

PRACTITIONER GUIDANCE ON THE 2026-27 SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE PAY FRAMEWORK

Purpose of this guidance

1. This guidance sets out the Senior Civil Service (SCS) pay framework and award for 2026-27.
2. It is a cornerstone of the centrally managed approach to the SCS. SCS pay is set centrally. SCS pay is determined on an annual cycle through the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB), an independent pay review body advising the Government.
3. This guidance follows the Government's response to the recommendations in the SSRB's Forty-Eighth Report and its recommendations for 2026-27.

Executive summary

4. Departments should follow this guidance in making awards to ensure consistent application across the SCS in line with the Government's decisions in response to the SSRB's recommendations. The Government's response to the SSRB this year provides a first step in reforming the SCS pay framework, by addressing structural pay challenges, and incentivising and rewarding high performance and delivery.
5. This SCS pay award for 2026-27 is as follows:
 - a. *All members of the SCS should receive a 2.5 per cent consolidated increase to base pay from 1 April 2026.*
 - b. *Setting the following pay ranges from 1 April 2026, based on increases to the minima and the maxima:*
 - i. *SCS Pay Band 1: £86,000 - £117,800 (an increase of £5,000 to the pay band minimum).*
 - ii. *SCS Pay Band 2: £105,000 - £162,500 (an increase of £5,000 to the pay band minimum) .*
 - iii. *SCS Pay Band 3: £135,000 - £208,100 (an increase of £5,000 to the pay band minimum).*
 - c. *1 per cent of the total SCS pay bill is allocated for the introduction of performance-based pay progression for the SCS from 1 April 2026.*
 - d. *The pay award follows the Government's acceptance, in part, to the SSRB's recommendation.*
6. Departments should ensure that the award is applied in the following order to members of the SCS, when applicable:
 - a. *Uplifts to the pay band minima (if applicable)*

- b. Consolidated base pay increase
 - c. Performance-related progression payment (if applicable)
7. The SSRB has not recommended an anomalies pot for the 2026-27 pay year.
 8. Departments are expected to pay the full award as soon as their payroll systems allow. It is the SSRB's expectation that departments should not delay the SCS award while waiting for other pay awards to be paid.
 9. Fuller details on the performance-related progression payment can be found in Section 1, paragraphs 8 - 18.
 10. Departments should also note that new changes have been made to the application of in-year non-consolidated performance based awards Section 2.
 11. In light of the new elements to this year's pay award, supplementary guidance is available to Pay Practitioners that further sets out the changes to the SCS pay award.
 12. If, exceptionally, departments wish to consider any departure from the approach set out above, this must be discussed and agreed in advance with the SCS Reward team in Civil Service Pay, Policy and Pensions in the Cabinet Office.
 13. Permanent Secretary pay is subject to the further consideration of the Permanent Secretary Remuneration Committee and any agreed changes will be communicated separately to departments in due course.
 14. End of year performance bonus awards for Director Generals payable for the 2025/26 performance year will be confirmed by the Senior Talent Committee by the end of June 2026 (see Section 2).

SECTION 1: PAY AWARD 2026/27

Revised SCS pay ranges with effect from 1 April 2026

1. Departments are required to implement the new SCS pay ranges detailed below. Employees whose current pay falls below the new minima must be adjusted to the minima:

Pay Band	Minimum (£)	Maximum (£)
1	£86,000	£117,800
1A*	£86,000	£128,900
2	£105,000	£162,500
3	£135,000	£208,100

Consolidated base pay awards

2. Departments should give all eligible¹ members of the SCS a consolidated pay increase of 2.5 per cent of their base pay from 1 April 2026.
3. In accordance with the SSRB's recommendations this year, the consolidated increase must be applied after the pay of SCS members has been uplifted to the revised pay band minimum.
4. Should the consolidated pay increase of 2.5 per cent exceed the pay range maximum, the excess of the award above the pay range maximum should be paid as a one-off, non-consolidated, non-pensionable lump sum payment.
5. Consolidated pay awards must not be paid to any member of the SCS who is subject to formal poor performance procedures and who is paid above the minimum. Where such individuals are paid below the new minimum, their pay should be uplifted to the minimum of the pay range.
6. Awards must be backdated to the start of the SCS pay year: 1 April 2026.
7. As usual in the next round of evidence, we will ask departments for information on how the pay award has been implemented in line with this guidance. We will be formally commissioning this information later this year. The SSRB has consistently

¹ Eligible members are those employees in an SCS post on or before 31 March 2026. All SCS staff employed in post on or after 1 April 2026 paid below the revised pay band minimum will receive the uplift to the new pay band minima. Where civil servants have been promoted into the SCS on or after 1 April 2025, but before the date from which their relevant departmental delegated pay award for is effective (the settlement date), departments may apply salary adjustments in circumstances where individuals who are promoted in this period would otherwise have not been subject to an annual pay review.

looked closely at the evidence on how the awards have been made by departments against the advice set out in its Report and recommendations and it will continue to do so.

Performance-Based Pay Progression

8. Departments should apply the following uplifts to eligible members based on their 2025-26 end of year performance rating and position in the pay range:

Performance Rating	Progression Threshold (75% of the new pay range)	Uplift <u>at or Below</u> Progression Threshold	Uplift <u>Above</u> Progression Threshold
SCS 1			
Achieving	£109,850	£1,000	£750
High Performing		£2,000	£1,500
Exceeding		£3,000	£2,250
SCS 2			
Achieving	£148,125	£1,500	£1,250
High Performing		£2,500	£2,000
Exceeding		£3,500	£2,750
SCS 3			
Achieving	£189,825	£2,000	£1,750
High Performing		£3,000	£2,500
Exceeding		£4,000	£3,250

Eligibility

9. The performance-based progression payment is payable for all permanent and temporary individuals (employed on SCS contracts and pay ranges) from 1 April 2026, whose performance for the 2025-26 SCS performance year has been moderated as Exceeding, High Performing or Achieving.
10. These payments are to greater reward high performance and delivery. Therefore individuals who are marked below 'Achieving' are not eligible for performance-based progression payments.
11. Individuals who do not have an end of year rating, for example, new starters, are not eligible for the progression payments.
12. Where an individual has moved departments but holds a 2025-26 end of year performance rating at their former organisation, they are eligible for the progression payment.

Application of policy

13. Payments should be applied to SCS1 to SCS3 after uplifts to the minima and basic consolidated uplifts have been made. This is the **reference salary** to determine whether the pay position is below, or above the progression threshold.
14. The progression award is consolidated up to the pay band maxima, and any excess above the maxima is **not** payable as a non-consolidated payment.
15. Performance-based progression payments are consolidated. The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and there should be no expectation that it is a permanent measure.
16. Departments should use 2025-26 end of year performance rating and position in pay range to determine the value of payments. It is the SSRB's firm expectation that departments make awards, in full, as soon as possible, without delay. Where departments have delays in finalising 2025-26 performance management markings, they should contact the Cabinet Office immediately and prepare interim arrangements to ensure the remainder of the pay award is paid whilst performance management markings are being finalised.
17. Departments should avoid circumstances where the application of the progression payments would result in an individual below the progression threshold leapfrogging individuals above the progression threshold, if they are assessed at the same performance marking. To address this, the pay for the individual below the progression threshold should be capped at the same rate of the individuals above the progression threshold.
18. The 2026-27 SCS Performance Management Framework and Managing Poor Performance guidance can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/senior-civil-service-performance-management>.

SECTION 2: NON-CONSOLIDATED PERFORMANCE-RELATED PAY (NCPRP)

General Principles

1. There must be a close and effective link between pay and performance, with the highest performers receiving the highest awards.
2. Higher in-year awards should be commensurate with achievement, based on specific and meaningful performance measures.
3. Members of the SCS subject to formal poor performance measures are not eligible for non-consolidated performance related awards.
4. Funding for all non-consolidated performance related pay continues to be capped at 3.3 per cent of SCS pay bill. This funding cannot be carried over to increase the pot for future performance years or used for any other purposes.
5. Non-consolidated performance awards are subject to transparency requirements, with spend published as part of the current annual aggregated disclosure by departments.

End-Year Awards

6. Departments must pay an end-of-year NCPRP award to those rated *Exceeded* as part of their performance management processes. In addition, departments are strongly advised to consider how they recognise those rated as *High Performing* with some level of end-of-year NCPRP award. All members of the SCS may be considered for an in-year award, unless they are subject to formal poor performance measures. End-of-year NCPRP must not be paid to individuals in the *Achieved* or *Partially Met* performance group, but they are eligible to be considered for in-year awards, subject to Section 2, paragraph 3.
7. To improve the consistency of the application of end of year performance bonuses awards for **Directors General**. The rates payable for the 2025/26 performance year will be confirmed by the Senior Talent Committee by the end of June 2026.
8. No amounts have been set for members of the SCS below Director General.

In-Year and Delivery Awards

9. Higher in-year awards should be commensurate with achievement, based on specific and meaningful performance measures.
10. The maximum individual in-year award has been increased from £5,000 to £10,000. This is to improve the link between pay and high performance. Higher awards should be used exceptionally to provide instant recognition to those members of the SCS delivering government priorities, demonstrating innovation and for going above and beyond. It is expected that this will result in larger in-year awards for the highest performers and fewer for members of the SCS delivering business as usual.

11. An individual can receive more than one award, but the total value of awards for a single performance year should not exceed £25,000 unless the approval from the Chief Secretary to the Treasury is sought.
12. Departments must be transparent regarding their reward systems and processes. For 2026-27, departments will be required to provide quarterly returns on how they are using in-year awards.

Role of Pay Committees

13. Departments' SCS Pay Committees play an important role in overseeing and directing the operation of SCS pay and performance frameworks. Each department's Executive Committee often performs this role although departments are free to operate alternative approaches provided the Accounting Officer remains responsible overall. It is for Pay Committees, in light of line managers' pay recommendations, to:
 - a. **make and communicate judgements** about individuals' performance and delivery, their competence, job challenge and sustained performance over time. Pay committees should take account of the salary position in the pay range and recent pay history as well as any market intelligence on professional or specialist skills and relativities across the Department and the wider SCS;
 - b. **monitor results** to ensure compliance with diversity legislation and take any appropriate action; and
 - c. **oversee the distribution** of performance groups to ensure that they meet the requirements of your Departmental SCS pay strategy and the Cabinet Office guidance on performance management for the SCS.

Pivotal Role Allowance

14. Departments have delegated authority to use Pivotal Role Allowances (PRA) to help retain experienced members of their SCS at Pay Band 1 and 2 level in highly specialised roles, those delivering the riskiest major projects across government and other priorities. The current guidance and pro-forma are set out in [Annex A](#). Departments are encouraged to use PRAs to address flight risk where outcomes can be easily measured. PRAs at Pay Band 3 level will require the approval of the Cabinet Secretary.

Other allowances

15. Departments must consult the Cabinet Office before they implement any changes to any other permissible allowances e.g. Private Secretary allowance.

Other SCS pay flexibilities

16. The limited and exceptional flexibilities introduced previously have been retained for 2026-2027 and can be found at [Annex B](#):

- a. converting non-consolidated funding into consolidated pay; and
- b. the timing of NCPRP awards for top performers.

SECTION 4: PAY CONTROLS

1. The Treasury Senior Pay Control is currently set at above £174,000. The guidance can be found here:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682643/Guidance_for_approval_of_senior_pay.pdf
2. Departments must secure the approval of the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (CST) for any remuneration above £174,000, before advertising, unless it qualifies for an exception as defined in the guidance. The Treasury has delegated approvals for the centrally managed SCS workforce to the Civil Service Chief Operating Officer provided they are within the established SCS pay framework. As indicated in Section 2, any performance pay arrangements with an annual value of more than £25,000 require the approval of the CST. You should aggregate in-year and end-year payments for the same performance year to determine whether the control threshold is triggered.
3. Departments must seek approval from the SCS Reward Team in Government People Group (GPG) where it is proposed to pay a salary for an SCS1 member of staff that is above the maximum of the SCS1 pay range of £117,800, or for SCS2 members above the maximum of £162,500 up to the new control threshold of £174,000.
4. The current pay controls are set out in **Annex C**. Departments should discuss with the [Civil Service Pay and Reward Team](#) in the Cabinet Office any cases where there is doubt about the application of the Treasury's guidance.

SECTION 5: NON-STANDARD TERMS

1. Please discuss in advance with the Cabinet Office any proposals to offer non-standard terms that may raise issues of propriety and controversy (e.g. benefits in kind).

Pay Band 1A

2. Long standing policy is that departments must not recruit into Pay Band 1A, since there is enough flexibility in the SCS pay system to recruit into Pay Bands 1 and 2. While departments should not recruit into Pay Band 1A, existing SCS in this Pay Band are unaffected and departments will be able to make pay awards in the same way as for other SCS.
3. Departments are asked to ensure that SCS are correctly recorded as 1As when returns are made to the Cabinet Office Analysis and Insight team as part of the annual collection exercise for the SCS database.

Pay on appointment/promotion

4. Departments should apply the following SCS pay policies consistently for SCS staff:
 - a. That no increase is given for moves on level transfer; and
 - b. On promotion, SCS receive no more than 10% increase or the minimum of the new grade.
5. An exception process is available in cases where internal candidates are moving to roles with significantly greater scale or responsibility so that increases can be considered, with the agreement of the Permanent Secretary and the relevant Head of Profession. More detail on the process is set out in **Annex D**.
6. The Cabinet Office will closely monitor use of this flexibility as part of the SSRB evidence gathering process, so please ensure that all exceptions are carried out against these criteria and recorded in the business case pro-forma provided.
7. All Pay Band 3 business cases need further approval by the Cabinet Secretary after the approvals set out in paragraph 5 above have been secured. Pay Band 3 cases should be sent to the [Civil Service Pay and Reward team](#) to process with the Cabinet Secretary.

Exit information

8. Exit data is vitally important in understanding why senior staff leave the Civil Service. The Civil Service Pay and Reward Team commissions this data four times a year.
9. HR Directors are personally accountable for ensuring exit interviews are properly conducted and timely returns made to the Cabinet Office and the appropriate forms are submitted. Exit interviews should be undertaken by a HR Director within

the department. If this is not possible, HR Directors may choose to nominate another suitable colleague within a department's HR function.

Senior executives in NDPBs

10. Senior NDPB executives are not members of the SCS and not in scope of SSRB's remit. Nevertheless, they have an important leadership role in following public sector pay policy. Any annual pay increase or decision to award performance-related pay to such staff should be considered alongside and according to the same general principles that apply to SCS in the rest of the organisation. Sponsor departments are accountable for enforcing this.

Statutory Office Holders

11. From 1 April 2026, the salaries of statutory office holders whose pay is directly linked to movements in the SCS pay bands will increase by 2.5 per cent.

Cabinet Office support

12. For any outstanding queries on SCS pay, SCS performance management and exit interview information, please contact the [Civil Service Pay and Reward Team](#).

Annex A - Guide on the Control Process for Pivotal Role Allowance

Background

- Departments have delegated authority to use Pivotal Role Allowances (PRAs) to retain experienced members of their SCS at Deputy Director and Director level in highly specialised roles, those delivering the riskiest major projects and other government priorities.
- PRAs for Director General (DG) roles will require the approval of the Cabinet Secretary.
- The non-consolidated allowance is removable and non-pensionable.
- The cost limit is set at 0.5% of the organisation's total SCS pay bill.
- The allowance relates to the role, not the individual. The allowance should be removed when the recipient leaves the role or the role is no longer business critical to the organisation.
- Departments' use of PRA is subject to quarterly reporting requirements by the Civil Service Pay and Reward Team in the Cabinet Office. GPG will write to departments to commission this data at the end of each quarter.

Qualifying criteria

- Any proposal to pay a PRA must meet four qualifying criteria:
 - a. The role is critical to delivering the strategic goals of the organisation.
 - b. There will be a disproportionately large impact on the business if left unfilled.
 - c. The role requires specific skills that are not readily available in the Civil Service.
 - d. There is a genuine flight risk.

Key conditions

- PRAs are a retention tool to retain skills and experience in key roles. They should not be used as an attraction measure or incentive for new staff.
- The outstanding balance of all departmental PRAs in payment should not exceed a cost limit of 0.5% of the organisation's total SCS pay bill. Departments must consult GPG where it needs to exceed this cost limit e.g. where its SCS workforce numbers are small and the PRA pot would not result in any meaningful payments; or where within the previous system this threshold has already been exceeded such that no further payments could be made.
- A flight risk must be demonstrated (evidence that the incumbent is looking for a new role or being headhunted etc.).
- PRAs must be linked to clearly defined and easily understood outcomes, supported by specific, measurable and meaningful milestones. These must be set out in the business case for internal approval.

- Payment should be in instalments and tied explicitly to achievement of milestones that will support outcomes. Equal payments paid with salary should not be agreed.
- The Accounting Officer is responsible for assessing and authorising payment.
- For specialist roles, cross-government Heads of Professions (HoPs) should be consulted first. The role of the HoP in this process is to provide both technical and profession specific insights on the role in terms of its responsibilities, scope and technical capabilities; which is considered alongside the flight risk and the business impact of the incumbent leaving.
- There is no cap on the level of PRAs, but they must be set at a level that is proportionate to timescales and reasonably reflects the business criticality of the role and the marketability of the skills being retained.
- Departments should use the pro-forma below for internal consideration to ensure consistent decision making and to maintain audit trails.
- PRAs for DGs require the approval of the Cabinet Secretary.

Monitoring

- Accounting Officers must ensure that the milestones against which payment will be assessed can be properly measured.
- Departments must review the PRA every six months to ensure that the role remains business critical to the organisation and to ensure that outcomes and milestones are up to date.
- Departments must report to the Civil Service Pay and Reward Team the PRAs in payment every quarter. The Civil Service Pay and Reward Team will commission this separately.

Process

- The approval process operates as follows:
 - a. The business unit identifies a role that meets all four eligibility criteria and develops a business case using the standard pro-forma below.
 - b. The business unit gains approval of the HR department and the Accounting Officer.
 - c. For specialist skills, the cross-government Heads of Professions should also be consulted (particularly project management, commercial, digital and finance roles).
 - d. For PRAs agreed, departments should report to the Civil Service Pay and Reward Team every quarter.

PRO-FORMA FOR APPLICATION FOR PIVOTAL ROLE ALLOWANCE

<p>Title of role</p>	
<p>Employing department</p>	
<p>Brief Description of the role.</p>	
<p>Profession of role</p>	
<p>Please describe how each of the eligibility criterion has been met</p>	<p><i>How the role is critical to delivering the strategic goals of the organisation</i></p>
	<p><i>The impact on the business if the role is left unfilled.</i></p>
	<p><i>The specific skills for this role that are not readily available in the Civil Service.</i></p>
	<p><i>The flight risk for this role (evidence that the incumbent is looking for a new role or being headhunted etc).</i></p>
<p>Level of allowance being sought and supporting justification, including market evidence</p>	
<p>Please provide details of the remuneration package currently received by the incumbent (including base salary, performance pay opportunity and any</p>	

other benefits/allowances)	
Please define clearly the outcome this PRA is intended to achieve.	
Please set out each instalment of the PRA against each milestone that must be achieved.	
Please describe how you will monitor performance against the outcomes/milestones and who will be accountable for this.	
For specialist roles, please confirm whether the cross- government Head of Profession is supporting	
Name of Accounting Officer supporting this application	
Name and post of person submitting this application	
Contact telephone and email	
Date of application	

Annex B - Additional SCS pay flexibilities

Converting non-consolidated funding into consolidated pay

The Cabinet Office and HM Treasury will consider, on an exceptional basis, requests from departments for the flexibility to address specific recruitment and retention pressures and other pay anomalies by re-allocating some limited funding within their overall SCS paybill.

Departments wishing to convert part of their non-consolidated pot to address recruitment and retention pressures are required to submit a business case to the Cabinet Office. This should meet all three of the following eligibility criteria:

- The roles should be business critical.
- Current pay should be below the median for the whole SCS population at the relevant pay band.
- Subject to performance of individuals.

The flexibility is also available to address equal pay liabilities where these can be fully evidenced and supported by legal advice.

Conversion is limited to a maximum of 0.5% of the 3.3% performance pay pot available. Any agreed conversion permanently reduces the NCPRP pot. Departments must be satisfied that the proposed reduction in the pot will not jeopardise the operation and effectiveness of their performance-related pay arrangements.

HM Treasury will be consulted on all cases and will want to consider the relative pay position of applicant departments compared to other departments. But that does not rule out higher paying departments if the eligibility criteria are met.

Departments should support their business case with the following information and data:

- Details of the recruitment or retention pressure to be addressed and details of the business critical area(s) involved.
- The number and nature of posts involved; existing and proposed pay rates and the level of adjustments involved; the proposed reduction in the PRP pot; and the cost to the consolidated pay bill including on-costs (employer pension contributions and ERNICS).
- The amount of the existing NCPRP pot calculated as a percentage of the current SCS paybill.
- Demonstrate how the pay award is already being targeted to reflect position in pay range and performance, and to address any other anomalies.

The timing of NCPRP awards for top performers

To strengthen the link between key achievements and reward, departments are able to stage NCPRP awards to top performers so that some payments can be made at the mid-year point or held over to other points to be determined. This is particularly relevant to project work with key milestones. This will be for departments to manage within the existing framework for NCPRP. If you would like to discuss how this flexibility might operate within your department, please contact the Cabinet Office.

Annex C - Salary controls for SCS

Level	Approval by Department (All appointments above former CO reference points to be signed-off by Accounting Officer)	Approval by Government People Group, Cabinet Office (All requests for approval to be made <u>before</u> hiring process commences)	Approval by the Civil Service Chief Operating Officer (All requests for approval to be made <u>before</u> hiring process commences)	Approval by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (All requests for approval to be made <u>before</u> hiring process commences)
Deputy Director Pay Band 1	Salary up to £117,800pa (salaries above £104,000 to be approved by Accounting Officer)	Salary above £117,800pa - £174,000	See next column	For Pay Band 1 and 2 roles, any remuneration in excess of £174,000pa as defined in the Treasury guidance For Pay Band 3, any remuneration in excess of £208,100pa as defined in the Treasury guidance
Director Pay Band 2	Salary up to £162,500pa (salaries above £139,000 to be approved by Accounting Officer)	Salary above £162,500 pa - £174,000	See next column	
Director General Pay Band 3	Salary up to £174,000pa (salaries above £162,000 to be approved by Accounting Officer)	See next column	Salary above £174,000pa - £208,100	
Permanent Secretary	Permanent Secretary pay is set centrally, based on the weight and complexity of the role. The Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service decides which tier each role sits in. The CST signs off all cases that exceed the maximum of the overall Permanent Secretary pay range.			

Annex D - SCS Pay: Exceptions Process Guidance

Policy

Since 2018-19, the following rules for movement into and around the SCS have been in place:

- No pay increases for moves within the SCS on level transfer; and
- On promotion to the SCS or to a higher SCS grade, SCS will receive no more than a 10% salary increase or the minimum of the new grade.

The aims are to:

- Tackle inconsistency of current approaches, which result in unequal outcomes for those moving into and around the SCS;
- Balance incentives for both breadth and depth of experience, encouraging SCS to build capability by remaining in post for longer; and
- Make more efficient use of existing funding, releasing savings to fund structural reform.

An exceptions process exists to enable flexibility in cases where internal candidates move to roles with greater scale or responsibility. This will require agreement from the **Permanent Secretary** and relevant **Head of Profession** and evidence should be given, including against both of the following criteria:

- Sustained high performance, increased effectiveness, deepened capability and expertise; and
- That the individual is relatively low in the pay range and/or have benefited less or not at all from the rise in the minima.

Departments must also consider the equality impact of any decisions made on exceptions, as well as any precedents they might be setting.

There is no limit on the number of exceptions that can be approved, but Cabinet Office will collate the number of exceptions made each year to feed into Senior Salary Review Body evidence. Although there is no centrally imposed limit on the number of exceptions, it is expected that they will make up only a small minority of cases.

Process:

- Resourcing leads and hiring managers identify that an exception is likely to be required and engage with the departmental HR Director and Head of Profession at the earliest opportunity.

- Resourcing leads and hiring managers develop a business case **using the standard pro-forma below** for the exception which:
 - a. demonstrates efforts to appoint in line with standard rules;
 - b. outlines costs and affordability; and
 - c. justifies the exception against central criteria.
- Once any departmental governance processes have been followed, the case should be submitted to the cross Civil Service Head of Profession for sign-off and any additional comments or endorsement.
- For Directors and Deputy Directors, the case should be finally submitted to the departmental Permanent Secretary (or equivalent).
- All Director General (Pay Band 3) business cases need approval by a Directors General Remuneration Committee and should be sent to the [Civil Service Pay and Reward team](#).

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **Who are the Heads of Professions (HoP)?**

You should initially contact your departmental heads of professions, who will be able to refer you to the cross-government Head of Profession. If you have any issues, then please contact: hrpolicy.gpg@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

- **Often an SCS role can overlap with more than one profession - which Head of Profession should sign off on an exception?**

The vacancy holder should make a decision as to whether the role has a clear anchor in one profession, and subsequently that Head of Profession will be approached for approval alongside the Permanent Secretary. However, if there isn't a clear anchor, more than one Head of Profession may be consulted for approval and joint agreement should be sought.

- **In some cases the Head of Profession is also the Permanent Secretary - who should be the second signatory in this case?**

In this instance, we would expect the Permanent Secretary to suggest an appropriate and independent alternative, to provide the dual-key approval.

- **Some Heads of Profession have significantly larger SCS workforces without corresponding support teams. How will we be able to process exceptions?**

Exceptions should be very few in number and should therefore not generate too much work. When defining their exceptions criteria Head of Profession should consider whether departmental heads of profession can provide initial sign-off to help with the administration of the process.

- **What if an exception is sought for a cross Civil Service Head of Profession role?**

In this instance, the Civil Service Chief Operating Officer, should be approached for approval alongside the relevant Permanent Secretary.

- **How do we know what has been delegated to department HoP and what hasn't?**

By its nature the exceptions process, and therefore the involvement of the HoP in reward decisions should be rare. However, as with all SCS recruitment, it is advised that you have early engagement with your departmental HoPs, before engaging in the recruitment process in order to ensure activity aligns to wider capability development plans. In the event that exceptional pay flexibility is required the departmental HoPs will be able to advise on the arrangements that have been agreed with the cross-government HoPs.

- **What happens when disagreement occurs?**

The exception process is designed to be a mutually agreed decision between the HoP and the Permanent Secretary/Accounting Officer for the benefit of the department.

We would anticipate that there may be a healthy level of challenge to decisions, to ensure that it is in line with the business needs of the departments and that all decisions are sufficiently robust to stand up to scrutiny. If disagreements do arise, the Permanent Secretary/Accounting Officer would make the final decision, but parties should try to reach agreement, to avoid the situation occurring.

If the case is a role at Director General level, approval is sought from the HoPs and the Permanent Secretary, then the Cabinet Secretary for final sign off.

- **Should the HoP be advising based on market rates of pay for these roles?**

The exception process exists to enable flexibility in cases where internal candidates move to roles with greater scale or responsibility. Therefore, market rates for these roles is less likely to be a determining factor although HoPs are expected to have some insight into market pressures on their profession as part of the broader design of SCS pay going forward.

The role of the HoP in this process is to provide both technical and profession specific insights on the role in terms of its responsibilities, scope and technical capabilities; which is considered alongside the individual's capability. Ultimately the HoP is responsible for deciding, alongside the accounting officer, whether an increase in salary is justified and reflective of the role's requirements.

With regard to advice about market rates of pay for the role, we expect that departments may also engage with the professions to help inform issues such as

appropriate rates of pay. The median Civil Service pay by profession is a helpful guide that has been made available to Heads of Professions, however, it is not expected that departments should be aiming to or able to pay the median or the market rate, as they should be considering other factors such as experience, skills and the job weight, alongside equality impact and affordability in their decision.

Pro-forma for SCS Pay Exception Approval

*An exception case requires agreement from the **Permanent Secretary** and relevant **Head of Profession** against both of the following criteria:*

- *sustained high performance, increased effectiveness, deepened capability and expertise; and*
- *that the individual is relatively low in the pay range and/or have benefited less or not at all from the rise in the minima.*

For cases relating to Director General roles, further approval is needed by the Cabinet Secretary.

1. Department

2. Department Contact Details

Name:
Phone:
Email:

3. Title of Role, Role Description, the Advertised rate, Current Salary and Proposed Salary

4. Why is this exception required and how does it meet both of the listed criteria?

1. *Sustained high performance, increased effectiveness, deepened capability and expertise; and*

2. *That the individual is relatively low in the pay range and/or has benefited less or not at all from the rise in the minima.*

5. Head of Cross-Government Profession Approval

Signature:
Comments:

6. Permanent Secretary Approval

Signature:
Comments: