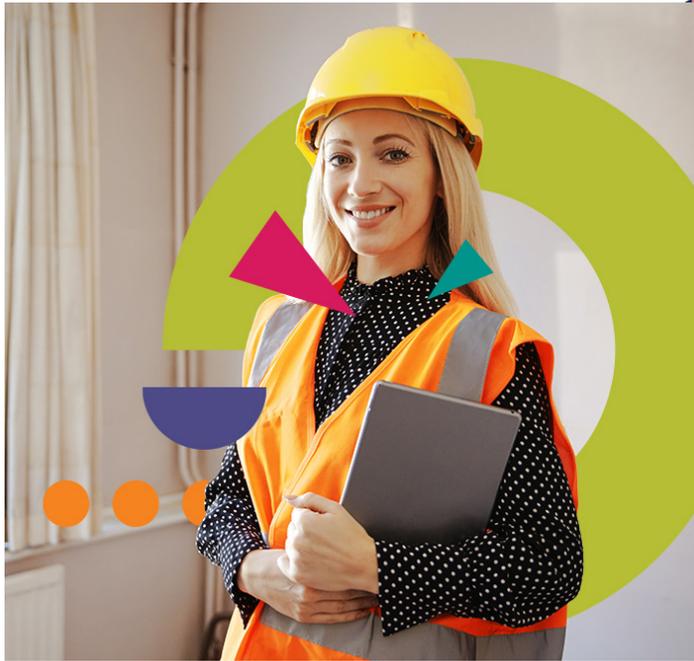




Valuation Office
Agency



VALUATION OFFICE AGENCY

BENEFITS BOOKLET



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What is the VOA and why is it a great place to work?

The VOA is an executive agency of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). We employ approximately **3,900** people, based on full-time equivalents, with offices in **35** locations throughout England, Scotland and Wales.



£60 billion

collected from non-domestic rates and council tax to help fund essential public services.

2 million

non-domestic properties valued for business rates.

26 million domestic

properties maintained on our Council Tax list.

Core purpose

We are the public sector's property valuation experts and advisers, providing the valuations needed to support local taxation and benefits; our work underpins the funding of vital public services.

Vision

To be a world-leading provider of public sector valuations.

Objectives

- Produce trusted property valuations in the most efficient way
- Deliver an excellent customer experience
- Be a great place to work



Work/life balance

Annual leave

25 days of annual leave offered as standard for all starters (pro rata for those working less than full time hours). This rises to **30** days after five years' service – including continuous service in other government departments. Like other departments, we also benefit from an additional day's leave to mark the monarch's birthday each year. In the VOA, we recognise not every year is the same, so we support colleagues to anticipate and carry forward annual leave.

Paid special leave

The VOA also supports an extensive range of paid special leave. This can be used in cases such as supporting colleagues with their caring responsibilities, the impact of their disability, and major moments in their life such as relocating, going through gender transition or studying for qualifications. There is no mandated cap on special leave.

Volunteering

We support colleagues to take up to five days a year as volunteering leave. Colleagues in the VOA actively support many diverse local and national charities and often organise fund-raising activities, including events ranging from “bake off events” to more energetic events. We also have our charity of the year, which is The Ocean Clean Up for 2022/23.

Career breaks

For those who wish to take an extended period of absence from work, we offer unpaid career breaks from three months up to five years.

Flexileave

Colleagues in grades AA-SEO are able to take up to three days flexi leave in each four-week period, or 39 days a year, on top of their annual leave. All colleagues at Grade 6 and Grade 7 can access flexi leave on a more informal arrangement with their line manager, using the same principles.



Flexible working

The Agency supports a full range of flexible working opportunities, including part-time working. We also support compressed hours, job-shares, and adjusted working patterns to allow you to strike the right balance between work and personal commitments.

Hybrid working

The VOA is an office based organisation that supports flexible working. By default, everyone in the VOA is a hybrid worker with options to work in the office, at home or out and about, depending on the work they're doing that day and where it's best done. In practice, this means more colleagues spend 2-3 days in the office each week.



Family leave

We recognise there is no one way to create a family, and therefore offer a full range of generous leave options for all different types of family including adoption, fostering, maternity, paternity and shared parental leave.

- Our maternity and adoption policies offer up to 52 weeks of leave, including 26 weeks of leave at full pay and 13 weeks on statutory pay.
- We offer four weeks paternity leave to everyone eligible – which is double the statutory requirements.
- The VOA also provides a fertility policy to explain the support colleagues can expect to receive when undergoing treatment.
- There is also pregnancy loss guidance to ensure Line Managers take all the appropriate steps to help a colleague experiencing this.

Wellbeing, Diversity and Inclusion

Resources

Race Equality Action Plan

The Agency's 10 point Race Equality Action Plan promotes equality and fair treatment through training, creating a culture where colleagues feel comfortable to take action on discriminatory behaviour.



Wellbeing

To support colleagues with disabilities and/or caring responsibilities, we provide and encourage the use of support 'passports'. These documents formally record agreements about the support someone needs to help them perform at their best – helping when people move roles, change line managers or face a change in their personal circumstances.

Healthy Living

We provide extensive healthy living guidance to support colleagues with their mental and physical wellbeing, such as advice on exercise, nutrition, and work / life balance.



Services

Employee Assistance Programme

PAM Assist is available to all of our people. They provide free, independent, confidential support with clinical and professional expertise. They are available by phone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year including by app – PAM Life. They offer referrals to free professional counselling sessions where appropriate, and provide workshops to support physical and mental wellbeing. Professional written resources are available for a range of issues including finances, relationships, bereavement and legal advice.

Occupational Health

Our Occupational Health provider supports the Agency by providing a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals dedicated to helping people to keep well, and to help them to work to their potential, regardless of health problems, as and when these arise. We use their assessments to help make informed decisions on issues like workplace adjustments. The VOA offers adjustments to maximise everyone's performance – whether they are dealing with a short-term issue or a long-term health condition/disability

Eye health

The examination is a vital health check for your eyes that can pick up early signs of eye conditions, including diabetes, glaucoma, high cholesterol and cataracts. The VOA, working with Specsavers, offers free eye tests and free glasses (from a select range) or a discount of up to £69 for another pair.



Services

Sports and Leisure Groups

The VOA promotes four Civil Service sports and leisure organisations to help colleagues stay fit and healthy. These are:

1. CSSC Sports & Leisure (formerly Civil Service Sports Council)
2. HASSRA
3. Valuation Office Sports and Social Association (VOSSA)
4. Revenue and Customs Sports and Leisure (RCSL)

Some of the organisations offer additional benefits such as a lottery, competitions and discounts on days out.

The Charity for Civil Servants

CFCS offer support on a huge range of issues including money, mental health, physical wellbeing, relationships and bereavements. They offer a phonenumber and online resources as first points of contact. Their other services include educational tools (webinars) and grants. Although they welcome support, they are not a membership body and support current, former and retired civil servants.



People



Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing groups

We have Executive Committee Champions and employee groups in place for nine diversity strands and one wellbeing focus group. These groups offer the opportunity for colleagues to offer input on what we do and share their experiences by shining a spotlight on personal stories to bring DIW-related topics to life and into the open. By doing so, we improve our understanding and learn about the experience of others, helping us to value what everyone brings to the Agency and to foster an inclusive culture.

Workplace adjustments

We provide a full range of adjustments to support colleagues with disabilities and health conditions to maximise their potential in work – including physical aids, assistive technology and support workers.

Confidential Support Coordinators

Confidential Support Coordinators can support colleagues and line managers from any business area with concerns at work, especially relating to mental health. Any one of them from the national network can signpost the support the Agency can offer, including Occupational Health, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and a range of special leave options.



Career Development

Learning to support your career development

Everyone in the VOA benefits from access to a large range of opportunities through both the Civil Service's Learning Platform for Government or our bespoke Learning Hub.

We have hundreds of VOA learning resources and events available to you on our bespoke Learning Hub, to help with your professional and personal development. Our courses and events run across all operational business areas, plus generalist areas such as Leadership and Management, O365 and diversity and inclusion.

For those new to the management role, we provide a blended to build the key skills for becoming confident and effective in the role.



Induction

When you join the VOA, you will be welcomed with a comprehensive induction event, including an introduction to the Agency by our Chief Executive and Head of Profession for Surveying and the opportunity to network with other new recruits. There are numerous opportunities to attend networking events, both civil service focused, and profession led events.



Professional Development

The majority of our colleagues are surveyors belonging to the property profession, but we also have opportunities for all of the following professions:

- Analysis
- Commercial
- Finance
- HR
- Operational Delivery
- Policy
- Programme and Project Management

If you are a member of a professional body that directly relates to your role, the Agency may be able to pay your membership fees.

Being part of the VOA enables you to access government wide professional networks, learning opportunities and career development across all of these specialisms.

Range of apprenticeships

In 2020, the VOA were recognised with award as Top 60 employer for our apprenticeship offer. We offer a wide range of apprenticeships, from level 3 to level 7, that are designed to help you develop skills and knowledge across a range of professional areas. For example, we offer project management and leadership apprenticeships

Secondments

For those looking to stretch their wings a bit further, we also support a range of loan and secondment opportunities, both across the Civil Service and wider afield.

Career Development: Surveyors

As our core specialism in the VOA, we offer tailored learning and development opportunities for our current and aspiring surveyor professionals.



Mentoring

For those new to the surveying profession, we have a fantastic tradition of mentoring colleagues through their first years in their career. Many of our experienced colleagues are Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) assessors so you can learn from the best. You will also be in good company – over the past year, we have supported more than 65 of our people to gain professional qualifications and we currently have 300 of our people enrolled on apprenticeship schemes.

Professional Subscriptions

We remain one of the largest employers of chartered surveyors in the UK so you'll find a community of like-minded passionate professionals here. To support your professional development as a surveyor, we automatically pay for your Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) or Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV) membership.

Graduate Scheme

Our graduate scheme has an enviable reputation with Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) assessment of professional competence (APC) success rates, which are amongst the best in the UK.

For those working on our graduate program we will provide:

- a strong focus towards helping you achieve Chartered Surveyor status (MRICS) through undertaking the RICS APC
- a structured training programme delivered by professional trainers, including mock assessments and revision sessions
- an experienced counsellor and supervisor along the way, as well as our own pool of APC assessors and other support from experienced professionals
- career developing surveying experiences and an opportunity to network with a wide range of property professionals across government
- the opportunity to inspect and value a large range of different property types
- access to a huge range of internal training and learning events to help you develop, and build your continuous personal development (CPD) log.

There will be plenty of variety in your work during your training and after. We're confident no one else can give you this range of experience and opportunities to develop your career.

The VOA offers a competitive national graduate salary of £26,500 (£29,000 in London).



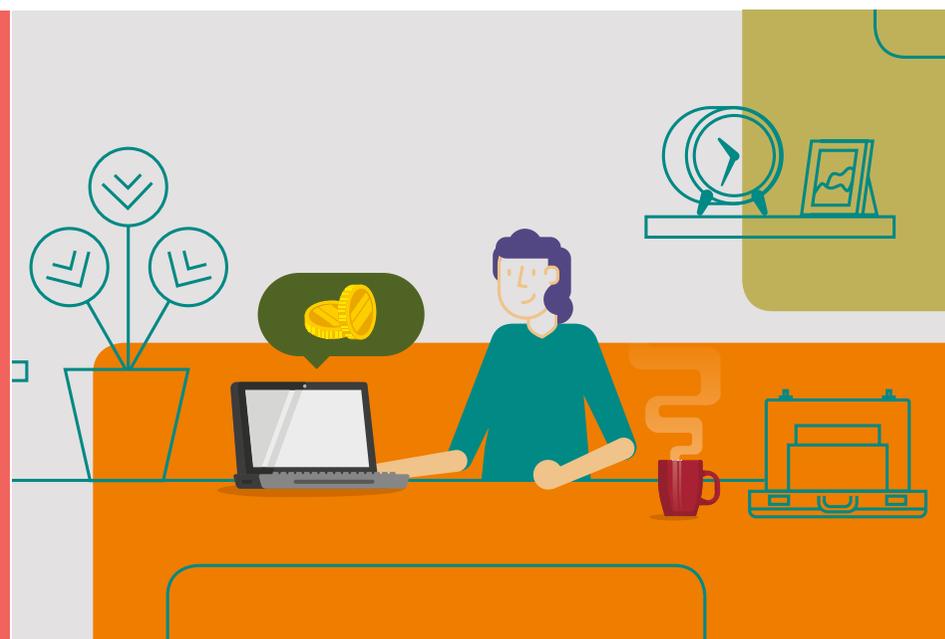
Financial rewards

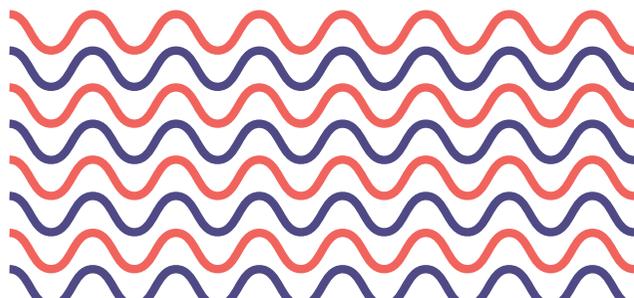
Pay

We've just completed a three year pay transformation programme – meaning all new starters benefit from our uplifted pay scales which make us a favourable comparison to many other Civil Service departments.

As a part of the pay deal, we also introduced a new pay scale to create an improved financial offer for our surveyors with up to 20% uplift in starting rates of pay compared to 2018/19.

We're continuing to work on future pay strategy and we implement a pay award in line with Civil Service Pay Remit Guidance each year.





Pension

Pension contributions

As an employer, we make contributions to your Alpha pension **equal to at least 26% of your salary**, while your contributions are between 4.6% and 7.35% (2020/2021 rates) and benefit from tax relief. For comparison, according to the Pensions Regulator, the minimum total employer and employee contribution are only 8%, of which just 3% has to come from the employer.

24/7 online portal

Through the Civil Service Pension website, members can access a 24/7 online portal and mobile app (iOS or Android) with all the information about the benefits of your pension, including any Additional Voluntary Contributions you make, your Death Benefit Nomination and life assurance cover.

MyCSP

Our pension provider (MyCSP) offers extensive member training to help us all maximise our pension benefits – including webinars on early, partial and pre-retirement. They also deliver one to one consultation on pensions and tax where this is required.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Similar offers are available for those former Rent Service colleagues on the Local Government Pension Scheme.



Flexible Benefits

Alongside careers in the VOA, everyone is also trying to balance life and all the challenges and opportunities it throws at us. The VOA endeavours to support everyone in these ups and downs by providing a suite of flexible financial benefits.



Employee discounts scheme

The Mylifestyle portal and app provide everyone with access to a range of exclusive discounts on almost all major supermarkets, high street retailers including Currys, Wilkos, JD Sports and New Look, and restaurants and entertainment options.

Reward vouchers

The Agency uses Simply Thanks vouchers to help us all recognise the small things that make a difference with an additional financial reward. The vouchers can be redeemed in a variety of high street and online retailers.

Salary advances

You can apply for an interest free loan from us in the form of an advance of your salary to buy a travel season ticket, a car parking permit or a bicycle or a rental deposit to support you with moving into a rented property.

Flexible Benefits

Long service awards

As an Agency, we are hugely grateful for the many years' service our colleagues have given us and we recognise this at significant milestones (25, 40 and 50 years) throughout people's time with us with a hand-signed certificate and voucher worth at least £125. We also provide an additional financial award to colleagues who retire after 25 years with us.



Cycle to work

The VOA's cycle to work scheme is run by Halfords – giving everyone access to their products as well as working with hundreds of local retailers. It enables you to take part of your pay as a loan for a bike and safety equipment in a way that will reduce the Tax and National Insurance that you pay. Everyone is able to access equipment up to £4,000 (including VAT) under the scheme.

Financial wellbeing programme

Colleagues in the VOA have access to financial advice through the Charity for Civil Servants and PAM Assist, as well as help with necessary purchases through our employee discount scheme.

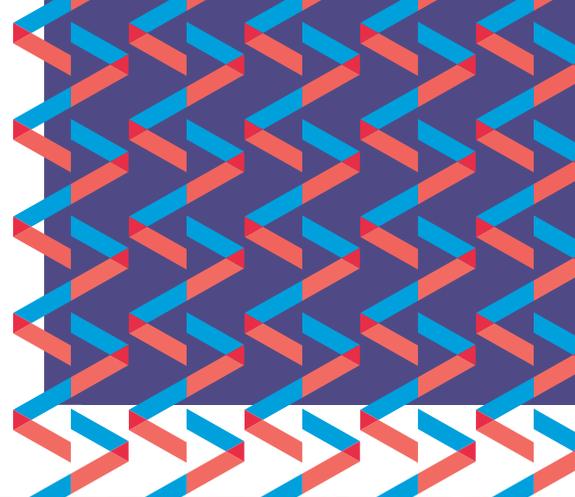
Overtime

Voluntary overtime can be on offer in the Agency to cover peaks in workloads. For those who want to take this on, there is an opportunity to be compensated with additional pay or corresponding time off.

Temporary promotion pay

Opportunities can arise for colleagues to fill posts at higher grades temporarily. To reflect the uplift in responsibilities and performance expectations, for the period of the temporary promotion, the Agency offers pay on promotion to the higher grade at the same rate as a permanent promotion (the higher of +10% of your pay or the new grade minimum) as well as development support.

Environment and facilities

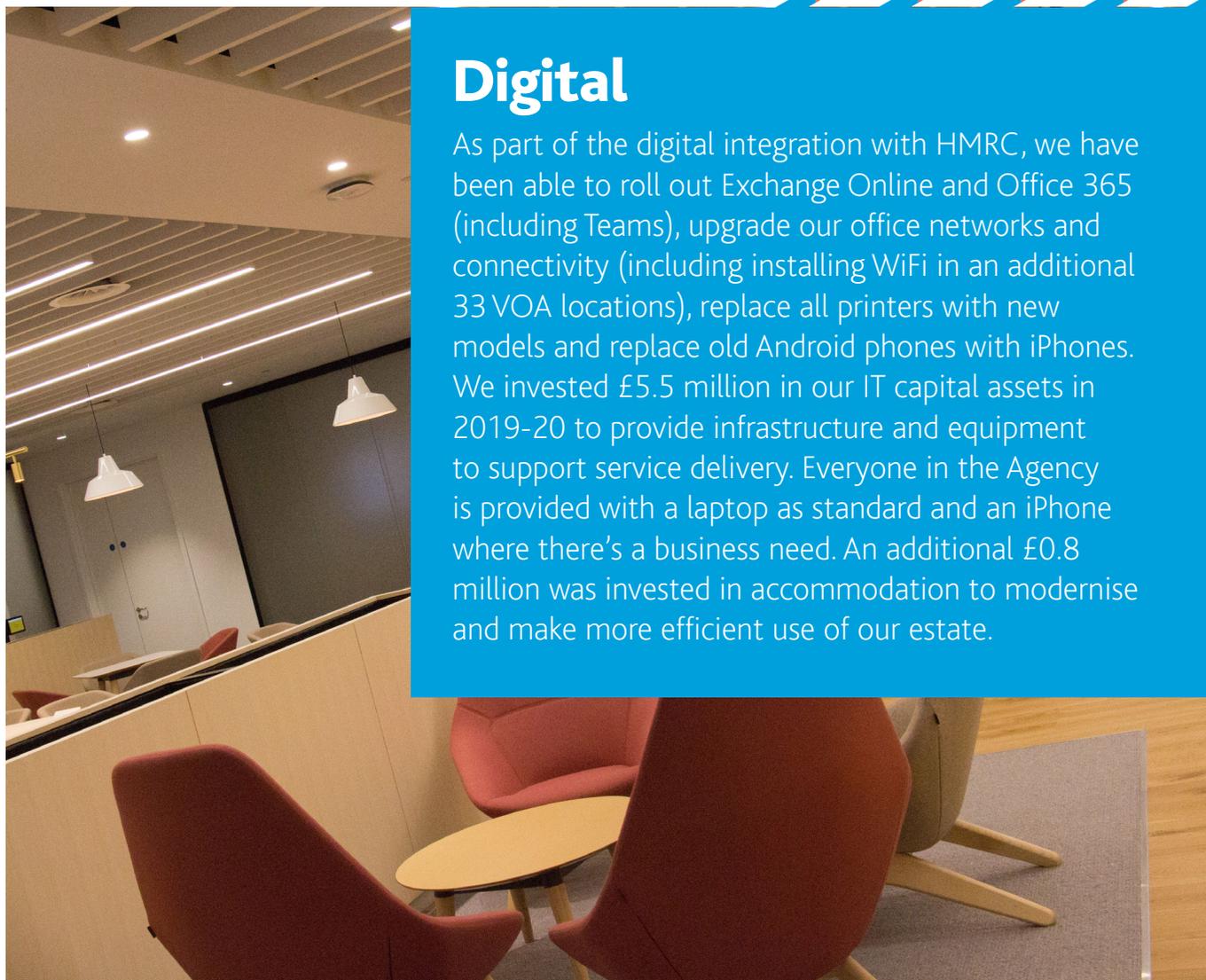


Digital

As part of the digital integration with HMRC, we have been able to roll out Exchange Online and Office 365 (including Teams), upgrade our office networks and connectivity (including installing WiFi in an additional 33 VOA locations), replace all printers with new models and replace old Android phones with iPhones. We invested £5.5 million in our IT capital assets in 2019-20 to provide infrastructure and equipment to support service delivery. Everyone in the Agency is provided with a laptop as standard and an iPhone where there's a business need. An additional £0.8 million was invested in accommodation to modernise and make more efficient use of our estate.

Future Technology

This year we have designed and launched the Business Systems Transformation (BST) programme and secured funding for its next phase. The programme will re-design and simplify our core business processes, and introduce new, more flexible data structures and technology systems to support them. It will reduce the need for administrative processing and information-entry, freeing colleagues to focus their time and skills where they add most value.



Estates

The VOA is based across 35 offices, and supports a significant number of our specialist staff to work from home permanently. We operate in an innovative and interactive way with modern, open workspaces and cloud-based technology and communications systems to connect everyone across multiple locations. Over 90% of our offices operate with flexible working space. Our sites are all designed to be accessible with good transport links, along with cycle racks and car parking where possible. We have on-site lockers, shower facilities and bike storage in many of our sites. We train first aiders and fire wardens at all our sites as well as confidential support coordinators and an Office Head.

Green credentials

We are proud of the efforts the Agency makes to reduce our environmental impact. We have enabled water consumption reductions. We created a 64% reduction in consumption per employee in 2014 and a 47% in 2015. In 2020/21, there was a 90% reduction in business travel emissions, compared to 2009/10. This year also marked the 12th consecutive reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions, alongside a 98% reduction in paper usage.



Culture

Valuing Our Future

As part of our Valuing our Future programme, we run regular sessions for all colleagues to come together to discuss topics that matter to us as an organisation and understand how we are transforming and why. In the most recent round, the executive committee and senior leaders held 89 sessions across all our offices, with most being held face to face and some online. The sessions are a great way for us to share updates with colleagues, hear about what's on their minds and take action as appropriate. In the most recent round, 2,742 colleagues joined the conversation.

Civil Service Code

As a part of the Civil Service, we are subject to the Civil Service code and its values: honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity. The VOA is a great place to work because we embody these values.

VOA People Awards

Each year, we run our VOA People Awards to celebrate the achievements of teams, individuals and colleagues who have received a professional development certificate. Nominations are open to everyone and the award ceremony is normally held in December at an external venue.



Honours

The Honours system recognises colleagues who have inspired and supported others, given up their time for their community or helped our customers. The VOA invites nominations year round and submits honours twice a year (New Year Honours and King's Birthday Honours) and there are different levels (CBE, OBE, MBE). We are proud to say that we regularly have people awarded in the Honours system and invited to attend the annual Royal Garden Parties.

*A Brilliant
Civil Service*

Civil Service People Survey

The annual Civil Service People Survey gives us a chance to check in on how everyone in the Agency feels about a range of topics. Our November 2021 results were positive given the continued disruption caused by Covid-19. There was a rise in overall engagement from 62% to 66% – including an improvement of 2% in how colleagues view our pay and benefits offer. We also got an insight into the culture of our Agency, with 86% of participants giving a positive view of inclusion in the Agency – up 3% from 2020, and 93% agree with the statement “I am treated with respect by the people I work with” – which is 4% more than Civil Service average and something we are proud about.

Interested in joining us?

You can see our current vacancies on [Civil Service jobs](#).
Want to learn more? Check out our [gov.uk and careers pages](#).

*Disclaimer: This booklet is a general guide.
The benefits and/or partner organisations
listed may change.*

Last updated September 2022

