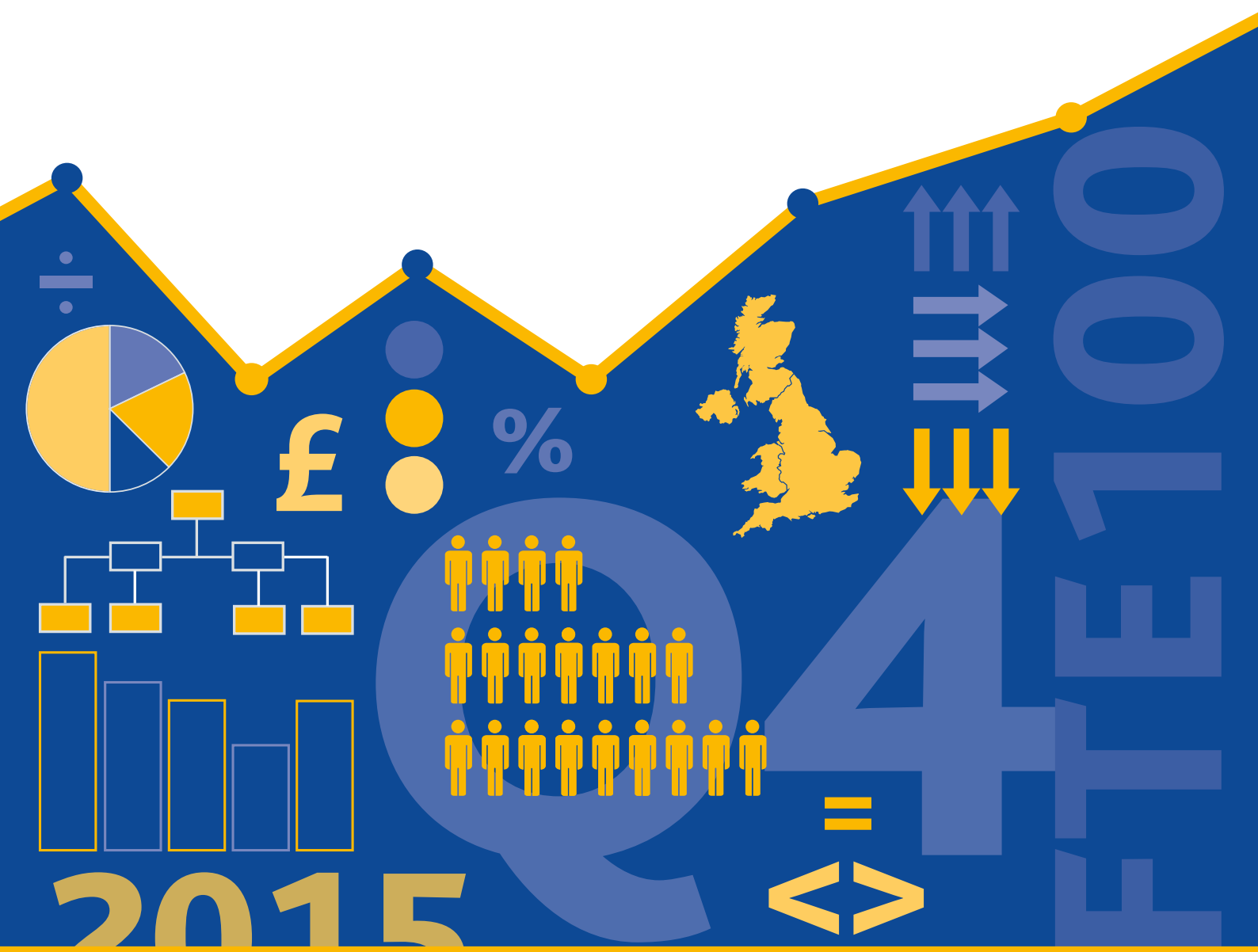


Whitehall Monitor 2015

The Coalition in 163 charts



Foreword

If you want to understand what government is trying to do, what resources it uses, how it is organised and what impact its programmes make, read this report. There is no better guide to understanding government – not just Whitehall but the broader public sector – based on the vast amount of data that the state itself produces, notably through the Office for National Statistics.

The *Whitehall Monitor* programme has become an important part of the Institute for Government's activities: high quality, data-based analysis of new developments of all kinds in government, whether civil service numbers, performance measures or changes in government and opposition front benches. The regular series of blogposts and associated Twitter posts have reinforced both the Institute's social media presence and its role as an authoritative commentator on all matters to do with government. This work is ably and forcefully led by Gavin Freeguard and has involved a wide range of Institute staff, as listed in the acknowledgements.

This annual report, the third in the series, is in addition to the regular blogposts; it attempts, as in the past, to provide an overview of developments under the categories of context, inputs, outputs and outcomes. Moreover, following the general election, an assessment is made of what happened over the whole life of the Coalition Government.

The report acknowledges that much more information is now available than in the past thanks to the Government's open data and transparency agendas. Serious problems, however, remain about data, notably about government finances and changes to spending plans, which can be inconsistent and opaque. As the authors argue, this makes it harder both to understand what difference departments' actions made, and to measure performance.

The report makes a number of important and timely suggestions about the publication of data, how it is presented and used. These points are highly relevant to the current spending round and to David Cameron's aspiration to create a 'smarter state'.

Clear, accessible and relevant data is essential.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PJR Riddell" followed by a horizontal line and two dots.

Peter Riddell
Director, Institute for Government

About the authors

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Dan Devine was a research intern at the Institute between April and September 2015, working primarily on *Whitehall Monitor*. Before that, he worked at the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex and at the University of Iceland. He graduated from Essex in 2014 with a BA in Politics, specialising in British politics and quantitative methods.

Acknowledgements

The *Whitehall Monitor* team would not have been able to produce this report without the support of our colleagues across the Institute and elsewhere. We would particularly like to thank Julian McCrae, Jonathan Pearson and Daniel Thornton for their comments and input throughout the drafting process; Matthew Batchelor, Andrew Murphy, copy editor Tracey Beresford and the team at Pistachio for producing the report; Nicole Valentinuzzi for all of her work on promoting the report (and our work throughout the year); Dr Hannah White for advice on all things parliamentary, and Akash Paun on all things devolution; our friends at Spend Network for providing the data on contracting, and Chris Wajzer for his advice on that chapter; Ellen Broad and the Open Data Institute for their research on our open data timeline; Tori Harris and ComRes, for allowing us to use their survey of MPs; Jill Rutter for comments (and co-authoring!) throughout the year; Ollie Hirst for his work on the latter stages of this report; and Petr Bouchal, Justine Stephen, David Bull and Caragh Nimmo for their work on previous iterations, making our job much easier.

We could not have produced this report without the hard work and support of everyone involved in producing statistics in government departments, the ONS, the House of Commons Library, National Audit Office and elsewhere. Many thanks to all, and to those who have commented on earlier drafts.

Any errors or omissions are entirely our own – except where we're clear it's the lack of good data...

Gavin Freeguard, Emily Andrews, Dan Devine, Robyn Munro and Joe Randall

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Introduction

***Whitehall Monitor* aims to chart government – literally. We analyse and visualise numbers from and about government – on everything from staff numbers to public perceptions – to help politicians, civil servants, civil society and the public better understand what central government looks like in the UK. This report looks at what happened under the Coalition, 2010 to 2015.**

Whitehall – a single street in London SW1 as well as shorthand for the administrative centre of British government – can often seem remote from everyday life. But the decisions taken and actions implemented from there can have a profound effect. What happens in Whitehall matters – understanding what, and how, and why it happens, matters.

Whitehall can also seem uniform – a set of grey buildings hosting government departments, which each have ministers and a permanent secretary at the top, civil servants below them, and some money from the Treasury to spend. But as we see in this report, departments vary widely in their size, shape and function.

In this annual report (our third) we take a retrospective look at government under the Coalition between 2010 and 2015: what does government look like in 2015, and how has it changed since 2010? Our report is split into four sections:

- **Context** The political context – how the particular parties came to be running their departments – and how transparency and open data became part of the governing landscape
- **Inputs** The resources available to departments, such as money and staff
- **Outputs** What departments do with those resources and how they manage them; 'business as usual', such as responding to requests for information; and how digital technology has started to change the way some services are delivered
- **Outcomes** The impact of departments' actions and how government measures this (or tries to), and public perceptions and international comparisons of government.

The data underlying our analysis can be found on the Institute for Government's website, where there are also links to our ongoing series of blogposts and other reports examining some of the subjects in this report in more detail. The annex at the back of this report includes a list of the abbreviations used throughout.

Summary

During five years of coalition government, Whitehall underwent profound changes: departmental budgets and staff numbers were reduced; some departments changed fundamentally what they did and how they did it; and the use of digital technology began to change the way public services and the citizen related.

But many things remain the same. Despite fewer resources, staff engagement has remained steady (or, in some departments, fallen and then recovered); despite fundamental transformations in some departments' operating models, the day-to-day business of government looks much the same.

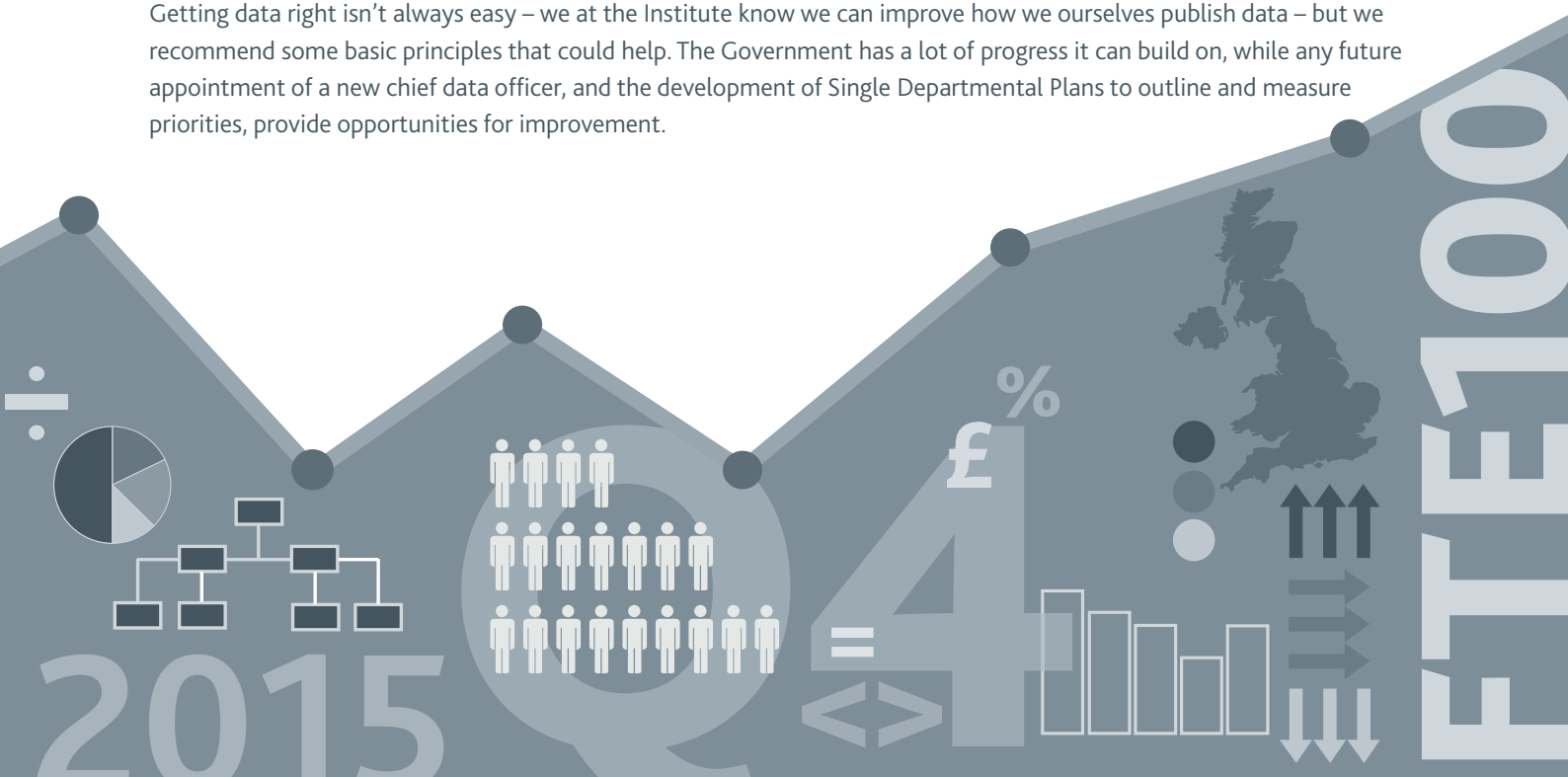
The UK's support for the open data and transparency agenda means we know more about all of this than ever before. Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) gives us a comprehensive picture of the Civil Service; government data covers subjects from what actions government has undertaken to how transparent it is (in some cases, such as major projects, the data may be encouraging it to do better); and a strong civil society movement encourages, challenges and scrutinises.

However, challenges lie ahead. The 2015 Spending Review is likely to mean further spending and staff reductions for most departments. Some departments and some services, if not the state, will need to be transformed despite, and in order to adapt to, these resource pressures. Further demands for devolution, and the forthcoming European referendum, could lead to new constitutional settlements – and unsettlement. The Civil Service is older, with more staff at more senior grades than in 2010. The Government has manifesto pledges to implement and a challenging world to implement them in.

Improving how it uses data could help the Government with some of this. The UK receives plaudits (often justified) for its record on open data, but problems remain. Too much data is still locked in PDFs and of questionable consistency, making it more difficult to use than it should be. Some data is still of poor quality – such as that relating to the professions of civil servants in many departments, which should be basic management information. Some data isn't published at all – including on the performance of companies providing public services. Government is bad at explaining what some key data means – for example, changes to spending plans, or the impact departments' policies and reforms have. These problems of quality and accessibility point to a wider problem: a lot of this data, which could provide greater insight into how government is run and increase accountability, isn't being used by government, Parliament or the public.

Although discussions of formats and standards can often seem technical and remote, they are vital: better data, and better use of data, can allow us to understand and improve government in ways previously unknown. Better data is a means to more effective use of data, and ultimately to more effective government.

Getting data right isn't always easy – we at the Institute know we can improve how we ourselves publish data – but we recommend some basic principles that could help. The Government has a lot of progress it can build on, while any future appointment of a new chief data officer, and the development of Single Departmental Plans to outline and measure priorities, provide opportunities for improvement.

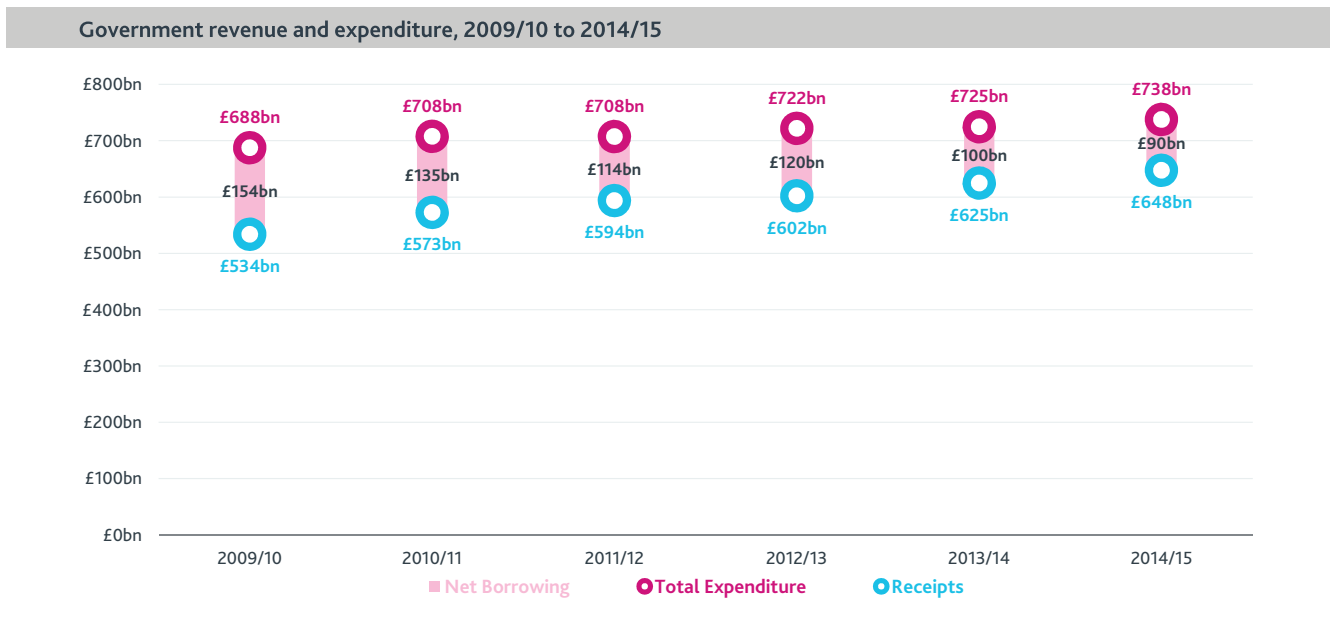


Whitehall: what has changed and what comes next

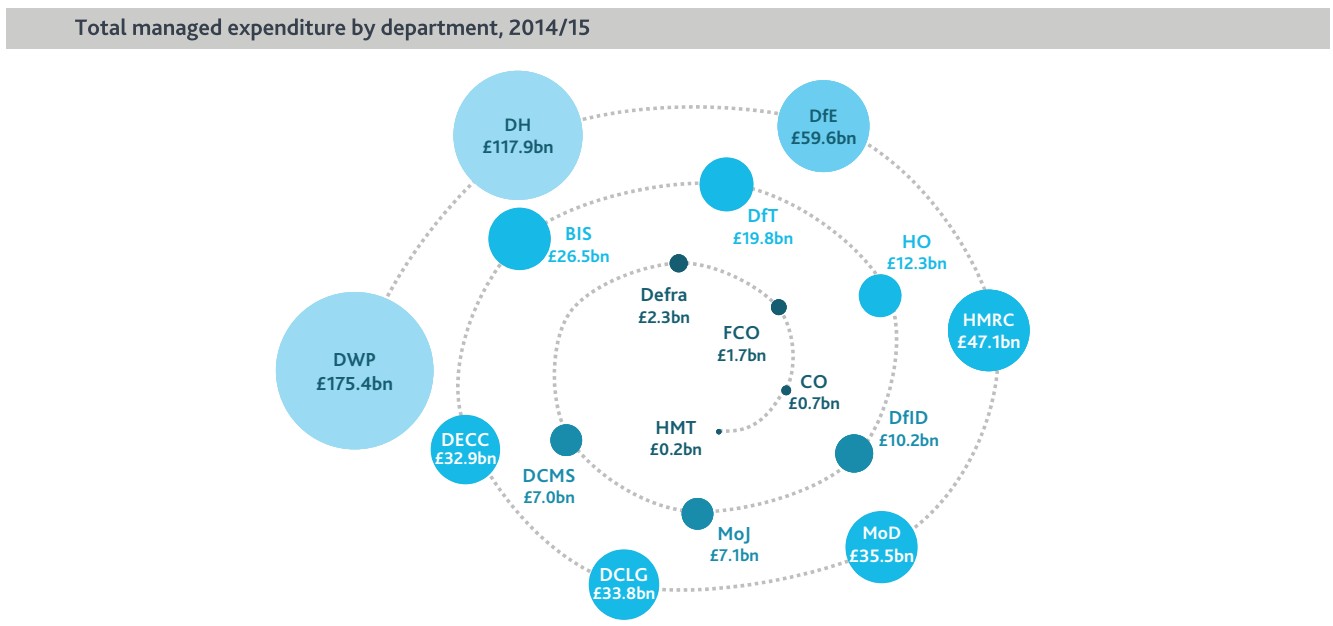
The 2010–15 Conservative–Liberal Democrat Government was the first coalition in the UK since 1945. It was relatively stable in terms of personnel – six secretaries of state lasted the course – and in terms of organisation, with minimal machinery of government changes. It had more joint ministers (serving more than one department) than most previous governments, and followed Institute for Government advice in employing more special advisers for support in the new political environment.

But if there was continuity in terms of personnel, there was much more change in the size, shape and nature of the departments they were running.

The resources available to government

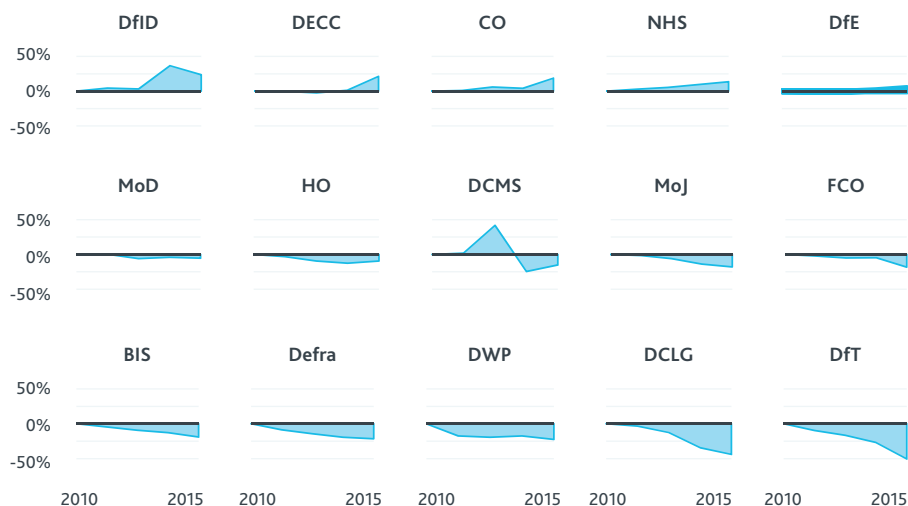


The Coalition committed to reducing the UK government’s budget deficit and bringing public spending under control. The deficit – the gap between government’s revenue and its expenditure – has narrowed from £135bn in 2010/11 to £90bn in 2014/15.



Government revenue is shared out between departments, although the money that each gets varies considerably: the largest, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), had a total managed expenditure of £175.4bn in 2014/15, while the smallest, the Treasury (HMT), had £200m.

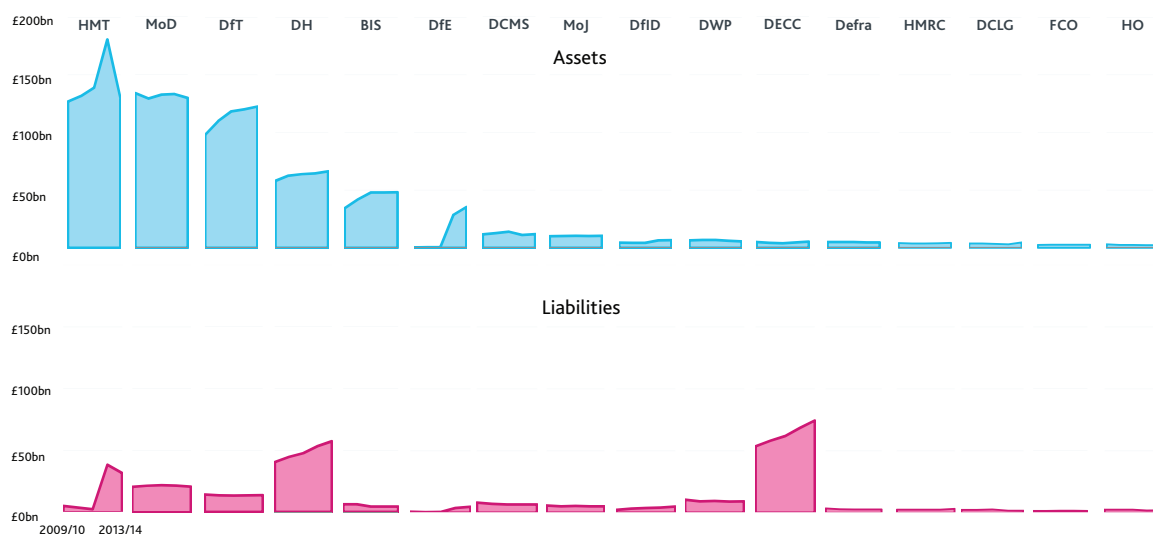
Percentage Change in RDEL from 2010/11 to 2014/15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2015.

The Government's attempts to bring public spending under control mean that departments' resource DEL (RDEL) budgets – which pay for the running of departments and their policies – have, in nearly all cases, been reduced since 2010. The exceptions are those with some ring-fenced budgets – the Department for Education (DfE), Department of Health (DH) and Department for International Development (DfID) – and also the Cabinet Office (CO) and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC). Departments have been asked to model further reductions to their resource DEL budgets – of 25% and 40% – for the November 2015 Spending Review, as they were for the 2010 Spending Review.¹ The true scale of reductions per department is difficult to calculate, complicated by machinery of government changes – shifts in policy responsibilities mean that grants are transferred from one department to another, or from central government to local authorities. This underlines the need for improvements to how government financial data is published and used, which should be a priority given expected reductions during the next parliament.

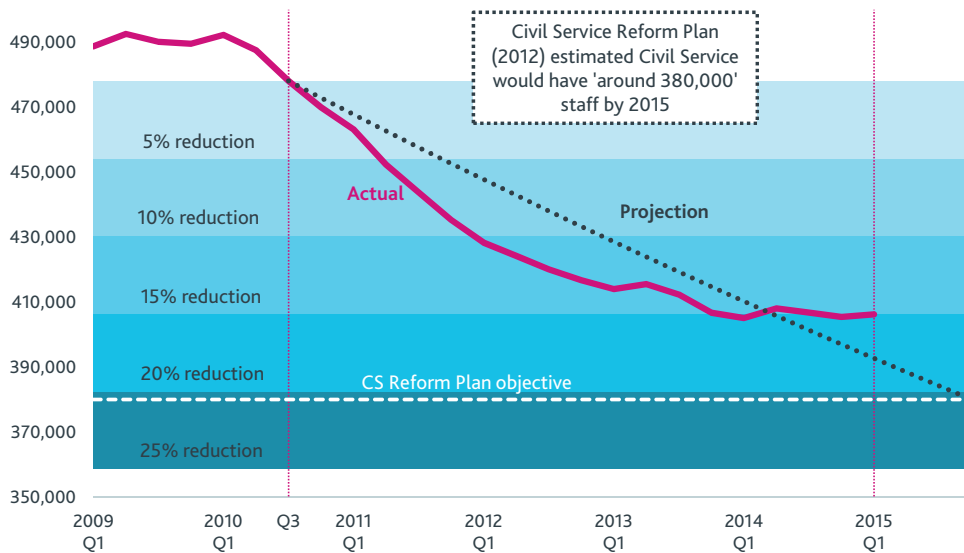
Departmental assets and liabilities, 2009/10 to 2013/14



Source: Institute for Government analysis of departmental Annual Reports and Accounts (Consolidated Statement of Financial Position).

Government’s net liabilities – the difference between the value of its assets and liabilities – have increased from £1.2tn in 2010/11 to £1.8tn in 2014/15. They have also fluctuated at departmental level: HMT has disposed of some of its assets (the stakes in banks taken during the financial crisis), and the Department for Transport (DfT) has acquired more. By contrast, DH (provision for clinical negligence claims) and DECC (nuclear decommissioning) have experienced a rise in liabilities. The Institute has previously noted that assets and liabilities deserve more attention, especially if further reductions are to be made to public spending. The selling-off of Royal Mail and stakes in the financial sector suggests this might be happening, although the aim may be to release more cash in the short term rather than to manage assets properly in the long term.

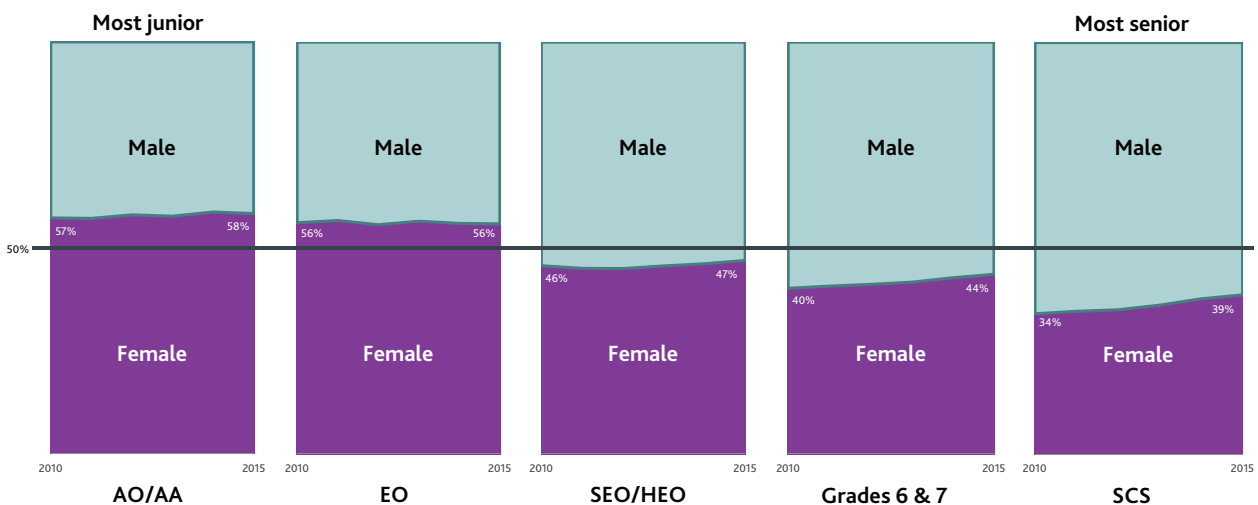
Civil Service staff numbers, March 2009 to March 2015 (Full Time Equivalent)



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Office for National Statistics (ONS) Public Sector Employment Data (table 9), Q1 2009 to Q1 2015.

A focus on reducing the cost of running government through efficiencies and reforms means that administration costs and the size and cost of the government estate have been reduced since 2010. But changes to the size of the state since 2010 are perhaps most obvious in the reduction in the number of civil servants. There were nearly 480,000 civil servants (full-time equivalent) at the 2010 Spending Review; there were just over 406,000 in March 2015, a reduction of 15%. However, the Government had expected the Civil Service to be operating with 380,000 staff by 2015, a stark illustration of how difficult any further reductions will be.

Gender balance of each civil service grade, 2010 to 2015 (headcount)



Source: IfG analysis of ONS Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2010 to 2015. SCS figures also include civil servants at equivalent SCS level.

The staff reductions mean the Civil Service is both older and more concentrated in senior grades than in 2010. More positively, it has become more diverse: 39% of the Senior Civil Service is now female, compared with 34% in 2010 (and there have been increases in ethnic minority and disability representation). However, this is still less than 50%, and does not reflect the greater number of women than men at more junior grades.

Engagement Index score, 2009 to 2014



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Civil Service People Survey, 2009 to 2014. Departments ordered from highest to lowest score, 2014.

Civil servants have experienced a great deal of change since 2010, with redundancy rounds, reduced resources and (in some cases, as we find below) a fundamental transformation in what their department actually does. Despite this, engagement scores – how civil servants feel about the organisation they work for – have remained steady for the Civil Service as a whole. They fell in some departments – notably DfE, DWP and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) – but have now recovered.

Finally, two referendums during the last parliament – in favour of further law-making powers in Wales, and against independence for Scotland – and a forthcoming one during this parliament, on the UK's membership of the European Union, have set the scene for constitutional change. As we saw in *Whitehall Monitor 2014*, Whitehall departments differ in the extent to which they are affected by Barnett consequentials – the formula that determines how much of their budget is given to the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and therefore how much of the UK their own spending and influence reaches.² Some Whitehall departments employ large numbers of staff in Wales and Scotland – notably DWP, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and DfID in Scotland, and DfT (through the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS, through the Intellectual Property Office and Companies House) in Wales. Further changes to the balance of powers – including raising taxes, devolved policy areas and, ultimately, independence for Scotland or something just short of it – could change all of this. The same is true in the other direction, with the possibility of powers returning to the UK from Europe, depending on the referendum outcome. The Institute's new project on Europe will be keeping track of those developments.³

What government did with its resources

Resource management models used by departments, 2013/14



Resources that are deployed through each resource management model as a percentage of identified spend of each department. Covers roughly 80% of departmental spend. Indicative.

Source: IfG analysis of departmental accounts, departmental Business Plans, NAO departmental overviews, relevant government publications, and OSCAR.

As well as differing in the amount of money they get from the Treasury and the number of staff they employ with some of it (and changes in both since 2010), government departments manage their resources differently:

- Some, such as the Ministry of Defence (MoD), HMRC, HMT and DWP directly manage most of them.
- Others, such as DH (NHS England and Public Health England), DfT (various road transport and other agencies, such as the DVLA) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (museums and galleries, Arts Council England, UK Sport) manage them through arm’s-length bodies (ALBs).
- DCLG is one example where most of the resources go through grants or system funding – in DCLG’s case, local councils.
- The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is one where a sizeable amount of resource is contracted out through private companies.

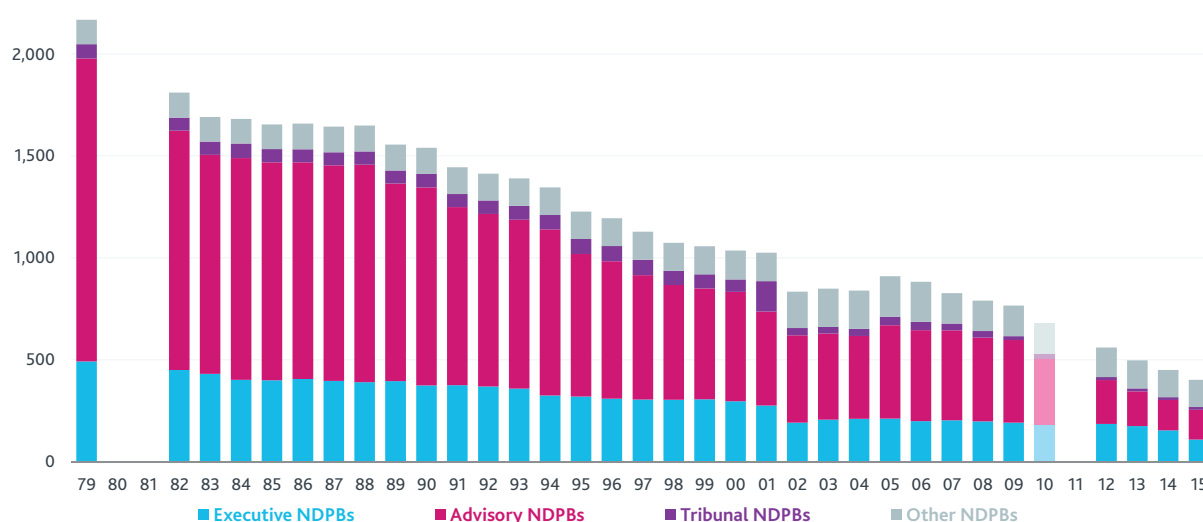
These different models have consequences for what ministers and civil servants will spend their time doing, and what skills they should possess: for example, departments that manage many ALBs will need to take management of their relationships with those bodies seriously. Departments need to be particularly aware of this if they are fundamentally changing what they do, and ensure they have staff with the requisite capabilities. This happened to a number of departments during the last parliament:

- DfE moved towards more contracting as more money went directly to academies without going through local government. The adverse opinion given by the Comptroller and Auditor General (head of the National Audit Office) on this part of DfE’s accounts highlights some risks in shifting model.⁴

- DH has gone from directly managing the National Health Service to doing so through two ALBs – NHS England and Public Health England.
- MoJ now runs the probation service through a markets model, rather than through an ALB – it should therefore ensure that it has the requisite contract management skills to do so.

It is difficult to work out exactly what the public service markets and contracting landscape looks like across government and over time, including what is being spent and to whom it is being given; we lack data entirely for the performance of contractors. Nonetheless, the National Audit Office estimates that central government spends about £40bn annually with third-party providers (less than local government and the NHS), the MoD spending more than any other department. Spend Network's analysis bears this out. It also finds that Capgemini (IT), Telereal Trillium (facilities) and HP (IT) were the three biggest suppliers to central government in 2014. Overall – and in spite of the Government's efforts to open up IT to smaller suppliers – IT companies account for most of the money going to the top 20 and top 50 suppliers to central government.

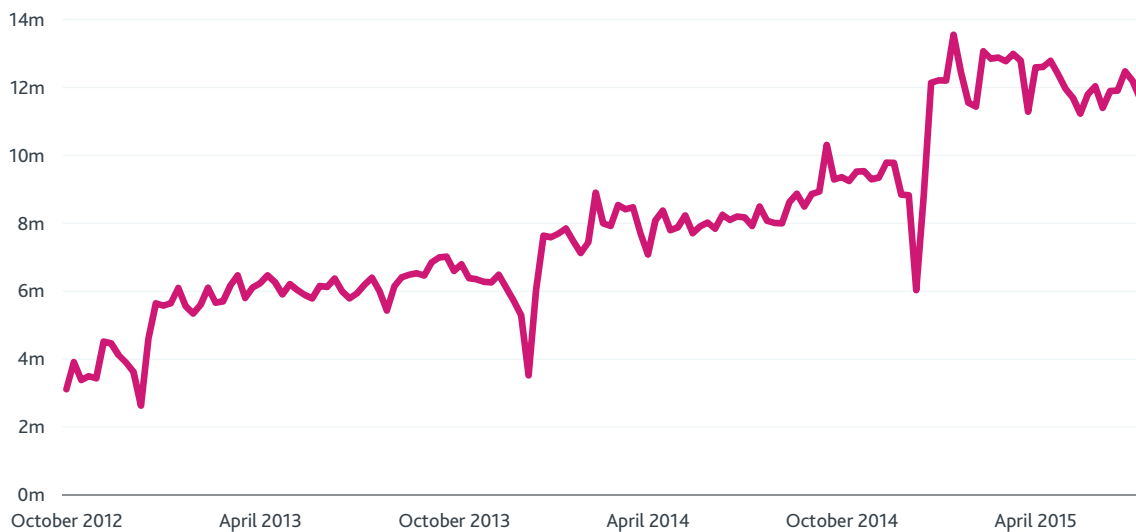
Number of Non-departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), 1979 to 2015



Source: IfG analysis of Cabinet Office *Public Bodies* reports, 1997-2009 and 2012 to Q1 2015. 2010 data from departments' reports and extrapolation.

The Coalition has also reformed the ALB landscape. ALB reform should be more than a numbers game, but most governments commit to a 'bonfire of the quangos' and a reduction of ALB numbers: the Coalition was no exception. The number of non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs – the most numerous type) has fallen steadily most years since 1979; it fell from over 680 in March 2010 to 401 in March 2015, following a review in summer 2010. The number of non-ministerial departments and executive agencies also fell, from 83 in 2010 to 62 in 2015. Some bodies have been created and several measures intended to improve the accountability of bodies have been introduced (being subject to review, publication of annual reports and public meetings).

Weekly unique visitors to GOV.UK, 2012-15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of GOV.UK, Performance Platform – Activity web traffic dashboard. Accessed 10 August 2015.

A big change in how some departments managed their resources and delivered their services during the last parliament came through digital technology. In its simplest definition, 'digital' refers to online activity – services available through government websites – but more broadly, it means a complete change in the way government operates, catalysed by technological advance. During the course of the parliament, more people started visiting GOV.UK, the single government website introduced in 2012 (it now receives around 12 million visitors each week). We are only at the beginning of the digital transformation of services: the Government Digital Service (GDS) began with 25 digital exemplars (13 of which, including voter registration, carer's allowance and tax self-assessment, were live before the end of the parliament) to demonstrate the possible benefits to users and savings to government. However, with the head and a number of other senior staff having recently left GDS, and suggestions of budget and staff reductions coming in the Spending Review, the relationship between GDS and digital teams in individual departments, and the impetus behind digital government, remain unresolved issues.

As well as trying new things, departments continued to do what they have always done. They continued to work on government bills to be passed into law by Parliament, though not as many as in the various Labour administrations between 1997 and 2010. They continued to receive and respond to information requests from parliamentarians and the public: parliamentary questions, ministerial correspondence and Freedom of Information (Fol) requests. DWP, Home Office (HO) and DH tend to receive the largest number of information requests, with the territorial offices receiving the fewest. While the Wales Office, DH and DfT are the best departments at responding to these inquiries on time, our analysis shows that HO, DCLG and MoJ were among the worst for the second year in a row. According to polling of MPs conducted by ComRes and published here for the first time, MPs agree with some of this – considering MoJ and HMT the departments who were least responsive to their enquiries in 2015.

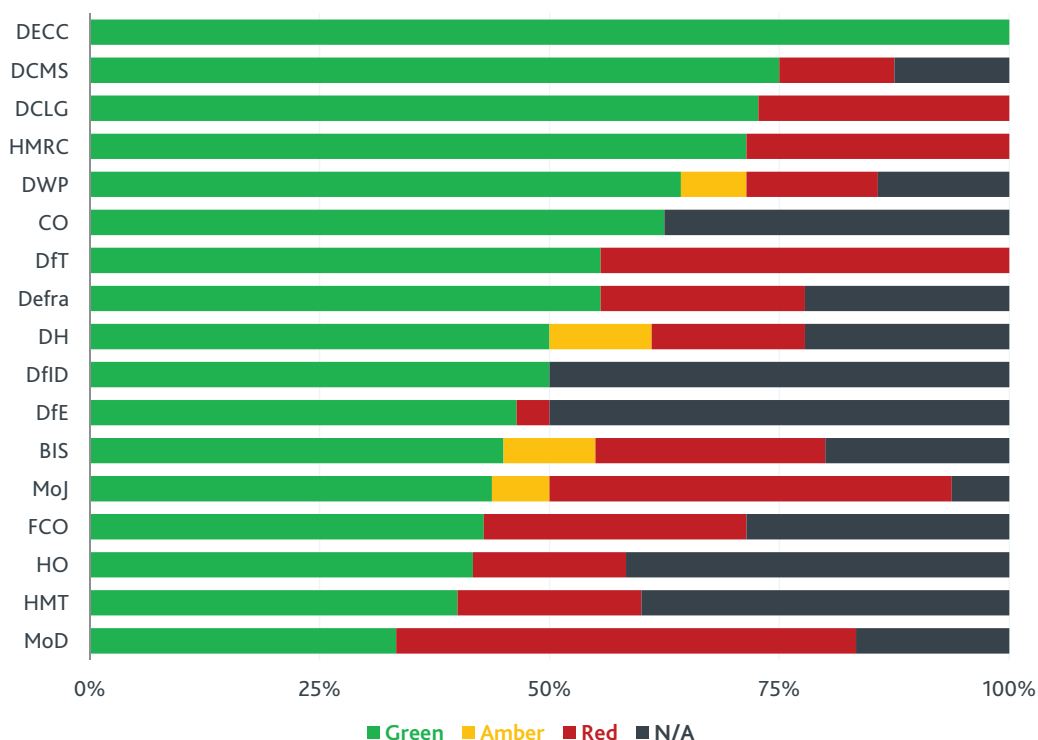
Another perennial of government business is major projects. The Coalition introduced the Major Projects Authority (MPA) in the Cabinet Office to support and scrutinise the Government's portfolio of major projects, which includes everything from Crossrail to Universal Credit. The fact that delivery confidence has increased across those projects monitored in all three MPA annual reports suggests the MPA's accountability and transparency might be helping to improve project delivery; the fact that some projects rated red or amber/red in the MPA's first annual report are still rated amber/red in its third suggests a degree of welcome realism.

Permanent Secretary Objectives – the means by which departments' most senior civil servants are assessed – have become more usable during the last parliament. But we find that they are not always joined up with the other measures of departmental performance. The new Single Departmental Plans being introduced after the November 2015 Spending Review will hopefully provide a better way of aligning the different measures, and be an improvement on the Structural Reform Plans (part of departments' Business Plans), which tracked – not entirely successfully – the actions and reforms of departments over the past five years.

The impact government made on the real world

Measuring outcomes – the impact of what government does, and what government departments do – is difficult. The UK has tried a number of cross-government performance initiatives since the 1980s to drive the delivery of priorities and measure their impact. As we have seen above, the Coalition introduced Business Plans for each department, outlining their priorities. Impact indicators – datasets that mapped most closely on to promised reforms, such as how many people are on particular types of benefit (DWP), reoffending rates (MoJ), the proportion of trains running on time (DfT) and net migration to the UK (HO) – formed part of these.

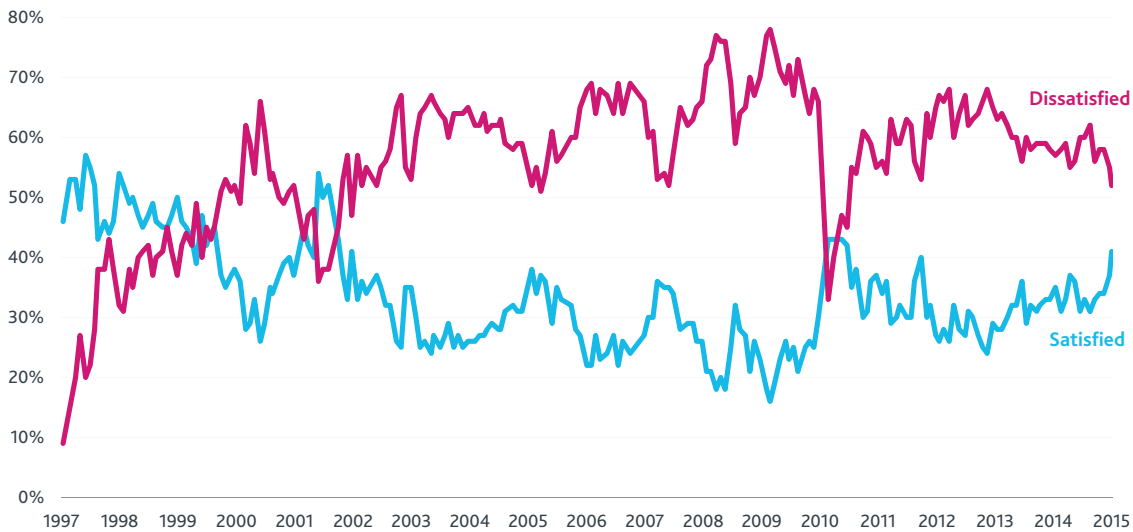
Movement in impact indicators, 2010 to 2015



Source: Institute for Government analysis of impact indicators - multiple sources, *Whitehall Monitor: Deep Impact?* (2015).

The indicators for some departments headed largely (in DECC's case, entirely) in the right direction between 2010 and 2015, while seven (MoD, HMT, HO, Foreign Office, MoJ, BIS and DfE) had under half go the right way. However, given the lack of data in many cases (half of indicators at DfID and DfE), the lack of any benchmarks or baselines, and the frequent lack of a connection between a department's reform plan actions and its indicators, it is extremely difficult to analyse what impact departments actually had. The poor quality of much published data also suggests neither departments nor the centre of government were making any use of the indicators. Again, the new Single Departmental Plans to be published following the 2015 Spending Review (and tied to the budget settlements therein) represent an opportunity to rectify these problems and provide a stronger platform on which government can measure its progress during the next parliament.

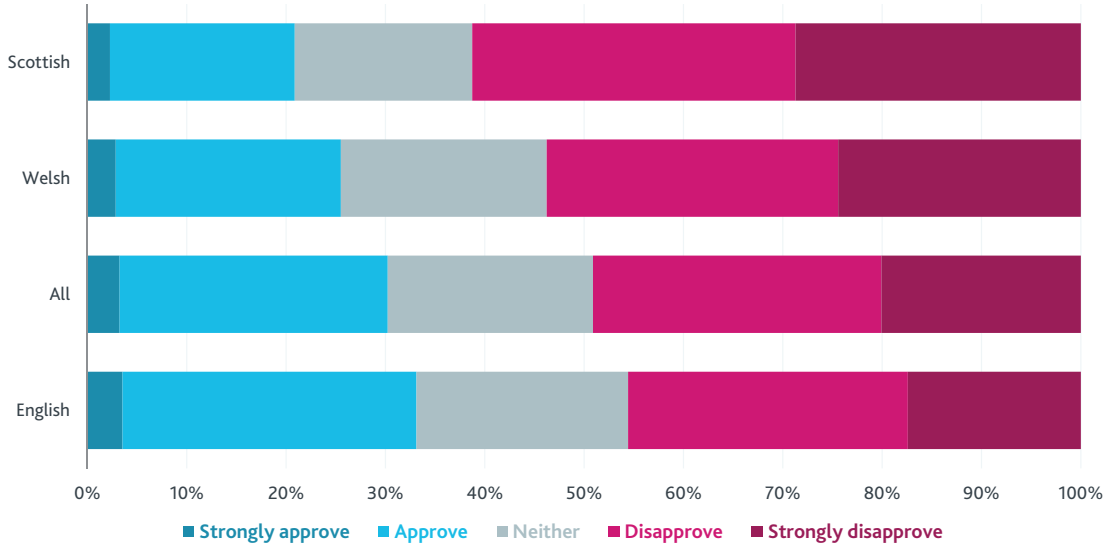
'Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the government is running the country?' - Ipsos MORI



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Ipsos MORI Political Monitor, May 1997 to April 2015.

There are other (imperfect) ways of measuring government's outcomes, and ultimately, its effectiveness. One is how the public perceives government performance. Satisfaction with the system of government in Britain has remained fairly constant (and fairly negative) over the past decade, with more than two-thirds of people surveyed saying it could do with improvement. Levels of satisfaction with the Coalition were similar at the end of the parliament to those at the beginning. Polling suggests the public thought the Coalition handled the economy reasonably well, and health and immigration not so well.

'Do you approve or disapprove of the job the [UK] government is doing?' - British Election Study



Source: Institute for Government analysis of British Election Study Wave 4 data, March 2015.

But one of the more striking findings – from the British Election Study – is the difference in attitudes to government overall in the different parts of the UK. In England, 44% disapprove or strongly disapprove of the job that the UK Government is doing; this rises to 60% in Scotland. This is not just a symptom of Scottish distrust of government in general: only 26% disapprove or strongly disapprove of the Scottish government. This polarisation of opinion could prove a challenge for the UK in the event of any further devolution over the coming parliament.

International comparisons present a mixed picture. The UK is consistently in the top 25 of various international rankings of 'government effectiveness' and 'government efficiency', and has improved in most of those since 2010. Its performance in international rankings of three core policy areas – health, immigration and the economy – is more variable: the UK is top of the Commonwealth Fund's health ranking, has fallen back on the Migrant Integration Policy Index, and has improved in some and declined in other economic rankings, which rather underlines the limitations of international indices.

Open data and transparency: what happened and what comes next

The UK is seen as a world leader in open data and transparency. It leads international initiatives and heads international rankings. The number of users and number of datasets on data.gov.uk (and elsewhere) has increased. 'Open Defra' means the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will soon publish 8,000 datasets. Francis Maude, who drove much of the agenda as Minister for the Cabinet Office, has asserted that open data is an idea whose time has come – and the UK is at the vanguard.⁵ The fact we can produce this report supports that.

But it is sometimes too easy for the UK to bask in the glow of such plaudits and ignore the problems that exist. We outline some we have found under the following headings:

- **Data as data** The raw material
- **Data as information** Turned into something meaningful
- **Data as evidence** Actually used for something, e.g. to scrutinise.

Data as data

Everything else – our ability to turn data into information, our ability to use it as evidence – flows from good quality, usable data.

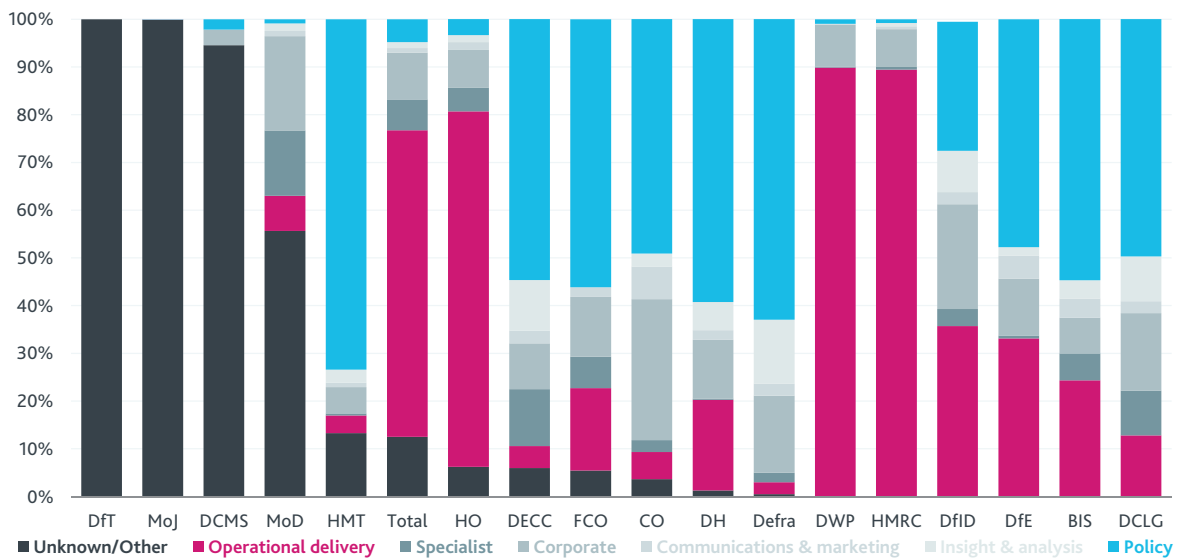
A few weeks after becoming Prime Minister, David Cameron wrote to government departments on 'opening up data'.⁶ He said there should be 'a presumption in favour of transparency', and that departments and agencies 'should ensure that any information published includes the underlying data in an open standardised format' in order that it might be reused by third parties. Five years on, this basic principle – far short of more developed standards such as those supported by the Open Data Institute – is not being applied. Too much government data is still published in PDF format, making it harder to reuse. There are problems with consistency between different releases of the same data, in terms of when updates are published and in what is included and excluded.

One consistency problem is that the boundaries of what constitutes a department change across datasets. Some refer only to the departments directly line-managed from the permanent secretary; others swap arm's-length bodies in and out at will. This often makes it difficult to build links within the same dataset over time, and between datasets, which could lead to more powerful analysis.

There are also consistency problems in and across financial datasets. There have been improvements over the past five years – through the consolidation of the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) and the Clear Line of Sight project – but problems remain. The various sources of government financial data – the WGA, Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA), budgets and spending reviews, departmental annual reports and accounts – do not always match. Some include depreciation and reconciliations, while others don't. Different departmental boundaries are used in different reports. Budget documentation is still not published in an open format. And many of these sources change baselines, making year-on-year comparisons difficult.

Some data is collected but not published at all; an obvious example is the performance of companies contracted by government to provide public services. Such information could increase accountability in public service markets, help government better understand public service markets and even increase public trust. As Matt Hancock, appointed Minister for the Cabinet Office in May 2015, noted, there is a 'ripple effect' from open data as the public use it to drive up standards in public services; businesses use it for economic growth; and others 'convert open data into useful insights that can be fed back into government'.⁷

Professions to which civil servants belong, March 2015 - by department (headcount)



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Civil Service Statistics 2015. Ordered by Unknown/Other.

We take much of the data that is published on trust – we assume it is reliable and accurate. But there are some obvious instances where data quality is poor or much of it missing: for example, data on the professions of each civil service post given by departments to the ONS. For five departments, the professions for more than 15% of their workforce are given as 'unknown' or something 'other' than the 25 civil service professions, one in eight civil servants overall. Often these numbers do not match those published in departments' own organograms. This should be fairly basic management information.

A final word on Freedom of Information (FoI). Open data and FoI are different – the former published proactively, the latter reactively in response to requests – but complementary. FoI can obtain information not otherwise published, and given the lack of any statutory 'right to data' or other legal underpinning, is a useful backstop. The recent transfer of the policy to the Cabinet Office, which has a restrictive release record, and the establishment of a commission on FoI are matters of concern, and could damage transparency in the UK and our global reputation for it.

Data as information

With so much data being published, it is possible for it to be hidden in plain sight. Publishing lots of data is one thing; making it meaningful is another. This is not always the role of government – which should publish the raw data (and necessary documentation) to allow others to use and interpret it – but there are instances where government should be much better at explaining its own working.

Transparency of departmental spending plans

Dept	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Overall Ranking
DCMS	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	1
DECC	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	2
DH	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	3
FCO	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	4
MoJ	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	5=
DfT	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	5=
BIS	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	6
DfID	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	7
DfE	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	8
HO	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	9
DWP	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	10
CO	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	11=
DCLG	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	11=
Defra	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	12
MoD	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	13
HMT	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	14=
HMRC	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	14=

Source: IFG analysis of Budgets 2010-15, Spending Review 2010 & 2013, PESA 2011-15, and departmental Annual Reports and Accounts 2011/12 to 2013/14.

Financial data provides a good (or bad) example. Departments' spending plans almost inevitably change throughout the year, so we asked if any such changes were explained and if a member of the public could find them easily. This year (as last year, when we conducted the same exercise), the answer for too many departments was no. Some (such as DECC and the Foreign Office), when contacted, were able to point us to explanatory documents. Others did not. For a second year, the Treasury was bottom of our transparency table. When contacted, officials seemed unconcerned that we could not explain movements in their departmental spending over the last parliament, and offered no explanation. As the department responsible for producing spending reviews and annual Budgets, and for reporting on the changes to each department's spending plans, the Treasury should offer a clear explanation for changes to its own.

Transparency and usability of impact indicators by department

Department	Current score	Annual report	Open data	Presentation	Overall
MoD	=1	=1	=1	=1	=1
DCMS	=1	=1	=1	=1	=1
DfT	=1	=1	=1	=1	=1
DCLG	=1	=1	=1	=1	=1
DWP	=1	=1	=1	=1	=1
DH	=1	=16	=1	=1	=6
HMRC	=1	=1	=1	=9	=6
DfID	10	9	8	=9	8
BIS	12	=12	=9	8	9
DECC	=1	=1	=9	=9	10
DfE	11	=16	=9	7	11
Moj	9	15	=9	=9	12
FCO	13	10	=9	=9	13
Defra	=14	=1	=9	=9	14
HO	=14	11	=9	=9	15
HMT	=14	=12	=9	=9	16
CO	=14	14	=9	=9	17

Source: Institute for Government analysis of impact indicators, via transparency.number10.gov.uk, and annual reports.

The impact indicators, designed by the Coalition to track the effect of policies and reforms, suffered from similar problems. They were explicitly designed so that members of the public could use and understand them, but even if data could be found and was up to date – and in many cases, it wasn't – there was little or no attempt by many departments to make it understandable (for example, through a simple visualisation or description). Many departments failed even to explain in which direction they wanted an indicator to head. Bottom of our transparency and accessibility table were the Cabinet Office and the Treasury, the two departments nominally responsible for the indicators.

Data as evidence

Even before becoming Prime Minister, David Cameron spoke of his hope that opening up data would lead to an 'army of armchair auditors' scrutinising government spending. Using data as evidence in this way can be powerful, and take simple or sophisticated forms. In our analysis of civil service staff reductions, for example, we show, simply, that reductions have not met the Government's expectations. At the more sophisticated end is the 'stat' model of government, particularly popular in many jurisdictions in the United States, where leaders use data to understand as much as possible about their territory, set benchmarks and targets, and as a tool for governing.⁸

The efforts of many UK state institutions – the statistical service, individual departments, the Cabinet Office, the ONS, the National Audit Office (NAO) – to use and visualise data in interesting new ways should be lauded. (To give one example, a number of departments have contacted us to replicate our civil service grade analysis, updated here on page 63, to better understand how their teams and units are, and should be, structured.)

But too often, government data is not being used to its full potential: the quality of some public data suggests it can't possibly be (unless departments have better unpublished versions). There is little evidence of that army of armchair auditors – even if they had enlisted, the availability and quality of some data (impact indicators, for example) would make it difficult for them to use. These problems suggest other key groups are not using certain data, either. The explanations for changes to departmental spending plans should be found in the estimates laid before Parliament, but little fuss seems to have been made in Westminster about the data coming (or not coming) out of Whitehall. The quality of some management information suggests Whitehall cannot be using it itself.

Data is most powerful when used for something; it should not be published only for the sake of being published. It should be used to improve our understanding of government, strengthen accountability to Parliament and the public, and ultimately to make government more effective. We need to build on the progress to date, and seize new opportunities such as the forthcoming Single Departmental Plans.

What comes next

Given that a letter from the Prime Minister on the importance of open data appears not to have solved all of these problems, what can be done? The institutional structure of 'open data' within government is part of the answer. Since Mike Bracken's departure in autumn 2015, the role of chief data officer is vacant. The Government has also gone from having four advisory bodies involving users of open data to none.⁹ These voids will need to be filled.

Whitehall Monitor 2013 made a number of recommendations on availability and access, purpose and documentation, and comparability of government data.¹⁰ Regrettably, most of them could be repeated now. The Royal Statistical Society and Open Data Institute have also made valuable recommendations.¹¹ Below are a few basic principles that are prerequisites to much of the above. We make them knowing that our own publications can always be improved, and that publishing the data for others to use, however imperfectly presented, is better than leaving it unpublished.

- **There should be a presumption that data is open**, as the Prime Minister wrote in May 2010, except where there are personal privacy concerns.
- **All data should be published in an open format.** Key datasets should be published in formats that anyone, not just those with programming skills, can reuse (for example, .csv, .xls).
- **Government data releases should be added to a release calendar with at least a week's notice and the publication accompanied by contact details.** This already happens for ONS releases, and some government data is on a calendar published by GOV.UK.
- **Government should compile a canonical register of government organisations, and government datasets should be clearer about which organisations they are referring to.** This would be a big step towards comparability across and linking up datasets.
- **Data should be accompanied by documentation, and government should explain what results in key datasets mean.** All datasets should be accompanied by key information, but in some instances government should go further and explain what results mean.
- **Government and Parliament should be more assiduous in using data.** Government should be using management information, and output and outcome measures; Parliament should be using data to hold government to account and highlighting where it is deficient.
- **Government should be clear about the remit of the new chief data officer and ensure they have the political and institutional support to do their job.** They will need sufficient political and institutional clout within Whitehall and will have to work closely with departments, the Government Digital Service, the ONS and the statistical professions in the Civil Service.
- **Government needs to be clear about the remit of a new user group (or groups).**

Context

Before looking in detail at government departments and what has changed within them since 2010, we set the scene in considering two important contexts in which they operated: transparency, and – of course – politics.

The UK Government's reputation as a world leader in open data and transparency has been growing over the past few years, though its roots are deeper. The transparency agenda means we have more data on the workings (and effects) of government than ever before, and it is becoming an important part of the governing landscape. But there are still improvements that can and should be made, and some key decisions to be taken over the next few years, if the UK is to continue to lead the way.

Those decisions will be made by a Conservative government with a small majority, which followed a rarity in recent British politics: a coalition government, the first since the Second World War. The political composition of the government sets the scene for everything in this report: the changes to the size and shape of departments, what those departments do, and the policies and reforms they pursue to change the country. The ministers in charge remained relatively stable between 2010 and 2015 – including Francis Maude at the Cabinet Office, which gave political force to cross-government initiatives including efficiency savings and digitisation.





1. The transparency context

The UK is seen as a world leader in open data and transparency: we wouldn't be able to produce this report if it weren't. But there is still considerable room for improvement, and the Government must ensure that progress made over the past few administrations isn't lost.

Open data has been a cross-party success story for the UK government. Initiatives under the premierships of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown opened the way for further progress from May 2010. David Cameron came to power having promised to make politics more transparent and enlist an army of 'armchair auditors' to scrutinise government. Francis Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office through all five years of the Coalition, argued transparency was an idea whose time had come.

The Government's commitment to publishing open data has allowed us to write this report for a third year. It has also sent the UK to the top of a number of international indices for transparency and open data, led to the UK chairing the first round of the international Open Government Partnership, and enhanced the UK's reputation as a world leader in the field.

The UK should celebrate these achievements – but it should not give way to complacency. There are unresolved questions about the future of open data in the UK, from who is organisationally responsible, to where government data is published. More importantly – and as we detail throughout this report – some key data remains unpublished; some is not published in an open format; some is not published in its most usable form; and what is published is of variable quality. The UK has not met some of its own commitments under two Open Government Partnership action plans. There are signs of retrenchment on Freedom of Information. The tone, attitude and ultimately actions of the Government over the next few months and years will determine whether the UK remains a world leader and – critically – whether transparency and open data can be used to improve how government operates.

About the data

Our timeline on key open data events is based on **research conducted by the Open Data Institute**, and supplemented by further Institute for Government research.¹

Site analytics published by data.gov.uk provide the information on the usage of the site. We have used data from when it was first available (July 2012) to the end of May 2015.²

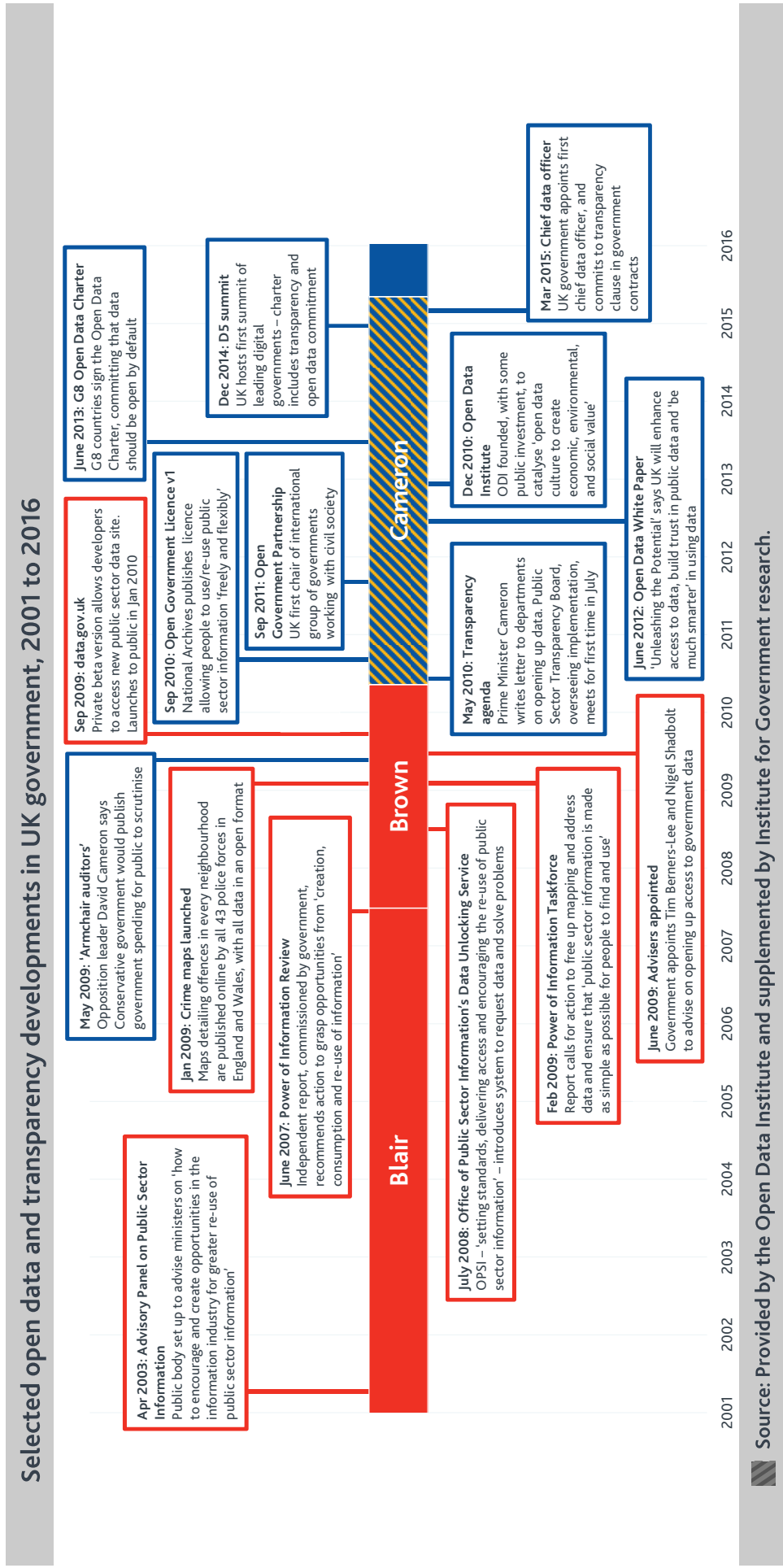
Two editions of the World Wide Web Foundation's **Open Data Barometer** have been published (2013 and 2014). It uses peer-reviewed expert survey responses, assessments of datasets by technical experts, and secondary datasets (e.g. other international surveys) to assess readiness, implementation and impact. Open Knowledge's **Global Open Data Index** has also been run twice (2013 and 2014), and works with contributors to assess 10 different datasets (including government budgets and transport timetables) according to six technical and three legal questions.³

Transparency International's Open Governance Scorecard (March 2015) assessed the UK's record in three areas: transparency, participation, and control and oversight. We focus on transparency, where 18 'standards' consist of 59 in-law indicators and 144 in-practice sub-indicators.⁴

The assessment of the UK's Open Government Partnership National Action Plan comes from **Independent Reporting Mechanism** reports. One of these was published following each National Action Plan – in 2013, assessing the UK's record against its 2011–13 commitments, and in 2015, assessing the 2013–15 commitments. Each report is written by an independent transparency expert.⁵

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/transparency

Successive UK governments have sought to improve the publication and use of public sector data.



Open data and transparency in the UK has developed as a result of initiatives undertaken by a series of prime ministers. The first steps came under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, with new public bodies and reviews clearing the way for the release and use of government data.

David Cameron became Prime Minister in 2010 having already promised to open up government spending to 'an army of armchair auditors' in response to the revelations about MPs' expenses in 2009.⁶ A letter to all departments in his first month as Prime Minister confirmed a number of commitments on publishing central government spending, local government spending and other key data, from street-level crime to organograms of government departments. Departments were told to ensure that 'any information published includes the underlying data in an open standardised format'.⁷

Political drive also came from Francis Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office. Maude told an audience at the Institute for Government in 2014:

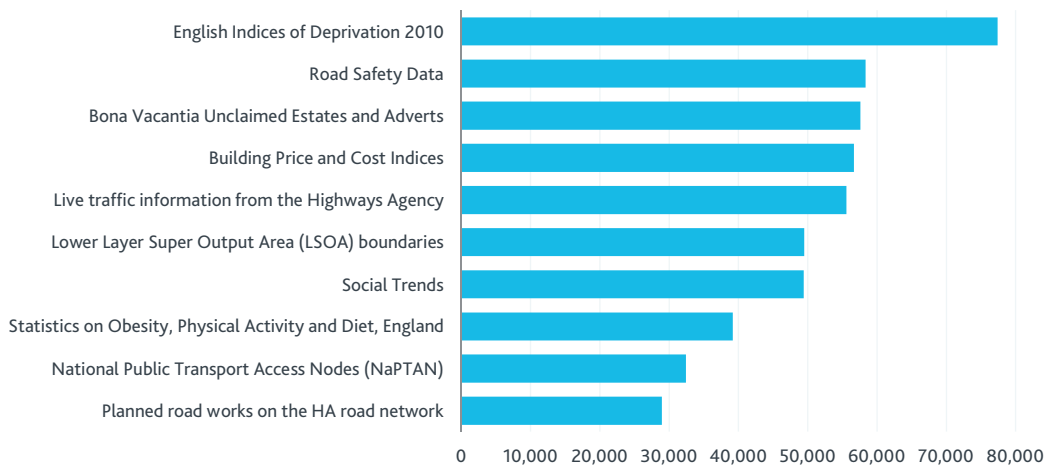
*My well-known mantra that gets trotted out by other enthusiasts for open data around the world is that nothing is so powerful than an idea whose time has come and transparency is an idea whose time has come. All of us who get it and are enthusiastic about it need to make sure it becomes irreversible.*⁸

Under Maude, the Cabinet Office gave three broad reasons for opening up data:

- making government more accountable and strengthening democracy
- improving public services
- feeding economic and social growth.⁹

Data.gov.uk was designed as the main portal for government data (although many datasets are published by individual departments on GOV.UK, and many of the numbers used in this report are from the ONS). As of September 2015, there were more than 22,000 published datasets (and more than 4,000 unpublished) listed on the site. Between July 2012 and May 2015, there were an average of 152,000 visits a month (with just over 191,000 visits in March 2014 and March 2015).

Top ten datasets on data.gov.uk by views, July 2012 to May 2015

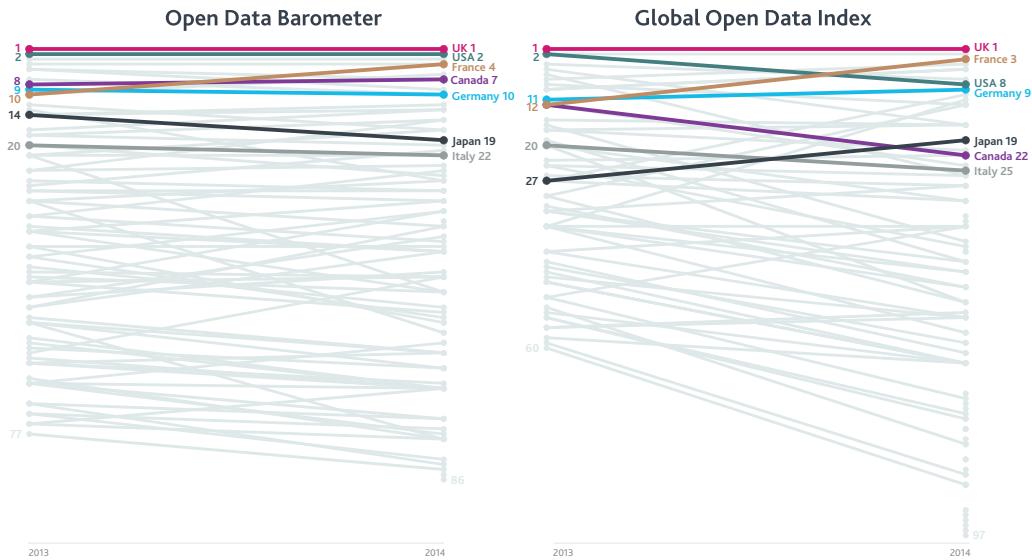


Source: Institute for Government analysis of data.gov.uk Site Analytics - Dataset Usage. Accessed 28 August 2015.

The most visited datasets include some dealing with the economic and social profile of the UK (indices of deprivation, social trends), shapefiles for creating maps (LSOA boundaries), some dealing with transport (including road safety data and planned roadworks) and a list of unclaimed estates.

The UK is seen as a world leader in open data and transparency. But there is considerable room for improvement.

Open Data Barometer and Open Knowledge Global Open Data Index rankings, 2013 and 2014 - G7 countries highlighted



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Open Data Barometer and Open Knowledge Global Open Data Index rankings, 2013 and 2014.

The UK is regarded as a world leader in open data. As well as being the first chair of the international Open Government Partnership and a member of the D5 group of advanced digital nations, the UK topped the Open Data Barometer and the Global Open Data Index in both 2013 and 2014.

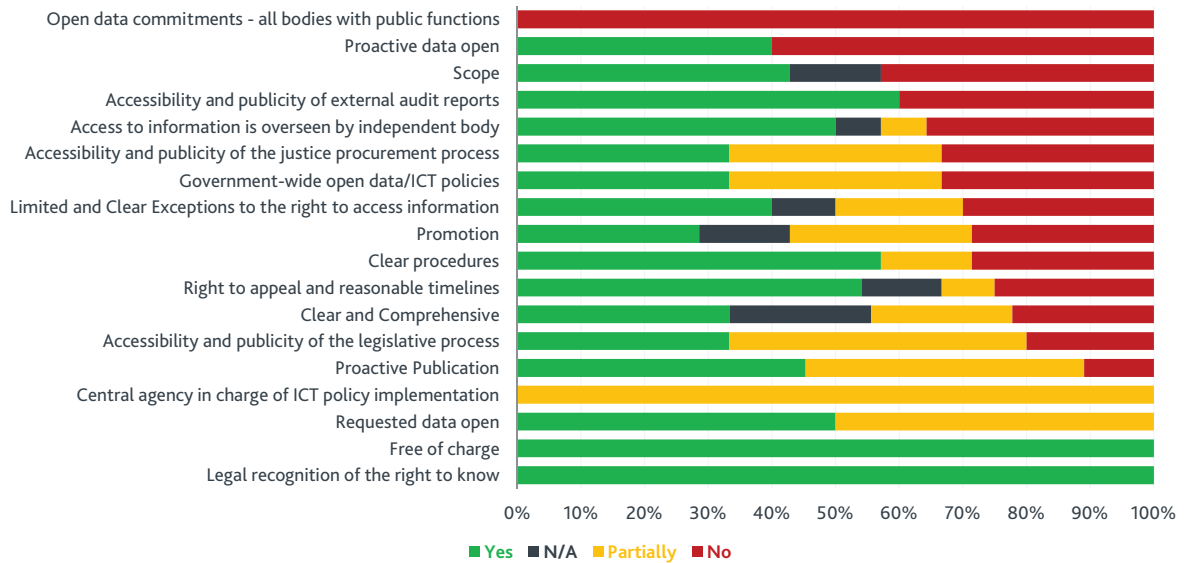
Open Knowledge Global Open Data Index rankings, 2013 and 2014 - UK score breakdown by dataset



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Open Knowledge Global Open Data Index rankings, 2013 and 2014.

As good as these international indices are, they cannot fully capture the reality of open data in the UK. For example, the Global Open Data Index gives the UK a very positive rating on government spending and a positive one on government budget (except for how up to date it is). However, our analysis in this report finds that some of the data is not published in an open format, some is not published in a usable form, and some does not explain important elements of spending, such as changes to spending plans (see chapter 3 on managing government finances).

Transparency International UK Open Governance Scorecard - answers to questions by transparency standard area



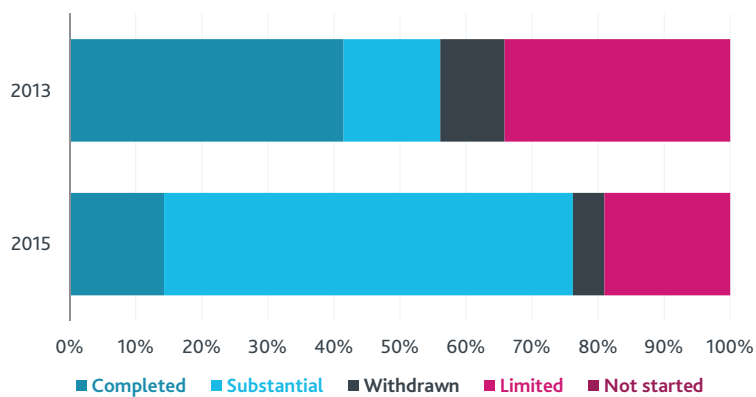
Source: Institute for Government analysis of Transparency International UK, *How open is the UK Government? UK Open Governance Scorecard results, 2015.*

Other studies highlight some of the problems. Transparency International UK examined the UK’s record using indicators under 18 different transparency headings. Its findings are 'broadly consistent' with the UK’s status as a leader in international rankings, but note 'room for improvement' with variable quality and consistency of data, lack of detail on public spending and limited powers to enforce compliance across government.¹⁰ It also finds that while the UK 'has made commendable progress without recourse to legislation, relying on policies and guidance', this:

leaves the system vulnerable to the political momentum behind the open data agenda and to the discretion of policymakers ... [and makes it] difficult to audit the open data work of public bodies and achieve high uniform standards and consistency where necessary.¹¹

What about the UK’s own commitments? As part of the Open Government Partnership – a group of countries working towards greater openness with civil society organisations – the UK has made a series of commitments, on everything from access to open data and anti-corruption, to digital government and citizen participation. A first set of commitments were compiled into a National Action Plan from 2011 to 2013. A second set, and a second National Action Plan, ran from 2013 to 2015. Independent progress reports were conducted as each plan came to an end.

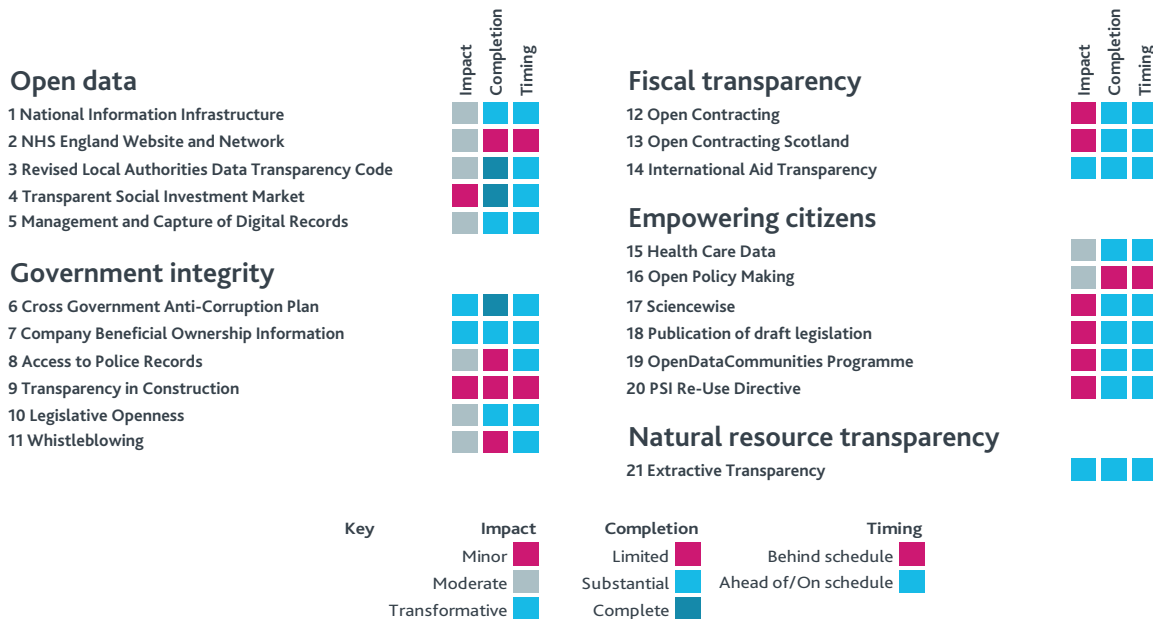
UK Open Government Partnership - level of completion of first (2013) and second (2015) National Action Plan commitments



Source: Institute for Government analysis of OGP National Action Plan Independent Reporting Mechanism reports, 2013 and 2015.

The progress reports show that the UK has completed or substantially completed more of its commitments at the end of the 2013–15 Action Plan (76%) than at the end of the 2011–13 Action Plan (56%). The commitments 'limited' in their completion in 2011–13 included some on the 'right to data', such as disincentives for public bodies to withhold data, the quality of metadata, and opening up data behind policy statements and surveys. Among the 'withdrawn' commitments in 2011–13 were powers for independent organisations 'to secure release of valuable public datasets, in suitable format, quality and regularity' (withdrawn for unknown reasons) and to create a single inventory of public datasets alongside an unlocking service (withdrawn due to technical difficulties). Nearly all of the withdrawn commitments in 2013–15 relate to the 'NHS England Website and Network', because of 'administrative and legal changes within the NHS' and privacy concerns.

UK Open Government Partnership - progress on Second National Action Plan commitments, 2015



Source: Institute for Government analysis of OGP National Action Plan Independent Reporting Mechanism reports, 2015.

Looking in more detail at the 2013–15 commitments, only three are both 'limited' in their completion and behind schedule: creating a website and network to share experiences of the NHS; increasing transparency in the construction sector; and a commitment 'to make open policymaking and the use of participation, digital technology, and online consultation the norm'.

With the exception of the NHS England website and network, all of the open data commitments are either complete or substantially complete and on or ahead of schedule. But even here, the independent reviewer highlights some future challenges. On the National Information Infrastructure (NII) – 'a management framework for the most strategically important data held by government' – the reviewer notes that government's response to criticism of the NII being inward-facing was to consult users. But the Government has gone from four user advisory panels to none between 2013 and 2015.¹² The reviewer also noted: 'The new chief data officer will need to play a stronger role in future coordination.'

It is unclear what role the new chief data officer will play (or who they will be), or whether any new user panels will be convened. There is also widespread civil society concern about the commission examining the Freedom of Information Act's operation.¹³ Although many issues still need solving – including basic ones such as the quality, consistency and openness of some data – the UK has made great strides over the past 10 years. Without legal underpinning for much of it, the tone, attitude and actions of the Government will be crucial. It would be a great shame if recent progress were lost, and the light shone on government – for which the UK is now globally renowned – extinguished.



2. The political context

After five years of coalition, the UK now has a Conservative majority government.

The first coalition government since the Second World War was formed in May 2010, with an overall majority of 41 in the House of Commons: 307 Conservatives and 57 Liberal Democrats. A total of 124 ministerial positions were shared out between the two parties, with 24 (19%) awarded to Lib Dems.

Three unforced reshuffles took place before the end of the parliament but 18 ministers stayed in the same post throughout, including six secretaries of state (among them Francis Maude – the longest-serving minister for the Cabinet Office since the position was created in 1997, by three years). The average tenure for a minister in the last Government was just under two years (695 days), nearly three months more than under Labour, 1997 to 2010 (613 days). Even so, eight departments ended the parliament with no ministers in the same position as at the start, and six departments (Scotland and Wales Offices, DfT, MoD, DCMS, Defra) had three secretaries of state in five years.

The number of joint ministers – with a position covering more than one department – rose from five to 14. Special advisers, or 'spads', rose in number from 63 to 107 by the end of 2014.

In 2009, David Cameron pledged that one-third of his ministers would be women.¹ The Government in 2010 was far off this target, at only 16% women (19 out of 119 ministers). Following the 2015 election, this has risen to 25% (30 out of 118). The proportion of women in Cabinet (full and attending) currently stands at one-third (10 out of 30).

The political context since the 2015 general election has changed markedly. The new Conservative government has a working majority of just 16 in the Commons. After dealing with the challenges of a coalition over the past five years, government – both the political and official sides – must now learn to negotiate the issues of working with a small majority.

About the data

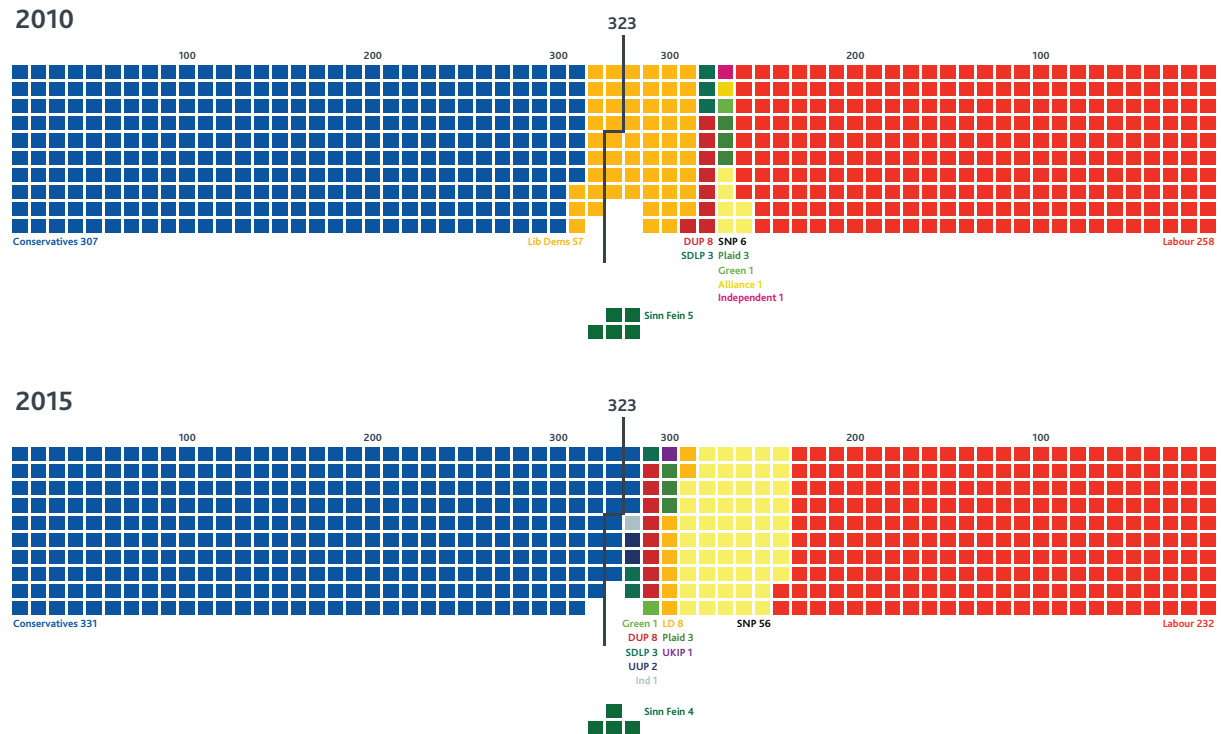
Most of the data from this chapter comes from **the Institute for Government ministerial database**, which holds data on ministers who have served in government since 1997 and draws on historical data held by **the House of Commons Library**, and from the **lists of ministers published on GOV.UK**.²

Data on special advisers came from the **special adviser data releases** put out at irregular intervals since 2010. Additional data on MPs and Lords came from the **British Election Study**, and lists published on **Parliament.uk**. Data on the election results comes from **BBC News**.³

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/politics

The 2015 general election resulted in a Conservative majority after five years of coalition.

Composition of the House of Commons following 2010 and 2015 General Elections



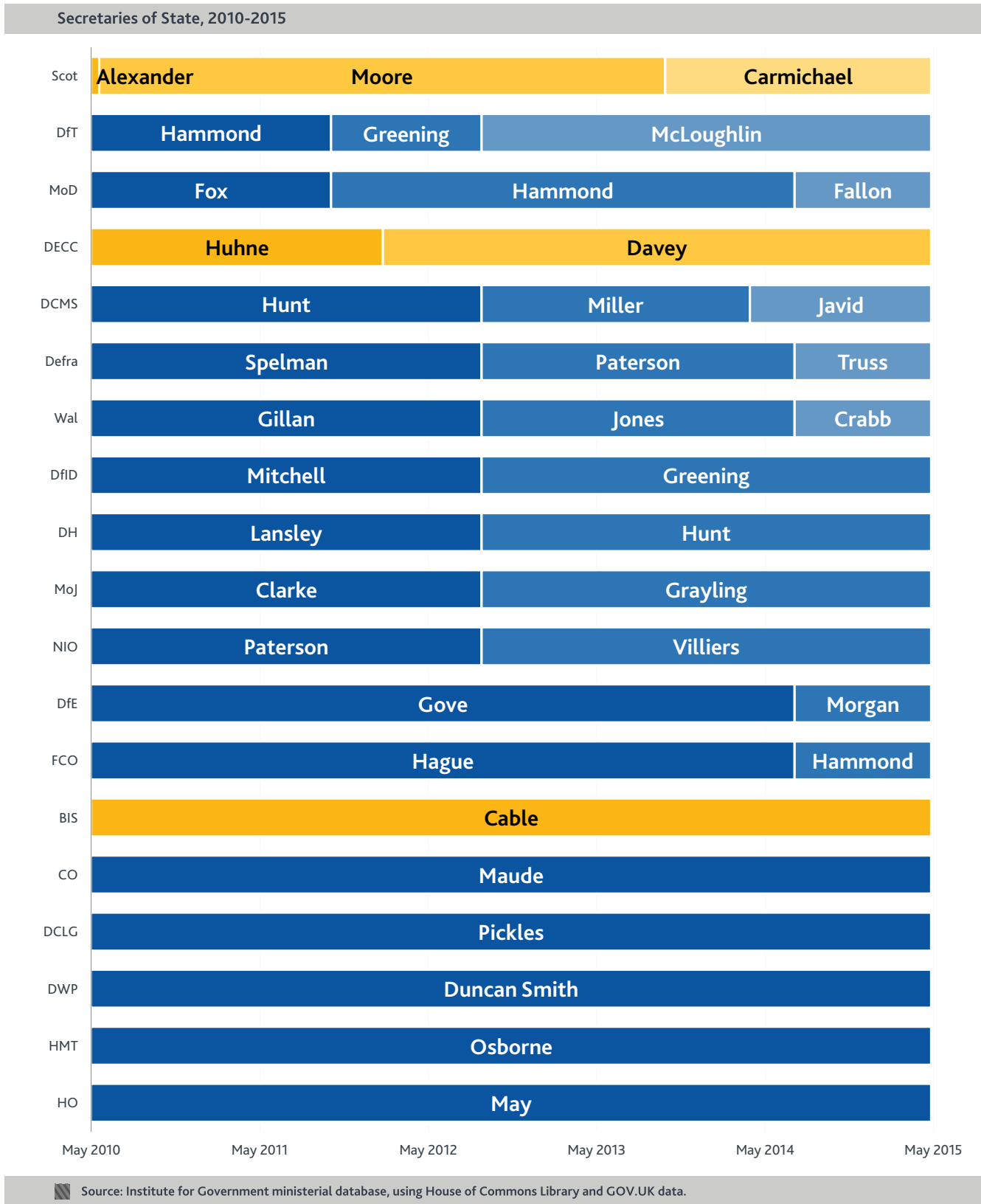
Source: Institute for Government research and BBC News.

Following the 2015 general election, the Conservatives hold 331 seats (if the Speaker is included) in the House of Commons. This is an increase of 24 since 2010, giving them a working majority of 16. The Scottish National Party gained 50 new seats, replacing the Liberal Democrats as the third-largest party in the Commons and gaining places on select committees (including two chairs).⁴

This election result ended the UK's first coalition government since the 1940s. Coalition gave the Liberal Democrats their first experience of government since the Liberals took part in Churchill's war ministry (1940–45). In May 2015, however, they lost 86% of their seats in the Commons (49 out of 57), taking their total down to just eight. Of those 49 former MPs, 14 had been government ministers under the Coalition.

The Coalition Government commanded a majority of about 70. The new Conservative Government commands an actual majority of just eight, and a working majority of 16. This could make getting its legislative agenda through Parliament challenging. This is the smallest post-election majority since 1974, and John Major's larger 1992 majority of 21 was quickly eroded due to death and defection. The House of Lords is also a potential stumbling block: fewer than a quarter of peers are Conservative members, and the Government was defeated ten times between May and July 2015.⁵

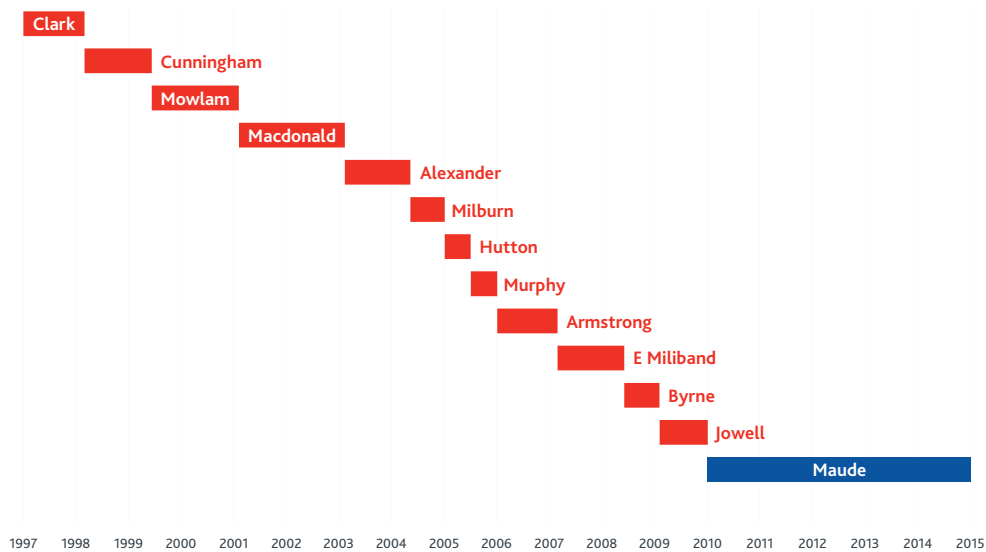
Six secretaries of state lasted the whole parliament.



When he became Prime Minister, David Cameron said that he wanted to avoid 'endless' reshuffles.⁶ In the end, he undertook three 'unforced' reshuffles – changes he was not forced to make because of resignations – during his first parliament. Six secretaries of state (or equivalent) besides himself and the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, survived all of them, and held the same post throughout the Coalition. They were George Osborne (HMT), Theresa May (HO), Iain Duncan Smith (DWP), Eric Pickles (DCLG), Vince Cable (BIS) and Francis Maude (CO).

In July 2014, with less than a year to go before the election, Cameron decided to bring in some new faces to join the stalwarts, promoting Michael Fallon (MoD), Nicky Morgan (DfE), Liz Truss (Defra), Stephen Crabb (Wales) and Sajid Javid (DCMS) to Cabinet positions for the first time. Only Javid has moved on since then, becoming Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills after this year's election. Javid, Truss and Morgan had been in Parliament for only four years when they entered Cabinet, having been elected in 2010.

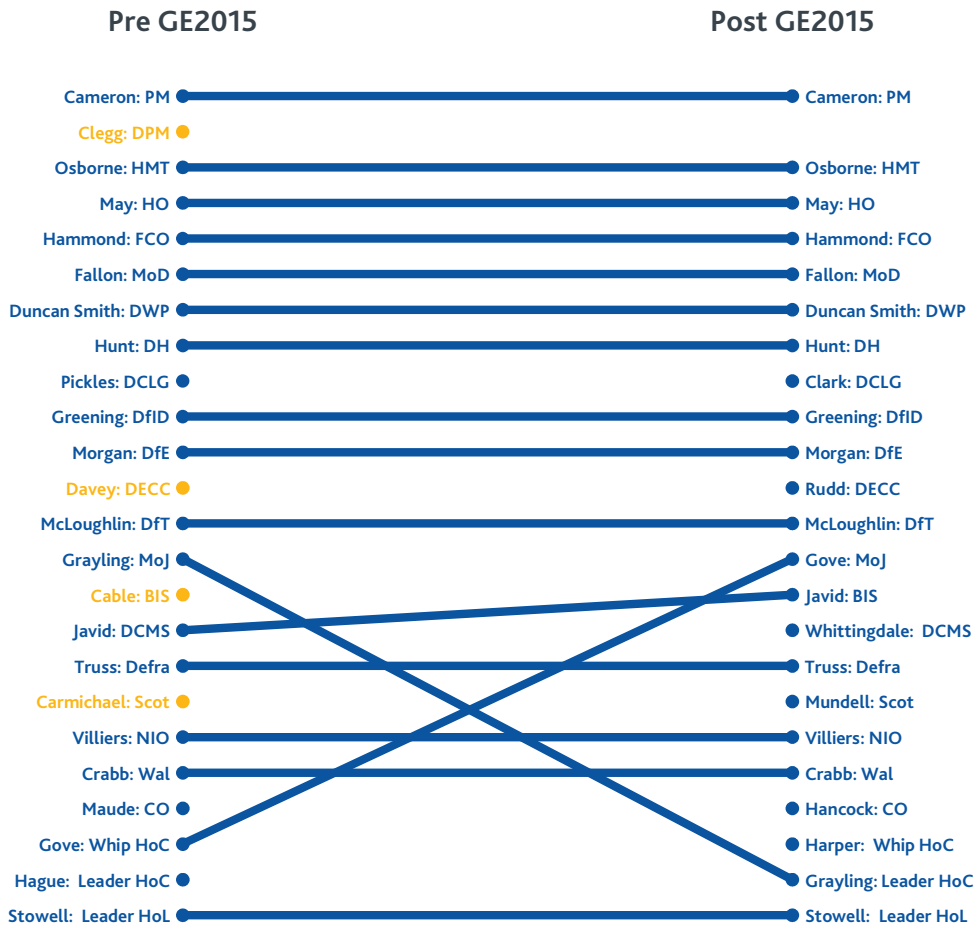
Ministers for the Cabinet Office, May 1997 to May 2015



Source: Institute for Government analysis of House of Commons Library data and lists of ministerial responsibility (including GOV.UK).

Francis Maude held the same post – Minister for the Cabinet Office – throughout the parliament, which included responsibility for civil service reform and government efficiency. He was the longest-serving minister in that role since its introduction in 1997. Gus Macdonald, the second-longest serving, held the post for two years. Since the general election, Maude (now Lord Maude) has become the Minister for Trade in the Foreign Office (FCO) and BIS. Matt Hancock – former Minister for Skills – has been moved into the role of Minister for the Cabinet Office, alongside Oliver Letwin, whose responsibilities as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster include overall responsibility for the work of the Cabinet Office.

Selected Cabinet positions, before and after 2015 General Election



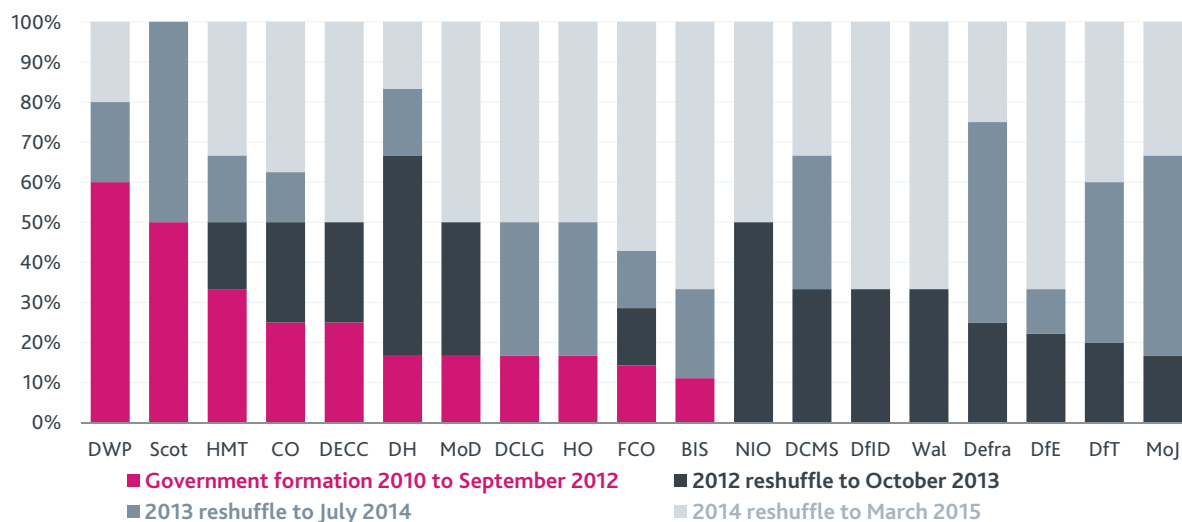
Source: IfG ministerial database (House of Commons Library and GOV.UK data). Shows PM, DPM, Secretaries of State, Leaders HoC and HoL and Chief Whip.

Following the election, 12 out of 19 Whitehall departments kept the same secretary of state (as well as Cameron remaining in Number 10). Three Liberal Democrats had to be replaced: Vince Cable (BIS), Ed Davey (DECC) and Alistair Carmichael (Scotland). Chris Grayling became Leader of the House of Commons and was replaced by Michael Gove (latterly Chief Whip) at MoJ. Eric Pickles has left government, and was replaced at DCLG by Greg Clark, formerly Minister for Universities and Science.

As this continuity suggests, there have been no major machinery of government changes: no departments have been created, abolished or merged since 2010.⁷

Eight departments ended the parliament with no ministers in the same post as when it began.

When government ministers took up their post, as of March 2015

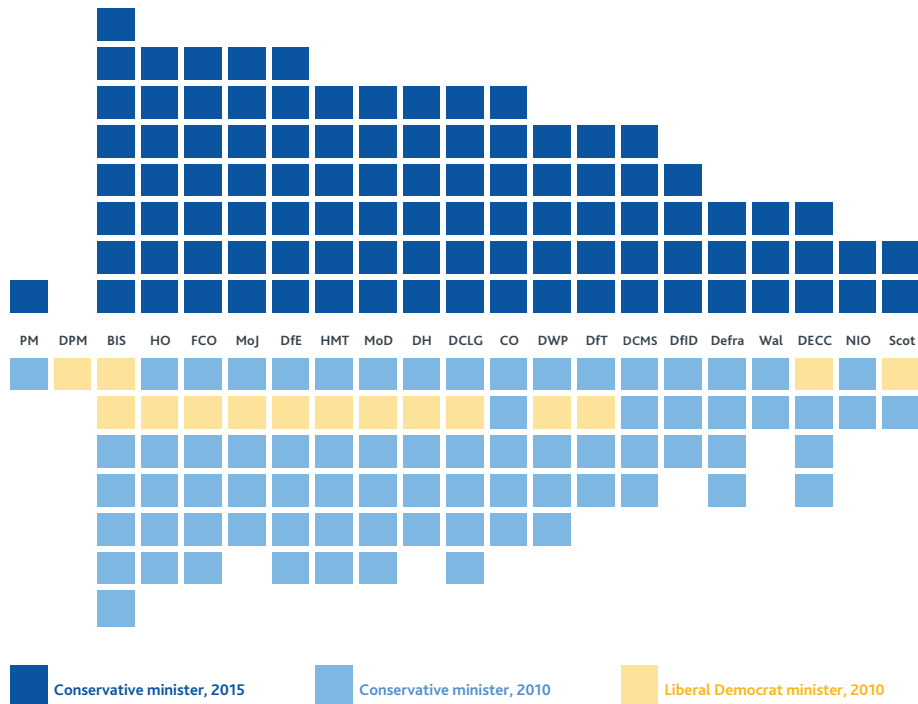


Source: Institute for Government ministerial database, using House of Commons Library and GOV.UK data.

The Cabinet of 2010–15 was fairly stable, but across the whole of government – including secretaries of state, ministers of state, parliamentary under-secretaries of state, and whips – there was more movement. Eight departments had no ministers remaining in the same post throughout the whole of the parliament, and four of those – DCMS, Wales Office, Defra and DfT – had three different secretaries of state. DH and DWP were the most stable departments in terms of turnover: three of the five DWP ministers in post at dissolution had been there since 2010, while four out of six DH ministers had been there since 2012.

There were 121 ministers in government at the end of the parliament; only 18 of them held the same position as at the beginning. Junior ministers had less longevity than secretaries of state. The average tenure of a junior minister in the last parliament (up to the day of the election) was one year and nine months, compared with two years and eight months for secretaries of state.

Ministers in government, after 2010 General Election and after 2015 General Election



Source: Institute for Government ministerial database, using House of Commons Library and GOV.UK data.

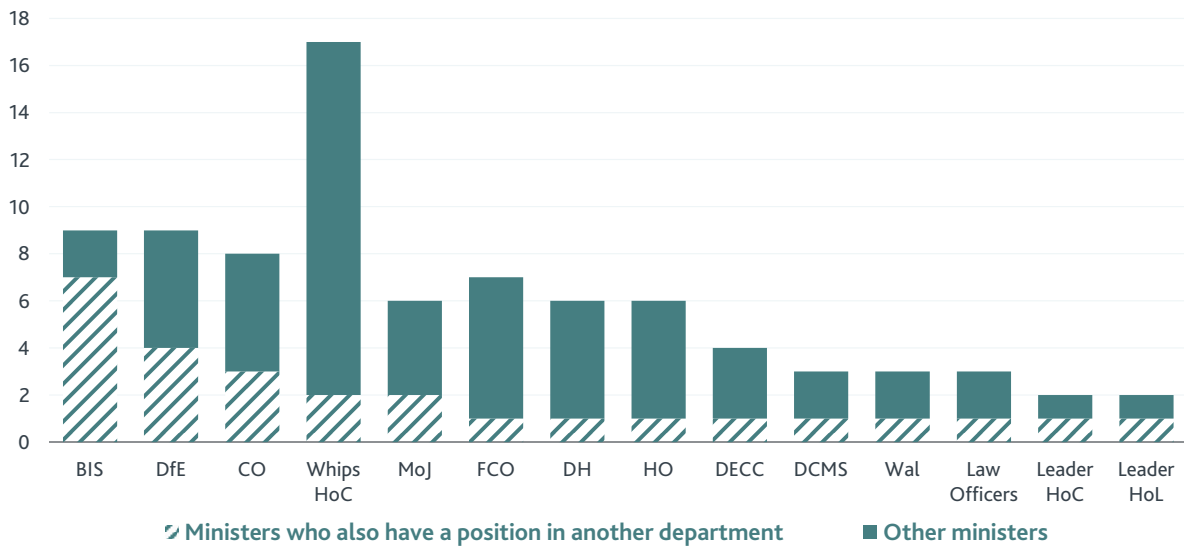
Departments differ greatly in the number of ministers they have, currently ranging from eight to two. This does not necessarily reflect the size of the department: BIS, for example, is the largest in terms of ministers but only the seventh-largest in terms of the number of civil servants in its departmental group, and eighth-largest in terms of its overall (RDEL) budget.

Under the Coalition, ministerial jobs were shared between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. The coalition agreement stated that the two parties’ share of ministerial posts would be ‘approximately in proportion to the size of the two parliamentary parties’.⁸ The Liberal Democrats ended up slightly better off than this: immediately after the 2010 election, they held 19% of government positions (24 out of 124 – including whips, offices of the leaders of the Commons and Lords, and law officers) compared with 16% of the Coalition’s seats in Parliament (57 out of 363). This increased over the course of the parliament – by the time Parliament dissolved, Liberal Democrats held 21% of government positions.

The Liberal Democrat leadership chose to spread their ministers across government departments. Only two (the Northern Ireland Office and DCMS, excepting Government Equalities Office ministers based there) had no Liberal Democrat ministers for the duration of the 2010–15 parliament. This allowed the junior coalition partners to keep abreast of all government activity, but also stretched the capacity of isolated Liberal Democrat junior ministers – a situation that may have been eased later in the parliament when controls on special advisers were loosened.

There were 14 joint ministers at the end of the Coalition.

Ministers with a role in more than one department, March 2015

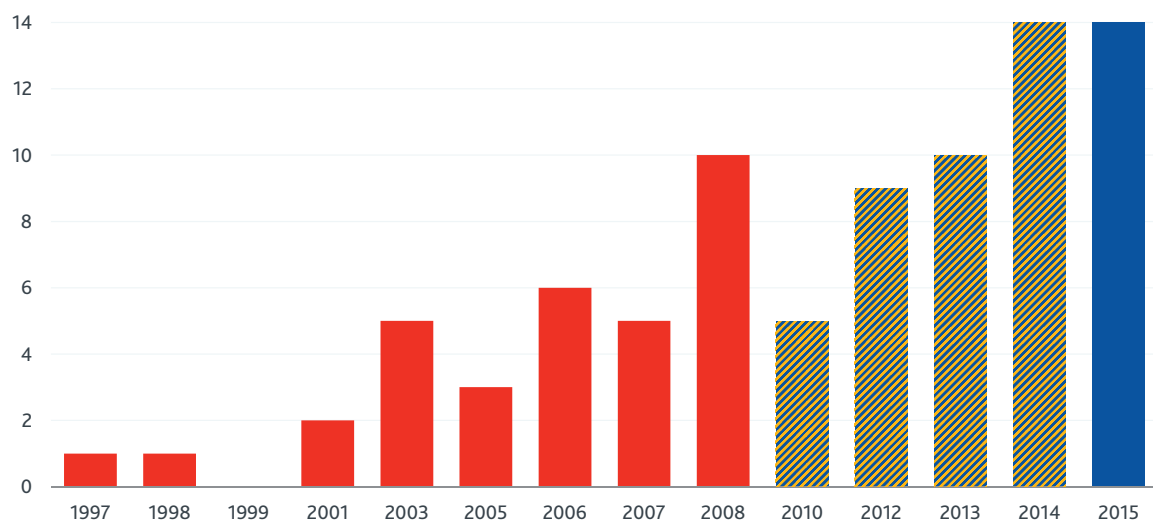


Source: Institute for Government ministerial database, using House of Commons Library and GOV.UK data.

At the end of the Coalition, 14 ministers held a position in more than one department. BIS had the most, sharing seven ministers with DCMS, DH, CO, FCO and DECC. DfE had the second-largest number – four – but two of those had equalities roles in DfE rather than education briefs.

There are three types of joint minister. Genuine ‘ministers *sans frontières*’ – as described in the Institute’s 2010 report *Shaping Up* – have cross-cutting portfolios, and can improve departmental co-ordination in their area. The role of Minister of State for Trade, split between FCO and BIS (or one of BIS’s predecessors), is one of the longest-standing of these. Others have different briefs in each department, in effect holding two jobs. For example, David Laws was Minister of State for Schools at DfE while also holding a strategic cross-government policy role in the Cabinet Office. While cross-departmental ministers can improve co-ordination, this arrangement can lead to a heavy workload and different lines of accountability and responsibility. Finally, there are some whips who also hold junior ministerial positions; the Public Administration Select Committee has suggested these ‘nominal’ positions could be used to work around statutory limits on the number of whips.⁹

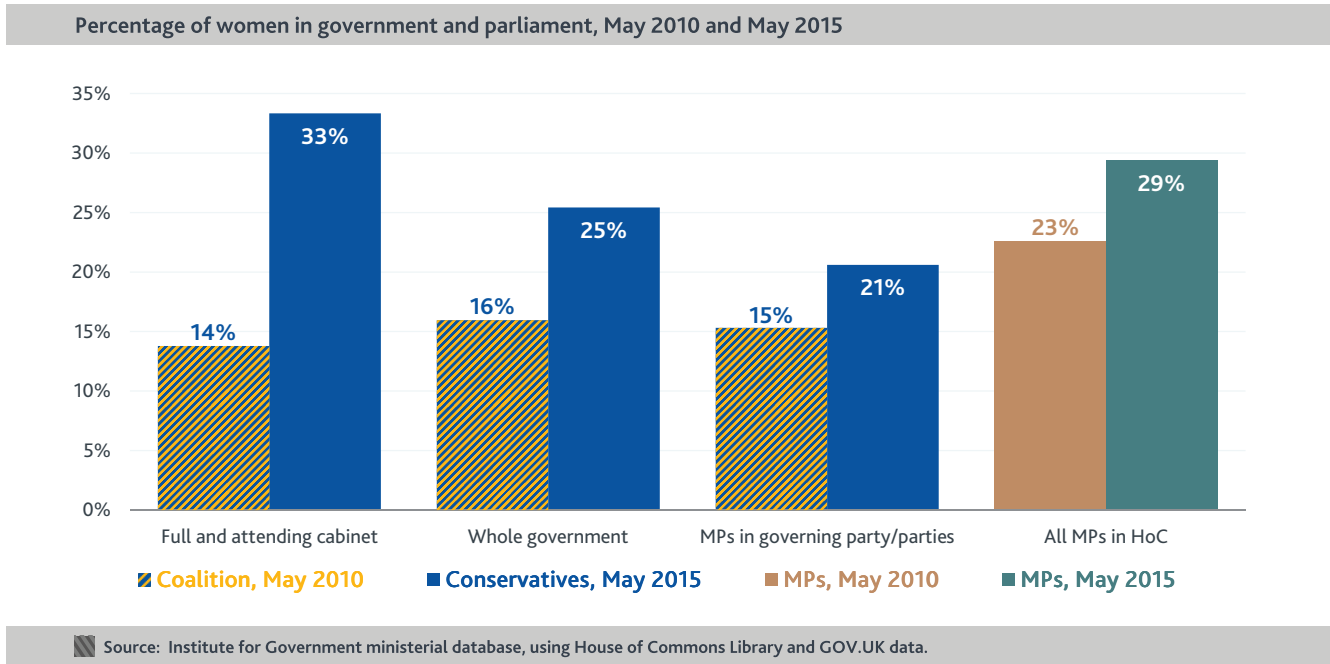
Ministers with a role in more than one department, at each unforced reshuffle since 1997



Source: Institute for Government ministerial database, using House of Commons Library and GOV.UK data.

Joint ministers were a new phenomenon under New Labour, and the Coalition embraced the concept. The number of joint ministers increased at every reshuffle in the last parliament, reaching 15 by July 2014. The Liberal Democrats were slightly over-represented here compared with the whole of government: four out of 14 ministers (28%) with joint portfolios after the 2014 reshuffle were Lib Dems. Cameron is continuing to use joint ministers in his new government, with 14 appointed after the election.

Women make up a third of the people attending Cabinet, but only a quarter of the whole government.



In 2009 – before he became Prime Minister – David Cameron declared: ‘If elected, by the end of our first parliament I want a third of all my ministers to be female.’¹⁰ Five years after he came into office, a third of the ministers attending Cabinet (10 out of 30) are women, and women represent seven out of 22 full Cabinet members.

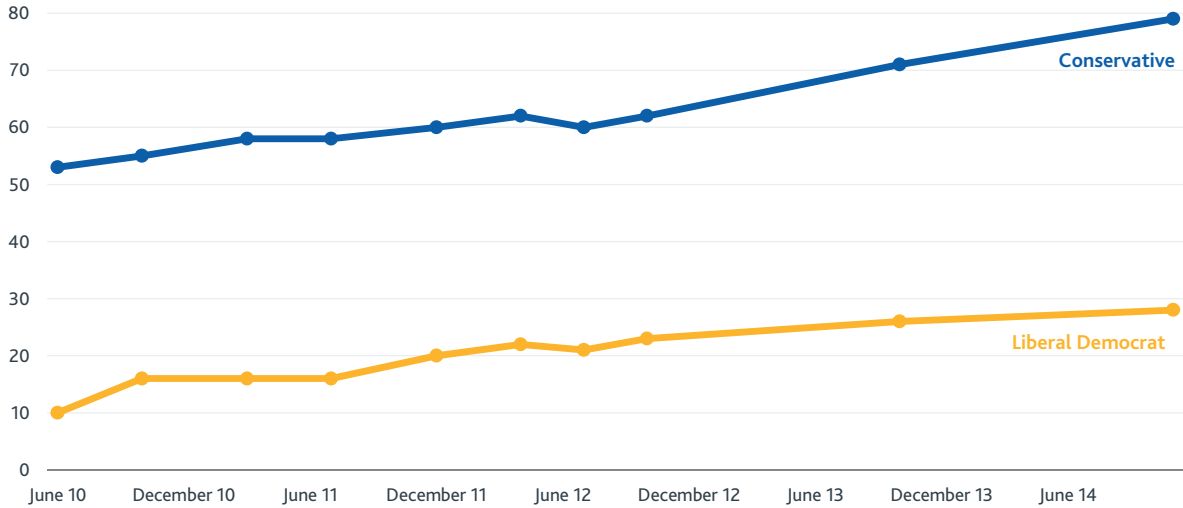
This did not happen straight away. Immediately after the 2010 election, only 16% of ministers across the whole of government – and 14% of people attending Cabinet – were women. Only 13% of Liberal Democrat MPs were women, leaving the Coalition with an overall gender balance of 15%. However, Cameron and Clegg did make efforts to address this situation, increasing the number of women in government at every reshuffle across the parliament. In the final reshuffle, of July 2014, Cameron pushed to appoint more women to his Cabinet, promoting Nicky Morgan, Liz Truss and Baroness Stowell.

The rapid promotion of relatively new MPs into ministerial positions has played an important role in ensuring that women are represented in the new Government. At the 2010 election, the number of women Conservative MPs rose from 18 to 48. Of these 48 MPs, 17 are currently in government. The proportion of Conservative MPs who are women stands at 21% following the 2015 general election. This leaves David Cameron with a somewhat larger talent pool to fish from over the next five years. However, the proportion of women in Conservative seats is still behind the Commons overall.

Currently, the Government (not including the Lords) is 96% white. There is no comparable self-declared survey of peers, so we do not have data for that part of government. Only four MPs in the new Government are from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background, according to survey data collected by the Representative Audit of Britain.¹¹ Two of them, Sajid Javid and Priti Patel, are attending Cabinet (Javid as a full member, as Secretary of State at BIS). People from a BME background therefore make up 4% of MPs in government, compared with 14% of the UK population.

The number of special advisers rose from 63 to 107 over the course of the parliament.

Number of government special advisers, 2010-14



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office, Special Adviser data releases 2010-2014.

The 2010 Conservative manifesto promised to 'put a limit on the number of special advisers' (commonly known as spads), and only 63 were appointed following the general election. However, it soon became apparent that this was insufficient, and the number rose to 71 within six months.

Over the course of the parliament, more advisers were appointed to Number 10, to improve the centre's overview of activity across government. Spads were particularly important for the Liberal Democrats, whose thinly spread ministers needed enhanced political support to stay abreast of developments across their department. Over the course of the parliament, the number of Liberal Democrat spads rose from 10 (fewer than one for every two Lib Dem ministers) to 28 (one per minister). The final data published by the Coalition, from November 2014, lists 107 spads.

Inputs

The resources available to most Whitehall departments have been reduced since 2010, with smaller budgets and fewer civil servants. Despite this, staff morale – as measured by civil service engagement – has remained steady (or in some departments, recovered).

The Coalition's promise to reduce the deficit (the difference between government's expenditure and its revenue), largely through controlling public spending, led to many departments experiencing reductions to their budgets.

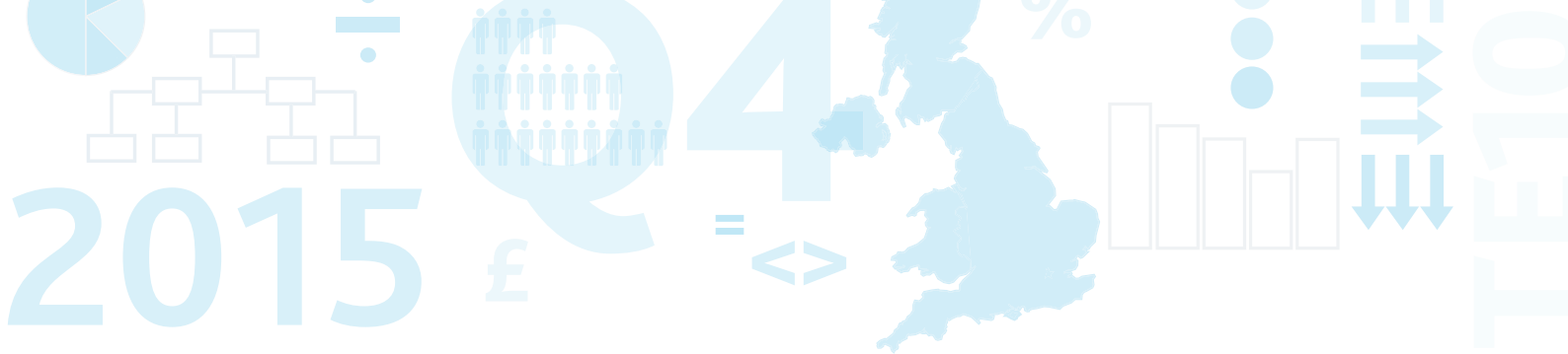
As part of these controls, the Coalition sought to bring down the cost of running government, and claimed £18.6bn in savings through efficiency and reform. This included reductions in the size and cost of the government estate, and in staff costs.

The number of civil servants employed is now at its lowest since the Second World War – from nearly 480,000 at Spending Review 2010 to just over 406,000, a fall of 15%. Departments vary greatly in size (from DWP's 80,000 to DCMS's 500) and in depth of reduction, with DCLG (down 35%) reduced by the greatest percentage. With much of this due to controls on recruitment, the Civil Service has become older and the percentage working in senior grades has increased – although the workforce has also become more diverse.

It is difficult to tell whether these reductions (or some of the changes to what departments do, which we examine in chapter 8, on how departments manage their spending) have changed the balance of different professions, as the data in many departments isn't good enough.

It is, however, possible to see the effect of reductions on staff morale, at least as measured by the Civil Service People Survey and its engagement index. Engagement has held steady across the Civil Service, and although there was a fall in some departments, many had recovered by the end of the parliament.





3. Managing government finances

In 2010, the Coalition promised to eliminate the budget deficit – the gap between government spending and revenue – largely through controlling public spending.¹ Five years later, progress has been made: the deficit has fallen and the Government has said it will run a budget surplus in 2019/20.²

Government revenue is drawn from various forms of taxation, fees for services, and public sector borrowing. The composition of these has shifted slightly since 2010, with a higher proportion coming from central government taxation in 2013/14.

This money is shared out among departments. How much each receives varies, from DWP (£175.4bn) to HMT (£200m). Departments also differ in the balance between:

- Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) – demand-led spending, such as pensions and benefits – and defined Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL). DWP and HMRC are dominated by AME; most others by DEL
- spending on resource (day-to-day running costs of government programmes and administering the department) and capital (investment in assets). DfT and BIS have most capital spending
- the size of their assets (HMT, MoD and DfT having the most) and liabilities (DECC and DH, increased since 2010)
- the reductions to budgets since 2010, with DCLG experiencing the deepest cut to its resource DEL.

Despite the Coalition's commitment to improving the transparency of public spending data and creating 'an army of armchair auditors', it is still difficult – and in some cases impossible – to identify why departmental budgets have changed and where savings have been made. Changes in spending plans are reported in financial documents but are not always fully explained. When each department is rated according to how clearly it has accounted for changes in its budgets since the 2010 Spending Review, HMT and HMRC come bottom (as they did in *Whitehall Monitor 2014*). Parliament could, and should, play a greater role in holding departments to account for unexplained changes in spending plans.

About the data

The **Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)** give us the financial picture across government. These are consolidated financial accounts of the whole public sector. We also used the **Office for Budget Responsibility's public finances databank** as of October 2015.³

We use **Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA)** to analyse total managed expenditure. PESA is published by the Treasury every year in July. It contains outturn and forecast figures for a large number of spending control totals.⁴

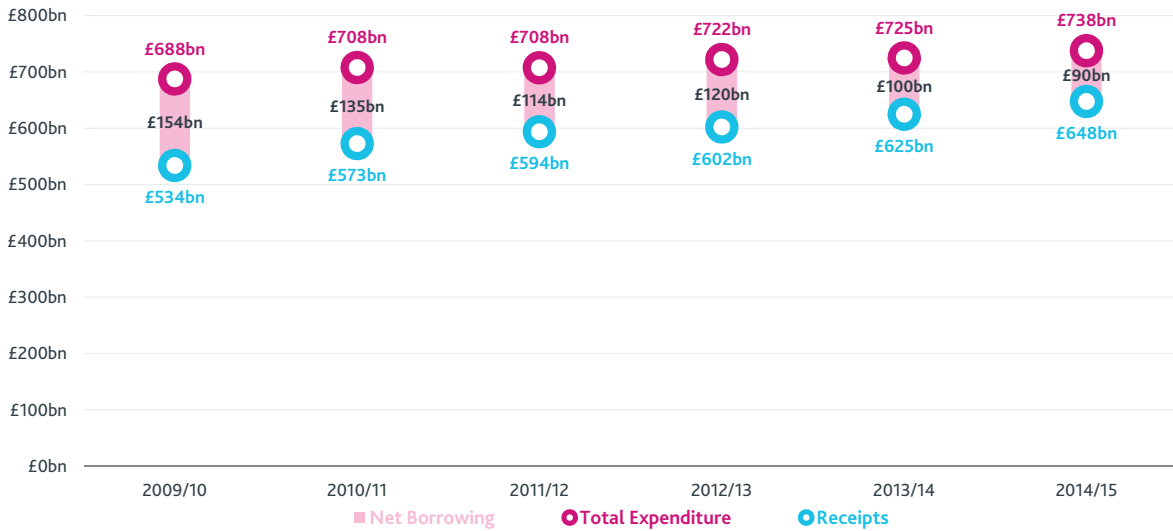
For more detail on government departments, we have used the **departmental Annual Reports and Accounts**. These are published annually by each department and contain consolidated financial statements for the departmental group.⁵

In our work on financial transparency we use **Spending Reviews and annual Budgets**. These set out the planned expenditure for each department for successive financial years.⁶

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/finances

Public sector spending has increased by 7% since 2010, while public sector borrowing has fallen. Revenue from direct taxation has risen, but so have net liabilities.

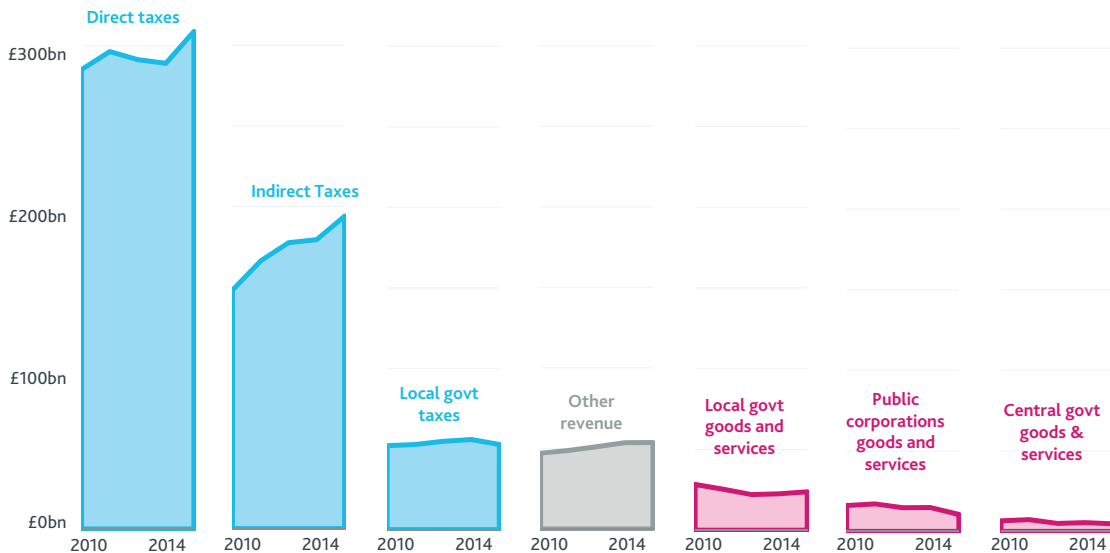
Government revenue and expenditure, 2009/10 to 2014/15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of OBR Public Finances Databank, October 2015.

Public sector spending in 2014/15 was £738bn, £90bn more than the £648bn raised through taxation and other forms of revenue. This shortfall between revenue and expenditure – public sector net borrowing – has fallen consistently since 2010, from 22% of total expenditure to 12% in 2014/15.

Sources of government revenue, 2009/10 to 2013/14



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Whole of Government Accounts.

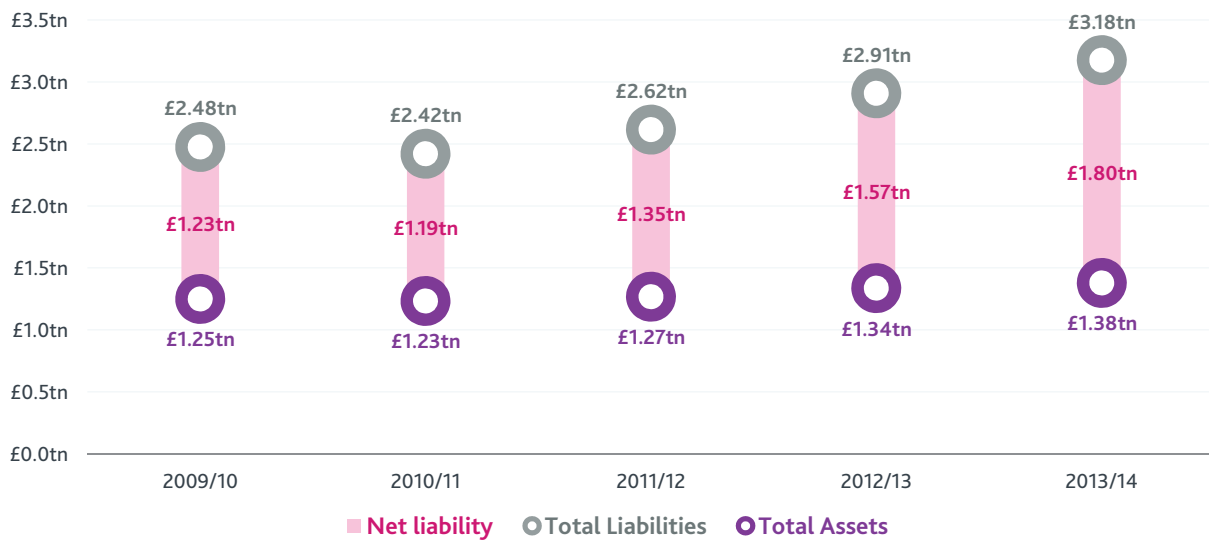
The bulk – £308.9bn, or 48% – of government revenue came from direct taxes, including income tax, National Insurance contributions and corporation tax. Indirect taxes, which include value added tax, excise duty and stamp duty, amounted to £194bn. The proportion of income generated through taxation in 2013/14 was 78%, an increase of four percentage points since 2010. While revenue from indirect and direct taxation has increased since 2010, the former has increased more substantially: from £148bn in 2009/10 to £194bn in 2013/14.

Government also generates revenue through the sale of goods and services. This is higher at local than at central government level. For local government, this revenue stream includes fees for public services – such as social care, leisure facilities, environmental services and transport.

Departments receive income from goods and services they provide through their operations (income from central government services was £4.7bn in 2013/14, or 0.5% of all revenue raised). The largest single source of this income is the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (£900m in 2013/14), which receives fees for waste management and electricity generation contracts.⁷

Government also receives income from the sale of goods and services by public corporations. The amount gained from this revenue stream fell over the past five years from £16.1bn in 2009/10 to £10.5bn in 2014/15. This is mainly due to the sale of public corporations such as the Tote in June 2011 and the postal service in 2013.⁸

Government assets and liabilities, 2009/10 to 2013/14



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Whole of Government Accounts Statement of Consolidated Financial Position.

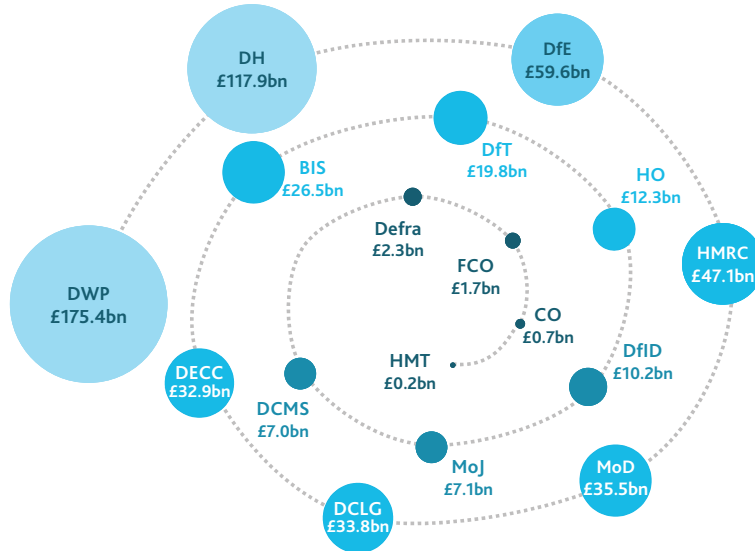
Revenue and expenditure streams are not the only financial resources that government must manage. It also oversees a large portfolio of financial assets and liabilities, which dwarfs annual income and expenditure. At the whole-of-government level, assets amounted to £1.38tn in 2013/14. This is made up chiefly of property, plant and equipment (£726bn), such as buildings and roads. Government also holds financial assets in the form of loans and deposits with banks (£147.8bn), student loans (£39bn) and equity investments (£66.6bn).

On the other side of the Government's balance sheet are its liabilities. In 2013/14, these amounted to £3.176tn, of which the largest components were obligations for public sector workers' pensions (£1.3tn) and government financing and borrowing – the public debt (£1tn).

When people talk of 'paying down the debt' and 'balancing the books', it is usually in terms of reducing spending and raising revenue – assets and liabilities are rarely mentioned, though they make up a much larger slice of the Government's financial resources. As the new Government continues to reduce the deficit and pay down public debt, more attention might be given to how its balance sheet can be managed to achieve its financial goals. This should involve reducing liabilities as well as sensible management of public assets.

Government spending is not shared equally between departments: DWP and DH accounted for 50% of all departmental spending in 2014/15.

Total managed expenditure by department, 2014/15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Annual Reports 2013/14, planned total expenditure for 2014/15.

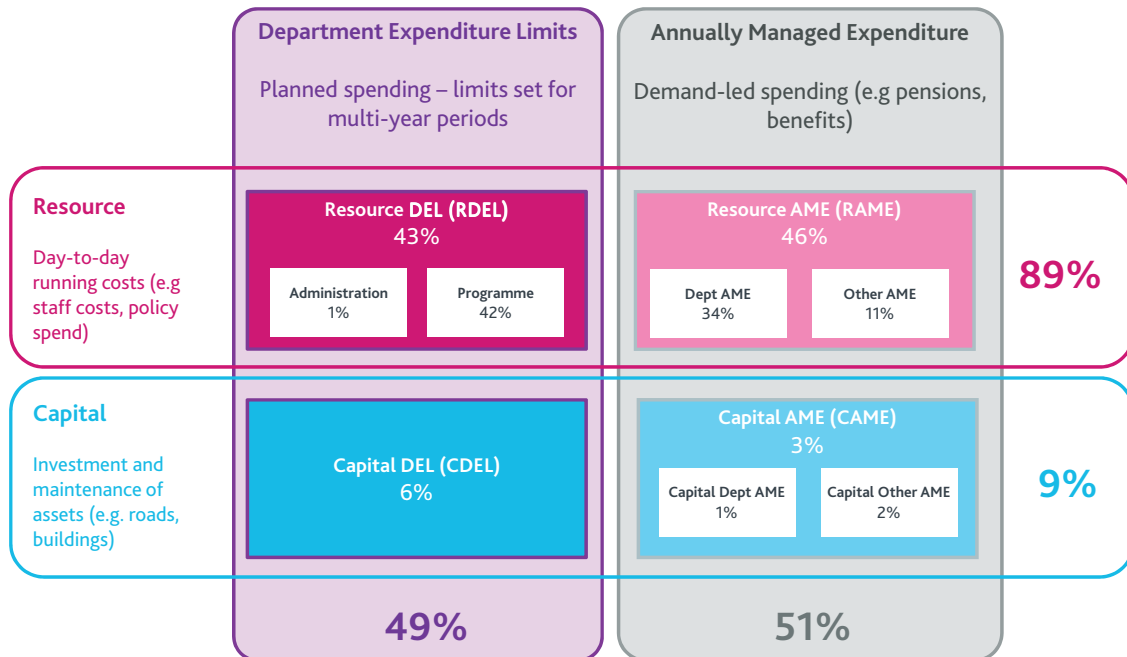
While some resource is used to service public debt and pension liabilities, the majority of the Government’s expenditure – £576bn in 2014/15 – is allocated to government departments.⁹ Of this, 50% went to the two largest: DWP and DH, which each have a budget in excess of £100bn (£175.4bn for DWP, £117.9 for DH). DfE (£59.6bn) is the only other department with a budget greater than £50bn. This spending covers all the programmes for which these departments are responsible – the majority of DH’s total managed expenditure is spent on the NHS, while the majority of DfE’s expenditure is spent on schools – as well as the costs of running the department.

At £32.9bn, DECC’s planned total managed expenditure was significantly higher in 2014/15 than 2013/14 (£3.9bn). This increase is due to the allocation of £28.8bn to DECC to cover provision for liabilities incurred under Contracts for Difference, funds payable to low-carbon electricity generators to make up the difference between the cost of investing in technology and the market price for electricity in the UK.¹⁰ This liability will be funded by electricity consumers rather than government.¹¹

Mid-sized departments, with budgets ranging from £10bn to £50bn, include HMRC, MoD and DCLG. Compared with these, FCO, CO and HMT – with budgets of less than £2bn – appear tiny.

Departmental budgets are split into different kinds of spending.

Composition of Total Managed Expenditure (TME), 2014/15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2015 Table 1.1.

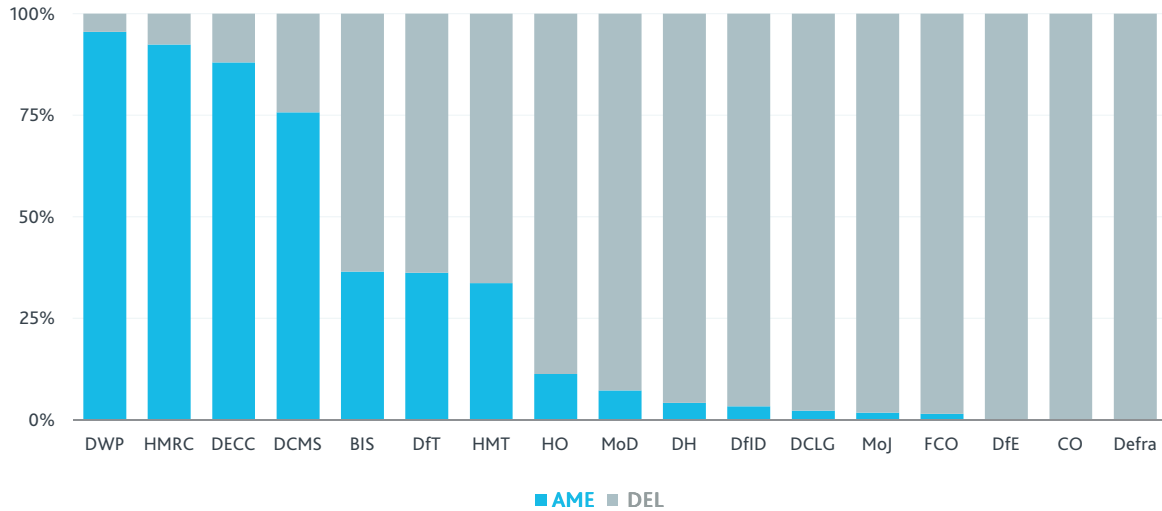
As part of the strict processes and controls applying to how and where departments can spend their money, a department's spending allocation for each financial year – its total managed expenditure (TME) – is broken down into different categories, each of which can be used only for particular kinds of spending.¹²

At the top level, departmental budgets are split between:

- **Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL)** This represents a relatively known quantity, covering plans that departments are committed to: the spending that departmental leaders can allocate to meet their objectives, as announced at Spending Reviews. DEL budgets are often set for a multi-year period, with minor adjustments made within the annual reporting cycle. DEL spending is limited, meaning departmental leaders cannot overshoot their allocated DEL budget – although they can underspend.
- **Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)** A spending line is defined as AME spending if it 'cannot reasonably be subject to firm three-year limits' (it is harder to predict, unlike DEL spending, which is set at Spending Reviews). This may be because it relates to functions that are demand-driven, such as pensions or welfare payments, or student loans.¹³

DWP and HMRC are dominated by demand-led spending, while DfE, CO and Defra spending is 100% DEL.

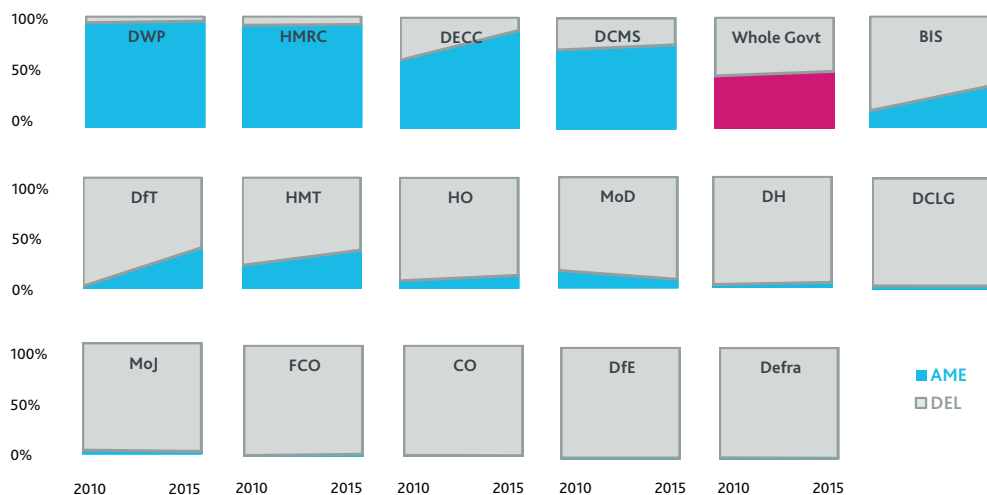
Departmental DEL and AME spending, plans for 2014/15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Annual Reports and Accounts 2013/14.

The proportion of DEL and AME varies according to each department’s policy responsibilities and functions.¹⁴ The majority of DWP and HMRC’s spending is categorised as AME because they are responsible for policy areas that are demand-led, such as pensions and welfare. DECC’s AME spending is largely comprised of funding for Contracts for Difference.¹⁵ DCMS’s AME spending includes expenditure funded from the proceeds of the National Lottery (National Lottery grants), and expenditure of the BBC.¹⁶ Other departmental budgets – such as DfE, CO and Defra – are almost entirely categorised as DEL.

DEL and AME spending, 2010/11 to 2014/15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Annual Reports and Accounts 2013/14 and PESA 2015.

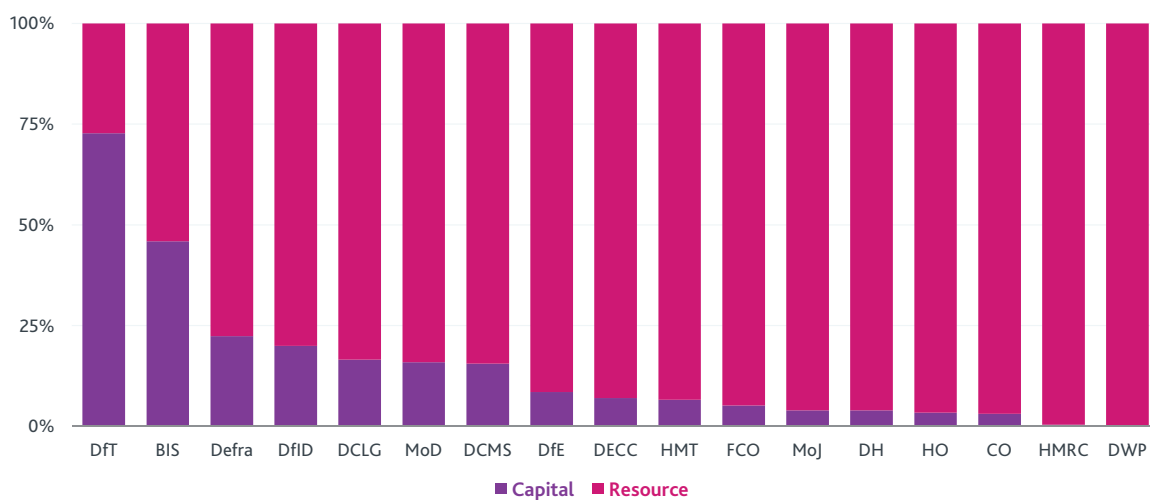
In 2014/15, AME spending overtook DEL spending across the whole of government. AME comprised 47% of total managed expenditure in 2010/11 – by 2014/15 this had increased to 51%.¹⁷ However, if we exclude the £28.8bn allocated to DECC in 2014/15 to cover the cost of Contracts for Difference, then DEL remains the larger of the two categories, accounting for 51% of total managed expenditure in 2014/15.

The balance of spending in most departments changed little over the course of the last Government, with the exception of DfT and BIS. DfT saw a sharp increase in its (capital) AME spending from just 1% of total departmental expenditure in 2010/11 to 36% in 2014/15. This is in part the result of Network Rail being reclassified to the public sector from September 2014. The main consequence of this change is to bring Network Rail's debt on to the public balance sheet.¹⁸ Network Rail accounted for £6.5bn in capital AME spending in 2014/15.

BIS has also seen an increase in AME spend over the past five years, partly due to a reduction in DEL spending, as well as an increase in spending on student loans.

DfT, BIS have significant capital spending, which has increased since 2010; HMRC, DWP have a much smaller proportion.

Departmental Resource and Capital spending, plans for 2014/15



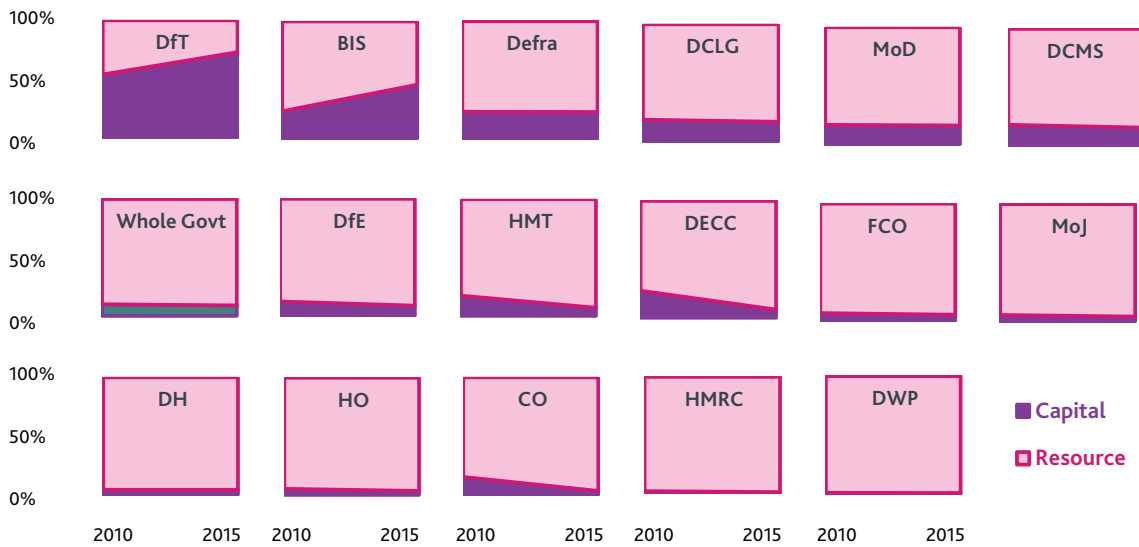
Source: Institute for Government analysis of Annual Reports and Accounts 2013/14.

The other major division within total managed expenditure is between:

- **Resource spending** This covers the department's day-to-day operations, and is further divided into administration spending, which covers departmental running costs including staff salaries and accommodation, and programme spending, which pays for policies and programmes.
- **Capital spending** This adds to the public sector's fixed assets, such as transport infrastructure and public buildings. Funds earmarked for capital spending cannot be transferred to resource spending. This ring-fencing is intended to ensure that sufficient funds are invested in public sector assets, which provide longer-term returns.

As with DEL/AME spending, the proportion of a department's total budget categorised as capital or resource spending depends on the nature of its policy functions and responsibilities. DfT and BIS have the highest proportion of spend allocated to capital budgets. Much of DfT's capital budget goes on maintenance of an investment in the UK's transport infrastructure: its capital budget for 2013/14 includes £3.7bn of spending on Network Rail, £1.1bn on Crossrail and £1.9bn on the Highways Agency. BIS capital spending includes spending on higher education (£10.3bn), including investment in higher education institutions.

Resource and Capital spending, 2010/11 to 2014/15

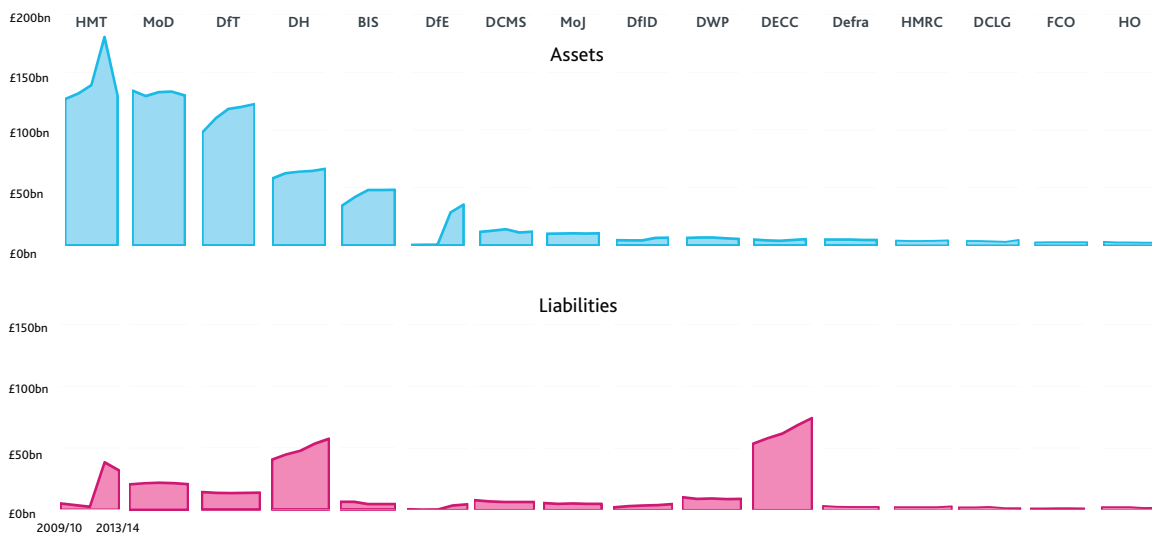


Source: Institute for Government analysis of Annual Reports and Accounts 2013/14.

Over the course of the last parliament the split between capital and resource spending at a whole-of-government level remained unchanged, with resource spending making up 90% of the total.¹⁹ However, for some departments the balance has shifted. As noted above, DfT has seen an increase in capital spending, in large part due to the reclassification of Network Rail. DECC has shifted in the other direction. In 2010/11 DECC’s capital budget was 23% of total expenditure; in 2014/15 it had fallen to 7%. While the department’s capital budget has in fact grown since 2010/11, this rebalancing is due to a significant increase in DECC’s resource AME budget. In 2014, the department was allocated £28.8bn as provision for Contracts for Difference, which support the production of low-carbon energy in the UK.²⁰

HMT, MoD and DfT have the most valuable assets – DECC has a large liability portfolio.

Departmental assets and liabilities, 2009/10 to 2013/14



Source: Institute for Government analysis of departmental Annual Reports and Accounts (Consolidated Statement of Financial Position).

Departments vary widely in the size of their assets and liabilities and the balance between them.²¹ On the asset side, the Treasury, MoD, DfT and DH stand out. The Treasury’s balance sheet reflects the large stakes that the state took in private sector banks in the wake of the financial crisis; MoD holds the military estate and the stock of weapons systems and ammunition; DfT manages a large part of the road network; and DH controls a large property portfolio.

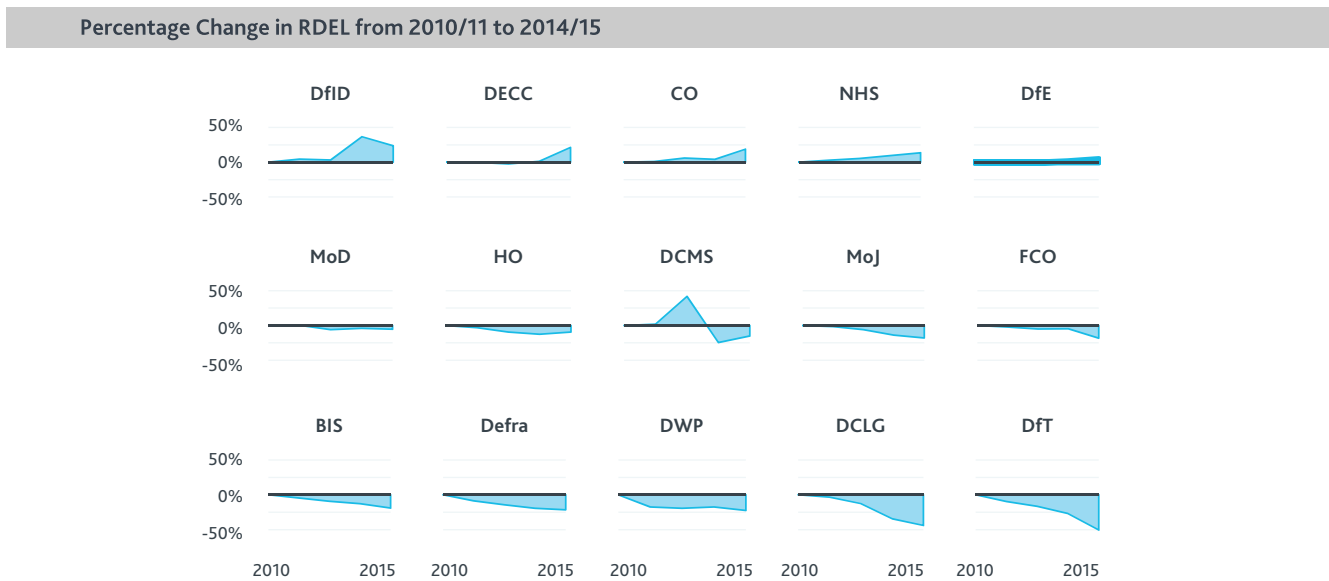
HMT and DfE have seen the biggest increases in assets since 2010. HMT’s assets increased in 2012/13 before falling back in 2013/14. This is largely due to the change in the value of assets held by the Bank of England Asset Purchase Facility Fund, which were valued at £44.3bn in 2012/13 and fell to £200m in 2013/14.²²

The significant change in the size of the DfE asset portfolio reflects the inclusion of academies’ estates in DfE accounts from 2012/13 onwards.

Some assets are not included as the Treasury did not think they could be accurately valued. For example, DCMS does not include assets such as artworks in the galleries it sponsors or in the Crown Estate.

DECC and DH hold the largest liabilities. The bulk of DECC’s liabilities arise from the Government’s obligation to cover the cost of decommissioning nuclear power plants (£70bn), while about half of the DH liability is made up of provisions for NHS clinical negligence claims (£25.7bn). These departments’ liabilities have both increased since 2010.

Budget reductions have varied between departments, with some hit harder than others.



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2015.

While total government expenditure has risen since 2010, the majority of departments have had their resource DEL budgets (RDEL) reduced over the past five years.²³ RDEL is the budget that departments allocate to running policy programmes, set in advance and for multi-year periods. The NHS, schools and international aid budgets have been ring-fenced and so the departments responsible for these spending areas (DH, DfE and DfID) have seen their budgets increase every year since 2010.

While budgets have increased consistently year-on-year in some departments, in others the picture is mixed: DECC’s budget, for example, fell between 2011/12 and 2012/13, only to increase due to various policy changes, the largest being an additional £300m to fund the Government’s Energy Discount. Similarly, there was a sharp increase in the DCMS budget around the time of the 2012 London Olympics, followed by reductions, then a small increase in 2014/15.

Some departments have had their RDEL allocations reduced every year since 2010. The FCO’s RDEL for 2014/15 is 18% less than its budget in 2010/11; DCLG’s is down 44%. The greatest cut in RDEL allocation has been at DfT – its budget for 2014/15 is 51% less than the equivalent figure in 2010/11. However, not all of these decreases in spending are the result of cuts to policy programmes. In 2013/14 DCLG’s budget fell by more than £7bn as a result of changes to local government funding and business rates; in this instance spending was not cut, but was transferred from the department to local government.²⁴ Spending plans for previous years were not adjusted to take this into account. Similarly, the reduction to DfT’s budget between 2013/14 and 2014/15 is due to an accounting change: £900m of transport grants was switched from RDEL to capital DEL.²⁵

The next five years pose challenges for the Government if it is to meet its spending reduction targets. Some of these are self-imposed: for example, if some policy areas continue to be ring-fenced then departments that have already had their budgets reduced will come under mounting pressure to find savings.

Other challenges are external and harder to mitigate. Demographic pressures such as an ageing population will drive demand for health services, pensions and other benefits. An increase in spending in these areas may lead to a further squeeze on others.

Departmental spending plans can change for reasons including machinery of government changes or underspends.

Changes to departmental RDEL spending plans for 2014/15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of RDEL spending plans for 2014-15 in Spending Review 2010 and PESA 2015.

The Coalition set itself the target of reducing the deficit by cutting spending.²⁶ Much of this reduction was accomplished by reducing departmental budgets. As we have seen, the majority of departments had their RDEL budgets cut year-on-year under the last Government.

But this was not the Coalition’s only objective in terms of public finances. It also committed itself to throwing open the books and allowing ‘armchair auditors’ to access government financial data – ‘the money it spends, where it spends it, the results it achieves’.²⁷ Anyone looking back on the Coalition’s record would find it (relatively) easy to identify what money the Government spent – but would have a harder time trying to identify exactly where it spent it.

Like its predecessor, the Coalition Government used Spending Reviews (in 2010 and 2013) to set multi-year departmental budgets. More detailed spending controls are set each financial year through the Budget process, at which spending plans may be revised upwards or downwards. Final outturn figures can differ substantially from the figure set out at Spending Review 2010. In some cases this is due to significant machinery-of-government changes – the 43% increase in Home Office spending is partly the result of the transfer of police grants to the department from DCLG. Similarly, the fall of 40% in DfT’s

budget from what was set out in 2010 is partly explained by a transfer of grants from the department to DCLG.²⁸ Other changes may be due to policy changes, underspends, or allocations from the Reserve (funding not allocated to departmental programmes and used to cover 'emergencies and genuinely unforeseen circumstances').²⁹ In some cases the reasons for these changes are given in full, either in the document where they appear or elsewhere; in other cases, the explanation is much harder to find.

Departments vary in how clearly they explain changes in their spending plans, with HMT and HMRC performing poorly.

Transparency of departmental spending plans

Dept	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Overall Ranking
DCMS	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	1
DECC	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	2
DH	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	3
FCO	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	4
MoJ	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	5=
DfT	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	5=
BIS	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	6
DfID	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	7
DfE	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	8
HO	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	9
DWP	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	10
CO	Red	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	11=
DCLG	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	11=
Defra	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	12
MoD	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	13
HMT	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	14=
HMRC	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	14=

Source: IfG analysis of Budgets 2010-15, Spending Review 2010 & 2013, PESA 2011-15, and departmental Annual Reports and Accounts 2011/12 to 2013/14.

By comparing the original figure set out at Spending Review with subsequent figures produced at Budgets, and the final outturn figure published in the department's Annual Report, we can chart changes in departmental spending plans across time. We should also be able to identify why those changes occurred and where any additional spending was allocated (or where cuts were made). However, while changes in departmental budgets are easily tracked through fiscal publications, the reasons for those changes are far harder to locate.

We graded each department according to how transparently it accounted for movements in spending plans. For each financial year we compared the original spending plan, as published in Spending Review 2010, with every revised plan for that year (published in annual Budget documents, PESA and the department's Annual Report and Accounts), and noted whether the spending plan had changed and whether this was explained. We graded each department according to:

- whether an explanation was given for a change
- whether each movement was fully or partially explained
- where the explanation appeared.

We then ranked the departments based on their average transparency rating.

No department provided a full explanation for all movements in the same document in which those movements appear. DCMS ranks highest on our transparency index, as the department had very few changes in forward spending plans and we were able to find an explanation for these, although this was published in a separate document. DH and FCO also score highly because we were able to find full explanations for the spending changes in these departments.

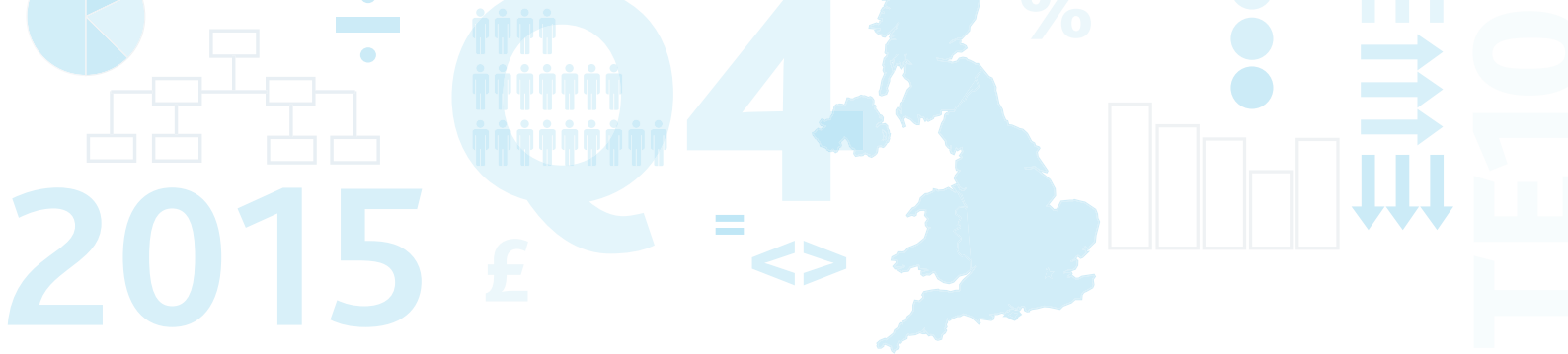
At the other end of the scale are HMRC and HMT. These departments have the lowest transparency scores because of inconsistencies in the way spending is reported. In the annual Budget documentation, funding allocated to both HMT and HMRC is combined under spending plans for 'Chancellor's Departments'; at Spending Reviews and in Annual Reports and Accounts, however, separate figures are reported for HMT and HMRC. It is therefore not possible to compare HMT spending, excluding HMRC, across different fiscal documents.

MoD also scores poorly, particularly in providing explanations for recent budget changes. From Spending Review 2013 to the July 2015 Budget, three different spending totals for this department were published – at Budget 2014 (£23.6bn), March 2015 (£28.4bn) and July 2015 (£28.1bn). But the documentation provides no clear explanation for any of these changes. MoD also performed poorly because, as with HMT and HMRC, it does not publish RDEL depreciation figures in its Annual Reports, which makes it impossible to compare outturn with the original spending plan in Spending Review 2010.

We invited departments to provide information on the changes we could not explain. Of the 17 departments we contacted, nine responded with additional information. In some cases we were able to find further explanations for changes in Main and Supplementary Estimates Memoranda which are produced for parliamentary select committees each year. However, the value of these Memoranda as a tool for transparency is limited, as they can be difficult to find: they are published by select committees and not by the department (with the exception of DECC, which provides a link to these useful documents on its departmental website).

Other departments did not respond to our request for additional explanations. Among them was the Treasury, which is at the bottom of our transparency table for the second year in a row. When contacted, officials seemed unconcerned that we could not explain movements in their departmental spending over the last parliament, and offered no explanation. As the department responsible for producing Spending Reviews and annual Budgets – the documents where changes to planned departmental budgets often appear – the Treasury should offer a clear explanation for changes to its own spending totals.

The Coalition made considerable progress in reforming the public finances in line with its pledges in the Coalition Agreement. The current deficit has shrunk and departmental expenditure has fallen, apart from in those departments where spending was ring-fenced. But other trends point to trouble ahead. The Government's net liabilities have increased since 2010, with the value of government assets growing slowly compared with the value of its liabilities. Securing further spending reductions may also prove challenging as demographic pressures increase demand on health and social care services, potentially leading to a squeeze on other spending areas. However, both the successes of the past five years and the challenges that remain are hard to assess given the lack of transparent data available. David Cameron's army of armchair auditors could find itself lost in the no-man's-land of the partially or wholly unexplained.



4. The cost of running departments

Since 2010, the cost of administering government departments has fallen. Government claims £18.6bn of savings through efficiency and reform. Departments' administration budgets have fallen, the government estate (and space per employee) has shrunk, and the pay bill has come down, though the number of off-payroll staff has increased.¹

Government departments spend some of the money they are allocated on their own operations, including everything from salaries and pension contributions, to renting and operating the buildings in which government officials work, and building and running the necessary IT systems.

The Efficiency and Reform Group (ERG) was established in the Cabinet Office in May 2010 to reduce spending in some of these areas. It claims to have made savings of £18.6bn since 2009/10 through improving the management of commercial relationships and major projects, 'transformation' (shrinking the estate, new commercial models, increasing digitisation) and reducing staff numbers and pensions. Although the reality is a little more complicated, the work of the ERG has nonetheless been encouraging.

Departments' 'administration budgets' – which may not include all operational costs, and which may have changed in what they include over time – have been reduced in all but four cases since 2011/12. Two significant components of administration spending are estates and staff costs. The size and cost of the former have shrunk, from 10.7km² and £3.1bn in 2010 to 8.6km² and £2.8bn in 2014. Staff costs have also come down – the cost of annualised staff salaries fell in all but two departmental groups, and by £2.49bn overall, between 2010 and 2014. However, the reductions in staff numbers have been accompanied by some departments employing more non-payroll, temporary staff.

About the data

Reports published by the Efficiency and Reform Group since 2011 present reductions achieved in a number of spending categories, including staff costs, procurement and major projects.²

For departmental administration budgets we use **table 1.7 (administration budgets) from Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA)**. The definition of administration spending has changed over time and may not include everything related to running the operations of a department.³

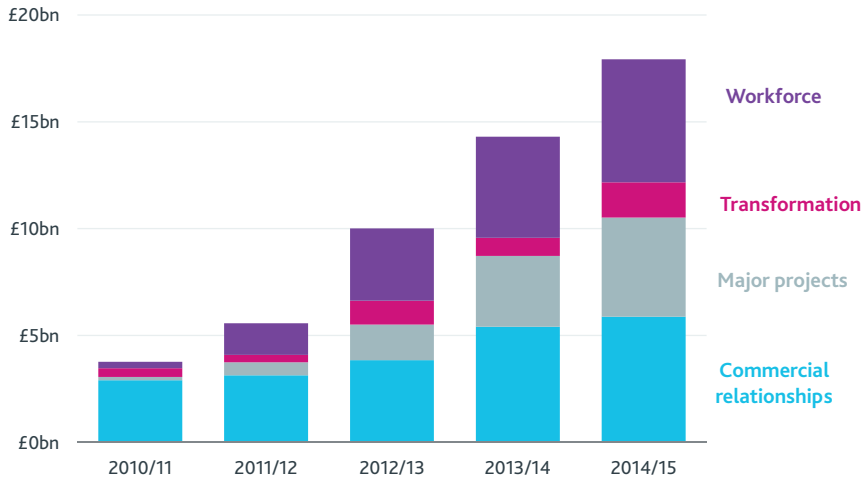
For estates we use the 2013/14 edition of **State of the Estate**, which has been published annually since 2010 by the Government Property Unit. We use its data on the size and cost of the mandated estate – central government-owned property and some specialist property such as courts, but not property such as galleries, power stations, ports and military establishments – and the benchmarked estate, a subset of the mandated estate including only back office space.⁴

For annualised staff salary costs, we use numbers from **Central Government Staff Costs (June 2015) published by the National Audit Office**. This uses ONS Annual Civil Service Employment Survey data to give annualised staff salary costs as of 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2014 for departmental groups (excluding any bodies that moved into or out of the Civil Service during that period). We are grateful to the NAO for providing us with these figures. Our numbers on non-payroll staff come from **workforce management information (WMI)**, published monthly by departments since the ERG instituted a system of controls on hiring, consultancy and some other spending. They are not official statistics and should be interpreted carefully; we have found occasional errors in the data and not all of it is publicly available.⁵

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/administration

The Government claims savings of £18.6bn through efficiency and reform since 2009/10.

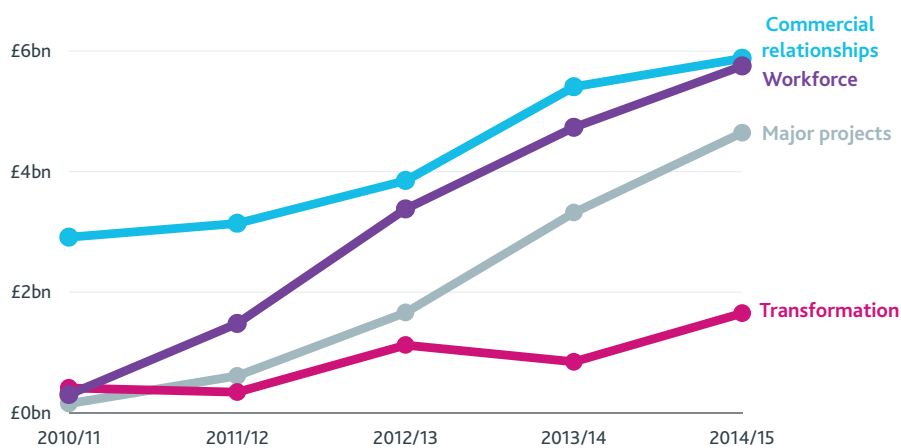
Savings claimed by Efficiency and Reform Group, 2010/11 to 2014/15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Efficiency and Reform Group Technical Notes, 2010/11 to 2014/15 and NAO reports on ERG savings.

The Coalition made reducing the cost of running government departments a priority and, in May 2010, set up the Efficiency and Reform Group (ERG) to reduce spending in specific areas. In August 2015, the ERG claimed savings of £18.6bn against a baseline of equivalent spending in 2009/10 across categories including property, consultancy and IT services. Since 2010, £5.8bn (about 33% of the total savings) has come from reforms to commercial relationships (such as centralisation of procurement, renegotiation of large contracts, and limiting expenditure on services such as marketing and advertising). Reductions to the workforce account for £5.7bn, or 32%.

Savings claimed by Efficiency and Reform Group, 2010/11 to 2014/15



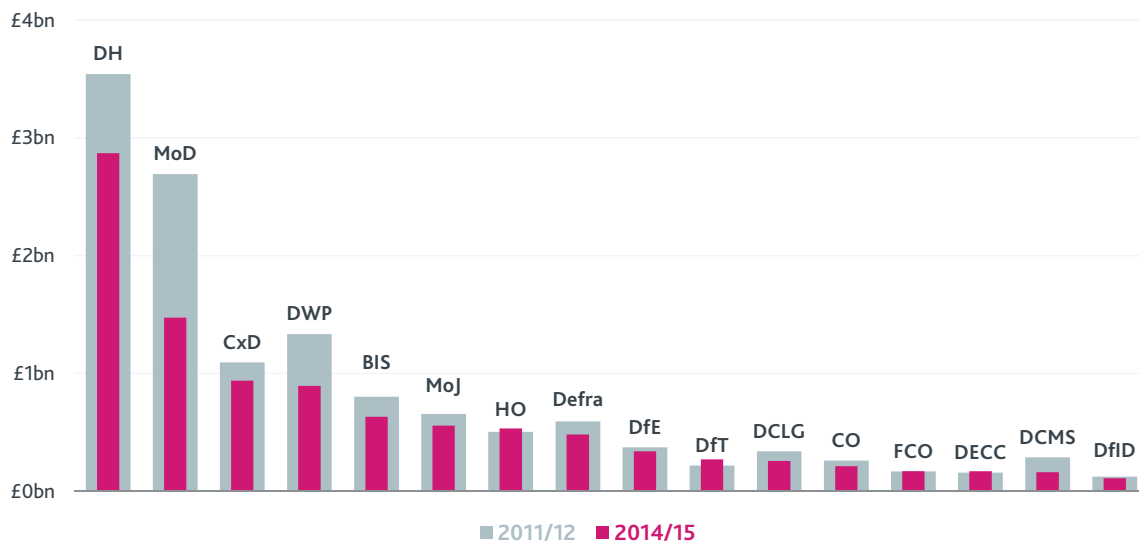
Source: Institute for Government analysis of Efficiency and Reform Group Technical Notes, 2010/11 to 2014/15 and NAO reports on ERG savings.

While the overall savings figure since 2009/10 is impressive, it is misleading. Savings achieved in previous years are rolled into each annual update – the £18.6bn of savings in 2014/15 includes £14.3bn from previous years. Most of the savings were made between 2012 and 2014, and the rate of reduction slowed in 2014/15: in some areas, such as advertising, government actually spent more in 2014/15 than in previous years.⁶

Nonetheless, the work of the ERG has been a step forward, developing clear methodologies, being audited by the NAO and being open with external commentators (such as the Institute for Government).⁷ The new Government has indicated that it will continue to pursue efficiency savings, with a target of saving £10bn in 2017/18. It should continue to report on progress in a transparent way; be clearer about savings achieved in each year, as opposed to the 2009/10 baseline; and be realistic about what can be achieved.⁸

All but four departments have reduced their administration budgets since 2011/12.

Change in administration budgets, 2011/12 to 2014/15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of table 1.7 in PESA 2015 (outturn 2011/12 and 2014/15).

Spending Review 2010 contained plans to reduce administration spending by about a third, and Spending Round 2013 by another £1.9bn, to about 40% below the level of 2009/10.

We are unable to compare 2014/15 with 2009/10 or 2010/11, owing to changes in government accounting. From 2011/12, departments were required to consolidate their non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and other bodies' expenditure and income into the department's Estimates and Accounts, which had the effect of 'increasing' administrative spending by some departments, like MoJ, DCMS and BIS.⁹

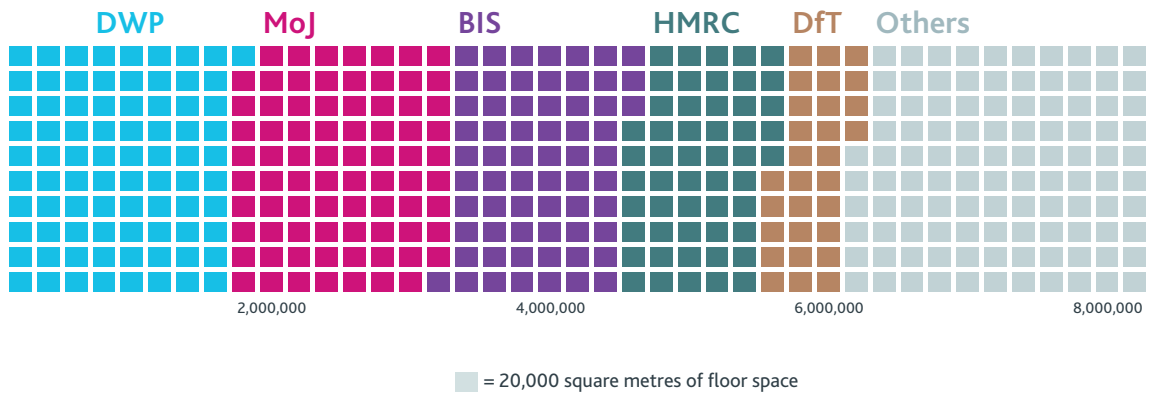
Since 2011/12, however, the overall administration spending of government departments has fallen by 23%. DH, which had the largest administration budget of all departments in 2011/12, has reduced its budget by 19%. MoD, which had the second-largest administration budget in 2011/12, has reduced its budget by 45%. However, some reductions may come from reclassifying costs. In the 2010 Spending Review, for example, elements of DWP's administration expenses were reclassified as programme expenses from 2011/12, which highlights the difficulty in distinguishing between 'programme' costs and 'administration' costs, as well as comparing these over time.

Four departments increased their administration budgets between 2011/12 and 2014/15. These were HO (up 6%), DfT (25%), FCO (1%) and DECC (8%).

In total, administration budgets made up about £10.5bn of government spending in 2014/15. DH (£2.9bn) and MoD (£1.5bn) have administration budgets of over £1bn, while the Chancellor's departments (CxD) – HMRC and HMT – spent £939m between them. About 65% of administration costs are accounted for by civil service pay, and a further 30% by goods and services, such as accommodation and equipment.

Five departments – DWP, MoJ, BIS, HMRC, DfT – make up three-quarters of the government estate. Its size and cost has shrunk since 2010.

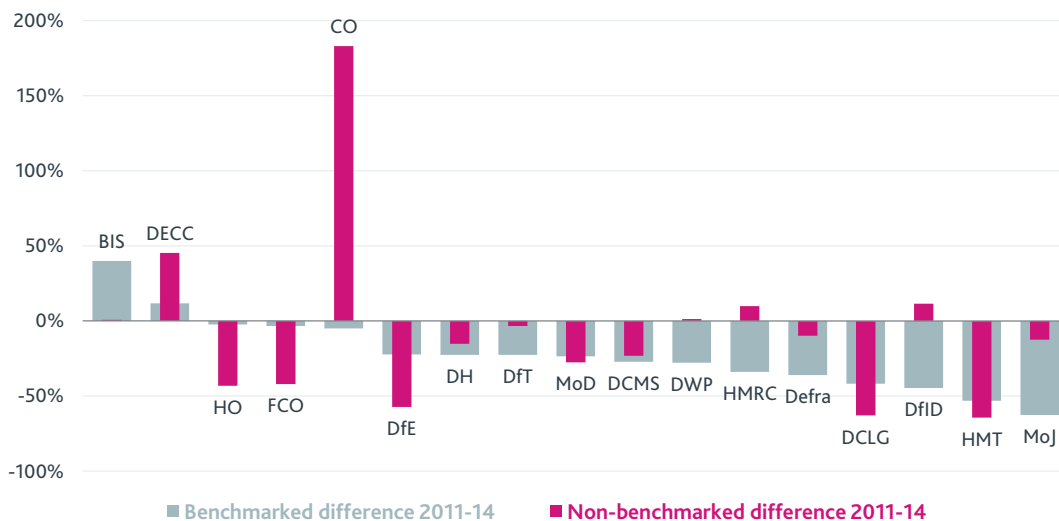
Size of government estate, 2013/14 (floor space, m²)



Source: Institute for Government analysis of *State of the Estate 2014*. Total floor space is that of main departments, excluding (e.g.) AGO, as of April 2014.

Just five government departments make up three-quarters of the 8.2km² of mandated estate occupied by government departments. DWP takes up 1.6km² of this (much of it through job centres), MoJ 1.5km² (courts), BIS 1.3km² (a range of delivery organisations), HMRC 1km² with its operations, and DfT 0.6km² with the British Transport Police and Highways Agency, among others. By comparison, HMT occupies just 0.025km².

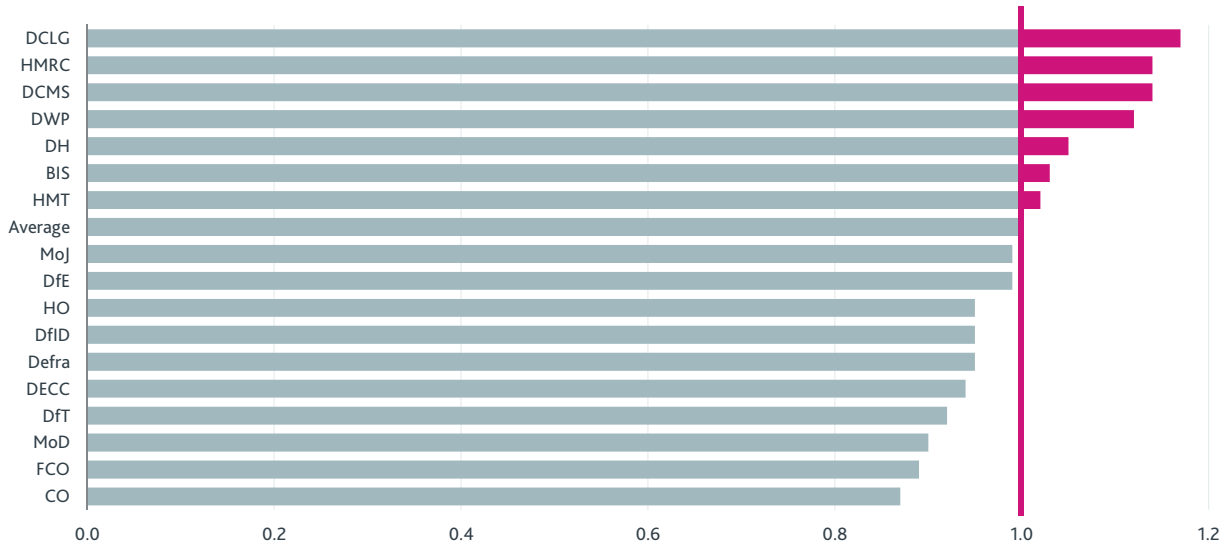
Change in size of benchmarked and non-benchmarked government estate, 2011 to 2014



Source: Institute for Government analysis of *State of the Estate, 2011 to 2014*.

Reducing the size of this estate has been a key target for government in its drive for efficiency savings. The mandated estate is broken down into the benchmarked estate (office space) and non-benchmarked estate (frontline estate such as courts and job centres). In general, most departments have had a reduction in their office space (benchmarked), while changes in public-facing services (non-benchmarked) have been less uniform. BIS had a 40% increase in benchmarked estate; CO had an increase in non-benchmarked estate (much of it from machinery-of-government changes).¹⁰

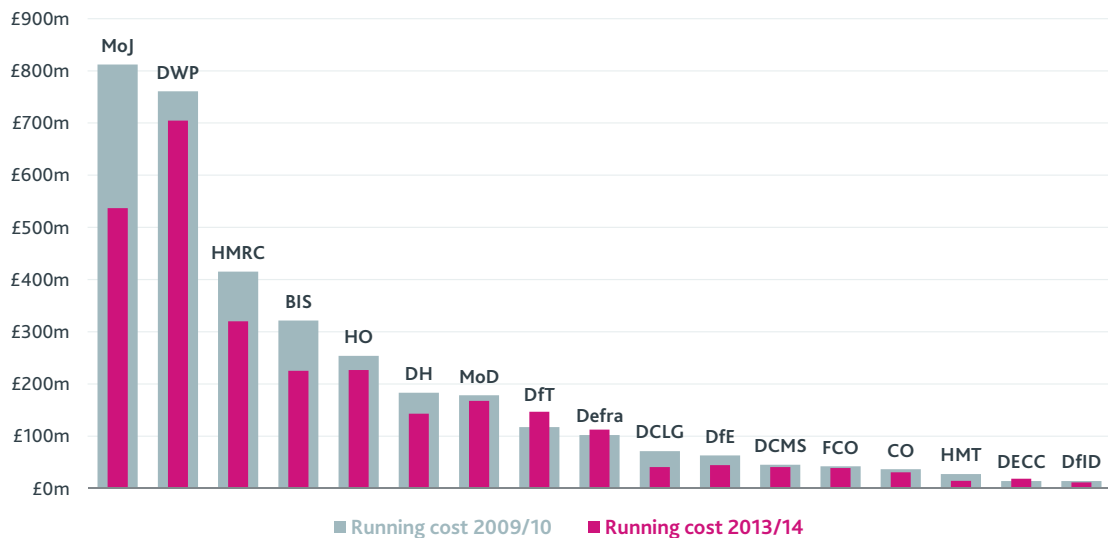
Workstations per staff member (full-time equivalent), April 2014



Source: Institute for Government analysis of *State of the Estate 2014*. Data as of April 2014.

The reduction in office space meant that civil servants in nearly all departments had less space in 2014 than in 2011, even though there had been headcount reductions. On average, departments had just over one workstation for each member of staff in 2014. Ten had fewer than one workstation per employee. Staff at the Cabinet Office had the fewest workstations per person: 0.85 per employee, or 85 workstations for every 100 members of staff.

Change in running costs of government estate, 2009/10 to 2013/14



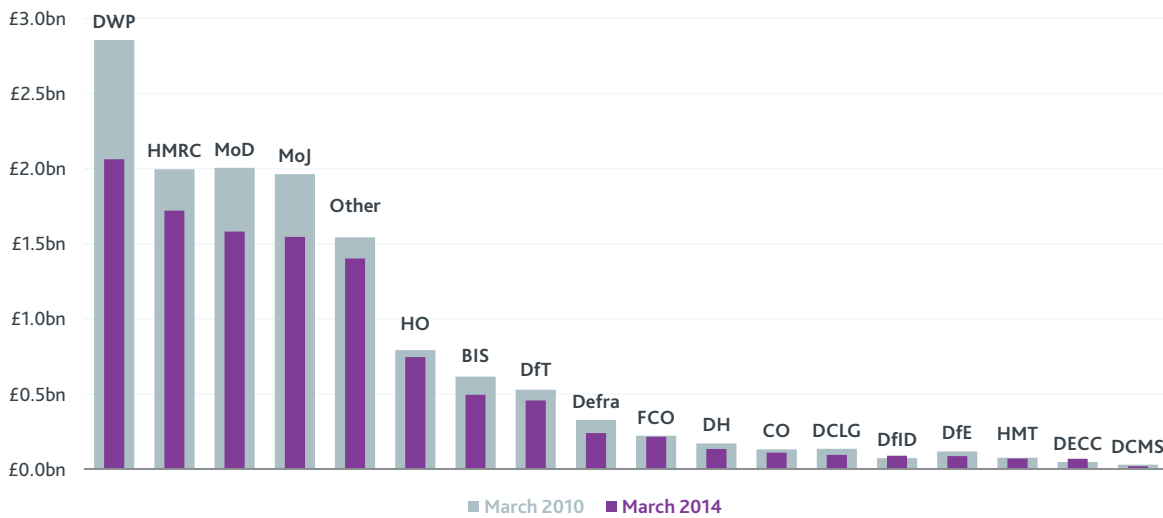
Source: Institute for Government analysis of *State of the Estate, 2011 to 2014*.

As well as size, the cost of the government estate has also come down. Running it is an expensive business: the cost of running the mandated civil estate of 8.6km² in 2013/14 was £2.8bn. Unsurprisingly, the most expensive departments are those that take up the most space: DWP is the most expensive, at a running cost of £704m in 2013/14.

This is lower than in 2010, however, when it cost £3.1bn to run the entire mandated civil estate of 10.7km². There has been an 18% reduction in the running costs of the estate across government departments, amounting to about £634m. MoJ had the biggest reduction, accounting for 43% of that amount, significantly higher than the average reduction of £37m. Three departments – DECC, Defra and DfT – have had an increase in the cost of their estate, with DfT receiving the biggest increase, at £29.4m.

Nearly all departments reduced their salary costs between 2010 and 2014 – but many also increased their off-payroll staff numbers.

Change in staff salary costs, March 2010 to March 2014, by departmental group (March 2014 prices)



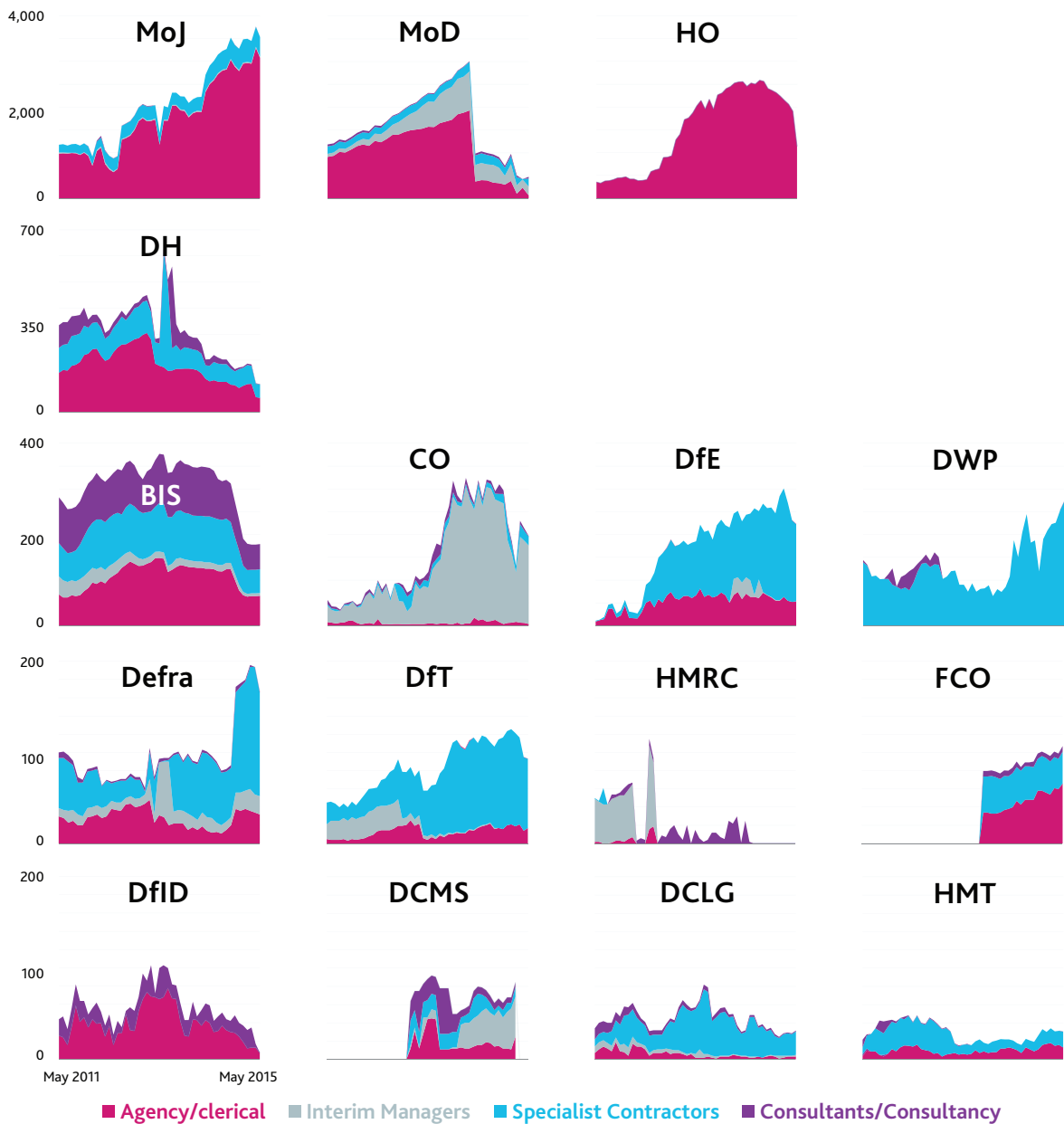
Source: IfG analysis of data provided by NAO, *Central Government Staff Costs (2015)*, from ONS Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2010 to 2014.

According to research by the National Audit Office, the cost of annualised staff salaries fell by £2.49bn (or 18%) between 2010 and 2014. (These numbers are for organisations which were part of the Civil Service in both 2010 and 2014, so excludes any entities that have moved in or out during that time.)

DWP’s departmental group, which had the highest salary costs in 2010 (£2.9bn), experienced a 28% reduction to 2014. Only DCLG (30%) and DCMS (36%) experienced deeper reductions, but are much smaller departments; DWP’s reduction was responsible for almost a third (32%) of the total fall in salary costs across the Civil Service.

Two departmental groups experienced increases in their salary costs between 2010 and 2014: DECC (45%) and DfID (24%). As chapter 5 shows, headcount increased in both departments over the parliament.

Number of non-payroll staff in departments, May 2011 to May 2015

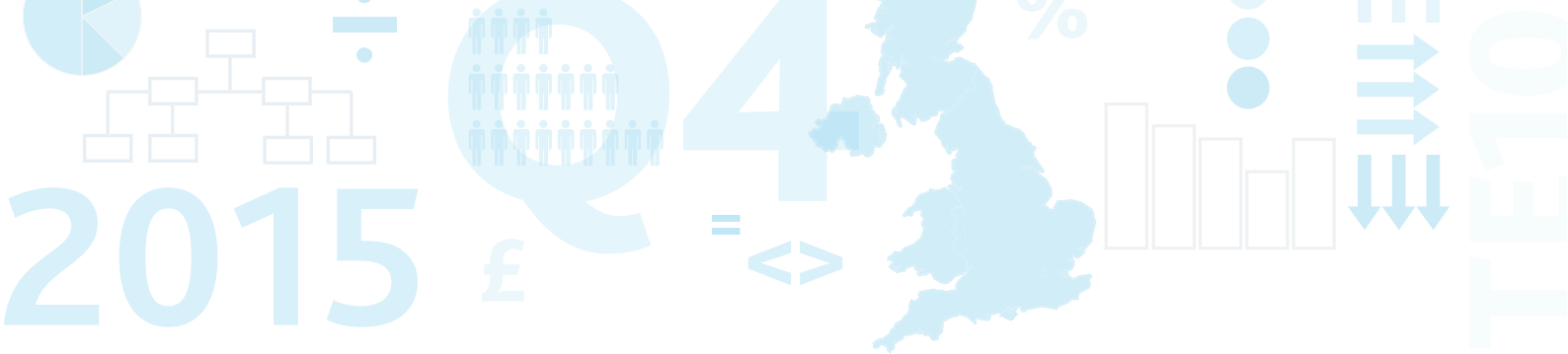


Source: IfG analysis of departmental Workforce Management Information (WMI). DECC not shown as monthly data unavailable from summer 2014.

However, at the same time as most departments are reducing their salary costs and (as we see in chapter 5) the number of civil servants they employ, some have increased the number of non-payroll staff they employ.

MoJ and HO, for example, both increased the number of non-payroll clerical or agency staff they employed during the course of the parliament, while CO’s non-payroll staff was dominated by interim managers. The mid-2013 spike in consultants and contractors at DH is probably due to the onset of NHS reform, but interestingly, there is no comparable effect at DWP with its major reforms, such as Universal Credit or automatic enrolment into pensions.

In any case, the workforce management information should be treated with some caution, as there are errors and inconsistencies and some data has not been published (DECC, for example, hasn’t published monthly updates since mid-2014). And the number of non-payroll staff is tiny compared to the whole Civil Service, which we turn to in the next chapter.



5. The civil service workforce

The Civil Service has become smaller, more senior, older, slightly more diverse (including at senior levels) and slightly more concentrated in London since 2010.

The number of civil servants (FTE – full-time equivalent) fell by 71,990 or 15% between the 2010 Spending Review and March 2015 (from 478,130 to 406,140). However, this falls short of the reduction to 380,000 expected in the 2012 *Civil Service Reform Plan*, underlining how challenging any further proposed reductions will be to implement.

Some departments have undergone deeper reductions than others. DCLG, DWP and DCMS have had the biggest reductions, of more than 30%. Three departments – DECC, DfID and CO – have actually grown since 2010.

The leadership of the Civil Service – the permanent secretaries in charge of departments – has changed a great deal since 2010, with only one (Sir Nicholas Macpherson at HMT) being in post at both the 2010 and 2015 elections. A greater percentage of civil servants are now to be found at more senior levels, particularly grades 6 and 7 (the workhorses doing much of the heavy-lifting, just below the Senior Civil Service). This may partly reflect recruitment freezes, which may also be responsible for the Civil Service being older than in 2010 – 40% of all civil servants are aged 50 or over in 2015, up from 32% in 2010. The service is slightly more diverse than in 2010, with female, ethnic minority and disabled representation in the Senior Civil Service increasing (though still lagging behind the Civil Service as a whole). 18% of the Civil Service is based in London in 2015, up slightly from 16% in 2010, while the North West has seen the greatest headcount reduction in absolute terms since 2010 (just over 13,000).

Cuts to the Civil Service have been deeper than in some other parts of the public sector – NHS and education have actually had a small increase – but not as deep as in the armed forces, local government or what the ONS classifies as ‘other health and social work’.

About the data

Civil Service FTE numbers come from table 9 of the **ONS Public Sector Employment** series, published quarterly. This gives staff numbers for all civil servants by organisation. The wider public sector figures come from tables 3 and 4.¹

The data on permanent secretaries comes from sources including **announcements on GOV.UK and news coverage**.²

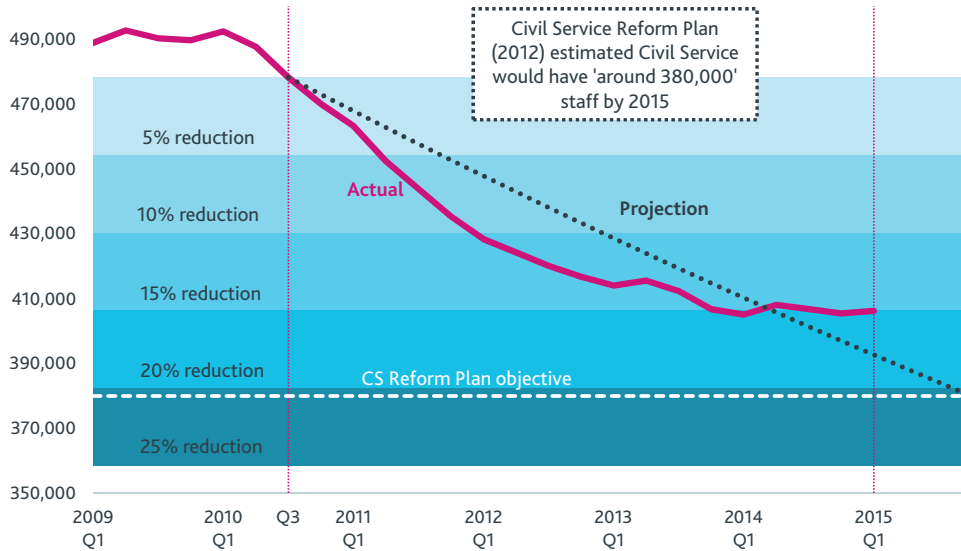
Data on the grade, age, diversity and location of civil servants comes from the **Annual Civil Service Employment Survey**, published every October (with numbers as of the preceding March) by the ONS.³

Our analysis involves allocating the organisations listed by the ONS to a ‘departmental group’ of organisations, for which a secretary of state is responsible to Parliament. We then distinguish between the ‘department’, where line management flows from the permanent secretary, and ‘other organisations’ – bodies for which the secretary of state is responsible but which have their own management structures. For example, we consider the Standards and Testing Agency, Education Funding Agency and National College for Teaching and Leadership to be part of the Department for Education, and also include Ofqual and Ofsted in its departmental group. For full details and groupings, see annex (pages 165-66).

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/workforce

Civil service staff numbers have fallen by 15% since Spending Review 2010, from 478,130 to 406,140 (FTE).

Civil Service staff numbers, March 2009 to March 2015 (Full Time Equivalent)

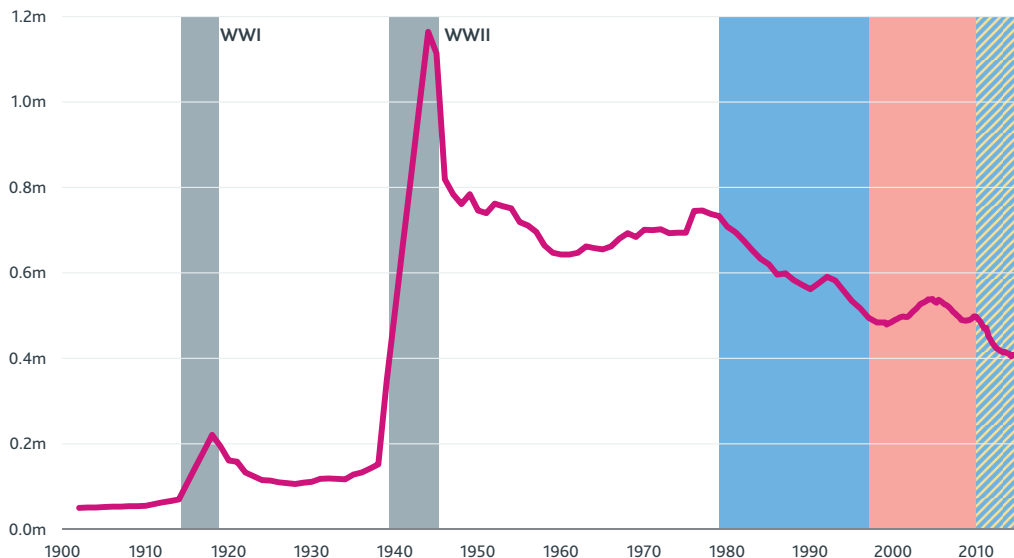


Source: Institute for Government analysis of Office for National Statistics (ONS) Public Sector Employment Data (table 9), Q1 2009 to Q1 2015.

There were 71,990 fewer civil servants (FTE) in March 2015 compared with Spending Review 2010, a reduction of 15%. According to the NAO, most of these reductions were probably due to fewer people being recruited and to natural turnover, rather than redundancy.⁴

This is a significant reduction – from 478,130 to 406,140. But it is not as low as the Coalition anticipated. *The Civil Service Reform Plan* (2012) estimated that the Civil Service would have ‘around 380,000’ staff by 2015, a reduction of about 23%. Assuming a constant rate of reduction from the 2010 Spending Review, we can see that the Civil Service was well on track until early 2013, when reductions slowed down, before veering off track in early 2014. The past five years therefore highlight the challenge of the next five. With further cuts to Whitehall departments expected in the 2015 Spending Review, further staff reductions are likely and could be more difficult than expected.

Civil Service staff numbers, 1902 to March 2015 (Full Time Equivalent) - governments 1979-2015 highlighted

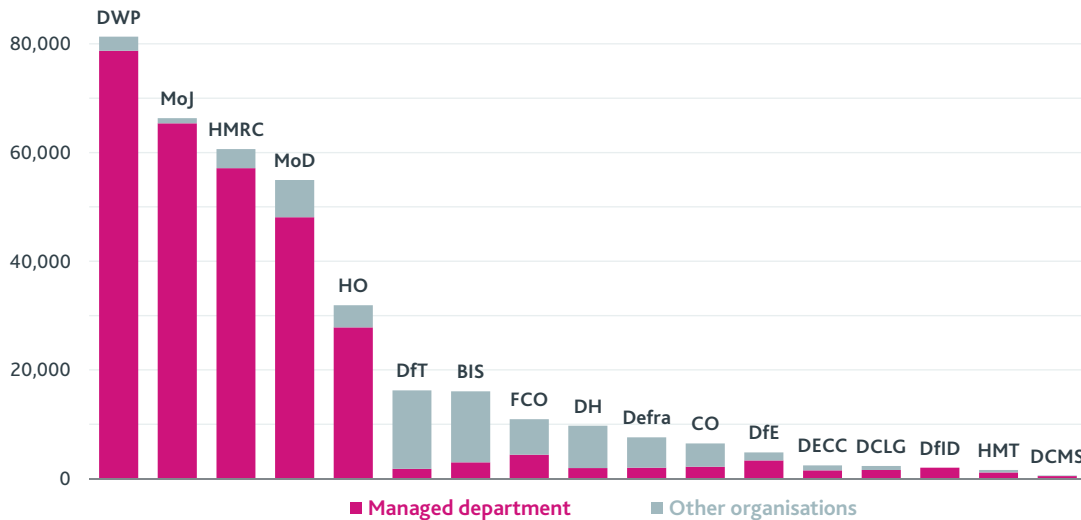


Source: IfG analysis of Cabinet Office compilation (Civil Service Statistics, 1902-1990; Public Sector Employment, annual, 1991-8 and quarterly, from 1999).

In spite of the Coalition’s slow progress towards its estimate, the Civil Service is at its smallest since the Second World War. Sustained reductions started around the time of the Thatcher government, leading to a Civil Service of under 500,000 by 1997 (with a slight increase in the early 1990s). Numbers increased to 539,000 in 2004, before falling again.

Five departments – DWP, MoJ, HMRC, MoD and HO – employ nearly three-quarters of all civil servants.

Civil Service staff numbers (Full Time Equivalent), March 2015



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Office for National Statistics (ONS) Public Sector Employment Data (table 9), Q1 2015.

In our headcount analysis, we break **departmental groups** down into:

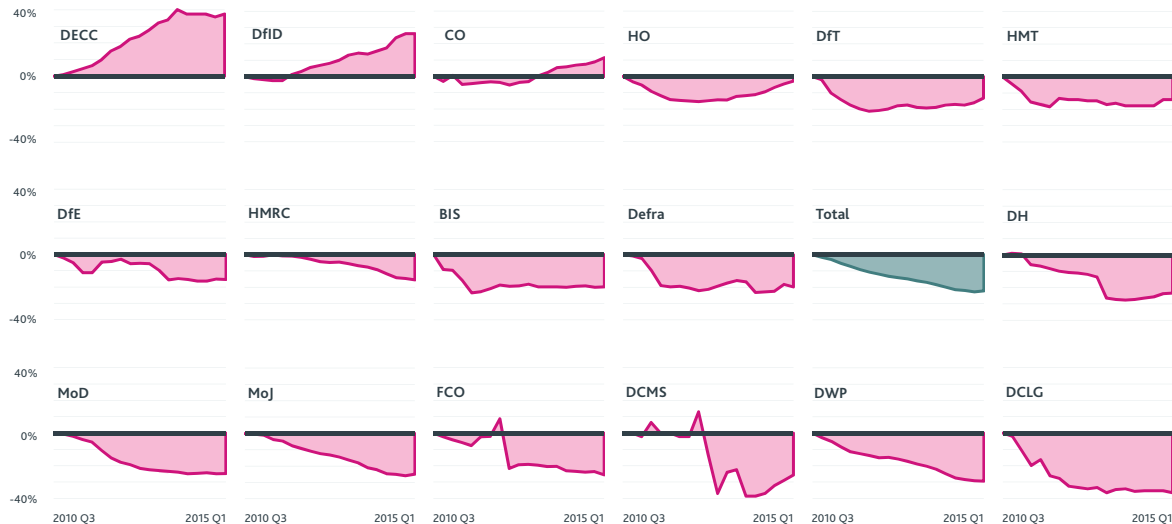
- **The department** The civil servants directly under the control of the permanent secretary; this sometimes includes other bodies (such as the National Offender Management Service at MoJ, or Education Funding Agency at DfE)
- **Other organisations** Other civil service arm’s-length bodies the department is responsible to Parliament for, but doesn’t manage as directly (such as the DVLA at DfT).

(The data from the ONS is for civil servants, and therefore does not include all staff working in arm’s-length bodies, or the wider public sector.)

Four departmental groups were responsible for employing more than 50,000 civil servants at the end of the Coalition. These were DWP (81,310), MoJ (66,330), HMRC (60,620) and MoD (54,960). The fifth-largest department is the Home Office (31,900), nearly twice the size of the next largest, DfT (16,250). The five largest departmental groups dwarf the rest: between them, they employ 73% of all civil servants.

DCLG and DWP underwent the largest reductions; DECC, DfID, CO increased in size.

Change in Civil Service staff numbers (Full Time Equivalent), Spending Review 2010 to March 2015 - managed department



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Office for National Statistics (ONS) Public Sector Employment Data (table 9), Q3 2010 to Q1 2015.

Since the Spending Review in 2010, 14 departments have decreased in size. DCLG has undergone the biggest reduction, shrinking by 35% since 2010. The managed department now contains 1,630 people – down from 2,520 four years ago.

It is closely followed by some of the largest departments – DWP, MoJ and MoD have all decreased in size by 25% or more. No department has had reductions in every single quarter, but numbers at these three have risen only once. HMRC, the third-largest department, has shrunk by 15%, a relatively small reduction, although this still amounts to almost 10,000 jobs.

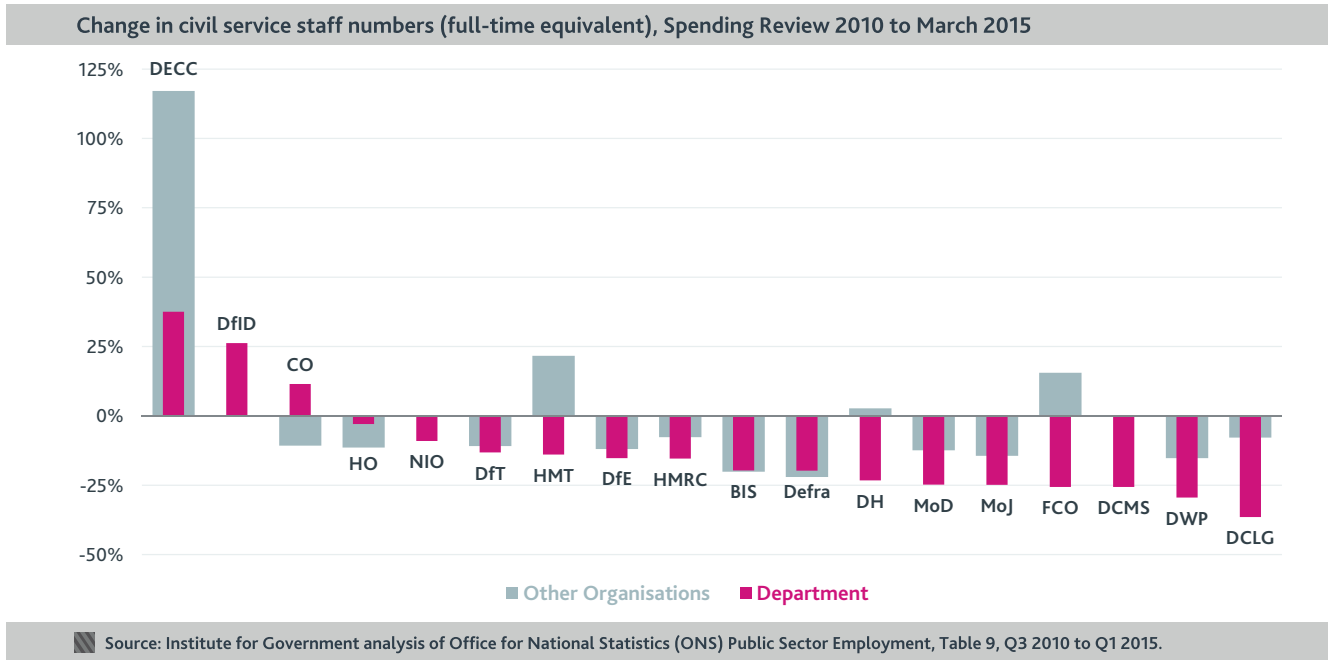
While reductions have been steady in some cases – DWP and MoJ in particular – other departments have been less consistent. DfE engaged in two rounds of cuts – in mid-2011 and mid-2013. The changes in DCMS's staffing – an increase followed by a sharp decrease – reflect policy areas it has gained (such as broadband) and its delivery of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

When departments reclassify their staff, but don't explain how or why, it can look like big changes have taken place. This is why the number of staff at FCO appears to oscillate in 2012, when the department revised their number of staff up and then down again. The large loss of staff in DH in 2013, though not explained, coincides with the establishment of Public Health England.

Other departments have fallen before increasing almost to 2010 levels, notably the Home Office (HO). At the end of 2012, the department was 15% smaller than at the Spending Review. But numbers have steadily increased since then: even when machinery-of-government changes are accounted for (such as the absorption of the Passport Office), HO now employs only 3% fewer people than in 2010.

DECC, DfID and CO are the only managed departments to have increased their staff numbers since 2010. At DECC and DfID, this rise has mostly levelled off. However, at CO – where there have been moves to build cross-Whitehall capacity (for example, digital) – numbers have risen every quarter since mid-2013.⁵

With departments with unprotected budgets asked to model resource reductions of 25% and 40% in preparation for the Spending Review in November 2015, further staff reductions are likely.

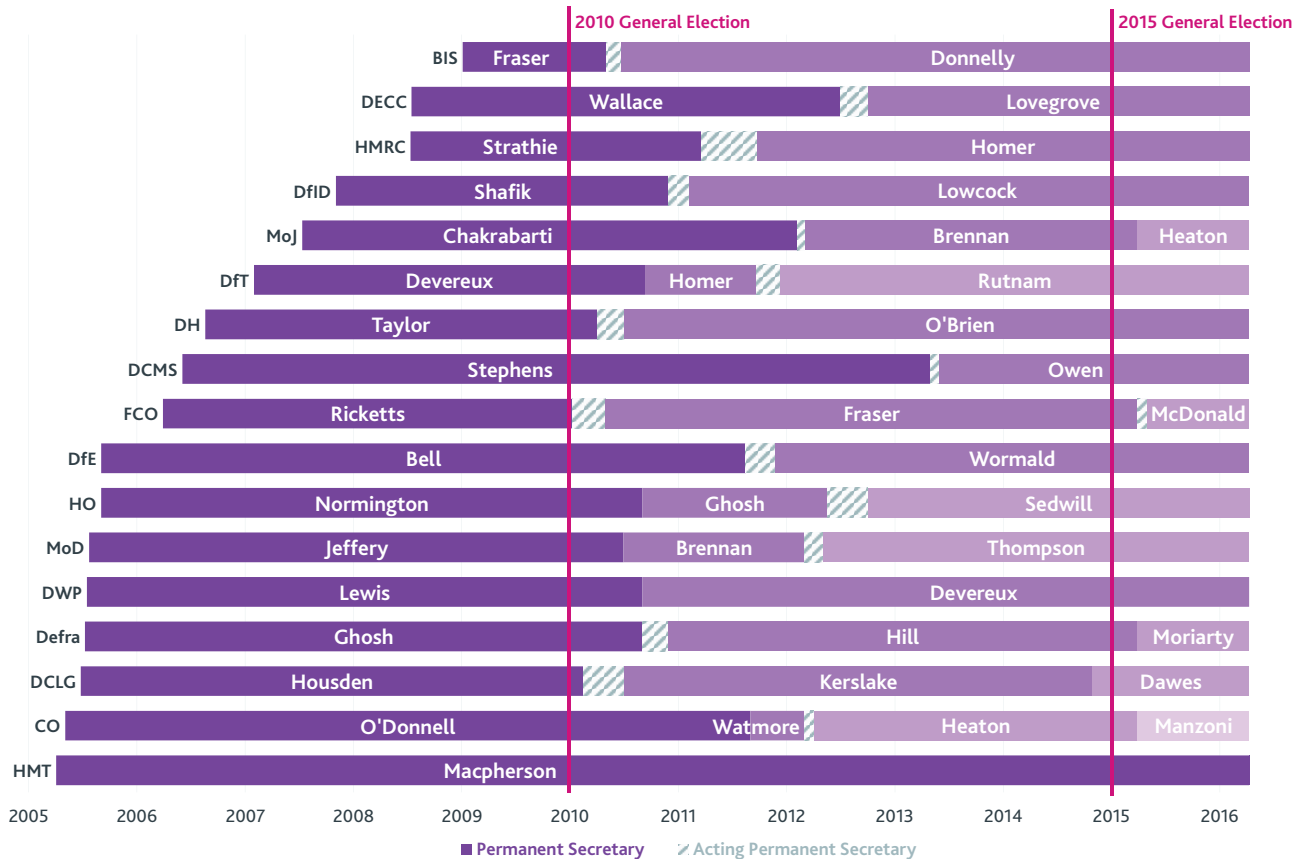


In most cases, staff reductions have been deeper in departments than across the other civil service organisations they are responsible for. The main exceptions are HO and, most strikingly, Cabinet Office, where staff numbers in the managed department have increased but numbers elsewhere – including at the Charity Commission and UK Statistics Authority – have fallen slightly.

At DECC, the 'other organisations' – actually one, Ofgem – have grown in size by even more than the department itself since Spending Review 2010. Staff numbers grew slightly in some of HMT's other organisations (Debt Management Office, Government Actuary's Department, National Savings and Investment) and in some of FCO's (the Wilton Park executive agency, FCO Services), even though numbers in the departments themselves fell.

Only one permanent secretary remained in place for the whole parliament.

Permanent Secretaries, 2010 to 2016 (from when first appointed)



Source: Institute for Government analysis of permanent secretary appointments, 2010 to 2015.

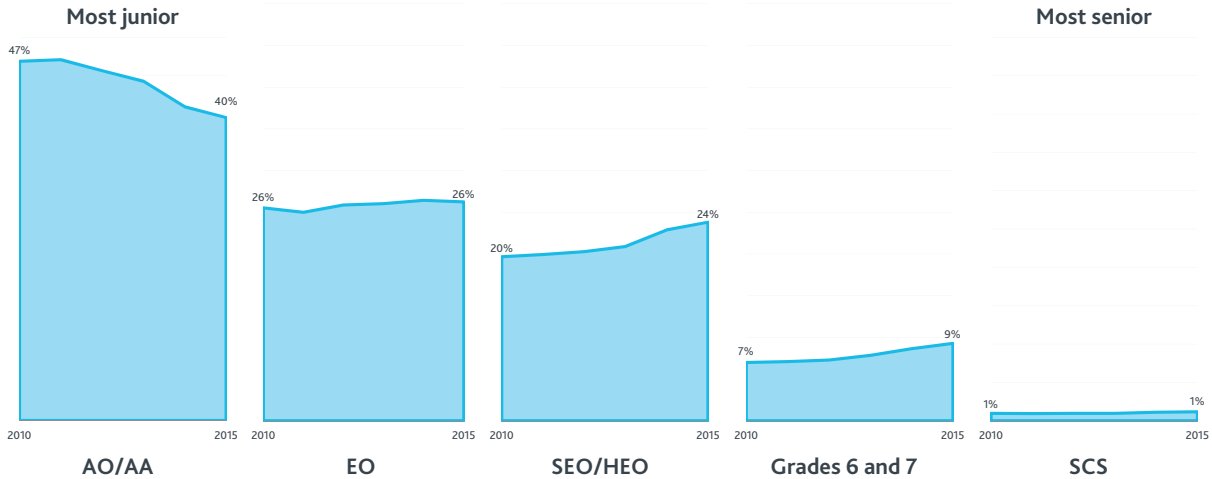
Turning to the composition of the civil service workforce, and starting at the very top, Sir Nicholas Macpherson at the Treasury was the only permanent secretary in the same post following the 2015 general election as after the 2010 election. Five departments – DfT, HO, MoD, DCLG, CO – each had three permanent secretaries in the same time period, although there was greater continuity as the parliament went on, with only two changes between 2013 and the election.

That said, most ministers entering or re-entering departments after the 2015 election would have been greeted by permanent secretaries with slightly more experience than in 2010 – on average, they had three years and six months of experience, compared with three years, five months in 2010. However, if the long-serving Macpherson is excluded, the average becomes three years, two months in 2015, shorter than the three years, four months in 2010.

In a number of departments, such as BIS, DWP and DH, the current permanent secretary has been in post for longer than four years, the usual presumption. We already know of four changes after the 2015 election: John Manzoni, chief executive of the Civil Service, taking over at CO; his predecessor, Richard Heaton, moving to MoJ; Clare Moriarty taking over at Defra; and Sir Simon McDonald, formerly Britain's ambassador to Germany, becoming permanent secretary at FCO. Melanie Dawes's appointment at DCLG, shortly before the election, was the first to be made under new rules. These allow the prime minister to choose from a list of suitable candidates drawn up by the Civil Service Commission.

A higher percentage of the Civil Service is in more senior grades than in 2010.

Percentage of civil servants in each grade, 2010 to 2015 (headcount)



Source: IfG analysis of ONS Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2010 to 2015. SCS figures also include civil servants at equivalent SCS level.

Permanent secretaries sit at the apex of a Civil Service with a higher percentage of people in senior grades in 2015 compared with 2010. The number of civil servants in grades 6 and 7, the grades immediately below the Senior Civil Service where much of the heavy-lifting is done, has increased from 36,630 to 39,530; they now make up 9% of the service compared with 7% in 2010. Administrative officers (AO) and administrative assistants (AA), the most junior grades, accounted for 47% of the Civil Service in 2010 – they now account for 40%. These trends tend to support the NAO analysis that, overall, staff reductions are the result of recruitment freezes rather than redundancies, with existing staff moving up through the grades and fewer people entering the organisation at its most junior levels.

The shape of the Civil Service varies between departments. In most departments, staff are concentrated in the middle ranks. All departments but five have seen reductions in the proportion of their staff in the Senior Civil Service (SCS). The largest decline has taken place in the Cabinet Office, where the growth of Grades 6 and 7 has been accompanied by a reduction of SCS staff from 15% to 11% of the department’s workforce. In spite of this proportional decrease, the number of senior civil servants at the CO has actually increased, from 200 in 2010 to 250 in 2015 – the only department where this has happened.

The grade profile of six departments (BIS, DH, DECC, DCMS, CO and DfID) is kite-shaped, with the bulk of their staff at the second highest (Grade 6 and 7) level. DfID now has the greatest proportion of staff at this level, with 55% of the civil servants in this department at Grades 6 and 7, while the Cabinet Office has seen the largest increase – from 24% in 2010 to 36% in 2015. Only the more bottom-heavy Home Office has seen a decrease in staff at this level since 2010.

Six departments (Defra, DCLG, DfE, HMT, DfT and FCO) are ‘diamond-shaped’, with the majority of their staff at the middle rank of SEO/HEO. Defra and DCLG now have the largest proportion of SEO/HEO staff in their workforces (46% and 44% respectively). Overall, the proportion of staff at this level has increased in ten departments since 2010.

The grade profiles of four departments – HMRC, MoD, MoJ and DWP – resemble pyramids, with the greatest proportion of their staff at junior levels. At least half of all staff in these departments are AA/AO: 73% of staff managed by MoJ are at this level. These are delivery-focussed departments, employing people in job centres (DWP), and as tax officials (HMRC) and probation officers (MoJ).

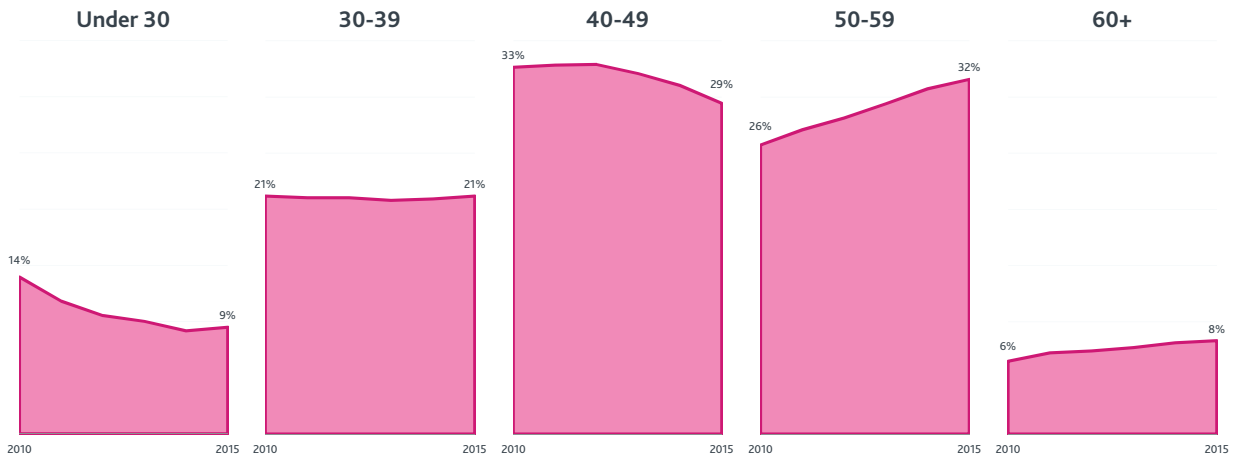
Grade composition and change by government department, 2010 to 2015 (percentage of staff at each grade - headcount)



Source: Institute for Government analysis of ONS Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2010 and 2015. 'Total' is for whole Civil Service.

The Civil Service has become older and more diverse – though senior levels lag behind the rest of the service.

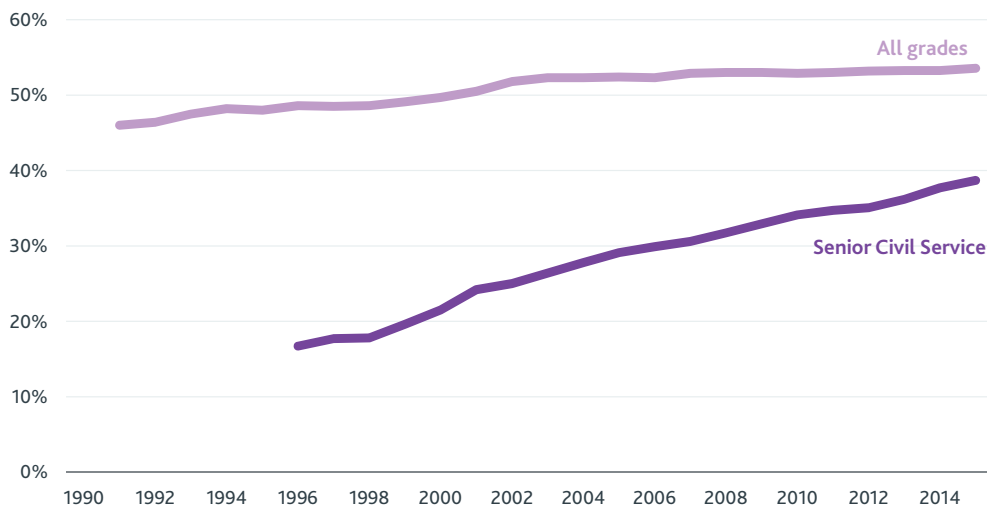
Percentage of civil servants in each age group, 2010 to 2015 (headcount)



Source: IfG analysis of ONS Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2010 to 2015. SCS figures also include civil servants at equivalent SCS level.

In 2010, 14% of all civil servants were under 30 – in 2015, just 9% were. Meanwhile, 26% of all civil servants were aged 50 to 59 in 2010 – 32% of them are in 2015. The percentage of the Civil Service aged 60 or over has also increased, from 6% to 8%. This again reflects recruitment freezes, which may prevent younger people from joining.

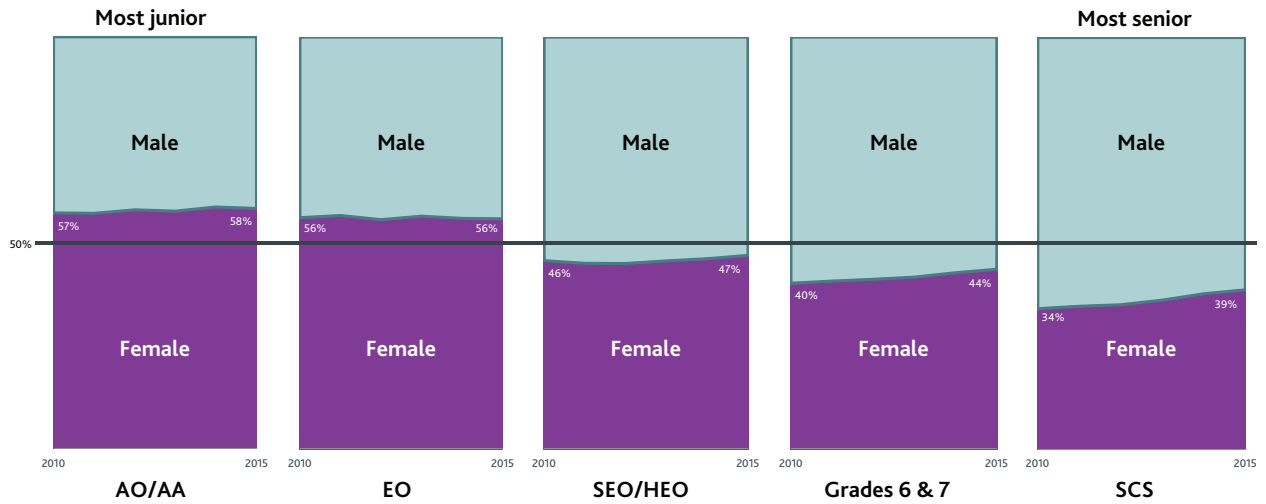
Percentage of women in whole Civil Service and Senior Civil Service, 1991 to 2015 (headcount)



Source: IfG analysis of ONS ACSES, 1991 to 2015. SCS figures also include civil servants at equivalent SCS level. SCS figures from SCS database to 2006.

More than 50% of all civil servants have been women since the early 2000s – in 2015, 54% of civil servants in all grades were women, and this has been reasonably steady for the past decade. The percentage of the Senior Civil Service that is female has increased from 17% in 1996 to 34% in 2010 and 39% in 2015.

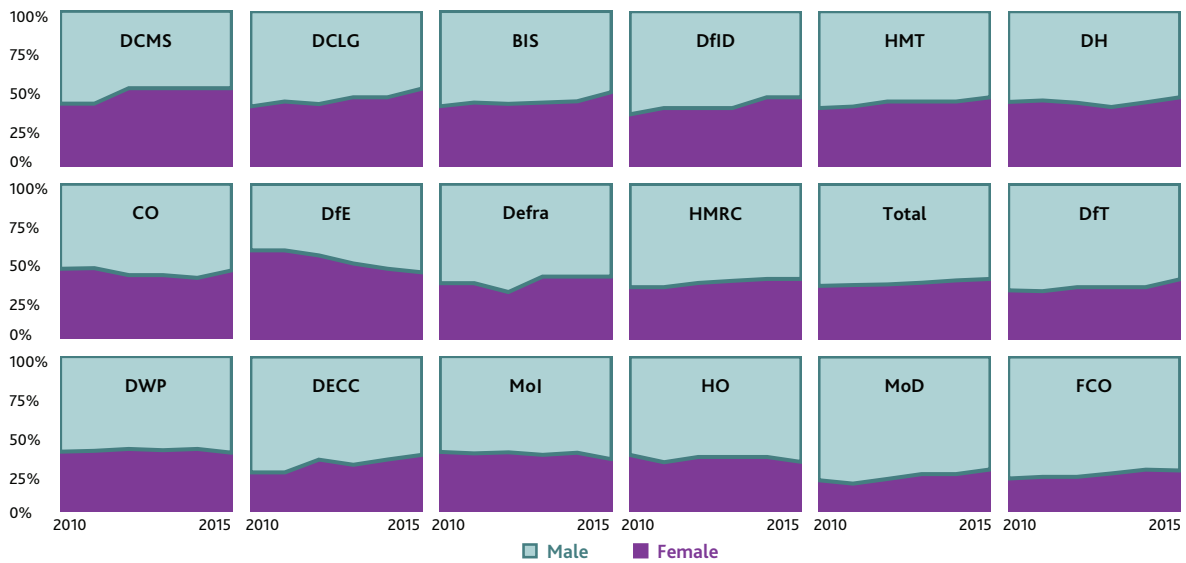
Gender balance of each civil service grade, 2010 to 2015 (headcount)



Source: IfG analysis of ONS Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2010 to 2015. SCS figures also include civil servants at equivalent SCS level.

This trend is seen in the next grades down – the percentage of civil servants in grades 6 and 7 who are women has increased from 40% in 2010 to 44% in 2015. But it remains the more junior grades where women outnumber men – in 2015, women accounted for 58% of civil servants at AA/AO level, and 56% at executive officer (EO) level.

Percentage of women and men in the Senior Civil Service by department, 2010 to 2015 (headcount)

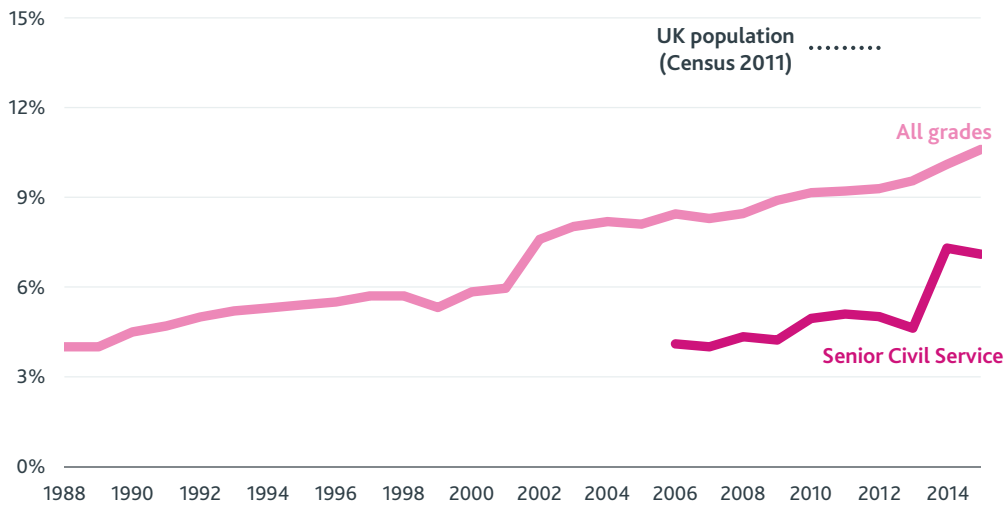


Source: Institute for Government analysis of ONS Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2010 to 2015. We have rounded numbers less than five up to five.

Some departments have a more positive record on Senior Civil Service diversity than others. In DCLG and DCMS, 50% of the senior civil servants are women, up from 38% and 40% respectively in 2010. FCO and MoD have the smallest proportion of women (26% and 27%), although both have increased since 2010 (when they were at 21% and 20% respectively).

The greatest increase in women in senior roles since 2010 has occurred in DCLG (up 12 percentage points from 38% to 50%), DfID (up 11 points, from 33% to 44%) and DECC (up 11, from 25% to 36%). DfE is the only department where the proportion of women in senior roles has decreased: from 57% to 43%.

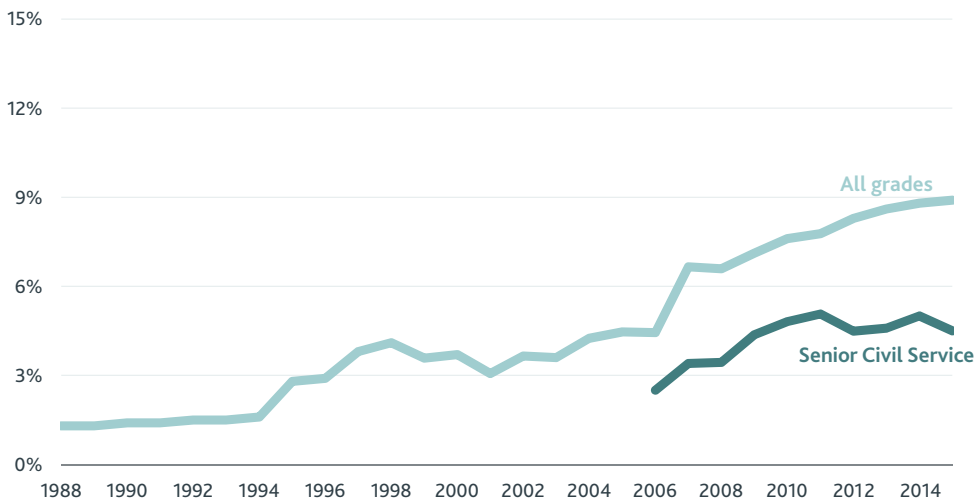
Percentage of ethnic minority staff in whole Civil Service and Senior Civil Service, 1988 to 2015 (headcount, where known)



Source: IfG analysis of ONS ACSES, 1988 to 2015. SCS figures also include civil servants at equivalent SCS level. SCS figures from SCS database to 2006.

In terms of ethnic diversity, 11% of the whole Civil Service was from an ethnic minority background in 2015, compared with 9% in 2010 and just 4% in 1988. This is still less than the ethnic diversity of the general UK population, which was 14% at the 2011 census. There is also a gap between the percentage of the whole Civil Service from an ethnic minority and that of the Senior Civil Service, although at 7.1% in 2015, this is an increase from 5% in 2010.

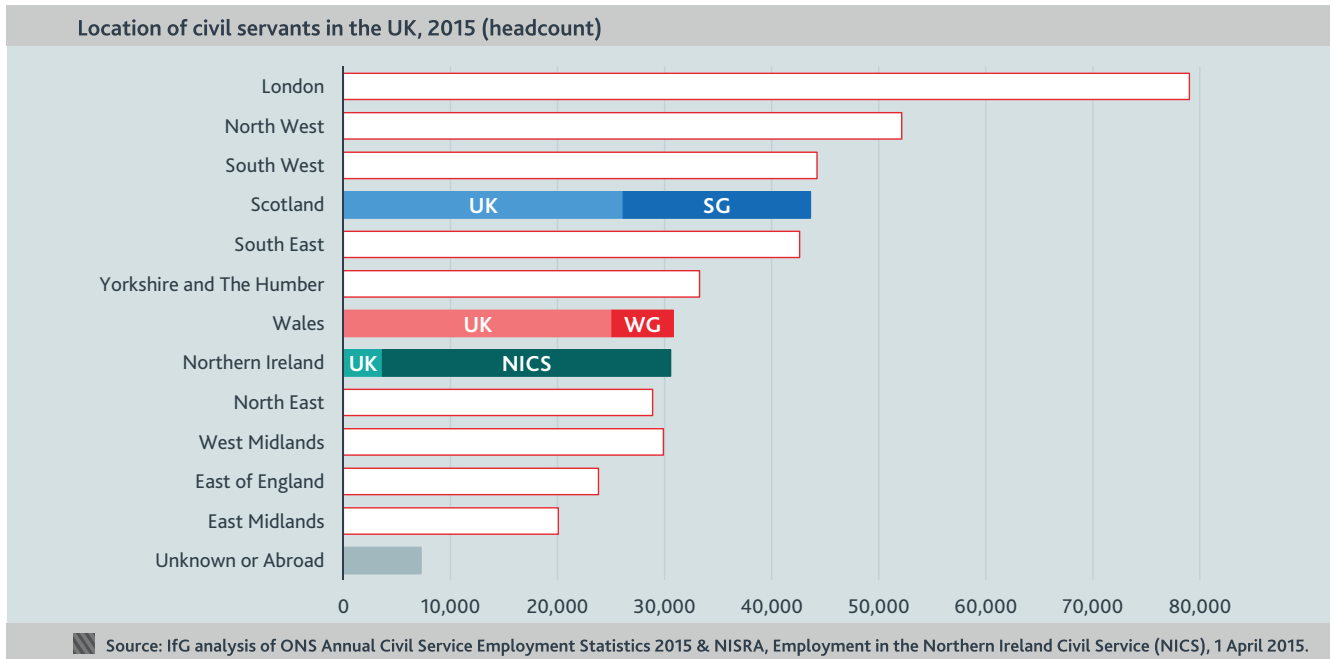
Percentage of staff with a disability in whole Civil Service and Senior Civil Service, 1988 to 2015 (headcount, where known)



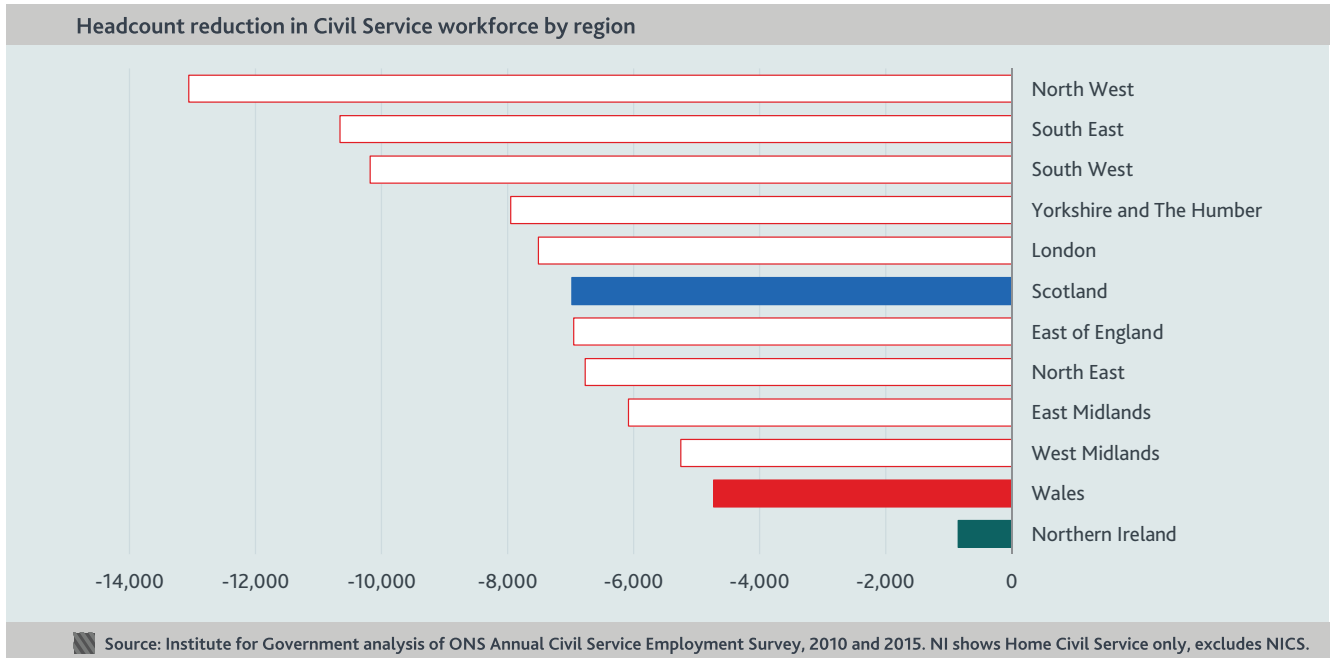
Source: IfG analysis of ONS ACSES, 1988 to 2015. SCS figures also include civil servants at equivalent SCS level. SCS figures from SCS database to 2006.

In 2015, about 9% of all civil servants have a disability. Again, this figure has risen since 2010 (when it was 5%); it has increased dramatically since 1988 (1%). And again, the percentage of senior civil servants with a disability is lower than across the Civil Service as a whole – 4.5% in 2015, down slightly from 5% in 2014.

London is home to more civil servants than any other region.



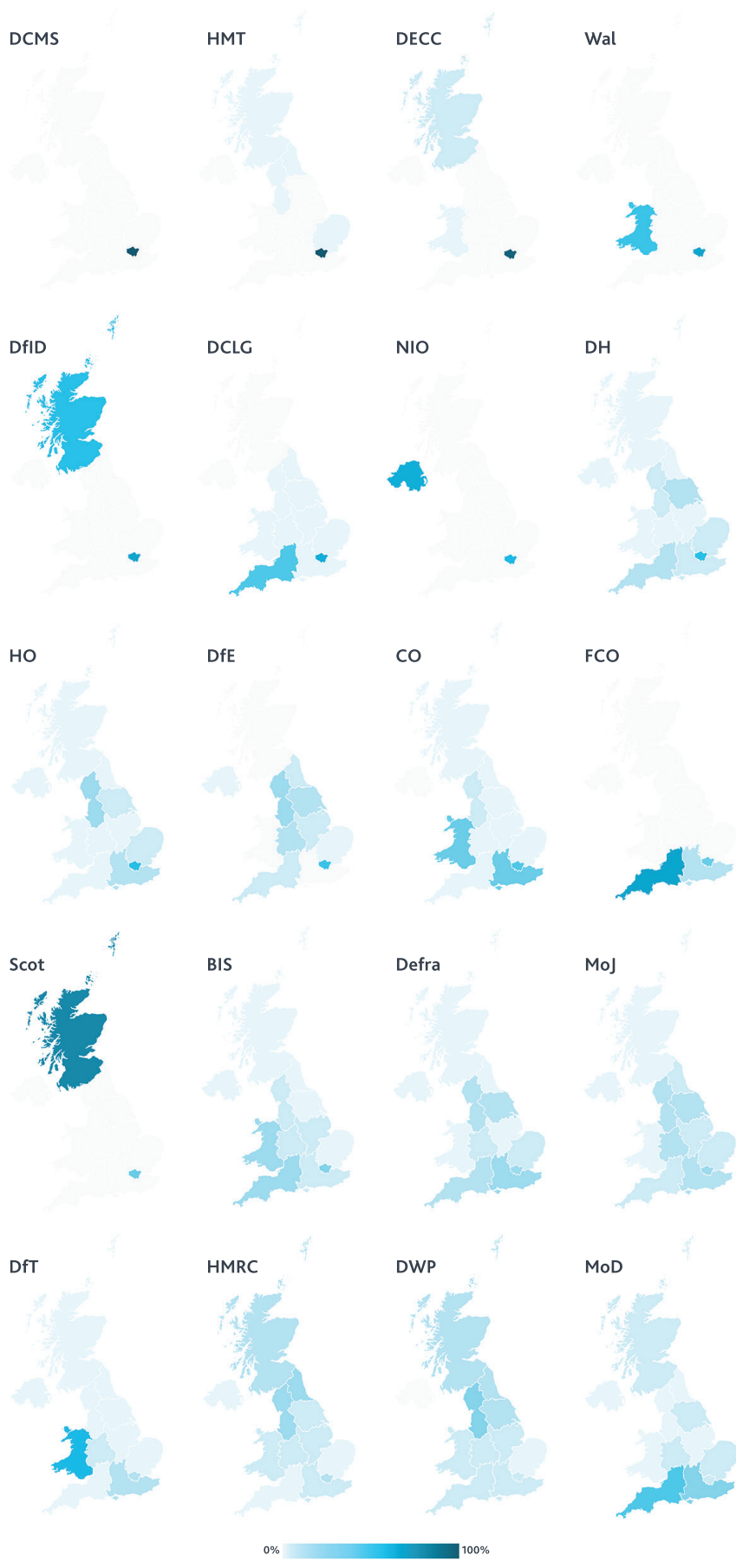
More civil servants are based in London than in any other UK region – some 79,000 staff, or 18% of the total: an increase from 16% in 2010. The East Midlands hosts the fewest (just over 20,000), even though – in general population terms – it is larger than the North East of England, Northern Ireland and Wales. In both Scotland and Wales, UK government departments employ more civil servants than the devolved administrations. In Northern Ireland, the reverse is true.



In absolute terms, the greatest reduction has been in the North West, which has seen its workforce fall by over 13,000 in the past five years, from 65,210 to 52,150. DWP alone employs 8,500 fewer staff in the region in 2015 when compared to 2010.

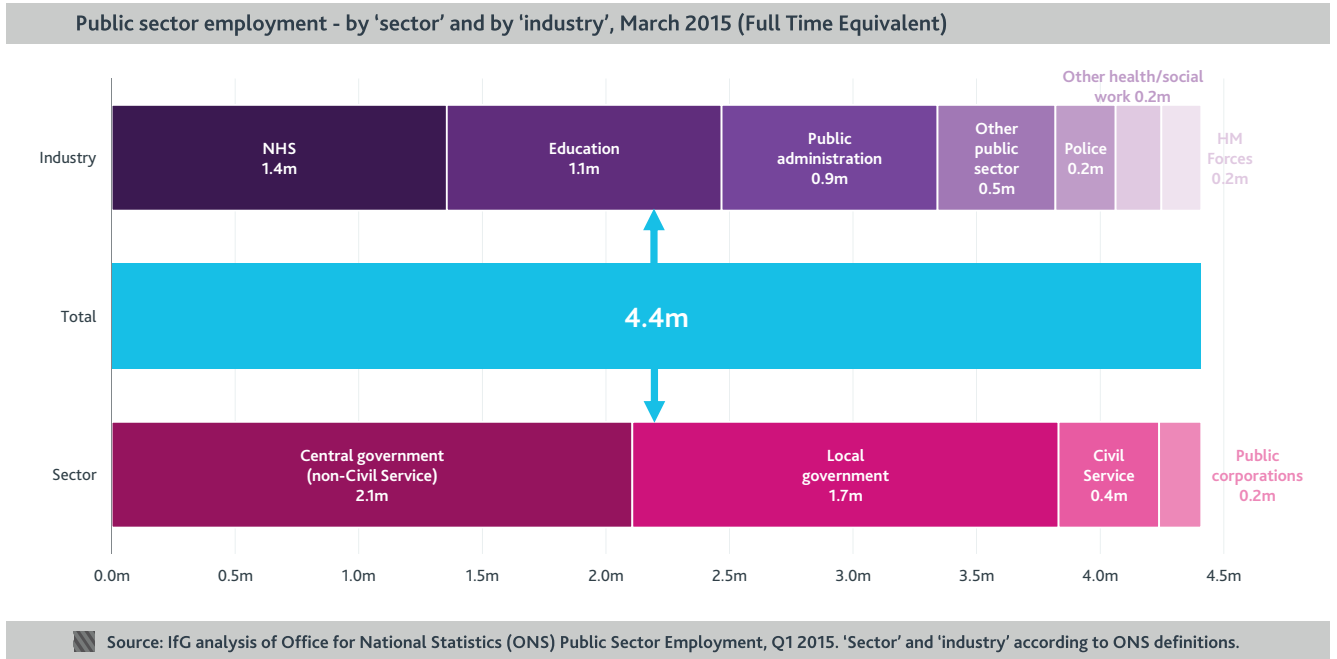
While all civil servants in DCMS's departmental group are based in London, all other departments have civil servants in at least one other UK region. The largest four UK departments in terms of headcount – DWP (with many staff 'on the ground' in job centres), HMRC (tax officials), MoJ (probation officers) and MoD – are all well-represented outside London. More than 45% of civil servants in DfT's departmental group work in Wales (mainly at the DVLA in Swansea), around a third of DCLG's are based in the South West (including the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol) and over 40% of DfID's are based in Scotland (in the East Kilbride office). Almost 60% of FCO's UK-based civil servants are based in the South West (mainly at GCHQ in Cheltenham), while the UK Statistics Authority extends the Cabinet Office's staff into Wales and the South East.

Location of civil servants in the UK by departmental group, 2015 (percentage of staff in each region - headcount)



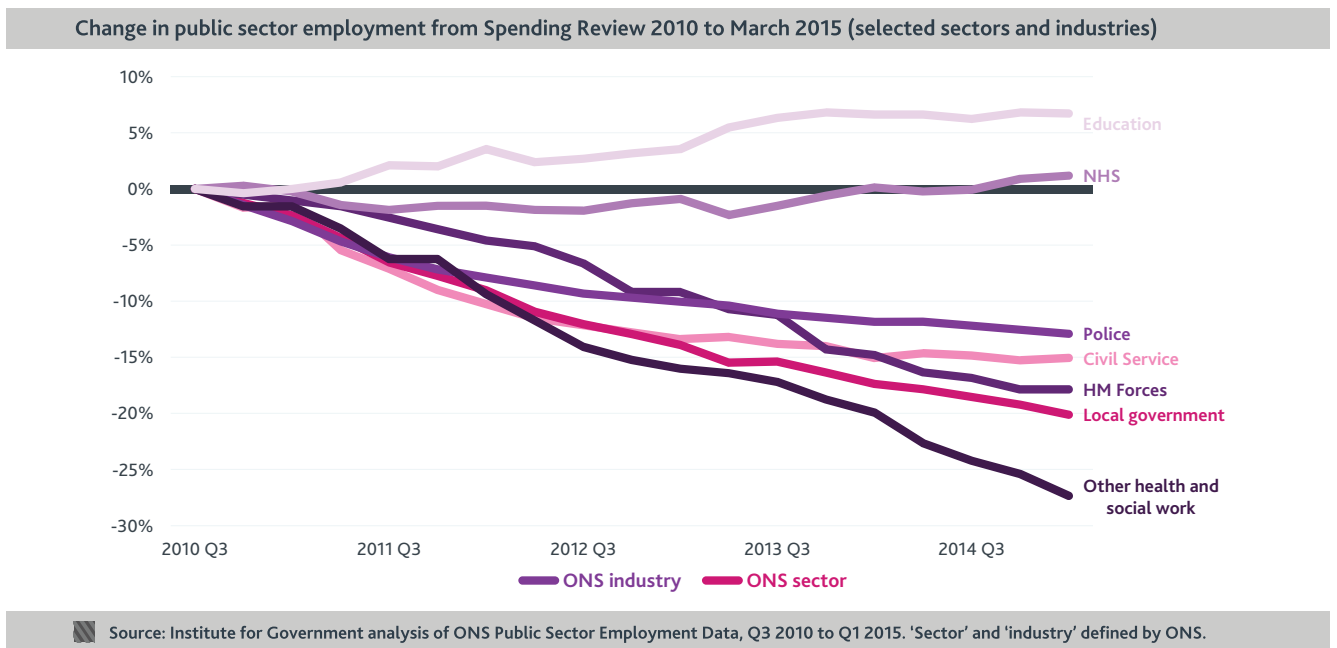
Source: Institute for Government analysis of ONS Annual Civil Service Employment Survey 2015. Ordered from most concentrated in London to least.

Civil service staff reductions have not been as deep as in other parts of the public sector.

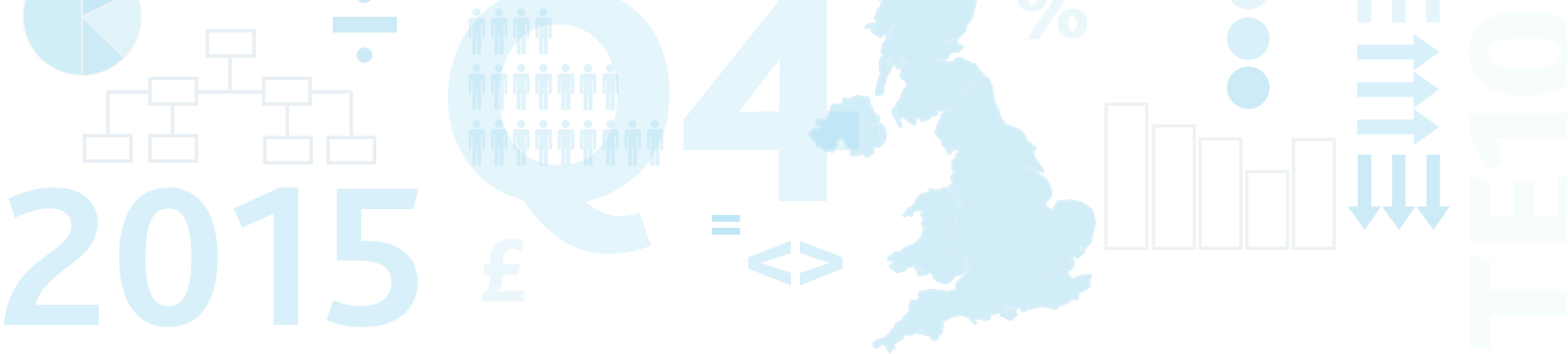


The Civil Service makes up only a small part of wider public sector employment, which stood at 4.4 million in March 2015. The ONS divides the total in two different ways:

- **By sector**, non-civil service central government (2.1m) has the most employees. As well as public administration, this includes the armed forces, NHS and parts of the education system (e.g. academy and free school staff). It became larger than local government (now 1.7m) during the course of the parliament.
- **By industry**, the NHS (1.4m) and education (1.1m) employ the most.



Percentage-wise, the reductions in the Civil Service since 2010 have been deeper than some parts of the public sector (such as the police), but not as deep as in the armed forces or local government. The biggest cut, of more than a quarter, has been in health and social work employment not included in the NHS numbers. There have actually been increases in staff working in the NHS and in education.



6. Civil service professions

The Civil Service is made up of 25 professions, including policy, operational delivery, various corporate functions and more specialist ones (such as medicine, law or planning). However, the poor and contradictory quality of the public data makes it difficult to build a clear picture of the professional makeup of the Civil Service.

Government departments should know which of the 25 civil service professions their employees belong to: it allows them to know what capabilities they possess (the work they do and have experience of) and to make better resourcing decisions – especially for future needs, if what the department does fundamentally changes (see chapter 8 on resource management) or if there are to be further headcount reductions.

However, the quality of the public data in this area is poor. From the figures collected from departments by the ONS, five departments – DfT, MoJ, MoD, DCMS and HMT – do not list the professions of more than 15% of their civil servants; they are listed as an enigmatic 'other' or are simply not reported. Only five departments listed the professions for more than 85% of their civil servants in both 2010 and 2015, making it difficult to analyse what has changed in this period. Of these, most show similar balances between 2010 and 2015, although at DfID there has been a noticeable shift away from policy and towards operational delivery (assuming the data is consistent).

There are also disparities between the ONS data and that published every six months by departments themselves in their organograms. The organograms do not always make it easy to compare across time, as some of the data – names of units within departments, the professions assigned to the same person in two different releases – is not consistent, and some departments have not published it at all for some periods. But the fact that the ONS and organogram data does not match must raise doubt as to how much departmental leaders know about the composition of their workforce.

Of course, it is possible that departments hold and use better data than they are publishing – the quality and coverage of the public data suggests many cannot be using it to improve how they are organised. If so, they should be publishing it: David Cameron explicitly mentioned the publication of organogram data when he set out his transparency agenda in 2010. Better professions data would help departments improve themselves and learn from one another. And all of the above assumes that the current 'professions' are the right way of classifying the Civil Service – for example, 'policy' is a broad term which may not be helpful in understanding how departments are organised, and the professions listed by the Civil Service do not map perfectly onto those used by the ONS and in organograms.¹

About the data

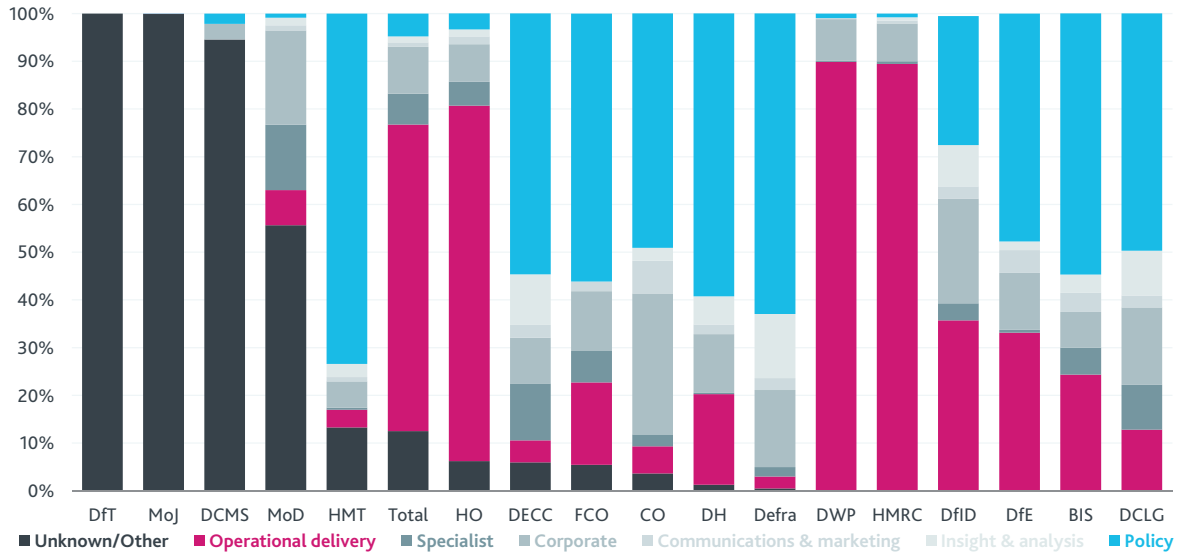
The **ONS Annual Civil Service Employment Survey** includes some data on professions, and the ONS has kindly provided us with the data by civil service organisation. The **organograms published by departments** every six months also provide information on professions.²

In **our analysis** we apply our definition of the managed 'department' as opposed to other organisations within its broader departmental group (see pages 165-66). We also divide the 25 professions into six groups: policy, operational delivery, corporate, communications, specialist, and insight and analysis. A full list is provided in the annex (page 167).³

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/professions

In many departments, we don't know what professions their civil service posts belong to.

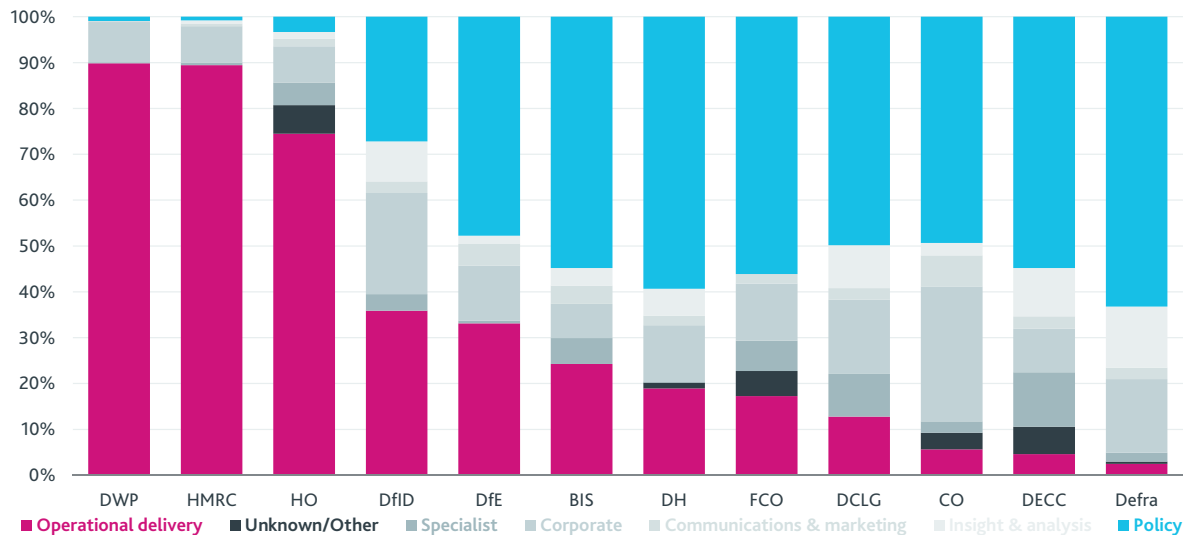
Professions to which civil servants belong, March 2015 - by department (headcount)



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Civil Service Statistics 2015. Ordered by Unknown/Other.

For five departments – including MoJ and MoD, two of the largest departments, and DfT, DCMS and HMT – the professions of more than 15% of their civil servants are not reported or listed as ‘other’. Across the whole Civil Service, 12.5% of civil servants – one in eight – are ‘other’ or unknown.

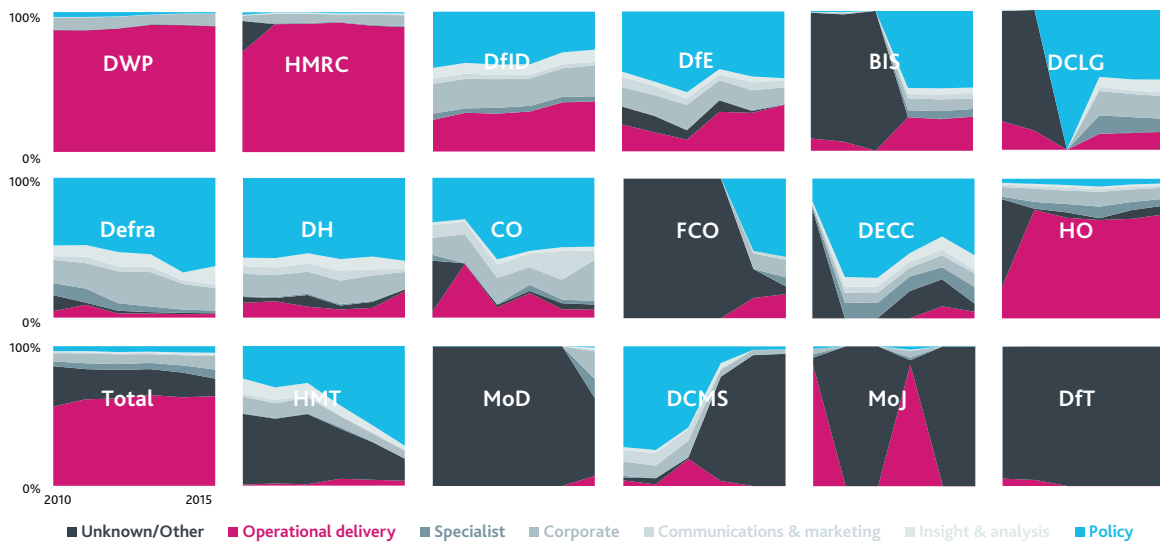
Professions to which civil servants belong, March 2015 - by department (where more than 85% known, headcount)



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Civil Service Statistics 2015.

Where we do know the professions of more than 85% of civil servants, we can see a group of departments where operational delivery accounts for the largest percentage of civil servants, and another made up of policy-heavy departments. In the former group are DWP (which has lots of frontline staff in job centres) and HMRC, while the latter includes Defra, DH, FCO, BIS and DECC, which all employ over half their staff in policy-related posts. Defra (science and veterinary), DECC (science and law) and DCLG (planning) employ a large percentage of specialists.

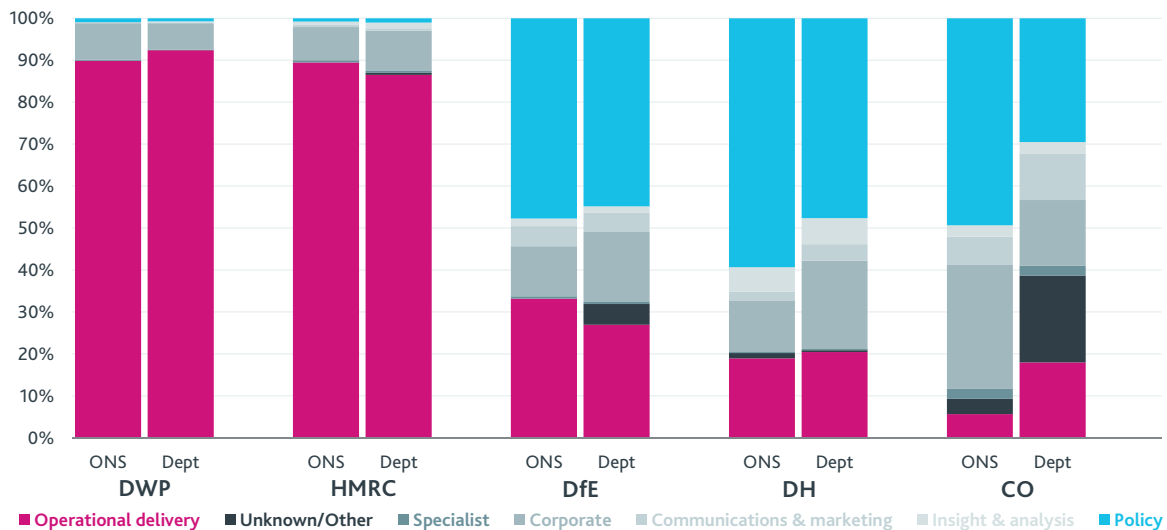
Professions to which civil servants belong, 2010 to 2015 - headcount by department



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Civil Service Statistics 2010 to 2015.

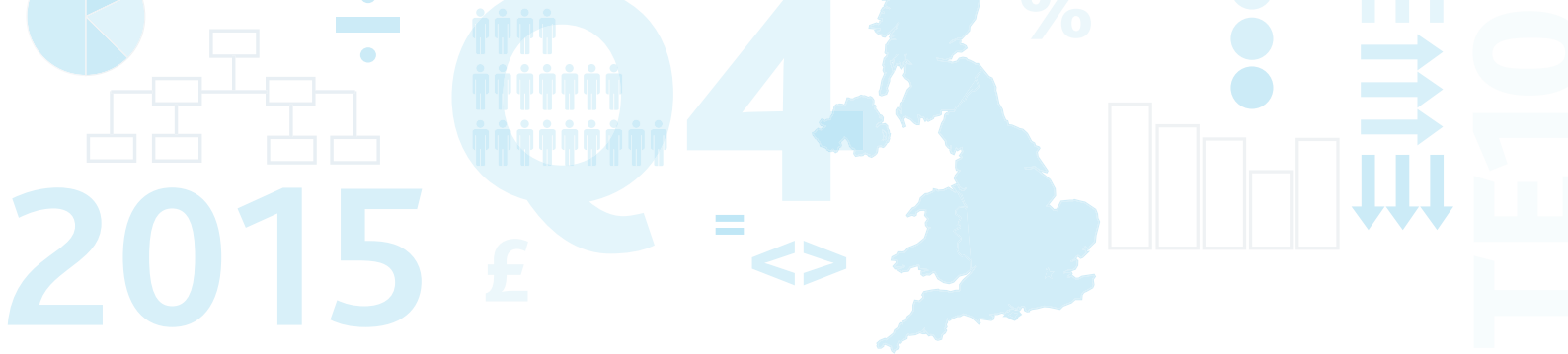
We have more coverage now than in 2010, when the professions of more than 15% of posts were unknown in ten departments and 29% of all civil servants were of an unknown profession. But only five departments listed known professions for more than 85% of their staff in both 2010 and 2015 (DWP, DfID, DfE, DH and Defra), making it difficult to work out what has changed. Where we can compare, one of the more noticeable changes is at DfID, which has seen a marked increase in the proportion of its staff working in operational delivery posts (from 23% in 2010 to 36% in 2015) at the expense of policy-oriented positions (which have decreased from 40% to 22%).

Professions to which civil servants belong, March 2015 - ONS compared to departmental organograms



Source: IfG analysis of ONS Annual Civil Service Statistics 2015 (where more than 85% known) and departmental organogram data (where available).

The ONS isn't the only potential source of professions data – organogram data published by departments contains it as well. However, only five departments have both 85% or more of their civil servants' professions known and published organogram data for March 2015. In DH's case, the organogram shows more corporate and fewer policy staff (around 10% in each case), while there are discrepancies between ONS and organograms at the Cabinet Office – the department ultimately responsible for the transparency and open data agenda. This, and the lack of recently-published organogram data for many departments, underlines the poor quality of data that they should be using to manage themselves better, plan for the future and make any further headcount reductions intelligently.



7. Staff engagement

Despite the reductions to budgets and the number of civil servants employed across Whitehall since 2010, the Engagement Index – part of the Civil Service People Survey, which measures how civil servants feel about their organisation – has largely remained steady.

However, this masks a great deal of variation. Some departments (DfID, FCO, HMT) have maintained consistently high scores since 2009, while others (notably DfE, DCLG, DCMS and DWP) have suffered falls, before recovering in 2014. HMRC had the lowest score in every year of the survey, but has increased from 36% in 2009 to 43% in 2014.

There are also differences between the 'themes' covered by the survey. While many theme scores have increased slightly since 2009, 'pay and benefits' has declined. 'Leadership and managing change' has increased, and 'learning and development' has recovered after a fall. The difference between highest- and lowest-scoring departments is especially marked for 'leadership and managing change' (32 percentage points), 'organisational objectives and purpose' (23) and 'pay and benefits' (22). The scores also show a big difference between how senior civil servants feel and the Civil Service as a whole, with the biggest divides being 'leadership and managing change' (26 points) and 'learning and development' (23 points).

Further staff and budget reductions are certain over this parliament, putting staff engagement under further stress. Pay freezes and the current dissatisfaction with pay and benefits, and the distance between senior civil servants and the rest, could make maintaining staff morale more of a challenge.

About the data

The Civil Service People Survey has been run by the Cabinet Office since 2009. The 2014 survey covered 101 government organisations, with 458,249 people (99.9% of all civil servants) being invited to take part (the response rate was 60%).

The core 2014 survey consisted of 62 questions across 10 themes, including the overall Engagement Index. There is a five-point scale for each question – strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree. The score for each individual question reflects the percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing. Theme scores are the average score for questions within that theme.

The Engagement Index is calculated differently. It consists of five questions – whether civil servants are proud when they tell others they are part of their organisation, whether they would recommend it as a great place to work, whether they feel a strong personal attachment to it, whether it inspires them to do the best in their job and whether it motivates them to help it achieve its objectives.

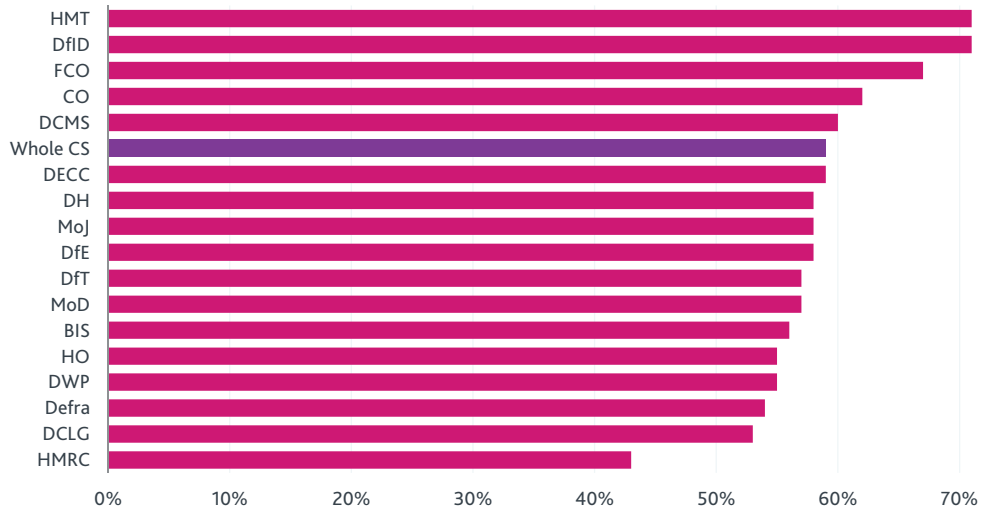
For each question, strongly agree is equivalent to 100, agree to 75, neither agree nor disagree to 50, disagree to 25 and strongly disagree to 0. An individual's score is their average score across the five questions; an organisation's is the average of the individuals within it. An organisational score of 100% would be equivalent to all employees strongly agreeing with all five questions; a score of 0% would be them all strongly disagreeing.¹

Our analysis involves no further calculations or regrouping of the named organisations – we use the central departments as defined by the Civil Service People Survey.

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/engagement

DfID, HMT and FCO had the highest engagement scores in 2015 and have been consistently high throughout the parliament.

Civil Service Engagement Index by department, 2014

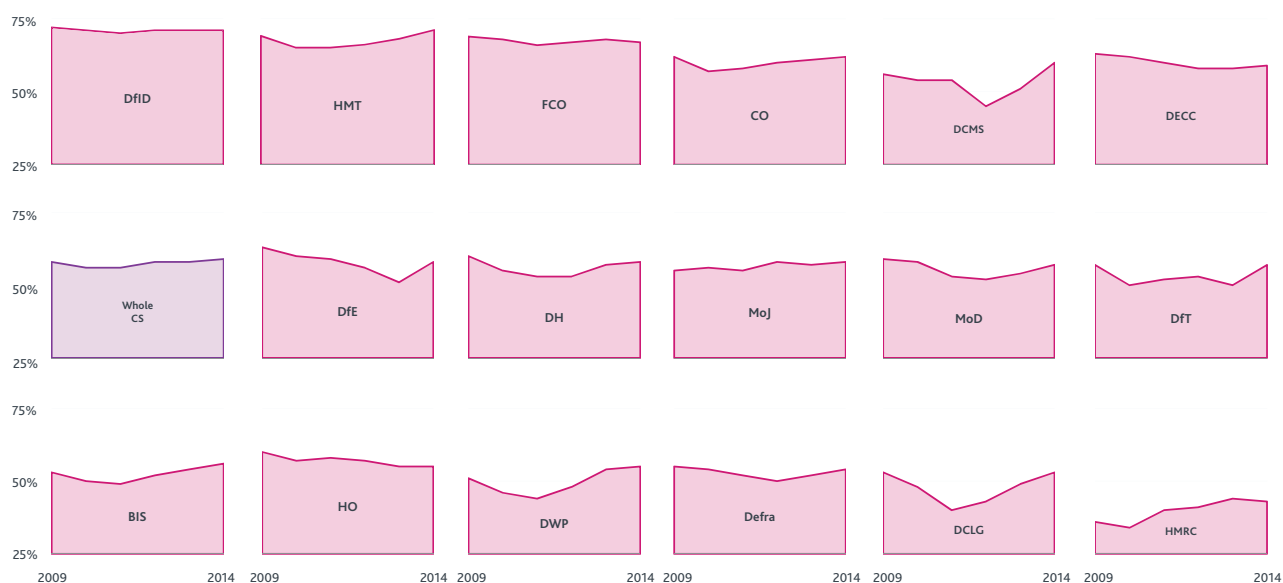


Source: Institute for Government analysis of Civil Service People Survey, 2014.

In 2014, the Treasury and DfID had the highest engagement score: at 71%, their scores were four percentage points ahead of the Foreign Office and 12 points above the Civil Service benchmark score. Three other departments – CO (62%), DCMS (60%) and DECC (59%) – had scores equal to or higher than the score for the whole Civil Service (59%). These high-scoring departments are all relatively small in terms of staff numbers (all of them have fewer than 5,000 civil servants).

HMRC is the lowest-scoring department, with an engagement score of 43%. It is the only department with a score below 50% (the equivalent of every civil servant in the department neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the questions put to them), and is ten percentage points behind the second lowest-scoring department (DCLG, 53%).

Engagement Index score, 2009 to 2014



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Civil Service People Survey, 2009 to 2014. Departments ordered from highest to lowest score, 2014.

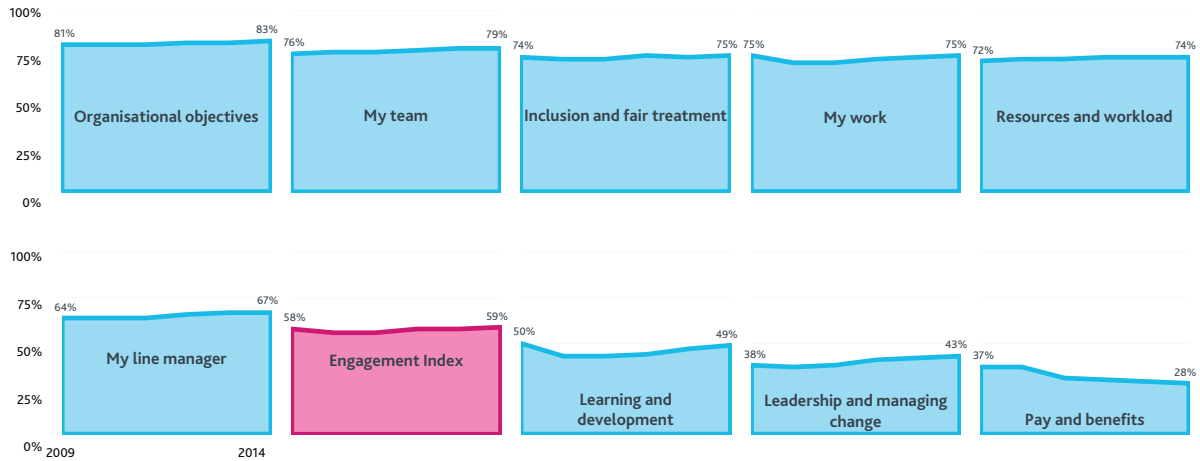
The engagement score for the whole Civil Service (101 organisations surveyed) has remained reasonably consistent since 2009, falling from 58% to 56% in 2010 and 2011, before recovering to 58% in 2012 and 2013, and finally reaching 59% in 2014. Although this reasonably straight line doesn't make for the most interesting of graphs, it is significant: despite staff and budget reductions across the Civil Service, morale, measured through the Engagement Index, has held steady.

The story is different within individual departments:

- DfID, FCO and HMT have had the top three engagement scores every year since the Civil Service People Survey started in 2009.
- HMRC has risen from a low of 34% in 2010 to a high of 44% in 2013. It now stands at 43%.
- DfE's score fell every year from 2009 to 2013 – from 63% to 51% – before jumping seven points in 2014 to 58%. Inevitably, changes in leadership at the top of the department (the departure of the Secretary of State and his special advisers) have been linked with the rise. But previous Institute for Government research suggests that the completion of a redundancy process that staff felt 'was unfair and had negatively impacted on morale' may also explain it.²
- Engagement in DCMS fell from 54% in 2011 to 45% in 2012 (although its current score of 60% is four points higher than its 56% score in 2009). The 2012 survey was conducted shortly after the London Olympics and Paralympics, and just as all non-Senior Civil Service staff were at risk of redundancy.
- DCLG's score fell from 48% in 2010 to 40% in 2011, coinciding with staff reductions. Its current score of 53% is the same as in 2009. DWP dropped seven points between 2009 and 2011, but now has a higher score (55%) than in 2009 (51%).
- Comparing scores in 2009 with 2014, DfE and HO have experienced the biggest falls (five points), followed by DECC (four).
- In all, six departments have higher engagement scores in 2014 than in 2009 (HMRC, DWP, DCMS, BIS, MoJ, HMT); eight have lower scores (HO, DfE, DECC, FCO, DH, MoD, DfID, Defra); while three have the same score (CO, DfT, DCLG).

Satisfaction with pay and benefits has fallen by nine points since 2009; satisfaction with leadership and managing change has risen by five.

Civil Service People Survey theme scores for Whole Civil Service, 2009 to 2014



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Civil Service People Survey, 2009 to 2014.

The questions in the Civil Service People Survey are grouped into nine themes other than the Engagement Index.

Scores for five of these themes rose slightly, by two or three points, between 2009 and 2014:

- 'Organisational objectives and purpose' to 83%
- 'My team' to 79%
- 'Inclusion and fair treatment' to 75%
- 'Resources and workload' to 74%
- 'My line manager' to 67%.

Two themes fell over the course of the Coalition, but have now recovered:

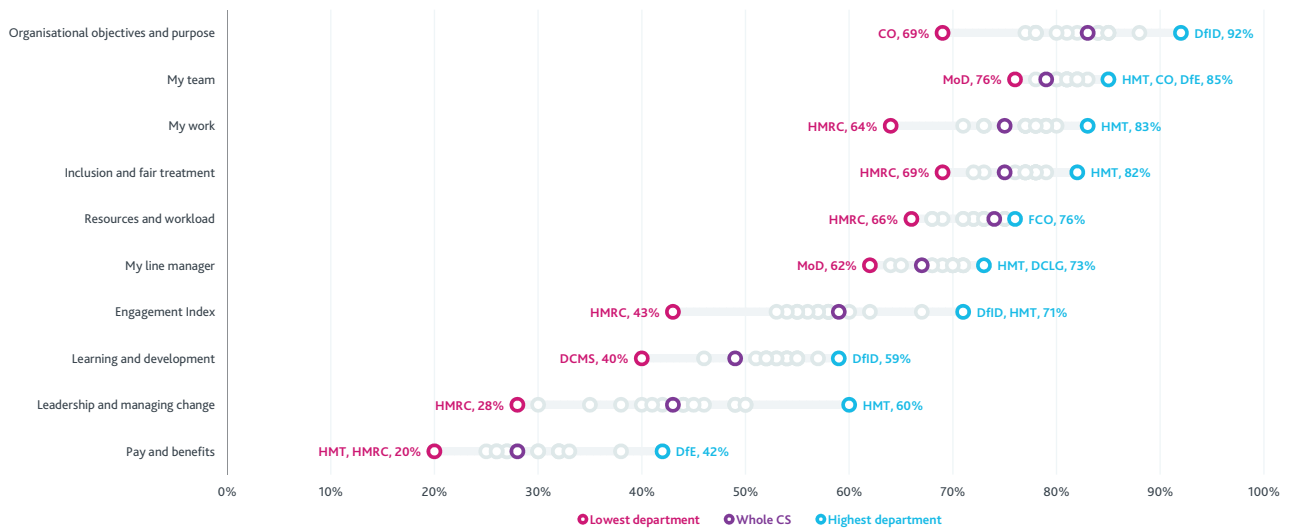
- 'Learning and development' fell from 50% in 2009 to 43% in 2010 before recovering to 49%.
- 'My work' fell from 75% in 2009 to 71% in 2010, but has risen back to 75%.

Two theme scores have changed significantly since 2009:

- 'Pay and benefits' was already the lowest-scoring theme in 2009 (37%) but has fallen by nine percentage points, to 28% in 2014.
- 'Leadership and managing change' – how well the organisation is managed and change within it led – has risen from 38% in 2009 (via 37% in 2010) to 43% in 2014. However, it remains the second-lowest scoring theme.

On the whole, then, civil servants are largely positive about their work and those they work with, the purpose of their organisation and – perhaps surprisingly – their workload, despite the reductions in budgets and staff numbers. But even though civil servants have become less negative about how change in their departments is led, in 2014, fewer than half of those surveyed were actually positive about it. Pay and benefits remains a source of unhappiness – departmental leaders will need to find other ways to motivate their employees if pay restraint continues.

Civil Service People Survey theme scores, 2014 - highest and lowest departments and Civil Service score highlighted



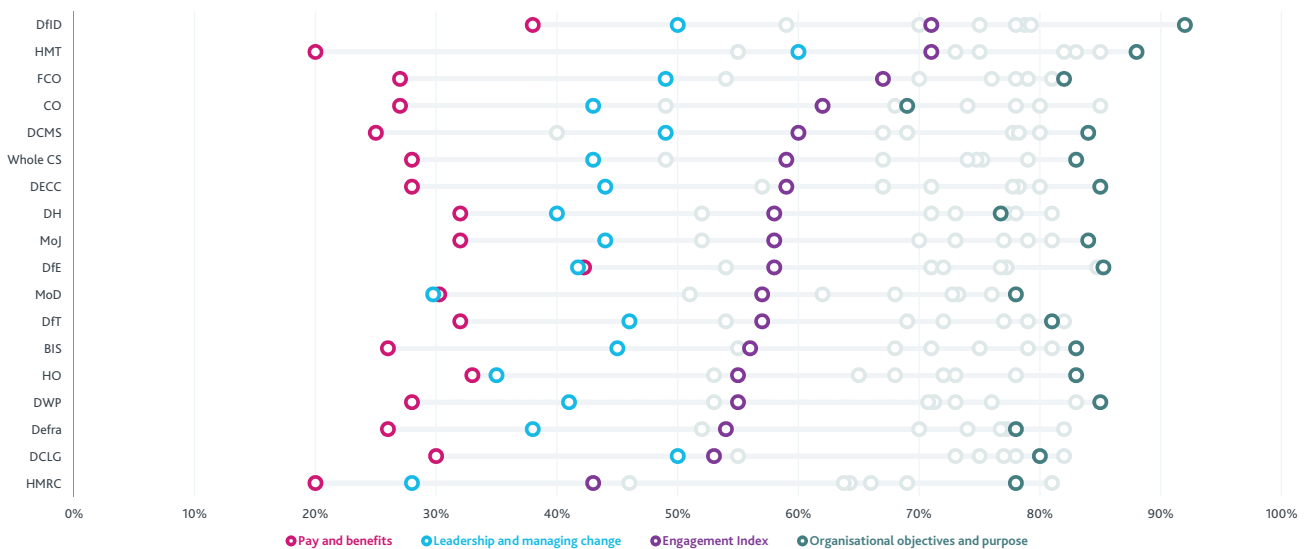
Source: Institute for Government analysis of Civil Service People Survey, 2014.

Many of the themes show relatively little variation between departments – for example, in 2014 only nine percentage points separated the highest- and lowest-scoring departments on ‘my team’, ten points on ‘resources and workload’, and eleven points on ‘my line manager’.

The difference is more pronounced in other areas:

- There are 22 points separating the highest (DfE) and lowest (HMT and HMRC) on pay and benefits.
- There are 23 points between the highest department on ‘organisational objectives and purpose’ (DfID) and the lowest (CO, eight points behind anyone else).
- The biggest gulf (32 points) is on ‘leadership and managing change’, between two of the Chancellor’s departments – HMT (highest) and HMRC (lowest).

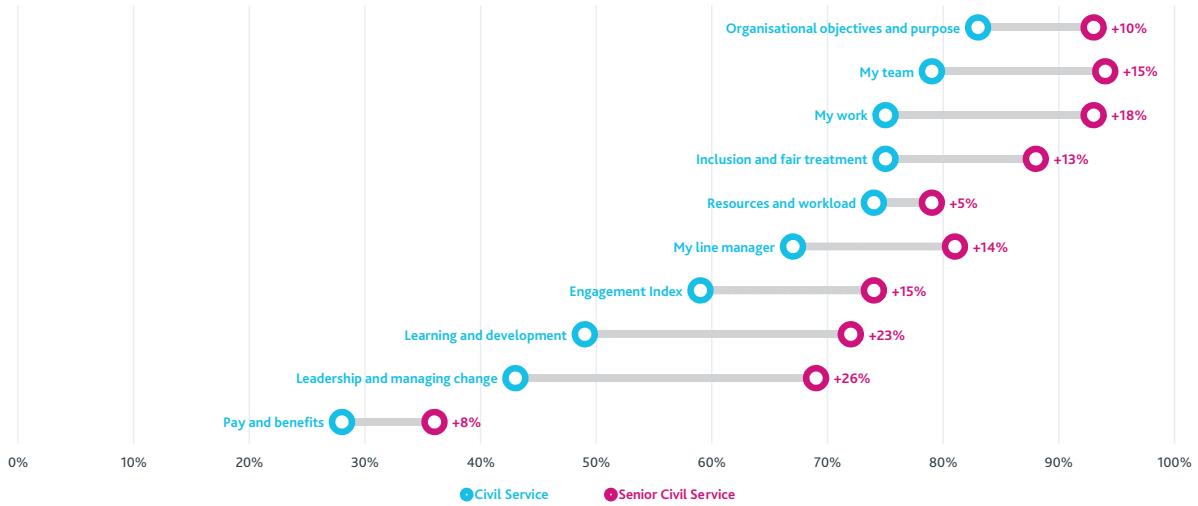
Civil Service People Survey theme scores, 2014 - Engagement Index and themes with highest ranges highlighted



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Civil Service People Survey, 2014.

Senior civil servants are much more positive than the rest of the Civil Service.

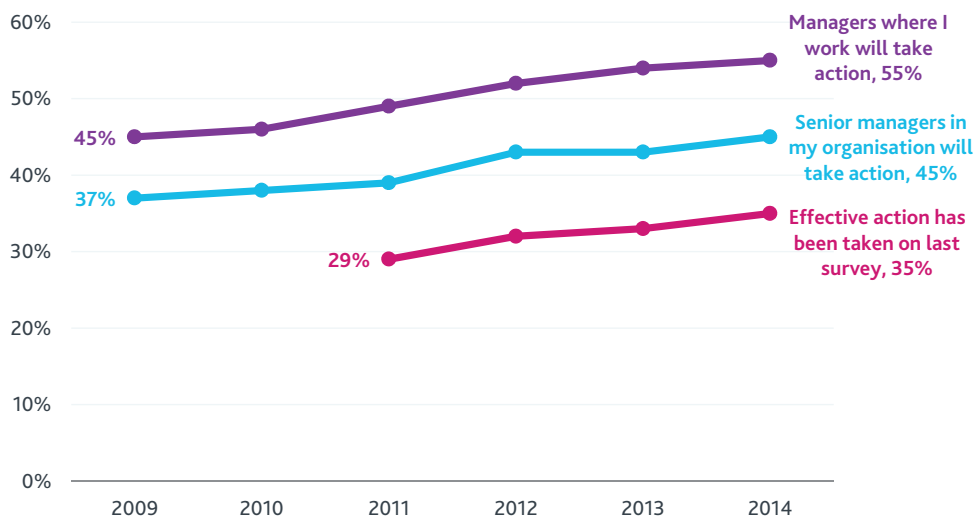
Civil Service People Survey theme scores, 2014 - whole Civil Service and Senior Civil Service



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Civil Service People Survey, 2014.

Members of the Senior Civil Service are more positive on every single theme than the Civil Service as a whole. Although they are only a few points more positive on some themes (eight on 'pay and benefits', five on 'resources and workload'), there are large differences on others: 23 points on 'learning and development' and, most worryingly, 26 points on 'leadership and managing change'.

Scores for questions about taking action based on results of Civil Service People Survey, 2009 to 2014



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Civil Service People Survey, 2009 to 2014.

However, the Civil Service has become more optimistic that action will follow as a result of the survey since 2009: 55% think the manager where they work will take action (up from 45%); 45% think senior managers will take action (up from 37%); and those agreeing that action has followed the previous survey has risen from 29% in 2011 to 35% in 2014.

While this, and the engagement scores themselves, gives cause for optimism, the further cuts to budgets and staffing expected before 2020 could put civil service engagement under further pressure. The way leaders manage changes in departments (despite improvement since 2009) is likely to be an area of particular stress, as is pay and benefits.

Outputs

Departments manage their resources in very different ways – some directly, others through grant funding, arm’s-length bodies or contracting. Some departments have changed these operating models considerably since 2010. Digital transformation could yet change how some public services are delivered – work began in some areas during the parliament.

It is important to understand how different departments spend their money, and how this has changed over the parliament – similar departments can learn from each other, and understand how changes might affect how they operate. Our model finds groups of departments around four different primary models: direct management, ALBs, grant and system funding, and contracts and marketing. Some departments have shifted model during the parliament – notably DH, DfE and MoJ. The lack of data makes it difficult to fully comprehend changes to contracting (and more transparency around performance is needed). As for ALBs, there are fewer bodies than in 2010, but reform should go deeper (including categorising bodies differently).

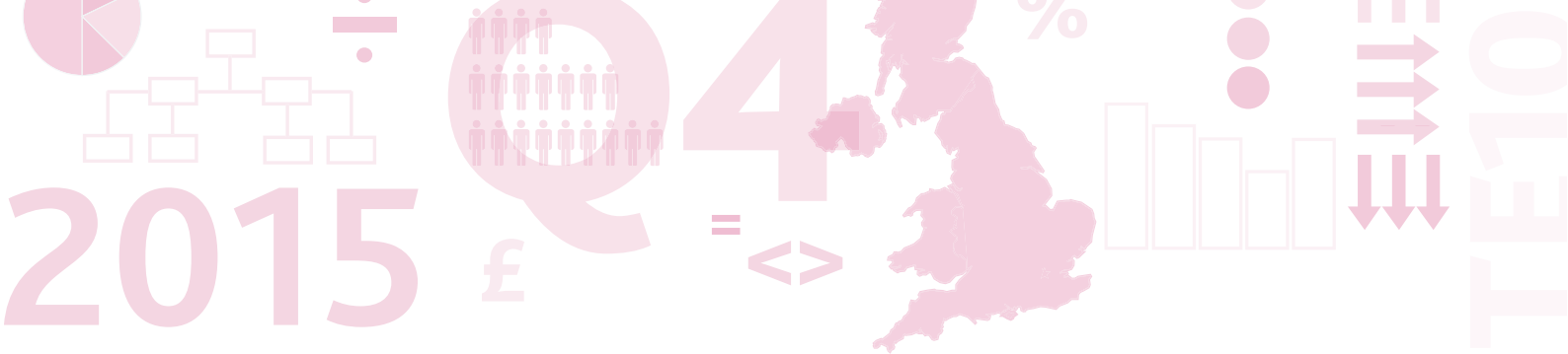
Digital transformation has been a theme of government discussion over the last parliament. GOV.UK now provides a common web platform, for information (DfE, HMT and CO receiving more visits than most others) and services. ‘Exemplar’ services overseen by the Government Digital Service give some idea of the possible savings and other benefits to citizens, but the full potential – and the political support for such changes over the next parliament – remains to be seen.

If digital is a relatively new phenomenon, there are some things that departments have always done. Government continues to pass legislation – though there were fewer bills during the last parliament than during any under Labour (1997 to 2010). HMT was responsible for the most bills.

Departments also continued to receive requests for information from parliamentarians and the public – through parliamentary written questions, ministerial correspondence and Freedom of Information requests – with some (DWP, HO and DH) receiving more than others.

Finally, government has a number of ways of measuring its outputs – those things inside its control to do – including Structural Reform Plan (SRP) actions, the Major Projects Authority and Permanent Secretary Objectives. Major project management seems to be improving; Permanent Secretary Objectives are more usable than they were, but still not obviously connected up with a lot of what departments do; while it can only be hoped that the proposed Single Departmental Plans (to be introduced after the November 2015 Spending Review) will prove a better way of tracking departments’ outputs than the SRPs.





8. How departments manage their spending

Departments differ in how they spend their money. Some allocate funds directly to programmes; others channel funding through ALBs and other organisations, or through grants (e.g. to local authorities); and others allocate resources using a markets model, where the department commissions other organisations to carry out work on its behalf. In some cases, the way departments manage their resources, and the split between each of these models, has changed since 2010.

Our framework for understanding how departments manage their resources uses four different models: direct management; sponsorship of ALBs; markets and contracting; and system and grant funding.

Most departments have a dominant model, but no department uses a single model to manage all of its resources. For example, DWP and HMRC manage more than 80% of their spend directly, but that still leaves several billion pounds, which go on contracts or grants to other parts of the public sector. Other departments use two or three models to manage large portions of their spending: MoJ, for example, relies on direct management for around half of its resources, but also uses contracts and markets, including spending on private prisons and probation services.

The Coalition made significant changes to the way some departments manage their resources, often by moving responsibility between the department itself and ALBs or a contracts-based system. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 created two new ALBs – Public Health England and NHS England – which are now responsible for managing the health service and the public health system. In education, the creation of academies means that less of the DfE budget is spent in grants to local authorities, and funding instead flows through contracts with academy providers.

About the data

Our resource management model draws on a number of sources to arrive at a coherent picture of departments' spending managed through each model. We used **departmental accounts, departmental Business Plans published in 2012 and 2013, the NAO's departmental overviews, various government reports and communications**, and occasionally more detailed data from the **Treasury's Online System for Central Accounting and Reporting (OSCAR) database**.¹

The result is a picture of roughly 80% of each department's spending. We have excluded spending not managed by departments (such as debt interest and the UK's contribution to the EU budget).

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/resources

Departments can be grouped into four categories according to how they manage their resources.

Resource management models used by departments, 2013/14



Resources that are deployed through each resource management model as a percentage of identified spend of each department. Covers roughly 80% of departmental spend. Indicative.

Source: IfG analysis of departmental accounts, departmental Business Plans, NAO departmental overviews, relevant government publications, and OSCAR.

There are several easily identifiable groups of departments: those that manage the majority of their resources directly; those that manage their spending through ALBs; those that allocate a majority of funding through system and grant funding; and those that use a market and contracting model.

In our first group of **direct-management departments** are MoD, DWP, HMRC and HMT. Each of these manages the majority of its spending directly, with departmental leaders in direct control of how resources are deployed via line management of staff providing a service (e.g. HMRC running tax offices) or by controlling a mechanism through which resources are passed directly to recipients (such as welfare payments).

However, none of these departments manages the entirety of its spend in this way. HMT allocates a small amount of funding through the Office for Budget Responsibility, an ALB. DWP uses markets and contracting to administer policies such as the Work Programme. In the case of MoD, a sizeable minority is managed through ALBs – chiefly Defence Equipment and Support, the organisation that buys and maintains military equipment.

A second identifiable group of departments are those that manage the majority of their resources through **arm’s-length bodies**. In this model, departmental leaders pass resources to organisations at ‘arm’s-length’ from their departments, which they do not manage directly but whose objectives and governance they set and oversee. ALBs also have their own governance systems, such as their own board. Departments in this group include Defra, DECC, DCMS, BIS and DH. Defra channels its

resources through a number of organisations, including the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Animal and Plant Health Agency. The bulk of DECC’s ALB spending goes to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (£3.3bn in 2013/14), with some also going to the Coal Authority (£300m in 2013/14). DCMS allocates funding to museums and galleries, sport, tourism and the arts through ALBs including the British Museum, UK Sport, VisitBritain and Arts Council England. BIS sponsors a range of ALBs including the Insolvency Service, research councils and the Student Loans Company. The Department of Health’s ALBs budget includes NHS spending.

A third group of departments allocate their resources using **system and grant funding**. Under this model Whitehall provides resources to multiple bodies, usually performing the same function in different geographic areas (e.g. schools provided through local authorities). Resources are usually allocated via agreed formulas or as a result of evaluating bids where Whitehall has discretion over whether to award grants. Departments that use this model include DfID (grants to organisations delivering overseas aid and development), DCLG (grants to local authorities), HO (grants to the police service) and DfE (grants to local authorities to fund schools).

The fourth category of resource management is **markets and contracting**, where a department directly procures or commissions others to act on the government’s behalf. The relationship is underpinned by a contract of some form, usually commercial (e.g. private prison services). No department uses this model to manage the majority of its resources. However, several allocate some of their spending through markets. MoJ, for example, relies on direct management for around half of its resources, but also uses contracts and markets, including spending on private prisons and probation services. DfE also uses this model to manage its academy schools programme.

Coalition reforms to public service delivery changed how a number of departments manage their resources, including DfE, DH and MoJ.

Reforms introduced by the Coalition to the way public services are delivered have affected how several departments allocate their resources.

Resource management models used by Department for Education, 2013/14

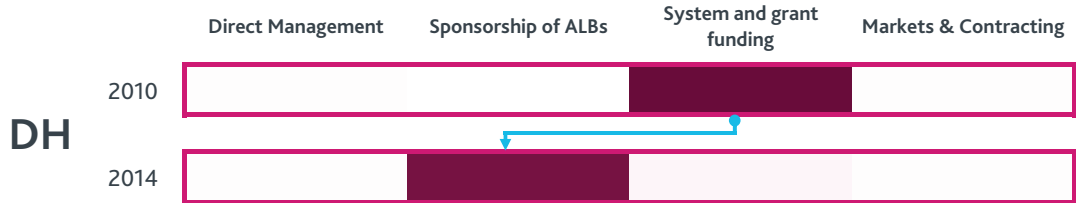


Source: Institute for Government analysis of departmental accounts, NAO departmental overviews, relevant government publications.

The roll-out of the academies programme – under which schools are taken out of local authority control – has increased the proportion of DfE’s budget allocated through markets and contracting. However, the majority of the department’s funding (about 80%) is still channelled through grants to local authorities (these grants are delivered through the Education Funding Agency).

This reform is not without challenges – in January this year, the Comptroller and Auditor General (head of the National Audit Office) warned that the need to consolidate the accounts of so many separate academies had left the department unable to provide ‘a true and fair view of financial activity’.²

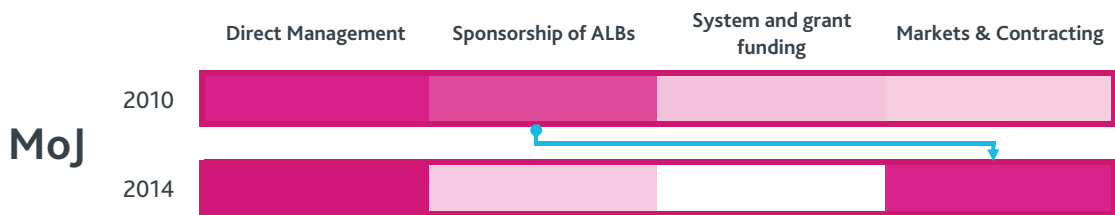
Resource management models used by Department of Health, 2013/14



Source: Institute for Government analysis of HMT Online System for Central Accounting and Reporting.

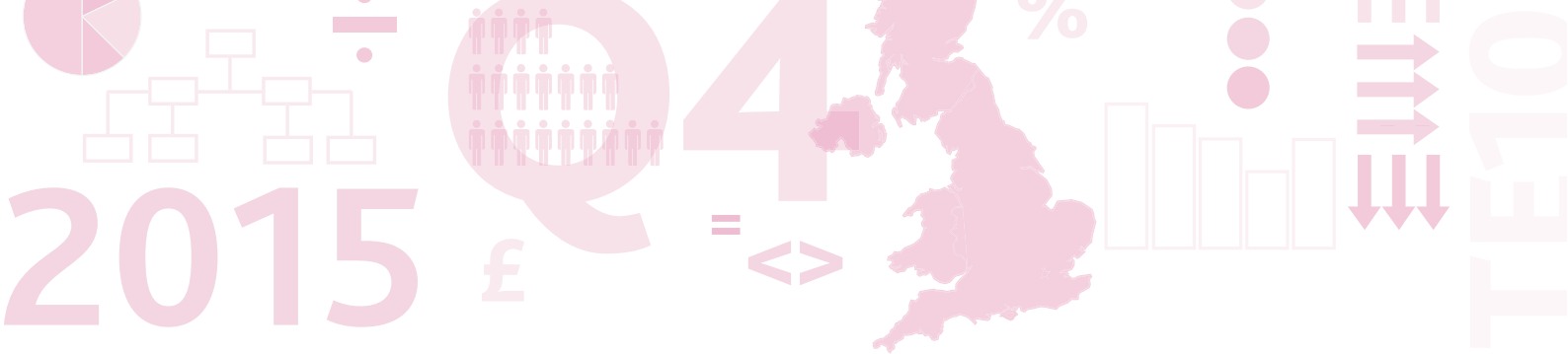
The Coalition’s NHS reforms fundamentally changed the structure of the NHS in England. Responsibility for managing the NHS and the public health system now lies with two ALBs – NHS England and Public Health England. The department itself has moved to an assurance role: rather than directly managing and shaping the health system, it specifies strategic goals for these bodies. The majority of DH’s budget is channelled through these two bodies.

Resource management models used by Ministry of Justice, 2013/14



Source: Institute for Government analysis of HMT Online System for Central Accounting and Reporting.

Reforms to legal aid have changed the way MoJ manages its resources. In April 2013 the Legal Services Commission (an MoJ ALB) was replaced by the Legal Aid Agency, which provides legal aid through a system of contracts. Spending has therefore switched from an ALB model to a contracts and markets model. The outsourcing of probation services has also contributed to the shift towards a markets and contracting-based system.



9. Contracting

Many government departments procure goods from private companies and contract with them to provide public services. These public service markets are worth nearly £200bn, with the biggest providers including IT, facilities and defence companies. However, it is difficult to assess the sector in detail, and there is no data currently available on how well providers perform.

According to the National Audit Office (2013), the public sector spends £187bn annually with third parties. Local government spends the most – £84bn – followed by the NHS (£50bn), central government (£40bn) and 'devolved and independent bodies' (£13bn). Of central government departments, MoD is by far the biggest spender – nearly half of all central government spending on third parties – with DWP a distant second.

The gap between MoD and DWP is less pronounced in analysis by open data start-up Spend Network, since not all of MoD's data is published. This is one of a number of problems with spending statements, from data not being published in a timely way to a lack of clarity about which government organisations are paying, which private companies are receiving and exactly how much.

Spend Network's analysis shows that Capgemini was the largest supplier to government in 2014 (mainly through its Aspire contract to overhaul IT systems within HMRC), and that most of the money going from central government to the top 20 suppliers was spent on IT. With the exception of Capgemini, most of the top 20 suppliers to central and local government in 2012 and 2013 (which we analysed last year) received less in 2014.

There were a number of controversies around outsourcing during the course of the parliament, including security for the Olympics, out-of-hours GP services, and electronic tagging of criminals. In a 2014 survey by Populus for the Institute for Government, respondents thought neither the Government nor the contractor tended to take responsibility where things had gone wrong. Greater transparency could help to identify problems and build public trust in the process. One solution could be a contractual transparency clause: the Institute has developed one, which – as Francis Maude noted in March 2015 – aligns with the Cabinet Office's development of a clause to be trialled as part of the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan commitments.

About the data

The **NAO published *Managing Government Suppliers*** in November 2013, alongside *The Role of Major Contractors in the Delivery of Public Services*. *Managing Government Suppliers* used a number of sources in coming to its estimates: Whole of Government Accounts from 2011/12; DH accounts from 2012/13; monthly data returns from departments to the Cabinet Office (which do not appear to be public); and quarterly returns from 40 strategic suppliers to the Cabinet Office for 2012/13.¹

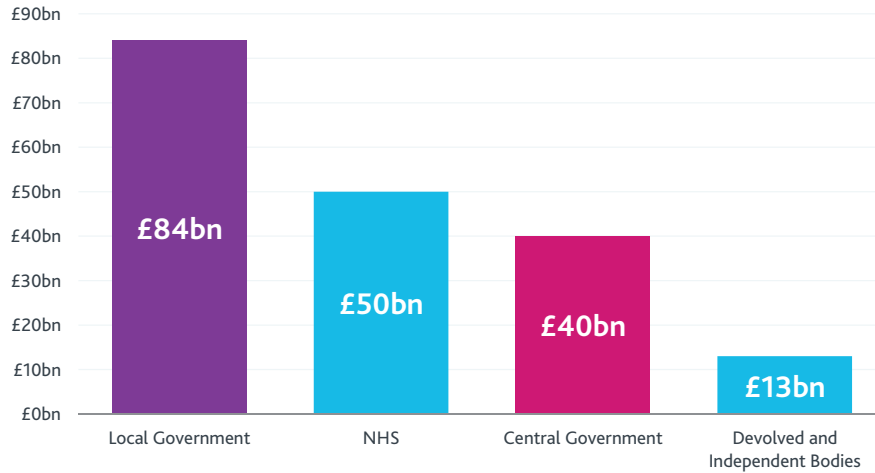
Spend Network analysed public spending statements published by 247 central and local government entities between January 2012 and December 2014. This consisted of more than 62 million transactions across 11,078 different files with a total value of more than £2.1tn. Supplier names were then matched with Companies House records. Where spending has been allocated to joint ventures featuring more than one business, Spend Network tried to allocate the spending to individual companies based on input from the buyers.²

Our data on public attitudes to outsourcing is from a **Populus poll in August 2014**, commissioned by the Institute for Government as part of our *Programme for Effective Government*. Populus interviewed 2,040 British adults online between 8 and 10 August 2014. Results have been weighted to be representative of all British adults. Populus is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.³

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/contracting

The public sector spends nearly £200bn annually with third parties; central government accounts for £40bn.

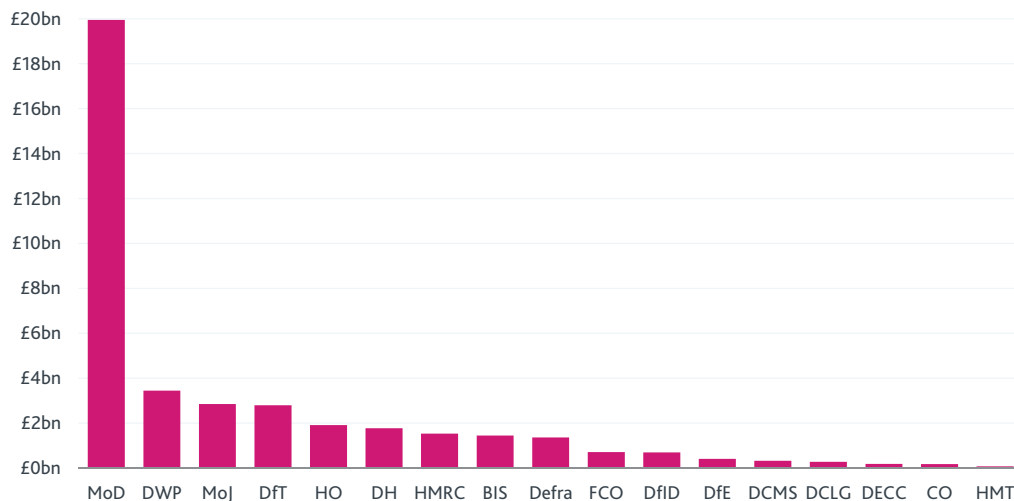
National Audit Office estimate of annual government spending with third parties



Source: Institute for Government analysis of NAO (2013), *Managing Government Suppliers*.

Central government accounts for only £40bn of the £187bn spent annually by the public sector with third parties, according to estimates by the NAO in 2013. Local government (£84bn) and the NHS (£50bn) both spend more. Of course, the fact that even the NAO has to estimate these figures – based on a range of different data sources, some of them incomplete and some not made available to the public – illustrates some of the problems in building up a snapshot of public sector markets, let alone monitoring change.

National Audit Office estimate of annual spending with private sector providers, by department

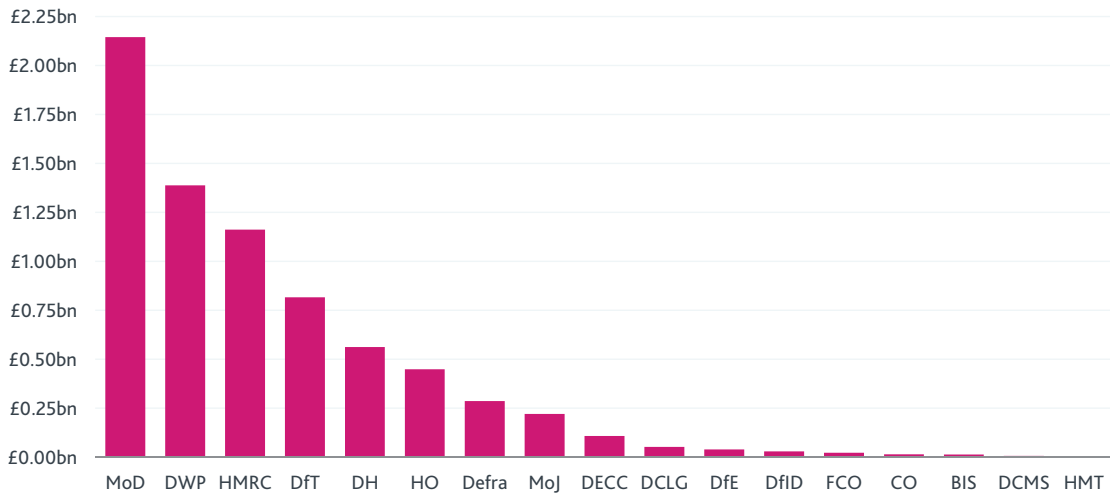


Source: Institute for Government analysis of NAO (2013), *Managing Government Suppliers*.

According to the same estimates, MoD spends more with private sector providers (£19.95bn) than any other department. It is some distance ahead of DWP, in second place (£3.45bn). MoJ and DfT are the only other departments spending more than £2bn.

Capgemini is the largest government supplier, and IT is the largest category of spend with the top 20 suppliers.

Spending with the top 20 independent suppliers to central government by department, 2014

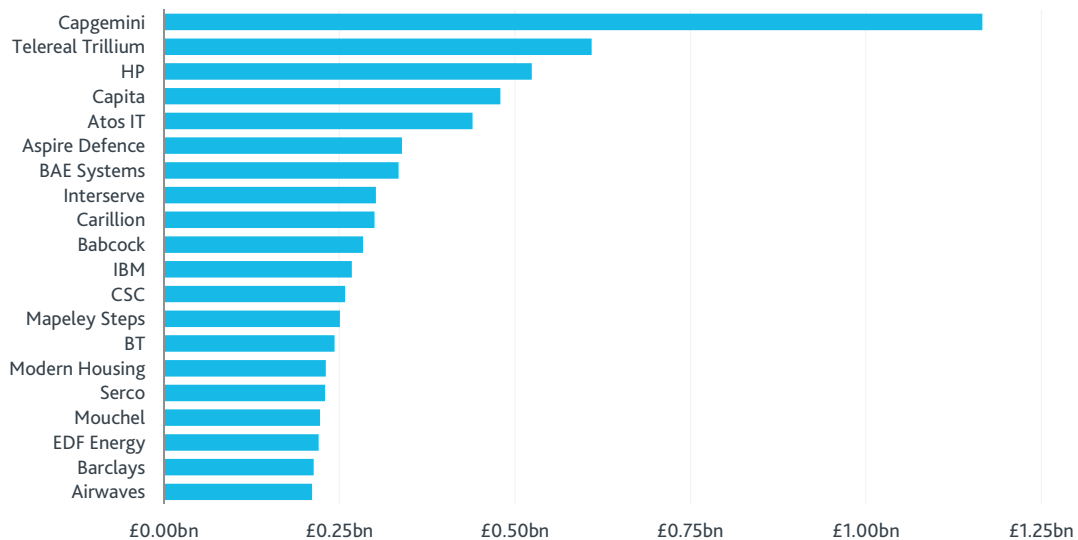


Source: Institute for Government/Spend Network analysis of government spending statements. Data for 1 January to 31 December 2014.

Spend Network’s analysis also has MoD as the biggest spender on third parties, but estimates it as having spent only £2.15bn with the top 20 government suppliers (compared with the NAO’s estimate of £19.95bn with all suppliers). This is partly because not all of MoD’s data is published. But this is just one complication in using data to understand public service markets in the UK – others include:

- some data not being recorded
- some departments not publishing spending statements on time
- lack of clarity about which public bodies are, or aren’t, included
- difficulty in working out which companies are ultimately benefiting from government contracts, especially where there are joint ventures or Private Finance Initiative deals.

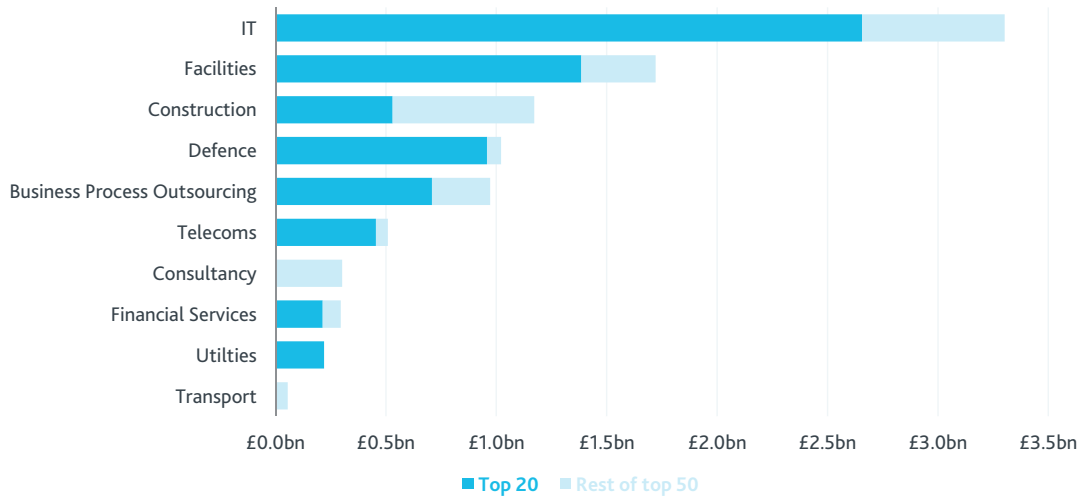
Top 20 independent suppliers to central government departments, 2014



Source: Institute for Government/Spend Network analysis of government spending statements. Data for 1 January to 31 December 2014.

Nonetheless, a top 20 of suppliers to central government departments in 2014 shows Capgemini in first place. Most of its £1.2bn comes from the Aspire contract to overhaul IT systems at HMRC. Telereal Trillium (facilities and property) and HP (IT) were second and third.

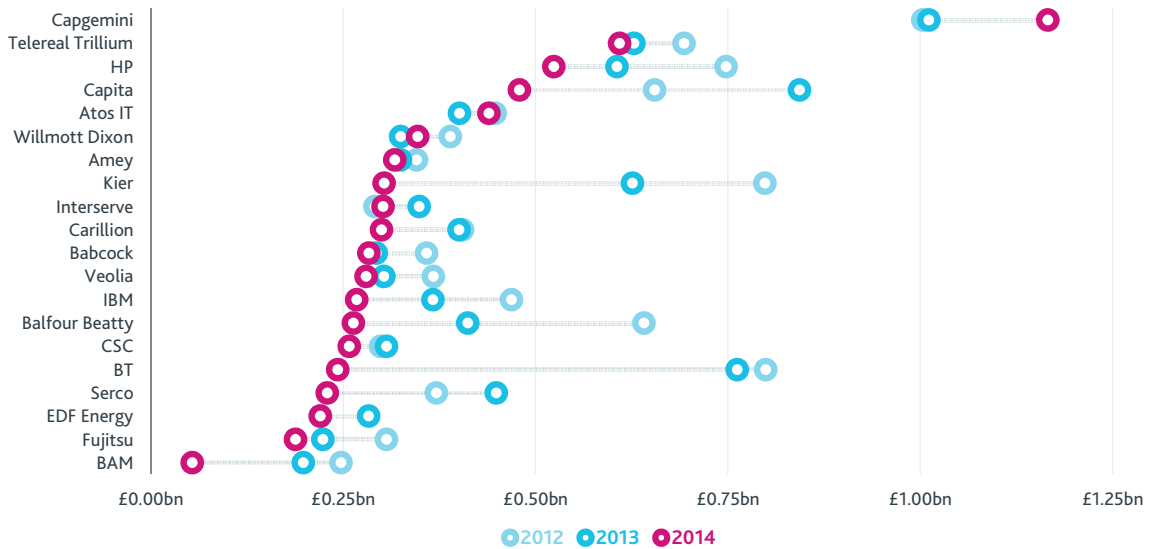
Top 20 (and top 50) suppliers to central government by category, 2014



Source: Institute for Government/Spend Network analysis of government spending statements. Data for 1 January to 31 December 2014.

Given that three of the top five providers receiving government spending in 2014 were IT companies (Capgemini and Atos), it is unsurprising that the sector received the most money going to the top 20 and top 50 suppliers to government. Facilities, construction and defence contractors in the top 50 also received more than £1bn per sector in 2014.

Top 20 suppliers to local and central government in 2012-13 - spend in 2014

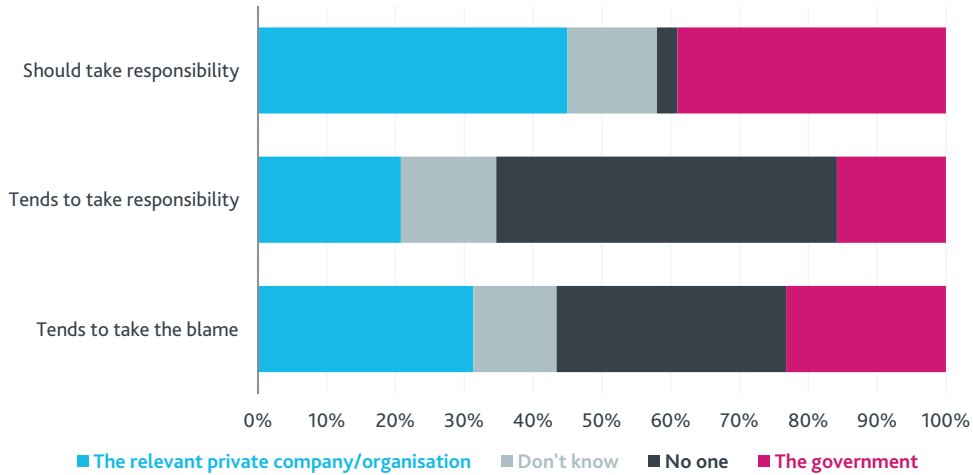


Source: IfG/Spend Network analysis of government spending statements, 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014. Top 20 from Whitehall Monitor 2014.

Whitehall Monitor 2014 analysed the top 20 suppliers to central and local government combined in 2012 and 2013. Of that top 20, only one – Capgemini – received a higher value of government business in 2014 than in both 2012 and 2013. For many of the others, the value was considerably lower than in 2012 and 2013, particularly for HP, Capita (business process outsourcing), Kier (construction), IBM (IT), Balfour Beatty (construction), BT (telecoms), Serco (business process outsourcing) and BAM (construction).

Greater transparency could lead to greater trust and better performance.

When something goes wrong [with public services contracted out to private companies/organisations], who do you feel...?



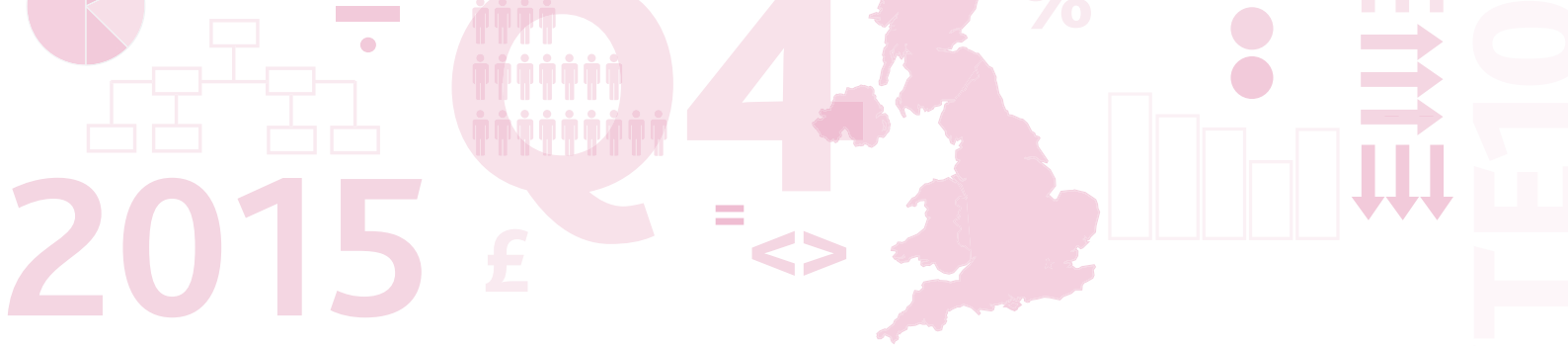
Source: Populus polling for Institute for Government, August 2014. Populus surveyed 2,040 GB adults online.

The 2010–15 parliament included a number of outsourcing controversies, such as G4S’s handling of security for the Olympics, G4S and Serco’s record on electronic tagging of prisoners, and Serco’s provision of out-of-hours GP services in Cornwall. Parliament played a large part in scrutinising some of the incidents, with high-profile select committee hearings.

But polling suggests the public don’t think either government or the relevant private contractor takes responsibility when things go wrong: 50% of those polled thought no one did, and a third thought no one tended to take the blame (31% thought the contractor did).

The Institute for Government has previously argued that timely and regular publication of key government outsourcing data would complement the big-bang accountability (or ‘scandal accountability’) of parliamentary hearings, and help mitigate failures in the first place.⁴ At present, some key information remains private. Although it is easier to find out to whom contracts are awarded than five years ago, it remains difficult to find details of contractor performance (and sub-contractor performance) and how much they have been paid. Without key performance information, it is difficult for government and for the public to understand which contractors are performing well and which are not, and to get a clear picture of the public service market landscape.

The Cabinet Office has said that, as part of the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan, it will pilot a new contractual transparency clause, which would help make public key information, such as fees paid to contractors, details of major subcontractors and performance.⁵ This builds on work by and the support of a number of organisations, including the Institute for Government, NAO, Public Accounts Committee, Information Commissioner’s Office, CBI, Open Data Institute, the voluntary sector and the suppliers themselves.⁶ The pilot is a positive step forward and we will be looking forward to seeing a more systematic adoption of this clause across all government outsourcing contracts. With open contracting also likely to be part of the next Open Government Partnership National Action Plan for the UK, transparency remains high on the agenda – and could help make contracting more effective.



10. Arm's-length bodies

ALBs are a key part of the governing landscape. Reforming them should be more than a numbers game, even though most governments pledge to reduce their number. The Coalition was no exception. However, it also aimed to increase the accountability of ALBs, and ALB boards have become more diverse.

The Cabinet Office classifies ALBs in four broad ways, moving further from ministerial control: non-ministerial departments, executive agencies, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs, the biggest group) and public corporations. This classification is not perfect and leads to some confusion, but there may yet be reform.

Thanks to *Public Bodies* reports – now being published more frequently and in a more usable format by the Cabinet Office – we have data on some of these different types. The number of NDPBs has been falling steadily since at least 1979. Under the Government's public bodies reform programme, there have been further reductions since 2010, with some departments – such as MoJ, which still has considerably more NDPBs than any other department – losing more than others. However, new NDPBs, executive agencies and non-ministerial departments have been created since 2010, suggesting there has been more to the reforms than reducing the number of bodies (this is also true of government expenditure and staff numbers).

The Government also committed to increasing the transparency and accountability of public bodies, through reviewing their functions, publishing more information and opening more of their business – such as meetings – to the public. The boards of ALBs have become more diverse (the percentage of members who are women has increased considerably), and fewer board members are declaring political activity than ever before.

About the data

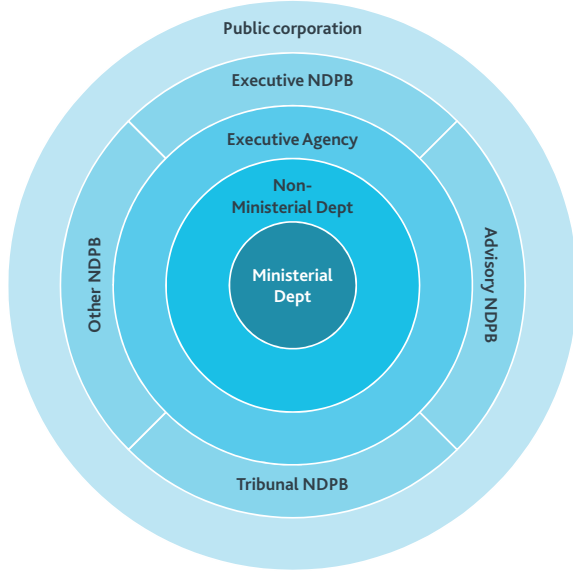
For the number of NDPBs, their staffing, funding and levels of accountability, we use the **Public Bodies reports** published by the Cabinet Office. The 1997 report provides numbers back to 1979 (with the exception of 1980 and 1981), and annual reports continue from 1998 to 2009 (with data as of March each year). Although no central report was published for either 2010 or 2011, we have found departmental reports with data for March 2010, which we have collated (there may also be 2011 reports available online but we have not had time to repeat the exercise). *Public Bodies* reports have been published annually again since 2012. In 2013, two further updates were published (for December 2013 and March 2014), and data for most fields (though not finances or staff numbers) is now updated on a quarterly basis following the 2014 annual report. We have used the March 2015 update to the 2014 report to give the number of bodies in 2015. Executive agencies and non-ministerial departments (with the exception of HMRC) have been included since *Public Bodies 2013*. We exclude both NHS England and the Education Funding Agency from our expenditure and staff number analysis, as they are outliers. For the numbers of executive agencies and non-ministerial departments in March 2010, we have used **archived snapshots of pages on the old Cabinet Office website**.¹

For the composition of ALB boards, we use the **annual statistics from the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA)**, which regulates the appointment processes for most (though not all) ALB boards. Diversity statistics are also published as part of the annual *Public Bodies* publications, but – with the 2015 report yet to be published – OCPA provides the most up-to-date information.²

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/ALBs

There are many different types of arm’s-length body, which could be more clearly defined.

Cabinet Office classification of different types of arm’s-length body (ALBs)



Non-ministerial departments (e.g. HMRC, Ofsted)
 Government departments that do not have their own minister, but are accountable to Parliament through sponsoring ministers. They are staffed by civil servants

Executive Agencies (e.g. DVLA, Public Health England)
 'Business units' headed by a chief executive as part of a department. Ministers set policy under which they exercise executive functions and are responsible to Parliament, but are not involved in their day-to-day running. Staffed by civil servants

Non-departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs)
 These have 'a role in the process of national government' but are not part of a government department.

- **Executive NDPBs** perform executive, administrative or regulatory functions, such as museums and galleries (DCMS), NHS England (DH), the Environment Agency (Defra) or Health and Safety Executive (DWP)
- **Advisory NDPBs** provide 'independent, expert advice' to ministers, such as the Boundary Commission (CO) or Low Pay Commission (BIS)
- **Tribunal NDPBs** have jurisdiction in specific fields of law, such as the Investigatory Powers Tribunal (HO)
- **Other NDPBs** are largely made up of independent monitoring boards of prisons, immigration removal centres and short-term holding rooms at MoJ.

Public corporations (e.g. Channel 4, Civil Aviation Authority)
 'Trading, market bodies' that operate commercially and typically generate more than 50% of their income from customers. They include chartered or statutory corporations (delivering public services within a remit controlled by ministers), government-owned companies or Joint Ventures and Public Private Partnerships

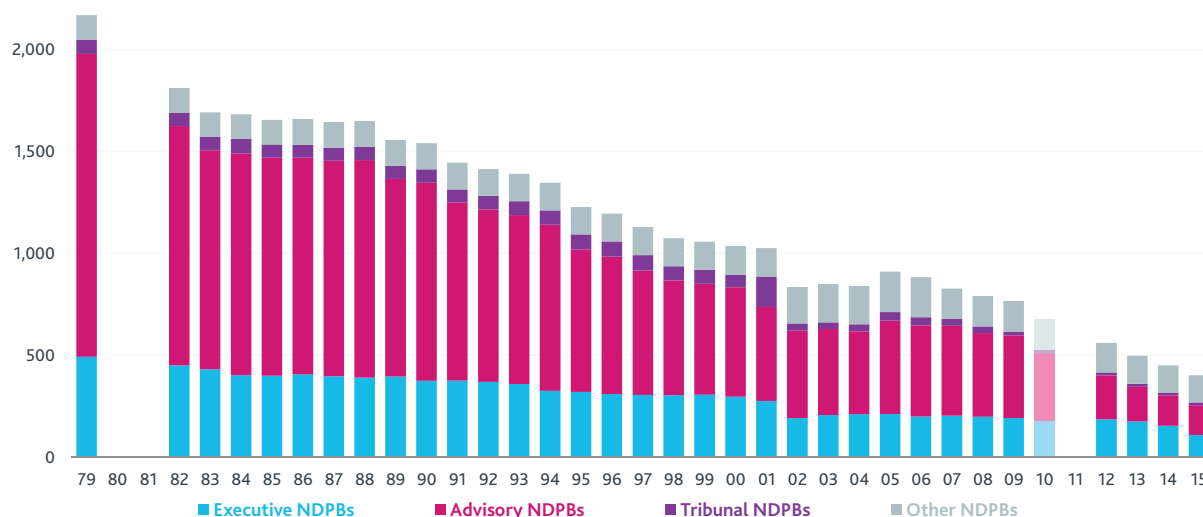
Source: Adapted by Institute for Government from Cabinet Office, *Public Bodies 2012*.

ALBs, sometimes known as public bodies or (often pejoratively) quangos, are a critical feature of government in the UK. There are a number of different types at varying degrees of arm’s length from political control. According to the Cabinet Office, these move outwards in concentric circles, from non-ministerial departments (accountable to Parliament through sponsoring ministers, despite the name), through executive agencies and NDPBs to public corporations.³

This categorisation does not fully capture the reality, and leads to confusion about the roles and responsibilities of ministers and their departments regarding ALBs. The Institute has previously identified at least 11 different types of ALB, and proposed a clearer taxonomy of four types (subsequently endorsed by the Public Administration Select Committee).⁴ Although the Coalition introduced reforms to the ALB landscape between 2010 and 2015 (covered in the Institute’s 2015 report *Out of the Ashes*), ALB classification has yet to be addressed – though the Cabinet Office is consulting on the issue.⁵

A steady reduction in the number of ALBs was a key part of the Coalition's reforms.

Number of Non-departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), 1979 to 2015



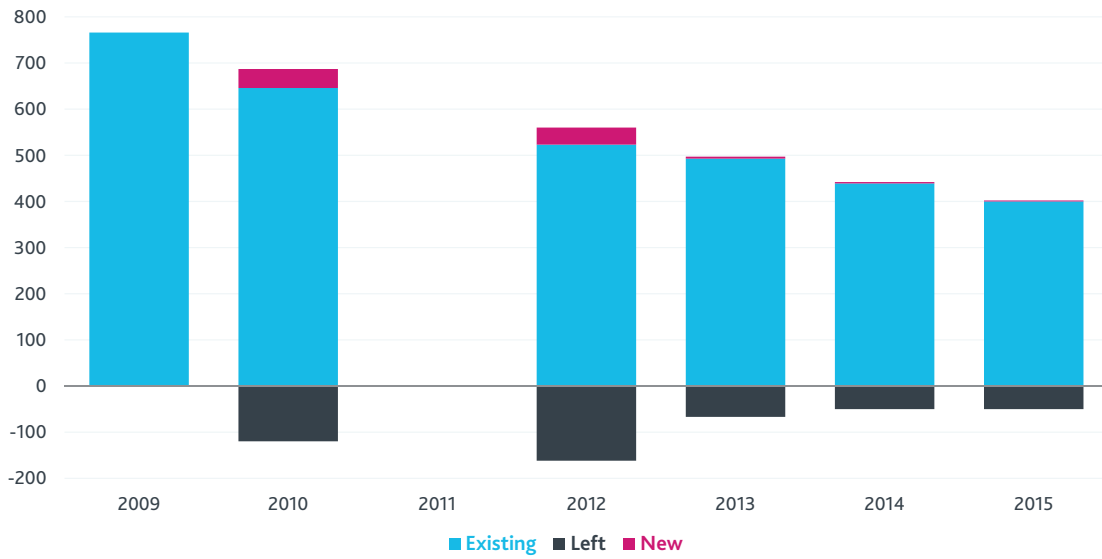
Source: IfG analysis of Cabinet Office *Public Bodies* reports, 1997-2009 and 2012 to Q1 2015. 2010 data from departments' reports and extrapolation.

Many governments come to power promising a 'bonfire of the quangos'; reducing the numbers of ALBs is often popular given the perception of them as 'unaccountable pits of public money'.⁶ The number of NDPBs – the only type of body for which a long and reasonably consistent data series exists – has fallen considerably since 1979. There were 2,167 NDPBs in March 1979, compared with 401 in March 2015.

All of the main parties committed to ALB reform before the 2010 general election (indeed, the Labour government had started to reform and rationalise following its *Smarter Government* White Paper in late 2009).⁷

After the election, the Coalition's public bodies reform programme aimed to reduce the number of ALBs – but also recognised the need for wider reform to ensure accountability and efficiency.⁸ Because of the reform programme, the Cabinet Office did not publish public bodies data in either 2010 or 2011. Most departments did produce a publication in 2010, however – and collating these, as well as using some archived government webpages and other *Public Bodies* reports, allows us to estimate how many bodies have been abolished and, in some cases, created. The numbers that follow do not quite match the 598 bodies that the Cabinet Office expects to exist in 2015 – these numbers include bodies other than NDPBs, executive agencies and non-ministerial departments – but nonetheless come from government publications.⁹

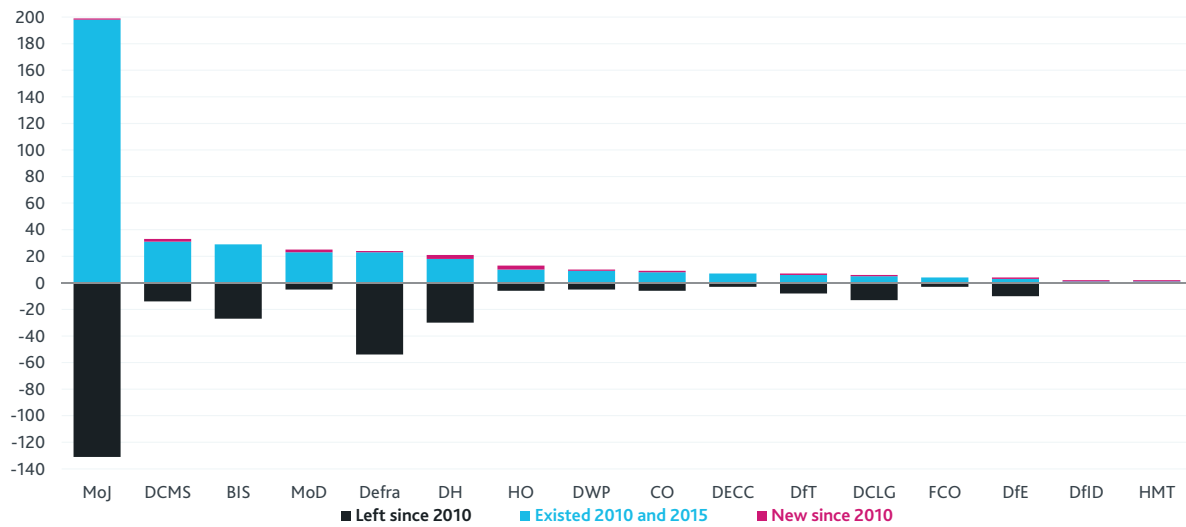
Change in number of Non-departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), 2009 to 2015



Source: IfG analysis of Cabinet Office *Public Bodies* reports, 2009 and 2012-14 (to Q1 2015 update). 2010 data from departments' reports and extrapolation.

As with many governments, the Coalition moth was attracted to the flames of the quango bonfire: around 160 NDPBs that existed in 2010 had ceased to exist by 2012, and 50 or more have been abolished each year since. However, reform was not limited to abolishing NDPBs – in fact, more than 40 have been created since 2010 – and was not undertaken only by the Coalition. The final year of the previous Labour government also involved the abolition and creation of NDPBs.

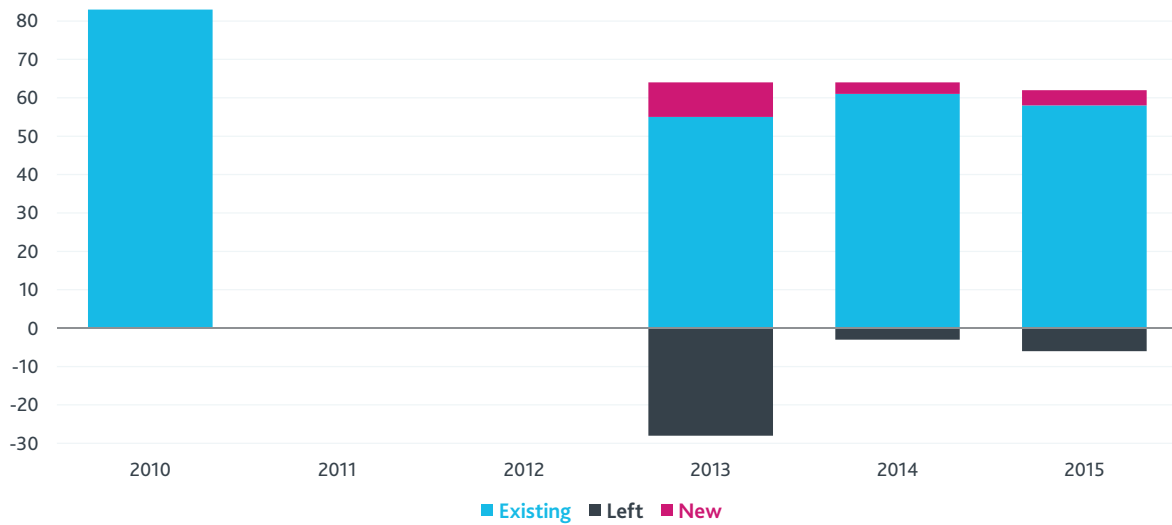
Non-departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) by department, Q1 2015



Source: IfG analysis of Cabinet Office *Public Bodies* reports, 2009 and 2012-14 (to Q1 2015 update). 2010 data from departments' reports and extrapolation.

MoJ has the most NDPBs in 2015 – just under 200 – but has lost about 130 since 2010. Defra, DH, BIS, DfE and DCLG have had notable reductions compared with the number of bodies they retain. Numbers have come down because of mergers (e.g. the Office of Fair Trading and Competition Commission at BIS into the new Competition and Markets Authority); transfer of functions to departments or other bodies (the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency into DfE); reduction in number of multiple bodies (from 101 to 47 advisory committees on justices of the peace at MoJ); change in the type of body (a number of Defra's former NDPBs are now expert advisory panels); and straightforward abolition (the Audit Commission). Again, though, many of these departments have also created new bodies, implying that reform went slightly further than a simple reduction of numbers.

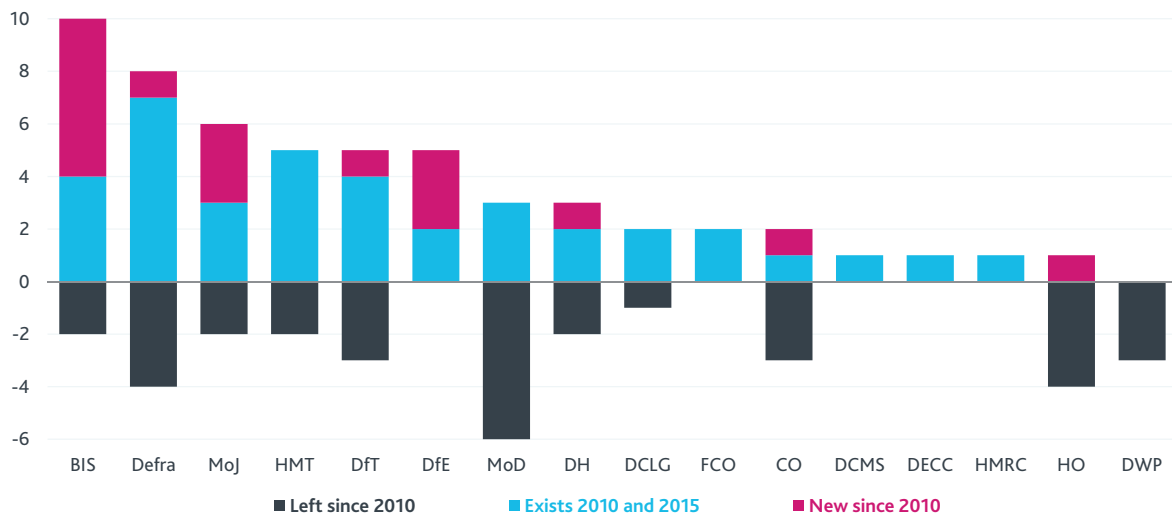
Change in number of Executive Agencies and Non-ministerial Departments, 2010 to 2015



Source: IfG analysis of Cabinet Office *Public Bodies* reports, 2013 and 14 (to Q1 2015 update). 2010 data from archived government websites.

This is also evident from the change in the number of executive agencies and non-ministerial departments. Although 28 were abolished between 2010 and 2013, nine were created, and seven more have been created since.

Executive Agencies and Non-ministerial Departments by responsible Ministerial Department, 2015

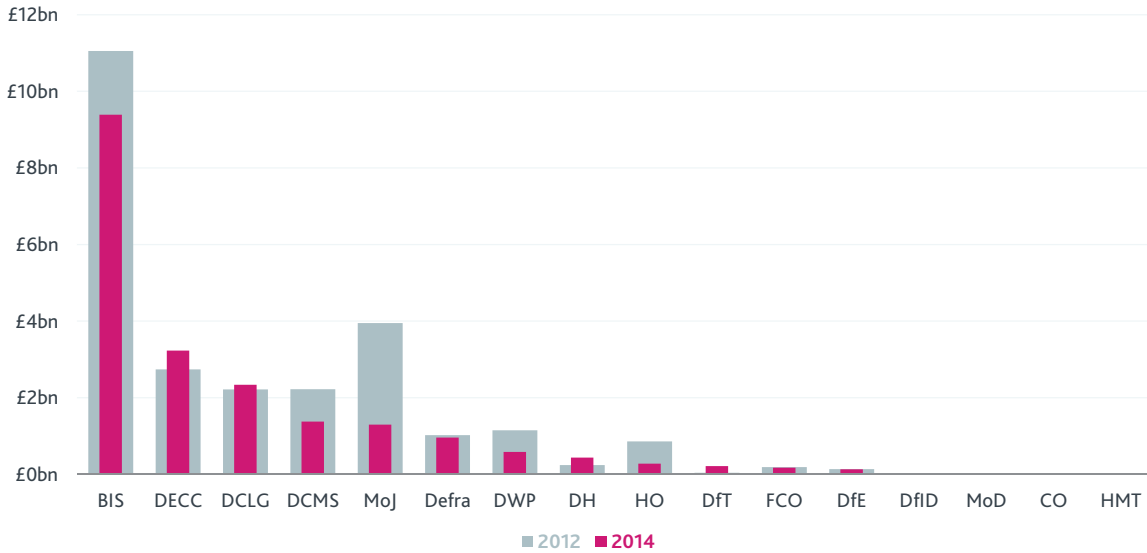


Source: IfG analysis of Cabinet Office *Public Bodies* reports, 2013 and 14 (to Q1 2015 update). 2010 data from archived government websites.

Departments have differed in their approach to executive agencies and non-ministerial departments. DfE has merged seven of its NDPBs into three new executive agencies, while DWP has brought all of its executive agencies – including Jobcentre Plus – inside the main department. Overall, BIS has the largest number of executive agencies and non-ministerial departments – and the largest number new to a department, including transfers from elsewhere (Ordnance Survey from DCLG, the Met Office from MoJ, Land Registry from MoJ) – while MoD has lost the greatest number since 2010.

Most departments have cut expenditure on and the number of staff in their ALBs.

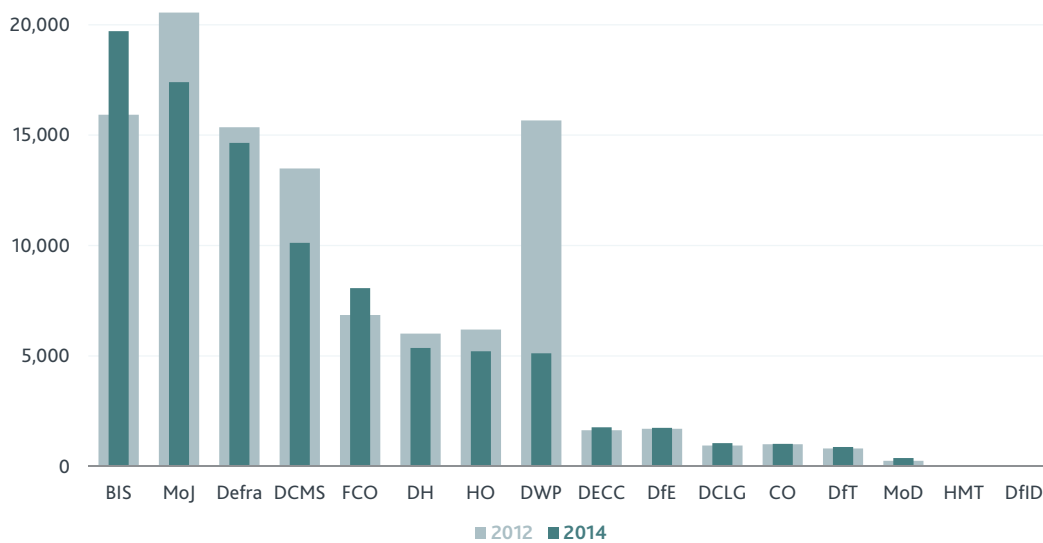
Government expenditure on Non-departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) by department, 2012 and 2014



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office *Public Bodies* reports, 2012 and 2014. Excludes NHS England (DH).

Given the reduction in the number of NDPBs, it is unsurprising that government expenditure and staff numbers have also come down. Between 2012 (the earliest year for which figures are easily available) and 2014, government expenditure going to NDPBs has been reduced in most cases. BIS and MoJ had the highest expenditure in 2012, and have reduced it since then; new executive agencies and a greater use of contracting may be responsible for this. (There is a glaring exception in the form of NHS England, through which DH manages the NHS, and which we cover in chapter 8 on how departments spend their money. It receives nearly £96bn, but is such an outlier that we have excluded it here.)

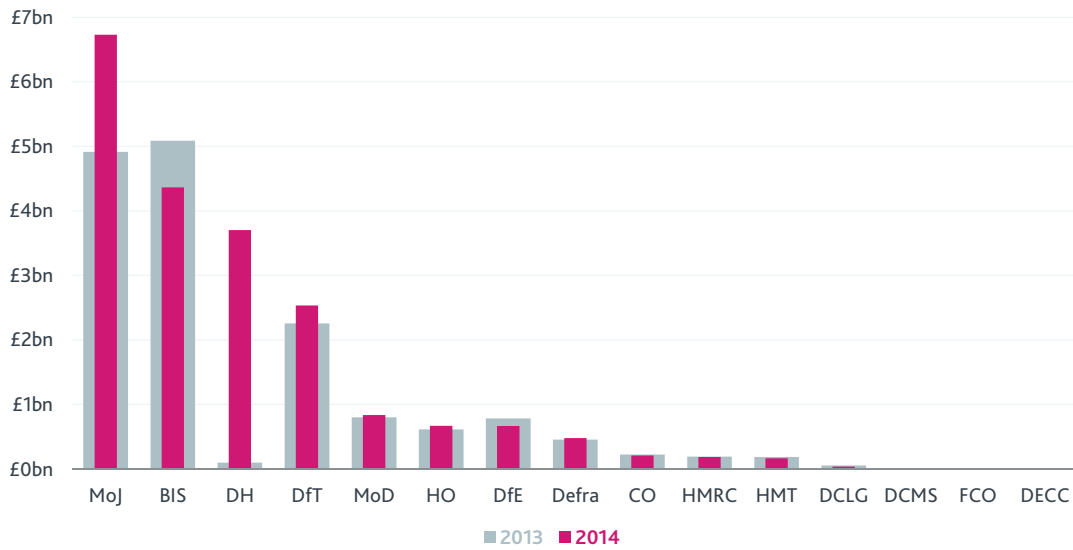
Staff employed (full time equivalent) in Non-departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) by department, 2012 and 2014



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office *Public Bodies* reports, 2012 and 2014. Excludes NHS England (DH).

Staff numbers have fallen in most cases, although BIS and FCO are among the exceptions. DWP has experienced the most marked decrease, in large part because bodies such as the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission have been brought back inside the main department (as the Child Maintenance Group).

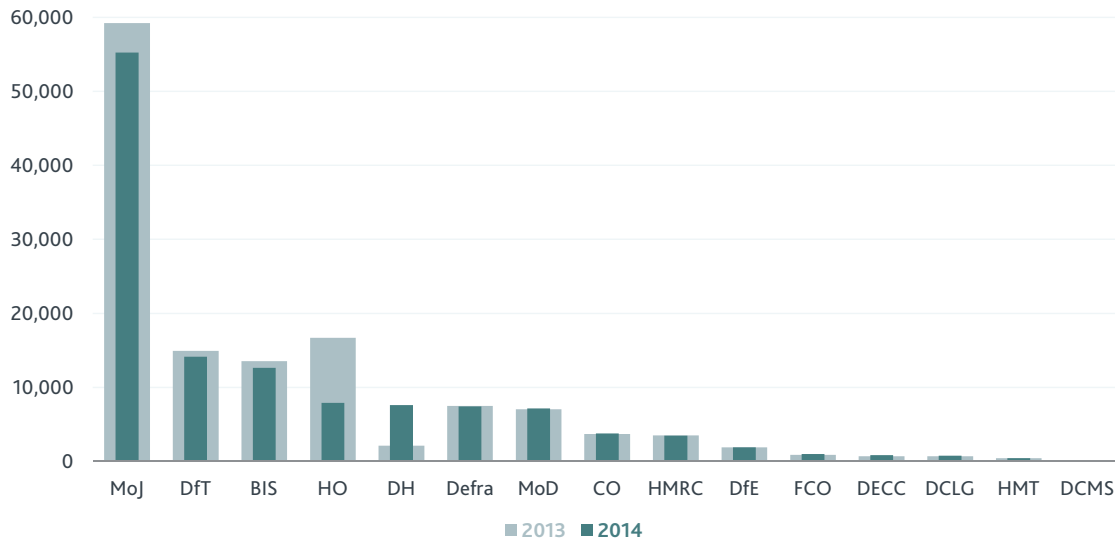
Government expenditure on Executive Agencies and Non-ministerial Departments by responsible department, 2013 and 2014



Source: IfG analysis of Cabinet Office *Public Bodies* reports, 2012 and 2014. Excludes Education Funding Agency (DfE), which IfG considers part of DfE.

Many departments spent around the same on their executive agencies and non-ministerial departments in 2014 as in 2013, the earliest year for which figures are easily available. The obvious exceptions are MoJ, which is spending more on a number of new bodies; BIS, which is spending less; and DH, where Public Health England has been created. (Again, we have excluded an outlier: the Education Funding Agency, responsible for more than £50bn at DfE, which we consider to be part of the department proper.)

Staff numbers (FTE) in Executive Agencies and Non-ministerial Departments by responsible department, 2013 and 2014

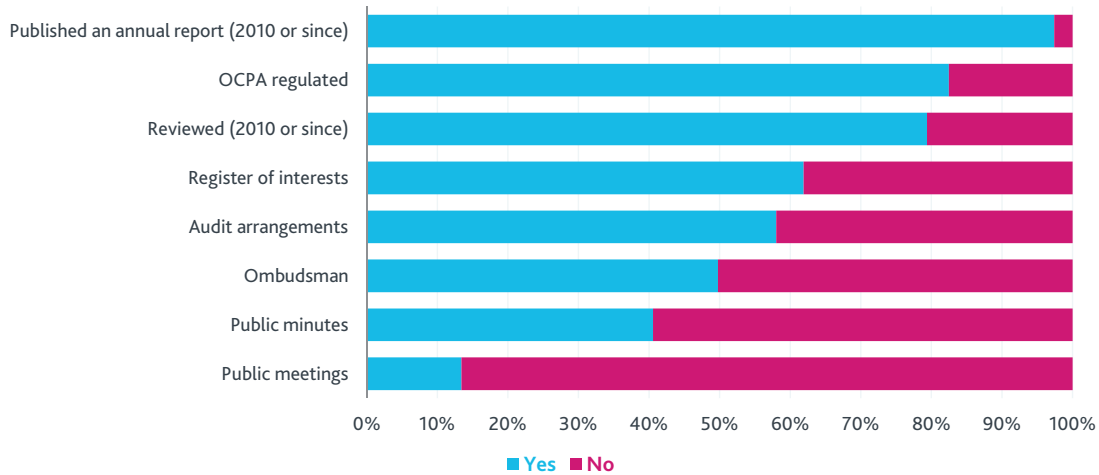


Source: IfG analysis of Cabinet Office *Public Bodies* reports, 2012 and 2014. Excludes Education Funding Agency (DfE), which IfG considers part of DfE.

Staff numbers in executive agencies and non-ministerial departments are reasonably consistent between 2013 and 2014. MoJ and HO are employing fewer, while there are more at DH (largely explained by the 5,141 staff at Public Health England).

ALBs have become more accountable, and their boards more diverse.

Accountability of Non-departmental Public Bodies, Executive Agencies and Non-ministerial Departments, Q1 2015



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office *Public Bodies 2014*, Q1 2015 update.

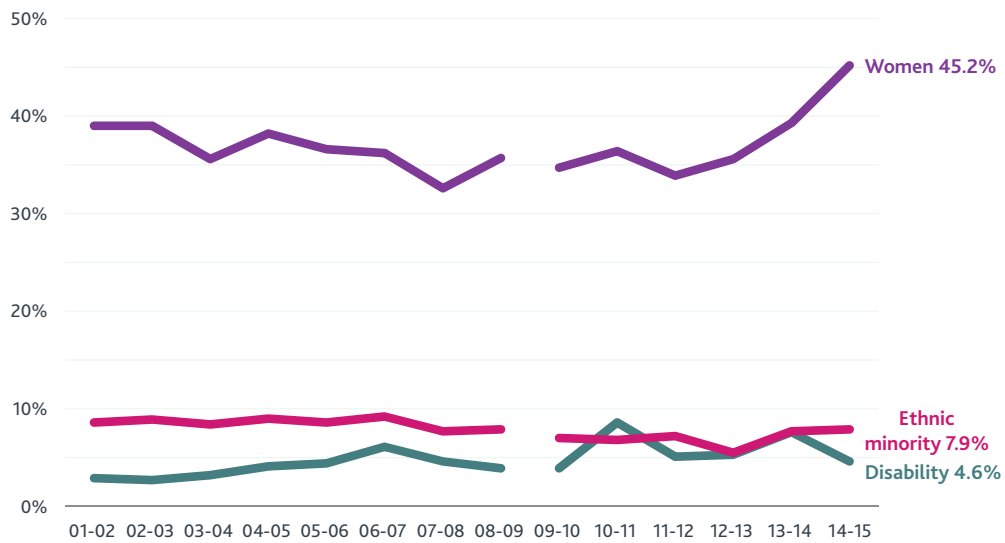
The Coalition’s reform programme was explicitly part of the Government’s commitment ‘to increase the transparency and accountability’ of all public services.¹⁰ This increased transparency included publication of more information and greater public access.¹¹ An important part of the public bodies reform programme was to review whether the functions a body had should be properly exercised at arm’s length:

The Government’s presumption is that if a public function is needed then it should be undertaken by a body that is democratically accountable at either national or local level. A body should only exist at arm’s length from government if it meets one of three tests:

- *it performs a technical function*
- *its activities require political impartiality*
- *it needs to act independently to establish facts.*¹²

More than 900 bodies were reviewed in spring/summer 2010. As of March 2015, nearly 80% of all existing NDPBs, executive agencies and non-ministerial departments have been reviewed in or since 2010 (many of those that have not been reviewed are the museums and galleries that are executive NDPBs of DCMS). More than 80% of bodies have published an annual report since 2010 and have their appointments regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA); more than half publish a register of interests and have audit arrangements in place; just under half are overseen by an ombudsman (which would not be appropriate in all cases); only 40% publish public minutes; and under 15% hold public meetings.

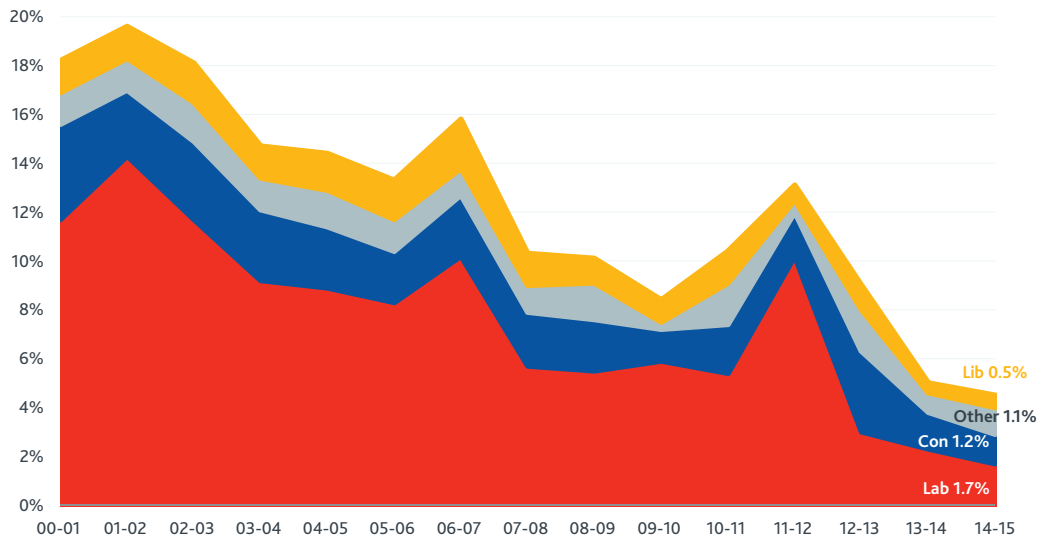
Percentage of all appointments to public bodies regulated by OCPA going to female, ethnic minority and disabled candidates



Source: IfG analysis of OCPA annual statistics. Shown as a percentage of all appointments before 2009-10, and where characteristics known from 2009-10.

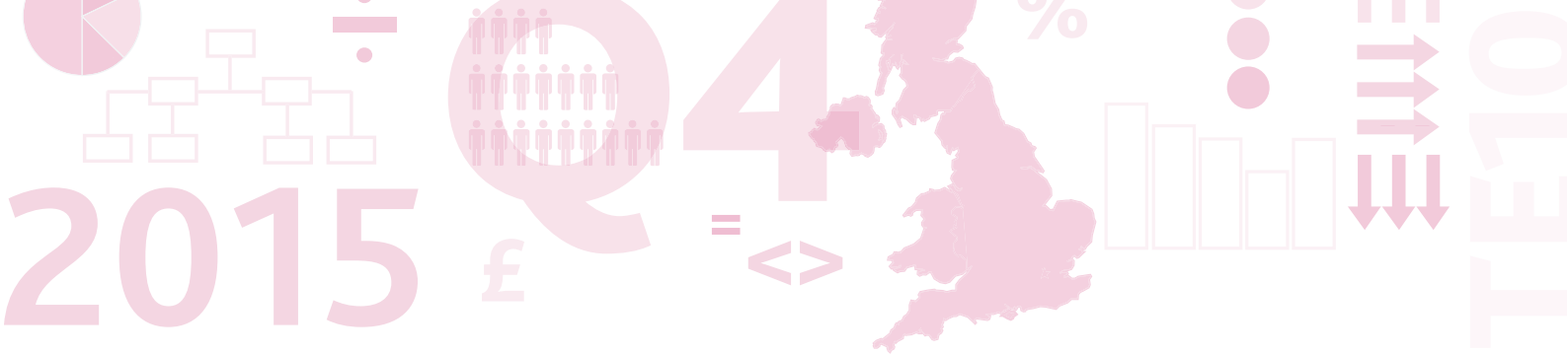
The percentage of those appointed and reappointed to the boards of OCPA-regulated public bodies who are women is at its highest-ever level – 45.2% of all appointments where gender is known. It has increased from 33.9% in 2011-12. The percentage of appointees from an ethnic minority (7.9%) is at its highest since 2008-09, although remains lower than the 14% of the general population who are from an ethnic minority (according to the 2011 census). However, the percentage of appointees with a disability (4.6%) has fallen to its lowest level since 2009-10, which OCPA described as ‘disappointing’.¹³

Percentage of all appointments to public bodies regulated by OCPA going to candidates of declared ‘political activity’



Source: IfG analysis of annual statistics from the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA).

A lot of comment focuses on the politicisation of appointments. In fact, the overwhelming majority of those appointed declare no political affiliation: in 2014-15, only 4.5% declared any political activity, the lowest level ever. This was down from 4.9% last year and around 20% in 2001-02. In every year, more appointees have declared activity for Labour than for any other party, except in 2012-13 when the Conservatives edged ahead.



11. Digital

'Digital' was one of the defining words of the last parliament. In its simplest sense, it refers to activity online: content that government publishes on websites, and services that are provided on the internet. An important part of digital is the user experience: how simple is it, and how does it feel to interact with government? In a broader sense, 'digital transformation' is about changing the way government operates – from the design of policies, to their implementation, to the look and feel of the services themselves.

The 2012 *Civil Service Reform Plan* committed the Government to taking a 'digital by default' approach to the delivery of information and services – making online channels so good that users prefer them over paper, telephone or face-to-face alternatives.¹

The delivery of information has been transformed over the last parliament by the creation of a new single government website, GOV.UK. Since launching in 2012, it has absorbed more than 250 different sites – including those belonging to individual government departments and ALBs. It currently receives about 12 million visitors a week.

The digital transformation of transactional services under the Coalition began with 25 digital 'exemplars', 13 of which went live before the end of the parliament.² These include patent renewals, and an online front end for voter registration. This is just the beginning of digital service transformation – government currently provides at least 800 transactional services, many of which are not available online.

Much of this work has been carried out or supported by the Government Digital Service (GDS). Launched in 2011 as a centre of digital expertise within the Cabinet Office, GDS has built GOV.UK, set new standards for the provision of digital services in government, and spearheaded new ways of working. Its budget increased every year over the course of the last parliament, reaching £23m by 2013/14.

About the data

Openness and transparency have been a key part of the digital agenda, as evidenced by the development of the **Performance Platform**.³ This is a set of online 'dashboards', which contain a varying set of performance indicators including user and visitor numbers, satisfaction and completion ratings, and cost. There are currently 864 performance dashboards, most of them for transactional services (800), or for areas within GOV.UK (48). The data is published in html and in .json formats, which allow users (who know how) to download and analyse the information. A lot of the data is updated regularly (weekly or monthly) – particularly that relating to user or visitor numbers – but cost data is often missing.

There are two sets of regular publications on government websites: the quarterly **lists of open central government websites**, and the annual **central government websites reports**.⁴ We have used the former.

The **Cabinet Office Annual Reports** gave us data on costs, and the **Efficiency and Reform Group annual publications (along with the NAO reports on them)** gave us the figures on savings.⁵ The **NAO's Digital Britain One** gave us information on Directgov and Business Link – the forerunners to GOV.UK.⁶ We have also used the **Cabinet Office organograms** to indicate the size of GDS.⁷

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/digital

Since 2012, GOV.UK has been the platform for citizens to interact with government; it receives 12 million visitors a week.

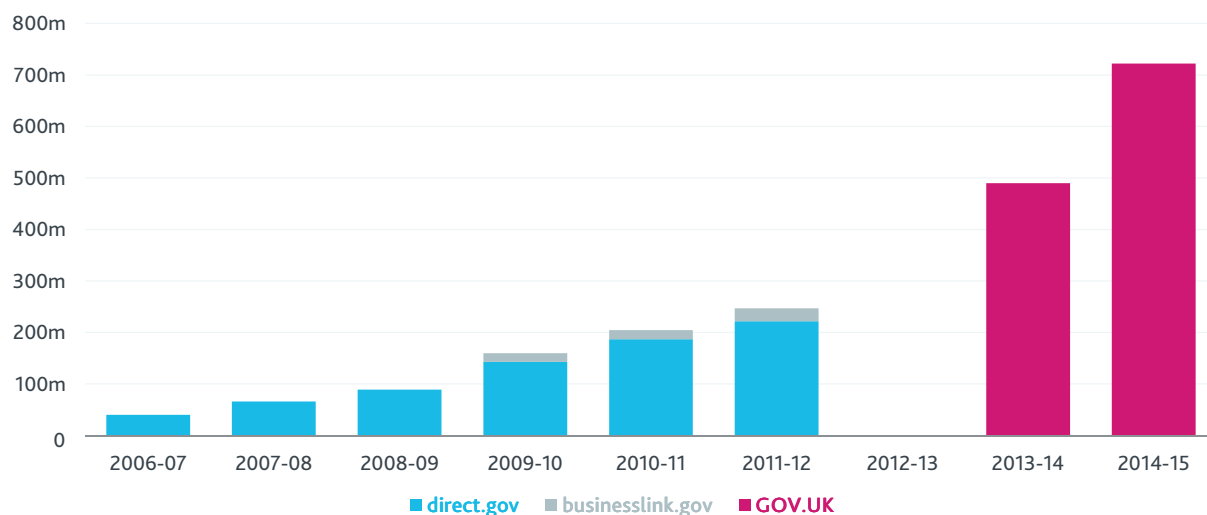
Weekly unique visitors to GOV.UK, 2012-15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of GOV.UK, Performance Platform – Activity web traffic dashboard. Accessed 10 August 2015.

The widest-reaching digital transformation project of the last parliament was the creation of GOV.UK: a single government website for hosting transactional services and providing information to citizens. It currently receives about 12 million visitors a week – four times as many as when it launched in October 2012.

Annual visits to Directgov, Business Link and GOV.UK, 2006-15



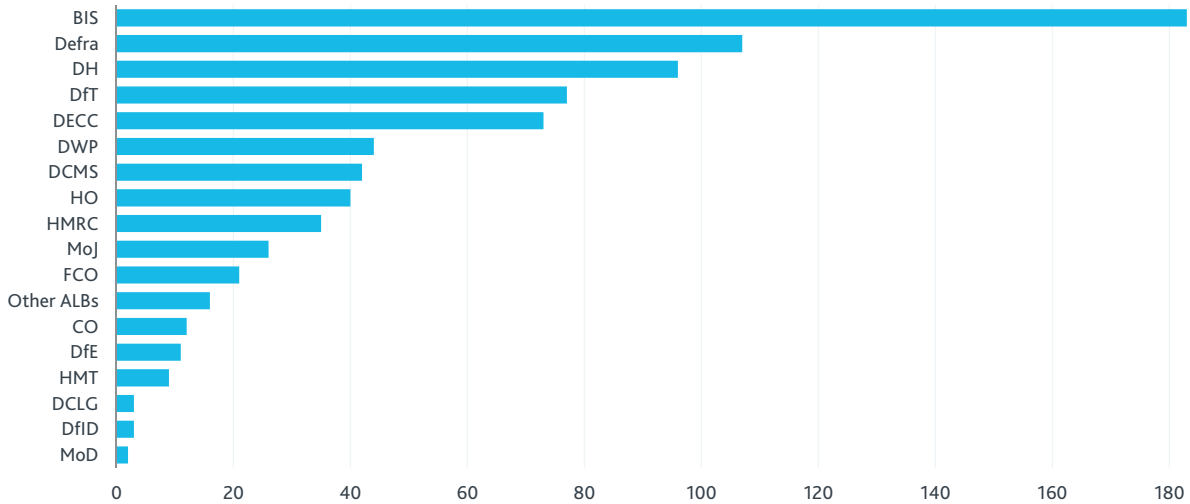
Source: IfG analysis of NAO, *Digital Britain One* (2011) and Cabinet Office, 'Annual Report on Open Central Government Websites' (2013-15).

GOV.UK marked a step-change in the consolidation of central government websites that has been ongoing since the early 2000s. In its final full year of existence, Directgov – GOV.UK's immediate predecessor – received a total of 222 million visits. In its first full year of existence, GOV.UK received 490 million visits.

This 120% difference cannot be fully explained by growing use of the internet – the number of people in the UK using the internet rose by just 12% between 2011 and 2013. These numbers partially reflect a growing expectation among the public that they should be able to conduct transactions and access information online – an expectation that GOV.UK was designed to respond to. GOV.UK is also more comprehensive than Directgov. It incorporates content that used to sit on separate department and ALB websites, and acts as a starting page for the digital transactional services.

There are at least 800 transactional services in government – some online, some not.

Number of digital services with a performance dashboard, as of 10 August 2015



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Performance Platform – Services data, <https://www.gov.uk/performance/services>. Accessed 10 August 2015.

There are 800 transactional services listed on GOV.UK: interactions between government and individuals or businesses, involving applications, registrations and payments. Digitising these transactional services can make them cheaper, by adding elements of automation, and easier to use. Currently, not all of the services on this list are digital; some can be completed online – such as searching for a job using DWP’s Universal Jobmatch tool – but others involve acquiring forms, filling them in and emailing or posting them to the service provider to be processed. This list, then, indicates the landscape of possibility for the digital delivery of transactional services.

BIS provides the largest number of transactional services listed on the performance platform: from applying for an apprenticeship, to registering trademarks, to applying for sponsorship from the UK Space Agency. However, hosting a large number of services is not the same as handling a large number of transactions. The government digital strategy singled out seven departments that handle the ‘majority’ of transactions: HMRC, DfT, DWP, MoJ, BIS, Defra and HO.⁸ HMRC is an almost entirely transactional department, but currently only has 35 distinct services listed.

This list of transactional services was originally published by GDS in July 2012 with the ‘ultimate aim of identify[ing] opportunities to make more services digital by default’ – making an online version of the service so convenient and user-friendly that most people would choose to use it.⁹ Rather than tackle all 800 at once, GDS designated 25 of these services ‘digital exemplars’ to demonstrate the benefits of digital transformation.

Of 25 digital exemplars, 13 went live before the end of the parliament (and two just after).

GDS Digital Exemplars – Stages of development, February 2012 to May 2015

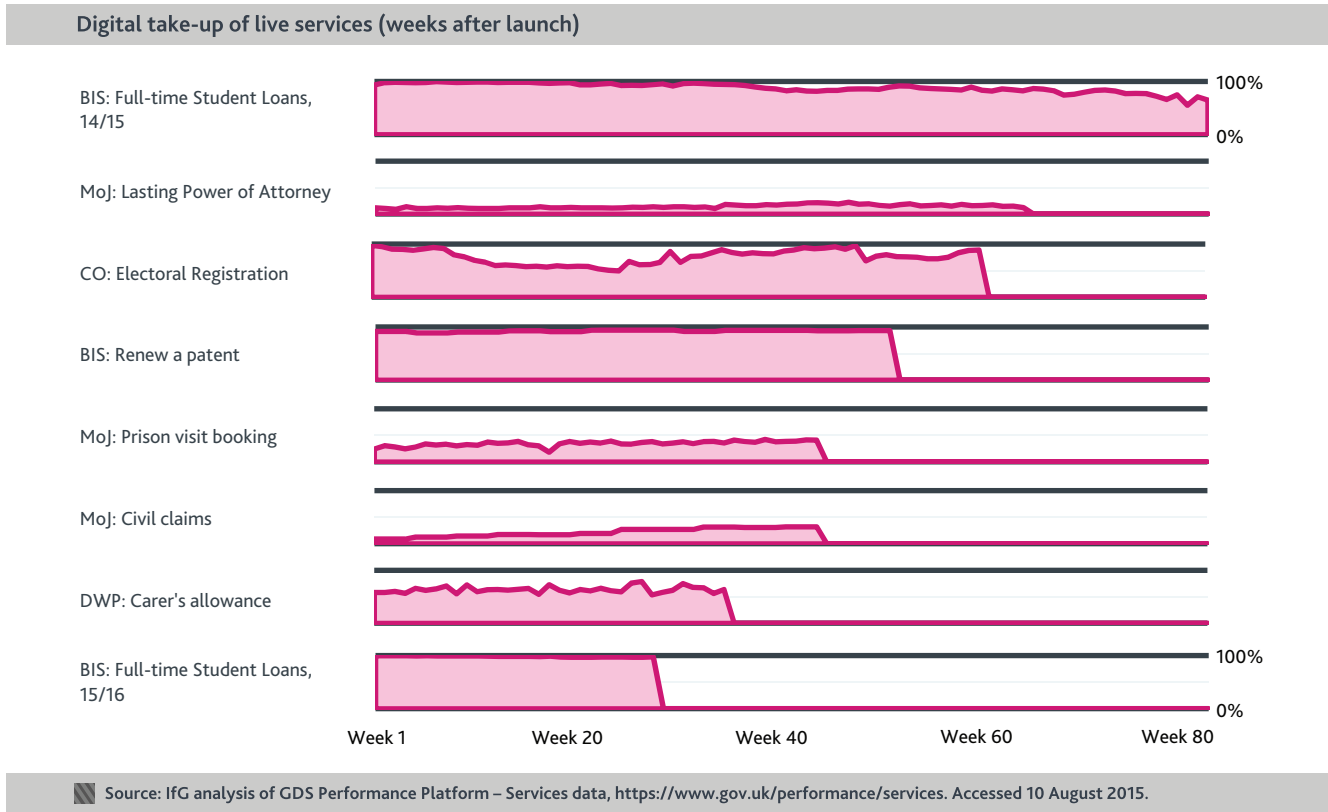


Source: IfG analysis of GDS Performance Platform – Services data, <https://www.gov.uk/performance/services>. Accessed 10 August 2015.

The 25 digital exemplars were to be transformed by teams within the departments and agencies that owned them – with the support of GDS – as showcases of good digital service design. They were intended to be accessible to the public by the end of the parliament. When Parliament dissolved in March:

- All of the services had completed their 'discovery' phase (when the initial user research is done).
- Five were still in 'alpha' (a prototyping phase).
- Five were in 'public beta' (accessible to the public, but still in a testing phase).
- Thirteen were 'live' (released for general use by the public although they will still be updated in response to feedback). Two, student finance (the full-time student loan applications part) and finding an apprenticeship, went live just after.

There are some high-profile successes and failures behind these numbers. More than a million people used the online electoral registration service in the week before the deadline, which allowed them to send their registration details to their local council via a central online form. Meanwhile, Defra's rural payments service – designed to process farmers' applications for subsidies – was much more complex, and proved unusable. The old system of email and paper forms was reverted to soon after it launched in beta, to ensure that farmers met their application deadlines.¹⁰

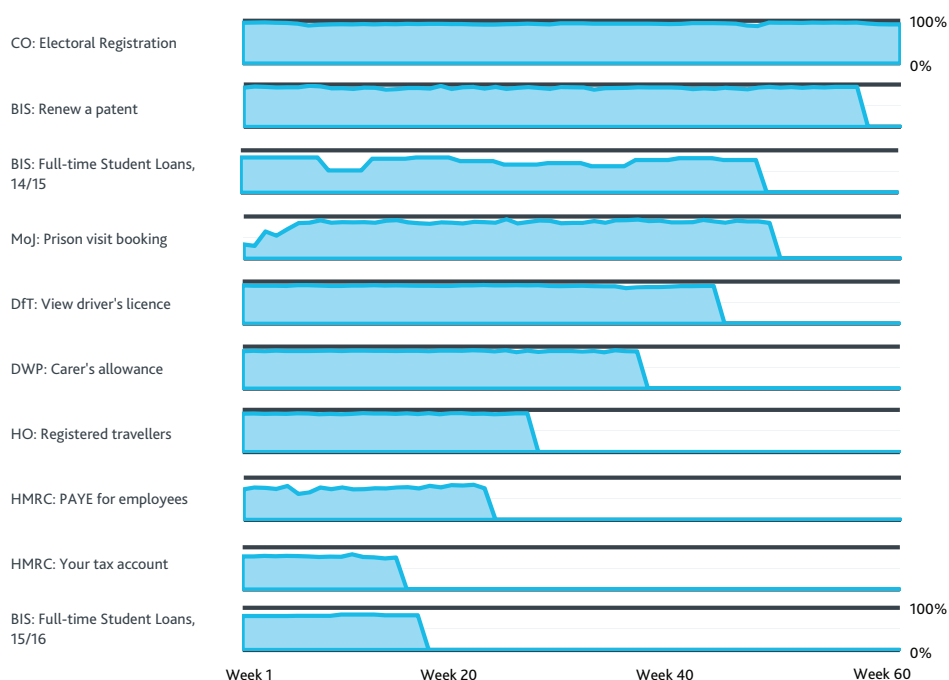


One way of measuring the success of a digital service is to see how many people choose to use it. Different services have different-sized user bases (many more people will register to vote than renew a patent) but we can compare how popular they are by looking at the take-up of the service: the proportion of transactions within that service that are completed online, rather than by phone, post or in person. Of the six services that went live in 2014 (not including 'view a driving licence', an online-only service), two currently have a digital take-up of more than 50%: patent renewals, and voter registration. Applications for full-time student loans for 2015-16 have been live only since May, but digital take-up for the 2014-15 application round was high even when the service was in beta.

Civil claims and prison visit bookings still have a take-up of less than 50%, but the proportion of people using the online service has been increasing steadily since they launched. By contrast, the proportion of people completing their application for lasting power of attorney online reached a peak of 23%, 47 weeks after launching, but has since hovered between 10% and 20%.

The 2014 Autumn Statement contained a pledge to 'increas[e] the digital uptake of public services among those online by 10 percentage points in 2016'.¹¹ GDS claims that this will take digital take-up to 90%, although it is unclear where the current figure of 80% comes from.¹²

Customer satisfaction with live services (weeks from launch)



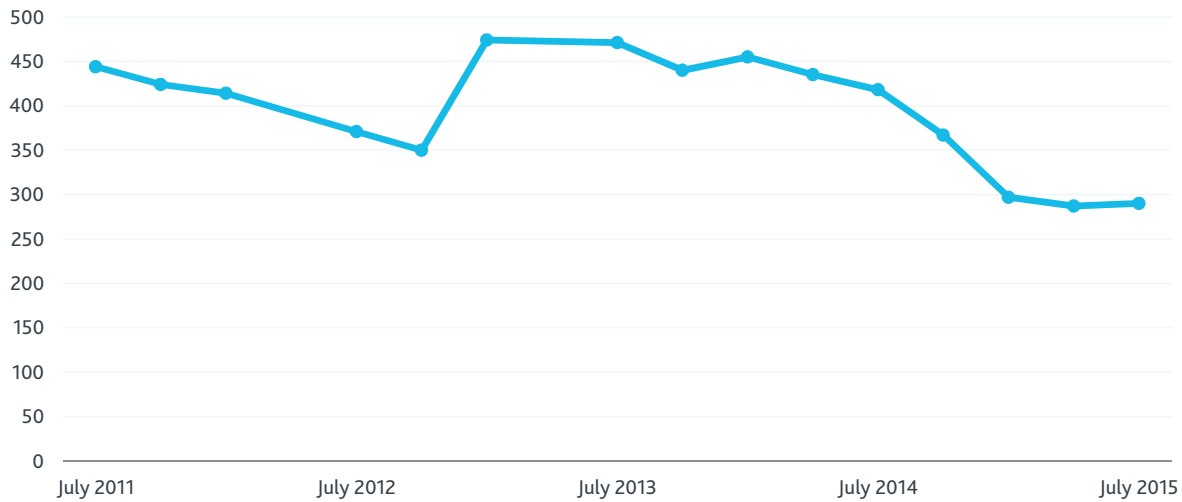
Source: IfG analysis of GDS Performance Platform – Services data, <https://www.gov.uk/performance/services>. Accessed 10 August 2015.

While the take-up of different digital services is mixed, the reported satisfaction levels of the people who do use them is mostly high. Of the ten services with published satisfaction ratings based on 200 or more respondents, seven have recent ratings satisfaction ratings of around 90%, and none have dipped below 75% after three months.

Although the take-up of the prison visit booking system has been low compared with the other exemplars – hovering between 30% and 40% over the past five months – customer satisfaction has risen to 80-90% (after a difficult first few weeks). HMRC’s exemplar services show consistently lower satisfaction ratings: around 70-80%.

GOV.UK has absorbed more than 250 websites since 2012. Departments still have their own pages on the platform – DfE’s are the most visited.

Number of Open Central Government Websites, 2011-15

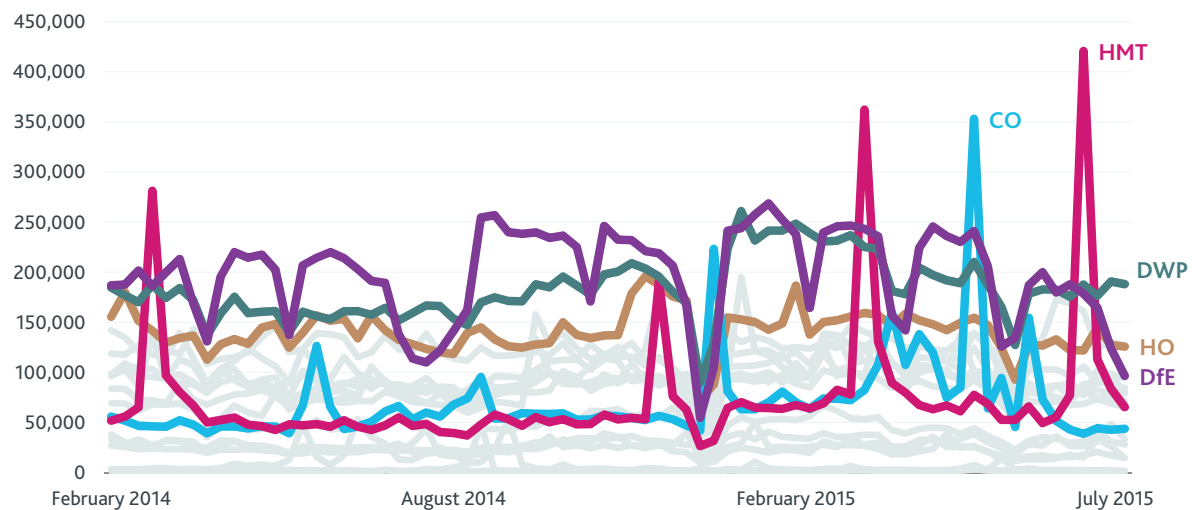


Source: Institute for Government analysis of List of Open Central Government Websites quarterly publications, October 2011 – July 2015.

A cornerstone of digital transformation is to make access to information easier for the user. A key part of this in the last parliament was the merging of separate government websites into GOV.UK. This began in 2011, when GDS compiled a list of 444 central government websites to be reviewed and possibly absorbed.

In 2013, the scope of that list was expanded, taking the number of websites up to 471. GDS has made rapid progress in absorbing these into GOV.UK, and there are now only 290. Of these, 223 websites – including the BBC, English Heritage and the Met Office – have been granted a special exemption to retain their separate identity.¹³ For many of these organisations, such as the Electoral Commission, independence from government is a crucial part of their work. Incorporation into GOV.UK, even if all of the content was produced independently, might jeopardise the perception of independence.

Visitors to department websites, February 2014 to July 2015



Source: IfG analysis of GDS Performance Platform – Web Traffic data, <https://www.gov.uk/performance/web-traffic>. Accessed 10 August 2015.

Once a department or agency's website has been merged into GOV.UK, its separate identity is not entirely lost. Much of the content on GOV.UK – called 'services and information' – is structured by topic rather than content, and produced by GDS itself. However, Whitehall departments and many agencies retain control of their own pages within GOV.UK, hosting policy documentation and guidance, and announcements that the department wishes to make.¹⁴

The most consistently visited departmental pages are DfE, DWP and HO.

- In 68 out of 75 weeks, DfE had the most visited pages, with dips during the school holidays. Its web traffic dashboard shows that the most-viewed pages contained information critical to people who work in schools, such as curriculum guidelines. There was also a spike in January when the annual school performance data is published – which is of interest to parents as much as teachers.
- The DWP pages host the claim forms for many different types of state benefit and support, such as budgeting loans, maternity allowance and housing benefit.
- The most visited HO pages are on topics of public interest (specifically immigration) and guidance related to HO's policy areas (such as alcohol licensing and police pensions).

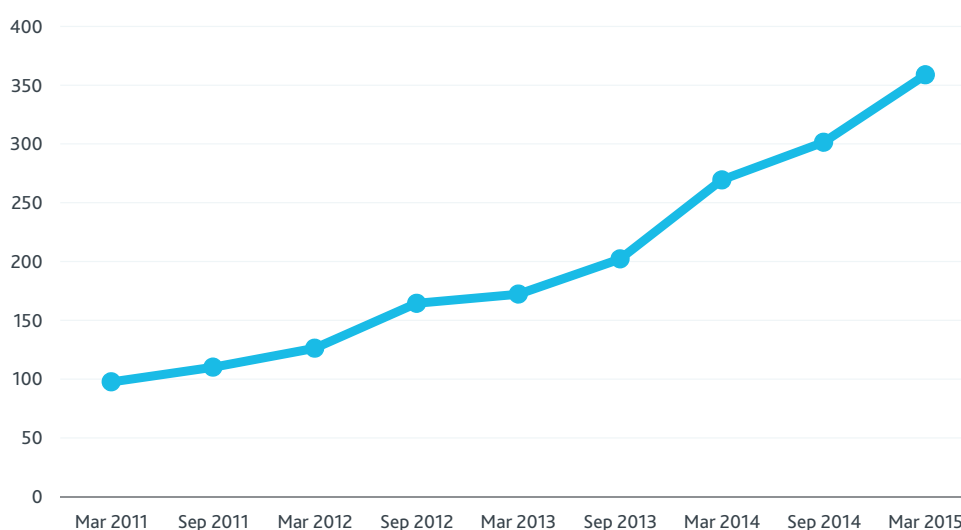
Spikes occur at particular times on other departments' pages:

- CO saw an increase in visitors around the general election, with a spike in the week afterwards when new ministers were announced.
- Visitors to the Treasury website spiked around the Budget and the Autumn Statement.

Altogether, these represent only a small proportion of visitors to GOV.UK. We do not know precisely the relative size of the different areas of the site.¹⁵ However, it seems that most traffic is not going to central government departments' websites. At the end of July, websites belonging to the 19 ministerial departments attracted only 11% (1.3 million) of the visitors to GOV.UK (12 million). The rest of the visitors went to pages in the services and information section, or to sites controlled by ALBs.

The Government Digital Service grew rapidly over the course of the last parliament.

Number of people employed by Government Digital Service, 2011-15

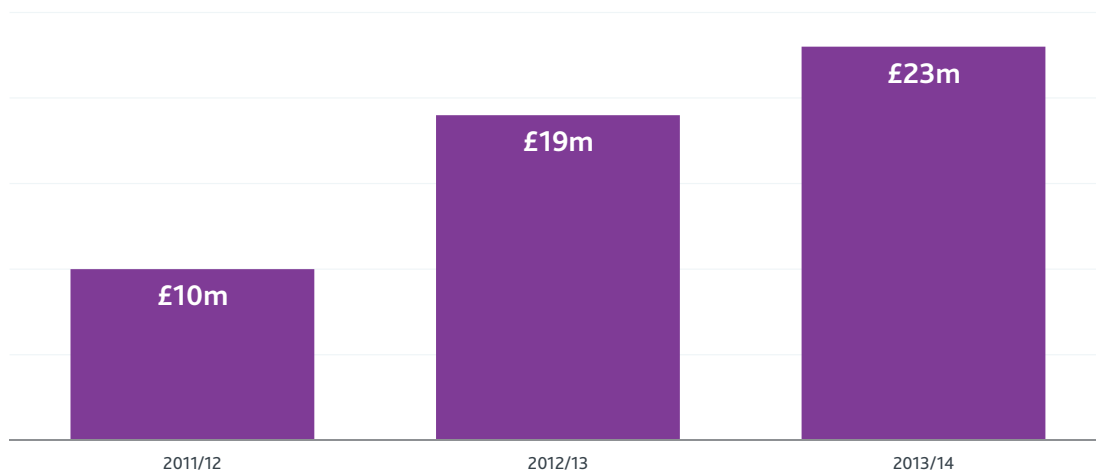


Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office organograms.

Digital transformation in the last parliament was catalysed and driven from the centre by GDS. This Cabinet Office 'hothouse' is part centre of expertise, part service delivery organisation, and a setter of standards for government digital; its workforce and budget grew following its launch in 2011. According to the Cabinet Office's published organograms, GDS currently employs 360 people, up from 100 when it was first established. This makes it an important contributor to the overall expansion of the Cabinet Office, which has grown by 580 FTE in the same period (162 FTE when reclassifications are taken into account).

The actual number of people employed by GDS may be higher than this organogram data suggests – GDS's own website claims that they employ more than 500 staff all over the UK, and a recent third party report on GDS reports that there were 566.5 FTE at GDS in 2014/15. This discrepancy may be due to gaps in the organogram data, discussed in chapter 6. It may also be due to the high number of interim staff – GDS' corporate report for 2014/15 asked for 635 staff, a third of whom would be interim.¹⁶

Cabinet Office Programme Cost: Government Digital Service



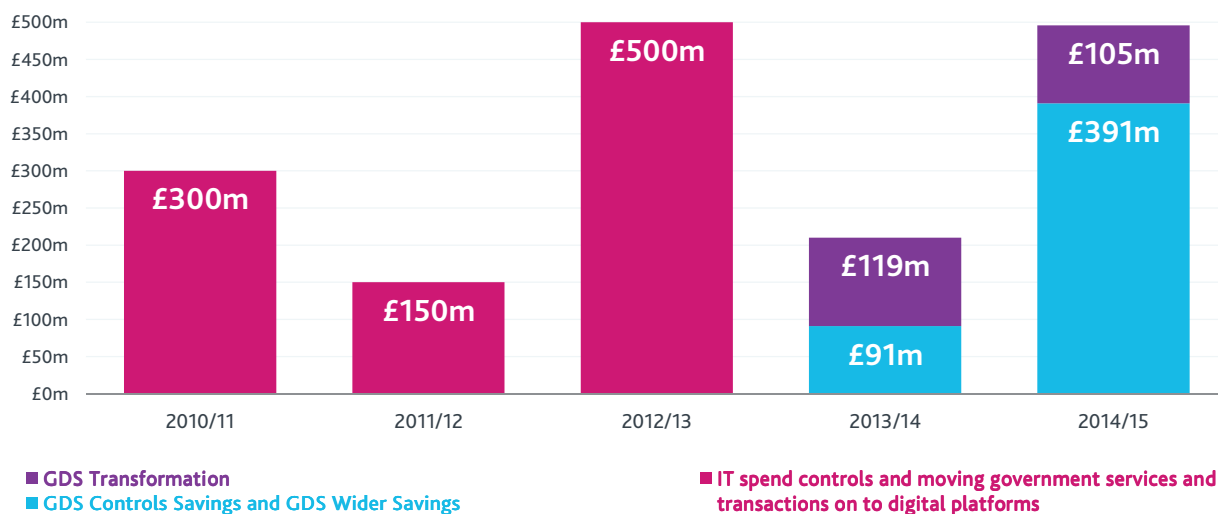
Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office Annual Report and Accounts, 2011-14.

While most of Whitehall experienced budget cuts during the last parliament, the cost of GDS's programme of work more than doubled: from £10m in 2011/12 to £23m in 2013/14. It therefore accounts for 10% of the Cabinet Office's programme spending. Under government financial guidelines, programme costs include 'certain staff costs where they relate directly to service delivery' – so there may be some more staff costs that are not counted under this number.

According to the Cabinet Office, the increase came from 'additional activities', including the continued expansion and development of GOV.UK, building departmental capability, and the work to digitise transactional services. The Cabinet Office also cites 'increasing the uptake of digital services' as a reason for budget increases – although it is unclear precisely what this means.¹⁷

Large savings from digital transformation are yet to be realised.

Efficiency and Reform savings from IT spend controls and digital transformation, 2010-15

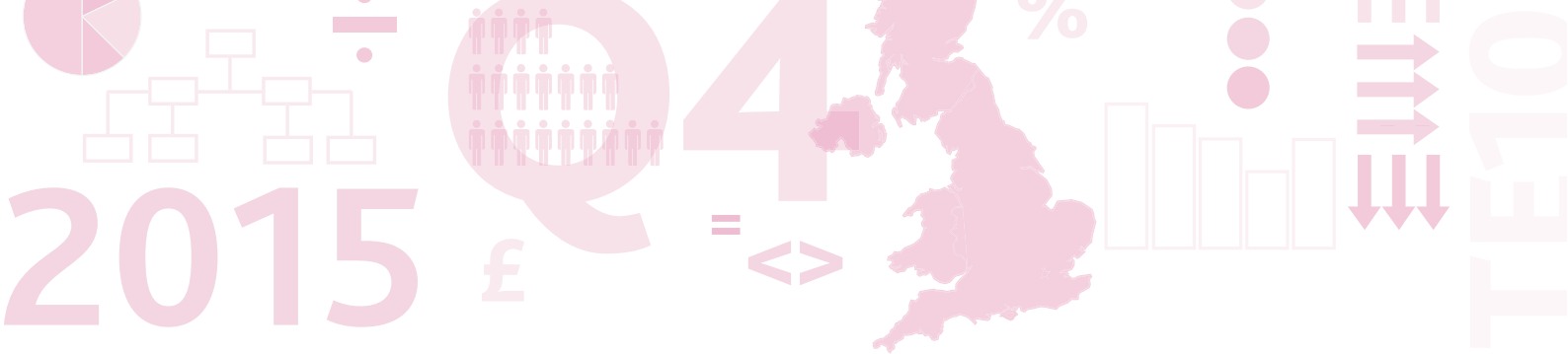


Source: IFG analysis of NAO, 'The savings reported by the Efficiency and Reform Group' (2010/11 to 2012/13), Cabinet Office, 'Saving delivered in the financial year 2014-15 in government departments, technical note' (2013-14, 2014-15). NAO figures may not be comparable.

Since 2010, the Efficiency and Reform Group has been publishing the efficiency savings it claims have been made each year (see page 50), including the transformation of digital services. The Government claimed £119m of savings from digital transformation in 2013/14, and £105m in 2014/15. Before this, digital transformation savings were counted together with savings from IT spending controls – the difference between IT spending proposals put forward by departments and the spending allowed by the central Office of the Chief Technology Officer. These changes make it hard to tell exactly where savings have come from.

Most of the claimed GDS digital transformation savings in 2013/14 have come from the closing of government websites – £61m against a 2009/10 benchmark in 2014/15. In that year, a further £36m of savings reportedly came from a single transformation project – identity assurance in DWP – with the remaining £7m coming from the digitisation of transactional services in other departments.

The closure of central government websites is almost complete, but the digitisation of transactional services has only just begun. So far, the Government cannot claim great savings from this activity. However, there are hundreds of transactional services yet to be brought online. This large-scale digital transformation remains one of the few ERG areas where there is still the potential for significant savings in the next parliament.¹⁸



12. Legislation

Although the reality is more complicated than the simplistic 'zombie parliament' tagline (suggesting Parliament was seen to be quiet, giving MPs little to do), fewer bills were passed per sitting day under the Coalition than during any Labour parliamentary session from 1997 to 2010.

Under the Coalition, one government bill was passed by Parliament into law every six days, compared with one every four and a half days in each Labour session. Of course, the amount of primary government legislation passed is not in and of itself a measure of government effectiveness.

More government bills were passed into law in the first session of the parliament (2010–12), although this was because that session was the longest. Broken down by sitting day, the 2012–13 session was the busiest, closely followed by 2014–15. This contrasts with 1997–2010, when the rush to pass laws before the end of the parliament meant the final session was always busiest. The change is perhaps explained by the Fixed-term Parliaments Act (2011) or by Coalition politics limiting the room for political manoeuvre.

The Treasury has been responsible for more bills passing into law over the last parliament than any other department, including the regular Finance Acts. These were each more than 300 pages, placing them among the longer pieces of legislation, along with six other bills on everything from criminal justice to the reform of the health and social care system.

With the new Conservative government having a working majority of just 16, it remains to be seen whether fewer government bills will be brought forward over the next few years.

About the data

The **parliament.uk website** lists the status of all bills in recent sessions, providing us with details of which government bills were passed into law, and which ministers were responsible for introducing them to Parliament.¹

We were then able to find further information – specifically the length in pages of each bill – at **legislation.gov.uk**.²

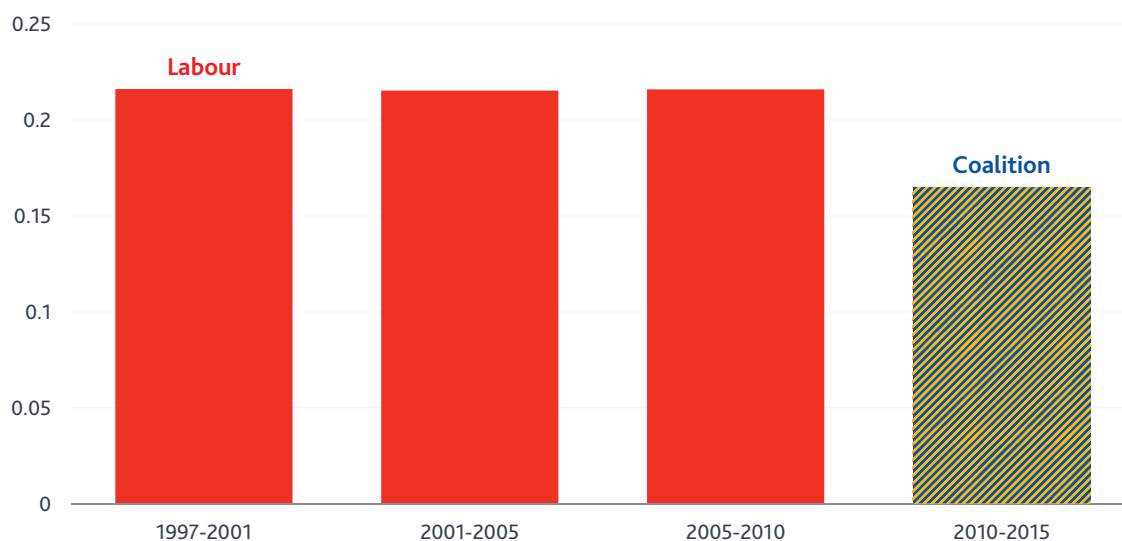
The **sessional returns for the House of Commons** provided us with a check on the government bills that became acts, and the number of parliamentary sitting days per session.³

Our analysis does not include private bills, private members' bills, secondary legislation such as statutory instruments, and bills that did not receive Royal Assent. In some cases, we had to make decisions about which government department was primarily responsible for a bill.

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One government bill passed into law every six days under the Coalition, compared with one every four and a half days under Labour.

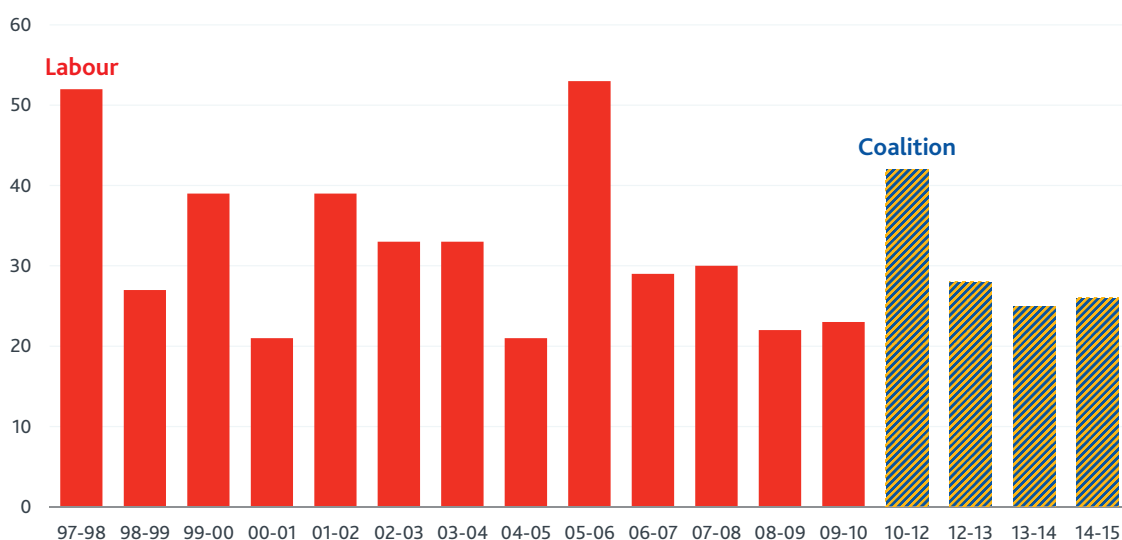
Number of government bills passed per sitting day by parliament, 1997-2001 to 2010-15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of parliament.uk data, House of Commons Sessional Returns and House of Commons Journal Office.

In terms of government bills, Parliament has been quieter under the Coalition than under Labour (1997–2010). One government bill has made it to Royal Assent every six days since 2010 (a total of 121 bills over 733 sitting days). In each Labour session, one government bill made it into law every four and a half days (139 in 643 sitting days in 1997–2001, 126 in 585 in 2001–05, and 157 in 727 in 2005–10).

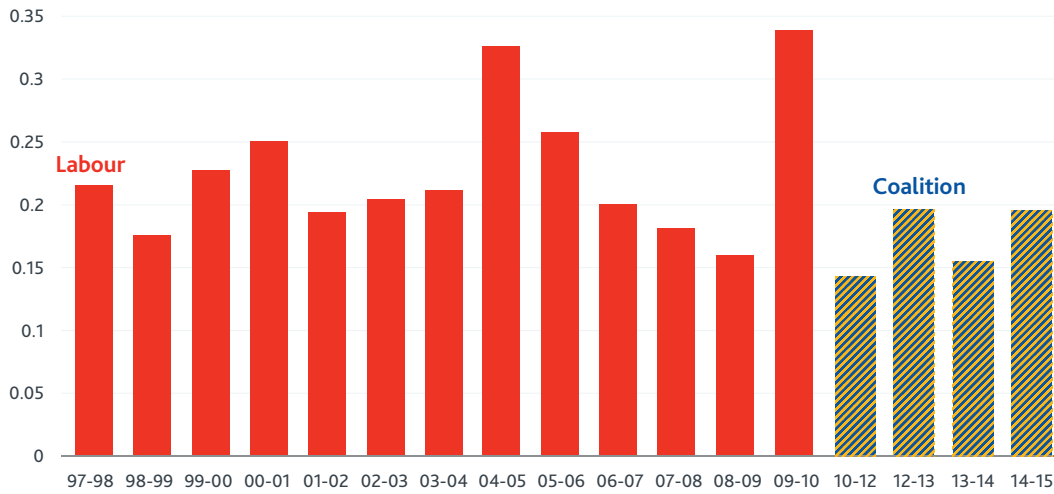
Number of government bills passed by parliamentary session, 1997-98 to 2014-15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of legislation data, published by parliament.uk, and House of Commons Sessional Returns.

Much of the legislative narrative during the Coalition focused on the 'zombie parliament' – the idea that later sessions were quiet, giving MPs very little parliamentary work to do. If one ignores the caveat that more legislation does not necessarily mean a more effective government or Parliament – there may be better uses of parliamentary time – then the total number of bills passed per session appears to bear this out.⁴ As with every parliament since 1997, more government bills became law in the first session than in any other – 42 in 2010–12. The 2012–13 session was the next busiest (28) and 2013–14 was the quietest (25), while 26 government bills received Royal Assent in 2014–15. More bills were passed in some of these sessions than in some under Labour.

Number of government bills passed per sitting day by parliamentary session, 1997-98 to 2014-15

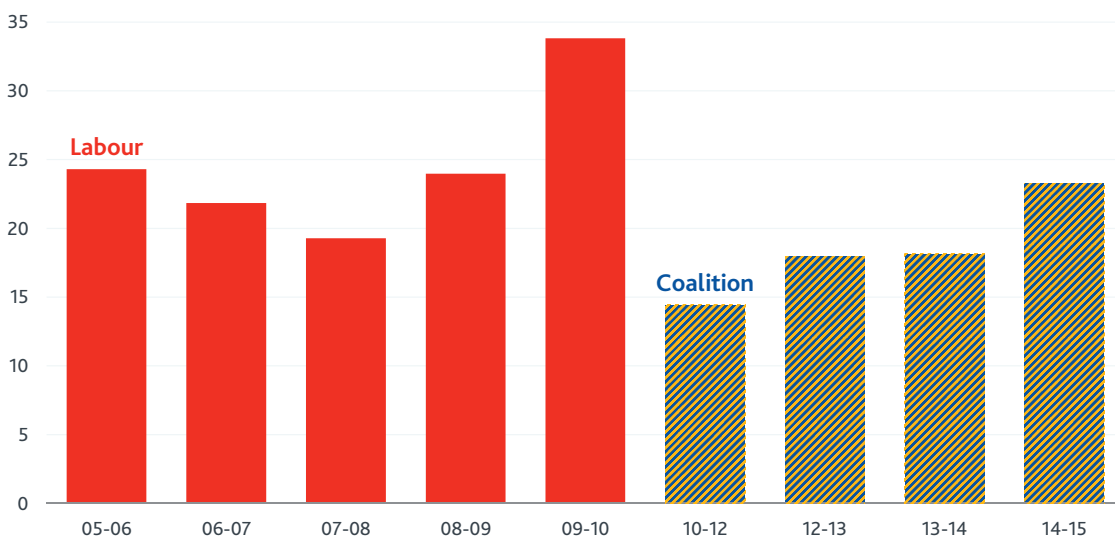


Source: Institute for Government analysis of parliament.uk data, House of Commons Sessional Returns and House of Commons Journal Office.

But the varying lengths of parliamentary sessions mean this is not a fair comparison. When the number of bills is divided by the number of sitting days, the first session was actually the quietest of the Coalition. The busiest was the 2012–13 session (0.196 bills per sitting day), just ahead of the 2014–15 session (0.195 bills) – in both sessions, that means one government bill was passed into law roughly every five sitting days.

In all three recent Labour parliaments (1997–2001, 2001–05 and 2005–10), the final session in each parliament was the busiest. In 2004–05 and 2009–10, one government bill was passed every three sitting days in the rush to get legislation through before the end of the parliament. It may be that the 2011 Fixed-term Parliaments Act (giving greater certainty to the parliamentary timetable), or simply a coalition government having less political room for manoeuvre, helped avoid such a rush this time round.

Pages of legislation passed per sitting day by parliamentary session, 2005-06 to 2014-15

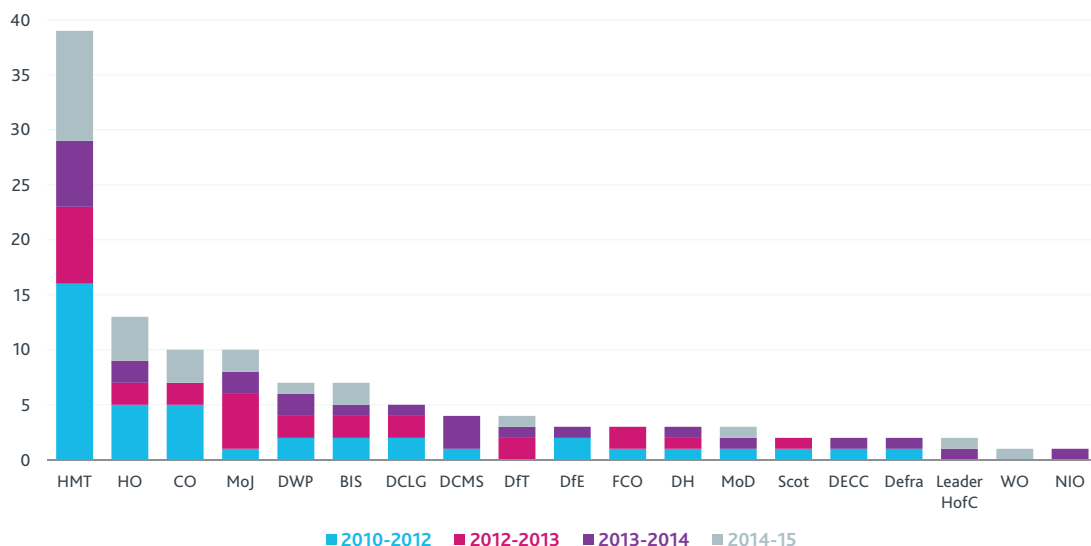


Source: Institute for Government analysis of parliament.uk data, House of Commons Sessional Returns and House of Commons Journal Office.

Not all bills are created equal, however; some are only a few pages long, while others run to many hundreds of pages, with hundreds of clauses and multiple schedules (causing many hours of debate). More pages of government legislation were passed per sitting day in 2014–15 (23.3 pages) than in any other session this parliament. It was also comparable with most sessions during the 2005–10 parliament, with the exception of 2009–10, when 33.3 pages were passed per sitting day.

The Treasury was responsible for more government bills becoming law than any other department, and for many of the longest bills.

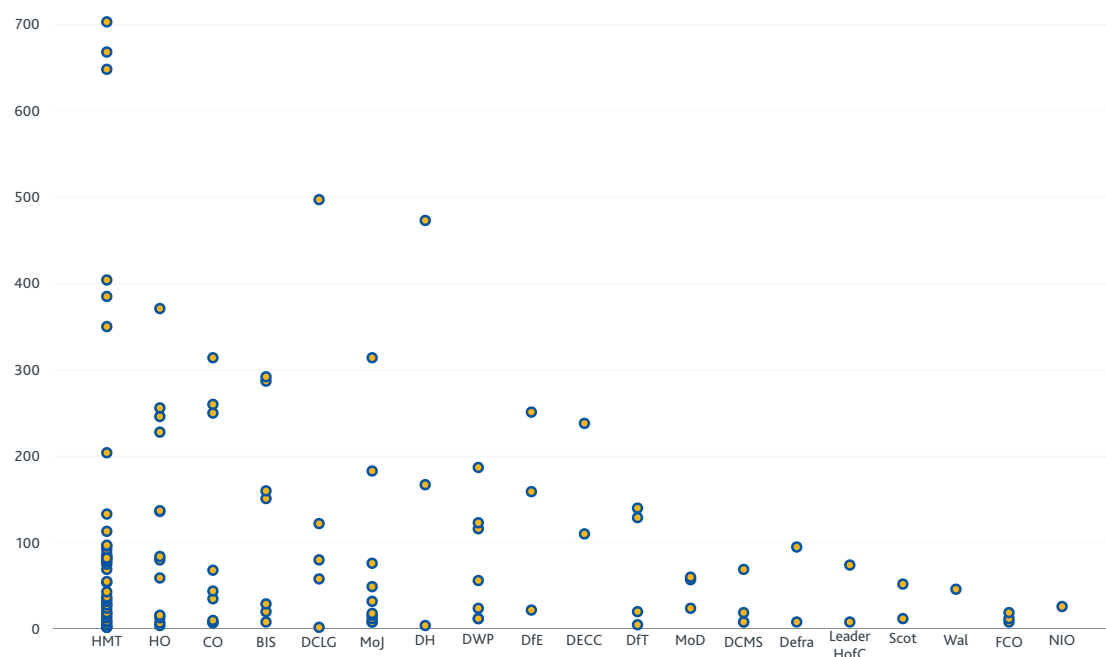
Government bills passed, 2010-2015 - by parliamentary session, by department



Source: Institute for Government analysis of legislation data from parliament.uk.

The Treasury was responsible for more of the government bills receiving Royal Assent under the Coalition than any other department – 39. Although these have included reforms to the financial system, National Insurance and taxes, many have been bills that allow the Government to raise and spend money, such as Finance Bills and Supply and Appropriation Bills.

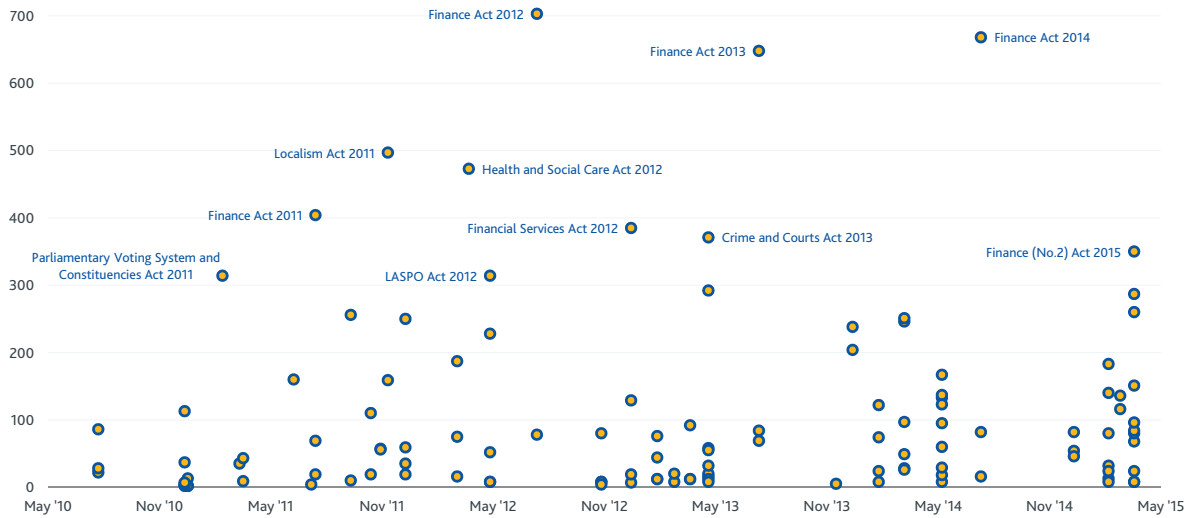
Government bills passed, 2010 to 2015 - number of pages by department



Source: Institute for Government analysis of legislation data from parliament.uk. Departments ordered by total number of pages, highest to lowest.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the Treasury was also responsible for many of the longest bills in terms of page length.

Government bills passed, 2010 to 2015 - date and number of pages (bills with more than 300 pages labelled)

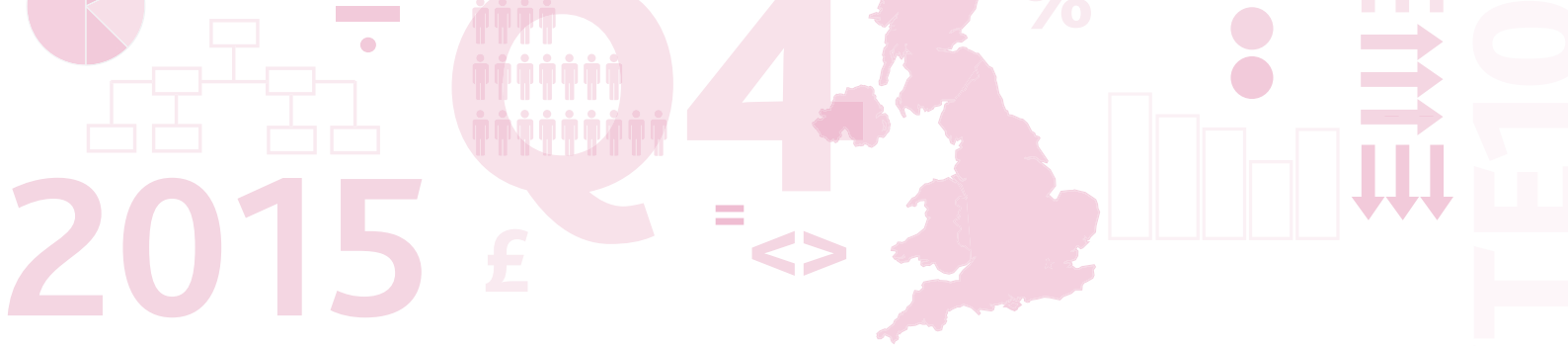


Source: Institute for Government analysis of legislation data from parliament.uk.

Finance Bills, which renew taxes and put new taxes announced in the Budget into law, were among the longest to become law. Most government bills were under 300 pages long – 47% were under 50 pages and 69% under 100 – but those others over 300 pages were:

- Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 (CO, 314 pages), which legislated to allow the alternative vote (subject to referendum), reducing the number of MPs to 600 and reviewing constituency boundaries (though political brokering means some of this has not been implemented)
- Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (MoJ, 314 pages), which instituted a number of changes to the justice system
- Crime and Courts Act 2013 (HO, 371 pages), which covered numerous matters, from the National Crime Agency to the Leveson Report
- Financial Services Act 2012 (HMT, 385 pages), which made various provisions about financial services and markets
- Health and Social Care Act 2012 (DH, 473 pages), which introduced reforms to the health system (such as increasing the power of GPs to commission services)
- Localism Act 2011 (DCLG, 497 pages), which devolved powers (including over housing and planning) to councils and communities.

Although HMT’s status as the department steering through the most – and longest – bills is unlikely to change, other departments may also need to navigate large bills through Parliament depending on the Government’s agenda. They will need to ensure they have the right capability to do so and that plans are fully thought through and not rushed – as was the case with the controversial Health and Social Care Act, whose passage had to be ‘paused’ to respond to concerns.⁵



13. Responding to information requests

Part of a department's work is taken up in responding to inquiries from politicians, journalists and the public – an important mechanism for holding government to account. DWP, HO and DH tend to receive the largest number of information requests, with the territorial offices receiving the fewest. While the Wales Office, DH and DfT are the best departments at responding to these inquiries on time, HO, DCLG and MoJ are generally among the worst.

Data is available on three different types of information request: written parliamentary questions from MPs, replies to correspondence from MPs and peers, and Freedom of Information (FoI) requests. We also have polling data thanks to ComRes that shows how responsive MPs think different government departments are.

In 2013-14 (the most recent session for which data has been published), DH received the most written parliamentary questions, and answered nearly all of them on time. There have been general improvements by all departments in answering questions on time between 2009-10 and 2013-14, with only DCLG and MoJ becoming worse at doing so over this period.

DH and DWP both received more than 15,000 items (letters and emails) of ministerial correspondence in 2014. But when other parts of the departmental group are added in, HO receives by far the most, with nearly 50,000 pieces of correspondence on visas and immigration. Of the core departments, DH has had a consistently high volume throughout the parliament and responded on time to nearly all of them.

DWP has received more FoI requests in nearly every quarter of the last parliament than any other department – some others have peaked around times of controversial reforms. HMRC, MoJ and CO – the latter two being the departments previously and currently responsible for FoI – consistently withhold information in response to more requests than the rest of Whitehall.

Depending on the measure used, ComRes polling of MPs indicates that either FCO or DfID is considered the most responsive department to MPs' enquiries, while either HMT or MoJ is the least responsive. However, MPs are extremely partisan – those from parties who are in government tend to be far more positive about departments' responsiveness than those from opposing parties.

About the data

Data on written parliamentary questions comes from two sources: **sessional returns**, which give the total number of 'ordinary' and 'named day' questions asked; and **reports by the House of Commons Procedure Committee**, which since 2009-10 have given volume and timeliness of response (within five and 10 days for ordinary questions, on the day specified for named-day questions), self-reported by department. The latest data available is for the 2013-14 session.¹

An **annual written ministerial statement released by the Cabinet Office** details the volume of ministerial correspondence received by each department (and some of their arm's-length bodies), and whether they respond within the targets they have set themselves.²

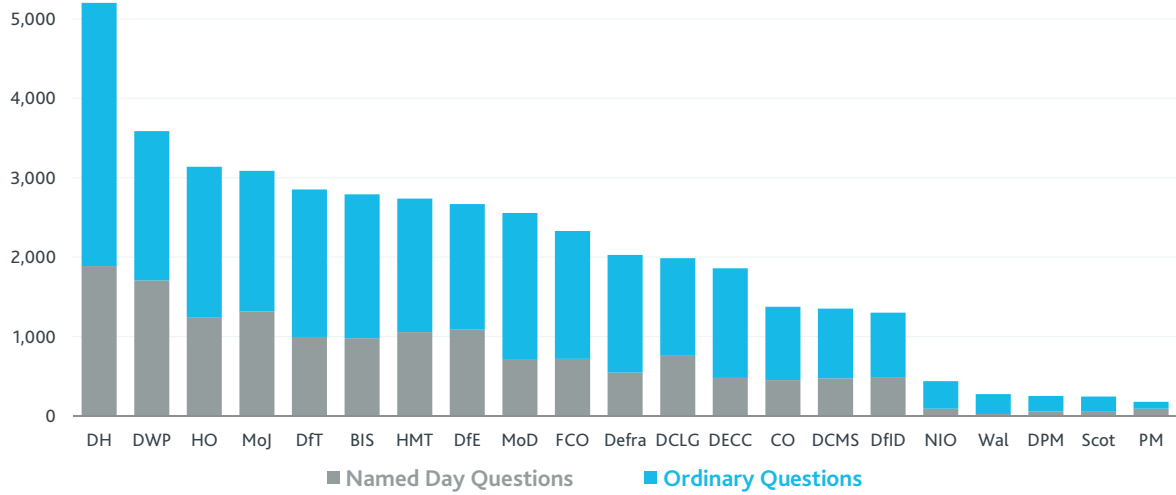
Quarterly reports published by the Ministry of Justice give us the number of FoI requests received by each department, how many they respond to on time (either within the 20 working day statutory limit or by permitted extension) and what the response is. Some departments are grouped with some, though not all, of their ALBs.³

As part of their regular surveys of MPs, the **research and polling consultancy ComRes asks MPs**: 'In dealing with these government departments in the course of your work as an MP, how would you rate them in terms of their overall responsiveness to your inquiries (i.e. speed, accuracy and depth of response)?' MPs are asked to state whether they feel a named department is 'very responsive', 'fairly responsive', 'fairly unresponsive' or 'very unresponsive'.⁴

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/information

DH receives the most parliamentary questions, and answers nearly all of them on time.

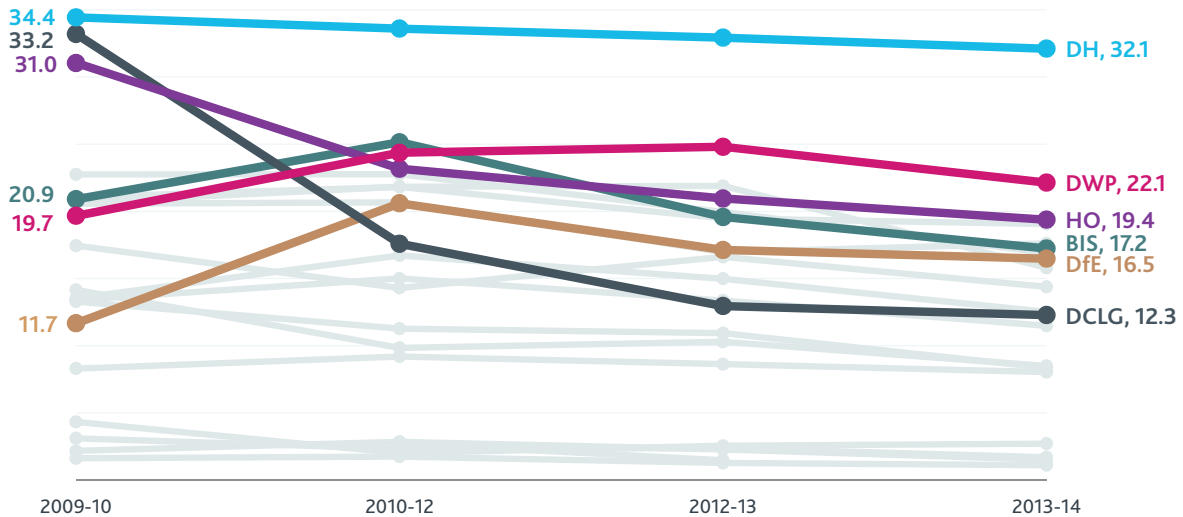
Number of written parliamentary questions submitted to each department, 2013-14



Source: Institute for Government analysis of House of Commons Procedure Committee, *Written parliamentary question answering performance in 2013-14*.

In 2013–14 – the latest parliamentary session for which data is available – DH received 5,201 questions in total, 45% more than DWP, the second-highest department. DH has received more than 30 written questions per sitting day in every session since 2009–10.

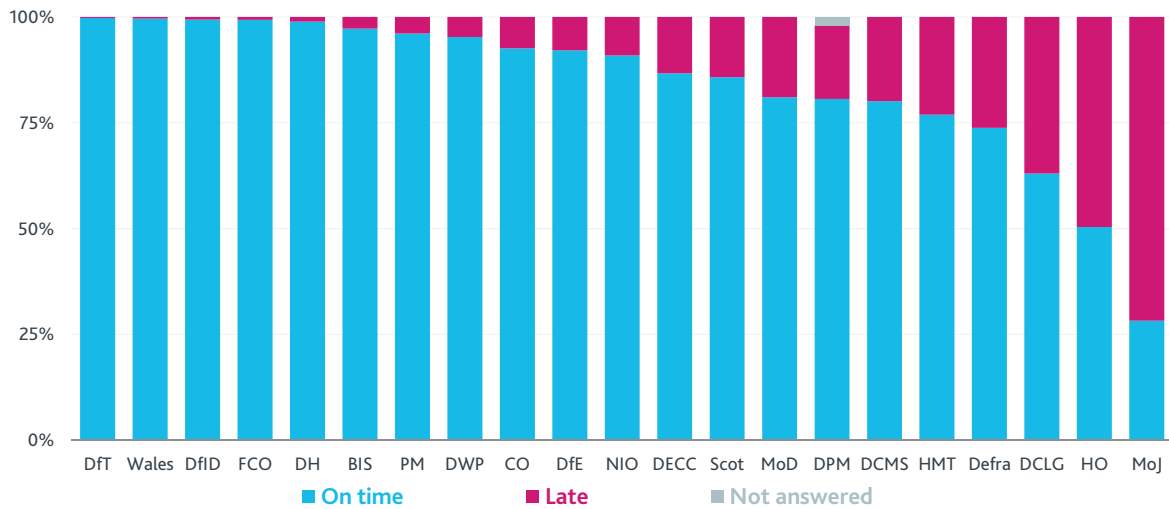
Number of written parliamentary questions submitted to each department by sitting day, 2009-10 to 2013-14



Source: Institute for Government analysis of reports published by the House of Commons Procedure Committee.

Most departments have received consistent numbers of written questions across sessions, although DCLG received nearly twice as many questions per sitting day in 2009–10 as in 2010–12, and HO has also had a fall. BIS and DfE have both fallen back from peaks in 2010–12.

Percentage of written parliamentary questions answered on time, 2013-14



Source: IfG analysis of Procedure Committee reports. We have combined ordinary (within five days) and named day (on day specified) questions.

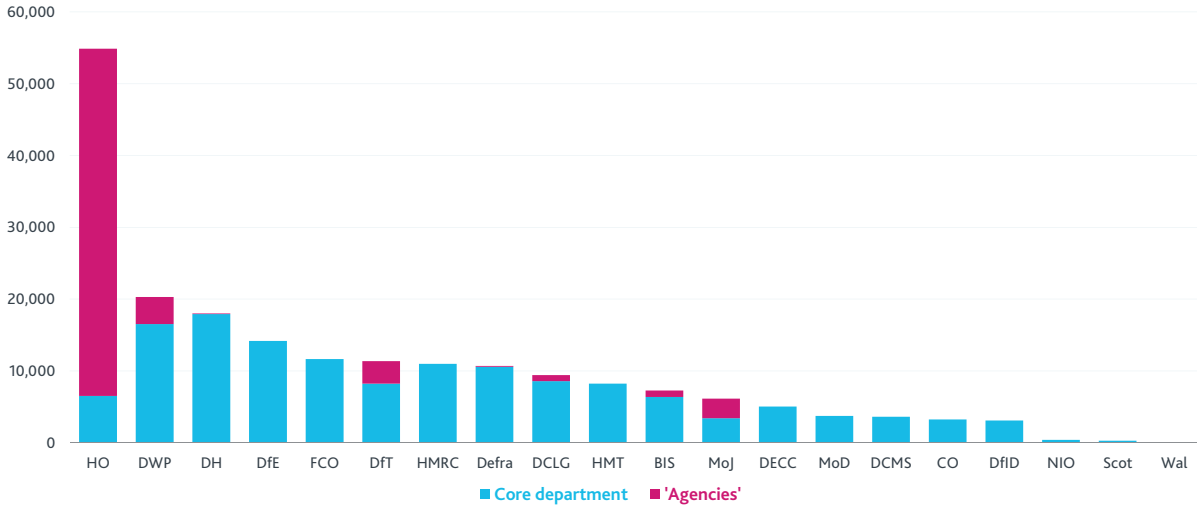
In 2013-14, only one department – MoJ – answered under 50% of the questions it received on time, with HO answering just over 50% on time. DfT answered the greatest percentage on time – all but six out of 2,854 questions. One ‘department’ – the Deputy Prime Minister – left some questions unanswered, compared with three in the 2012-13 session (the Prime Minister, Cabinet Office and Defra).

The majority of departments answered a greater percentage of questions on time in 2013-14 than in 2009-10 – only DCLG and MoJ failed to do so. In some – such as DECC, BIS and DWP – there has been a dramatic and sustained rise in performance. In others – DCLG and MoJ – there has been a continuous drop in performance over the past few years, with MoJ falling from 68% on time in 2012-13 to 28% in 2013-14.

DfE’s performance was a marked improvement on the three previous parliamentary sessions, when it had the lowest percentage of timely responses in each session.

The Home Office departmental group receives the most ministerial correspondence.

Volume of correspondence with MPs and Peers by government department (including reported 'agencies'), 2014



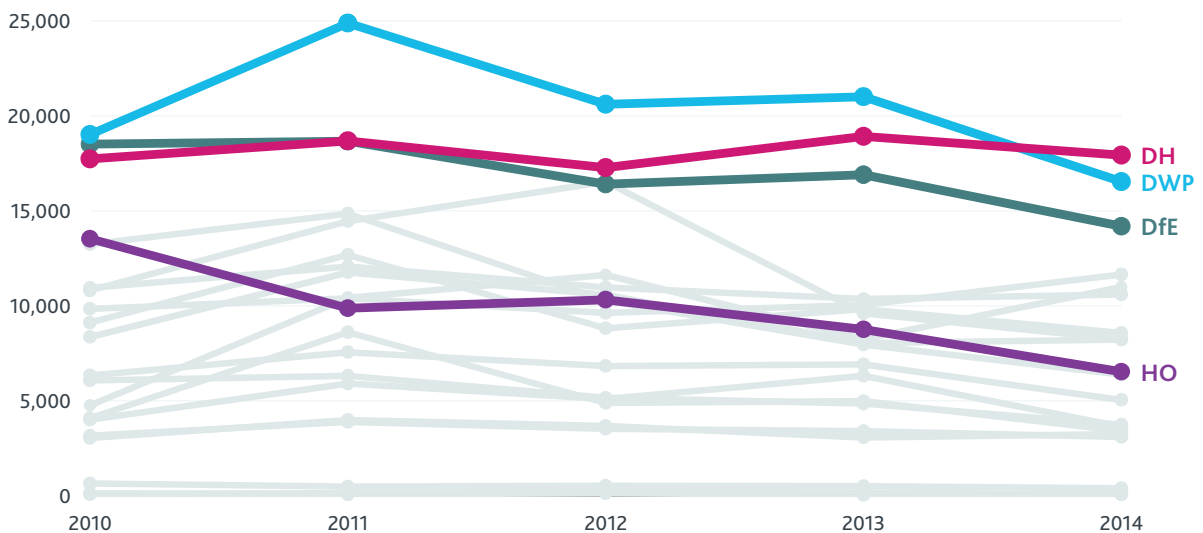
Source: Institute for Government analysis of annual ministerial correspondence reports, 2015.

Since ministers are accountable to Parliament, they have a responsibility to reply to letters and emails they receive from MPs and peers (and MEPs and members of the devolved assemblies). These representatives often get in touch with ministers to ask questions on behalf of their constituents.

In 2014, two departments received more than 15,000 such letters and emails: DH (17,932) and DWP (16,542). This isn't surprising – this is how MPs can raise cases on behalf of their constituents, and DH and DWP are two of the larger public service departments. But when the various other bodies of each department are included, HO received by far the most: UK Visas and Immigration, Immigration Enforcement and Border Force received 48,334 pieces; the core department only 6,529.

Only the 'territorial' departments received fewer than 500 pieces of correspondence in 2014: the Northern Ireland Office (404), Scotland Office (303) and Wales Office (80). Most of the issues raised in this kind of correspondence would be dealt with directly by the devolved governments.

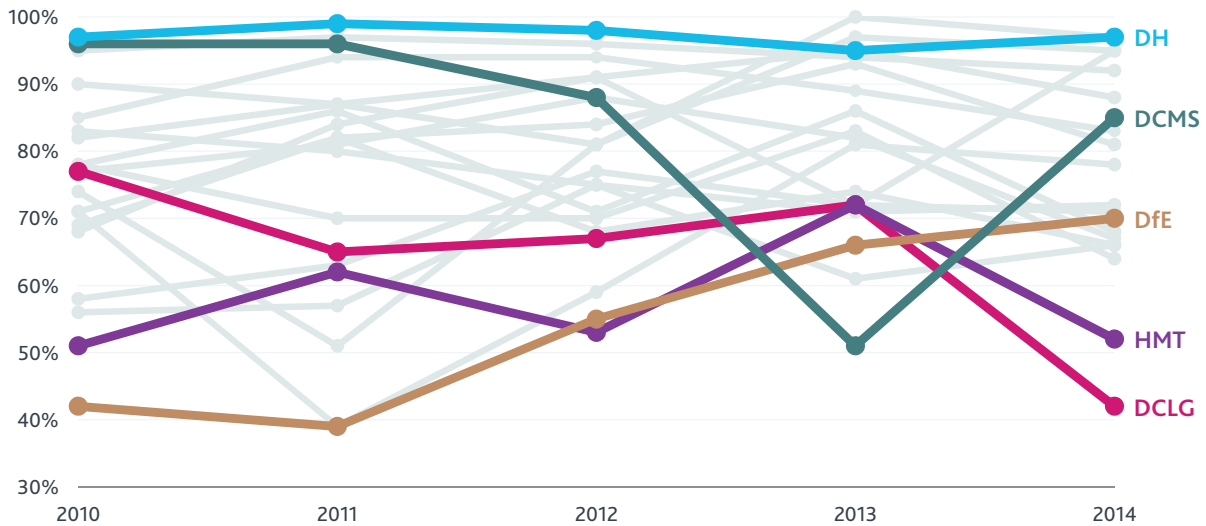
Volume of correspondence with MPs and Peers by government department, 2010-2014



Source: Institute for Government analysis of annual ministerial correspondence reports, 2011 to 2015.

If we look only at ministerial correspondence sent to core departments, we can see that 2014 was the first year in the last parliament that DWP didn't receive the most correspondence – and it received fewer letters from parliamentarians than in any other year since 2010. By contrast, correspondence to DH remained relatively stable over the course of the parliament. Both the Home Office and DfE – departments that generally receive a high number of requests for information – actually experienced a decline in correspondence from MPs over this period.

Percentage of departments' correspondence answered within target, 2010-2014



Source: Institute for Government analysis of annual ministerial correspondence reports, 2011 to 2015.

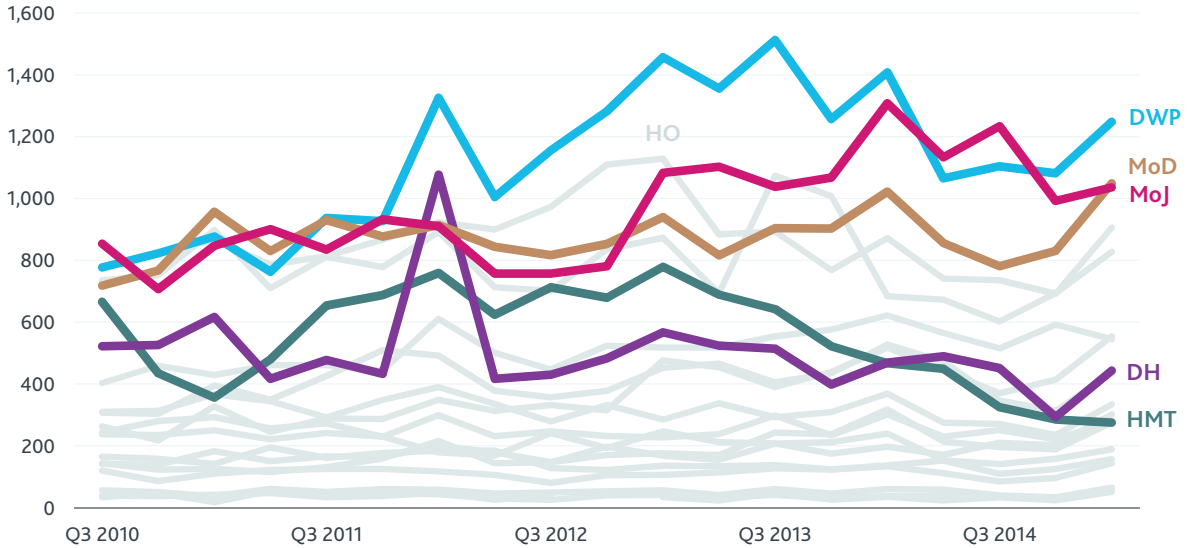
The Cabinet Office guidance on how departments should handle correspondence from MPs and peers sets out a target of no more than 20 working days in which all routine correspondence should be answered, although many departments adopt shorter targets.

In 2014 DH answered 97% of its correspondence within its target (18 days), which is impressive given that it received the highest volume of all the core departments. At the other end of the scale, DCLG achieved its target in only 42% of cases. This may be explained in part by the fact that DCLG aims to respond to correspondence within 10 days – the shortest target of any core department.

Looking at departments' overall record of replying to correspondence within their targets across the whole of the last parliament, DH has consistently ranked among the best. At the Treasury, there was a sharp fall in correspondence replied to on time in 2014 – it answered only 52% within its target (15 days); at DCLG the fall was even steeper (to 42% in 2014). DCMS shows that such falls do not have to be permanent: it bounced back in 2014, answering 85% of correspondence within its target (20 days), having previously dropped from 88% in 2012 to 51% in 2013. Finally, DfE has shown consistent improvements since 2011 – reflecting improved performance by this department on information requests in general (parliamentary questions, ministerial correspondence and FoI) since the early part of the parliament.

DWP consistently receives the most Freedom of Information requests.

Freedom of Information requests received by government departments, Q3 2010 to Q1 2015

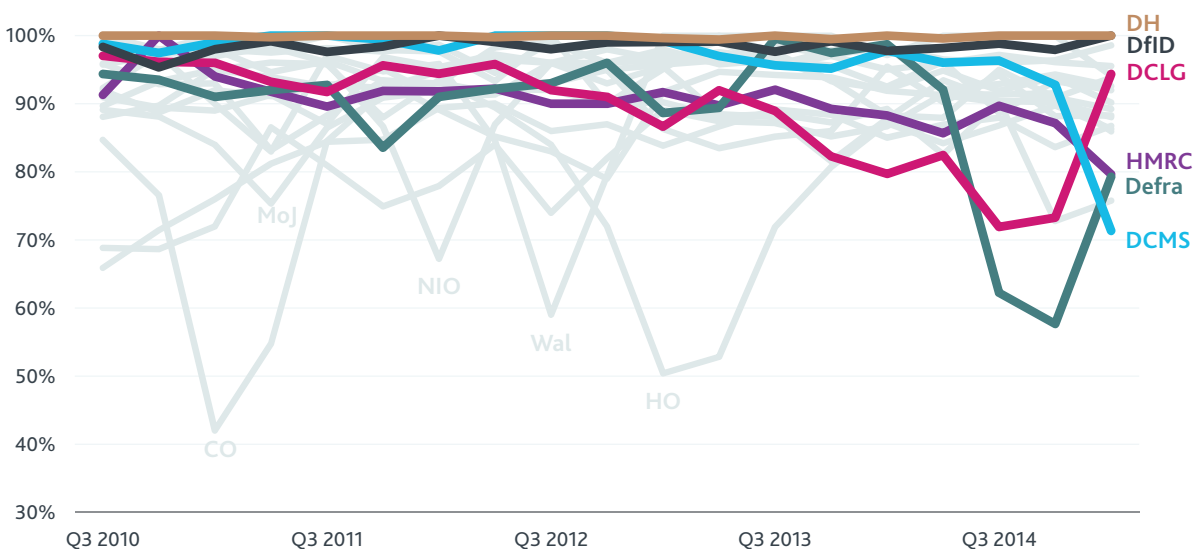


Source: Institute for Government analysis of Government FoI Statistics, Ministry of Justice, 2010 to 2015 using MoJ definitions.

DWP received the largest number of FoI requests in the majority of quarters during the 2010–15 parliament. The Treasury is the only department that experienced a consistent fall in FoI requests over this period.

Many FoI requests may be submitted by individuals about themselves – for example, to check how something will affect them or the status of a claim – so increases in specific departments’ requests are often driven by major reforms in these departments. Significant welfare and legal aid reform efforts might explain the high number of requests received by DWP and MoJ over this period, and the spike in FoI requests received by DH in 2012 came at the same time as the Coalition’s controversial health reforms.

Percentage of ‘in time’ responses by government departments to Freedom of Information requests, Q3 2010 to Q1 2015

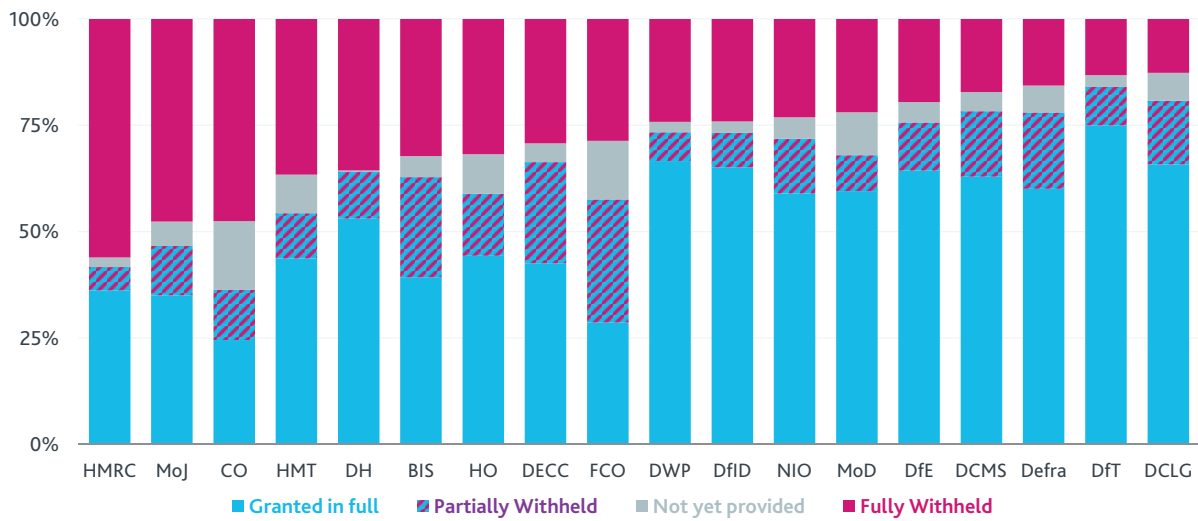


Source: Institute for Government analysis of Government FoI Statistics, Ministry of Justice, 2010 to 2015, using MoJ definitions.

Organisations are required to respond to FoI requests within 20 working days except where an extension has been permitted; requests answered within these deadlines are deemed 'in time'. DH and DfID responded to all requests on time in the last quarter of the Coalition Government.

By contrast, HMRC, Defra, MoJ and DCMS had the worst records on providing responses in that quarter, each failing to respond in time to more than 20% of requests. Defra and DCLG were on a downward trajectory in terms of 'in time' responses towards the end of the parliament, but both improved by more than 20 percentage points in the final quarter. This pattern was fairly common during the parliament, when a number of departments dropped sharply before recovering quickly. While DCMS fell sharply in the final quarter of the Coalition – by more than 20 percentage points, to 71% – at HMRC there was a slower, steadier decline in timeliness during the parliament.

Outcomes of Freedom of Information requests by government department, Q3 2010-Q1 2015

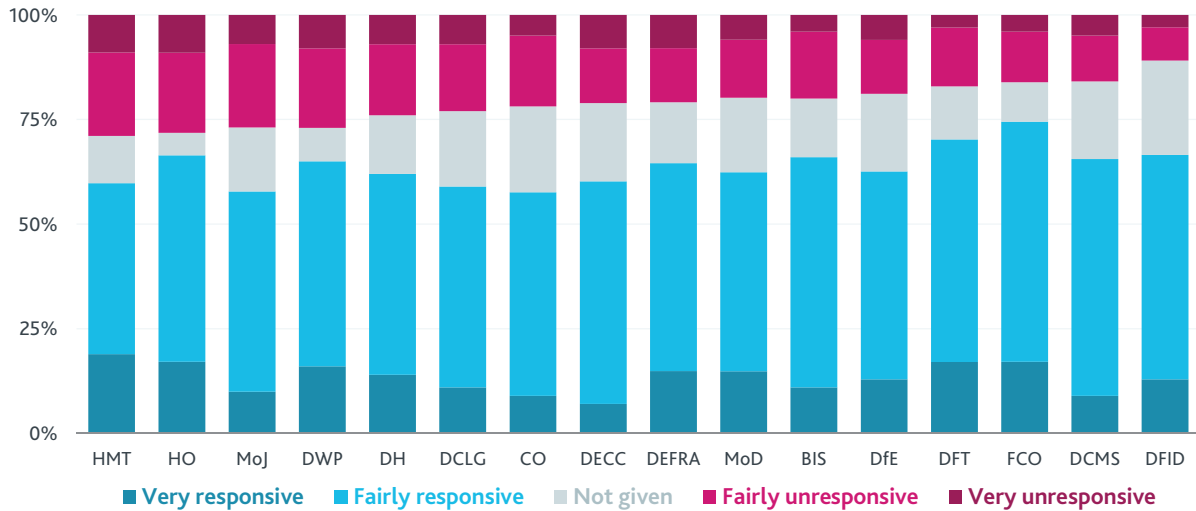


Source: Institute for Government analysis of Government FoI Statistics, Ministry of Justice, 2010 to 2015, using MoJ definitions.

There are measures other than timeliness for how departments handle FoI requests. Over the last parliament, three have consistently 'fully withheld' information in response to a large percentage of requests: HMRC (59%), MoJ (48%) and the Cabinet Office (48%). There may be very good reasons why information should not be released, and departments often make use of the exemptions and exceptions under the Freedom of Information Act; much of the information withheld by HMRC is prohibited from release, for example. But it is ironic that MoJ and CO, the departments previously and currently responsible for FoI, withhold more than nearly everyone else.

MPs consider HO, HMT and MoJ the least responsive departments, but MPs are quite partisan in their views.

'In dealing with these Government departments in the course of your work as an MP, how would you rate them in terms of their overall responsiveness to your inquiries (i.e. speed, accuracy and depth of response)?' - ComRes, 2015

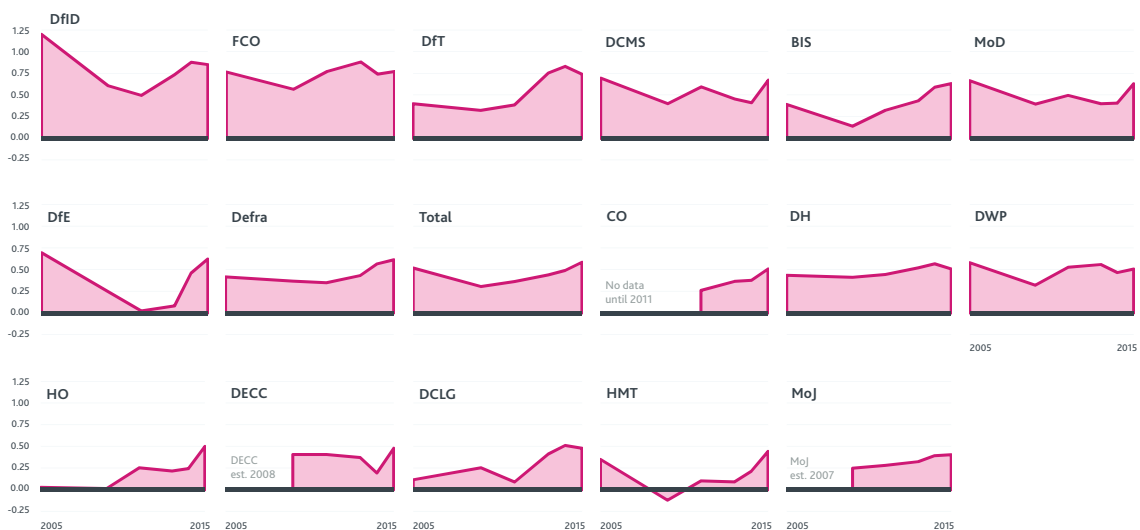


Source: Institute for Government analysis of ComRes MPs Panel Survey data, October 2015 (n=150).

Using one measure, in 2015, HMT and HO were considered the least responsive departments by MPs. These departments were considered fairly or very unresponsive to inquiries by 29% and 28% of MPs respectively. FCO was considered to be the most responsive department – 74% of MPs surveyed considered it either fairly or very responsive to their inquiries.

Using a scoring system of MPs' different responses – where 'very responsive' gets a score of +2, 'fairly responsive' +1, 'fairly unresponsive' -1 and 'very unresponsive' -2 – allows us to assess the divergence of opinion on particular departments, and the strength of MPs' feelings about their responsiveness to requests for information, over time.

'In dealing with these Government departments in the course of your work as an MP, how would you rate them in terms of their overall responsiveness to your inquiries (i.e. speed, accuracy and depth of response)?' - ComRes, 2005-2015

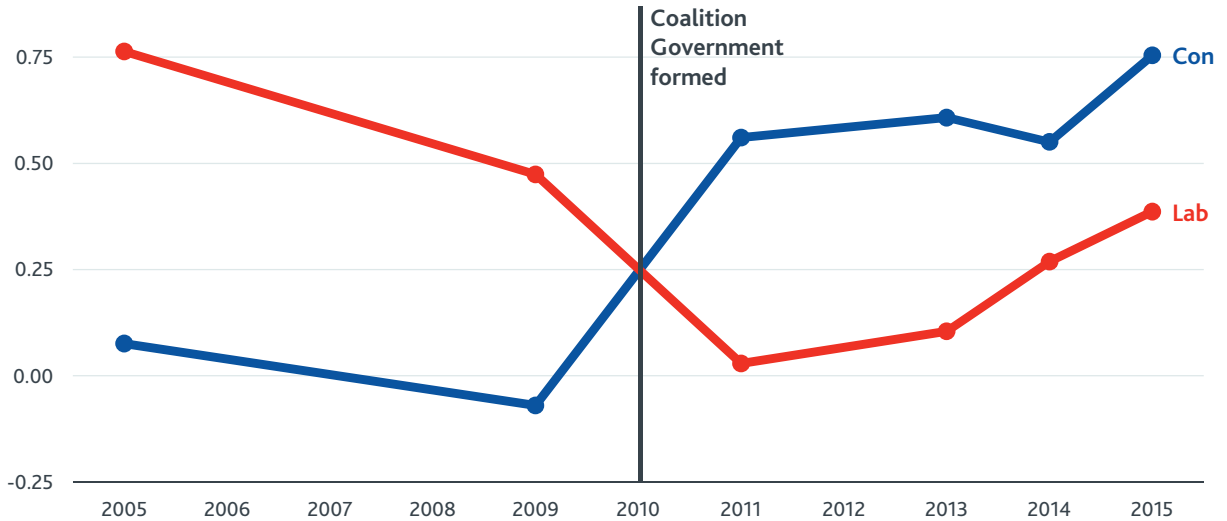


Source: Institute for Government analysis of ComRes MPs Panel Survey data (n=150). Average scores where 2 = "very responsive" and -2 = "very unresponsive".

On this measure, DfID, FCO and DfT were felt to be the most responsive departments in 2015. While all three have been relatively high-scoring since 2005 when this dataset begins, DfT has shown the largest improvements since 2005. The three lowest-ranking departments by this measure in 2015 were DCLG, HMT and MoJ.

Many departments have received relatively stable scores from MPs over time. Two exceptions to this are DfE, whose score fell sharply in 2011, but (as noted above) seems to have improved its responses to information requests since then; and HMT, which in 2011 became the only department to receive an overall negative rating from MPs.

'In dealing with these Government departments in the course of your work as an MP, how would you rate them in terms of their overall responsiveness to your inquiries (i.e. speed, accuracy and depth of response)?', by party - ComRes, 2005-2015



Source: Institute for Government analysis of ComRes MPs Panel Survey data (n=150). Average scores where 2 = "very responsive" and -2 = "very unresponsive".

One of the limitations of using perceptions data to assess departments' responsiveness is that the sample is of a highly partisan set of respondents – MPs. Those from parties who form the government of the day tend to rate departments' responsiveness much more highly than those from opposing parties. There were large shifts in Conservative and Labour MPs' opinions about departments' responsiveness after the Coalition Government assumed office.

Overall, Wales Office, DH, DfT provide the most timely responses, with MoJ bottom of the table.

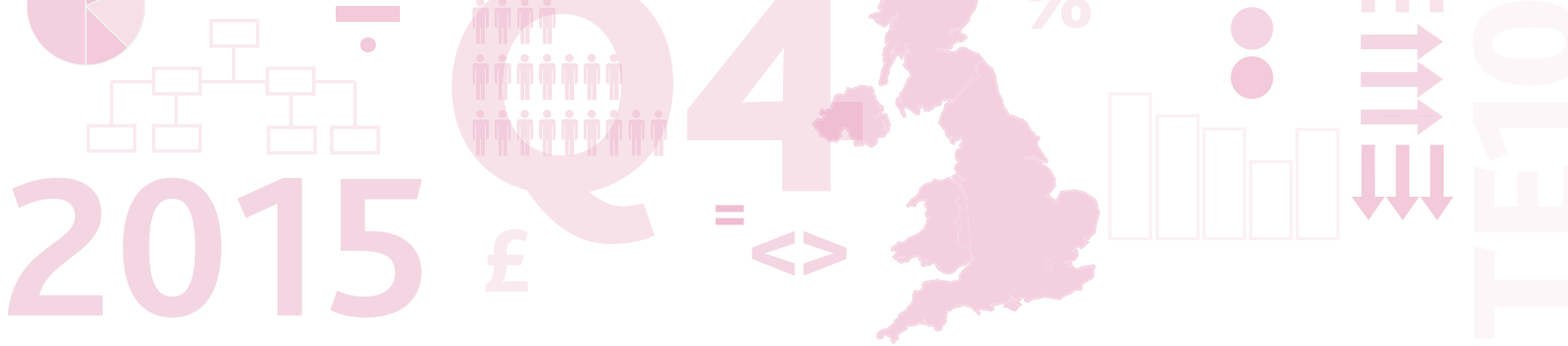
Overall timely response ranking: parliamentary questions, ministerial correspondence and Freedom of Information

Department	Parliamentary Questions	Rank	Ministerial Correspondence	Rank	Freedom of Information	Rank	Overall Rank
Wal	99.64%	2	97%	=1	98.53%	3	1
DH	98.92%	5	97%	=1	99.90%	1	2
DfT	99.79%	1	95%	3	96.20%	5	=3
DfID	99.39%	3	92%	4	98.73%	2	=3
BIS	97.24%	6	81%	8	96.87%	4	5
FCO	99.36%	4	88%	5	90.52%	11	6
DWP	95.26%	7	83%	7	91.54%	9	7
Scot	85.77%	12	71%	=10	92.72%	7	8
CO	92.59%	8	71%	=10	90.24%	12	9
DECC	86.67%	11	66%	15	92.99%	6	10
NIO	90.91%	10	68%	13	90.77%	10	11
DfE	92.13%	9	70%	12	90.06%	13	=12
DCMS	80.12%	14	85%	6	89.13%	14	=12
HMT	76.92%	15	52%	18	92.54%	8	14
MoD	81.04%	13	67%	14	86.32%	16	15
Defra	73.83%	16	72%	9	72.81%	19	16
HO	50.38%	18	66%	15	86.77%	15	17
DCLG	63.00%	17	42%	19	80.50%	17	18
MoJ	28.22%	19	64%	17	80.36%	18	19

Source: Institute for Government analysis of parliamentary questions, 2013-14; ministerial correspondence, 2014; FoI statistics, Q2 2014 - Q1 2015.

Taking a composite ranking across all three forms of information request, the top spots – Wales Office, DH and DfT – remain unchanged from last year. The Wales Office tops the chart as the department providing the highest percentage of timely responses to parliamentary questions, ministerial correspondence and FoI requests, although it does receive a relatively small number. DH and DfT, which round out the top three, both receive considerably more.

MoJ is bottom, having finished last in answering written parliamentary questions on time, third-last in answering ministerial correspondence within target, and second-last in answering FoI requests in time. DCLG is second from bottom – the same position as last year, with HO – which was bottom of the table last year – rising two places to third from bottom position.



14. Measuring performance

Whitehall has a number of mechanisms for tracking its performance against its outputs (those things that are within Whitehall departments' control to do or produce). Under the Coalition, these included the Structural Reform Plans (a list of priority actions for each department), the Government Major Projects Portfolio (large projects on the Government's books, monitored by the Major Projects Authority) and Permanent Secretary Objectives.

Structural Reform Plans (SRPs) outlined priority actions for each department – such as delivering two million apprenticeships in BIS, and introducing the Care Act 2014 – along with timelines for delivery and the current status of each action. Across government, about 75% of actions have consistently been completed on time, with some variation between departments. However, the SRP framework has been of limited use for judging performance or tracking progress of individual reforms, and there are plans to replace it with new Single Departmental Plans.

The Major Projects Authority (MPA), established as part of the Cabinet Office in 2011, assesses the delivery confidence – the likelihood of successful delivery – of nearly 200 major projects across government. Examples include opening rehabilitation up to the market (MoJ), Crossrail (DfT), Universal Credit (DWP) and defence projects (MoD). The confidence ratings of those projects that have been monitored since 2013 have improved, although there are more red and amber/red ratings across the whole portfolio in 2015 (25%) than in 2014 or 2013 because of new projects entering the portfolio.

Since they were first published in 2013, Permanent Secretary Objectives (PSOs) have shown real improvement in format, timeliness and usefulness in assessing the performance of individual permanent secretaries. However, when compared against other government datasets – major projects ratings, engagement scores and financial outturn – it is clear that they are not being consistently set with an eye on other measures of departmental performance.

About the data

Structural Reform Plans were introduced by the Coalition in November 2010 to track completion of actions and reforms, as part of wider departmental Business Plans. They were refreshed in May 2011, May 2012 and June 2013. We have looked at data, published on the Number 10 Transparency website, from the spring (April/May) of each year from 2011 to 2015.¹

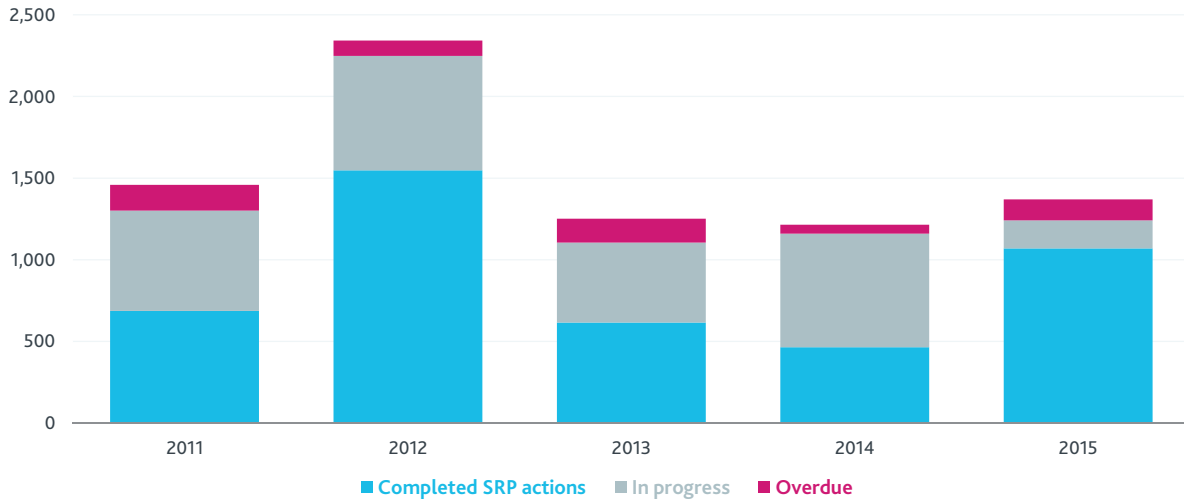
Major Projects Authority annual reports publish red/amber/green (RAG) ratings for nearly 200 major projects across government. Red means successful delivery appears to be unachievable, amber/red that it is in doubt, amber that it is feasible but with significant issues, amber/green that it appears probable, and green that it is on time and on budget and of high quality. The MPA has published three annual reports, in May 2013, May 2014 and June 2015, with data as of the preceding September.²

Permanent Secretary Objectives form the basis of performance management for the most senior civil service officials in Whitehall. Although they have existed for many years, they were first published for 2012–13. Permanent secretaries have an end-of-year review with either the Cabinet Secretary or the Head of the Civil Service each spring – 25% are placed in the top category for performance, 65% in the middle and 10% in the lowest. The top 10% receive a bonus of £17,500.³ The objectives for 2015–16 have not yet been published – we use the 2014–15 objectives. We assess the objectives using other government datasets – the MPA annual report, the Civil Service People Survey engagement scores (see chapter 7 on staff engagement scores), and the RDEL outturn figures (see chapter 3 on managing government finances).

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At the time of the election, the Structural Reform Plans contained 1,370 actions – 301 were not completed. DCLG missed none of its deadlines; HMRC missed 80%.

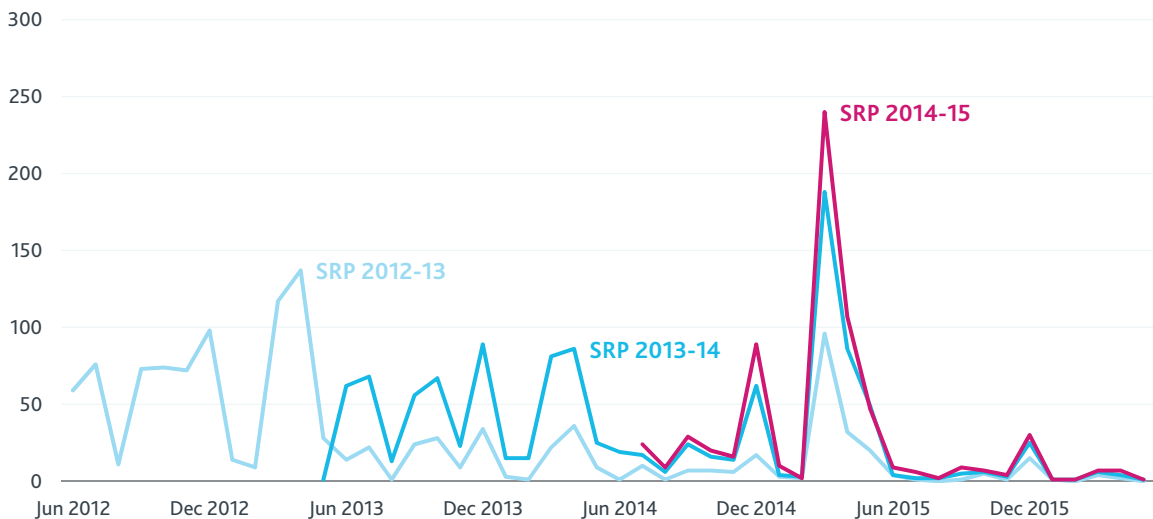
Total and complete actions in Structural Reform Plans, prior to each major refresh and annually thereafter



Source: Institute for Government analysis of SRP data API as of 5 May 2011, 13 April 2012, 18 April 2013, 27 April 2014 and 8 May 2015.

Structural Reform Plans contained key actions and milestones for each department, according to Coalition reform priorities. At the time of the 2015 general election, there were 1,370 actions remaining in the SRPs across government. A total of 301 had not been marked as complete; of those, 129 were overdue.

Due dates for Structural Reform Plan actions, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of SRP data API as of 29 May 2013, 25 July 2014 and 8 May 2015.

There was a large spike in actions due to be completed immediately before Parliament dissolved at the end of March 2015. As the end of the parliament drew closer, this spike got bigger. According to data from May 2015, most of the 240 actions due to be completed in that month were completed early or on time: 194 (81%). The remaining 46 were still incomplete at the time of the general election.

Percentage of Structural Reform Plan deadlines missed by department, ranked by % missed in 2014-15

Department	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Rank change since 2013-14
DCLG	17%	22%	0%	+8
DfID	4%	3%	3%	-1
DWP	33%	30%	4%	+10
BIS	6%	13%	8%	-1
DfE	23%	14%	9%	-1
DECC	19%	32%	14%	+8
Defra	23%	32%	14%	+8
DH	30%	34%	22%	+8
HMT	39%	12%	22%	-7
DCMS	34%	50%	22%	+7
FCO	39%	20%	27%	-4
CO	22%	23%	28%	-1
MoD	9%	15%	34%	-7
HO	22%	22%	37%	-6
Moj	35%	23%	41%	-5
DfT	35%	25%	58%	-4
HMRC	38%	14%	80%	-12

Source: Institute for Government analysis of SRP data API as of 29 May 2013, 25 July 2014 and 8 May 2015.

In 2014–15, 77% of the total actions that were due were completed on time – continuing the trend of previous years when the figure hovered around 75%. There is a wide variation between departments in how many of their actions were completed on time: DCLG did not miss a single deadline in 2014–15, while HMRC apparently missed 80%. Some departments remained consistently good (DfID, BIS) or less good (CO, DfT), but in most cases, completion rates changed over the course of the parliament. Between 2013–14 and 2014–15, DWP moved up from 13th to third place, while HMRC – which missed only 14% of its deadlines in 2013–14 – moved from fifth to last place.⁴

This data should be interpreted carefully. The workload of departments varies significantly, as does the level of detail contained within different actions: big projects might count as one action in one department's SRP, but be split into several in another's. Some departments appear to have removed actions after they were completed, shrinking the proportion of completed actions. In previous years some departments were timelier than others in updating their reports; as the Business Plans ran out of steam towards the end of the parliament, some completed actions may have gone unrecorded.

In our 2011 report *See-through Whitehall*, we outlined the weaknesses of the initially promising SRP system.⁵ The plan to make very clear the actions that the department was going to undertake, with clear deadlines, was a promising step forward for government transparency and accountability to the public. However, its shortcomings – the inconsistency between departments, and their lack of responsiveness to internal changes of direction – limited its usefulness. As they have not been refreshed since 2013, the SRPs might bear little relation to activity within departments towards the end of the parliament. Also – as discussed in the Institute's 2015 report *Deep Impact? How government departments measured their impact, 2010–15* and chapter 15 of this report – the actions were often not related to the measures departments were using to assess their impact.⁶

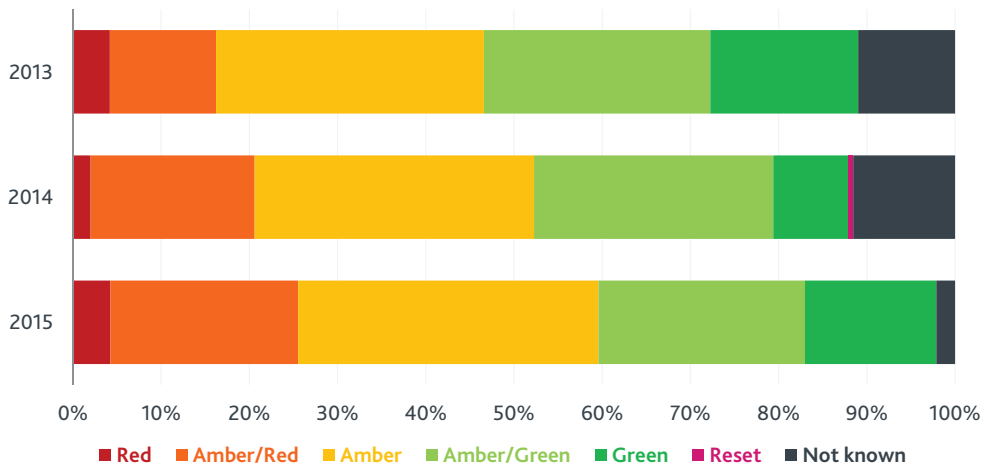
We now know that the Business Plans – including the SRPs – will be replaced by a new reporting document, called the Single Departmental Plan (SDP). Currently, little is known about its content. John Manzoni, Head of the Civil Service, has written:

[W]e are bringing together efficiency, spending round and activity plans into the SDP. Crucially, since SDPs are completely aligned with the Spending Review, they will enable us to bring together inputs (especially funding) with outputs – thus making clear the trade-offs and choices ... They will also identify where departments and the cross-departmental functions need to work together to deliver the required outcomes.⁷

Whitehall Monitor will monitor the Single Departmental Plans when they are released.

The Major Projects Authority’s confidence in the delivery of government major projects has improved over time.

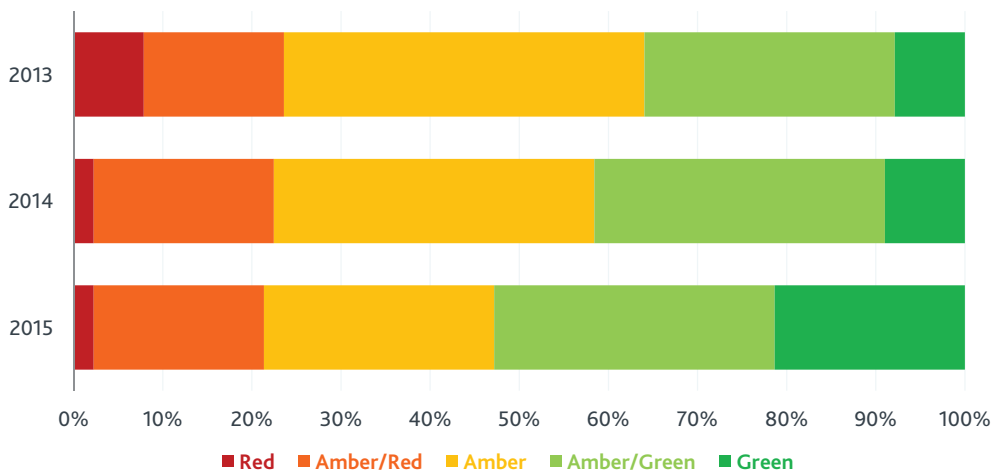
RAG rating of all projects in Government Major Projects Portfolio, 2013-15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Major Projects Authority annual reports, 2013-2015. Data in each report as of previous September.

The Major Projects Authority publishes a delivery confidence RAG rating for each major project across government, of which there are 188 in 2015. A quarter of major projects are now rated red or amber/red, up from 20% in 2014, and 16% in 2013. This is mainly driven by new projects entering the portfolio at the lower end of the confidence scale: 29 out of 38 new projects were rated amber, amber/red or red. The proportion of projects rated green or amber/green has also risen slightly; this across-the-board increase is possible because fewer projects are exempt from publishing their rating.

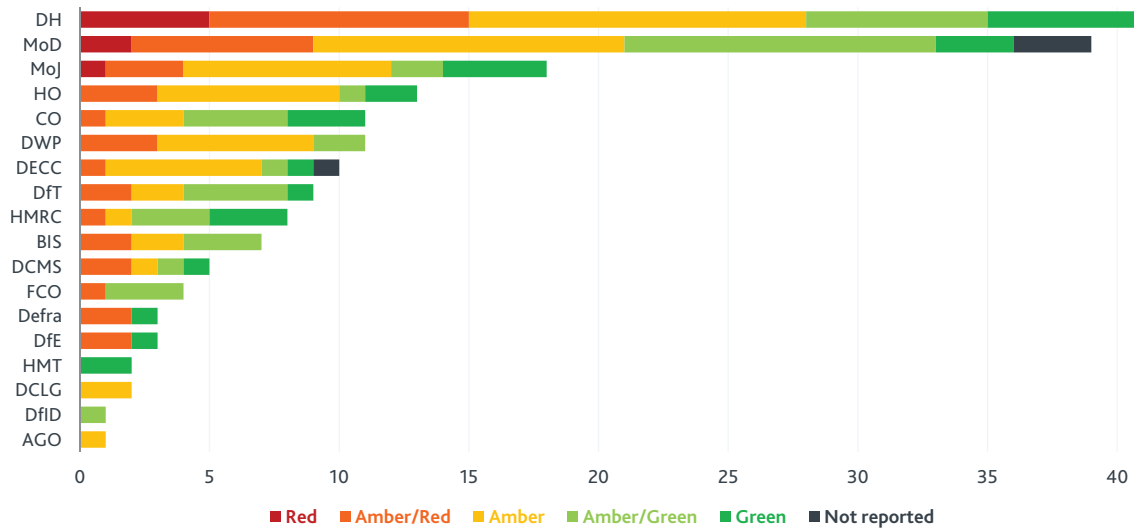
RAG rating of projects rated in all three Major Projects Authority annual reports, 2013-15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Major Projects Authority annual reports, 2013-2015. Data in each report as of previous September.

New projects enter the portfolio each year, and others leave (as they are completed, move to 'business as usual' or are 're-scoped'): 39 projects exited in 2014, and 49 in 2015. Of the 113 projects in the portfolio since the first MPA report, 89 have been given RAG ratings in all three years. The number rated green or amber/green has increased every year; in 2015, 19 are green, up from eight the year before. This suggests (as you would expect) that delivery confidence tends to increase over a project’s lifetime. Although it would be better to see more of these projects head towards green, the fact that almost 50% still have an amber rating or lower indicates that the MPA’s assessments can be considered realistic.

Number of projects and their RAG rating by departmental group, Major Projects Authority annual report 2015

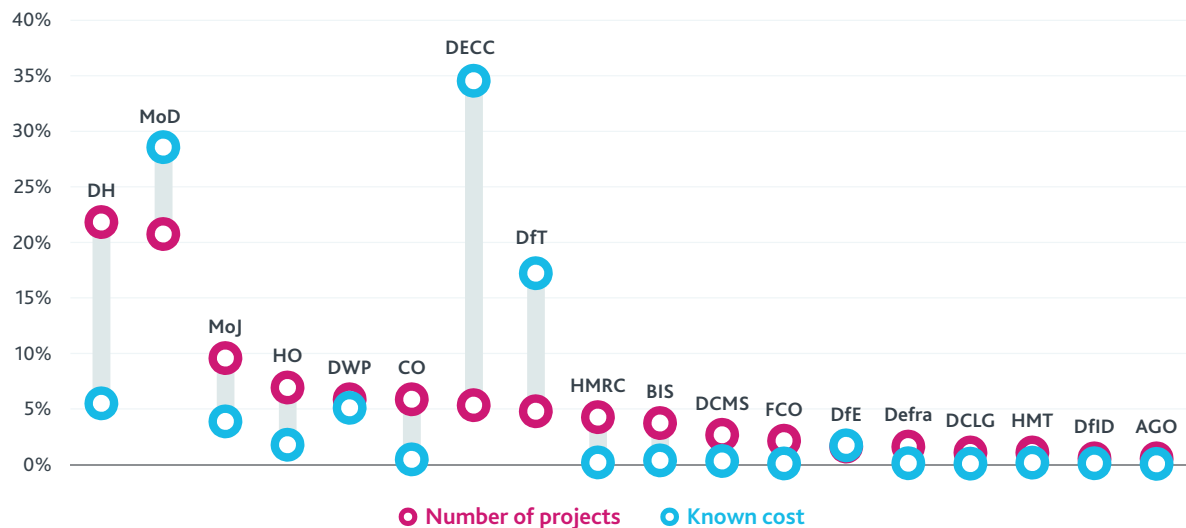


Source: Institute for Government analysis of Major Projects Authority annual report 2015. Data as of September 2014.

Major projects are not spread equally across Whitehall departments. Between them, DH and the MoD are responsible for 40% of the entire MPA portfolio. DH’s portfolio has been swelled by 14 new projects to 41 this year, overtaking MoD (39), which had previously been responsible for the most projects. The majority of departments have fewer than ten projects in the major projects portfolio.

All of the red-rated projects are held by the three departments with the most projects in the portfolio, including the data programme at DH, the Army Basing Programme at MoD, and an ICT project at the National Offender Management Service (under MoJ).

Percentage of all government major projects and known whole-life cost held by each departmental group, 2015

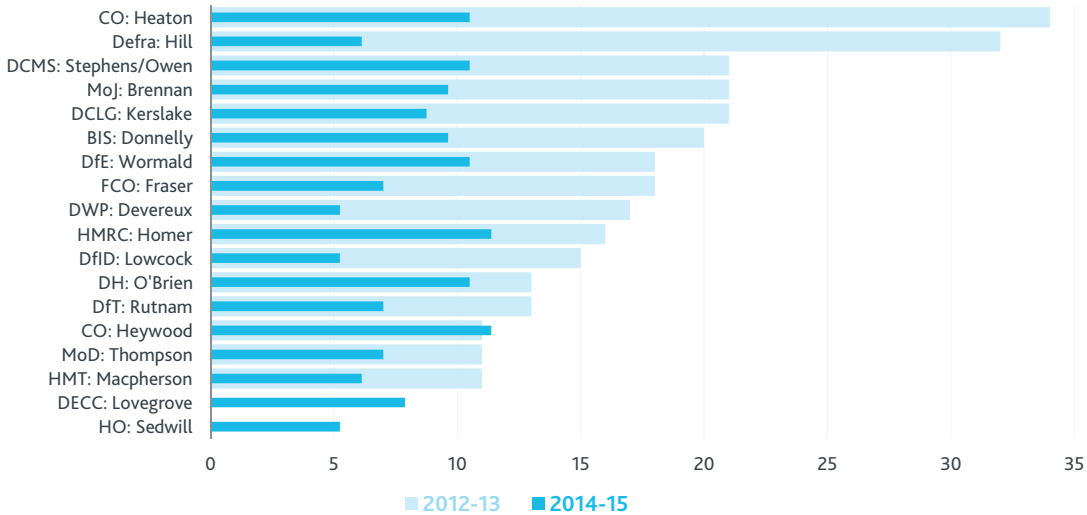


Source: Institute for Government analysis of Major Projects Authority annual report 2015. Data as of September 2014.

The number of major projects falls unevenly across departments, but so too does the cost. DECC is responsible for only 5% of the projects in the MPA portfolio (10), but 35% of the cost (£169bn). DfT also has a smaller number (nine) of more expensive projects (£84bn, 17% of the total) compared with most departments. By contrast, almost a quarter of all the major projects are in DH, but they amount to only 6% of the known total MPA cost. MoD is responsible for both the second-highest number of projects and the second-highest known cost.

Permanent Secretary Objectives became more measurable and usable over the parliament.

Number of Permanent Secretary Objectives by department, 2012-13 and 2014-15

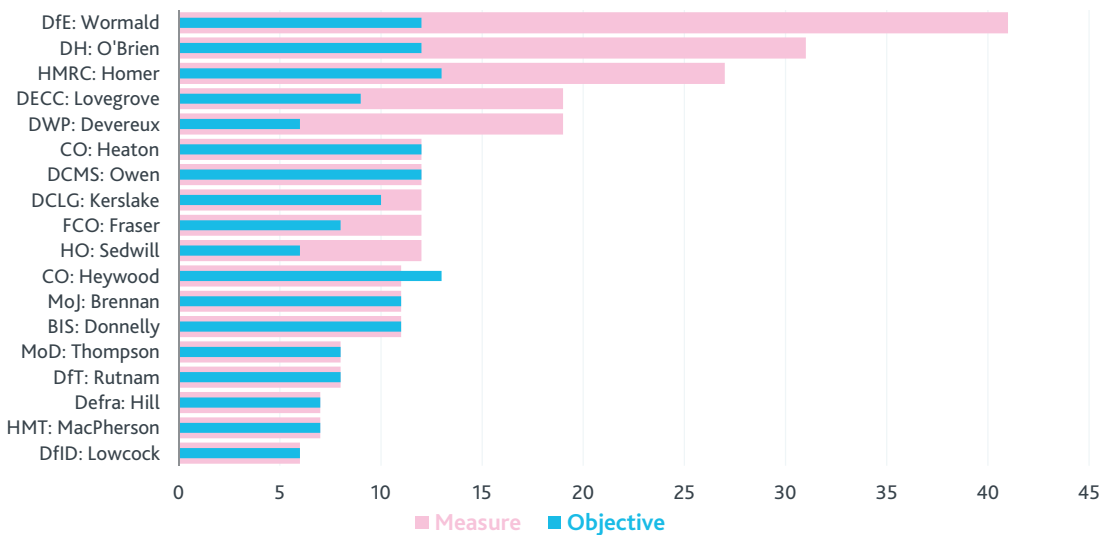


Source: Institute for Government analysis of Permanent Secretary Objectives, 2012-13 and 2014-15.

Permanent Secretary Objectives (PSOs) – the measures against which the performance of a department’s most senior civil servant is assessed – were published for the first time in 2012. This was a step forward for accountability, but problems were evident: PSOs were published midway through the year they applied to, were too numerous – Richard Heaton (CO) had 36; the average was 18 – had no clear overarching priorities, and were often missing measures and milestones.

By 2014–15, there had been improvements on all of these fronts. Permanent secretaries had a more manageable number of objectives: between six and 13 each, with an average of nine.

Number of Permanent Secretary Objectives and Measures, 2014-15



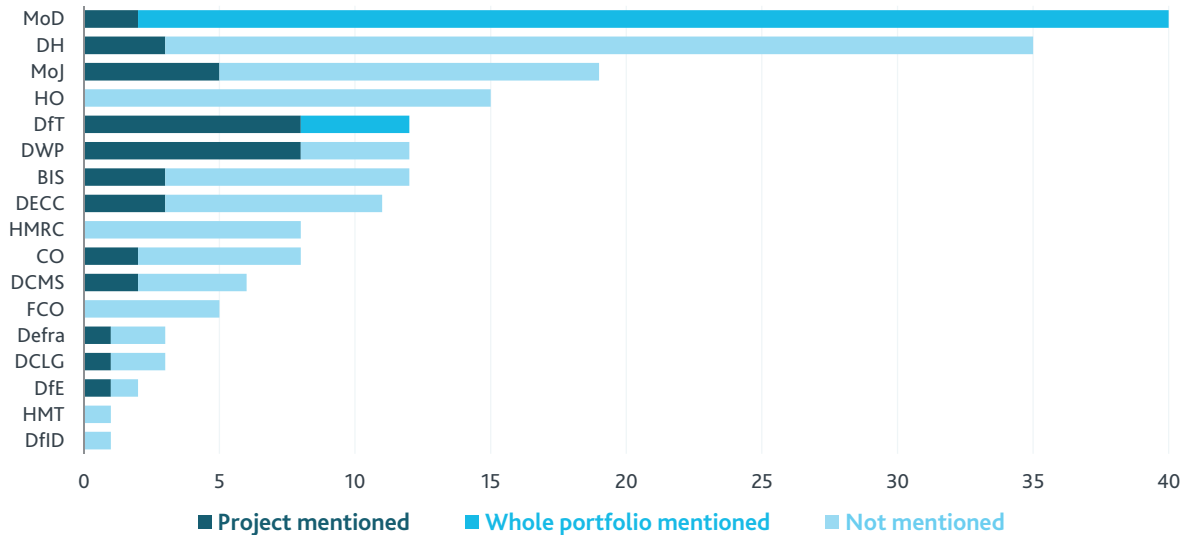
Source: Institute for Government analysis of Permanent Secretary Objectives, 2014-15.

The 2014–15 objectives also included much clearer and more consistent measurements, with almost every objective listed with a corresponding measure. However, there was still some inconsistency in how these were created and used, with some departments shoehorning lots of measures into fewer objectives: Chris Wormald (DfE) had far more measures (41) than objectives (12), many of which resemble separate objectives in other permanent secretaries’ lists. Sir Jeremy Heywood – the Cabinet Secretary – is the only permanent secretary with more objectives than measures.

But it is not always clear how Permanent Secretary Objectives link up to other performance measures.

Despite improvements, there are still questions about the content of the objectives; it is unclear how they are chosen and how they relate to a department’s other priorities. We examined four common themes in the PSOs – major projects, staff engagement, leadership and spending – to see if there was any correlation between an objective appearing there and a department’s performance in the area.

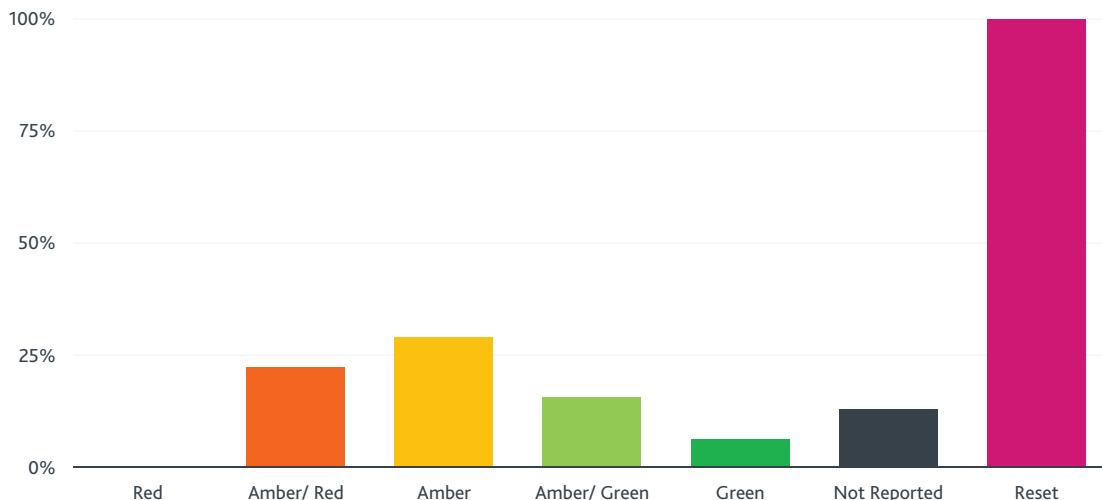
Government Major Projects mentioned in the Permanent Secretary Objectives (including measures), 2014-15



Source: Institute for Government analysis of MPA annual report 2014 and Permanent Secretary Objectives 2014-15.

In some cases, permanent secretaries have been given specific responsibility for the delivery of one or more of their department’s major projects. Twelve departments’ PSOs referred to major projects from the 2014 MPA report. In two sets (Jon Thompson at MoD, Philip Rutnam at DfT), oversight of the department’s whole major projects portfolio was cited (as a measure and an objective respectively).

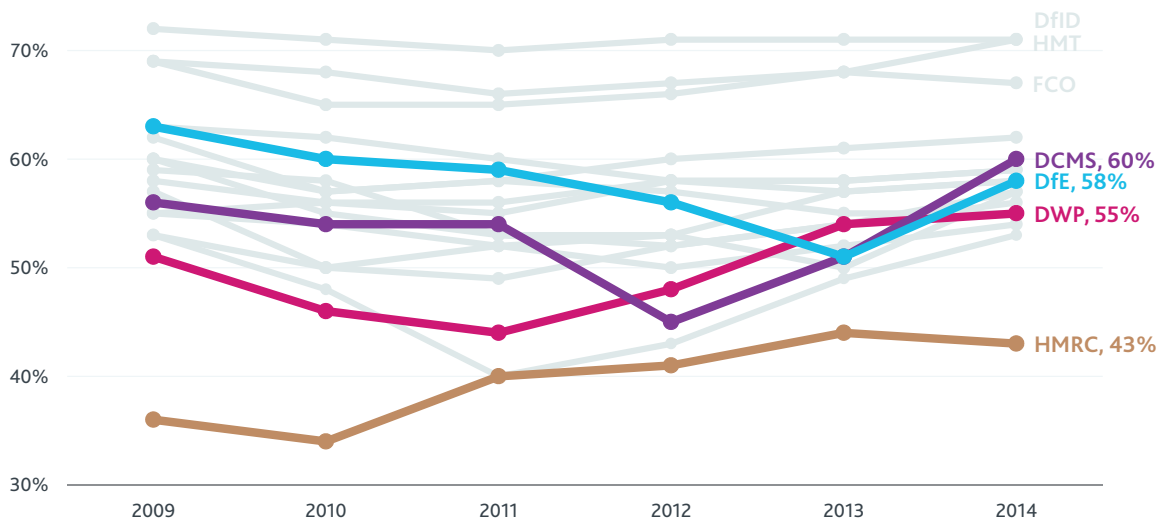
Percentage of Major Projects (2014) mentioned in Permanent Secretary Objectives, by RAG



Source: Institute for Government analysis of MPA annual report 2014 and Permanent Secretary Objectives 2014-15.

None of the four red-rated projects in the 2014 MPA annual report were mentioned in the PSOs. However, Universal Credit – the DWP project that was ‘reset’ in 2014 – was mentioned in Robert Devereux’s objectives. One green-rated project (out of 16) – the implementation of legal aid reforms – was mentioned in Dame Ursula Brennan’s objectives at MoJ.

Civil Service Engagement Scores 2009-2015: departments whose PSOs mention staff engagement highlighted

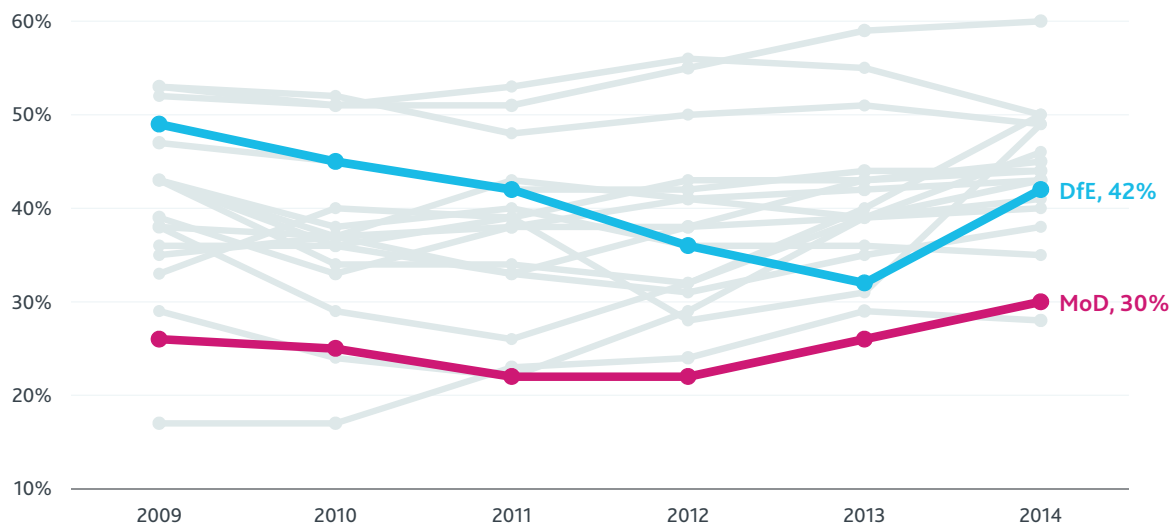


Source: Institute for Government analysis of Civil Service People Survey, 2009-14.

Four departments’ PSOs mention staff engagement as objectives or measures:

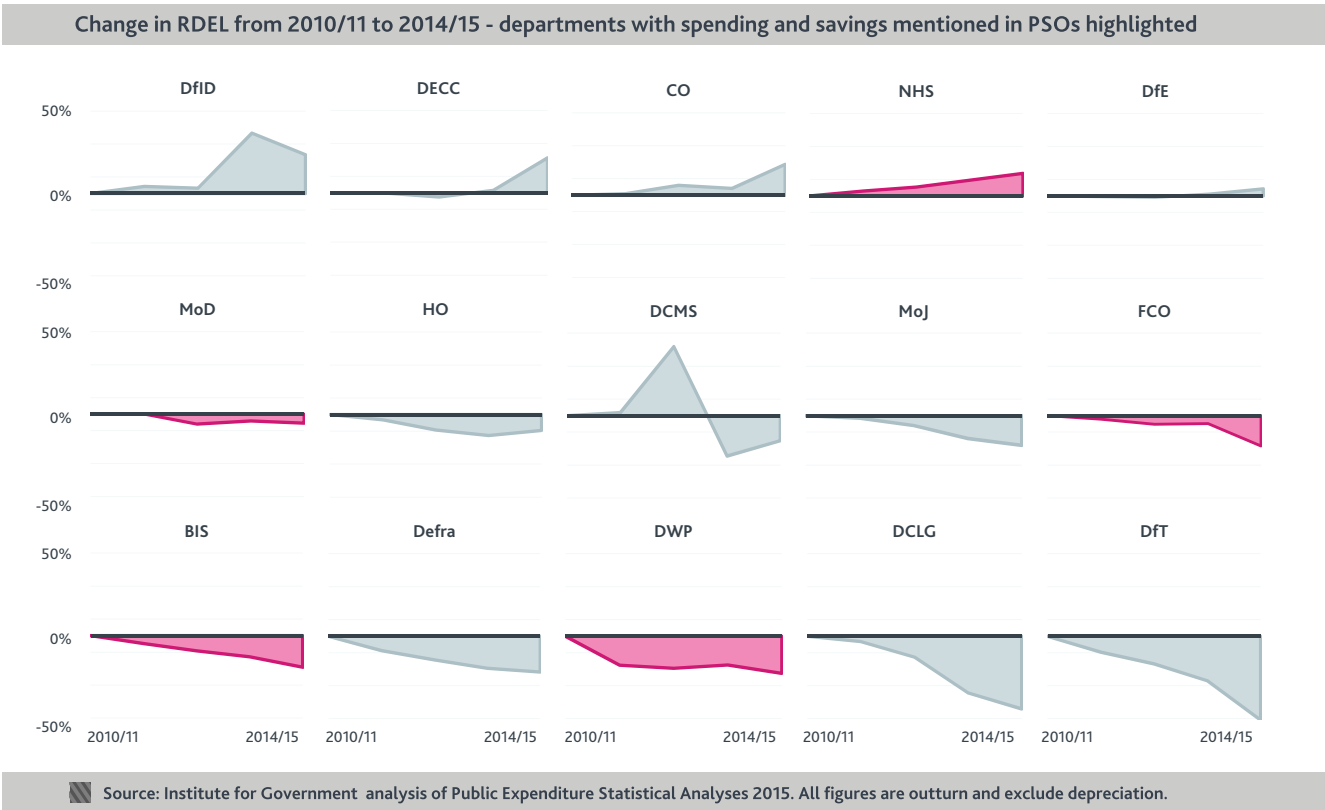
- At HMRC, Lin Homer’s objective to narrow the gap between HMRC and the rest of the Civil Service may have been driven by the data; HMRC has had the lowest score every year. Although it remains the lowest (43%), it has risen from 34% in 2010. But the gap with other departments has widened in the past year, as HMRC fell by one point and others improved.
- DfE and DCMS scores fell (DCMS over a single year, DfE over every year since 2009), which may have prompted the objective. Both made substantial improvements in 2014.
- DWP’s score fell seven points between 2009 and 2011 (although DH fell by seven, MoD by six, and DCLG by 13 over the same period).

Civil Service Engagement Scores – ‘Leadership and management’ theme - 2009-2015: Departments whose PSOs mention leadership and management highlighted



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Civil Service People Survey, 2009-14.

The ‘leadership and managing change’ theme of the Civil Service People Survey was cited as a measure in two sets of PSOs: at DfE, where there was a continuous drop between 2009 and 2013 before a recovery in 2014, and at MoD, whose score is among the lowest in the Civil Service, although it has improved since 2012. Additionally, BIS’s PSOs included the ‘my manager’ score from the People Survey as a measure of improved management capability; it hovered around 66% between 2009 and 2012, climbing to 68% in 2014. While this is among the lowest in Whitehall, it is actually one point above the whole civil service score for this theme.



Five departments’ PSOs contain references to controlling spending, or making efficiency savings: FCO, MoD, BIS, DH and DWP. All but one of these had their resource DEL budget cut in the last parliament. In 2014/15, spending was down 18% on 2010 in FCO, 19% in BIS and 22% in DWP.

Dame Una O’Brien, Permanent Secretary at DH, has an objective to keep expenditure ‘under control’ and ensure ‘sustainability for the future’. RDEL outturn in the NHS – for which O’Brien is ultimately accountable – went up in the last parliament, and the Conservative Government has pledged to protect its budget over the next five years. However, financial pressures on the NHS in the coming years will be acute, with an ageing population and rising incidence of long-term health problems.⁸

Spending cuts will continue to be an important feature of government business in the next parliament: up to 40% cuts for all departments except DfID, DfE and DH. Holding permanent secretaries to account for achieving these savings, while delivering on political priorities and ensuring business as usual can continue, will be critical.

Although we can see places where the PSOs correlate with other departmental performance measures, there is currently no systematic relationship between the metrics departments have, and the objectives their leadership are given. We hope that the PSOs will continue to develop into an effective performance management tool, with objectives that are clearly aligned to the priorities of the department, and measures that can be used by the public to assess progress. At the same time, the permanent secretaries (along with ministers, other senior civil servants and non-executive directors) will need good management information to gain an accurate picture of how the reductions are proceeding and how the department is faring. The Single Departmental Plans offer a new opportunity to improve the way performance in Whitehall is measured.

Outcomes

Measuring the impact of government policies and reforms is difficult. However, that does not excuse the inadequacy of impact indicators, the cross-government measures of impact under the Coalition. They lacked benchmarks and baselines that would have made them useful, did not always join up with the actions departments were taking, were difficult for the public to use and understand, and fell into disuse by departments and the centre of government.

Impact indicators – part of the Business Plans developed by every department, which also included the Structural Reform Plans covered in chapter 14 on measuring performance – were the latest in a long line of cross-government performance initiatives, and a deliberate break with the targets and Public Service Agreements of the preceding Labour government. They included everything from new housing starts (DCLG) to reoffending rates (MoJ).

More indicators headed in the desired direction for some departments than others (notably DECC, where all indicators headed the right way), but more meaningful analysis is impossible; some data isn't available, and there are no benchmarks or baselines to truly understand departments' impact. Most importantly, the data that is available has not been used to hold government performance to account or drive improvement by the public, Parliament, departments or the centre of government.

Other proxies for impact include public perceptions, and international comparisons and indices. The former suggests that the public thinks government could be improved; that there is quite a gap between Scottish perceptions of the government in London and in Edinburgh (with a preference for the latter); and that the Coalition was viewed as handling the economy better than it did health or immigration. International indices – which should be treated with some caution – present a mixed picture. The UK consistently ranks alongside its G7 counterparts in measures of government effectiveness and efficiency. It scores worse on migration policy, better on health, and has either improved or declined on the economy, depending on which study you use – which rather illustrates the limitations of such measures.





15. How government measures its impact

Measuring the difference that government departments make in the real world is difficult. Under the Coalition, this wasn't made easier by the use of impact indicators, which were flawed and clearly not used by departments to improve performance.

UK governments have used a succession of ways to measure and manage their performance. In 2010, the Coalition introduced Business Plans for each department. Although these deliberately focused on the actions a department could take (see chapter 14 on Structural Reform Plans) they also included impact indicators. These were designed 'to help the public to judge whether [departments'] policies and reforms are having the effect they want', giving information such as how many people were on particular types of benefit (DWP) and the proportion of trains running on time (DfT).

The number of indicators varied between departments, ranging from 28 (DfE) to six (MoD). Departments also differed in terms of positive results (for example, fewer people on benefits, more trains running on time) since 2010, from DECC (all indicators heading in the right direction) to MoJ and MoD (more than 40% in the wrong direction).

The indicators are difficult to use for performance measurement. Comparable data was unavailable for a number of them. The lack of benchmarks and baselines meant we had to resort to a simple RAG analysis. Many indicators did not connect to the actions in departments' Structural Reform Plans. Data was often difficult to find (if published at all), not published in an open format and not explained by departments. The public would struggle to find and use the data; many departments and the centre of government stopped using the indicators; and Parliament never started. An examination of the three policy areas that top the public's list of concerns, according to Ipsos MORI and YouGov – immigration, health and the economy – underlines some of the problems.

The planned introduction of Single Departmental Plans following the Spending Review in November 2015 provides an opportunity to address these issues.

About the data

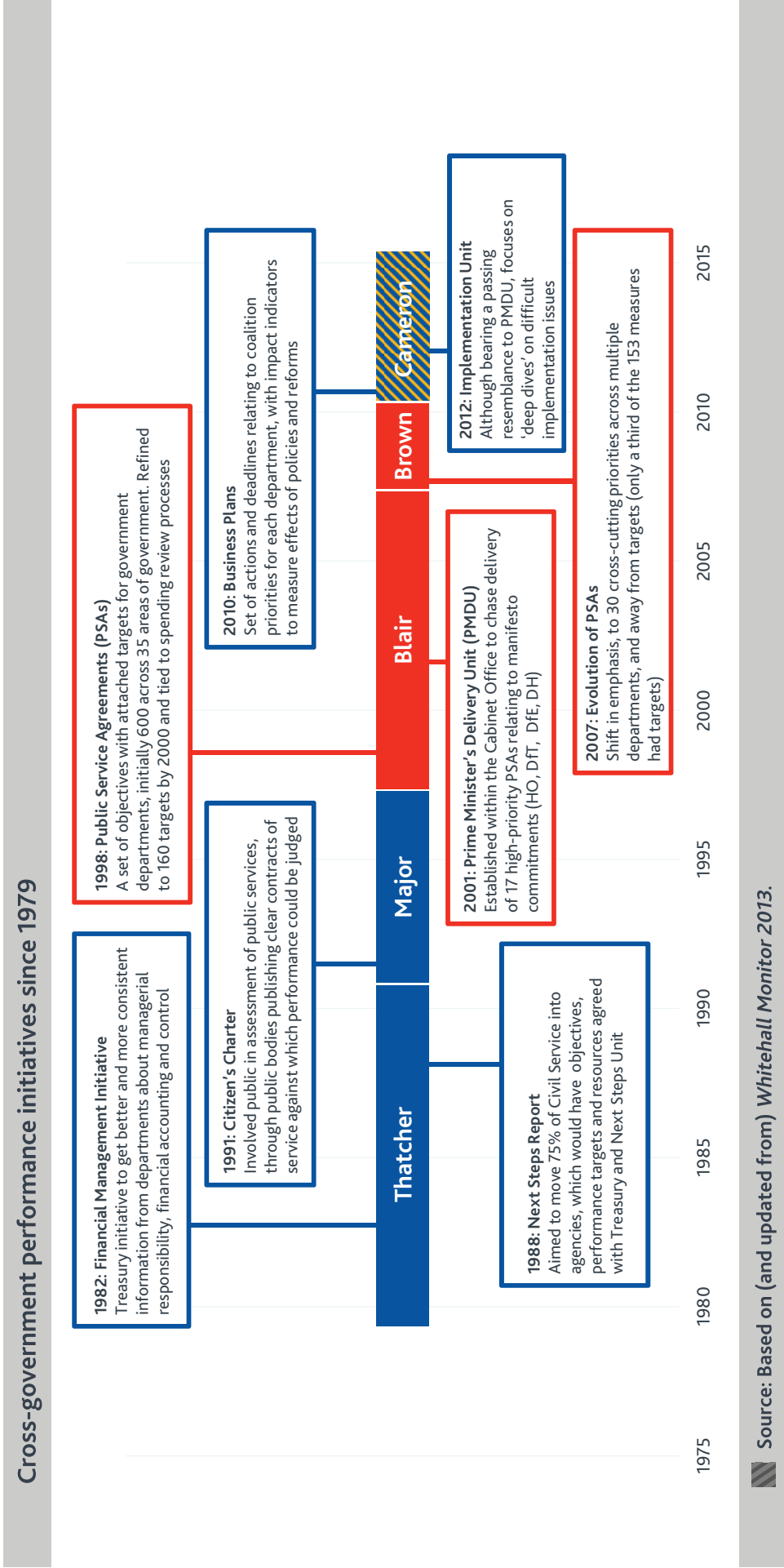
The **impact indicators** formed part of departments' Business Plans, first published in November 2010 and refreshed in May 2011, May 2012 and June 2013. We took the most recent set available on the Number 10 Transparency website.¹

Our analysis, for our report *Deep Impact? How government departments measured their impact, 2010-15*,² involved three main tasks (full methodological details can be found in the annex):

- On which direction the indicators have moved in since 2010, we tried to track down the data behind each impact indicator. We applied a RAG rating of green where a score had moved in the desired direction, amber where it was the same, red where it had moved in the wrong direction, and dark grey where no comparable data was available.
- On transparency and accessibility, we attempted to access the indicators via the Number 10 Transparency website. Each indicator was then scored 0 or 1 against four criteria: whether we could find the current score, whether the data was available in an open format, whether it was presented in an easily understandable form, and if the score could be found in the department's annual report laid before Parliament.
- On the relationship between the indicators and actions in the Structural Reform Plans, we looked at each indicator and awarded a green rating where there were several actions with a direct link to it, amber/green where there was one action with a direct link, amber where there were several actions with an indirect link, amber/red where there was one action with an indirect or tenuous link, and red where there were no actions relating to it.

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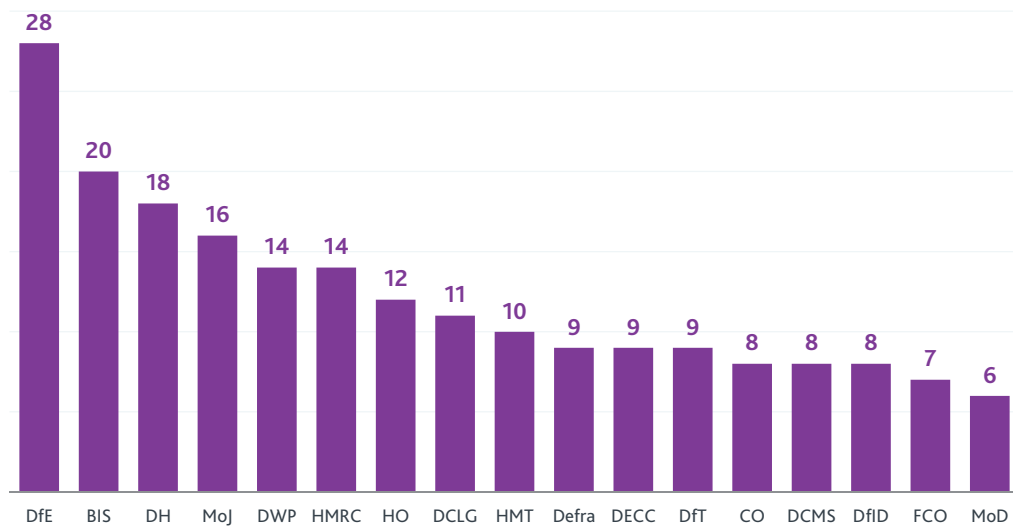
Impact indicators were part of Business Plans, the latest initiative to measure cross-government performance.



The Coalition introduced Business Plans in 2010. As we saw in the previous chapter, 'Measuring performance', these focused on actions or administrative steps departments could take – 'outputs' within their control – as part of a Structural Reform Plan. This was in part a reaction to Labour's Public Service Agreements, which had set targets for the effects the government wanted to have in the real world – 'outcomes' or impact.

However, the Business Plans also included a series of impact indicators, designed 'to help the public to judge whether [departments'] policies and reforms are having the effect they want'.³ Examples included how many people are on particular types of benefit (DWP), reoffending rates (MoJ), the proportion of trains running on time (DfT) and net migration to the UK (HO). The number of indicators varied between department, with DfE having the most (28) and MoD the fewest (six).

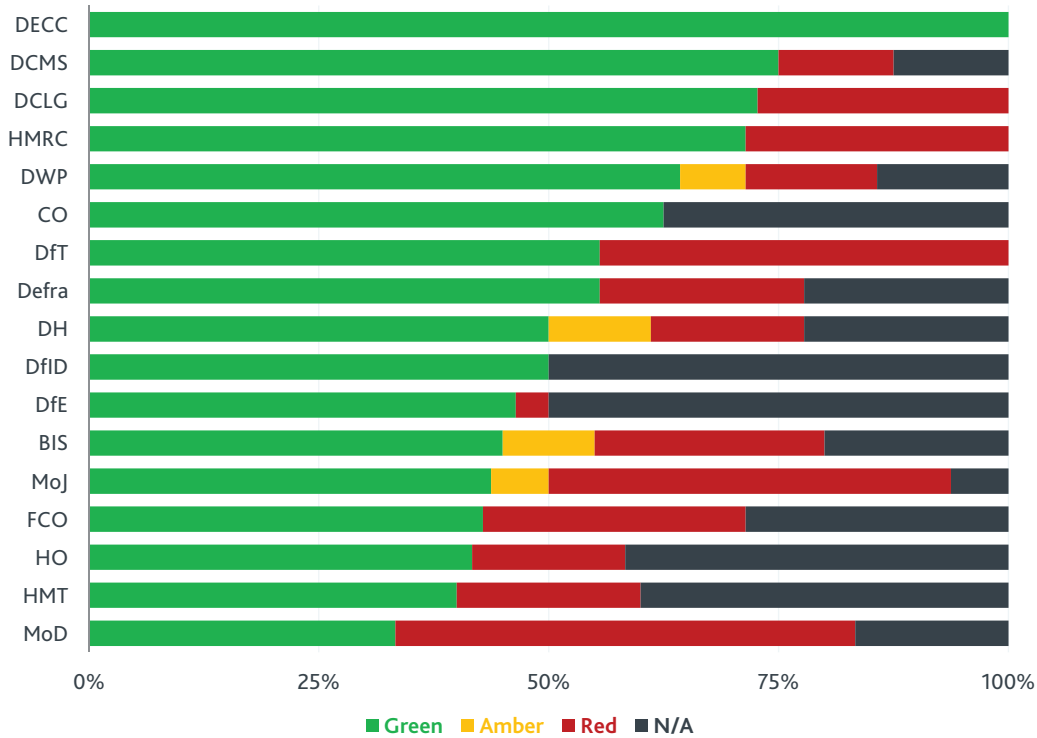
Number of impact indicators by department



Source: Institute for Government analysis of impact indicators, via transparency.number10.gov.uk.

Performance against the indicators varied – all of DECC’s moved in the right direction, while seven departments had under 50% go the right way.

Movement in impact indicators, 2010 to 2015



Source: Institute for Government analysis of impact indicators - multiple sources, *Whitehall Monitor: Deep Impact?* (2015).

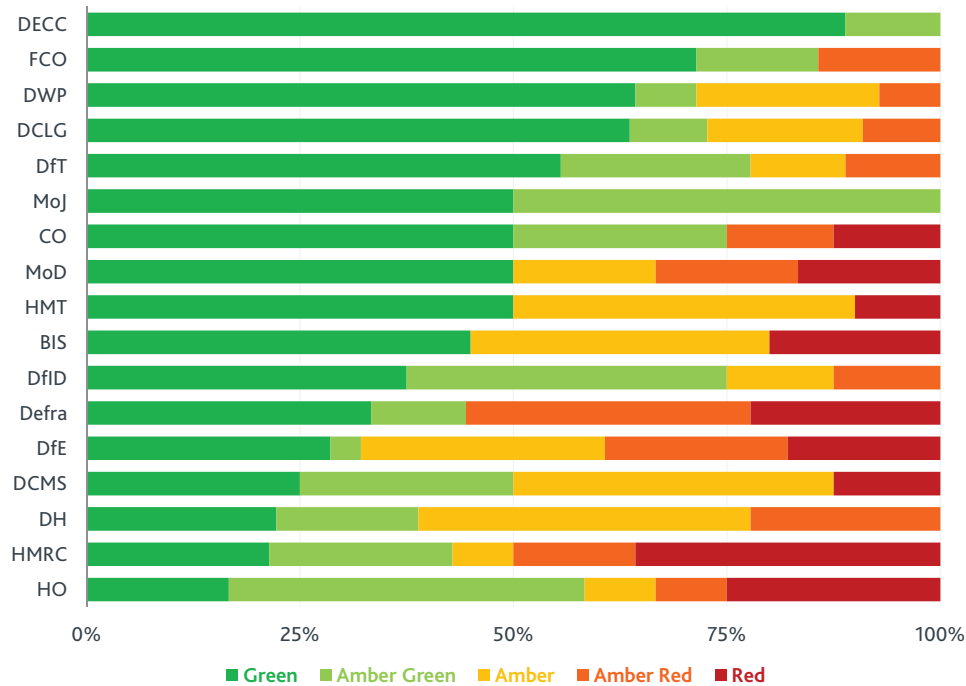
All of DECC’s impact indicators – which ranged from lowering the number of households in fuel poverty to increasing the proportion of UK energy supply from low-carbon sources – headed in the right direction over the period 2010–15. The indicators for DCMS also scored well, with only the proportion of children playing competitive sport declining.

However, other departments’ indicators did not score so well. At MoD and MoJ, more than 40% of indicators headed in the wrong direction, including a falling percentage of deployable personnel and falling service personnel satisfaction at MoD, and rising reoffending rates at MoJ.

Seven departments saw improvements in fewer than 50% of their indicators – DfE, BIS, FCO, HO and HMT as well as MoJ and MoD. But this figure highlights one of the bigger problems – the lack of comparable data in many cases (50% at DfID and DfE), meaning we couldn’t assess all indicators. We had to resort to a relatively simplistic analysis, of whether indicators had improved, declined or remained the same, because of the lack of benchmarks, baselines or counterfactuals to properly assess what the numbers mean.

But the indicators were often not linked to the actions departments had committed to, difficult to access and understand, and not used by departments.

Strength of link between impact indicators and actions listed in Structural Reform Plans



Source: Institute for Government analysis of impact indicators and Structural Reform Plan actions, *Whitehall Monitor: Deep Impact?* (2015).

There were other problems with the impact indicators. Since they were designed to 'help the public to judge' the effect of policies and reforms, we attempted to link each indicator with the actions departments had committed to undertake in their Structural Reform Plans. While 40% of indicators across government did link back to a series of actions (green), a further 40% had only indirect links to several actions (amber), a tenuous link to one action (amber/red) or no link at all to any action (red). This was true of 70% of DfE's actions.

The disconnection between the actions departments committed to and the indicators designed to measure their effects is understandable, given that the indicators were 'the best available data that departments have suggested maps most accurately to the reforms', in part to avoid 'putting big and very costly new data requirements on the system'.⁴ Nonetheless, the failure to connect outputs (SRP actions) with outcomes (impact indicators) in many cases hindered the ability of the public, departments and the centre of government to understand the impact of policies.

Transparency and usability of impact indicators by department

Department	Current score	Annual report	Open data	Presentation	Overall
MoD	=1	=1	=1	=1	=1
DCMS	=1	=1	=1	=1	=1
DfT	=1	=1	=1	=1	=1
DCLG	=1	=1	=1	=1	=1
DWP	=1	=1	=1	=1	=1
DH	=1	=16	=1	=1	=6
HMRC	=1	=1	=1	=9	=6
DfID	10	9	8	=9	8
BIS	12	=12	=9	8	9
DECC	=1	=1	=9	=9	10
DfE	11	=16	=9	7	11
MoJ	9	15	=9	=9	12
FCO	13	10	=9	=9	13
Defra	=14	=1	=9	=9	14
HO	=14	11	=9	=9	15
HMT	=14	=12	=9	=9	16
CO	=14	14	=9	=9	17

Source: Institute for Government analysis of impact indicators, via transparency.number10.gov.uk, and annual reports.

We investigated whether a member of the public could find scores in departments’ annual reports, and use the Number 10 Transparency website to find current scores, presented in a way that meant something (in charts, or the department explaining what the numbers meant), and in an open format. Only five departments (MoD, DCMS, DfT, DCLG, DWP) allowed a user to do all four tasks. Some departments were directing users to dead links or data that had not been updated for more than two years, implying that departments had also not been using the data.

The frameworks departments use to measure outcomes (2013)



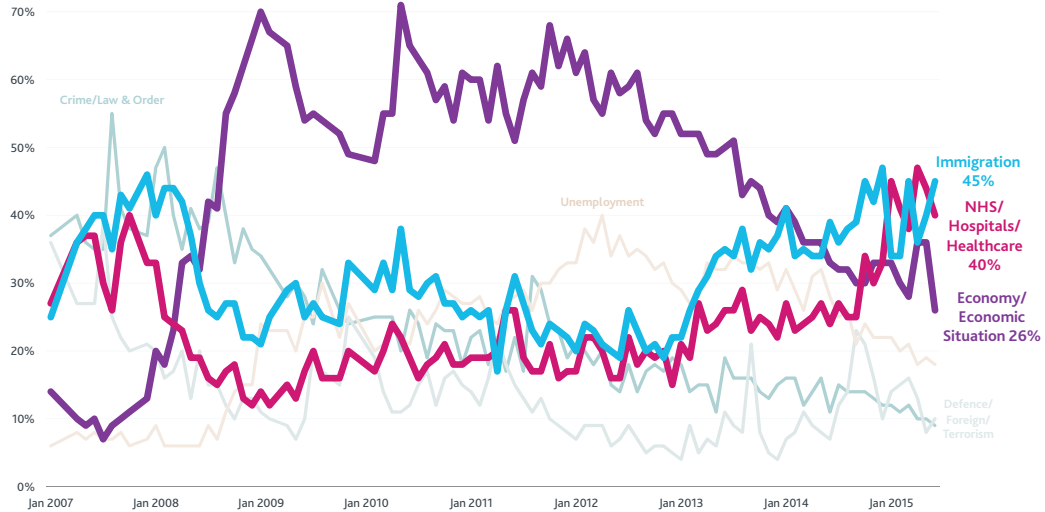
Source: Adapted from Whitehall Monitor 2013.

This supposition was supported by research we conducted for *Whitehall Monitor 2013*, when we asked departments what frameworks they used to measure their outcomes. Almost half said they used something other than just the Business Plans, and two used something different altogether, despite Business Plans being drafted together between departments and the centre of government.

The Government hoped the public, departments and the centre of government would be able to use impact indicators to judge progress. But problems with the availability and accessibility of data made it difficult for the public to use the indicators as intended. Departments and the centre of government lost interest, and Parliament does not appear to have used them either. Single Departmental Plans, due to be published in November 2015, provide an opportunity to learn from the mistakes made with impact indicators and reinvigorate performance management in government.⁵

Analysis of the subjects most important to the public – immigration, the economy and health – demonstrates the problems.

'What would you say is the most important issue/see as other important issues facing Britain today?' - Ipsos MORI Issues Index

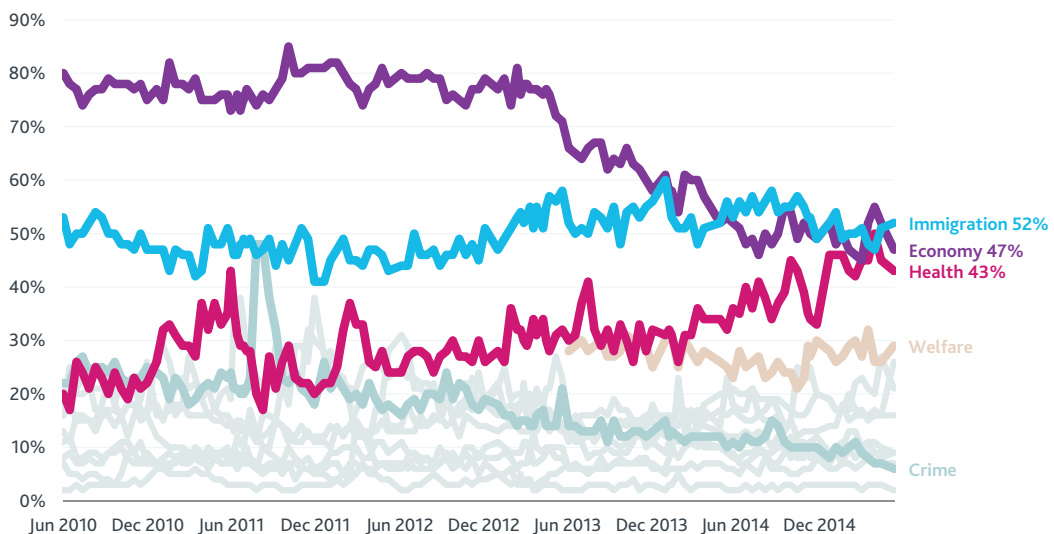


Source: IfG analysis of Ipsos MORI Issues Index, January 2007 to June 2015. Answers unprompted and combined from two questions. Issues >30% shown.

In order to illustrate what the impact indicators mean, we will look at those relating to the public's three most important political issues. According to Ipsos MORI's Issues Index, these are:

- **Immigration**, which has increased in importance since mid-2013 to top the index (45%)
- **NHS/Healthcare**, which grew steadily in importance during the Coalition before a sharp jump in late 2014 to second place (40%)
- **The economy**, which has fallen to third place (26%) from having been the most important issue (peaking at 73%) at the start of the Coalition.

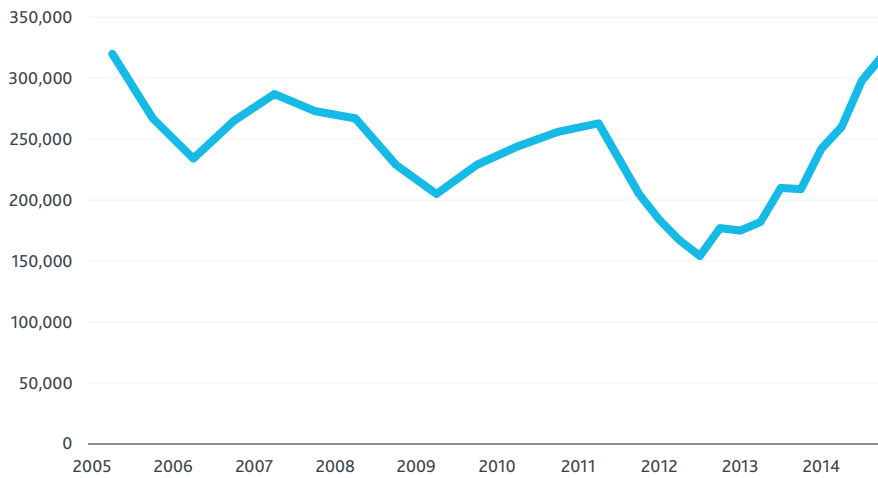
'Which do you think are the most important issues facing the country at this time?' - YouGov Political Tracker



Source: Institute for Government analysis of YouGov Political Tracker - Issues, June 2010 to May 2015. Respondents allowed to tick up to three issues.

YouGov's Political Tracker gives the same top three issues (although with health and the economy swapping places). Both trackers show a decline in the importance of crime, with the exception of a spike around the time of the riots in London and elsewhere in summer 2011.

Net migration to the United Kingdom, June 2005 to December 2014



Source: IfG analysis of Office for National Statistics (ONS), *Migration Statistics Quarterly Reports*. Long-term international migration, with Census 2011 revisions.

The Home Office’s impact indicators include three on immigration: migration applications processed within target (which went up between 2010 and 2015), asylum applications concluded in one year (also an improvement on 2010), and net migration to the UK.

It is this final indicator that has been the subject of most political interest, not least because of a pledge by the Conservatives to bring net migration down: the party’s 2010 manifesto pledged to take figures down to ‘tens of thousands a year, not hundreds of thousands’, usually summarised as meaning under 100,000.⁶ The most recent figures show that net migration is now higher than at the start of the Coalition, and considerably higher than 100,000 – 318,000 in the year to December 2014, up from 244,000 in the year to June 2010.

There are a number of points about using the impact indicators here:

- Despite it being a high-profile pledge, there is no link between the Conservative ambition to reduce net migration and the relevant impact indicator.
- Although having a political link to performance management is important, this missing link is not necessarily a problem. Targets, which are more about political incentives to get things done, should not be confused with sensible benchmarks, baselines and counterfactuals, which allow performance to be properly assessed. But these are also missing.
- The manifesto vow demonstrates the hazards of pledging targets on issues largely beyond a government’s control, in the heat of an election campaign, which can make governing harder.⁷

Selected economic impact indicators: change since 2010 and over last reporting period, link with Structural Reform Plan actions

Indicator	Dept	Change - 2010	Change - latest	SRP link
Private sector employment	BIS	Green	Red	Yellow
Early-stage entrepreneurial activity rate	BIS	Red	Green	Green
Ease of doing business in the UK	BIS	Red	Green	Green
Number of businesses helped through internationalisation	BIS	Green	Green	Green
Openness to trade	BIS	Red	Green	Green
Creative employment in the UK	DCMS	Green	Green	Yellow
Current deficit as a percentage of GDP	HMT	Grey	Green	Green
Public sector net debt as a percentage of GDP	HMT	Red	Green	Green
GDP - latest quarter growth	HMT	Green	Green	Yellow
GDP per capita - latest quarter growth	HMT	Green	Green	Yellow
Business investment as a share of GDP	HMT	Red	Green	Yellow
UK employment rate	HMT	Green	Green	Yellow

Source: Institute for Government analysis of impact indicators, various sources, from *Whitehall Monitor: Deep Impact?* (April 2015).

On the economy, there are at least twelve indicators across three different departments that are relevant. The performance is mixed, with seven improving since 2010 (including private sector employment, creative employment GDP and overall employment all increasing) and four declining (including ease of doing business in the UK, openness to trade, and public sector debt as a percentage of GDP).

HMT impact indicators (March 2015): change since 2010 and over last reporting period, link with Structural Reform Plan actions

Indicator	Change - 2010	Change - latest	SRP link
Current deficit as a percentage of GDP	Grey	Green	Green
Public sector net debt as a percentage of GDP	Red	Green	Green
Departmental DEL outturn v final plans	Grey	Green	Green
Impact of spending, tax, tax credit and benefit changes	Grey	Green	Green
GDP - latest quarter growth	Green	Green	Yellow
GDP per capita - latest quarter growth	Green	Green	Yellow
Business investment as a share of GDP	Red	Green	Yellow
UK employment rate	Green	Green	Yellow
Government shareholdings in banks	Green	Green	Green
Banks' capital ratios	Grey	Red	Red

Source: Institute for Government analysis of Treasury impact indicators, various sources, from *Whitehall Monitor: Deep Impact?* (April 2015).

Looking only at the Treasury's impact indicators – which also include departmental spending and public ownership of the banks – a clearer story emerges. There is poor indicator setting ('departmental DEL outturn v final plans' is meaningless without any further explanation), a lack of data and a lack of openness (none of the Treasury's impact indicators can be found via the Number 10 Transparency website). The recently announced Bean Review, which will assess whether the UK's economic statistics are appropriate, robust and credible, will hopefully improve matters.⁸

DH impact indicators (March 2015): change since 2010 and over last reporting period, link with Structural Reform Plan actions

Indicator	Change - 2010	Change - latest	SRP link
Life lost from potentially amenable causes	Green	Red	Green
Life expectancy at 75 i) males	Green	Green	Orange
Life expectancy at 75 ii) females	Green	Green	Orange
Infant mortality	Green	Green	Yellow
(Healthy) life expectancy in different communities	Green	Green	Yellow
Low birth weight of term live births	Green	Green	Yellow
...where father's occupation is NS-SEC=1,2,3,4	Green	Green	Yellow
...where father's occupation is NS-SEC=5,6,7,8	Green	Green	Yellow
Mortality rate from causes considered preventable	Green	Green	Green
Health related quality of life: long-term conditions	Red	Red	Green
Emergency admissions: not usual conditions	Red	Red	Yellow
Emergency re-admissions: within 30 days	Red	Red	Green
Patient experience of primary care	Red	Red	Yellow
Patient experience of hospital care	Red	Red	Green
Quality of life for adults receiving social care	Red	Red	Green
Satisfaction with adult social care services	Red	Red	Green
Safety incidents leading to severe harm or death	Red	Green	Orange
Safety incidents	Red	Red	Orange

Source: Institute for Government analysis of Department of Health impact indicators, various sources, from *Whitehall Monitor: Deep Impact?* (April 2015).

There was improvement against half of DH's 18 impact indicators during the course of the Coalition, although fewer than half of them had a direct link to actions in the department's Structural Reform Plan. However, in 2013, DH was one of only two departments to say it did not use its Business Plan – including the impact indicators – to measure its outcomes.

Eleven of DH's impact indicators are part of either the NHS Outcomes Framework or the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, which the department does use. These appear on the indicator portal of the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC), a non-departmental public body established in April 2013, which publishes all of DH's impact data. HSCIC collates all the data and publishes it, in an open format, whenever it is updated.

HSCIC is a very good example of how government can publish and use its impact data. But the DH experience also underlines the failure of the impact indicators as a way of measuring cross-government performance: DH chose to use its own frameworks, and many of these indicators were not strongly tied to the reform actions the department committed to in its Structural Reform Plan.

The forthcoming Single Departmental Plans provide an opportunity to solve some of these problems. They will need to ensure that the department's resources, actions and impact are aligned, that the numbers around them are transparent, and that the department, the centre of government, parliament and the public can all use the figures to make government more effective.



16. Public perceptions

One proxy for government effectiveness is to look at how the public perceives it: what does the public think about our system of government, about the job government is doing and about the way the Coalition handled the big issues of the day? The short answers are that government could be improved, dissatisfaction is high (and higher in Scotland and Wales), and the economy was dealt with better than healthcare or immigration.

Hansard Society polling shows that more than two-thirds of respondents believe the overall system of government in Britain needs improvement. (The more positive views that tended to be expressed by supporters of the political parties forming the government underline the point that these are merely perceptions that could be affected by considerations other than effectiveness.)

Dissatisfaction with how government was doing its job was around 50% at the end of the Coalition, according to polling from Ipsos MORI and the British Election Study. The Ipsos MORI polling shows more respondents were satisfied than dissatisfied for a brief period at the very start of the Coalition, before dissatisfaction peaked in early 2013. The British Election Study, meanwhile, shows that Scottish (and to a lesser extent Welsh) respondents are far more likely than English ones to disapprove of the way the UK is being governed, and that they approve of the Scottish government more than the UK government. This could pose big challenges over the next five years, with elections to the devolved assemblies taking place in May 2016, and as further devolution to parts of the UK is debated and delivered.

Perceptions varied on how government handled the three most salient issues at the end of the Coalition: immigration, health and the economy. 40% of respondents believed the economy was being handled well, but two-thirds thought the Government's handling of the NHS and immigration was poor.

About the data

For views on the system of governing Britain, we used **the Hansard Society's Audit of Political Engagement** going back to 2004. The 2015 data was collected by GfK from fieldwork in November 2014 from a representative sample of 1,123 adults in Great Britain, interviewed face-to-face in their own homes. The sample was weighted to match the overall population. Polling for previous Audits was conducted by Ipsos MORI (2004–11 and 2014) and TNS BMRB (2012–13). Cross-tabulations for party support – especially the Liberal Democrats – are small.¹

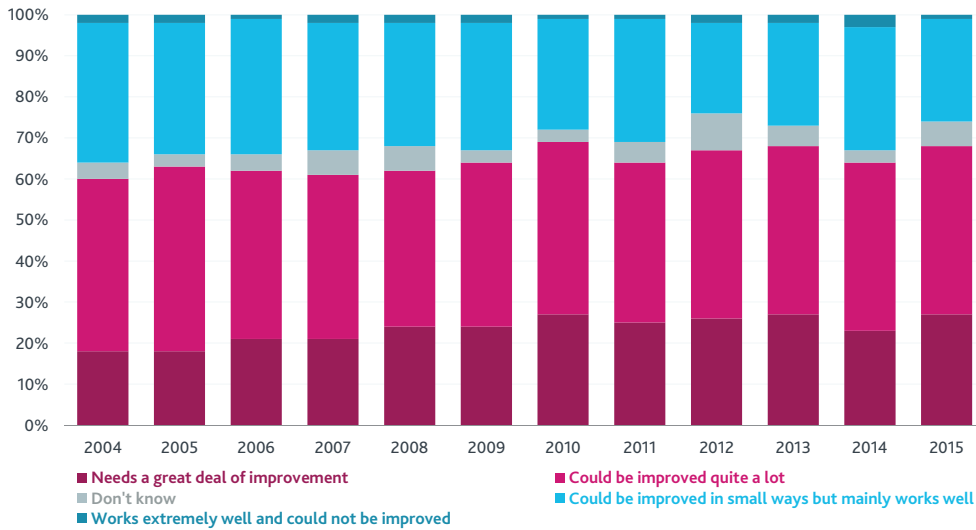
Our analysis of government satisfaction is based on two sources. We use **Ipsos MORI's Political Monitor** from May 1997 to April 2015 (although data is available back to 1977), a monthly series asking respondents if they are satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the government is running the country. The **British Election Study 2015 panel data, wave 4** was conducted in March 2015, the final wave before the general election campaign. The data was collected via a representative internet panel by YouGov with 31,323 respondents. Panel data is useful to observe change within individuals over time, but here wave 4 is used as a cross-section. We have not applied weighting in our analysis. Northern Ireland is not included in the data.²

The three salient policy areas were chosen from the Ipsos MORI and YouGov trackers presented in the previous chapter. We supplement the British Election Study data on individual policy areas with **survey data collected by YouGov/The Sun** between 2011 and 2015. The polling is conducted online, and in the latest wave had 2,078 adult respondents.³

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/perceptions

More than two-thirds of the British public believe the 'present system of governing Britain' could be improved.

'Which of these statements best describes your opinion on the present system of governing Britain?' - Hansard Society

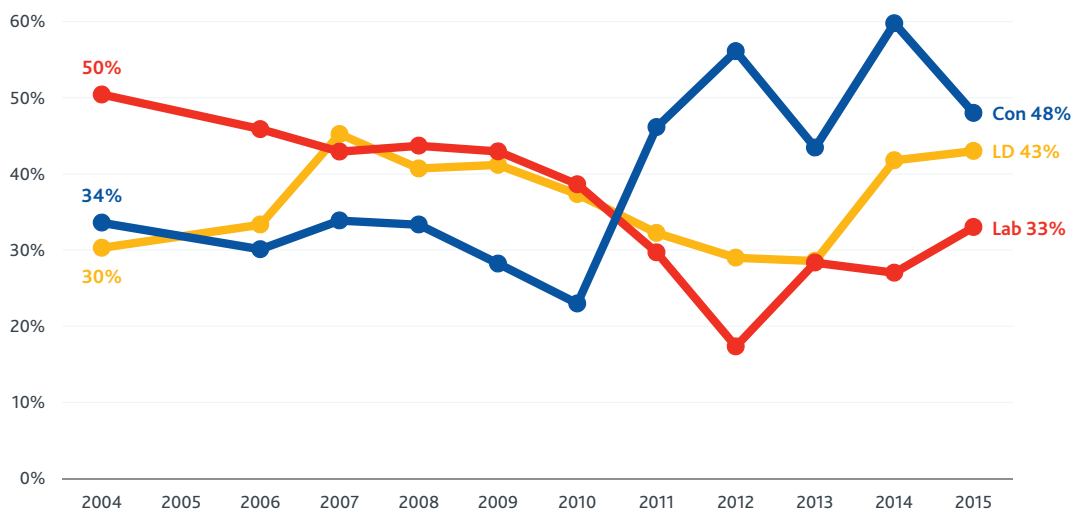


Source: IfG analysis of Hansard Society, *Audit of Political Engagement*, 2004-15. Polling by Ipsos MORI except 2012-13 (TNS BMRB) and 2015 (GfK).

In 2015, the Hansard Society's *Audit of Political Engagement* found that just 26% of the respondents thought the 'present system of governing Britain' was working well or extremely well (the second-lowest percentage after 2012); 68% of respondents said the system could do with improving (joint second highest after 2010). Dissatisfaction is slightly higher than the first results under the Coalition (2011), when 31% said the system was working well and 64% that it could do with improvement.

This level of dissatisfaction is reasonably consistent with similar studies: in 2012, the European Social Survey found 55% of respondents were dissatisfied with the way government was doing its job (though this uses a different response scale), and in 2015, polling by Policy Network found that 69% of respondents felt the system of government needed 'significant improvements'.⁴

Present system of governing Britain 'mainly works well' or 'works extremely well' by party support - Hansard Society

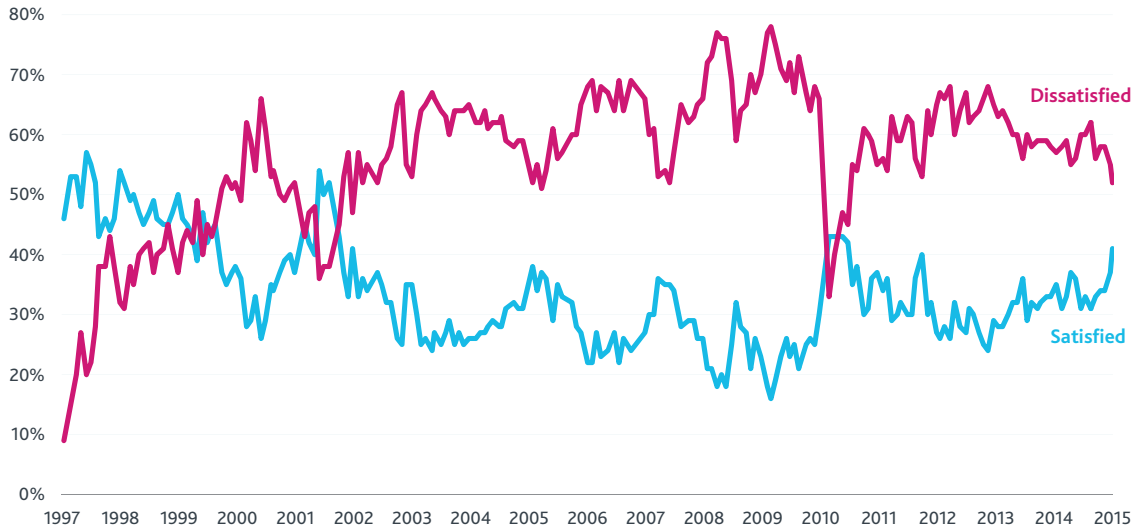


Source: IfG analysis of Hansard Society, *Audit of Political Engagement*, 2004-15. Polling by Ipsos MORI except 2012-13 (TNS BMRB) and 2015 (GfK).

We should be careful not to read too much into these numbers, however. The question doesn't explicitly ask about government effectiveness; interpretations of terms such as 'works well' will vary; and responses may reflect respondents' support for the government – Labour respondents are more positive before 2011 and Conservative ones afterwards.

Satisfaction with the Government was similar at the beginning and end of the Coalition. But satisfaction with the UK Government is much lower in Scotland.

'Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the government is running the country?' - Ipsos MORI

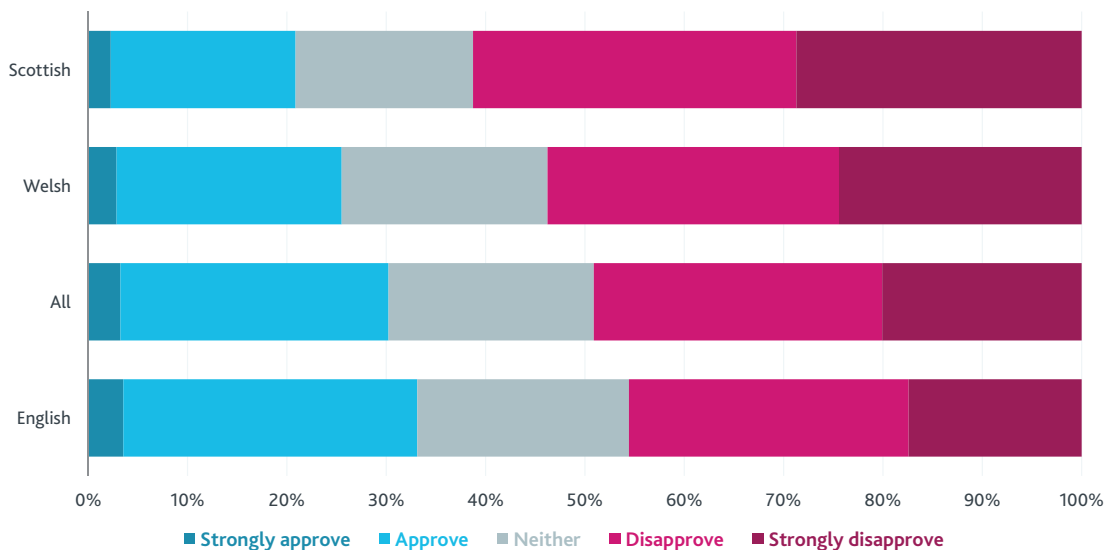


Source: Institute for Government analysis of Ipsos MORI Political Monitor, May 1997 to April 2015.

In the first few months of the Coalition, public satisfaction with government was 43%. Indeed, in June and July 2010, satisfaction was higher than dissatisfaction for the first time since November 2001. Satisfaction with the Coalition reached a nadir of 24% in March 2013, but had recovered to 41% shortly before the 2015 general election. However, dissatisfaction was much higher – just over 50%, and above levels in summer 2010.

That's satisfaction with the UK government. But the UK has seen considerable constitutional change since the 1990s, and the divergence of political opinion within and between the devolved nations. With devolution set to continue and widen, it is important to understand the difference in perceptions between these nations as well as the UK as a whole.

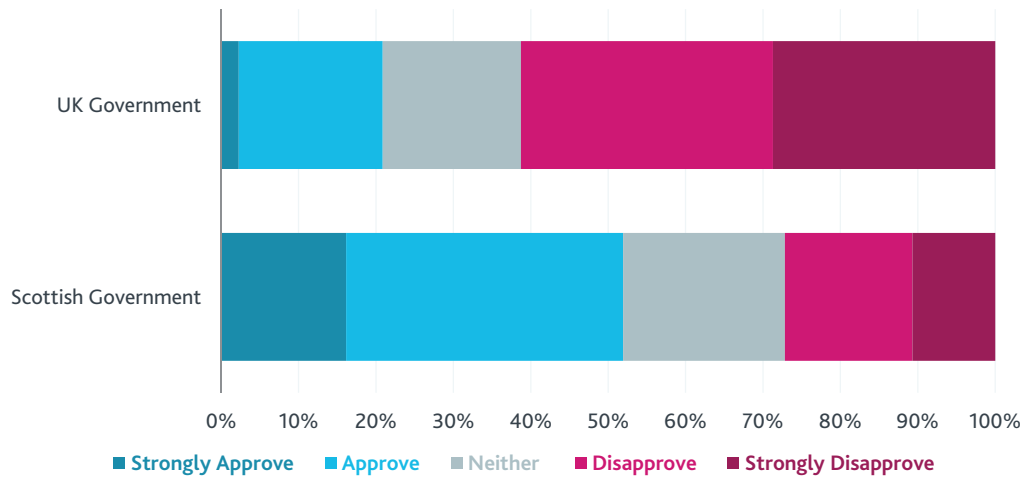
'Do you approve or disapprove of the job the [UK] government is doing?' - British Election Study



Source: Institute for Government analysis of British Election Study Wave 4 data, March 2015.

Overall, the British Election Study shows similar levels of dissatisfaction to those reported by Ipsos MORI – nearly 50% disapproving or strongly disapproving in March 2015. But, although disapproval is stronger than approval across Great Britain, 31% of those in England approve or strongly approve of the Government, compared with 25% in Wales and just 20% in Scotland. In England, 44% disapprove or strongly disapprove of the job that the UK Government is doing; this rises to 60% in Scotland.

'Do you approve or disapprove of the job the government is doing?', UK and Scottish governments - British Election Study

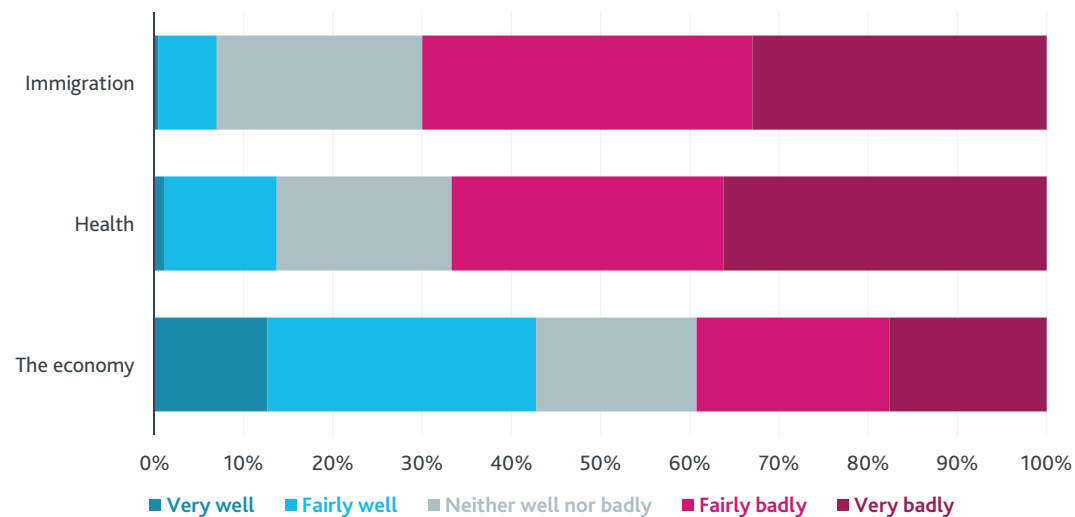


Source: Institute for Government analysis of British Election Study Wave 4 data, March 2015. Respondents resident in Scotland only.

But this is not just a symptom of Scottish distrust of government in general. More Scottish respondents strongly approve or approve of the Scottish Government than the UK Government (51% versus 20%), and 34% more strongly disapprove or disapprove of the UK Government than the Scottish (60% versus 26%). This polarisation of opinion could prove a challenge over the coming parliament and with the development of further devolution, particularly if the gap grows.

The Coalition was perceived to be handling the issues of immigration and health poorly, but the economy well.

'How well do you think the present government has handled...' - British Election Study

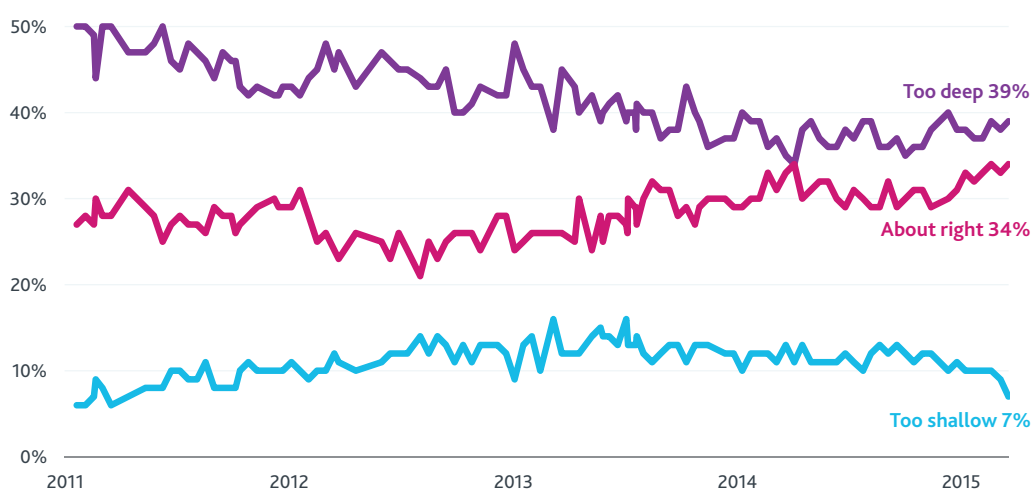


Source: Institute for Government analysis of British Election Study Wave 4 data, March 2015.

Turning to immigration, health and the economy – the three policy areas the public thinks most important, according to Ipsos MORI and YouGov polling – there were considerable differences in perception in March 2015, according to the British Election Study.

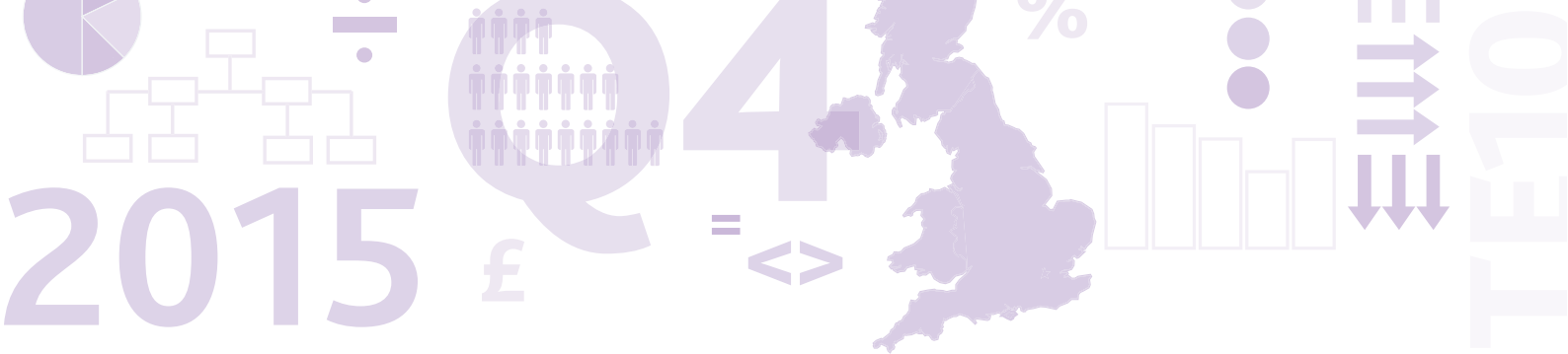
On immigration, just 6% of people think the Government is performing very or fairly well, with just 32 out of 7,742 respondents answering 'very well'. On the other hand, 66% believe the Government to be performing very or fairly badly. It is a similar story for health, with 13% believing the Government to be doing well but 63% believing it to be performing badly. People's perception of the Government's performance on the economy is much better, with 40% thinking it is doing very or fairly well compared with 37% fairly or very badly.

'Thinking about the way the government is cutting spending to reduce the deficit, do you think this is...' - YouGov



Source: Institute for Government analysis of YouGov polling, February 2011 to April 2015.

A key aspect of government economic policy over the past five years has been to cut the deficit by reducing government spending. Between 2011 and 2015, the amount of people thinking the spending reductions were 'about right' increased from 27% to 34%, with those thinking they are too deep falling from 50% to 39%.



17. International comparisons

A number of international indices compare 'government effectiveness' and 'government efficiency' globally, with the UK consistently in the top 25. International studies that compare performance on three core areas of policy – immigration, healthcare and the economy – are more mixed.

International indices need to be approached with caution. There is often little consistency between them, and they are sensitive to both operational and statistical errors, as well as the errors and biases that can be found in surveys (which many of the indices are based on, at least in part).

However, in the international comparisons on government efficiency and effectiveness, the UK is consistently in the top 25 and usually ranks alongside its G7 counterparts. The Nordic countries, as well as some countries in Asia and the Gulf, perform consistently well, and lead the way in all four of the studies we look at here. The UK has improved in most, though not all, international rankings since 2010.

The UK's performance on the three key policy areas that head the YouGov and Ipsos MORI issues indices – health, immigration and the economy – is more variable. On health, the Commonwealth Fund places the UK first out of 11 industrialised nations. On immigration, the Migrant Integration Policy Index (Mipex) ranks the UK 15th out of 38, lower than in 2010. On the economy, different surveys give different results, with the UK improving according to the IMD Business School and declining according to Bertelsmann Stiftung.

About the data

We use four international comparisons of government efficiency and effectiveness:

- **'Government effectiveness' from the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators**, which captures features including quality of civil service and of policy implementation
- **'Government efficiency' from the IMD World Competitiveness Index**, which takes into account GDP, public finances and labour regulation
- **'Governance' from the Bertelsmann Stiftung Sustainable Governance Indicators**, which takes into account a government's ability to lead and adapt to change
- **'Government efficiency' from the World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Competitiveness Index**, which includes wastefulness of government spending and the transparency of policymaking.¹

For health, we use **the Commonwealth Fund health rankings**, which rank 11 countries on a range of aspects of healthcare, such as accessibility and quality.²

For immigration, we use **the Migrant Integration Policy Index (Mipex)**. This relatively new dataset ranks countries on integration across eight policy areas, such as access to education and ease of family reunion. This assumes migrant integration is a desirable outcome, and may not necessarily measure what the public may be most concerned about.³

For economic performance, we use **'economic performance' from the IMD** (which includes public spending, unemployment and tax) and **'economic policy' from Bertelsmann Stiftung** (which includes macroeconomic factors as well as redistributive taxes).⁴

Get the latest data www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/international

The UK keeps pace with its G7 counterparts on government efficiency and effectiveness, and has largely improved over the past five years.

UK ranking in four international indices of government effectiveness or efficiency (G7 countries highlighted)

Rank	World Bank (2013)	IMD (2015)	WEF (2015)	Bertelsmann (2015)
1	Finland	Hong Kong	Qatar	Sweden
2	Singapore	Singapore	Singapore	Finland
3	Denmark	UAE	Finland	Norway
4	Sweden	Qatar	Hong Kong	Denmark
5	Norway	Switzerland	UAE	New Zealand
6	Switzerland	New Zealand	New Zealand	Luxembourg
7	Canada	Norway	Rwanda	United States
8	Netherlands	Canada	Malaysia	Germany
9	New Zealand	Taiwan	Switzerland	Canada
10	Hong Kong	Denmark	Luxembourg	United Kingdom
11	Liechtenstein	Sweden	Norway	Australia
12	Australia	Luxembourg	Sweden	Switzerland
13	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Netherlands	Iceland
14	Japan	Australia	United Kingdom	Poland
15	Belgium	Ireland	Canada	Austria
16	Austria	Malaysia	Germany	Ireland
17	Andorra	Finland	Japan	Spain
18	Anguilla	Germany	Ireland	Netherlands
19	Germany	United Kingdom	Oman	Belgium
20	United States	Estonia	Estonia	Lithuania
21	Iceland	Kazakhstan	Chile	Estonia
22	United Kingdom	Iceland	Iceland	Israel
23	France	United States	Saudi Arabia	Latvia
24	Ireland	Israel	Bahrain	Mexico
25	Cyprus	Lithuania	Jordan	South Korea

Source: IFG analysis of World Bank Worldwide Governance, IMD World Competitiveness, World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness and Bertelsmann Stiftung Sustainable Governance indices.

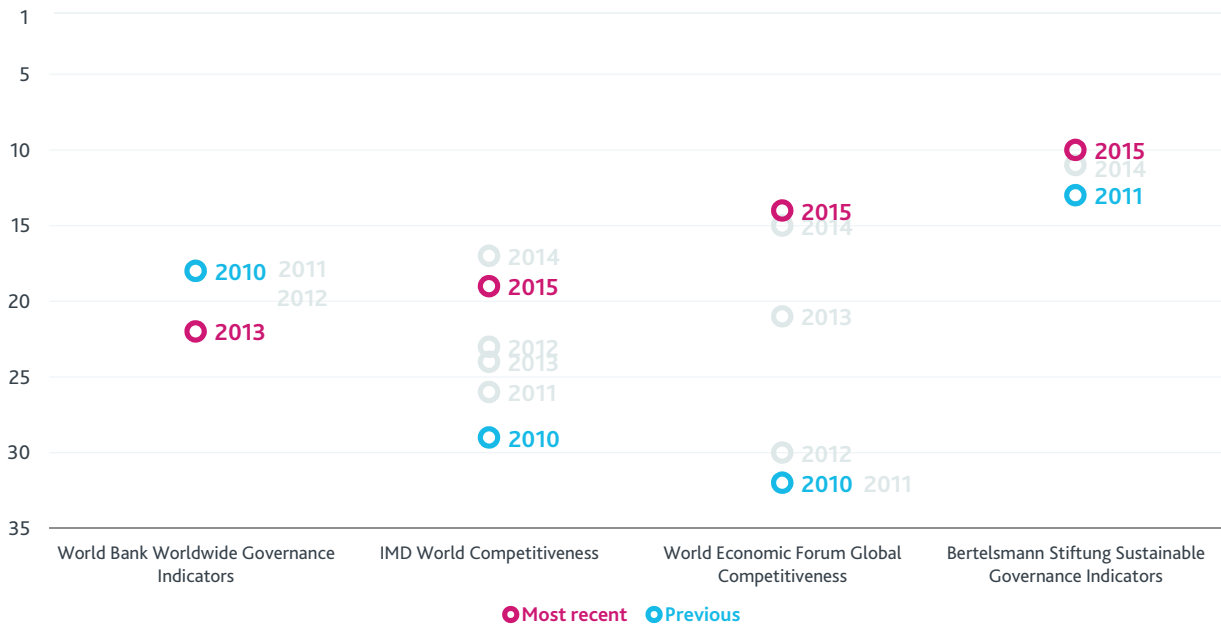
The UK features in the top 25 of all four studies that we look at. It performs worst in the World Bank Institute's Worldwide Governance Indicators – 22nd out of 210 countries – and best on the Bertelsmann Stiftung Sustainable Governance Indicators – 10th out of 41. The latter measures 'executive capacity' ('does the government have strong steering capabilities?') and 'executive accountability' ('are non-governmental actors involved in policymaking?'), with the UK performing strongly on executive capacity.

The UK outperforms all other G7 countries in the WEF Global Competitiveness Index, while overall Canada is the best performer. Japan appears in the top 25 only twice, France once and Italy not at all.

The countries leading the way in each index are diverse. In the studies that focus on government efficiency – the IMD World Competitiveness and WEF Global Competitiveness indices – Qatar and the UAE do well, but they are not measured in the other two indices. Similarly, Singapore is second in all but the Bertelsmann Stiftung category, which does not include Singapore. The Nordic countries perform consistently strongly, particularly in the Bertelsmann Stiftung and Worldwide Governance measures, although not as well in the WEF Global Competitiveness Index.

The disparities in performance highlight a key problem with these cross-national studies: they may see the job of government differently, use different variables, and even measure the same thing differently. Nevertheless, collectively they give a sense of how the UK compares internationally, particularly against similar countries. The same applies when looking at how the UK has performed over time.

UK ranking in four international indices of government effectiveness or efficiency - change 2010 to 2015



Source: IFG analysis of World Bank Worldwide Governance, IMD World Competitiveness, World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness and Bertelsmann Stiftung Sustainable Governance indices.

On all but the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators, the UK’s ranking has improved since 2010:

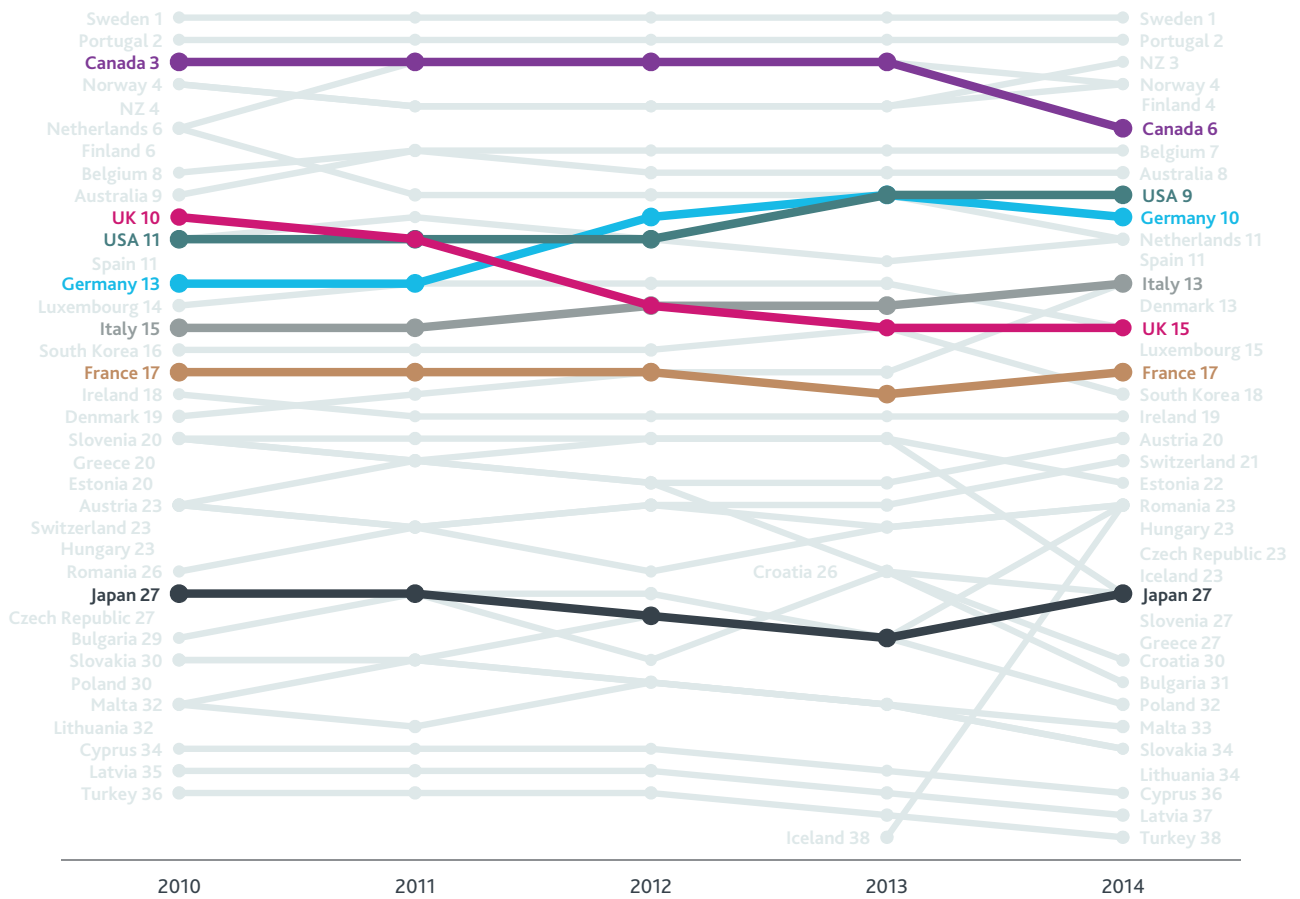
- In the WEF’s measurement, the UK improved from 32nd to 14th.
- On the IMD’s measurement, the UK moved from 29th to 19th.
- The improvement was more modest in the Bertelsmann Stiftung 2015, where the UK rose from 13th in 2011 to 10th in 2015.
- In the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators, the UK fell from 18th to 22nd; however, the most recent data available is 2013.

The studies in which the UK performed most strongly in the most recent data releases are ones that focus more on ‘government efficiency’ than ‘government effectiveness’ – WEF and IMD. For example, WEF’s government efficiency category is as much about government attitudes to business, regulation and control of public finances as anything else. This is in contrast to the World Bank’s indicators, which include public trust in government, the coverage of public infrastructure and governance capability. Bertelsmann Stiftung includes citizens’ participatory competence, organisational reform capacity and the ability of the media to provide a trustworthy source of information. As a result, it is entirely possible that the same reforms that are behind an increase in one index can cause a decrease in another.

Along with these more general studies, some organisations have attempted to rank countries on the specific policy areas of immigration, health and the economy.

The UK has declined on migration integration and scored well on healthcare, with a mixed picture on the economy.

Country rankings in the Migration Integration Policy index (MIPEX), 2010-14 - G7 countries highlighted



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), 2010 to 2014.

Assessing immigration policy objectively is extremely difficult, if not impossible. Mipex attempts to do so by using 167 policy indicators across eight policy areas to assess how effectively a country integrates immigrants. The index includes 38 countries (36 before 2013, when Croatia and Iceland were added). The policy areas consist of, for example, labour market mobility, education and the ability to reunite families.

The UK ranks 15th out of 38 countries – behind four other G7 nations. Its decline from 10th in 2010 is one of the sharpest and most consistent falls.

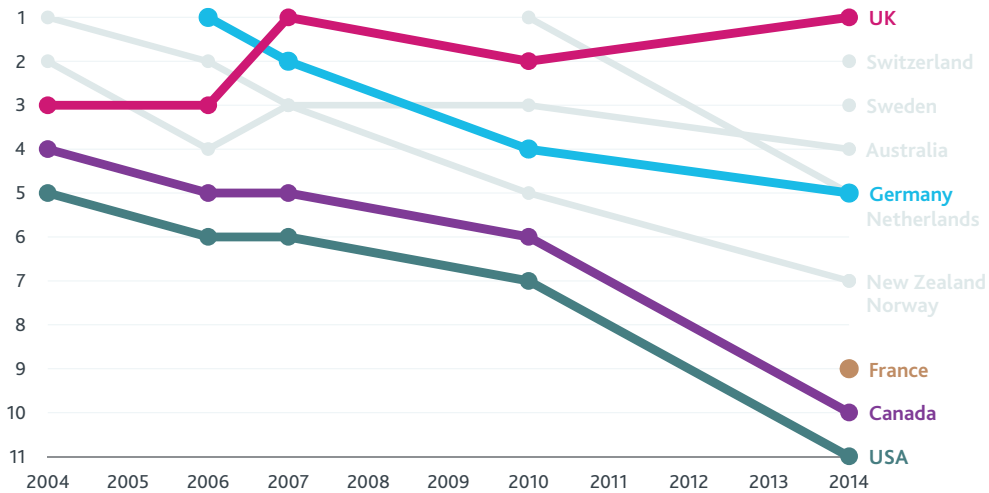
UK scores by policy area in Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), 2010 to 2014



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), 2010 to 2014. Scores out of 100.

Between 2010 and 2014, the UK has fallen on all but one of the policy indicators, political participation, where it stayed the same. The biggest falls were in the ease of family reunion, ability to acquire education and the ability to acquire permanent residence (all 11 points), with smaller falls in another three policy areas.

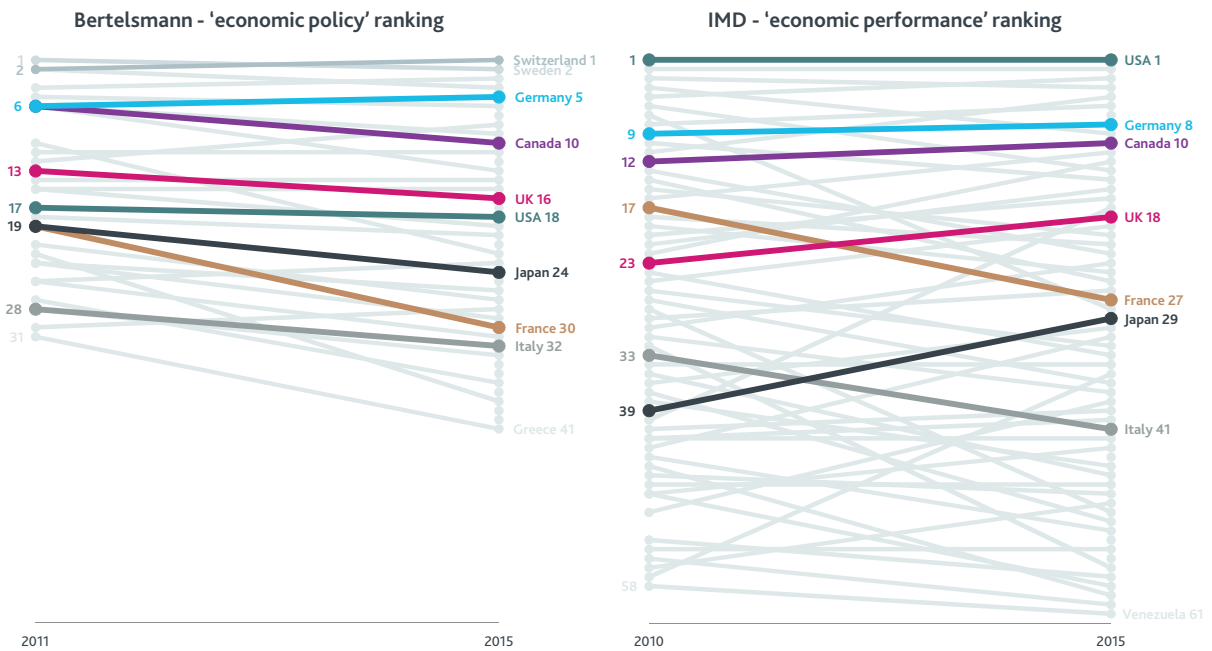
Commonwealth Fund ranking of international health systems, 2004 to 2014 - G7 countries highlighted



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Commonwealth Fund Health System Scorecards, 2014.

The UK does better in a respected international ranking of healthcare systems. The Commonwealth Fund scores countries on quality of care, access, efficiency, equity and healthy lives. On these measures, the UK ranks first out of 11 industrialised nations, and is the only country to improve since 2010. Indeed, Britain tops all but three of the report’s 11 categories (the UK comes second to Sweden on equity, third on timeliness of care, and 10th on ‘healthy lives’). The UK has been ranked in the top three ever since the start of the series in 2004; Canada has always been second from last and the US last.

Change in ranking, Bertelsmann Stiftung 'economic policy' and IMD 'economic performance' - G7 highlighted



Source: IfG analysis of Bertelsmann Stiftung Sustainable Governance Indicators, 2011-15 and IMD World Competitiveness Index, 2010-15.

The Bertelsmann Stiftung Sustainable Governance Indicators include an 'economic policy' ranking, which examines the economy, labour markets, taxes, budgets, research and innovation, and the global financial system. The UK ranked 16th out of 41 countries in 2015, a decrease from 13th (out of 31) in 2011 and some way behind Germany in fifth and Canada in 10th position (although this may owe something to some countries entering the survey for the first time, above the UK).

The IMD has a similar 'economic performance' ranking, with countries assessed across five categories: domestic economy, international trade, international investment, employment, and prices. Each of these is made up of numerous sub-categories. On this scale, the UK does reasonably well, ranked 18th out of 60 countries, behind the US, Germany and Canada, but ahead of France, Japan and Italy. This is an improvement from 2010, when it ranked 23rd (although it was placed 11th in 2014). Qatar and Singapore were second and third, with China and Hong Kong also appearing in the top 10.

Annex

This annex contains the endnotes from each chapter, as well as some more detailed information about some of our calculations and methodology and the abbreviations we use throughout the report.

Further details on all the subjects we cover, as well as the underlying data, can be found on the Whitehall Monitor section of the Institute for Government website.

You can also email us on WhitehallMonitor@instituteforgovernment.org.uk.

Find out more at www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/annex



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Methodology

Financial transparency, pages 47 and 48

We have ranked each government department according to how transparently it accounts for movements in spending plans.

For each financial year we compared the original spending plan, as published in Spending Review 2010, with every reissue of a plan for that financial year (in annual Budget documents and the department's Annual Report and Accounts), and noted whether the spending plan had changed and whether this change was explained. We looked for explanations in the annual Budget documentation, in the Government's Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA), in departmental Annual Reports and Accounts, and in Explanatory Memoranda to Main and Supplementary Estimates.

We graded each department according to:

- whether an explanation was given for a change
- whether each movement was fully or partially explained
- where the explanation appeared and how easy it was to access the documentation.

We then ranked the departments based on their average ranking across the five financial years (2010/11 to 2015/16).

Staff numbers, pages 57 to 60

We use table 9 from the ONS Public Sector Employment series, which contains staff numbers (full-time equivalent, FTE) in all public organisations that employ civil servants. FTE counts part-time staff according to the time they work (e.g. a person working two days a week as 0.4); this is more accurate than headcount, which does not distinguish between full-time and part-time employees.

We have grouped bodies according to where ministerial responsibility lies, even when these are reported under a separate 'departmental' heading in the ONS data. For instance, we group Ofsted with DfE and not as a separate department.

We have grouped organisations included in the Public Sector Employment data into two kinds in each 'departmental group':

- **Department** The core department and other bodies within the department that are line-managed within a structure that flows from the departmental leadership (for example, the National Offender Management Service within MoJ, the Education Funding Agency within DfE).
- **Other organisations** Other civil service bodies for which ministers in the department have responsibility (e.g. Ofsted in DfE, DVLA in DfT) but which are not part of the department's line management structure.

Our calculated rates of change in each period for each department are adjusted for reclassifications of staff between bodies. Reclassifications are usually noted by the ONS in footnotes to the data tables. The figures shown for each department in our 'change from baseline' charts take a geometric average of per period change rates over all periods from 2010 Q3 (our Spending Review baseline) to the latest period.

The table below shows the categorisation of each body, which we also use when referring to departments and departmental groups elsewhere in the chapter.

Abbreviation	Department	Other organisations
AGO	Attorney General's Office	Attorney General's Office; Crown Prosecution Service; Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate; Serious Fraud Office; Treasury Solicitor
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service; Companies House; Export Credits Guarantee Department; HM Land Registry; Insolvency Service; Met Office; National Measurement Office; Ordnance Survey; Skills Funding Agency; Intellectual Property Office; UK Space Agency; Competition and Markets Authority
CO	Cabinet Office excl agencies Office of the Parliamentary Counsel	Charity Commission; UK Statistics Authority; Crown Commercial Service
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government	Planning Inspectorate; Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport	Royal Parks
DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change	Office of Gas and Electricity Markets
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Animal and Plant Health Agency; Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science; Food and Environment Research Agency; Ofwat; Rural Payments Agency; Veterinary Medicines Directorate
DfE	Department for Education Standards and Testing Agency; Education Funding Agency; National College for Teaching and Leadership	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation; Ofsted
DfID	Department for International Development	
DfT	Department for Transport	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency; Highways Agency; Maritime and Coastguard Agency; Office of Rail Regulation; Vehicle and Operator Services Agency; Vehicle Certification Agency; Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency
DH	Department of Health (excl agencies)	Food Standards Agency; Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency; Public Health England
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions	The Health and Safety Executive
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (excl agencies)	Security and Intelligence Services; Wilton Park Executive Agency; Foreign and Commonwealth Office Services
HMRC	HM Revenue and Customs	Valuation Office
HMT	HM Treasury	Debt Management Office; Government Actuary's Department; National Savings and Investments; Office for Budget Responsibility
HO	Home Office (excl agencies)	National Fraud Authority; National Crime Agency; Her Majesty's Passport Office
MoD	Ministry of Defence	Defence Science and Technology Laboratory; Defence Support Group; UK Hydrographic Office
Moj	Ministry of Justice (excl agencies) HM Courts and Tribunals Service; National Offender Management Service; The Office of the Public Guardian; Wales Office; Scotland Office (incl. Office of the Advocate General for Scotland); Legal Aid Agency	National Archives; UK Supreme Court; Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority
NIO	Northern Ireland Office	
Scot Gov		Disclosure Scotland; Education Scotland; Historic Scotland; National Records of Scotland; Office of 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 Gov		Estyn; Welsh Government

Civil service professions, pages 70 to 72

We group the 25 civil service professions, used in the ONS Annual Civil Service Employment Survey and departmental organograms, as outlined below.

Profession	IfG category
Communications and Marketing	Communications & marketing
Economics	Insight & analysis
Engineering	Specialist
Finance	Corporate
Human Resources	Corporate
Information Technology	Corporate
Inspector of Education and Training	Specialist
Internal Audit	Corporate
Knowledge and Information Management	Insight & analysis
Law	Specialist
Medicine	Specialist
Operational Delivery	Operational delivery
Operational Research	Operational delivery
Planning	Specialist
Policy Delivery	Policy
Procurement and Contract Management	Corporate
Programme and Project Management	Operational delivery
Property Asset Management	Corporate
Psychology	Specialist
Science	Specialist
Social and Market Research	Insight & analysis
Statistics	Insight & analysis
Tax Professionals	Operational delivery
Veterinarian	Specialist
Other	Unknown/other
Not Reported	Unknown/other

ComRes survey of MPs' perceptions, pages 120 to 121

ComRes conducts a regular panel survey of MPs (n=c.150), asking: 'In dealing with these government departments in the course of your work as an MP, how would you rate them in terms of their overall responsiveness to your inquiries (i.e. speed, accuracy and depth of response)?' MPs are asked to state whether they feel a named department is 'very responsive', 'fairly responsive', 'fairly unresponsive' or 'very unresponsive'. ComRes has kindly shared with the Institute the data it collected for the years 2005, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2015. At different times, ComRes has recorded MPs who do not respond to the survey in different ways – sometimes including the responses 'don't know', 'not applicable' and 'not stated'. In order to compare across years, we combine these responses into the single category 'not given'.

Impact indicators, pages 133 to 142

Our analysis of the departmental impact indicators, which we undertook for our report *Deep Impact? How government departments measured their impact, 2010–15*, involved three tasks.

Movement in the indicators We took the most recent set of impact indicators published for each department on the Number 10 Transparency website. In line with the Government's stated intentions, very few specific targets for performance against impact indicators are given. As such, for all indicators, we simply look at whether scores have improved or declined.

We gave two scores for each indicator – improvement since 2010; improvement over the latest reported time period:

- **Green** indicates an improvement
- **Amber** indicates no change, or a mixed picture according to different aspects of an indicator
- **Red** indicates a decline
- **Dark grey** indicates a lack of comparable data.

In nearly all cases, we have made an assumption about which direction departments want the indicators to head in; this is seldom explicit, but it is usually reasonably obvious.

Transparency and usability of the indicators We assessed each impact indicator against four measures, drawn from the Institute for Government's 2008 report *Performance Art*:

- Can we find the current score via the Number 10 Transparency website?
- Is the data available in an open format?
- Is it presented in an easily understandable form?
- Can the score be found in the department's annual report?

For each indicator, we gave a mark of either 0 or 1 for each category. Once we had scored each indicator, we took an overall percentage score for each department in each category.

Where the indicators could not be accessed from the Number 10 Transparency site, or where the most recent update was more than a year old, we awarded a 0 across the Current Score, Open Data and Presentation categories.

Departments were ranked in each category. For the overall rank, we used the overall average score, rather than average category rankings.

Link between actions and impact Each Structural Reform Plan is arranged by a series of overarching themes drawn from the Coalition Agreement, with actions, and then sub-actions, below them. We took each indicator and assessed whether there were actions listed in the Structural Reform Plan that linked to or sought to affect it.

For each indicator, we applied a RAG rating for the link between the actions outlined in the Structural Reform Plan (SRP) affecting it:

- **Green** Several SRP actions with a direct link to this indicator, i.e. will have a direct impact on this indicator
- **Amber-Green** One SRP action with a direct link to this indicator
- **Amber** Several SRP actions with indirect links to this indicator – i.e. actions will affect the indicator, but not deliberately/specifically
- **Amber-Red** One SRP action with indirect/tenuous link to this indicator
- **Red** There are no actions corresponding to this indicator.

Abbreviations

Government organisations

Acronym	Organisation name
AGO	Attorney General's Office
APA	Asset Protection Agency
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
CO	Cabinet Office
CxD	Chancellor's Departments (APA, DMO, GAD, HMRC, HMT, NS&I, OBR)
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DE&S	Defence Equipment and Support (part of MoD)
DfE	Department for Education
DfID	Department for International Development
DfT	Department for Transport
DH	Department of Health
DMO	Debt Management Office
DPM	Deputy Prime Minister
DVLA	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (part of DfT)
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ERG	Efficiency and Reform Group (part of CO)
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GAD	Government Actuary's Department
HA	Highways Agency
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury
HO	Home Office
Law	Law officers (AGO, Office of the Advocate General for Scotland)
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MPA	Major Projects Authority (part of CO)
NAO	National Audit Office
NHS	National Health Service
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NS&I	National Savings and Investments
OBR	Office for Budget Responsibility
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PM	Prime Minister
Scot	Scotland Office
SG	Scottish Government
Wal	Wales Office
WG	Welsh Government

Other abbreviations

Acronym	Definition
AME	Annually Managed Expenditure
AO/AA	Administrative Officer/Administrative Assistant (Civil Service grade)
API	Application Programming Interface
AR	Annual Report
BUD	Budget
CAME	Capital Annually Managed Expenditure
CDEL	Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit
DEL	Departmental Expenditure Limit
EO	Executive Officer (Civil Service grade)
FTE	Full-time equivalent
G6, G7	Grade 6 and Grade 7 (Civil Service grade)
IfG	Institute for Government
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
IT	Information Technology
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OSCAR	Online System for Central Accounting and Reporting
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PASC	Public Administration Select Committee
PESA	Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses
Q (Q1 etc.)	Quarter
QDS	Quarterly Data Summary
RAG	Red – Amber – Green (rating scheme)
RAME	Resource Annually Managed Expenditure
RDEL	Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit
SCS	Senior Civil Service
SEO/HEO	Senior Executive Officer/Higher Executive Officer (Civil Service grade)
SR	Spending Review/Spending Round
SRP	Structural Reform Plan
TME	Total Managed Expenditure
WGA	Whole of Government Accounts
WMI	Workforce Management Information

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