

Whitehall Monitor #14 – analysis of civil service staff numbers

Petr Bouchal and Justine Stephen

In June 2012, the Government published its *Civil Service Reform Plan* setting out a vision for how the Civil Service will need to change over the coming years. The plan stated that ***“it is estimated that by 2015 the Civil Service will be around 23% smaller than it was in March 2010, operating with around 380,000 staff”***. It noted that ***“there are no targets for any further headcount reductions but (...) the Civil Service must ensure it is resilient to any future decisions about its size and shape.”***

This Whitehall Monitor continues our regular series, looking at changes to staff in the Civil Service since the spending review.¹ This analysis is based on the latest *Public Sector Employment* data from the ONS, released on 12th September 2012, containing figures to Q2 (June) 2012. We report figures for ‘Whitehall’ and ‘non-Whitehall’ sections of the Civil Service separately, to distinguish between the central department and civil servants in the wider departmental group, where possible (see fn 5).

Headlines

- **Civil service numbers have dropped for the 5th successive quarter**, and are now at 424,220 FTE.² This is a reduction of over 54,000 FTE (11%) since our spending review baseline.³
- **The Civil Service will need to reduce by another 48,000 FTE** to reach the levels set out in the *Civil Service Reform Plan*⁴
- Within the ‘Whitehall’⁵ parts of the Civil Service, there is a persistent pattern of a few departments (BIS, DCLG, Defra and DfT) having made reductions of approximately 20% whilst other departments have seen much smaller rates of reduction, or even small increases.⁶
- **The rate of reductions across the ‘Whitehall’ components has slowed or reversed in recent quarters** leaving the overall ‘Whitehall’ total virtually unchanged from last quarter.⁷
- **The ‘non-Whitehall civil service’ figures continue to show reductions across almost every department**⁸, with a total reduction of 4,802 FTE (1.2%) quarter on quarter.

Leading this research at the Institute, Justine Stephen said:

“The Civil Service is continuing to shrink, with a reduction of over 54,000 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) staff since the spending review. Though initially we saw the highest rates of cuts occurring within the ‘Whitehall’ sections of departments, most of the recent reductions have come from other parts of the Civil Service.”

¹ We have used the ONS Q3 2010 figures as our baseline for the Spending Review. This baseline is then adjusted to take into account Machinery of Government changes within and between departments.

² FTE – Full Time Equivalent provides a measure based on the hours the employee is contracted to work (e.g. someone who works 2.5 days per week would be 0.5 FTE). We use FTE rather than headcount figures, unless otherwise noted, as the latter counts both fulltime and part-time employees as one unit.

³ Due to the change in reporting by FCO, the figure may underestimate the reductions slightly.

⁴ See Figure 2

⁵ See Table 1 for the full breakdown of ‘Whitehall’ and ‘Non Whitehall civil service’ groupings

⁶ See Figure 4

⁷ After adjusting for machinery of government changes, excluding the effect of a reporting change at FCO. See figs. 3-4

⁸ See Figures 5 and 6

Whole of civil service

- **Total civil service⁹ numbers have continued to decrease**, reducing by 4,090 FTE in the last quarter.
- Figure 1 shows this continuing trend, amounting to a reduction of over 11% of FTE from the civil service since the spending review baseline.

Whitehall¹⁰

- **The 'Whitehall' part of the Civil Service has remained virtually unchanged in size since the last quarter**, having made reductions of approx. 10% since the spending review.¹¹ The rate of reductions has generally slowed in recent quarters and even those departments which initially made large cuts appear to have stabilised their numbers.
- **DCLG are still the department which has cut the most from their Whitehall figures since the spending review. In the last quarter, the biggest reductions have also come from DCLG**, which cut 80 FTE.
 - DCLG have cut their core dept by 32.5% FTE since the spending review
 - BIS have cut their core dept by 19.1% FTE since the spending review
 - DfT have cut their core dept by 20.8% FTE since the spending review
 - Defra have cut their core dept by 20.5% FTE since the spending review
- **Several departments have seen small increases to their 'Whitehall' numbers in the last quarter** but overall these departments have still seen significant levels of reductions since the spending review
 - BIS took on 110 FTE, which includes 30 performing a new function inside the department
 - DfT 'Whitehall' component is also taking on staff – 10 FTE over the last quarter
 - Defra, another department which has made large cuts to its core since the spending review, has hired 30 FTE in Q2 2010

Non-Whitehall Civil Service¹²

- **There has been a continuing trend of reductions in 'non-Whitehall' staff** for most departments since the spending review
- **In percentage terms, several departments have been ahead of the pack** (See Fig. 6)
 - In its non-Whitehall business, Cabinet Office has seen cuts of 57.2% - largely due to the abolition of COI (see WHM #6)
 - DCLG have reduced their non-Whitehall parts by 18.4%.

⁹ Including Core Whitehall departments & Non-Whitehall Civil Service

¹⁰ We have defined 'Whitehall' using the core department figures (excluding separately defined agencies & arms length bodies) provided in the ONS data. The Welsh Assembly & Scottish Government have been excluded from the core Whitehall figures. In MoD, HO and DWP the figures for the core 'Whitehall' element of the department are not reported separately so are not included in this figure. Instead MoD, HO & DWP are reported as a whole within the 'Non-Whitehall Civil Service' category.

¹¹ This excludes FCO as recent changes to the way that they report their staff numbers has made it impossible to construct a baseline to compare against.

¹² In the MoD, HO and DWP the figures for the core 'Whitehall' element of the department are not reported separately so are not included in this figure. Instead MoD, HO & DWP are reported as a whole within the 'Non-Whitehall Civil Service' category.

- **In absolute terms, DWP have reduced the most**, shedding 5,000 FTE more than the department with the next largest reductions, MoD. DWP has reduced by over 17,200 FTE across the whole department since the spending review (See Figure 5).
 - However, this figure is for the whole of the DWP departmental group as changes to how they report their figures mean that we are unable to separate out the Whitehall element of DWP from the rest of the department.
- **Over the last quarter, the reductions outside of Whitehall have slowed or stopped in some of the departments** which have made substantial reductions since the spending review.
 - DCLG has grown in absolute terms of 20 FTE quarter on quarter
 - The number of staff in non-Whitehall BIS has remained unchanged
- **MoD and MoJ have each made reductions of approx. 1600 FTE** to their non-Whitehall organisations, though in MoD it is impossible to say how much of this came from their head office.
- **DfE has seen new agencies established**, taking on a total of 1120 FTE into the department as they move from the wider non-departmental public bodies (NDPB) family into the civil service. We can observe a corresponding drop in staff numbers from DfE's NDPB figures during this period.

Next steps

The Institute for Government will continue to monitor the ONS quarterly headcount statistics - the next update will be in December 2012.

We will also aim to provide a series of comparable figures for FCO.

Further information

You can find previous Whitehall Monitor reports, contact information, and underlying data at <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/our-work/more-effective-whitehall/whitehall-monitor>.

Annex

Figure 1: Civil Service FTE figures by quarter – including structural changes

Total civil service FTE figures have seen a continual decline since the spending review baseline (Q3 2010), reducing by over 11% over the period.

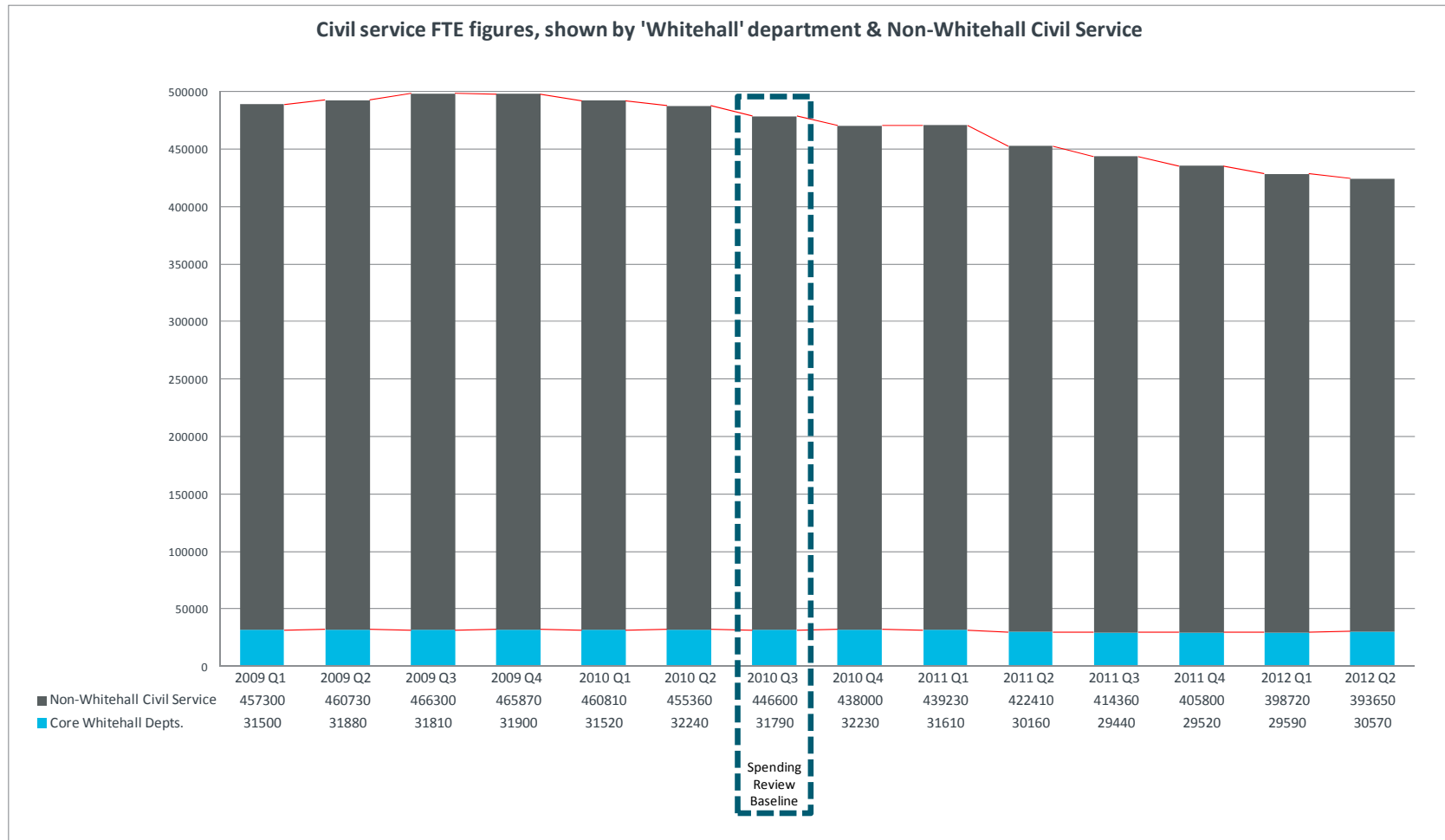


Figure 2: Civil Service total FTE figures by quarter, with projection toward Civil Service Reform Plan

The Civil Service Reform Plan from June 2012 envisions an end state of staff levels 23% below March 2010, which is a reduction of approx. 52,000 FTE, of which approx. 48,000 are still to be made between Q2 2012 and the end of 2015.

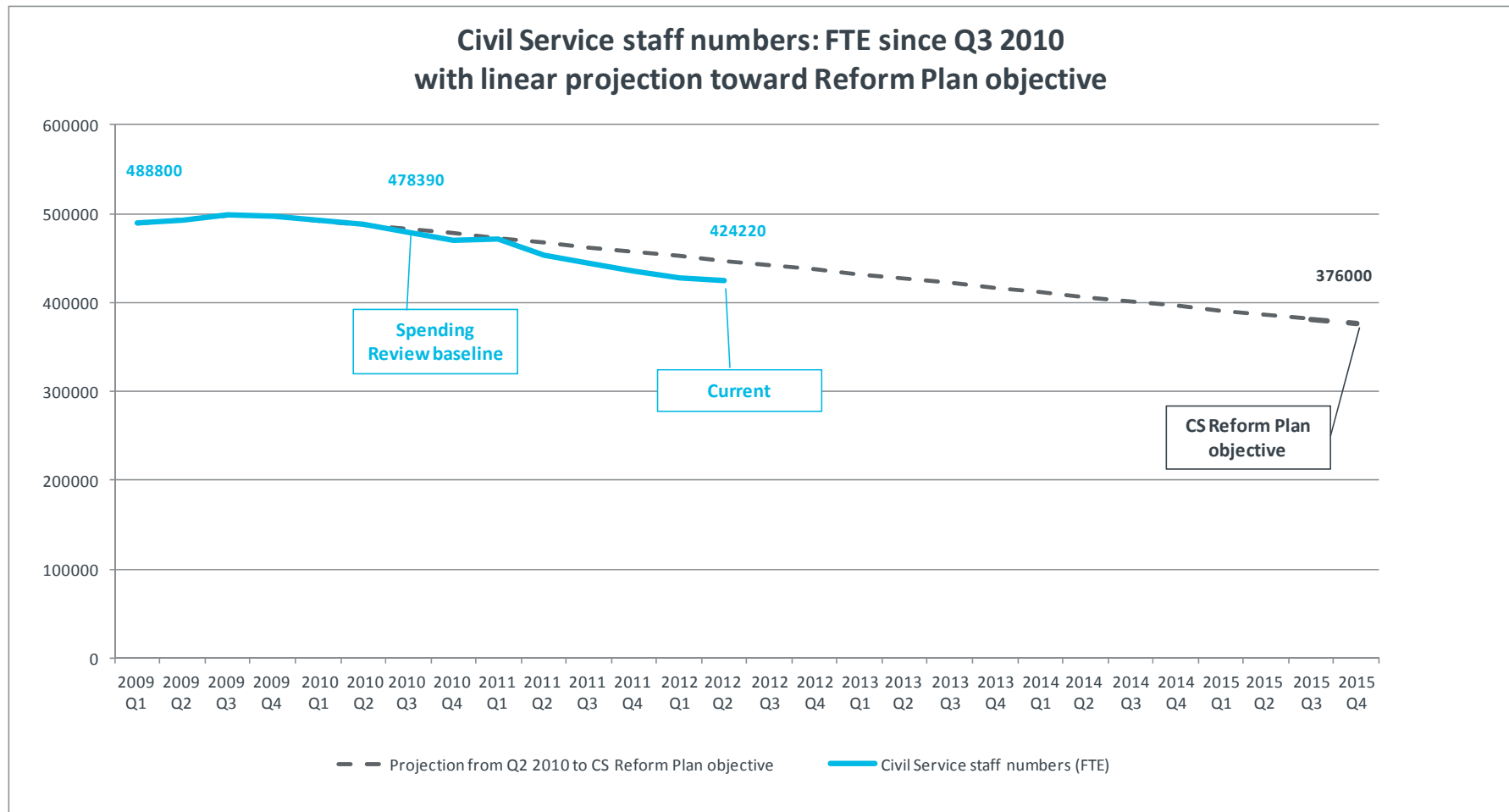


Figure 3: Whitehall department FTE change from adjusted Q3 2010 baseline

Looking at absolute FTE reductions from the core departments, BIS and DCLG all stand out as the biggest reductions. In contrast, DECC has seen a significant increase to its core department.

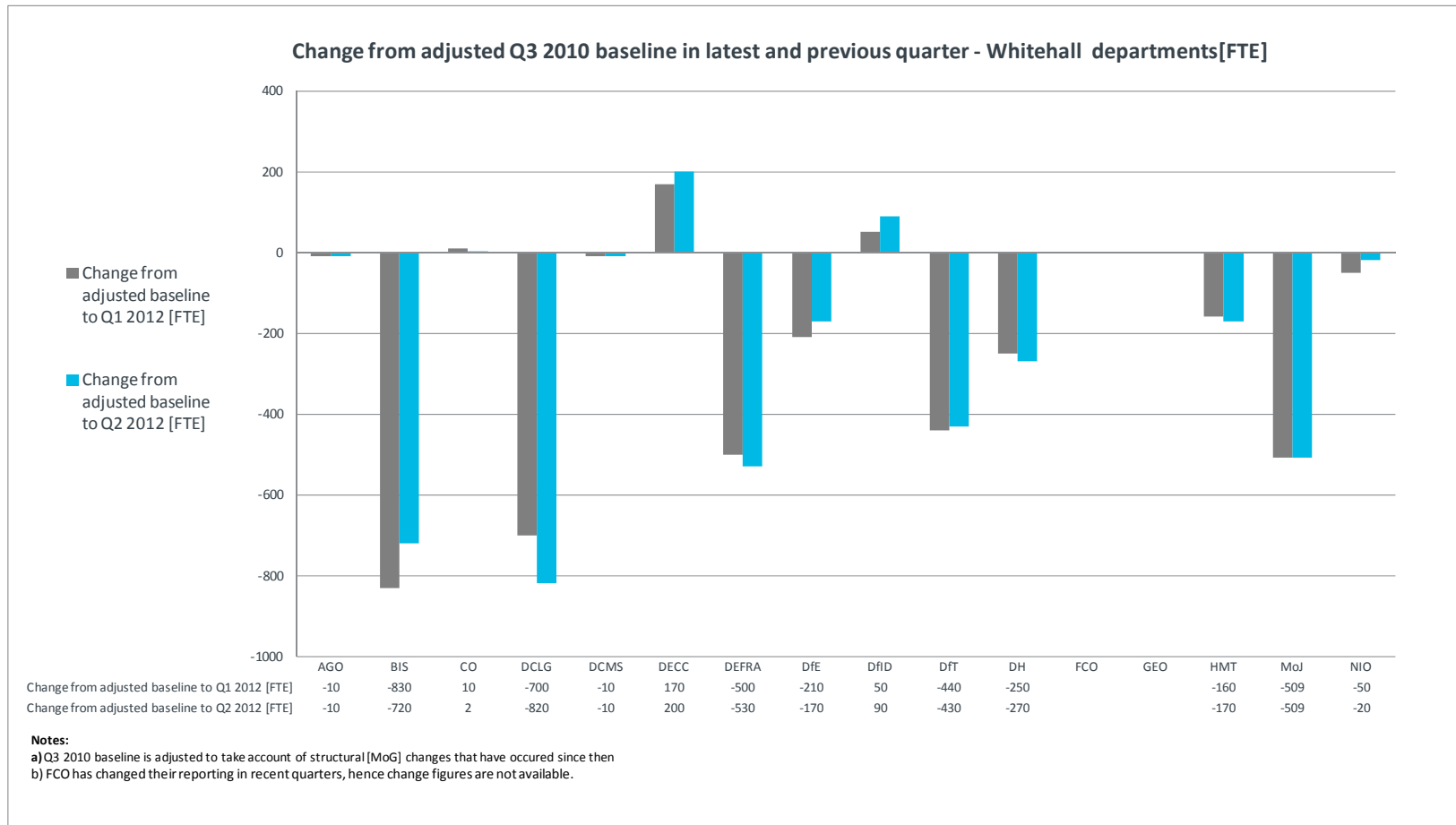


Figure 4: Whitehall department FTE % change from adjusted Q3 2010 baseline

DCLG has continued to cut in the last quarter and is still showing the highest % reduction in FTE since the spending review.



Figure 5: Non-Whitehall Civil Service FTE changes from the baseline

DWP is leading the field in terms of the numbers of FTE cut outside of Whitehall since the spending review, with a reduction of over 17,000 FTE across its non-Whitehall organisations. Note DWP, HO & MoD figures include both Whitehall & Non-Whitehall FTE as they are not reported separately.

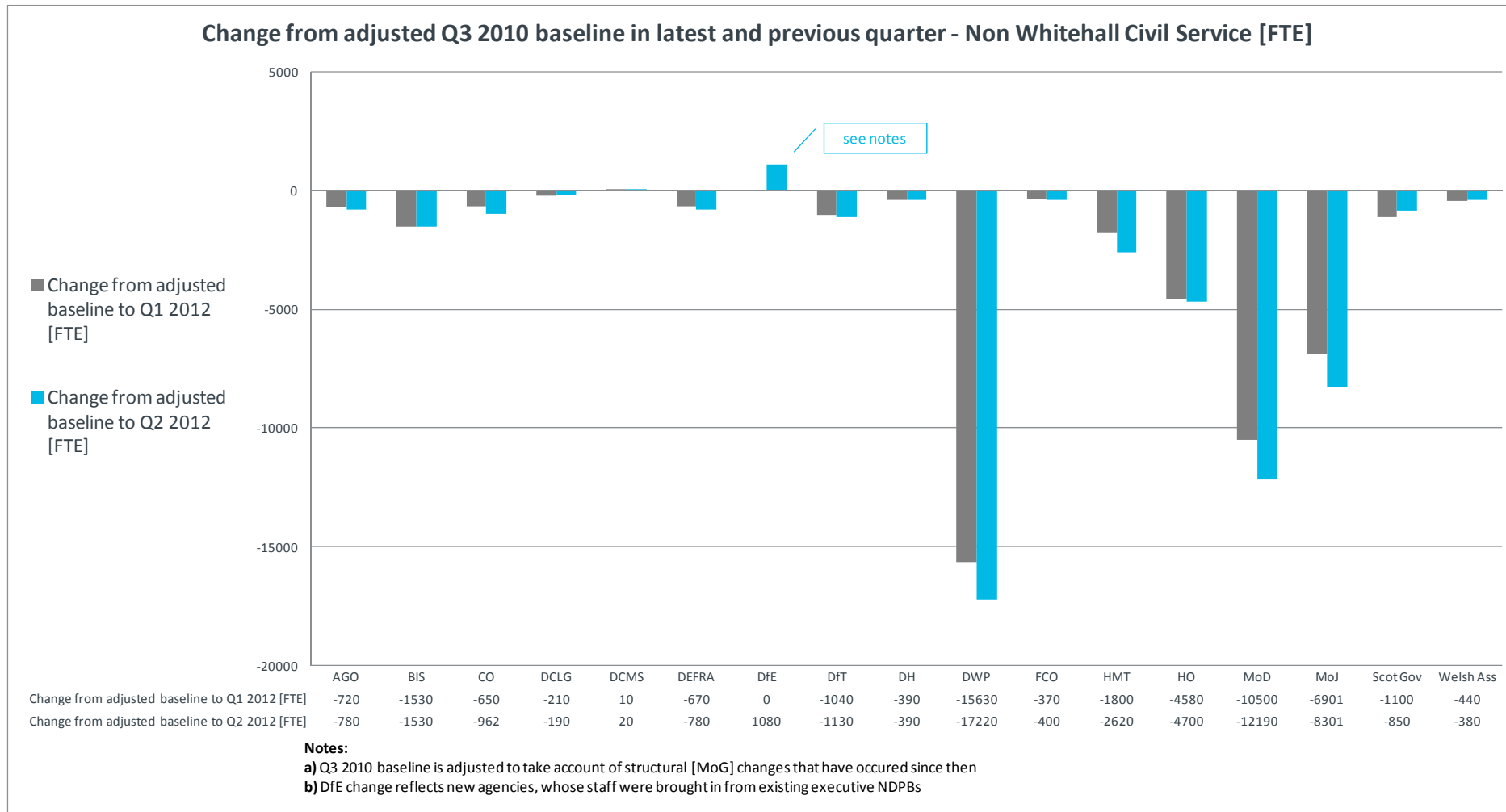


Figure 6: Non-Whitehall Civil Service FTE % change from baseline

Cabinet Office shows the biggest FTE % change reducing by over 30% of its FTE since the spending review. The vast majority of this came from the Central Office of Information redundancies (see Whitehall Monitor #6 for further details). DfE change is due to new executive agencies entering the Civil Service.

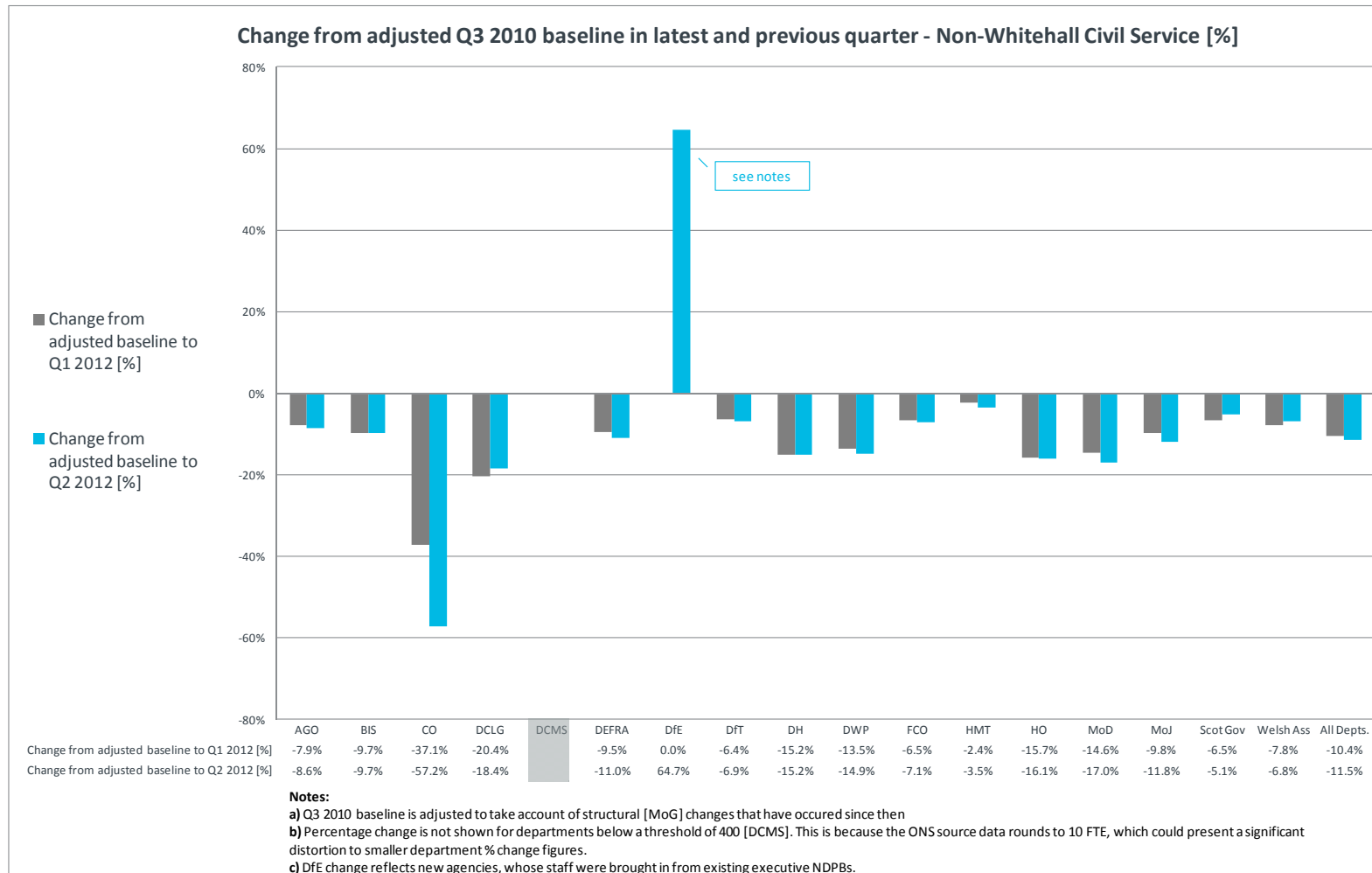


Table 1: Civil Service bodies grouped by Whitehall departments

Department	Whitehall?	Dept detail / Agency
AGO	Core Whitehall Depts. Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Attorney General's Office
		Crown Prosecution Service
		Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
		Serious Fraud Office
		Treasury Solicitor
BIS	Core Whitehall Depts. Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Business, Innovation and Skills
		Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service
		Companies House
		Export Credit Guarantee Department
		HM Land Registry
		Insolvency Service
		Met Office
		National Measurement Office
		Office of Fair Trading
		Office of Gas and Electricity Market
		Ordnance Survey
		Skills Funding Agency
		UK Intellectual Property Office
CO	Core Whitehall Depts. Non-Whitehall Civil Service	UK Space Agency
		Cabinet Office excl agencies
		Central Office of Information
		Charity Commission
		Government Procurement Service
DCLG	Core Whitehall Depts. Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Office of the Parliamentary Counsel
		Department for Communities and Local Government
		Fire Service College
		Planning Inspectorate
		Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre
DCMS	Core Whitehall Depts. Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Department for Culture Media and Sport
		Royal Parks
DECC	Core Whitehall Depts.	Department for Energy and Climate Change
DEFRA	Core Whitehall Depts. Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
		Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency
		Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
		Food & Environment Research Agency
		OFWAT
		Rural Payments Agency
		Veterinary Medicines Directorate
		Department for Education
DfE	Core Whitehall Depts. Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
		Ofsted
		Standards and Testing Agency
		Education Funding Agency
		National College
		Teaching Agency
		Department for International Development
DfID DfT	Core Whitehall Depts. Core Whitehall Depts. Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Department for Transport
		Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
		Driving Standards Agency
		Government Car and Despatch Agency
		Highways Agency
		Maritime and Coastguard Agency
		Office of Rail Regulation
		Vehicle and Operator Services Agency
		Vehicle Certification Agency
		Department of Health (excl agencies)
		Food Standards Agency
DH	Core Whitehall Depts. Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency
		Child Maintenance Enforcement Commission
DWP	Non-Whitehall Civil Service	

Department	Whitehall?	Dept detail / Agency
FCO	Core Whitehall Depts.	The Health and Safety Executive
	Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Department for Work and Pensions Foreign and Commonwealth Office (excl agencies) Security and Intelligence Services Wilton Park Executive Agency
HMT	Core Whitehall Depts.	HM Treasury Office for Budget Responsibility
	Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Asset Protection Agency Debt Management Office Government Actuary's Department HM Revenue and Customs National Savings and Investments UK Statistics Authority Valuation Office
HO	Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Criminal Records Bureau Identity and Passport Service UK Border Agency Home Office (excl agencies) National Fraud Authority
		Defence Science and Technology Laboratory Defence Support Group Ministry of Defence UK Hydrographic Office
MoJ	Core Whitehall Depts.	Ministry of Justice (excl agencies)
	Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service National Archives National Offender Management Service The Office of the Public Guardian UK Supreme Court Wales Office
NIO Scot Gov	Core Whitehall Depts.	Scotland Office (incl. Office of the Advocate General for Scotland)
	Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Northern Ireland Office Disclosure Scotland Education Scotland Historic Scotland National Records of Scotland Office for the Scottish Charity Regulator Registers of Scotland Scottish Court Service Scottish Government (excl agencies) Scottish Housing Regulator Scottish Prison Service Headquarters Scottish Public Pensions Agency Student Awards Agency Transport Scotland Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Accountant in Bankruptcy
Welsh Ass	Non-Whitehall Civil Service	ESTYN Welsh Government

Table 2: Q2 2012 FTE figures by department

Department	'Whitehall'	Non-Whitehall Civil Service	Total
AGO	40	8280	8320
BIS	3040	14220	17260
CO	1800	720	2520
DCLG	1700	840	2540
DCMS	450	130	580
DECC	1320		1320
DEFRA	2060	6290	8350
DfE	2630	2750	5380
DfID	1690		1690
DfT	1640	15200	16840
DH	2270	2180	4450
DWP		98210	98210
FCO	6420	5260	11680
HMT	1160	72520	73680
HO		24520	24520
MoD		59640	59640
MoJ	4260	61890	66150
NIO	90		90
Scot Gov		15770	15770
Welsh Ass		5230	5230