value by supporting professional recruitment based on use of the consistent standards and expectations expressed in frameworks.

Building on current professional recruitment practice, as frameworks and Success Profiles embed there will be value in continued HR and professional conversations about how the professional elements are used and how well that is working.

## Integrating frameworks into induction

If not already established practice, it is worth considering for both professional and departmental practice how induction programmes and processes promote frameworks and their use as a tool to support individuals. Done well, this helps individuals both engage with their profession early and manage their professional career development in the Civil Service.

Areas to consider when thinking about the professional elements of induction could include:

- highlighting professional communities and the professional offer in departmental induction
- signposting individuals to the career framework as part of the induction and
- reflecting profession specific training in the induction programme.

*Example of good practice: Government Statistician Group central support team contact all new starters into the profession and inform them of profession specific training which sets out standards, frameworks, and learning and development.*



## **Integrating frameworks with departmental performance management approaches**

The new Performance Management (PM) Framework took effect from April 2017. It requires departments to reflect eight core elements in their PM approach. These core elements are designed to help the Civil Service achieve effective performance management (at delegated grades).

One of these core elements requires departments to develop their PM approaches working with the relevant professions. This allows professional standards to be integrated into departmental PM approaches to ensure that:

- comparable professional standards are being applied across organisations; and that
- assessments of individuals translate between departments when moving within a profession.

The integration of frameworks into HR practice and thinking can frame the conversations between departmental Heads of Profession and Performance Management leads. This can help ensure PM approaches are developed collectively and consistently, and meet the above criteria.



## Longer-term integration: linking to strategic direction for HR

In the longer-term, as more frameworks come online and individuals are increasingly aware of them, professions and departments may want to look at how to further align frameworks as a tool to support delivery of their current and emerging strategic HR priorities. This could include considering how departments and professions might use frameworks, at key stages in an individual's career, in

- **Talent**
- **Strategic workforce planning**
- **Building capability and transferability of skills and**
- **Performance management conversations**

### Talent

It will be worth considering:

- how talent schemes might link to the professional career routes and development opportunities showcased in frameworks to support attraction and retention
- how the talent approach and strategy is aligned to the learning offer in career frameworks
- using frameworks to support joint departmental and professional conversations on key critical roles for delivery
- using frameworks to help identify capacity or capability needs to support building talent and succession planning and
- how frameworks can be referenced in materials on holding talent conversations.

*Example of good practice: The Communications Profession run annual capability reviews and deliver recruitment campaigns owned jointly with directors in*

### Strategic workforce planning

It will be worth considering:

- how to position the work on the professional agenda and frameworks within or alongside the organisation's workforce planning activity to facilitate those strategic connections
- how frameworks can inform joint workforce planning conversations between departments and professions. This will be particularly helpful for conversations with those professions who have a more decentralised model, for example Policy and
- how frameworks can reflect and support the regional agenda, across HR and professional teams, including supporting the career offer across locations.

*Example of good practice: In HMRC, part of their People Strategy is building 'regional career opportunity frameworks'. These provide a central resource for individuals to consider their careers within or across professions.*



## Building capability and transferability of skills

It will be worth considering:

- how frameworks can promote a joint understanding of what skills and experience individuals need to progress within a profession, linked to supporting the regional agenda,
- collaborating to identify opportunities for individuals to gain that professional depth of expertise and
- exploring how best to open up opportunities for cross-professional movement to build breadth of experience, in a way that supports the development of our most talented individuals who aspire to, and have the potential to, reach our most senior roles.

## Performance Management conversations

It will be worth considering, building on creating clarity of professional standards in PM:

- highlighting the value of frameworks as a reference source to support conversations. This may be particularly helpful where the individuals and managers are not in the same profession
- using frameworks as a resource when individuals, on their own or with their managers, are looking at how to identify the right development and learning opportunities for them and
- using frameworks to plan to achieve those next steps in their current role or by moving in or across a profession. This could be as part of the performance management conversation or during a separate talent/development discussion. This practice is already happening in some areas and is being evaluated in terms of learning and experience.

*Example of good practice: Department for Work and Pensions is developing a learning journey specifically aligned to Operational Delivery Profession's professional requirements.*



# Annex A - Strategic Communications

### Strategic positioning

**Internal communication teams** may find it useful to have these overarching messaging available. They can give the strategic context for frameworks and can be linked to the organisational direction and other related HR activity, building on the ambitions in the [Workforce Plan](#).

#### Messaging on the value of career frameworks

- To meet the aim in the **Civil Service Workforce Plan: 2016 – 2020** to create an inclusive workforce, we need professional career paths and professional frameworks that allow us to show the breadth and depth of experience needed for careers in the Civil Service.
- Career frameworks are a critical element in delivering on this ambition to build a culture and reputation that attracts, develops, retains and fully engages diverse talent.
- Career frameworks support a Civil Service that provides a good career choice where individuals become part of a profession that offers career routes, training and development programmes, and a real sense of belonging.
- Career frameworks developed and used well, make the breadth and depth of careers in the Civil Service visible and attractive to diverse pools of skilled people, whether they are already in the Civil Service or not.
- Career frameworks set out the experience, skills and qualifications required, enabling people to deliver in their complex and challenging roles within a profession.
- Career frameworks, supported by a commitment to learning and development, will ensure our people are equipped and trained, with the right expertise to deliver services to the public.

#### Messaging to highlight the shift in culture the Civil Service aspires to

- At point of entry into a Civil Service career, an individual will begin to develop a professional identity and one or more clear professional anchors.
- Individuals, who work in the Civil Service, will know that being a professional is for everyone, whether it is about developing in a current role or moving laterally or progressing upwards in or across professions.
- Talking about career frameworks and a career journey becomes the norm. It becomes a common currency, not professional or HR language, but a shared way of thinking about and describing careers at any given point in the Civil Service.



## Annex B – Building a shared narrative

### Having a shared narrative

The messaging here when used consistently and regularly in communications is intended to promote a common and consistent understanding of the benefits of using career frameworks.

**Internal communications, HR and professional teams** can draw from it for a range of communications, including any specific messages on frameworks or when promoting the links between frameworks other related areas of activity across the HR agenda.

<b>Articulating the benefits of having frameworks</b>	
<b>Professions and Departments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Embedding frameworks into job design and selection is part of ensuring we can recruit excellent people.</li><li>• Frameworks that express the professional technical skills and experience ensure clarity on professional expectations.</li><li>• Frameworks facilitating conversations, using common standards, about what individuals need to do to mature as a professional, builds capability.</li><li>• The professional standards and expectations clearly shown in frameworks can inform learning and talent offers aligned to the professional needs of our talented individuals.</li><li>• Frameworks support the development of individuals and leaders who are able to lead both in deep professional teams and in multidisciplinary contexts, to deliver departmental priorities.</li><li>• Frameworks help professions retain talented individuals by illustrating the role opportunities and range of learning open to them.</li></ul>





<p><b>Individuals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You will be able to use available frameworks to identify the skills and experience you need at any point in time for any given professional role.</li><li>• Frameworks will support you to plan and manage your own career, helping you plan your learning journey to support your career aspirations.</li><li>• Frameworks will help you take control of and steer your development conversations more effectively so they reflect your professional priorities and needs.</li><li>• An understanding of the professional technical and experience needed for a role will also support you if you want to look for a move, as the professional requirements are reflected in recruitment.</li></ul>
<p><b>Line managers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Frameworks will help you structure conversations with individuals in your team, providing a narrative for you to use in development conversations.</li><li>• Frameworks provide a way to build a joint understanding with individuals in your team, of the professional expectations, especially where you may be in a different profession.</li><li>• Using frameworks and Success Profiles to inform discussions on recruitment can help you ensure you get the right person in post; with the right skills needed to be successful.</li></ul>