

To comment: N/A

Written by: [REDACTED]

To decide: Secretary of State

SCS: Helen Mills
[REDACTED]

Press	Stakeholder	Parliamentary	Other
Uncontroversial	Potentially Controversial	Uncontroversial	Uncontroversial

Thursday 11 July 2024

Senior Civil Servant (SCS) Resourcing, and Handling of Future SCS Recruitment Exceptions

Summary:

This submission provides an overview of

- SCS recruitment requirements,
- outlines proposed immediate changes to DSIT's SCS structure for your consideration and approval, and
- seeks your view on management of SCS exceptions to 'external by default' recruitment going forwards.

Timing: Urgent- a decision is requested by Monday 15 July in order for senior level resourcing to be in place as soon as possible to support delivery of key appointments and priorities.

Objectives: Through recommended changes to senior resourcing, this advice specifically seeks to support delivery of the following priority:

1. Drive a modern digital government which gives people a more satisfying experience and their time back ('Modern Digital Government');

Recommendation:

- 1) You are invited to:
 - a) Note the guidance provided on how senior level appointments to the Civil Service are made;
 - b) Review the anticipated SCS internal moves outlined in Annex A and provide a steer on preferred approach to appointments.
 - c) Note the suggested approval process for 'external by default' exception requests going forward and share any changes you would like made to this process (Annex B). You are also invited to consider the proposed automatic exceptions to this policy as outlined and indicate whether you are content with these continuing, and
 - d) Consider whether you wish to nominate a Minister in DSIT to consider requests for exceptions to 'external by default' SCS recruitment on your behalf if that would be preferred.

Detail

Overview: Recruitment into the Civil Service

- 2) Appointments to the Civil Service, including appointments into the SCS, must generally be made in a way that is fair, open and on merit. This requirement is outlined in the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act (2010). The core of the associated legal requirements are distilled into the [Civil Service Recruitment Principles](#), which have been developed and are enforced by the Civil Service Commission. In some limited circumstances, exceptional appointments can be made without meeting this requirement; permissible exceptions and associated restrictions are outlined in the Principles.
- 3) You will shortly receive formal guidance from the Civil Service Commission outlining the extent of permitted Ministerial involvement in appointments to Civil Service roles. Whilst Ministers are unable to join recruitment selection panels, their input is highly valuable particularly when designing the recruitment plan before the campaign launches, and as insight for the selection panel when assessing shortlisted candidates. It should be noted that as per the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act, involvement of Special Advisers is prohibited at any stage in Civil Service recruitment.
- 4) In addition to the legal parameters that Civil Service recruitment must be delivered within as outlined above, the Civil Service implemented a strengthened 'External by Default' recruitment policy that requires all Senior Civil Service (SCS) roles to be advertised externally. All SCS1 (Deputy Director) and SCS2 (Director) roles must be advertised externally unless a Minister has authorised an exception with clear and justifiable business case.
- 5) The Government People Group within Cabinet Office provides specialist recruitment support for SCS roles. SCS 1 and 2 recruitment (Deputy Director and Director level roles) are delivered by the Government Recruitment Service (GRS) SCS Recruitment team. Specialist support is provided by the Senior Talent and Resourcing team (STAR) where SCS3 and 4 (Director General and Permanent Secretary) roles are being recruited to. An outline of a standard SCS3 level campaign process is provided in Annex C for information. Civil Service Commissioners chair recruitment campaigns at Director-level and above.

For immediate consideration: SCS appointments in DSIT

- 6) A number of SCS appointments have been proposed to enable the department to respond rapidly to your priorities and ensure that we have the right skills and capabilities in key roles. These are outlined in Annex A. Your views would be appreciated on the proposed roles and appointments.
- 7) To make these appointments at pace it is proposed that none of these roles are initially advertised to the external market. As such your approval is also sought, noting that these appointments would be exceptions to the Civil Service policy of 'External by Default' recruitment.

Future Handling: Recruitment Requests

- 8) DSIT is fully committed to fairness and openness in recruitment, however full external SCS recruitment processes can take 6 months or longer before the selected candidate takes up post. This means there are times where it is necessary to fill roles temporarily without external competition to meet business needs, triggering the need for Ministerial

approval as exceptions to 'External by Default' recruitment. Further detail is provided in Annex B.

- 9) Ministerial approval is sought following HR Director and Permanent Secretary review and approval. To ensure recruitment can proceed as quickly as possible, we propose to share requests for approval on a weekly basis going forwards. You are invited to consider whether you wish to approve future SCS recruitment exception requests or whether you wish to delegate this to another Minister to review on your behalf.
- 10) You may also wish to consider approving automatic exceptions by default. These have previously been agreed where 1) the role is temporary and short term e.g. to cover a period of parental leave, and 2) external recruitment will be undertaken but the request is to run an internal campaign to identify interim cover.

Annex A: Proposed SCS Appointments

ID	Role Title and key responsibilities	Grade	Proposed Resourcing route
1.	<p>Director General – Digital Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the overall scope and strategy for the digital centre of government. Within this, a key element to work on will be delineating what parts of the public sector are in and out of the digital remit's scope. The role will decide what projects should be prioritised for the digital centre and what the roadmap looks like over the first few years. Importantly and linked to this, the role will lead on the funding required to deliver our digital ambition, ensuring this is linked into already existing spending review preparation activities The role will be required to determine what organisational structure will best serve the digital centre of government. Linked to this, decisions will be made by this role on how the key functions and disciplines across government should be organised to support the mission, in recognition of the boundaries between data, digital and AI 	SCS 3	A Fixed Term Appointment for Emily Middleton, currently awaiting Commissioner approval via Exception 4 for a period of up to 2 years.
2.	<p>Head of Delivery Unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for ensuring your objectives are delivered- scrutinising 	SCS 1	Extend the temporary promotion of [REDACTED] (currently Head of the Election Hub) for a period of 9 months

	<p>policy proposals to ensure they are feasible and will deliver for growth and the public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting rapid analysis of data with a view to intervening to solve problems where progress is off track e.g. through live dashboards, conducting deep dive investigations, supporting stocktakes; 		<p>to resource this role on an interim basis to support the immediate establishment of the Delivery Unit, in parallel with full external recruitment.</p>
3.	<p>Transformation Director</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the scoping and delivery of the DSIT Transformation Programme to ensure we are set up to deliver our priorities, bring our new organisation together and ensure the smooth transition of colleagues as part of the machinery of government change. 	SCS2	<p>A Managed move of an existing SCS2, Erin Robinson who is currently the GDS Chief Operating Officer. Erin has the skills and experience, and it is also critical we have someone from the new part of the Department at the centre of the Transformation.</p>
4.	<p>Director, GOV.UK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This role leads a team of c250 staff and ensures key pieces of the UK's digital CNI and citizen-facing services are well-led and stable whilst we establish the digital centre for Government. • GOV.UK is designated critical national infrastructure (CNI) and is home to 300+ essential services used by c.16 million visitors each week. It requires strong leadership as both a citizen-facing platform, and a vehicle for government delivery of key priorities (mostly recently Covid 19, cost of living, general election etc). 	SCS2	<p>Short term Expression of Interest for a period of 9 months to backfill this role as the previous incumbent, Christine Bellamy, has been appointed and publicly announced as GDS's Interim CEO for an equivalent period of time.</p> <p>A request for approval to recruit has previously been submitted within Cabinet Office for consideration, however following the machinery of government announcements this request is also included here for completeness.</p>
5.	<p>Comms, Engagement and Change - Transformation Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the work on the culture and Values required for DSIT to Transform • Lead a single plan on Comms, change and engagement ensuring that our people understand the 	SCS1	<p>Temporary role in line with the length of the Transformation Programme. Short Term Expressions of Interest for 6 months then advertise externally for a Fixed Term Contract.</p>

	change, what is required of them, are given the opportunity to input and be involved and we support all our people through the change.		
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Annex B: [Summary- SCS External by Default Recruitment Policy](#)

Annex C: Outline of standard SCS3 Recruitment Process

Step 1-The Vacancy

Action required	Responsibility
Job role, responsibilities and person specification drafted	Sponsor/HR
Evaluation of post if it is a new role to confirm SCS grade (JESP assessment)	HR

Step 2- Approvals

Action required	Responsibility
Obtain Permanent Secretary approval	Sponsor/HR
Confirm pay band and salary for the advert - obtain Chief Secretary to the Treasury (CST) approval where salary exceeds £150,000	Sponsor/HR
Initial engagement with Senior Talent and Resourcing (STAR) team. Develop Business Case for Senior Leadership Committee (SLC) approval	HR
Cabinet Office review of SLC request (if required)	HR
If a new role- formal JESP conducted	HR/CO/SLC
Obtain SLC-approval	HR
Inform Ministers- agreeing the recruitment approach, level of ministerial interest and involvement, and job description	Permanent Secretary
Civil Service Commissioners allocated	CO DG workforce team

Step 3- Advertise/assess applicants

Action required	Responsibility
Appoint an executive search company (if required)	CO DG workforce team/sponsor
Arrange a planning meeting with the hiring manager, CS Commissioner, and Executive Search (if using)	DG Workforce team/perm sec office
Agree panel composition	Line Manager & CS Commissioner

Advert & application pack cleared with Commissioner & panel	
Advert issued (online)- Post on Civil Service jobs site	CO DG workforce team/sponsor
Post closing date-long list meeting	Selection Panel
Short list meeting	Selection Panel
Initial consideration of potential conflicts of interest	Permanent Secretary /Sponsor
Psychometric Tests/Staff Engagement Exercises/Individual Leadership Assessment	CO DG workforce team/HR
Informal meeting between short listed candidates with Ministers/key stakeholders as outlined in the advert	Permanent secretary office/DG workforce team/HR/sponsor
Final Panel Interview	Selection Panel
Board report written up	CS Commissioner
Appointment approval from head of CS and Prime Minister	Permanent Secretary

Step 4- Making an offer

Action required	Responsibility
Discuss remuneration with successful candidate	HR/ line manager
Prepare contract	HR
Report outcome to the CS commission, including diversity data	HR/ DG workforce team
Onboarding including required Security Clearances	HR/Line manager/CO DG Workforce team
Candidate to take up post- induction activity	



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

SCS External by Default Recruitment Policy

Summary

External by Default Policy Summary

The Government Declaration on Reform set out the Government's commitment to further open up Civil Service recruitment by strengthening the implementation of "External by Default". Since 13 May 2022, **all SCS1 and SCS2 roles have been advertised externally by default unless a Minister has authorised an exemption** with clear and justifiable business needs. This approval cannot be delegated.

Exemptions may be considered by Ministers where:

The timeframe required to fill the role is so short that it would not enable a full external competition to be run and business needs are still to be met. This includes emergency resourcing for urgent and critical roles. This does not apply to circumstances where there has been insufficient workforce planning within a department.

The essential criteria are such that only an existing civil servant would be able to perform the role effectively within a reasonable timeframe. This includes circumstances where the role would have a direct impact on national security.

The role is time bound e.g. cover for periods of parental leave.

DSIT has previously operated with two automatic delegated

exceptions to the policy, which are outlined on the following slide.

Expressions of Interest

Expressions of Interest (EOIs) are considered an exception to External by Default for and therefore approval, prior to advertising, **must** be sought. Below is an exhaustive list of scenarios where an EOI can be used. Any circumstances which cannot be attributed to one of these scenarios would not warrant the use of the EOI:

redeployment situations in consultation with the Recruitment and Redeployment Working Group (RRWG)

cover for short to medium term absence, for example, parental leave, career break, and long-term sick leave

covering an interim vacancy filling whilst an external recruitment campaign is ongoing

short-term inter-departmental loan

priority resourcing, e.g. in situations of national emergency

workforce planning moves.

In the interest of streamlining the approvals process where possible, automatic exceptions have previously been granted in the following two circumstances:

1. Once a role has been advertised externally, an exception to “external by default” is applied automatically which allows you to fill the role temporarily, for a maximum of 6 months, via an expression of interest process whilst the recruitment process to fill the role permanently is run.
2. An exception to “external by default” is applied automatically to requests for a role to be filled temporarily to cover short-term periods of absence fill (e.g., parental leave, short-term sickness, and other short-term absences), where there is no permanent role to be filled, up to a maximum of 9 months.

Please note, however, that these types of requests will still require Permanent Secretary approval. Therefore, vacancy holders must still ensure any temporary recruitment goes through the usual approval process.

DSIT SCS Resourcing Approvals Process

