

How to Best Attract, Induct and Retain Talent recruited into the Senior Civil Service

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Foreword

The Civil Service must recruit, develop and retain the best civil servants if it is to meet the operational and delivery challenges of the 21st century. It needs to continue to build capability and has been clear on the need to use external recruitment to fill critical skills gaps. In addition, the Reform Plan is committed to making it easier for staff to move between the Civil Service and the private sector. It is crucial, therefore, that the Civil Service makes the most of the external talent it attracts – and that people entering the Senior Civil Service (SCS) from external organisations are able to fulfil their potential.

Overall, the senior Civil Service is an interesting and exciting place to work, with many high calibre, highly motivated people wanting to do important meaningful jobs for the country. Many comment on the fact that it is a “bigger game in Government” with “tremendous scope to operate – way more than the private sector”. People commented on the intellectual strength of people at the top of the Civil Service: “the intellectual horsepower of the SCS will meet, and beat, any private sector company”. The breadth of Civil Service roles and the opportunity to move laterally compare favourably to the private sector. The SCS is an equal opportunities employer with strong levels of female participation in senior roles. This, too, compares well with the private sector and other areas of the public sector.

These are considerable strengths. However, many feel that these positives at some point become outweighed by organisational and cultural frustrations, plus financial considerations, and they feel they have to leave. Some comment on the difficulties of assimilation from outside, with previous experience not taken into account or utilised effectively. There are specific retention issues for people who have been brought in to lead change, and who feel frustrated by not being able to deliver the change they were hired to make. There are many comments made on the physical, mental and emotional effort of trying to bring change to a resistant culture. Weighing up this lack of progress and achievement, while working for below market pay, all acts as a driver to leaving.

Based on interviews, focus groups and surveys, this report gives an overview of the key issues that external hires face when joining the senior levels of the Civil Service. It focuses on their recruitment and induction, as well as their experiences of working in Whitehall. I have picked up key themes but have allowed – as far as possible – the quotes to speak for themselves.

The report then outlines best practice from external organisations – businesses which have sought to attract, recruit and retain talent effectively. It considers how the Civil Service can learn from these organisations about the recruitment and integration of external candidates.

The final section contains a number of recommendations. These draw on the conclusions of the research and best practice to ensure the Civil Service can get the most out the new expertise, insight and experience people entering the Civil Service may have to offer. This will have critical personal benefits for the individuals involved, as well as important financial and reputational benefits to the Civil Service as a whole.

I am grateful for the time, access and support given to me by many people across the Civil Service. I have received a lot of input but the conclusions and recommendations are obviously my own.

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Chapter 1

Methodology and Background

- 1.1 For the purposes of this report, external hires are defined as members of the Senior Civil Service (SCS) who were not civil servants immediately prior to their original recruitment to the SCS, and internal hires as the opposite: members of the SCS who were civil servants prior to their entry to senior levels.
- 1.2 There are limitations. Data held on external hires is patchy. There is no central database to tell us who external hires are, nor where they have come from. The Civil Service does not currently hold exit interviews as the norm. The one-to-one interviews conducted as part of this research report uncovered a number of concerns – and positives – raised consistently by external hires who had left, or were about to leave, the Civil Service. Exit interviews would give a fuller account of the reasons people may have for leaving a role. Two of the report's recommendations seek to rectify these limitations.
- 1.3 However, what we do know from the data available is that the number of resignations from the Senior Civil Service is at its highest level since 2005/6. People hired externally are contributing disproportionately to this.
- 1.4 Resignation rates¹ are higher for external hires (7.6%) than internal people (2.6%)² and, while external hires make up just under one-quarter of the Senior Civil Service (24%), they account for almost half of the resignations (46%). Resignation rates increase at more senior levels: external Top 200 members have the highest resignation rates (13.7%) compared to 10.8% for Directors and 5.5% for Deputy Directors³.
- 1.5 The reason behind the resignation rates is not just simply due to low performers moving out: external top performers have a higher resignation rate than low performing external colleagues (5.3% against 4.2%)⁴.
- 1.6 Other Civil Service sources also indicate there is a problem: the 2013 People Survey shows that engagement scores for external hires are significantly lower

¹ Resignation rate uses the leaver reason 'resignation' to calculate the rate. This would not include where an FTA has come to an end as this would be 'end of contract'. However, it would do so if the individual resigns before the end of their contract as this is still a resignation.

² See Table 1

³ See Table 3

⁴ See table 2. It should be noted that this is based on a very small sample size.

than those of internal hires (63% compared to 73%)⁵. Compared to their internal counterparts, they are also much more likely to have lower employee engagement scores on learning and development, and leadership and management of change (52 to 72% on the first, and 52% to 71% on the latter).

- 1.7 But while the data tells part of the story, it is difficult to conclude much from this alone. In the absence of a comprehensive set of exit interviews, the findings are based on a set of interviews and focus groups, as well as survey responses [Annex D details the methodology].

⁵ Using the people survey we define external hires as people who are at SCS grade and report that they have been in the Civil Service three years or less.

Chapter 2

Key Findings

a) Culture

- 2.1 The Civil Service has a strong culture, much as you would expect from a large, complex, successful and longstanding organisation. This culture comes with its own language, ways of working and behavioural norms. Some of this is both helpful and healthy. Civil servants speak of their pride in the value of the work that is done for citizens. Focus groups with Deputy Directors reported the sense of purpose, mission and challenge of Civil Service roles as particular strengths. There was also praise for the breadth and diversity, with “old hands, high flyers, bright young things, new media types, policy gurus, hands-on deliverers... and this is a real strength”.
- 2.2 But there were also serious concerns about the culture. The main criticisms were:
- Resistance to change and a closed mentality.
 - Lack of value on operational delivery.
 - Process rather than outcome driven.
 - Too hierarchical.
- 2.3 The Civil Service’s resistance to change came up numerous times - sometimes the cultures are “so powerful that people don’t realise they are there, as it’s inconceivable to them that there is another way”. One of the consequences is an unwillingness to learn new ways of doing things, or to harness the experience that external hires bring to the organisation: “[The Civil Service] assumes it’s the Rolls Royce and has a monopolistic behaviour and attitude, so that external experience and insight is not jumped on to develop a competitive edge.”
- 2.4 New entrants can find the culture closed, resembling “a club you cannot join - a little like Lord’s Cricket Club”, and difficult to navigate, such that “very good people get lost, even a bit pushed out, as they don’t speak the language and don’t get the nuances”. Comments from long-serving civil servants reinforce this: “[new recruits must] thrive on ambiguity” and “the key is how they are operating”. At times it was felt that the “Civil Service can be very polite and engaging whilst not making any attempt to understand or help you and may actively work against you”.

- 2.5 Ultimately, there is a sense that, rather than embrace different skills and styles, the Civil Service works to bring people into line, a place where “people will talk positively about bringing in external expertise, but then do everything in their power to kill fresh thinking”. In fact “all the expectations are that new people have to adopt the existing culture, this reflects a lack of interest and complacency that the Civil Service cannot learn from others except for specific skills”, rather than “exploit the differences in approach that were the key reason for making an external appointment”. One person commented that the Civil Service “brings people in to effect change and then punishes them for doing so” while another questioned “if people only survive by assimilating, how do we get their value?” Where people were unable, or unwilling to assimilate, the alternative was clear: “there comes a point where your head hurts from banging it so often against the brick wall and you realise that life can be easier and more rewarding elsewhere”.
- 2.6 Most worryingly, there were various descriptions of the Civil Service culture as a “bear pit”, “snake pit”, “bullying and macho culture”, “uncollaborative, poisonous environment” and “an elite club that you are unable to join” where “the culture hides behind the CS Code and uses impartiality to exert control and ensure people are members of the Club”. This “culture of competitive individualism” – where people compete for favour and attention - is in part bred by the complexity of the organisational structure. There was a strong sense that “people are frustrated they don’t have the levers they are used to” and that “the operating environment is too exhausting so [external people] retreat to what they can control, which leads to multiple fiefdoms”.
- 2.7 It was felt that the Civil Service failed to value operational delivery and specialist expertise: “primary problems are in delivery [but] the Civil Service does not respect execution and delivery” and “the culture values strategy over operational detail. Operational delivery is under appreciated”. The Civil Service tends to prefer policy and generalists: “the whole culture and approach appears to be based on the principle of generalism – anybody can do any role if they have a certain set of competencies... this devalues expertise and experience”.
- 2.8 Many new recruits to the Civil Service experienced some level of culture shock. Compared to the private sector the culture was described as not commercial, complicated and bureaucratic (“endless refining of detail that does not matter”). The focus on process is a particular frustration: “compliance with a process is more important than the outcome we are trying to achieve”... “a fascinating place to work with some really good people, but the organisation wastes a huge amount of time on unnecessary process and long-winded briefing papers and business cases which the private sector simply would not tolerate.” The expected public scrutiny means that one has to “follow all the right processes but the patient dies.”

- 2.9 The culture was also described as hierarchical and obstructive: “the culture does not encourage dissenting views so I fear we don’t allow our more junior colleagues to flourish and contribute as much as they might”. Some described a hierarchy between departments, with Treasury officials apparently refusing to meet with peers of similar grades elsewhere. Whilst there were many reports of working in a high performing department with high quality people, issues tended to arise when dealing with other departmental colleagues with differing Ministerial and Permanent Secretary agendas. In particular, there were reports of resistance and negative behaviour in relation to cross departmental change projects when people would agree but then not do anything: “the Civil Service say one thing and do another – it is so ingrained after so many years that they don’t realise they are doing it.”; “The Civil Service can be very polite and engaging whilst not making any attempt to understand you or help you and may actively work against you.”
- 2.10 These views are not shared by all – “there is a huge amount of good will and no bias to those from outside”- but a positive culture is not encouraged by the way civil servants are sometimes portrayed in the press (“it is soul destroying to hear time and time again that all civil servants are useless”) and its response to this type of criticism (“the Civil Service does its best to disengage people through its bureaucratic nonsense, its penny-pinching and its response to the Daily Mail ‘civil servants are lazy and useless’ dog whistle”), failing to defend its record, promote its successes and be bolder about the value and reward a career in the civil service can bring.

b) Recruitment and Selection

- 2.11 There are strict procedures governing Civil Service recruitment. These are designed to protect the important principle of recruitment on merit. But it is clear from interviews and surveys that the current recruitment process as experienced by many is far from perfect, and the opposite of people’s experience in the private sector. In fact, it was viewed as arduous and requiring huge patience (“it was far too long – I was tempted to go off and do other jobs”), while panel interviews were considered impersonal and to lack depth (“[the interview was] dispiriting and weird.. a tick box process that did not acknowledge me as an individual”). The competency based interview was felt to give insufficient focus to what people had done, and did not allow for candidates to get to know the people or the role properly.
- 2.12 This is in stark contrast to people’s experience of the private sector which often involved “adult conversations and some charming. In the Civil Service it felt like they were reluctantly choosing the least worst option”.

- 2.13 As well as failing to focus on people's relevant skills and experiences, the interview process was felt to give too little emphasis on the importance of "influencing and softer skills [essential] to build constituencies of support and navigate the way through". With this in mind, we cannot guarantee that the current system is helping the best talent get through.
- 2.14 While these issues were raised across grades, the problems were most acutely felt at director and deputy-director level. Recruitment at these grades is inconsistent across departments, with variation in the quality of process and criteria used. The focus often tends to be on filling the immediate role rather than creating a pipeline of talent for the future, based on potential. This is in stark contrast to the first-class graduate entry process and it is surprising that less attention is given when recruiting for more senior roles.
- 2.15 If the Civil Service is going to attract and engage external talent, its recruitment and selection procedures need to be overhauled. A more engaging, personal approach based on informal and formal meetings would not cut across the principle of recruitment on merit. But it would do much to ensure the best people are selected, in particular helping to do more to level the playing field between internal and external candidates.

c) Induction

- 2.16 According to the questionnaire, focus groups and interviews, the induction was generally felt to be one of the weakest areas. Criticism varied, from the induction missing absolute basics to not existing at all (with many saying that inductions could be improved "by having one"). Respondents reported arriving at extremely difficult situations, for example being provided with "no desk, no phone, no outer office, current incumbent still in post, no direction". There were also reports of people not given any time to actually undertake an induction, with job pressure and deadlines emerging on day one.
- 2.17 New recruits are also at a disadvantage because they "don't know where the talent is", and are not given the correct support in terms of people to help them at the beginning and those required to help them drive through change.
- 2.18 The result of such poor induction can mean that entrants lack the basic equipment and knowledge to do their job properly. Beyond this, it can also mean they are left in the dark as to where they might fit in a wider management structure, how Government works and how to effect change in a relative complex environment.
- 2.19 An effective induction should also recognise and address the fact that there are a number of cultural challenges in moving from a senior role in a private sector

organisation: notably the shift from taking direction from a single board to a broader Cabinet and federated department structure. These are not easily resolved. But much could be achieved by raising awareness and understanding. Indeed, respondents noted that easing into a new role would be significantly helped through provision of “an honest description of how the Civil Service works and what you need to know... the top things previous hires wished that someone had told them.” The importance of allowing knowledge sharing and experiences of senior people in this context should not be underestimated.

- 2.20 Inductions at Director/Deputy Director level were frequently described as poor, with “no serious attempt at on boarding”. New recruits are faced with unfamiliar language, people, roles, networks and are not given sufficient information, support or follow up: “external hires at D/DD level are given their objectives but no one explains accountability, sensitivities, stakeholders, relationships.” Furthermore, the Civil Service Code is not explained to D/DDs in terms of what it means to them, so that people can be inadvertently caught out in their private life.
- 2.21 The induction process should not be one-sided. To address some of the cultural issues, there is a need for the receiving teams to be properly briefed and understand how they might get the most out of the different experiences and viewpoints the new hire may bring.

d) Talent Management

- 2.22 Feedback on the quality of talent management across the Civil Service was mixed, with people’s experiences varying immensely depending on grade, department, line manager and whether they were regarded as ‘high potential’ or not. While in theory the Civil Service offers the opportunity for broad and varied careers, the process of career development was generally felt to be patchy. In particular, where people are brought in to specialist roles, clear career paths were said to be non-existent. One interviewee noted, “beyond the role there is a void”.
- 2.23 The top talent schemes in the Civil Service are strong, well regarded and continually improving. However, in general it was felt that the Civil Service concentrates on processes, not people, and that little investment was made in discussing the skills and experiences of new recruits to work out career paths that may be of interest. Against the back-drop of the day job, personal development was said to be forgotten.
- 2.24 This lack of central oversight was felt particularly by Directors and Deputy Directors keen to progress and develop, but who were not participants on a high potential talent development scheme. These individuals can be said to

represent the organisation's core expertise and organisational capital, and need to be kept motivated and engaged. This middle '50%' of talent should be 'segmented', and provided with their own targeted interventions to ensure they are not disenfranchised by a focus on developing just the top 25%. In the private sector, this can be done using bonuses, share options and pay increases. Set against the context of a public sector pay freeze, the need for targeted talent management beyond the very top performers becomes even more pressing.

- 2.25 Learning and development programmes would not appear to be geared for those joining the Civil Service from outside. The people survey shows a significant difference between internal and external hires' views of learning and development: just over half (52%) think that the Civil Service learning and development offer is effective, compared to almost three quarters (72%) of internal hires.
- 2.26 There was also criticism of the performance management process. People noted an overall lack of interest in performance management driven by a lack of flexibility to reward strong performance with improved pay and an unwillingness to deal with poor performance quickly and effectively. There were also concerns that opportunities for promotion and progression were opaque, and that decisions on advancement were based on personal rather than objective criteria.

e) Pay

- 2.27 Pay undoubtedly plays an important role in attracting, motivating and retaining talent. The Civil Service unavoidably operates under constraints not felt in the private sector. It goes without saying that being able to offer market salaries could improve the chances of the Civil Service attracting the most suitable talent. However, this is beyond the scope of this project.
- 2.28 Nonetheless, we should record that pay is cited by a number of people as a reason to leave. Regardless of the debate about base pay, the situation is not helped by the inflexibility around pay processes. For example, people cited examples where they were unable to match improved offers of even around 10% pay increases and have lost good, talented people as a result. The pay freeze also means that people tend to have to move roles to improve their pay – both within and outside of the Civil Service.

Chapter 3

Learning from External Best Practice

- 3.1 Major shocks of recent years including, but not limited to the financial crisis and Libor, as well as the resultant loss of public confidence, have led to much corporate soul searching and reinvention. Major companies have recognised the need to change, and to improve and develop leaders who can succeed in a highly scrutinised and competitive environment.
- 3.2 The result is that there are various initiatives and practices existing in the corporate world which the Civil Service could learn from and embrace. In this section, we draw out the key strengths of recruitment and talent management processes across Barclays, BBC Worldwide, BP, and McKinseys. This is intended to give a flavour of the kind of activities private sector companies are performing to make sure they are competing effectively in order to attract and retain the best talent, rather than providing an exhaustive account of any corporate strategy or initiative (which is, or which tends to be, Civil Service practice).
- 3.3 The information about the various companies in this section comes from telephone interviews with their HR departments. It therefore does not represent the full corporate position within the companies, but seeks to give a strong flavour of their practice.

Barclays

- 3.4 The recent corporate difficulties of Barclays are well publicised and well-known. As part of their response, they have sought to move from a loose federation of businesses to a more unified and consistent organisation with robust core HR processes and an attempt to drive distinct culture change. They have sought to “grow the talent for the greater good” by developing leaders across the business with a consistent talent framework and approach.
- 3.5 To ensure consistency of approach to achieve the right values, culture and behaviour, Barclays ensures all recruits, promotions and high potential performers are externally assessed. For new recruits, this assessment forms the basis of their development plan. The company has sought to significantly strengthen its core talent faculty in order that senior external hiring can be undertaken centrally rather than departmentally, as previously was the case.

- 3.6 Finally, they also have a Global Induction Programme that is delivered face to face in the first six weeks of someone starting in a role. New hires are also provided with online material prior to the first day, including a welcome from the CEO, some history of the company, a clear account of the company's values and the company strategy.

BBC Worldwide

- 3.7 BBC Worldwide has recognised the issue of strong candidates joining then moving rapidly out of the organisation. Much like the Civil Service, it is not a leader in pay and so it has focussed attention on the brand and opportunities for career development.
- 3.8 Again, BBC Worldwide run a global induction process, which is consistent across all new hires, spanning the first month. It begins with successful candidates receiving a welcome letter from the CEO as well as a link to a website that contains videos and anecdotes to keep people engaged before they arrive. On the first day, a meet and greet, a welcome video and practical information (such as IT and a building tour) is provided.
- 3.9 At the end of the first month, new hires have a one day induction to understand strategy and the context of their work. This includes exercises on how to plan networks and think broadly across the company. Following this there is a one and a half day induction with the public service company (the BBC) to help new recruits understand the culture and values of the organisation. This session includes group work and case studies, people speaking from their own personal experience and mock broadcast sessions.

BP

- 3.10 BP has invested considerable effort in attempting to become a major "employer of choice". This has involved building a more people focussed branding and giving strong positive messages around diversity and inclusion.
- 3.11 External assessment experts are used to provide in-depth analysis of senior hires, looking at behaviours, values, motivations and potential. The recruitment process is similarly people focussed: informal meetings with relevant leadership teams are used to make sure everything is done to attract, engage and support candidates and these meetings continue once an offer is made.
- 3.12 Prior to starting, new hires are given a single point of contact to ensure effective co-ordination of everything that is required to get people off to a strong start. They are also given access to a new starter portal which provides relevant

corporate information and attempts to set the scene regarding what it is like to work in BP. The portal also includes information on the code of conduct, expected values and behaviours.

- 3.13 All starters join a three day induction session (“Discover BP”) that happens within the first three months of starting. Here, senior speakers give overviews of the business and people. An online portal sits alongside this and has additional information including video clips and messages from the CEO and senior executives.
- 3.14 To make sure the induction process is followed correctly, there is a 90 day checklist with accountability for meeting the requirements resting firmly with the line manager.

McKinsey

- 3.15 McKinsey’s induction is typically viewed as the “best in class”. The majority of McKinsey staff enter the company at graduate or MBA level. A strong induction process helps McKinsey to meet the significant cultural challenges surfacing on the rare occasions they recruit senior hires.
- 3.16 The McKinsey process begins with a month’s induction prior to formally starting the role which provides opportunities for meeting people and understanding the organisation. If senior hires have strong experience in other fields but do not have a business background, they are sent on a mini MBA programme at a faculty of a top business school. This takes around three weeks.
- 3.17 All entrants are given a basic welcome week or orientation and then a week of consultancy readiness practice. Here, new hires work in teams through the life-cycle of a mock project. The training also includes self-awareness and development tools, for example Myers Briggs. The intention is to enable new starters to build a cohort and ready network seen as critical to success.
- 3.18 Most notably, senior hires are expected to start at the bottom, even though they may be entering as Partner. They work two to three months as an Associate, then as a Manager for the same period before starting work as a Partner. To prevent awkwardness or sensitivities they are given experienced managers. This is a long standing practice and regarded as essential to integration. It is felt to be a safe place to start to understand the role properly.
- 3.19 Finally, when people decide to leave they are given support and helped into new roles on the basis that they are likely to become clients of the future. Alumni are invited to a website that features job postings and global events, and this wider network is valued by all.

Chapter 4

Conclusions and Recommendations

- 4.1 The conclusions drawn from interviews, focus groups and surveys demonstrate conflicting views. Many enjoyed their Civil Service roles as meaningful, varied and broad and spoke highly of the intellectual capacity and strength of existing Civil Servants. There was a sense that the workforce is diverse – with strong levels of female participation and good gender balance between roles. Making the most of these strengths is a direct and important challenge the Civil Service needs to meet, particularly given the difficulty it will inevitably face in matching the private sector on pay.
- 4.2 There are clear opportunities for improvement in terms of practical steps the Civil Service could take which would create a significant and almost immediate difference. If the Civil Service is going to continue to meet the demands made of it, responding to ever more complex policy and delivery challenges, it needs to attract and retain the very best – and to ensure that this talent is introduced, managed, motivated and properly promoted.
- 4.3 The conclusions and recommendations focus on improvements to recruitment and selection, induction, talent management and culture. We also set out proposed steps so that progress can be measured and monitored. While these recommendations are primarily focussed on ensuring the success of external hires, the improvements will ultimately benefit all civil servants.

a) Monitoring progress

- 4.4 To ensure progress can be monitored and success effectively measured, the Civil Service should:
- **Establish a central database of external hires**, in order to establish exactly who the external hires are, where they have come from, and what experience they bring into the Civil Service. This will ensure that the Civil Service can draw on the experience, expertise and perspectives they have accrued from outside.
 - **Establish consistent, candid and recorded exit interviews** for people coming in from (and moving back out to) the private sector. This will ensure that the learning, insights and experiences of their time in the Civil Service are captured, enabling lessons to be learnt and improvements made. For new entrants, it means that their experience can be focussed on from the start.

- **Establish a Quarterly Pulse survey for new hires.** This should be used to gauge whether the experience of recruitment, induction, settling in, development and progression has met new entrants' expectations. This would help identify any issues before they become a problem and also capture learning to continually improve the process and experience. There should be clear benchmarks for success with line managers properly held to account for results.
- **Flag external hires on the People Survey** so that the experiences of this group, their engagement with their work and their views on the culture of the Civil Service can be collected on a more systematic level.

b) Recruitment and selection

4.5 While many high quality candidates are attracted to the meaningful, interesting and broad scope and scale of the work the Senior Civil Service offers, much more needs to be done to explain the strength of the SCS and the exceptional opportunities it offers. The Civil Service should:

- **Develop the SCS as an employer brand with a view to becoming an employer of choice.** This should include developing a Charter for External Hires that lays out what a new hire can expect from the Civil Service and what the Civil Service expects from them. The Charter should be developed in consultation with people who have been recruited externally and is based on best practice. It should make the most of the unique selling points outlined above, and ensure consistency in how the Civil Service presents itself to possible external candidates;
- **Strengthen and streamline content on the benefits of a Civil Service career.** An important element of the Charter will be communicating more effectively the flexibility of roles and the opportunities for people who need to marry career with care responsibilities. But the Civil Service should look for wider opportunities to do this, drawing on case studies and promoting role models, particularly in the context of its recent work on diversity. There is currently no single place that prospective candidates might search, in order to gain information about what it is like to work in the Civil Service and the opportunities and benefits a Civil Service career might bring. This should be addressed immediately, with the Civil Service jobs portal sitting alongside dynamic content that answers the question, "why should I consider a Civil Service career?";
- **Establish an alumni network.** The Civil Service should set up an alumni network for those who have left the SCS, or talent streams. This should help to develop a pool of potential candidates, provide a further route for promoting

the Civil Service as a career and be an asset for promoting secondment opportunities. This alumni group should be invited to attend annual events to meet the Civil Service leadership and understand any future opportunities arising.

4.6 The current recruitment and selection process suffers from being bureaucratic, formal and disengaging to external hires. To attract the best talent and make sure the right person is selected for the role, there is a need for much more personal care, rigour, and increased formal and informal contact throughout the selection process. This will help to level the playing field for internal and external candidates. In general, the overall recruitment experience should seek to be more modern, personal and engaging. To this end, the Civil Service should:

- **Review the current panel interview process** with a view to ensuring that there is more personal care, rigour and contact during the selection process. The process should ensure that people are selected on a wide range of inputs, which would ensure that it is fair and objective. The selection process should be more personal and needs to include both formal and informal meetings as well as opportunities to meet the team. Permanent Secretaries, Director Generals and the Civil Service Commission should review the current practice, with a view to putting in place a new minimum standard of best practice which, whilst adhering to the Civil Service Code, gives a much richer experience for both candidates and selectors. At a minimum this should include ensuring all candidates have one point of contact who will guide them through the process, keep the candidate fully informed and give appropriate support, alongside greater opportunities for informal discussions outside of the formal interview process.
- **Develop a richer selection process**, including more personal time with the prospective candidate and future team. While the competency based approach to interviews may remain, criteria for selection should include a better balance of emotional intelligence, influencing style and stakeholder management, alongside technical competence as essential components of a successful entry into the SCS. The Civil Service should also consider borrowing from external best practice and introducing an element of external assessment particularly for critical roles.
- **Give careful consideration to the quality of the external hires** who should be able to demonstrate an openness to learning how things work, as well as emotional and mental resilience and an ability to navigate the system: “people need to understand which walls can be brought down, and which ones to work around.”

c) Induction

4.7 The lack of proper induction means new entrants do not have adequate support as they enter the new culture of the Civil Service. This has an impact beyond the ability of new hires to do the job in hand. It is a missed opportunity to taking advantage of the fact that the Civil Service has a strong set of agreed core values and to making sure these are properly lived by leaders and new recruits alike. It also means the Civil Service as a corporate entity fails to have a positive influence on new entrants' chances of success: there are no organised opportunities for building networks within and across departments. To ensure consistent quality and experience, the Civil Service should:

- **Develop a standard 5 – 10 day induction which all hires to the SCS should attend.** This should cover the essential information that is critical to new hires having a chance of success. It should include purpose, values and the history of the Civil Service alongside other practical information and should be run prior to the start of the role to allow time for new arrivals to get up to speed. It should include training on how to approach complex stakeholder management, as well as significant elements regarding negotiating and influence skills. This will help people overcome problems of delivering through others, some of whom may not work for you or share the same objectives.
- **Offer advance digital induction.** Newly appointed civil servants should be given advance access to some digital content (via Civil Service Learning) that can help bring them quickly up to speed on the basics, as well as providing an opportunity for the senior leadership of the Civil Service to welcome new joiners.
- **Invest in first 100 days training and coaching for key roles.** This has already been trialled in some departments successfully and should be rolled out more widely across the SCS. Alongside this, ongoing support and training should be offered, for example through quarterly up-skilling sessions hosted by current and previous Permanent Secretaries, and Ministers sharing personal insights into what does and doesn't work.
- **Establish two to three official launch pad areas of the organisation,** where new people can learn about government in a relatively safe place, which is not in a high-pressured central role. There should be scope to encourage people to start their careers in 'safer' spaces, in agencies rather than central departments for example, before they take on higher profile roles where the risk and fallout from failure may be much higher.
- **Provide each new external hire with an experienced mentor.** This should be someone who has previously made a successful transition into the Civil Service as an external hire, and will serve to provide new entrants help and

support outside of the formal line manager relationship. Mentors should give advice on how to quickly establish credibility and to recognise the biggest points of vulnerability that mentees may need help with.

- **Ensure proper ownership of the new hire by the line manager.** There should be a clear message coming forth that line managers are expected to effectively contribute to the successful introduction of any new hire and should feel equally responsible for their success. The manager should also act as a mentor to guide the new recruit through the difficult first twelve months, giving regular feedback and guidance and, in the words of Lord Browne, “introducing them to the pitfalls and winning ways of the organisation” To support this, they should be properly briefed and if necessary provided with additional training so that they can effectively manage the transition. This briefing should extend to the receiving team and include some awareness of the cultural and structural challenges new entrants may face.
- **Set up a structured ‘introduction’ session.** All senior new hires should take part in a structured session where they are given the opportunity to introduce themselves, their background and experience and set out what they can offer to the receiving organisation.
- **Put in place a formal feedback session to take place after the first month to six weeks.** This should be headed up by the Director General or Permanent Secretary, and would be the chance to provide advice and support, as well as an opportunity to understand how things can be improved. The ability of new people to spot small things that could be changed or reformed to generate big improvements should not be under-estimated and there needs to be a constructive, positive way in which this feedback can be collected and acted upon.
- **Ensure every new hire has a career discussion after 12 months** to ensure that they understand what opportunities are available and how they might fit into the roles.

d) Talent Management

4.8 Talent management varies immensely depending on grade, department and line manager. There is no consistent sense of ownership by leaders of the current talent management process. While HR processes have improved, a transformative change across the Civil Service will only be driven if the ownership of talent becomes core to every senior management role. To make sure the Civil Service gets the best out of the talent it has, and helps set the scene for success, this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Greater attention also needs to be given to career development opportunities for people

with specialist skills. The Civil Service should:

- **Recruit a Talent Director for external hires.** This person should ensure that all the minimum quality standards are met as well as acting as a sounding board and source of advice and support for managers and new hires.
- **Provide greater training to line managers** not only in core talent management skills, such as giving balanced feedback, spotting and nurturing talent, supporting development plans and dealing with poor performance, but also for simply managing the transition of external hires.
- **Establish monthly talent meetings to review top talent, skills gaps, promotion opportunities and recruitment plans.** These should be held by the leadership of each department and feed into quarterly cross-departmental talent reviews to get an overall picture of strengths, gaps, cross-departmental moves and succession planning.
- **Invest more in developing career paths for specialists.** Heads of profession and functions across Government should map out career paths that allow people to progress in their chosen field, or explore broader options with the right support and sponsorship. These should be supported through the professional learning offer and strong professional networks that can provide information about training and career opportunities.
- **Develop external career partnerships.** The Civil Service Reform Plan declared a commitment to encourage secondments between the Civil Service and the private sector. To give this further direction and shape, the Civil Service should proactively develop partnerships with relevant organisations (for instance, research institutions such as the Institute for Government and consultancies such as PWC as well as major FTSE 100 companies) that could provide suitable roles and enable people to move out of the Civil Service, develop their skills and experience, before heading back into new roles and areas.
- Give senior managers given some pay flexibility to help retain key personnel for modest increases in salary.

e) Culture

- 4.9 Comments on culture were relatively polarised, reflecting the extent to which people see the world differently depending on their level, background, previous experience, department and role. The leadership has a responsibility to transform the culture into being more open, responsive and interested in what new talent people can bring.

4.10 A robust and thorough induction process should ensure everyone, from the very top leadership through the SCS and across the organisation as a whole, has strong clarity of purpose. High quality support to new hires, including mentoring and coaching and giving people the space and time to understand the culture properly in non-pressurised environments, including launch pad areas, will also help to navigate some of the barriers and pitfalls that may otherwise prevent a successful Civil Service career.

4.11 But there is more that could be done. To ensure new entrants can properly launch themselves and their civil service careers on the best footing, the Civil Service should:

- **Set out clearly the behaviours and language expected from senior leaders.** Strong, coherent leadership will be key to driving cultural change. The SCS must have clarity of mission, purpose and accountability. It should also set out the kind of behaviours and language, in particular a strong spirit of collaboration, that senior leaders should role model to ensure change. This will help drive forward a Civil Service that is modern, personal and engaging. Leaders need to be in tune with what is happening in departments, understanding not just what people do but also how they feel, and making active efforts to improve engagement.
- **Develop a shared agenda for change across departments.** This should be clearly articulated and shared across departments and Ministers to make sure that, in this space, the Civil Service is following one overall agenda. As part of this, the Civil Service Board should look to be a transparent decision making body to visibly articulate the Civil Service aims and priorities.
- **Ensure buy-in and agreement over new senior roles.** People coming into the Civil Service should be confident that their roles are well defined, and broad objectives clearly agreed and supported by the most senior leaders. This means ensuring clear articulation of where the role fits in terms of any overall change agenda, and having a clear set of defined deliverables that the senior leadership agrees and is signed up to. Without this, there is a high risk of ambiguity with people not effectively set up for success.
- **Get the right formal support in place.** For external hires coming into senior roles, the emphasis should be on ensuring the new entrant has a strong, experienced team and private secretary, all of whom understand how things work and can effectively provide guidance and help them navigate new systems. For people brought in to fill specialist roles, the Civil Service should consider identifying an internal change agent to work alongside them and help to translate specialist knowledge and expertise into real change within the organisation.

- **Provide informal support.** Alongside more formal support, the Civil Service should ensure that the right informal support – people to whom new hires can turn openly and without prejudice – is available. All new external hires should be provided with a peer level ‘buddy’ who can help provide advice and guidance, as well as just offering a friendly face in a new, sometimes complex environment. Alongside this, the Civil Service should support the growth of external hire networks, including digital networks, so that best practice and experience of people who have been through this before can be widely shared.

f) Implementation

- 4.12 Following implementation of the recommendations in this report, the Civil Service should return to this topic in 6 to 12 months and conduct a further series of in-depth interviews to check what has changed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to offer a sincere thank you to all those who participated in the research. Everyone was extremely helpful, candid and generous with their time. Thank you to the members of Chris Last's team who willingly shared numerous documents and presentations and patiently answered my queries. Thank you to Anna Saunders for organising the distribution of the questionnaires through the HRD teams across departments. Thank you to the SCS Analysis and Insight team who kindly recut and analysed the data to enable this report to have relevant data and insight. Thanks as well to Becca Taber and Becky Wyse for helping to steer me through the labyrinth of the Civil Service, and for making the introductions that made this project possible. Finally, thank you to all the senior civil servants who went out of their way to be friendly and helpful and made offers of further help and support. This not only reflects well on the high calibre of the individuals but also on the importance and value this subject holds for many people.

Annex A

Key Quotes

Comments from current Directors General and Directors employed in the Civil Service within the past five years

Strengths

- Work is meaningful and interesting – “wanted to serve the country”
- “[important to be contacted and attracted by] a leader you would like to help and work with” because “people follow people”
- “Fantastic job – love it – tremendous scope to operate – way more than the private sector”
- “bigger game in Government” and “real intellectual challenge”

Weaknesses

- “[recruitment] process endless – slow, then have to stand to attention and perform, then nothing for weeks”
- “The only interaction I had with the Civil Service was in a panel interview”
- “[interview process] not interacting as human beings... dispiriting and weird, tick box process that did not acknowledge me as an individual, or the presentation I gave, and felt clunky and old fashioned”
- “[recruitment process in stark contrast to private sector which involved] adult conversations and some charming, in the Civil Service it felt like they were reluctantly choosing the least worst option”
- Induction described as “absolutely nothing”, “appalling”, “so easy to do – so badly done”
- “the Civil Service fails to see recruitment as a commercial transaction which needs to have the value maximised”
- No career paths “beyond the role there is a void”
- “I was able to afford a pay cut – no way would I have moved earlier in my career”

Culture

- “Ministers, Perm Secs and Directors General regard you as exceptional when you are an outside expert but once you become and SCS they do not have the same regard – it does not occur to them that you have a choice”
- “[there is] endless refining of detail that does not matter”
- “[The hierarchical culture] gets in the way of best ideas and best advice” yet “being a critical friend is not being disloyal to the idea of one Civil Service”
- “[Previous experience is not always valued and instead] the clock starts the day you join the CS”
- “no competitive angle – assumes it’s the Rolls Royce and has a monopolistic behaviour and attitude, so that external experience and insight not jumped on to develop a competitive edge”
- “very good people get lost, even a bit pushed out, as they don’t speak the languages and get the nuances”
- “if people only survive by assimilating, how do we get their value?”
- “[levers are] more about influence than control and accountability, therefore people are frustrated they don’t have the levers they were used to”
- “external people come in with big ambitions but the operating environment is too exhausting, so they retreat to what they can control, which leads to multiple fiefdoms – few have the energy to influence the totality of government”
- “Primary problems are in delivery and the Civil Service does not respect execution and delivery”
- “people progress, not by making great decisions, but by not messing up”
- “people rotate too quickly in their roles – therefore the culture develops of don’t drop the baby – just hand it on”
- “people who don’t come in with an ego the size of mine can be quite easily intimidated by the infrastructure”.
- “maybe that’s fine – means in reality over my dead body - need to understand the calibration.”

Interviews with external hires who are about to leave / have left

Strengths

- “you will never have a bigger job than in the Civil Service”
- “[in terms of flexibility for women, Civil Service is] streets ahead”

- “intellectual horsepower of the SCS will meet, and beat, any private sector company”

Weaknesses

- “Officials did not do what I expected them to do – but did what they felt comfortable with”
- “the inherent nature of government frustrates very capable people”
- “The Civil Service wants what people have to bring but then does not expect anything to be disrupted”
- “If you are from the private sector you either hold onto your values – or become one of them and lose your value”
- The expected public scrutiny means that one has to “follow all the right processes but the patient dies.”
- “the Cabinet Office and Treasury own the culture – they set the tone of the Civil Service”
- “[there is a] culture of competitive individualism”
- “intellectually the Civil Service wants to import talent, but as soon as the operation is over, the antibodies attack”
- “the Civil Service say one thing and do another – it is so ingrained after so many years that they don’t realise they are doing it”
- “[the Civil Service is an] uncollaborative, poisonous environment”
- “delivery skills not valued internally, and policy people promoted, so external people with delivery skills recruited unnecessarily”
- “cleverness is believed to be able to overcome any problem including management”
- recruitment into permanent roles described as “tortuous”.
- panel process with competency focus described as “daunting and very uncomfortable”.

Interviews with experienced Civil Servants

- “general candidate care way off benchmark practice”
- “Recruitment and selection not fit for purpose”
- “witnessed unnecessary senior hire wastage rates, because there were few alternatives and poor recruitment practices”

- “recruitment is too focussed on the ‘action hero box’ and not enough on the influencing and softer skills to build constituencies of support and navigate the way through in order to deliver change”
- “the Civil Service significantly under-invests in induction and support”
- “[new recruits must] thrive on ambiguity, understand the challenges, have an intense curiosity and a respect for their peers”
- “they need to understand the issues and where people want to get to, which requires time, respect, integrity and empathy”
- “it’s not a question of whether people are an insider or an external hire the key is how they are operating”
- “the recruitment process needs to be lengthened and deepened to really understand people’s skill sets, motivations and influencing styles. People by their nature at this level will be good at self-presentation. [we] need to peel back the layers”
- “you need to be able to function in an organisation to change it”
- “Each department works for their Secretary of State so they are as joined up as Cabinet is. The Civil Service is in a difficult position as they serve their own, and not other Ministers. External people are used to a CEO and a Board once agreed being aligned and the organisation held accountable for delivering the decision made”

Key Quotes on Culture

- “The CS has a number of powerful cultures, not one, they are so powerful that people don’t realise they are there, so it’s inconceivable to them that there is another way.”
- “There is a written culture at the top based on evidence and integrity of decision making- but it does not have to be like that”
- “There is a cultural norm of understating emotional responses. New people can change this if they are given permission.”
- “Civil service can be very polite and engaging whilst not making any attempt to understand or help you and may actively work against you.”
- “They nod and hope you forget, or feel stressed about telling you they can’t or won’t help. This is driven by a fear of failure or being labelled incompetent.”
- “The culture values strategy over operational detail. Operational delivery is under appreciated.”
- “There is a strong habitual closed culture with its own language, like other big successful organisations. It is not resistant to external hires. It is less cliquey,

zero sum, dog eat dog than other organisations. There is a huge amount of good will and no bias to those from outside.”

- “The CS is a very closed culture – all the expectations are that new people have to adopt the existing culture, this reflects a lack of interest and complacency that CS cannot learn from others except for specific skills.”
- “There is not a cultural level playing field”.
- “The culture hides behind the CS code and uses impartiality to exert control and ensure people are members of the Club.”
- “Need to capture the benefits of new people that bring new ways to improve – how can we create a culture that is more open to challenge and new ideas and allows people to bring the benefit of their experience and skill set.”
- “Culture set in its ways and very resistant to challenge and doing things differently – it takes triple effort to get half as far as I would like to go”
- “[You] need to create a bubble of clarity around you, and your work, and don’t try to boil the ocean”
- “if people like to run their own show unfettered by anyone else [the SCS] might not be for them, they need to be able to manage competing power bases”

Annex B

Responses to Questionnaire

A simple 16 question questionnaire was sent out via the departmental HRDs to external hires in the SCS asking them about their experience of the talent journey. These questionnaires were emailed back to me personally to ensure anonymity was protected. 129 emails were sent out and 56 responses were received, giving a healthy response rate of 43%.

Overall the responses showed a very mixed experience with a full range of comments from the very positive to the very negative on all areas. There did not seem to be any particular link to a grade, or department, or time or whether the person was an interim, contractor or permanent employee.

It almost appeared haphazard whether an experience was poor, ok or very good. However, regarding **inductions** most people commented on totally avoidable weaknesses that need to be addressed urgently. **It should be noted that all overall results were less than good (less than 4).**

There is a clear need to have a clear minimum quality standard for inductions that all employees should expect when joining the SCS. This is such a blatant need and current waste that the debate I suggest should be focussed on who is accountable for each key stage, and when can we ensure best practice is put in place.

Comments regarding culture were powerful, with many comments around the resistance to change. This is clearly a tricky subject. However, a few practical steps to lead to improvements include the acknowledgement of external points of view, and more thorough utilisation of talents, should be put in place urgently to stem the frustration and wastage that currently results.

(Note I have tried to limit quotes to a maximum of 2 from each person to ensure a fair spread of commentary. Duplicate comments I have left out if the message is clear.)

Ratings: Rating system 1 to 5, with 1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = just ok, 4 = good, 5 = very good.

Recruitment and selection process - 3.3

Welcome received – 3.8

People interested and valued your experience – 3.9

Induction – 2.4

How engaged and part of culture – 3.4

Quality of career management – 3.2

Recruitment and selection (3.3)

There were many comments that the recruitment and selection process was slow, bureaucratic, and lengthy. People were kept in the dark and there was no one person in charge for the whole process.

- *“people need to remember that there is a person at the end of the process with a life and options”.*
- *“it was far too long – I was tempted to go off and do other jobs”.*

Some positive comment –

- *“it was a very rigorous process and although there were many stages the process was swift and well explained”.*

The recruitment panel with a 45 minute interview concentrating on competencies was viewed as poor by many for its lack of depth, impersonal nature, insufficient focus on what people had done and their expertise for the role.

It also did not allow candidates to get to know people, the role, the culture, the way of working and it does not allow for any networks to be created.

This is absolutely in opposition to people’s experience in the private sector and needs to be improved urgently.

- *“there was little opportunity to discuss the role and get to know people I would be working with and there was little due diligence done on my experience as an external hire.”*
- *“didn’t explain at all the challenges of working in the CS or give me a genuine ability to understand what I would spend the majority of my time doing. An opportunity to speak off the record to other private sector SCS hires as part of the process would have been very useful.”*

Selection does not ensure fit and suitability –

- *“I see many externals who simply don’t get it, cannot adjust, and fail as a result.”*

Basic HR policy relating to terms and conditions and CS code information not given.

- *“I did not have explained to me at any point the potential restrictions resulting from my appointment.”*

Lack of leadership –

- *“nobody took accountability for getting me through the recruitment process to being set up as a new starter and lots of things fell through the cracks.”*
- *“someone needs to be accountable for the end to end process and empower them to join the dots.”*

Suggestion

- *“use of assessment centres including personality profiling – the biggest retention issue is probably cultural fit and realistic expectations.”*

Welcome (3.8)

Again mixed -

- *“ very good welcome from my boss – nothing from the CS.”*
- *“the welcome ranged from friendly and welcoming to hostile and rude.”*

Note of caution -

- *“this needs to work both ways – I have listened to a lot of new entrants talk an awful lot about when I was at.. this can sound very dismissive.. which in turn explains why others might seem actively dismissive of their views.”*

Induction (2.4)

This was one of the weakest areas and many absolute basics were missing getting new recruits off to a bad start –

- *“provided neither a working infrastructure or PA which caused big stress and reduced effectiveness.”*

Many answers to how could we improve your induction were *“by having one”* – eg.

- *“by having an induction – by ensuring you are introduced to the right people who will help your job go smoother, and induction to how government works and how best to get the government machinery working.”*

Some truly terrible cases -

- *“no desk, no phone, no outer office, current incumbent still in post, no direction.”*
- *“no induction, no HR help, no Manager assistance (he was too busy) – I was given a book to read and after two weeks told to stop acting like a new boy!”*
- *“former role holder put a list of meet and greets in the diary at a time I had no idea how they fit into structure... and still after 5 months have no idea how the IT works!”*
- *“the culture shock could have been eased with a bit more of a ‘what is different and what might you find difficult’ type session.”*
- *“an honest description of how the CS works and what you need to know would be useful – the top things previous hires wished that someone had told them.”*

Need for a structured induction and briefing programme tailored to the needs of new entrants which covers the overall CS, the department, the team and the role to a robust quality standard.

There were some reports of positive corporate ones (base camp) and some reports of positive department ones and occasional mentoring, but the results overall were poor.

Most people did not have a buddy, mentor or adequate support or guidance.

Engagement and part of the culture (3.4)

- *“the culture is incredibly diverse – old hands, high flyers, bright young things, new media types, policy gurus, hands-on deliverers etc – and this is a real strength.”*
- *“the culture is out dated and does not fit with bringing in seasoned, experienced professionals. But nobody has told the CS.”*
- *“the culture seems to attach more value to governance and being able to demonstrate auditability and accountability at the expense of delivering results.”*
- *“it’s a club – they start in the fast stream and move up together and have their own language and ambitions. Distance from service delivery and London-centric view is shocking.”*
- *“feels very closed – resembles a club you cannot join (a little like Lord’s Cricket Club).”*
- *“I have noticed people will talk positively about bringing in external expertise, but then do everything in their power to kill fresh thinking.”*
- *“The CS does its best to disengage people through its bureaucratic nonsense, its penny-pinching and its response to the Daily Mail ‘civil servants are lazy and useless’ dog whistle.”*
- *“there comes a point where your head hurts from banging it so often against the brick wall and you realise that life can be easier and more rewarding elsewhere.”*
- *“CS brings people in to effect change and then punishes them for doing so.”*
- *“it is changing but there is a lack of reality and too few people are prepared to take and own decisions. I’ve never seen so many people spend their lives in meetings.”*
- *“the whole culture and approach appears to be based on the principle of generalism – anybody can do any role if they have a certain set of competencies.. this devalues expertise and experience.”*

How does CS compare to working in other organisations

- *“there is still as degree of tension between a bureaucratic and rights based culture and a visionary /can do culture of high achievement and high appreciation/support.”*
- *“there is a tendency in the CS to focus overly on process and organisation rather than content and value add. This can slow/clutter things and cause teams to lose sight of the real purpose of what they are doing.”*
- *“it is a fascinating place to work with some really good people, but the organisation wastes a huge amount of time on unnecessary process and long winded briefing papers and business cases which the private sector would simply not tolerate.”*

- *“I struggle to deal politely with staff who think that compliance with a process is more important than the outcome that we are trying to achieve. This requires a culture change that would need to flow down from the top.”*
- *“a culture of extremes, where some people do their 7.5 hours, and are part of the 4.30/5pm exodus, and others who are now doing 11-12 hour days.”*
- *“there seems to be a lack of trust in people and their abilities, and the focus is on being second guessed with hindsight applied after the event.”*
- *“one of the main issues is the press that the CS is given by current Ministers. It is soul destroying to hear time and time again that all civil servants are useless. As we join from industry we then fall into this category and take the negativity along with longer serving members.”*
- *“the process has become far more important than the people within it.”*

Many commented on the hierarchical nature of the CS –

- *“the hierarchical culture does not encourage dissenting views so I fear we don’t allow our more junior colleagues to flourish and contribute as much as they might.”*
- *“I have lost count of the times I have been told that people who are SCS3 will not meet with SCS1.”*
- *“the challenges of the job compare well. The sense that the employer has any interest in retaining me or helping me develop – very poorly.”*
- *‘there appears to be a tendency to try and get the new SCS recruits to fit into the CS, rather than exploit the differences in approach that were the key reason for making an external appointment.’*

Career management (3.2)

The comments range from ‘its either all the individual’s responsibility so its ok,’ to ‘there is a lot of support,’ to ‘there is nothing’ or ‘it is process rather than people focussed.’

- *“there is little culture of continuous, open, honest feedback than I was used to before.”*
- *“it would be great to be mentored/ coached by a board level director.”*
- *“some of the bureaucracy and lack of financial recognition means that after 5 years I will be restless.”*
- *“outside of Whitehall talent management is nothing short of appalling – this is relevant as the agencies provide a perfect way of getting new talent into the CS.”*

There is not a practice of having exit interviews which would capture some of this learning and also allow the leaver to have a say, and help start the process of moving on.

Annex C

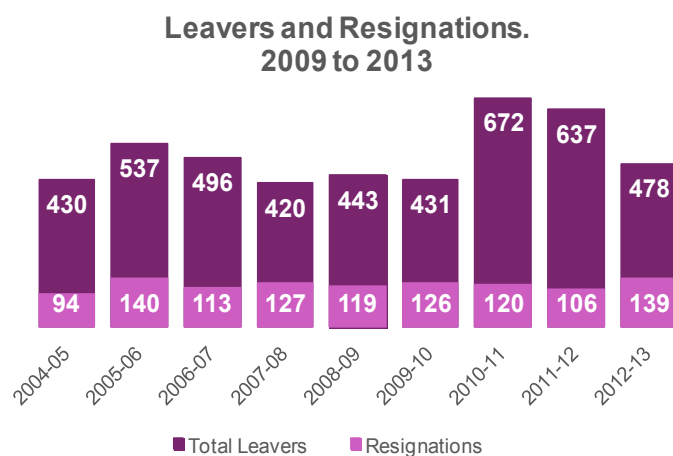
Data Tables

The number of resignations is at its highest level since 2005/06

There were 139 resignations in 2012/13, its highest level since 2005/06.

In 2012/13 resignations accounted for 29% of all leavers from the SCS, the highest proportion since 2007/08.

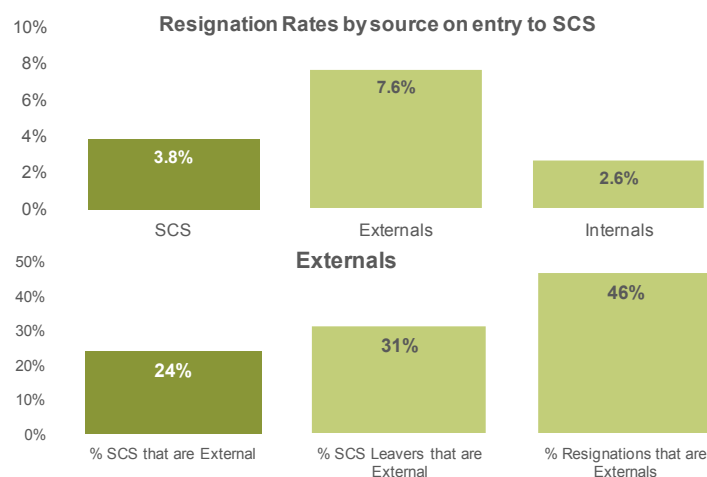
Resignations and resignation rates are members that have resigned from the SCS only. It does not include where SCS members have transferred to other departments within the SCS or have exited with a payment (early departure/paid exit).



The external resignation rate is almost three times the internal resignation rate

Externals are three times more likely to resign than their internal colleagues, 7.6% vs 2.6%. This is reflected by the fact that externals make up just under 1 in 4 SCS but almost half of resignations (46%).

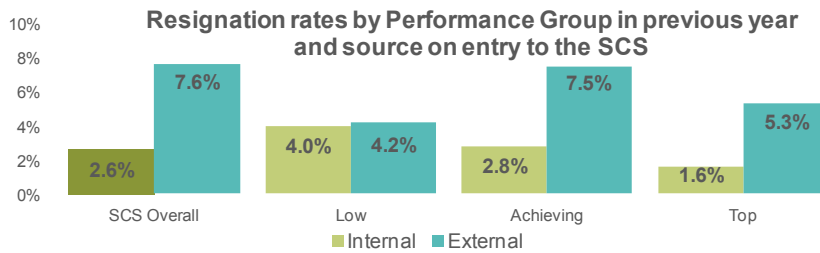
External SCS are those SCS members that were not Civil Servants immediately prior to their original recruitment to the SCS.



Top performers are less likely to resign than lower performing colleagues

Top performers in 2011/12 were the least likely group to resign in 2012/13, with a resignation rate of just 2.4%. Low performers were more than 60 percent more likely to resign in 2012/13 than their top performing colleagues, 4% vs 2.4%.

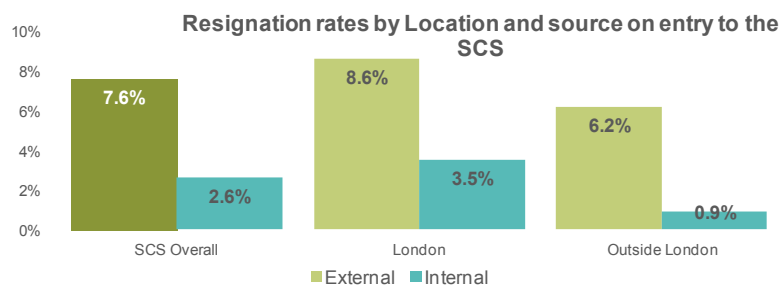
External top performers have a higher resignation rate than low performing external colleagues (5.3% vs 4.2%). **Caution is advised as the 5.3% resignation rate is based on just 9 external resignations of top performers.**



SCS in London have a higher resignation rate than their colleagues outside London

SCS based in London are almost twice as likely to resign than those outside London, where the resignation rates are 4.6% and 2.4% respectively.

External SCS based in London are almost 40% more likely to resign than those outside London (8.6% against 6.2%).

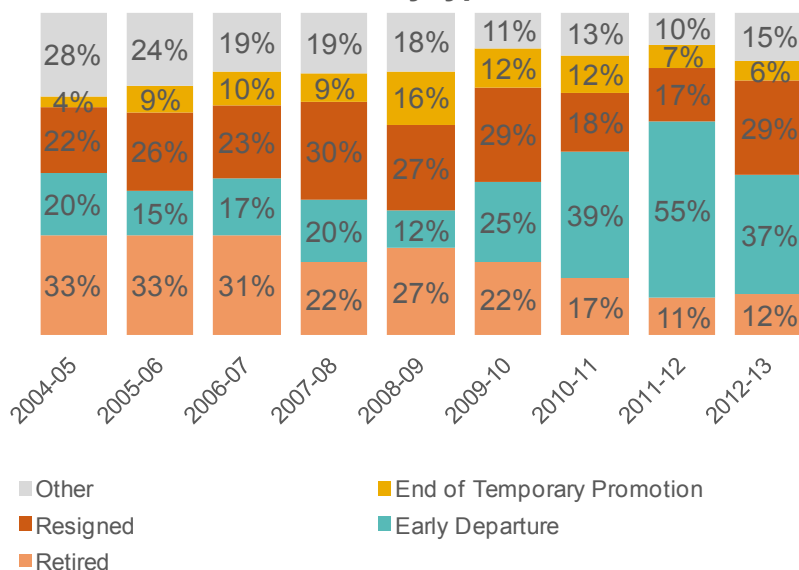


The resignation rate for external SCS increases year on year for the first 5 years spent in the SCS

The resignation rate for external SCS increases year on year for the first 5 years in the SCS, then falls and levels off.

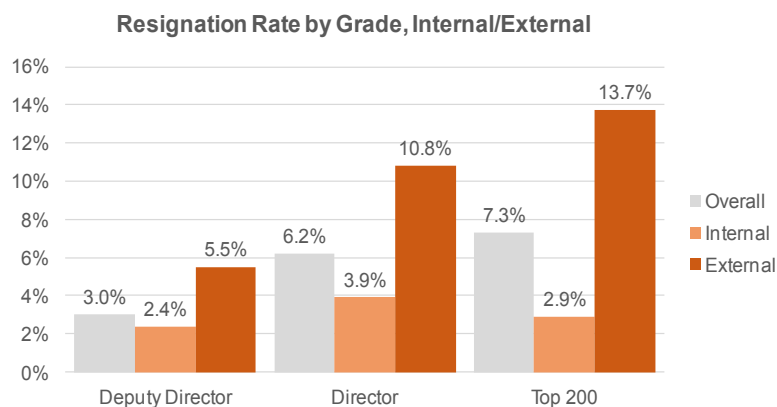
After the first year in the SCS the resignation rate for internal SCS is fairly stable. It is at its highest between 6 and 7 years (4.5%) SCS service. The overall resignation rate for SCS increases as time spent in post increases.

Leavers by type, 2004 to 2013



Resignation rates in the SCS increase with seniority

The resignation rate for Deputy Directors (3%) is less than half the resignation rate of Directors (6.2%) and the Top 200 (7.3%). External SCS Top 200 members have the highest resignation rate (13.7%), in comparison to a rate of 10.8% for Directors and 5.5% for Deputy Directors. **This should not be taken to imply that there is a causal link between seniority and resignation rates. Further work is required to establish which grades are more likely to resign when other factors are held constant.**



Recent joiners are much less positive about learning & development, and leadership & managing change

The People Survey does not carry a marker for whether SCS are external entrants. Instead we can use a proxy of looking at those SCS who are recent entrants to the Civil Service.

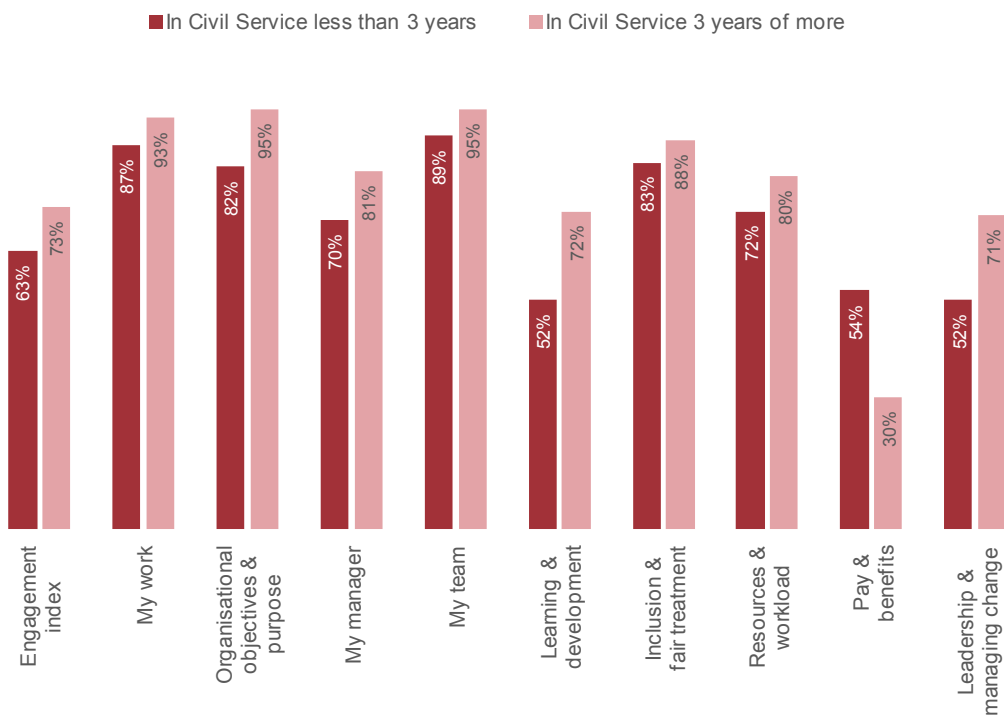
SCS who joined the Civil Service in the past 3 years are generally less positive than their colleagues with longer service.

Recent joiners have an engagement index of 63% compared to 73% for SCS who have been in the Civil Service for 3 years of more.

The greatest differences between SCS that have recently joined and their colleagues with longer service are seen for the leadership & managing change and learning & development themes.

Recent SCS entrants to the Civil Service score just 52% for the learning & development theme, and the leadership & managing change theme, compared to 72% and 71% of SCS with more than 3 years service.

However, recent SCS entrants to the Civil Service are much more positive about pay & benefits with a theme score of 54%, compared to just 30% for SCS with more than 3 years service in the Civil Service.



Annex D

Methodology

This report draws on the following:

A. Interviews with Senior Stakeholders, including the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Permanent Secretaries and NEDs

B. Interviews with 15 Perm Sec/DG/ Directors who have been hired externally

C. Focus Groups with Deputy Directors

2 focus groups were held on 17th and 18th June with a total on 10 participants.

D. Interviews with 7 Director Generals / Directors who have left/leaving interviews

E. Interviews with established senior civil servants who have experienced working with external hires

F. Interviews with 9 senior Civil Service HR professionals

G. Review and analysis of current policies and documentation

Provided by DG CSHR office.

H. Analysis of best practices in talent management of major employers from private and public sector

Interviews with leading HR experts in a variety of leading organisations - Barclays, BBC, BP, McKinsey.

I. Questionnaire to senior external hires currently in SCS and those who have left over the past 3 years

Methodology – questionnaire sent to 129 external hires via Chris Last's office to departmental HRD's to then send to individuals. 56 respondents - split 53 current and 3 leavers. 43% response rate.

J. Review of current SCS data available from People Survey and SCS Analysis and Insight working with the Analysis & Insights Team.