



Government  
People Group

A modern  
Civil Service 

# Civil Service People Plan

## 2024-2027





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# Foreword by Rt Hon John Glen MP

**I am very proud of all that this Government has achieved to modernise public service and prouder still that there has been no let up on that process of improvement. And we continue to deliver results.**

But a programme of modernisation is no end in itself. It is about delivering to every part of our country and every family, and doing so better, more effectively and efficiently. The half a million colleagues that make up our Civil Service are critical to that endeavour. To support this modernisation I am delighted to sponsor the **Civil Service People Plan**.

This People Plan sets a clear direction and focus for the Civil Service to be the most dynamic, skilled and efficient that it can be. It establishes people priorities that will ensure a Civil Service that is fit for current and future challenges by:

- ▶ Providing high quality advice to the Government and outstanding services to the public
- ▶ Safeguarding the UK's prosperity and security at home and overseas.
- ▶ Underpinning the achievement of our reform ambitions
- ▶ Enabling a Civil Service that is lean, efficient and productive and able to deliver for our people and our citizens.

Given the scale of the challenge and the breadth of the activity, the Plan is necessarily wide-ranging. I am particularly keen to drive forward progress on the following key areas:

## **Recruitment**

We are committed to bringing the best talent and skills into the Civil Service, reflective and representative of the diverse skills, backgrounds and places across our nation. Just 1 in 5 new entrants to the Senior Civil Service are currently external. I want to ensure that every potential recruit who wants to bring their expertise to bear in the public interest can feel able to do so.

To do that, we must modernise the ways we recruit, speeding up and simplifying the process and improving the candidate experience without compromising on quality or fairness. We must also continue to expand the use of secondments and other direct entry routes (including the Fast Stream and apprenticeships), ensuring they are properly baked into the skills and resourcing strategies of all departments and professions.

## Linking Reward to Performance

We are determined that great performance from civil servants that provides better outcomes for taxpayers should be rewarded. We will therefore reward people for being exceptional in what they deliver for the public especially where it drives better productivity and more efficiency in the delivery of government. And we must better link reward and performance payments to meeting agreed targets and demonstrating higher performance.

## Spans and Layers

Carefully considering spans and layers is important for any organisation. It is key for improving innovation, speeding up decision making, and increasing the quality of line management. We will work across government to ensure that the Civil Service are learning from the best, most efficient teams to organise themselves in the optimum way, striving to achieve reduced layers and greater spans to enable the effective delivery of departmental strategic objectives and goals.

## Accelerating the Places for Growth programme

For too long, policy making and the leadership of the Civil Service has been too London-centric. That's why we committed to relocating 22,000 roles out of London by 2027. We have now delivered more than 16,000 government role relocations. That is more than half of our total commitment in just the first three years of the programme and exceeds our commitment to relocate 15,000 roles by 2025.<sup>1</sup> We're also well on our way to the target of 50% UK based SCS outside

London, with 30% now based outside the capital. However this is also about providing the opportunity to recruit brilliant civil servants – from around the country, to work in our teams.

## End to Civil Service expansion

The Civil Service, excluding devolved administrations, has grown by around 66,000 since 2019 and, while this has enabled an effective response to challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic, further unabated growth would not be fair to taxpayers or promote the efficiency they expect. The Public Sector Productivity Programme is focused on creating a modern and efficient public sector workforce. As a first step, the size of the Civil Service has been capped.

To go further after the current Spending Review period, government departments will be asked to produce plans to reduce the size of the civil service to pre-pandemic levels by the end of the next Spending Review period.

In the long term, however, we need to maintain a relentless focus on tackling unnecessary bureaucracy and improve the use of technology, to make the Civil Service more productive and act as a lean, agile, and cost-effective organisation.

## Improving Office Attendance

We have all had to work differently over the last few years. Many have been in the workplace all of that time and others have worked flexibly. The Civil Service, like most organisations, is continuing to explore and take stock of what the most effective place is for us to be working.

As we look across a range of other employers in all sectors, we are seeing a trend of workplaces reviewing their balance of office working to drive better benefits for both the employer and employees. A minimum balance of 60% for most in the office will help us retain both the benefits of office working and flexibility. We continue to support and recognise that some colleagues will have specific needs and adjustments.

## How will the People Plan deliver against my 6 priorities?

This People Plan has a strong delivery focus and will drive our modernisation and reform ambitions. The commitments set out in the People Plan will collectively underpin the delivery of my priorities. Highlights include:

### Recruitment

- ▶ **We will Improve and speed up recruitment in the Civil Service** to achieve consistency and raise performance against time, cost, quality (including external) and diversity metrics.
- ▶ **We will launch new industry secondment programmes across the functions and professions.** Including external Digital secondees to inject world class skills and experience as needed into the right roles in the Civil Service.

### Linking Reward to Performance

- ▶ **We will develop a clear leadership and pay framework** for the Senior Civil Service that rewards delivery of better outcomes and

that raises the overall capability of the SCS, delivering greater productivity for citizens.

- ▶ **We will strengthen the digital pay framework** to provide better pay progression within grade for Government Digital & Data roles, based on capability.

### Spans and Layers

- ▶ **We will develop a set of externally accredited line management standards** that will be embedded across government. These standards will draw on the evidence base of best practice from academic research, professional bodies, across sectors and within government
- ▶ **We will Improve the productivity and capability of line managers** across the Civil Service, by setting externally accredited standards and requirements for line managers with a commitment that 70% of the target cohort of priority line managers will achieve or be working towards accreditation by 2025.

### Accelerating the Places for Growth Programme

- ▶ **We will accelerate our activity** in order to relocate at least 22,000 roles by 2027, instead of 2030. Also by 2030, 50% of UK-based SCS will be based outside London
- ▶ **We will use the Places for Growth programme** to support departments to launch a **network of thematic campuses across the UK** over the next two years.

## End to Civil Service Expansion

- ▶ **We will** use the Shared Service Strategy for Government to **automate many mundane processes and transactional services**, which will free up the valuable time of civil servants to focus on what they do best – engaging with, and delivering for, citizens.
- ▶ **We will** streamline services **through a cluster based approach**, modernising our systems, adopting new technologies and capabilities so that we can save time, cut back-office red tape and offer taxpayers better value for money.

## Improving Office Attendance

- ▶ **We will** continue to implement an **expectation of increased office-based working** across the Civil Service. Those based in offices will spend **a minimum of 60%** of their working time working face to face with their colleagues either in offices or on official business.
- ▶ **We will** ensure strong visible leadership across sites by setting the expectation that **senior managers will spend more than 60% of their working time** face to face with their colleagues in offices or out on official business. **Visible, connected leadership is important;** and the most valuable way to learn at work is from others around us. Senior managers' presence will help colleagues have the support, guidance and development they need to keep delivering excellent public services.

The People Plan provides a significant update on what we have already delivered and what we commit to deliver over the coming months and years.



**Rt. Hon. John Glen MP**  
Paymaster General and Minister  
for the Cabinet Office

# Foreword from Alex Chisholm and Sarah Healey

**This government is committed to Civil Service reform in order to drive improvements in the day-to-day lives of all our citizens, providing excellent services delivered with value for money. This is key to deliver a better skilled, more productive, and as a result, leaner and more effective Civil Service.**

Our people will be instrumental in transforming the UK for the better. This Civil Service People Plan is our recognition of the importance of our people, detailing the commitments we are making and outlining how we will deliver against them.

The Civil Service is already an **amazing place to work**. We provide the opportunity to make a significant impact on the lives of our citizens on a daily basis, putting the merit principle front and centre.

Across the UK and globally, our civil servants are delivering services at the moments in citizens' lives when they need us the most. Whether protecting our people, territories, values at home and overseas through strong armed forces to ensure our security, support our national interests and safeguard our prosperity. Or in our healthcare when we are at our most vulnerable, setting standards for the education of our children, providing us with independence through the provision of our driving licences, protecting our borders, ensuring the quality of our food, preserving our

countryside, supporting us back into employment; or in providing weather and climate forecasts to help with those decisions so people can be safe, well and prosperous.

The quality of what we do is also exceptional. The **International Civil Service Effectiveness (InCiSE) Index**<sup>1</sup> assesses the performance of central civil services around the world. The UK tops the most recent InCiSE Index overall. It is in the top position for regulation. The UK performs relatively highly for most indicators and is in the top 5 country rankings for 6 core function indicators: policy making (3rd), fiscal and financial management (3rd), HR management (5th), procurement (3rd), tax administration (3rd), and regulation. On attributes, the UK is ranked 3rd for openness.

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“To be a Modern Civil Service that is Skilled, Innovative and Ambitious.”

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1 The International Civil Service Effectiveness (InCiSE) Index

What sets us apart is our ambition: we continually strive to be greater. To be a Modern Civil Service that is Skilled, Innovative and Ambitious. Our people are key to deliver through the significant challenges faced, and we will seize opportunities outlined in this People Plan to provide a focus on how we can amplify what we do well as well as address the barriers to progress.

Some of these barriers are well known and long standing. Such as the frustrations around time to hire, tackling performance issues, smoothing interoperability processes, and addressing bullying, harassment and discrimination. Others are emerging and escalating in their impact. These include balancing the opportunities and impacts of hybrid working, addressing rising pressures of mental health and wellbeing, and the need to grip the opportunities and requirements of a digital society.

In particular, we will focus on our Places for Growth programme, expanding the pool of expert people in public service, driving improvements in digital processes and having a stronger assessment of public service programmes.

This plan outlines the priorities on which we must focus our collective leadership attention. We will be innovative in our approach to tackling them, being creative in our response to those established and emerging challenges to be the most efficient and productive Civil Service we can.



**Sir Alex Chisholm**

Chief Operating Officer for the Civil Service and Permanent Secretary of the Cabinet Office



**Sarah Healey CB CVO**

Permanent Secretary of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

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“This Civil Service People Plan is our recognition of the importance of our people, detailing the commitments we are making and outlining how we will deliver against them.”

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# Introduction from Fiona Ryland

**Our People Plan will ensure a Civil Service that is fit for current and future challenges; providing high quality advice to the Government, outstanding services to the public and safeguarding the UK's prosperity and security at home and overseas.**



For over 150 years the Civil Service has played a vital role in British life, providing support and advice for Ministers, implementing government decisions and projects, and delivering key services. Recently we have seen yet further evidence of the extraordinary brilliance, imagination and dedication of public servants delivering in very difficult situations, such as the swift introduction of furlough, the delivery of universal credit and the vaccination programme.

Today the UK faces increasingly complex, systemic challenges that require us to join up across and outside the Civil Service. National security, responding to global environmental threats, operating through the pandemic emerging into a changed world of work and tackling the cost of living crisis that has required increased connectivity and adaptability.

We must equip ourselves to deliver in an emerging digital era, harnessing the benefits of new technologies and the flexibility presented from new ways of working.

Seizing these opportunities, for example in Artificial Intelligence, can provide the key to unlocking the solutions to several of our old workforce challenges (on recruitment, talent, progression) as well as addressing potentially new ones (mental health, hybrid working). We will ensure our approach is focussed on drawing on the best available talent through our Places for Growth programme, delivering for the taxpayer through innovation and improving the delivery of public services offering value for money.

Our Civil Service is world-leading in many areas, and its values of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity are the bedrock of its success – as is its commitment to always aiming higher. We must build resilience in our committed workforce and support them to deliver impact in various scenarios, both present and future promoting the sustainability of our practice.

“Our Civil Service is world-leading in many areas, and its values of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity are the bedrock of its success.”

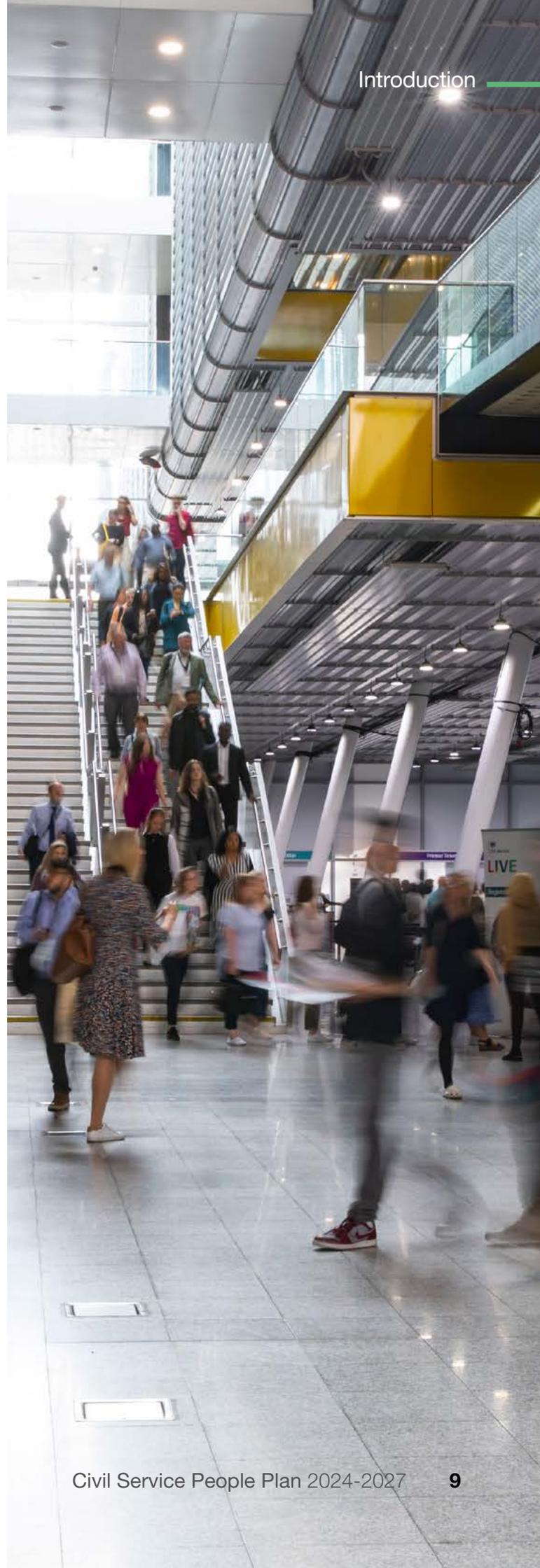
We must therefore go further to realise a Civil Service that is more efficient and effective in delivering vital public services, and more skilled, resilient and responsive in the face of a rapidly changing world; harnessing technology to increase efficiency and productivity. This needs to be done in the context of supporting our people to unleash their spirit of public service.

### That is why I am setting out clearly in this People Plan:

- 1 Our Vision, Aims and Objectives
- 2 The Civil Service People Priorities
- 3 How these priorities drive Government Reform
- 4 A clear baseline of current performance
- 5 Reflections from our people on our priorities
- 6 Key outcomes and commitments to achieve our ambitions.

**Fiona Ryland**

Government Chief People Officer



# Our Vision, Aims and Objectives



## Vision

We will have the best people leading and working in Government to deliver better outcomes for citizens<sup>2</sup>.



## Aim

To ensure that the Civil Service workforce is comprised of the very best people from across the UK so that it is fit for the challenges of the 21st Century and is equipped to support the government of the day in developing and implementing its policies, and in delivering excellent public services.



## Objectives

The Civil Service is world-leading in many areas. Its values of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity are the bedrock of its success. Now we must also go further.



2 Declaration on Government Reform, June 2021



## We will:

- 1 Deepen our understanding of citizens in all parts of the country;
- 2 Attract and retain individuals from the widest possible pool of talent with a more diverse range of skills and background through ensuring fairness, transparency and merit in our recruitment;
- 3 Set the standard for inclusive workplaces where people achieve their full potential;
- 4 Invest in training programmes that cultivate commercial, delivery, and future-oriented skills, enabling civil servants to navigate effectively emerging challenges and areas of importance such as digital and technology;
- 5 Support and encourage multidisciplinary teams;
- 6 Recognise and reward exceptional civil servants, particularly those who demonstrate outstanding skills and expertise, incentivising and acknowledging their contributions; and
- 7 Create more opportunities for Ministers and officials to discuss and hone policy collaboratively.

At the end of this Plan we outline clearly the commitments we – all leaders across the Civil Service – are making to deliver our vision, aim and objectives.

These are the things you can hold us to account on, and to aid this, we will publish an annual progress report on all our published commitments.

# Our People: a key driver of Government Reform

The Declaration on Government Reform<sup>3</sup> set out a vision of renewed and rewired government to be achieved through a programme of reforms on three fronts:

**1. People** – ensuring that the right people are working in the right places with the right incentives;

**2. Performance** – modernising the operation of government, being clear-eyed about our priorities, and objective in our evaluation of what is and is not working; and

**3. Partnership** – strengthening the bond between Ministers and officials, always operating as one team from policy through to delivery, and between central government and institutions outside it.

The Declaration included commitments to:

- ▶ Ensure that more civil servants, including senior leaders, will work outside of the capital, closer to communities that they serve.
- ▶ Open all senior appointments to public competition by default, advertised in such a way as to ensure the widest possible pool of applicants.
- ▶ Ensure that Ministers have visibility of Senior Civil Service appointments in the departments.
- ▶ Invest in training for civil servants and for Ministers.
- ▶ Promote mixed-disciplinary teams and avoid hierarchies slowing down action.
- ▶ Set a new standard for diversity and inclusion by drawing upon the talents of the widest possible range of geographical, social and career backgrounds.

3 Declaration on Government Reform, June 2021



However, there is much more to do to invest in our workforce if Government is going to be equipped for future challenges. Therefore establishing clear People Priorities is key, working “to ensure that we have the best people leading and working in Government” through skills, recruitment, retention and building a strategic workforce and delivering on the Declaration of Government Reform’s commitments.

These priorities will promote the delivery of the vision for a reformed government and a Civil Service that is trusted, responsive and tailored to meet the needs of those we serve. They will drive our capability to deliver our priority objectives for 2025: Capability, Place, Digital & Data, Innovation and Delivery.

This is what will drive us to be a more productive and effective government, creating a Civil Service that will stand the test of time not just for now, but for the rapid change we are seeing in the economy and society.

# Civil Service People Priorities

The Civil Service is one of the UK's largest workforces. Composed of Ministerial and Non-Ministerial departments, Executive Agencies and Crown Non-departmental public bodies, it has a combined headcount 520,000<sup>4</sup>. The Civil Service is also one of the most complex. The reach and impact of the work we do is unique.

The shape of the Civil Service continues to change:<sup>5</sup>

- ▶ Through the Places for Growth programme the proportion of civil servants based in London has decreased to 20.1% in 2023, while the largest areas of growth are **Northern Ireland (6.8%), Scotland (4.9%), North West (4.4%)** and **Yorkshire & the Humber (4.1%)**.
- ▶ **54.6% are women**, 54.5% in 2022.
- ▶ **15.4% are from an ethnic minority background**, 15.0% in 2022.
- ▶ **14% declare themselves as having a disability**, (unchanged from 2022).
- ▶ **6.4% identify as being lesbian, gay, bisexual or recorded their sexual orientation as 'other'** (LGBO), 6.2% in 2022.

Our priorities for improvement must be those areas that impact all of our civil servants most significantly, regardless of grade, background, location, department or profession; and that will improve service to the public and reduce costs to the taxpayer. Through close partnering with Permanent Secretaries, Chief Operating Officers, HR Directors, and experts in Departments, Professions and Functions as well as drawing on external expertise, we have established our areas of focus. These priorities will contribute to the delivery of key priorities such as Places for Growth.

These are the key priorities that Civil Service leaders must use to address both our most pressing and immediate people challenges as well as identify what is required to deliver more fundamental transformation:

4 Civil Service Statistics 2023, Cabinet Office

5 Civil Service Statistics 2023, Cabinet Office

- 1  **Learning, Skills and Capability:** Providing a clear and targeted learning offer to ensure civil servants have the skills they need now and for the future.
- 2  **Pay and Reward:** Rewarding excellence in public service delivery and recognising proven delivery and productivity.
- 3  **Employee Experience:** Promoting an engaged workforce and culture of performance excellence, with effective line management.
- 4  **Recruitment, Retention and Talent:** Securing the best people working in the right place with the right incentives in a timely way.
- 5  **High-performing HR function:** Delivering innovation, expertise and agility, to help build thriving cultures, drive organisational success, streamline processes, and simplify the availability of our services to our employees.

For each of our Five Priorities this Plan outlines:

1. **The opportunities to be seized**, those key areas that we will grip to improve delivery.
2. **Current performance**, to highlight how we are doing currently so we collectively understand where we excel and where we must improve.
3. **Reflections from our people<sup>6</sup>**, as we developed this Plan we engaged with thousands of civil servants across all grades, departments, professions and functions to hear honest reflections against our priorities.
4. **What has already been delivered**, providing an update of excellent work that has already been completed.
5. **Key outcomes and commitments**, our intent and deliverables over the next three years to achieve our vision, aims and objectives set out in this Plan.

These are areas that we believe will achieve the most significant improvements for our people and better enable us to deliver our strategic objectives across Civil Service organisations.

6 In February/March 2023 civil servants were invited to share their views and experiences of working in the Civil Service to inform and shape the Strategic People Priorities. Over 2800 responded across all grades forming the 'Reflections from our People' insights.



# Learning, Skills and Capability



## Reform connection

**To deliver the Government's priorities, the Civil Service must be skilled, knowledgeable and networked. Confident and capable civil servants must develop the full spectrum of skills relevant for their role, including gaining both broad universal knowledge and deep specialist skills.**

The Curriculum and Campus for Government Skills will ensure the Civil Service invests in the skills needed now and in the future by building a culture of continuous learning and offering targeted training both in-person and digitally. Every civil servant will be supported to nurture and hone their skills whilst taking ownership of their own development as the Civil Service is transformed into a learning organisation. An accessible, easy to navigate curriculum, standardised skills taxonomy and robust evaluation framework will enable a data driven approach to ensure that training is enhancing knowledge, improving capability, resulting in better policy making and better public services for the country.

## Opportunities to be seized:

- ▶ **We will** raise the bar by investing in high-quality training to equip our people with the skills and knowledge they need to deliver efficiently for the public and tackle the challenges of the future, ensuring:
  - Every civil servant has the core skills and knowledge they need.
  - Specialists are offered the tools and training to deepen their expertise, including in high-demand areas like digital, data, science, commercial and project delivery.
  - Professionalisation of skills is celebrated, capability is assessed objectively against robust standards and accredited, where appropriate.





▶ **We will** foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement at all levels, ensuring:

- Easy access and L&D time to support every civil servant to take ownership of their learning and proactively find ways to develop their skills.
- Agile, multi-disciplinary, peer learning becomes the norm and people learn from each other, whilst delivering, supported by line managers who value and reward commitment to learning.
- There are clear career pathways for our people and opportunities for the wide range of talent already present across the Civil Service.

▶ **We will** become a data-driven learning organisation that is committed to impact evaluation and using insights to actively deploy and manage our workforce.

# Current Performance:

**52% of staff responding to the 2022 Civil Service People Survey<sup>7</sup>** agreed that the learning and development activities they completed in the last year have helped them to improve their performance.

There have been **significant improvements** over the long term across a range of People Survey indicators related to Line Manager Capability, however **LMC decreased by 1% in 2022 to 78% from 79% in 2021.**

**67% agree** that the feedback received helps them improve their performance.

**89% of staff** believe their manager is considerate of their life outside of work.

7 Civil Service People Survey 2022 results: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2022-results>

8 'In 2023 Civil Servants were approached to share their first hand experiences of the people priorities, over 2800 responded.'

## What our People say:<sup>8</sup>

“ Having more time available to do training, we are pressured... to complete as many calls as possible.”

“ It would be useful to formalise the L&D offerings with curriculums and pathways which are mandatory.”

“ More encouragement and permission to dedicate time in your diary to these opportunities.”

“ More specific training courses related to my role are difficult to source.”

Through our strategic goals we will weave learning into the fabric of the organisation where agile, multi-faceted, peer learning will be the norm. We will be respected across sectors and internationally for the quality of our training offer.

A clear, explicit skills strategy will expand our vision, individuals will be empowered to take responsibility for their own development, supported by line managers who value and reward commitment to learning.

### **We have delivered:**

- ▶ **Government Campus.**

We established the new Government Campus model of a curated, coherent learning curriculum delivered through a virtual campus to enable all civil servants to develop the right skills to tackle the challenges of the future.

- ▶ **Learning curriculum.**

We established the five strand curriculum, designed to set out the skills and knowledge that Civil Servants need, from foundation to specialist, to work in Government.

- ▶ **Induction.** We launched a new Civil Service-wide induction for all new joiners, reformed the SCS induction and launched a new SCS orientation for those joining from outside the Civil Service.

- ▶ **Digital and data skills for all.**

We invested in a range of new products to raise digital and data literacy across Government. We launched masterclasses for senior leaders in data (2020) and innovation (2021) and both are now well established. We launched pilot courses for our Digital Excellence Programme on building digital and data cultures in 2023 and we will continue to develop these.

- ▶ **Writing Skills Academy.**

Including Foundations of Writing in government. This innovative basic skills course has already been accessed by 4,000 civil servants.

- ▶ **Parliament and ministers.**

We have established a new parliamentary capability programme for civil servants and, alongside this, we designed and piloted a new induction programme and a series of masterclasses for ministers.





- ▶ **Skills for leading and managing.** We launched the first two programmes of new management pathways supporting managers at all levels of the Civil Service to increase their line management capability. 2,000 civil servants have already gone through the Foundation and Practitioner programmes.
- ▶ **Reform of accelerated development programmes.** We launched a new Directors Leadership Programme (for up to 40 talented directors (SCS2) in each cohort) replacing the former High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS). This is the first of a rolling reform of all cross-Government accelerated development schemes.
- ▶ **Public sector leadership.** We are piloting a series of short courses and programmes to CEOs, deputy CEOs, and public sector leaders in equivalent-level roles. 2023 pilots were themed on Leading Public Services in the Digital Age and Leading Collaborative Organisations. We have reformed networking and skill-sharing activities, creating regular opportunities for Civil Servants to connect with leaders across the public sector to learn from one another.



- ▶ **Fast Stream.** We have delivered a radical reform of the Fast Stream programme that will ensure a pipeline of leaders and managers to support the corporate functions and professions. The new design includes:
  - Regional pilots in Darlington, Yorkshire and the West Midlands. Around 25-30 new Fast Streamers will join the pilots in autumn 2023. Their evaluation will inform future location strategy.
  - A revised learning and development offer, which provides greater flexibility and embeds the concept of team based/peer learning. It now has a clearer focus on, and balance between, developing technical and specialist skills required within professions alongside the leadership and management skills that will be required.
- **Apprenticeships.** We launched the bold 2022-25 Civil Service Apprenticeships (Government Reform Declaration Action 8) strategy with a refreshed commitment to creating a more skilled, professional workforce with quality and relevant apprenticeships built into strategic capability plans. Having been in place for a year, we have now reported on progress towards the Apprenticeship Strategy success measures.

## We commit to:

1. **Government Skills Campus.**  
Launching the new Government Skills Campus, providing a single platform across Government with better access and visibility to the learning curriculum. It will use skills data to intelligently drive quality assured training, focused on developing the specific skills needed to deliver excellent public services to individual civil servants. It will also provide departments, functions and professions the skills data to inform better workforce planning and management.

### Opportunities

- Development of first pan-CS skills taxonomy to provide consistency in approach to defining and measuring skills.
- Introduction of skills passports to allow portability of skills between departments.
- Improved strategic workforce planning able to accurately highlight gaps requiring targeted intervention.

### Timeline

- Q4 2023-24 Pilot service launched with HMRC & CO staff with signposting to LF content.
- Q2 2024-25 move into phased rollout. Design work complete for integration blueprint with other LMS/skills tools.
- Q4 2024-25 service available to 50% of the civil service.
- Q4 2025-26 service available to all of the civil service. 2023-26

2. **Digital and data skills for all.**  
We will continue to develop and evaluate digital and data training for those outside the Government Digital & Data and Analytical professions. Building on world class learning products like One Big Thing, the Civil Service data learning moment, the digital excellence programme and data masterclass, we will increase digital and data capability. **2024**
3. **Learning Frameworks.** We will procure the next iteration of the learning frameworks. Learning frameworks are centrally managed contracts that save time and money by allowing Civil Service organisations and individuals to purchase learning without separate procurement. As with previous iterations of the frameworks, we are identifying how the future services can be improved in quality, efficiency and reach. Learning Frameworks are the training contracts that provide approximately 50% of all training across the Civil Service in a spend control compliant way. In partnership with the cross-government learning and development community, we will procure the next iteration of the Learning Frameworks. This will ensure a refreshed, high quality, relevant and modern learning and development offer, focusing on the priority skills areas. We will seek best in class training providers that can meet the broad range of needs right across the Civil Service, whilst ensuring that the offer is clear, accessible and value for money providing the skills that are needed now and in the future. We commit to: i) Engaging with potential providers to use market insight to develop a commercial

strategy, and ensuring that they understand our requirements. ii) Developing a robust business case that includes a comprehensive benefits realisation plan, and seek the relevant approvals to commence procurement in 2024 iii) Planning with departments and professions to ensure a smooth transition between existing contracts, and new contracts. iv) Implementing the new service from late 2025 across the Civil Service. **2025**

4. **Skills for leading and managing.**

Rollout the 5 month Senior Practitioner Programme (for Grades 6/7 and Deputy Directors). This programme completes the new management pathways which are designed to improve line management capability. The Programme ensures senior managers have the skills they need to manage both teams and resources effectively. It will be evaluated against two measures:

- Increased staff performance, engagement and retention.
- Well informed decision-making.

All Leadership College for Government (LCG) programmes are evaluated in line with the evaluation strategy. The Evaluation Lead works closely with colleagues from the Evaluation Taskforce. **2024**

5. **Reform of accelerated development programmes.**

We will reform the Future Leaders Scheme (for c.400 high potential Grade 6 or 7 Civil Servants each cohort) and the Senior Leaders Scheme (for c.100 deputy directors (SCS1) each cohort). The 2023/24

cohorts are the final iteration of the programmes in their current design and we have committed to redesigning ahead of recruiting the next cohort. **2024-25**

6. **Emerging Talent Strategy for Fast Stream and Emerging Talent.**

We will develop and implement a strategy that creates clear entry and progression pathways for new and existing civil servants at the start or early stages of their career that offers opportunities to progress and develop their skills in accordance with the Government Curriculum. We will also create and deliver a new Schools Outreach programme. This will deliver a range of measures such as organising events for schools to promote roles and routes in the Civil Service and creating materials for schools /colleges with a STEM focus. **2024**

7. **Internships.** Following the launch of the Summer Internship Programme, we will deliver a new internship offer to support employability skills and broaden entry routes into the Civil Service. **2024**

8. **Apprenticeships.** We will continue to support and enable departments to embed the Apprenticeship Strategy and to improve against the measures set out in the strategy such as at least 5% of Civil Service headcount should be apprentices on programme and the overall percentage of apprentices employed in each region should reflect the local Civil Service workforce size (Levelling-up & Regionalisation). **2025**



9. **Reformed Fast Stream.** We will deliver a reformed Fast Stream that has a refreshed attraction and selection approach giving potential candidates a clearer preview of the Fast Stream offer, and which will aim to attract a greater number of graduates with a STEM background. We will also deliver a new Fast Stream operating model to enable more efficient and effective delivery of the Fast Stream. **2024**
10. **College for National Security (CfNS).** As stated in the Integrated Review Refresh, we will embed CfNS in our national security architecture. CfNS will move from pilot stage to roll out of its National Security Curriculum. **2024**
11. **Skills Plan.** To ensure that the Civil Service has a workforce with the capability, skills, knowledge, experience and diversity needed to deliver against government's challenging priorities we will develop a plan to ensure the attraction, building and retention of high-demand skills and experience that are relevant to the challenges of the day are delivered. This will focus on aspects such as the High Demand Skills which will be owned by functions through their professional networks and expert knowledge, and supported by Government People Group people expertise. **2024**
12. **Specialist skills.** We will continue to develop members of professions from entry to deep specialism, including through accredited routes, as well as supporting civil servants to build interdisciplinary range. **2025**



# Pay and Reward

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Work is underway to develop a Civil Service Reward Strategy which will define the longer term structure and approach to pay and reward aimed at driving and supporting a 'Modern Civil Service'. The overall aim of the strategy is to deliver a more coherent, flexible, and individualised reward framework by 2030 that rewards civil servants to deliver better productivity across Government and better outcomes for taxpayers.

## Opportunities to be seized:

- ▶ **We will** reward people for being exceptional in what they deliver for the public especially where it drives better productivity and more efficiency in the delivery of government.
- ▶ **We will** link rewards and bonuses to meeting agreed targets and demonstrating higher performance.
- ▶ **We will** incentivise those with deep subject expertise who stay in areas where they add value and continue to develop.



# Current Performance:

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Civil Service average pay within grades has shown a general downward trend in real terms since 2008, due to below inflation increases.

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The proportion of Senior Civil Servants compared to the overall headcount has grown from **0.97% in 2008 to 1.47% in 2023**.

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Compared to 2021, there has been an 11% reduction in the proportion of staff responding to the People Survey that agreed that their pay adequately reflects their performance.

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The Pay and Benefits score consistently dropped across all professions. Compared to 2021, the largest decrease can be found for Policy and International Trade (-13% respectively), followed by Analysis (-12%). The highest score is for HR (38%) and the lowest for Consular (16%).

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The median and mean bonus gender pay gaps have improved but remain high. A higher proportion of women receive a bonus compared to men.<sup>9</sup>

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The median gender pay gap for the Civil Service rose from **8.1% in 2021 to 11.3% in 2022**. The mean gender pay gap for the Civil Service also widened slightly from **7.8% in 2021 to 8.5% in 2022**.

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The median and mean bonus gender pay gaps for the Civil Service showed an **improvement from 37.1% and 27.4% in 2022, to 25.4% and 23.5% in 2023** respectively.<sup>10</sup>

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9 Civil Service Statistics 2023, Cabinet Office

10 Civil Service Statistics 2023, Cabinet Office

## What our People say:<sup>11</sup>

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“ The main reason I stay is because I feel passionate about the work I do and making a difference.”

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“ Someone who performs poorly or does the minimum is paid the same as someone who always goes the extra mile or who is competent to do their work. This is why capable people end up getting demotivated and even leave.”

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“ Most people of the same grade get paid about the same regardless of whether... they have been in the role for 1 day or 10 years.”

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<sup>11</sup> 'In 2023 Civil Servants were approached to share their first hand experiences of the people priorities, over 2800 responded'



## We have delivered:

- ▶ **Pay Remit.** Providing the framework in which departments and other Civil Service organisations can recognise and reward the year on year contributions that civil servants make to deliver for government and citizens. 2023-24 saw the largest remit in over 20 years, with extra pay flexibility for those on the lowest pay bands and now given the scope to make a fixed one-off payment in recognition of the pressures felt during the 2022/23 pay year.
- ▶ **A choice of Civil Service pension arrangements.** Provision of choice of defined benefit and defined contribution schemes, with different contribution levels.
- ▶ **Fast Stream Pay.** Developed the case for an improved Fast Stream Pay system that is fairer and more modern, and retains the very best talent on the Civil Service's graduate scheme. **August 2023**

## We commit to:

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13. **Developing a new Reward Strategy.** Developing a Reward Strategy for the Civil Service in the short-, medium-, and long-term. **2024**
  - Setting out a pay framework that rewards delivery for the taxpayer, drives better productivity, high performance and the acquisition of skills and capabilities needed to support Government and public.
  - Ensuring the value and options on pensions are fully recognised and understood by existing civil servants and act to attract talent to the Civil Service.
  - Articulating the wider employment offer available to current and future civil servants that recognises the future of work and the opportunities this brings.
14. **SCS Strategy.** Develop and publish a new strategy setting out how the Senior Civil Service will become smaller, more skilled, better rewarded and how they will play an active role leading Civil Service communities across the UK across the range of modern leadership approaches, including for technical expertise. **2024**

15. **Future SCS Pay Framework**
  - develop a clear leadership and pay framework for the Senior Civil Service that rewards delivery of better outcomes and that raises the overall capability of the SCS so that it can lead the Civil Service across the Government’s priorities, delivering greater productivity for citizens.
16. **Pensions rectification activity commencement.** The 2015 McCloud Remedy Programme will deliver the necessary changes to provide members impacted, by the identified age discrimination within the Civil Service Pension arrangements, a choice of pension benefits during the remedy period (2015-22). **2024**
17. **Digital Pay Framework Development.** Strengthen the pay framework to provide better pay progression within grade for Government Digital & Data roles, based on capability. **2024**





# Employee Experience

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**To deliver for our citizens the Government must be a model employer, setting the standard for inclusive workplaces. We want the right people with the right mix of skills and experience to stay in the Civil Service and flourish. We want to create an environment that stretches our people personally and collectively and challenges them to deliver the best of themselves for their communities and the UK.**

We must therefore create an experience where they can thrive, where they know their wellbeing is of the utmost importance, where the full range of diverse voices are heard, and where workplace relationships are built on respect and tolerance.

A positive employee experience cannot be left to chance. We will approach this holistically and systemically through deliberate inclusion at every stage and touchpoint of a civil servant's career. Progress will be measured and assured from the centre, using the full range of data alongside our considerable people expertise to drive improvement and celebrate success.

## **Opportunities to be seized:**

- ▶ **We need** the best people leading and working in government to deliver better outcomes for citizens.
- ▶ **We must** ensure we draw on the talents of the widest possible range of geographical, social and career backgrounds and promote fairness at work to make the most of that talent.
- ▶ **We must** create an environment where our people feel proud to be in service of others and the country.
- ▶ **Public Service** delivery depends upon having talented and capable line managers to create a Civil Service culture that is accountable and optimised to achieve our priorities.
- ▶ **Good line management** and the culture it creates has a significant influence on productivity, employee workplace experience, engagement levels, and well-being. Energised teams are more creative, collaborative, efficient, decisive and better problem solvers.
- ▶ **Line managers** who are capable, empowered, valued and externally accredited will be essential for a positive employee experience and ensuring that reforms are delivered and embedded across Whitehall and the Civil Service.

# Current Performance:

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Representation of women and ethnic minority staff in the SCS are at their highest ever levels. Overall, **54.6% of the Civil Service are women** in 2023<sup>12</sup>. This varies by grade from 48.5% in the Senior Civil Service (SCS)<sup>13</sup> to 56.9% at EO level.

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Overall, **15.4% of civil servants are from an ethnic minority background** in 2023. By grade this varies from 8.6% in the SCS to 17.8% at EO level. Both the overall percentage and the percentage in every grade has increased since 2010.

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The benchmark **Engagement Index is 65%**. The index is a measure of how proud staff feel in working for their organisation, whether they would recommend their organisation as a great place to work, whether they feel a

strong personal attachment to it, and whether they feel their organisation inspires and motivates them to do the best in their job and achieve their organisation's objectives.

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**67%** of respondents to the Civil Service People Survey indicated that they **feel proud** to tell others they are part of their organisation.

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**77% agree their team cares about their wellbeing** – a good foundation of peer support for wellbeing.

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Sickness absence for mental ill-health is at the highest it has ever been. Overall, **Mental Ill-Health** is the leading cause of sickness absence with an average of **2.3 days lost** per staff year ending 31 March 2022.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Civil Service Statistics 2023

<sup>13</sup> SCS Database Q1 2022

<sup>14</sup> Annual Sickness Absence Report, Cabinet Office 2022

## What our People say:<sup>15</sup>

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“ My line manager is exceptionally good in her role. Her strong work ethic and commitment to the team’s strategy encourages me to perform to my best standard.”

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“ ...my line manager goes above and beyond for staff and the rest of the team.”

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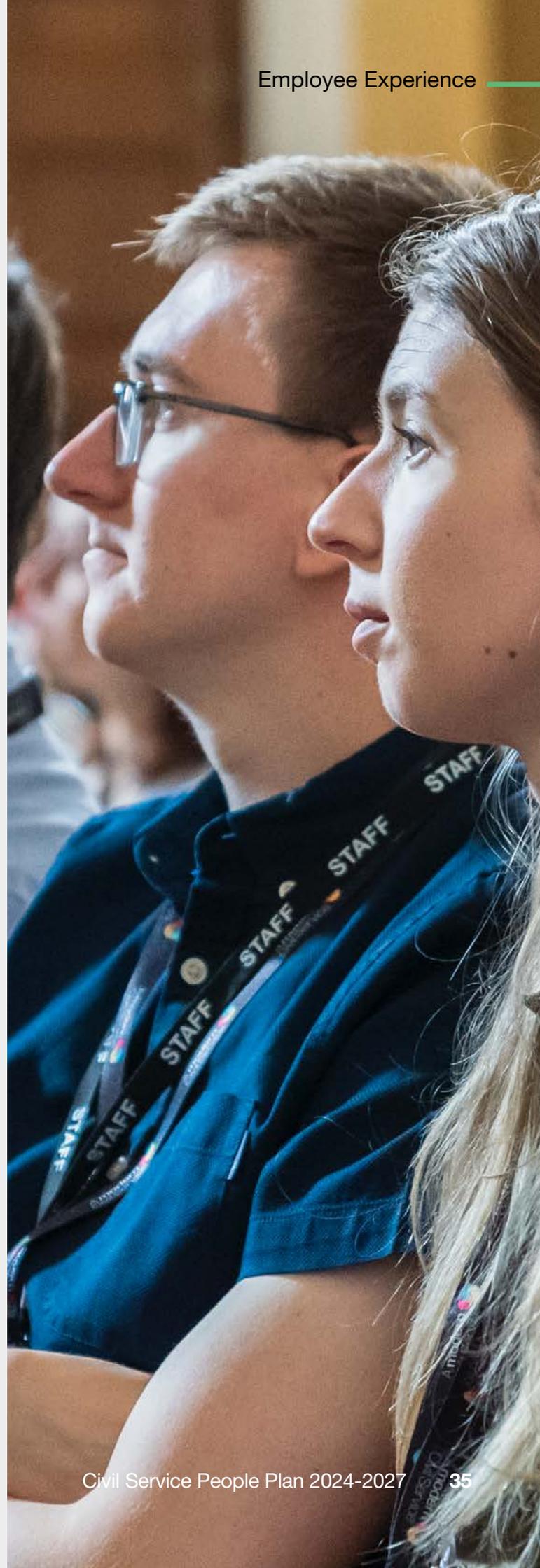
“ My line manager is incredibly supportive and provides a flexible working environment where I can be my best.”

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“ My line manager has changed 6 times in 3 years.”

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15 'In 2023 Civil Servants were approached to share their first hand experiences of the people priorities, over 2800 responded.'



## **We have delivered:**

### ▶ **Places for Growth Programme.**

This programme aims to relocate government roles to all parts of the UK, aiming to establish thriving government places of work outside Whitehall. Through these role relocations we will help realise the opportunities to create a more inclusive approach to working, better career pathways for civil servants across the whole of the UK – including at SCS level – and the access to new talent and experiences that will enrich our policy making and connection with the communities we serve; contributing significantly to Levelling Up. This programme has already relocated more than 16,000 roles exceeding the commitment to relocate 15,000 roles by 2025. The programme will now accelerate and aim to deliver 22,000 role relocations by 2027.<sup>16</sup>

### ▶ **Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2022-25).**

This strategy sets out 31 actions to promote improved fairness and performance for our people. Regular updates will be provided to our people on the progress against these actions and on the key projects and programmes of work to improve diversity and inclusion across the Civil Service; using a data-driven, evidence-led and delivery focussed approach. **February 2022**

### ▶ **Inclusive Britain Report.**

The Government response to the Commission on Race and ethnic Disparities and sets out a ground-breaking action plan to tackle negative disparities, promote unity and build a fairer Britain for all. It sets out what we intend to do to give everybody, from every community, in every corner of the UK, the opportunity to succeed. **March 2022**

### ▶ **EDI Expenditure Review.**

The Chancellor of the Exchequer commissioned a review of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) spend across the Civil Service with a view to establishing what was being spent and the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of that spend. Initial findings were reported back in time for the Chancellor to make an announcement during his autumn fiscal statement. The review delivered current spend and associated activity data from across 99 CS organisations which was independently analysed. **Autumn 2023**

### ▶ **Civil Service Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Review.**

The Declaration on Government Reform made it clear that there will continue to be zero tolerance for bullying, harassment and discrimination (BHD) within the Civil Service. The D&I strategy committed to delivering the first major Civil Service wide review into the practices to tackle BHD, since the Sue Owen review of 2018. This new review seeks to consider the issues holistically to inform

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/places-for-growth>

targeted and impactful interventions. It is focussed on understanding all aspects of BHD: policies, process, practice and performance which will then be used to develop a minimum standard on tackling BHD underpinned by a framework for organisations to achieve this new standard. Successive phases will focus on research of the experiences of individuals, reporting on what steps organisations can take to drive improvement and renewal which will set out an action plan to improve BHD rates over time. **December 2022**

- ▶ **Access to Neurodiverse candidates.** Utilising Auitcon (a Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise) Public Sector Resourcing (PSR) has developed an approach to directly access neurodiverse candidates within the Government Digital & Data profession. The approach will support both the candidate throughout their assignment as well as providing support and training for their Hiring Managers within Departments. **2023**
- ▶ **Health and Wellbeing Standards.** As part of the ‘Thriving through Crisis’ recommendations, we developed and delivered a set of Health and Wellbeing Standards in March 2023 to support departments to deliver best practice in health and wellbeing, and allow HR teams to self assess and monitor progress against the expected good practice standards.
- ▶ **Health and Wellbeing Dashboard.** We developed a health and wellbeing dashboard, which is produced on a 6 monthly basis. This is based on People Survey and absence data and is provided to departments to help identify priority areas to focus on. **Ongoing**
- ▶ **Menopause – we developed the Menopause in the Workplace Policy for departments and supported its implementation in December 2021.** We coordinated the signing of the Wellbeing of Women Workplace Menopause Pledge in June 2022 on behalf of the Civil Service, engaging with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Ministers and Permanent Secretaries to facilitate this. We also worked with DHSC colleagues on the Women’s Health Strategy, providing content and case studies of good practice. We continue to promote the Cross Government Menopause Network and organised a well received panel discussion session with them at the Mental Health Conference in **October 2022**.
- ▶ **Occupational Health & Employee Assistance Programme.** Working in conjunction with Crown Commercial Service, Government People Group assists departments to secure appropriate OH and EAP services, helping them identify and resolve issues with service providers. Government People Group and Crown Commercial Service, will work on the re-let of the cross government frameworks. **2024**

▶ **CS Workplace Adjustments.**

Following the publication of the Civil Service Workplace Adjustments Standards in April 2022, Civil Service Workplace Adjustment Service (CSWAS) published a workplace adjustments page on The Charity for Civil Servants website within the wellbeing hub in **March 2023** along with a suite of new workplace adjustment products and support tools on Civil Service Learning.

- ▶ **Skills Flow.** The Declaration on Government Reform committed to increase the movement of individuals, knowledge, skills and experience within and between the Civil Service, and other sectors to ensure the Civil Service has an engaged workforce who are skilled and equipped to deliver on Government priorities and address skills gaps in key areas.

Achieving ‘flow’ encompasses many of our People Priorities, and delivery on this commitment can be seen throughout this People Plan, for example the work on end to end recruitment review, external by default recruitment, secondments, apprenticeship strategy, 50% of external Fast Stream hires having a STEM degree background, Places for Growth plans to move 22,000 roles out of London by 2027 and the Career Pathways Strategy establishing for the first time a collective vision for career pathways for all employees within the Civil Service.

In May 2022, the Civil Service Recruitment Framework (CSRF) was strengthened by the External by Default (EbD) policy.

Since then, departments must advertise an SCS1 or SCS2 job vacancy externally unless there are specific exceptional circumstances and the decision has been approved by a Minister (or Permanent Secretary equivalent in non-Ministerial departments).

When supported by effective workforce planning, the strengthened CSRF promotes the opening up of opportunities to applications from outside of the Civil Service, while the exceptions built into the policy give departments the flexibility they need to cover unexpected short-term or emergency resourcing gaps and meet their legal obligations (e.g. providing work for those returning from parental leave or redeploying those at risk of redundancy).



## We commit to:

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- 18. Places for Growth Programme.**  
We will accelerate our activity in order to relocate at least 22,000 roles by 2027, instead of 2030. By 2030, 50% of UK-based SCS will be based outside London. The Places for Growth programme will also support departments to launch a network of thematic campuses across the UK over the next two years. **2025-2027**
- 19. Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2022-25).**  
Set out 31 actions to promote improved fairness and performance for our people. The strategy is positioned to be an essential lever to deliver on the shared ambition of a Modern Civil Service where our values are to serve with integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality; driving our vision to be a skilled, innovative and ambitious Civil Service equipped for the future. **2022-25**
- 20. Inclusive Britain Report.**  
This outlines the Government response to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities which was established in July 2020 to review inequality in the UK, providing 24 recommendations for government, other public bodies and the private sector. The Inclusive Britain Report sets out a clear action plan in response to these recommendations to tackle negative disparities, promote unity and build a fairer Britain for all. The 71 actions are grouped under 3 main themes: trust and fairness, opportunity and agency, and inclusion. **2024 onwards**



21. **EDI Expenditure Review.**  
Following the Chancellor's announcement that subject to further work Ministers will consider a presumption against external EDI spending and increasing ministerial scrutiny whilst streamlining EDI training and HR processes with a view to getting value for the taxpayer. This further work will deliver a suite of policies that build on effective controls that have already been established but also exert further control on EDI spend and activity across the Civil Service, providing deeper assurance and alignment with government priorities. In addition, we are committed to further developing a baseline from which all future spend and activity can be scrutinised. **2024**

22. **Line Management Capability Programme** commits to:

- **Improving the productivity and capability of line managers across the Civil Service.** We will set externally accredited standards and requirements for line managers, with a commitment that 70% of the identified target cohort of priority line managers will achieve or be working towards accreditation by the end of **2025**.
- **Raise profile and esteem for line management.** We will highlight the value and importance of the line manager's role - including through involvement in sessions on management and leadership at all CS Live locations. **2024**

– **Improve employee experience for staff and managers.**

We will advise on required changes to ensure the standards are reflected throughout the employee lifecycle. This will include amending policies linked to recruitment, performance management, capability based pay and promotion. Line management standards will also be incorporated into functional frameworks. A full schedule of implementation for the required changes will be developed. **2024**

– **Set the standards and requirements for line managers across the Civil Service.**

We will develop a set of externally accredited line management standards that will be embedded across government. These standards will draw on the evidence base of best practice from academic research, professional bodies, across sectors and within government. **2024**

– **Accreditation will follow thereafter Inform the evolution of line manager training and development.**

We will support the Government Skills and Curriculum Unit and departments to enhance management learning offerings, aligning to the new standards. **2024**

23. **Central Employee Identifier (CEI).** This will be a unique identifier for each civil servant to enable joined-up and reusable data across government systems. Each member of staff will be issued with a CEI that will stay with them throughout

their life in the Civil Service. It will provide the ability to link and integrate employee datasets across departments, functions and the Central Services. By providing this golden thread we project £9.8m of efficiency savings by enabling better processes, removing manual work and simplifying integration of HR datasets. **2024**

24. **Commercial Category Strategy for Workforce Strategy Team.**

Working collaboratively with Government People Group, Crown Commercial Service is developing its Commercial Category Strategy for supporting the Workforce requirements of the Civil Service. The strategy will incorporate both permanent resourcing and contingent labour, along with routes to market for the extended workforce, such as resource augmentation and statement of works services, with a view to it being focused on Total Talent Acquisition (which allows for the integration of various routes to talent to address complex talent acquisition challenges across the Civil Service). **2024**

25. **Crown Commercial Service Employee Benefits.**

The new framework will improve the Reward and Recognition offering to include non-financial and social recognition. It will no longer be a single supplier agreement and will have six lots giving customers a broader choice of providers. **2024**

26. **Mental Health Project.** We are finalising plans for work to support civil servants' to maintain good mental health, wellbeing and attendance. This will focus on better communications, embedding of best practice, piloting of new tools, an exploration of the role of job crafting and greater support for the wellbeing of SCS colleagues. We are using data to better understand the issues and are working with Health and Safety leads, HR Teams and external stakeholders to identify the activities that will, working together, have the greatest impact across the Civil Service. **2024**

27. **Health and Wellbeing Standards Health Check/Self Assessment.**

We will conduct a 'health check' of departments' health and wellbeing plans, support and provisions in place using the recently implemented health and wellbeing standards. We will use the results to inform future health and wellbeing priorities and plug gaps in any support which is required. **2024**





# Recruitment, Retention, and Talent

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**The Civil Service needs to attract and recruit people across the UK at the right time and with the right skills and experience; based on merit, following an open and fair competition. Yet the process is not always quick or easy enough to navigate, particularly for external candidates. Internally our recruitment system is complex, being made up of a range of individual and separately managed processes, supporting many different types and/or volumes of recruitment.**

The Civil Service is committed to supporting and championing talent, and works to ensure it attracts, develops and retains talented people from a diverse range of backgrounds, to create a brilliant Civil Service now, and for the future.

Our goal is to improve organisational capability in attracting and supporting diverse individuals at all stages of their career journey. In order to ensure this, the Civil Service needs to provide all potential and existing employees with the resources and guidance they need to take control and ownership of their career pathways to create a more skilled Civil Service.

Our recruitment processes will enable us to bring in people from all walks of life, in all areas of the country. We will set and uphold a standard for recruitment across the Civil Service, and address any factors which slow down recruitment or limit entry routes. We will inject world class skills and experience through new secondment and interchange programmes, including those with industry, local government, academia and wider sectors.

## **Opportunities to be seized:**

- ▶ **We already** have superb people at every level of public service, working at home and abroad. But we must do better at attracting an even wider range of talent from more diverse backgrounds. We must do better at retaining individuals with deep subject expertise – from service delivery to international trade to national security – while being open to new voices which can challenge established ways of thinking.
- ▶ **We will** improve the way we recruit and the way we manage moves into and out of government. Civil servants are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. There is however more we must do to attract a broader range of people to the privilege of public service.

# Current Performance:

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Civil Service **turnover**<sup>17</sup> has remained unchanged in **2022/23 at 8.9%**. Departmental turnover has fallen slightly to 11.9%.

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Overall rates are lower than in the general workforce, however there is substantial variation between different Departments, grades, and professions.

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**21%** of staff indicated their **intention to leave** their organisation as soon as possible or in the next twelve months.

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For civil servants who declared they intend to leave their organisation either as soon as possible or within the next 12 months, the **most common reasons** for doing so were a better **pay and benefits** package (**55%**); a promotion or **career progression** within the Civil Service (**31%**).

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<sup>17</sup> Civil Service Statistics, 2022 and 2023. Turnover rate includes all moves out of the Civil Service over the specified year. Departmental turnover rate includes moves between Departments within the year, in addition to moves included under turnover rate.

## What our People say:<sup>18</sup>

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“ Recruitment processes are fair and transparent, however having recently lost a candidate to the private sector (who offered the post and produced a contract in 72 hours) the timeliness of the processes could be improved.”

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“ Recruitment is slow and can be an additional burden on an already stretched team.”

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<sup>18</sup> 'In 2023 Civil Servants were approached to share their first hand experiences of the people priorities, over 2800 responded.'



## **We have delivered:**

- ▶ **End-to-End Recruitment Review.** Across the whole system, developed an ‘as is’ picture of the recruitment landscape, capturing where we are already addressing known challenges and highlighting where we might do more. This ‘whole system’ approach will help us to develop more strategic and coordinated improvements, which help to optimise recruitment timescales and other outcomes such as the quality and diversity of hire, for the variety of recruitment contexts and circumstances across the Civil Service. In recent years the HR and Security Functions have begun working more closely together to align policies and processes, and deliver improvements to support ease of transfers between security cleared roles and prioritisation of clearances for new recruits coming into roles that support national priorities. The Security Function has also worked to improve security processes in relation to diversity and inclusion **2023-24**
- ▶ **Fast Stream STEM attraction strategy.** A new university outreach, marketing and attraction strategy, with a focus on attracting a higher number of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) applicants from a broader range of universities/further education colleges. **2021**
- ▶ **External by Default Policy.** Updated Civil Service Recruitment Framework issued, with departmental ministers asked to take personal responsibility for any recruitment approach for SCS roles that are not to be advertised externally. **May 2022**
- ▶ **Assignment Duration Policy.** This policy delivers on Action 10 of the Declaration on Government Reform 2021. It sets a minimum assignment duration for all SCS1&2 employees of 3 years. **July 2022**
- ▶ **Executive Search Framework.** Provides UK coverage for support with the recruitment for Executive & Non-Executive permanent appointments, fixed term appointments and inward secondments. The framework provides access to Individual candidate placements, as well as access to all services in a modular format if required. **September 2022**
- ▶ **Growing our User Experience Evidence Base.** We have analysed 80,000 candidate (internal and external to the Civil Service) responses, ensuring that recruitment design decisions both globally and locally are based on insight around the key drivers of applying for a new job.
- ▶ **Publication of the Career Pathways Strategy.** Sets out the overarching approach, delivering for the first time a collective vision for career pathways, linked to professions standards, for all employees within the Civil Service. **2023**

- ▶ **Going Forward into Employment.** Recruited over 2000 civil servants using innovative approaches to life chance recruitment. GFIE schemes work in partnership with the voluntary sector, Prisons and Probation, Local Government and others to reach out to candidates who may not otherwise have considered a civil service job, including people from lower socio-economic groups, carers, care leavers, veterans and prison leavers. Utilising exceptions 2 and 10 of the Recruitment Principles we accredit and run GFIE schemes that remove barriers, simplify application and interview processes and offer fixed term appointments of 12-24 months to 'individuals whose circumstances and previous life chances make it difficult for them to compete for appointments on merit on the basis of fair and open competition without further work experience and/or training opportunities'. **2023**

## We commit to:

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28. **Improve and speed up recruitment in the Civil Service.** Aim of achieving consistency and raising performance against time, cost, quality (including external) and diversity metrics. In support of this, the Government Security Group is improving national security vetting to deliver a more assured, timely and effective approach. The Baseline Personnel Security Standard policy is also under review, in conjunction with the HR Function, to improve the Civil Service pre-employment checks process. **2024**
29. **Revamp our processes to speed up recruitment and open up as many entry routes as possible.** Discovery Pilots will launch across the Civil Service to test new approaches to recruitment. Each discovery pilot will have a specific objective and be time bound, before being fully evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the intervention and its applicability for wider rollout across the Civil Service. **2024**
30. **Fully open up the Civil Service with a new brand, advertising campaign and the better use of Executive Search.** Launch of a new cross-Civil Service brand and a cross-Civil Service attraction strategy. **2024**
31. **Launch new industry secondment programmes across the functions and professions.** Including external Digital secondees to inject world class skills and experience as needed into the right roles in the Civil Service. **2024**

32. **Government Recruitment Service (GRS) Transformation Programme. 2023-26.** Over the next 3 years we will deliver:
- **Digital Change and Applicant Tracking System (ATS) Replacement.** Scoping, developing and delivering the recruitment technology roadmap, including procurement of a replacement ATS.
  - **Operational Service Automation.** Automating the most manual repetitive processes of the GRS operational service.
  - **Online Tests and Assessments.** Developing a new Behavioral Styles test for automated shortlisting, redeveloping the existing Situational Judgement Test, and procuring a replacement online test and assessment platform.
  - **Data & Operational Reporting.** Improving Government Recruitment Service customer operational and bespoke reporting, and developing the Government Recruitment Information Database (GRID) Service Wrapper and roadmap for future report rollout.

33. **Focus on recruiting and nurturing data and digital talent. 2026**
- **Designing a cross-government digital identity and employee value proposition (e.g. ‘Government digital’).** This will help reposition the government as a top tech employer. Combined, Government Digital & Data already is the biggest tech employer in the UK.

- **Developing a 200 person ‘upskilling’ programme for Government Digital & Data.** Aiming to analyse and add places to existing successful Government Digital & Data upskilling initiatives across government. Building on the Government Digital & Data capability framework. To ensure that it is so easy to use and understand that it becomes indispensable for skills and career development. This year, we will add SCS roles to the framework and identify skills connection points with other professions.
- **Building on the Government Digital & Data capability framework.** To ensure that it is so easy to use and understand that it becomes indispensable for skills and career development. This year, we will add SCS roles to the framework and identify skills connection points with other professions.
- **Recruitment Campaigns.** We will do bulk recruitment campaigns for in-demand Government Digital & Data roles, reducing the burden on departments and de-duplicating processes.

34. **Developing a new digital platform for moving staff between departments.** Including a digital form, workflow, case management, integrations and reporting. The platform will reduce resource and manual effort dedicated to movers processes, reduce costs and errors, improve transparency and data quality, improve employee experience and retention. **2024**

35. **Identification Digital Verification Technology (IDVT).** Implementation will deliver an IDVT solution to departments who use the Civil Service Jobs Applicant Tracking System for customers of GRS. The solution removes manual intervention points within the recruitment process and streamlines the pre-employment checking experience. It will improve customer and vacancy holder experience by removing the need to manually check physical ID documents. We are exploring migration opportunities with the GOV.UK One Login programme. **2025**
36. **External by Default (EbD) in Practice Review.** Gather and analyse data and feedback from the quarterly SCS Recruitment Survey, Civil Service Commission, departments, functions and delivery partners on their experience of EbD in practice. Identify possible areas for improvement which could be recommended to Ministers. This will complement the findings and actions of the End-to-End Recruitment Review and work on scarce skills. **2023-25**
37. **Assignment Duration Policy Implementation Review.** Evaluate the success of the implementation of the Assignment Duration policy across government. Gather and analyse feedback from departments and functions to identify any issues with implementation with a view to providing further guidance if needed. Put in place longer term evaluation of the success of the policy to retain capability in the SCS and the impact the policy has had on this in relation with other

policy changes e.g. performance management and capability based pay. **2024**

38. **Going Forward into Employment.** Continue to lead the way in developing a comprehensive life chance recruitment offer across the civil service by supporting a thriving community of GFIE schemes representing the geographical and professional range of the civil service, to candidates who reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. To achieve this we will evaluate work to date on GFIE life chance schemes with a view to understanding the merits of mainstreaming life chance recruitment as a recruitment method; applying learning to increase the use of GFIE life chance recruitment schemes. **2024**





# High-performing HR Function

**The new HR Functional Strategy will define the ambition for the HR function in being an enabler, facilitating and supporting our People over the next five years.**

It will provide a view of the size and shape of the function, including the operating model and opportunities we intend to maximise through ‘clustering’ of departments. It will set out how we will build and track the capability of our HR professionals to deliver a high-performing function for our customers to deliver a workforce with the skills to achieve our People goals.

The strategy will clarify responsibilities between GPG<sup>19</sup>, departments, clusters and service providers, putting in place the right level of governance for the HR Function to monitor its performance. As the Function matures, our operating model will develop and we will iterate this Strategy.

**Opportunities to be seized:**

- ▶ **We will** improve HR cross-government functional delivery to better support departments’ corporate activity.
- ▶ **We will** clearly articulate how the HR Function will enable delivery of our people priorities, including the roles and responsibilities of GPG, Departments and Clusters.



<sup>19</sup> Government People Group (GPG) is the current title of the central HR business unit, based in Cabinet Office

# Current Performance:

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HR tends to be viewed as the most important function by members of other functions. It also consistently receives the highest importance ratings from non-function members.

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Most HR quality dimensions received negative ratings on average in 2022. Feedback highlights some key issues, recruitment and onboarding especially. However, there are wider issues with the self service model.

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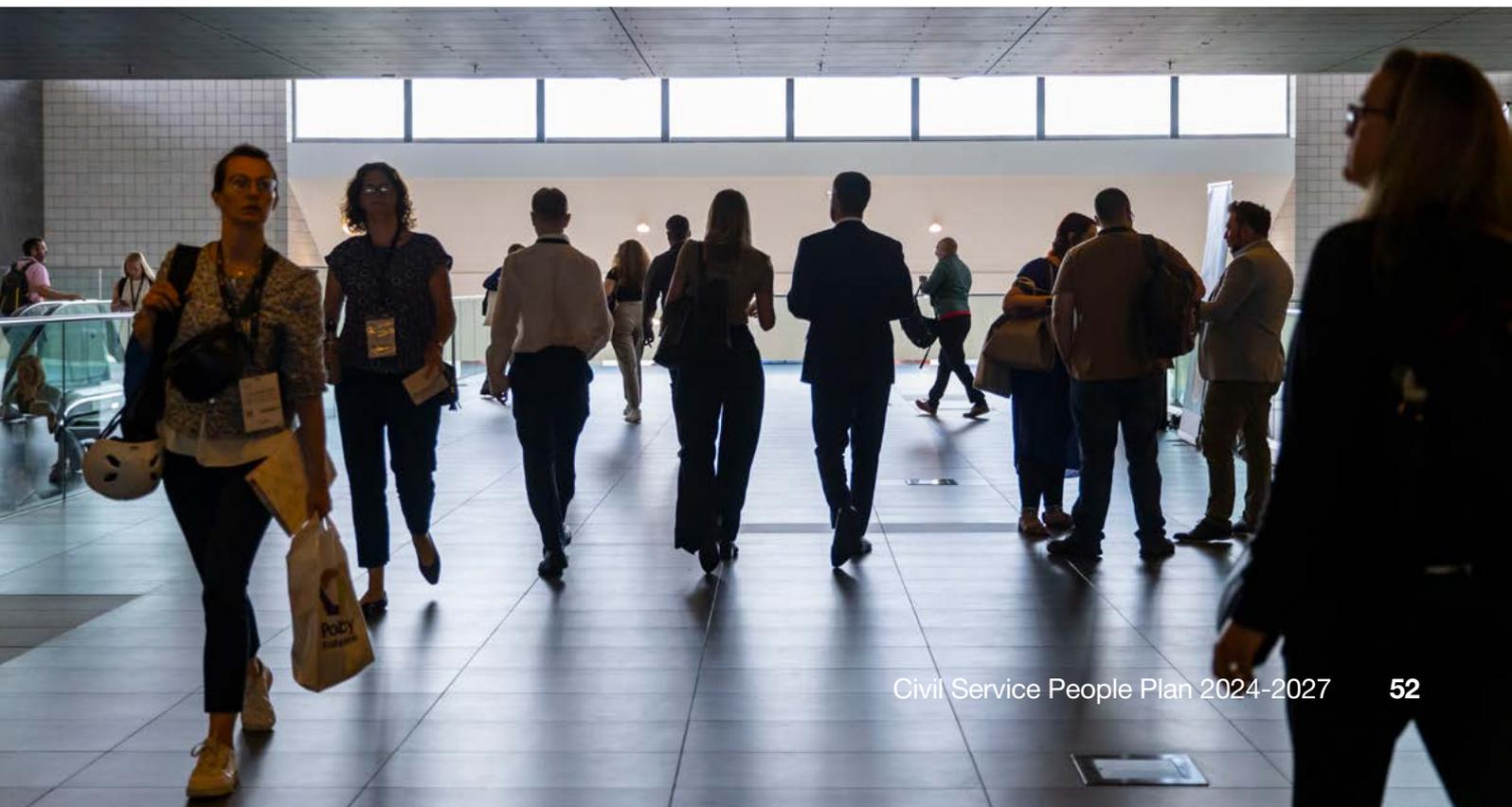
**85% compliance** with mandatory elements of the HR Functional Standard criteria has been declared by responding Departments and Agencies, and work to build interventions to address any gaps continues, with support from the centre.

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**77% of the HR Function hold CIPD accreditation** and organisations are continuing to engage with the centre and CIPD to increase this.<sup>20</sup>

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20 Sample size 2137 HR Colleagues



## What our People say:<sup>21</sup>

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“ Sometimes it feels difficult to know who to contact (too many options) and then responses can sometimes come with delays.”

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“ What is HR support?”

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“ The answer to an individual and specific situation is not always on the internet.”

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“ Be more visible. Advertise the support they offer. Write policies in plain English.”

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21 'In 2023 Civil Servants were approached to share their first hand experiences of the people priorities, over 2800 responded.'



## We have delivered:

### ▶ **HR Operating Model**

**Optimisation.** We reviewed the People Function Operating Model and identified four areas (below) to deliver optimisation. These must all be enabled by initiatives driving: HR networks; and line management capabilities. To date, subject matter experts from across the Civil Service formed communities of practice around these priority areas, creating a model of shared ownership and responsibility. Together they delivered a methodology to produce user centric design in HR policies, developed a standard curriculum and career framework for HR Business Partners and first drafts of the People Dashboard and a People Analytics Strategy. **2021-23**

- **HR Business Partners:** Focus on supporting senior leaders to drive HR strategies that enable delivery of organisational objectives, moving away from transactional work.
- **Data & Analytics:** Greater use of people analytics to provide insights to key HR questions to support operational and strategic decision-making.
- **Automation & Self-Service** should be applied to processes with heavy administrative burden, reducing errors and time taken, while improving user experience.
- **Policy-making.** Create innovative policies that solve the most pressing people problems, are easy to understand, and enable organisations to perform.

▶ **CS D&I Assurance Dashboard Prototype.** This has been developed to monitor the delivery of the 31 actions shown in the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (action 31). To audit and measure the delivery of our strategic priorities, to ensure a consistent, effective and value for money approach is taken in line with government standards. **March 2023**

### ▶ **Clustering of Departments.**

Through the Shared Services for Government Strategy we have seen an unprecedented level of collaboration and cooperation between departments and arms length bodies. Eighteen departments and over 100 arms length bodies have come together to create five new clusters. This enables greater sharing of functional capability, as well as being the step off point for ever closer process and policy alignment within clusters. Clusters have formed and are working closely together to deliver shared service centres, data and process convergence across government and deliver more value for money for the taxpayer. **March 2022**

### ▶ **New learning provider for our HR Apprenticeship Programme.**

To ensure that we are providing the best platform for our colleagues. **April 2023**

## We commit to:

39. **Shared Services Strategy for Government (SSFG).** The Strategy will transform the back office of government by replacing outdated, cyber vulnerable, legacy IT systems with modern, user friendly, cloud-based systems. We will link departments using smarter, cheaper, faster systems and processes to create an interoperable Civil Service. We will harness modern technology to deliver improved experience for users and increased opportunities through harmonised data. We will also automate many mundane processes and transactional services, which will free up the valuable time of civil servants to focus on what they do best – engaging with, and delivering for, citizens. By streamlining services through a cluster based approach and modernising our systems, adopting new technologies and capabilities, we can save time, cut back-office red tape and offer taxpayers better value for money. Two shared service centres went live in 2022, the third is expected in 2024 and the remaining two in 2025. Departments will join as current service contracts expire with all departments onboarded in 2028. **2023-28**
40. **Functional Convergence Programme.** An enabler of SSFG, this will drive interoperability through improved cross-functional processes, standards and KPIs, as well as identifying opportunities for policy convergence, investment in digital technology fit for a modern civil service and generating game-changing insights and benchmarking. **2028**
41. **Data Strategy.** Improving how we capture and synthesise people data across the Civil Service and HR Function and measure its performance via new data collection procedures and producing new dashboards. **2024**
42. **Developing a new HR Functional Strategy.** This will set out the how, who and when in order to enable delivery of the people priorities. Building capability across the HR Function to have the right people with the right skills in the right roles. **2024**
43. **Update the HR Career Framework.** To ensure it remains current and relevant for HR Professionals and other interested staff to support the development of the Profession, linked to Functional Strategy. **2023-24**
44. **Gaining Assessment & Professional Accreditation.** All departments have confirmed they will meet the 1 April 2024 target of 100% of SCS achieving Chartered FCIPD and 100% of G6 / 7s achieving Chartered MCIPD. Advocating a ‘pilot’s licence’ approach to qualification to be implemented through the CIPD by **2024**
45. **Redesigning the HR Fast Stream programme.** For 2024 to align with the wider reform of the Fast Stream, while supporting the continued development and oversight of the programme for our future talent in the HR profession. **2024**

# Summary and Table of Commitments

These five People Priorities will help us ensure that we continue to build on the excellent work already underway to attract and retain the very best people leading and working in Government to deliver better outcomes for our people and our citizens.

They provide the necessary focus to go even further, outlining clearly the commitments summarised below which will drive us to succeed in our aim to be a Civil Service that is fit for the 21st century and the challenges we face.

This plan outlines the strong connection between our priorities and our people across the Civil Service, as well as how integral they are to delivering our reform agenda. Given their importance, we will not leave delivery of this plan to chance.

## How will we ensure success?

1. Firstly, this plan is not a HR document or simply for HR practitioners. It is a document for all to see clearly **what** our priorities are and **why**. It is also for all leaders across the Civil Service to embrace and use to understand our Strategic People Priorities and deliver against them, whether actions and interventions to improve are being delivered in the centre, locally in departments or collectively. Our leaders will make improvements in policy, process, and practice come to life for our people wherever they work.
2. Secondly, this document will be followed by a **HR Functional Strategy** which will address the **how, who** and **when**, working in conjunction with the CS People Plan to set out how the HR Function will enable delivery of the People Priorities including the roles and responsibilities of the centre, and HR teams in departments, professions and functions.
3. Thirdly, we will use data to monitor progress and assure delivery. The **Civil Service People Data and Analytics Strategy** will ensure that we are drawing on robust people data and analytics as a foundational building block to inform all people-related decisions.
4. Finally, alongside this data strategy we will implement a new **People Data Dashboard** to ensure that we are using evidence to inform decisions, monitor progress and allow us to respond to emerging priorities through the CS People Plan and HR Functional Strategy. Enabling us to effectively monitor performance and the impact of interventions. Our initial indicative metrics for our priorities will include:

Priority Area	Metric	Description
Learning, Skills & Capability	People Survey – L&D theme score	Percentage of positive answers to the Employee Engagement theme questions on the People Survey.
	L&D spend and volume over time	Number of bookings made and the cost of those bookings updated quarterly.
	L&D courses completed by date	Number of staff completing both required and not required learning courses by date.
Pay & Reward	People Survey – Satisfaction with Pay	Percentage of positive answers to the Pay and Benefits theme questions on the People Survey.
	Gender Pay Gap	The gap between the median salaries of male and female Civil Servants by department. Dotted line shows the Civil Service median.
	Median Pay Scales	Distribution of median pay across departments by grouped grade. It illustrates an element of the internal pay market of the Civil Service.
Employee Experience	People Survey – Employee Engagement Index	Represents the extent to which employees are committed to their organisation's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success, and are able to enhance their own sense of well-being.
	Sickness Absence – average working days lost.	The most accurate measure available for sickness absence and accounts for part-time workers and workers that have not worked for the entire year.
	Percentage of SCS based outside of London	Measured against the Places for Growth commitment for over 50% of SCS to be based outside of London by 2030.
Recruitment, Retention & Talent	Recruitment Time to Hire (GRS Customers)	Time taken from advertising to hire, both inclusive and exclusive of pre-employment checks (GRS customers only)
	Turnover – Headcount	Percentage of those leaving the Civil Service entirely, for any reason by department.
	Employee moves within the civil service	Percentage of total civil servant headcount that moved to another government department.

We will regularly revisit our **measures** to ensure that they respond to our performance against them and that the Civil Service has a robust set of **metrics** in place necessary to drive our performance and the delivery of our priorities.

We will publish an annual progress report on all of the commitments included in the People Plan, through which we will monitor progress and ensure accountability for delivery in Government People Group and our partners across the Civil Service. Our improved data will show us how our actions are having the desired impact of increasing productivity, and inform decisions on further interventions if they are required. We will regularly update the Civil Service People Board on the Plan's progress.

The impact of this work will deliver our reform ambitions to be a Civil Service able to quickly adapt to the changing needs of modern government. At the heart of government are our people. From job centre managers and policy professionals to software engineers and scientific experts, the Civil Service designs and implements policy that works, and runs services needed by the public in all corners of the country. To do this efficiently requires a skilled, experienced and engaged workforce, deploying talent where it can have the greatest impact.

This People Plan supports the next stage of modernisation and will deliver a responsive and trusted Civil Service. One which provides an excellent service tailored to the needs of people across our country, with effective and resilient public services.



The commitments outlined throughout the plan are summarised below.

No	Commitment	Delivery date
<b>1) Learning, Skills and Capability</b>		
1	Government Skills Campus	2023-26
2	Digital and data skills for all	2024
3	Learning Frameworks	2025
4	Skills for leading and managing	2024
5	Reform of accelerated development programmes	2024/25
6	Emerging Talent Strategy for Fast Stream and Emerging Talent	2024
7	Internships	2024
8	Apprenticeships	2025
9	Reformed Fast Stream	2024
10	College for National Security (CfNS)	2024
11	Skills Plan	2024
12	Specialist Skills	2025
<b>2) Pay and Reward</b>		
13	Developing a new Reward Strategy	2024
14	SCS Strategy	2024
15	Future SCS Pay Framework	
16	Pensions rectification activity commencement	2024
17	Digital Pay Framework Development	2024

No	Commitment	Delivery date
<b>3) Employee Experience</b>		
18	Places for Growth Programme	2025-27
19	Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	2022-25
20	Inclusive Britain Report	2024 onwards
21	EDI Expenditure Review	2024
22	Line Management Capability Programme	2024-25
23	Roll out the Central Employee Identifier (CEI)	2024
24	Commercial Category Strategy for Workforce Strategy Team	2024
25	Crown Commercial Service Employee Benefits	2024
26	Mental Health Project	2024
27	Health and Wellbeing Standards Health Check/ Self Assessment	2024
<b>4) Recruitment, Retention and Talent</b>		
28	Improve and speed up recruitment in the Civil Service	2024
29	Revamp our processes to speed up recruitment and open up as many entry routes as possible	2024
30	Fully open up the Civil Service with a new brand, advertising campaign and the better use of Executive Search	2024
31	Launch new industry secondment programmes across the functions and professions	2024
32	Government Recruitment Service (GRS) Transformation Programme.	2023-26

No	Commitment	Delivery date
33	Focus on recruiting and nurturing data and digital talent	2026
34	Developing a new digital platform for moving staff between departments	2024
35	Identification Digital Verification Technology (IDVT)	2025
36	External by Default (EbD) in Practice Review	2023-25
37	Assignment Duration Policy Implementation Review	2024
38	Going Forward Into Employment	2024
<b>5) High-performing HR function</b>		
39	Shared Services Strategy for Government	2023-28
40	Functional Convergence Programme	2028
41	Data Strategy	2024
42	Developing a new HR Functional Strategy	2024
43	Update the HR Career Framework	2024
44	Gaining assessment & Professional Accreditation	2024
45	Redesigning the HR Fast Stream programme	2024

