

Whitehall Monitor 2020



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About Whitehall Monitor

Whitehall Monitor analyses the size, shape and performance of Whitehall – the central government of the UK.

The decisions taken by politicians and civil servants in Whitehall can often seem remote from citizens' lives, but are fundamental to them. Understanding Whitehall matters.

This Whitehall Monitor annual report – our seventh – provides an assessment of the administrative and political health of government and its performance. It seeks to present the most comprehensive view of the different organisations (and people) responsible for governing the UK, using data published by the government.

It explores political leadership, the civil service workforce, government finances, how public money is managed, major projects, digital services and transparency.

This annual report is complemented by a wealth of online information, regularly updated to reflect key events and data releases.

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Foreword

A new year – and a political landscape unrecognisable from a year ago. The UK now has a new government with the largest majority since 2001. The focus now turns to the ambitious agenda that the prime minister, Boris Johnson, and his government have set for themselves.

Their first promise is to 'get Brexit done'. Yet even as parliamentary hurdles have fallen away, practical ones remain, while the work to manage the UK's exit from the European Union and move to a new relationship with it competes for attention, effort and money with all the other aims of government.

At the same time, ministers and advisers have talked about reshaping the way the civil service works. The Institute for Government welcomes the focus on problems we have long identified – such as turnover of staff between jobs at a rate so high that it undermines institutional knowledge.

The government also wants to 'level up' the UK, pouring money and new projects into parts of the country that have found it hard to thrive. It is hardly the first government, though, to try to boost regional growth and help struggling parts of the country flourish. Managing large-scale spending and construction is always hard – and does not guarantee success. If Johnson wants to succeed, his government will have to be careful about its priorities for these projects. The first budget, scheduled for 11 March, and the spending review expected in the summer will be important steps for it to do that.

This is the seventh edition of *Whitehall Monitor*, which each year brings together the most pertinent information on the size and shape of government. We do this to shed light on the performance of government, and present our analysis of government data in order to help those in charge to run it more effectively. This work also aims to help make government more accountable, by offering Parliament and the public a view of what is being done.



Bronwen Maddox
Director, Institute for Government

Overview

The emphatic Conservative victory in the 2019 general election brings to an end a decade of government by coalition, minority and slender-majority government. A promise to 'get Brexit done', with the UK expected to leave the EU formally on 31 January 2020, marks the start of a new phase of negotiation and transition after the political tumult of the last three and a half years. It also brings renewed focus on the domestic agenda, and on the workings of government itself.

Whitehall Monitor 2020 analyses data on what has happened to government and politics over the past year. In doing so, it allows us to understand what may happen to government over the next year. 2020 has begun with a great deal of discussion about the future of the civil service, government and UK politics in general.

The civil service workforce

Civil service staff numbers have risen as the government prepares for Brexit. They have increased in every quarter since the 2016 EU referendum, with the number working specifically on Brexit estimated to have tripled since 2018. These new recruits are changing the shape of the civil service: there are more people in senior roles and in London; the percentage of civil servants aged under 30 is increasing as the 2010 recruitment freezes thaw; diversity is improving, although female, minority ethnic and disabled civil servants remain under-represented in senior roles.

But perennial issues remain – and these have been given greater emphasis at the start of 2020 with figures including the prime minister's chief adviser, Dominic Cummings, and one of the authors of the Conservative election manifesto, Rachel Wolf, writing about the future of government.¹ Both have touched on the high turnover of civil servants, so disruptive to the delivery of policies and projects and to institutional memory, and so costly – £74 million in recruitment and lost productivity.²

The latest figures show that turnover remains a problem – it has increased in five departments over the past year. Senior civil service turnover is particularly damaging: senior civil servants move roles, on average, less than every two years. This is especially true for Brexit-related roles: more than 10 senior civil servants in charge of key aspects of Brexit, including permanent secretaries, changed roles in 2019.

If government wants to tackle the problems of high turnover, it will need – [as the Institute for Government has recommended](#) – to reform pay, promotion, rules on internal competition for jobs and its human resources policies generally.³ It also needs better data to understand and fix the problem. There is some progress on this count:

departments will now be expected to publish turnover numbers in their annual reports and accounts. However, in 2018/19, only two departments did.

Reforms to pay, promotion and people management are subjects not only for individual government departments but also for the professions and functions responsible for particular skills and capabilities (like the digital, data and technology profession, DDaT, or the project delivery function) across government. This too has risen up the agenda, following Cummings's unconventional job advert for "weirdos and misfits with odd skills" and call for data scientists to work at Number 10 Downing Street.⁴ A lot of these skills can already be found in government – as our colleague Giles Wilkes has written, "data-obsessed officials are already strewn throughout the state".⁵

The civil service has made progress in developing career paths, improving particular capabilities and skills, and professionalising areas of expertise. But it remains unclear exactly how many advances are being made in these different areas, given the lack of publicly available information on the progress of these reforms.

Reshuffling and reshaping government

With the new government's strong parliamentary majority and mandate to leave the EU on 31 January 2020, we are unlikely to witness a repeat of the political tumult of the 2017–19 parliament – a session that was almost unprecedented in both duration and drama. It encompassed record numbers of ministerial resignations and changes of political allegiance (as MPs defected or had the party whip removed, and in some cases restored), and government defeats in the House of Commons on a scale not seen since the 1970s. A majority government should be able to get its legislative business done.

But there may be some disruption from changes to the personnel and profile of government departments once the UK has formally left the EU. There might well be good reasons for a new government to reshuffle ministers and reshape organisations: to stamp its authority, bring together complementary policy areas and focus on its top priorities. We already know that the Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) will cease to exist on 31 January – a sensible step bringing future negotiations under the prime minister's control.⁶

But new ministers and new departments take time to adjust to one another – already three quarters of all government ministers have only been in their posts since July 2019 – and the process itself comes with considerable costs. These can be around £15m in direct costs for setting up a new department, and £34m in lost productivity.⁷ If the government does want to reshape the state through creating, merging or abolishing departments, it needs to be clear about what it actually wants to achieve.

Major projects

As well as promising to 'get Brexit done', the government pledged more money for public services and various other projects in its manifesto. Increased public spending, after years of constraint, seems inevitable.

But government already has a lot to do. Away from Brexit, its major projects portfolio contains more than 130 projects, including large infrastructure projects like the High Speed 2 (HS2) rail line and numerous other ICT and service-transformation projects

within public services. Civil service leaders have long argued that government is 'doing too much to do it well'. The government appears to recognise this, with the prime minister asking Cabinet ministers to go back to their departments and assess which projects could be scrapped – even if it means “slaughtering sacred cows”.⁸

But with an ambitious and radical domestic agenda, including pledged investment across the Midlands and the north of England, the government will have a tough job picking priorities in the face of political pressure.

Data and transparency

Better government data matters for effectiveness. As government better understands itself, it can improve how it operates. It matters for accountability, too; if those of us on the outside can properly scrutinise the government's performance, we can better hold it to account. The Institute for Government was able to produce this report only through the publication of open data and the support of civil servants across government in providing us with other information.

But there are warning signs of government becoming less open, and of data still being inadequate. Much of the 'transparency data' that departments are mandated to publish – for example, on the structure of their organisations and any spending over £25,000 – is published late, if at all. We have had freedom of information (Fol) requests to obtain some of this data refused – even by the Cabinet Office, the body responsible for telling other departments to publish this data.

Departments are also, in general, releasing less information in response to Fol requests than in the past. And the low quality, inconsistency and lack of availability of some data suggest that departments themselves cannot be using it.⁹ Between the long-expected National Data Strategy, and the new focus on the potential of data from within No.10, 2020 provides an opportunity for government to fix some of these problems.

The government has set itself an ambitious agenda of 'getting Brexit done', while investing in public services and infrastructure projects – and reforming government. It will take more than passing the Withdrawal Agreement Bill to do the former; it will take more than a blogpost to address the latter. The question is how much of this agenda government can deliver, whether it can set priorities as the pressure on time grows, or whether the scale of the task it has set itself, together with the uncertainties of Brexit, lead it to fall short.¹⁰



1 Finances

The government spends around £850 billion (bn) each year on providing public services, social security payments and capital projects. Funding for most departments is starting to increase after years of restraint and spending on public services is expected to increase further over the coming years.

Government spending of around £850bn is equivalent to 40% of national income. This is more than it raises through taxes and other revenue streams (around £810bn). But the deficit has fallen to levels last seen before the 2008 financial crisis.

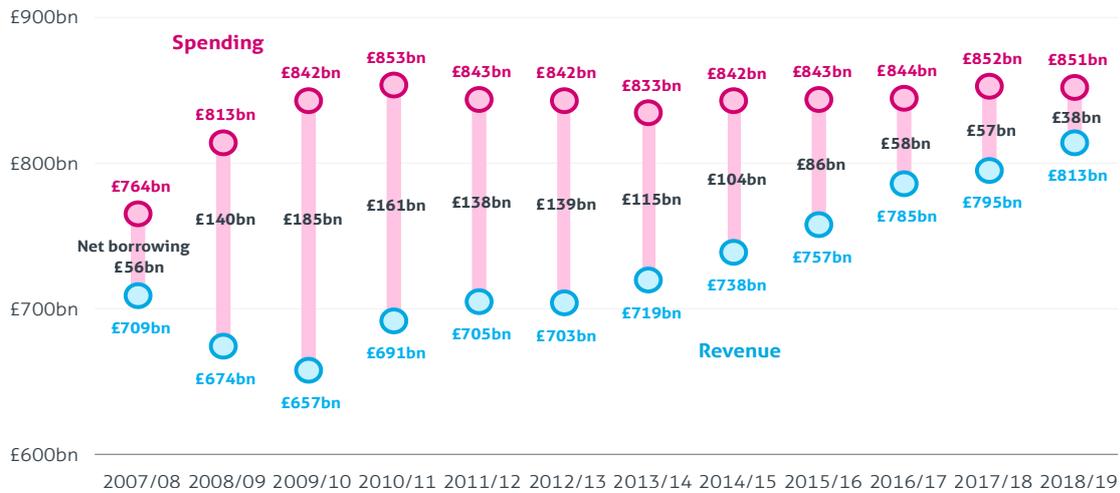
That is partly because departmental spending has been squeezed sharply since 2010. Most departments have had their day-to-day budgets cut in real terms – some by more than a quarter. The government has begun to increase funding for most departments over the past few years, as further planned cuts were not implemented, and spending increases now seem inevitable.

Cuts to direct spending on government administration – the cost of running Whitehall, which includes paying civil servants – have been even steeper in the past decade than on public spending overall. Spending on staff, for example, has seen a 20% fall in real terms since 2012/13. These cuts are unlikely to be fully reversed over the next few years.

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The deficit has now returned to pre-financial crisis levels

Figure 1.1 Total public sector spending and receipts, 2018/19 prices



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Office for Budget Responsibility, Public finances databank, December 2019. Values are deflated to 2018/19 prices using the GDP deflator.

In 2018/19, the government raised £813bn in revenue, equivalent to 38% of national income (or GDP, the measured annual value of all economic activity taking place in the UK). In the same financial year it spent £851bn. This represents a deficit – the difference between what the public sector spends and the revenue it receives – at a level lower than at any time since the 2008 financial crisis.

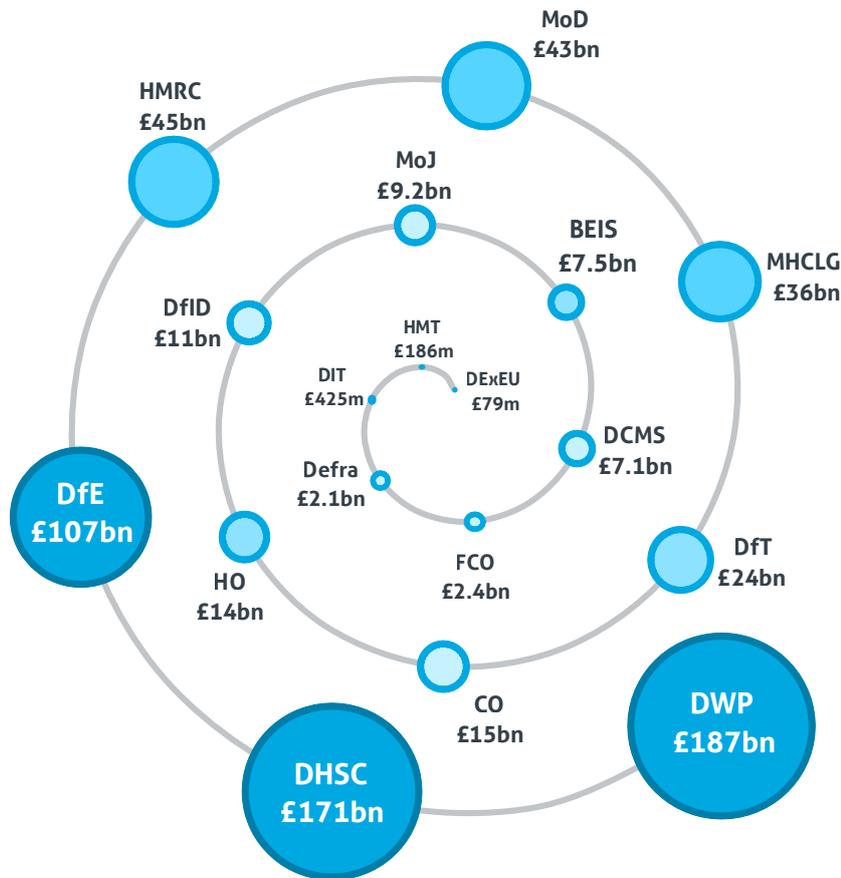
When the coalition government entered office two years after that crisis began, in May 2010, much of its focus was on reducing the deficit. The deficit has since been reduced from almost £185bn in 2009/10 (the financial year before the coalition took office) to £38bn in 2018/19. This was achieved through a growth in public sector revenues (over 90% of which is tax revenue) and controls on public spending. The latter has barely grown in real terms (that is, adjusting for economy-wide inflation) since 2010/11 – a spending squeeze that is unprecedented in post-war UK history.

However, this era of public spending restraint appears to be ending. While the 2010, 2013 and 2015 spending reviews set out plans to reduce spending by government departments, in July 2018 the then prime minister, Theresa May, and her chancellor, Philip Hammond, announced a big settlement for the NHS as a “70th birthday present”.¹ They then signalled that the 2019 spending review would herald the “end of austerity”.² In the event, the 2019 spending announcement was delivered by a new chancellor, Sajid Javid, under a new prime minister, Boris Johnson. It covered only one year, taking the title ‘spending round’, rather than following the traditional multi-year spending review format.

The 2019 spending round provided a substantial boost to many areas for 2020/21, including the Home Office and Ministry of Justice (MoJ). While a longer, more wide-ranging review is planned for 2020, the scale of promises made by Johnson since his leadership campaign in July 2019, and further commitments made during the general election campaign in December, mean big increases in public service spending seem almost inevitable over the next few years.

DWP, DHSC and DfE have the biggest departmental budgets

Figure 1.2 Total managed expenditure (TME) by department, 2018/19



Source: Institute for Government analysis of HM Treasury, Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2019, table 1.12, July 2019. HMT shows administration spending only. BEIS excludes Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

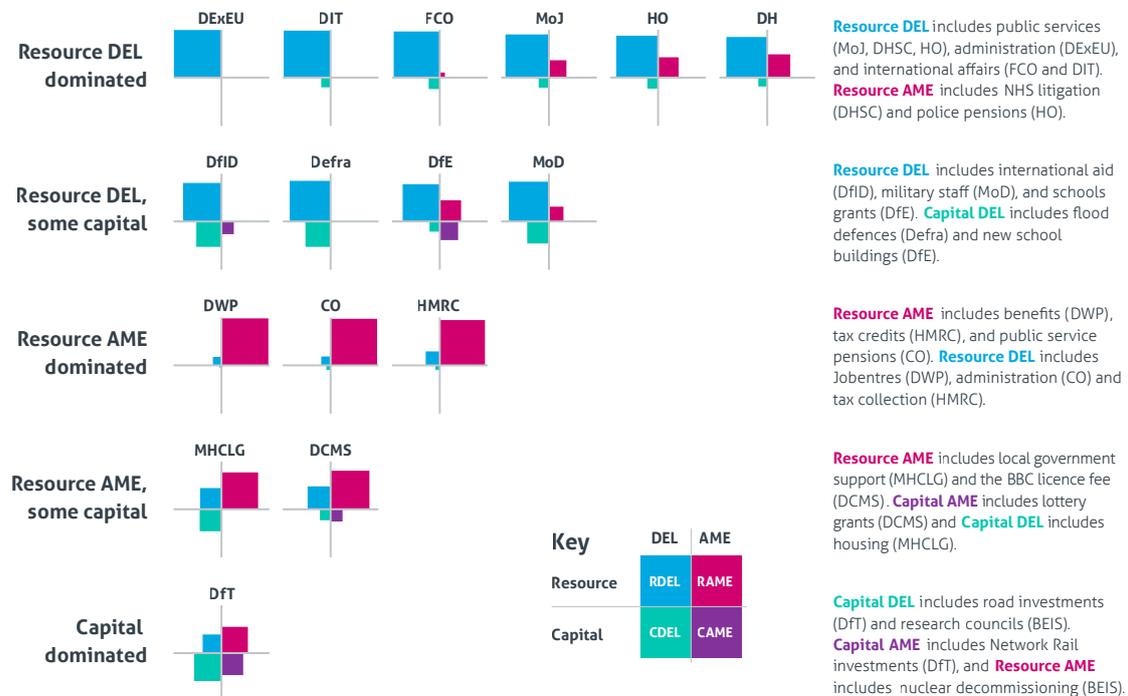
Most government spending is conducted by central government departments. By far the largest of these in terms of annual total managed expenditure (TME) are:

- the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) with £187bn (22% of all spending), which covers pension and social security payments
- the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) with £171bn, which covers NHS funding and public health in England (health care is devolved to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)
- the Department for Education (DfE) with £107bn, which covers schools, and further and higher education.

Spending by DHSC has risen the most quickly over recent years. This rose by 11% in real terms between 2016/17 and 2018/19, a result of modest planned real-terms increases set out in the 2015 spending review and additional resources committed to it after that. Spending on the NHS (the majority of the DHSC budget) is now the subject of a long-term settlement and will increase by £20.5bn in real terms between 2018/19 and 2023/24.³

It is not surprising that health spending is rising more quickly than for other areas because this is where demand pressures are greatest (given, for example, the UK’s ageing population).⁴ Previous experience suggests that actual spending on the NHS will increase by even more than current plans, as governments have historically topped-up their health spending plans with regularity over spending review periods.⁵

Figure 1.3 **Composition of total managed expenditure (TME) by department, 2018/19**



Source: Institute for Government analysis of HM Treasury, Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2019, tables 1.3 and 1.8. HMT and BEIS excluded due to negative TME values.

However, looking only at TME across departments masks important differences in the role of departments in controlling their budgets. Spending can be defined in two ways. First, by how budgets are managed:

- **Departmental expenditure limits (DEL)** cover the areas of public spending – on public services like schools and hospitals, public administration and some investments – over which central government has a high degree of control. DEL can reasonably be set several years in advance at a spending review (usually for multi-year periods, though not in the case of the 2019 spending round). Departments cannot overshoot their allocated budget.
- **Annually managed expenditure (AME)** covers those areas of public spending that are harder to control and “cannot reasonably be subject to firm multi-year limits”.⁶ This includes demand-driven benefits, central government debt interest and local authority expenditure financed through locally raised taxes.

Or second, by what it is invested in:

- **Resource spending** relates to day-to-day operations. This breaks down into administration spending, which covers departmental running costs such as salaries, and programme spending, which covers public services and benefits.

- **Capital spending** adds to the public sector's fixed assets, such as transport infrastructure (for example, roads and rail) and public buildings. This also includes spending on research and development.

Within these divisions there are four types of spending: resource DEL (RDEL), resource AME (RAME), capital DEL (CDEL) and capital AME (CAME). The strict controls on how departments spend their money mean that allocations to one category cannot be used for others (however, with Treasury approval, departments can move money between CDEL and RDEL budgets).

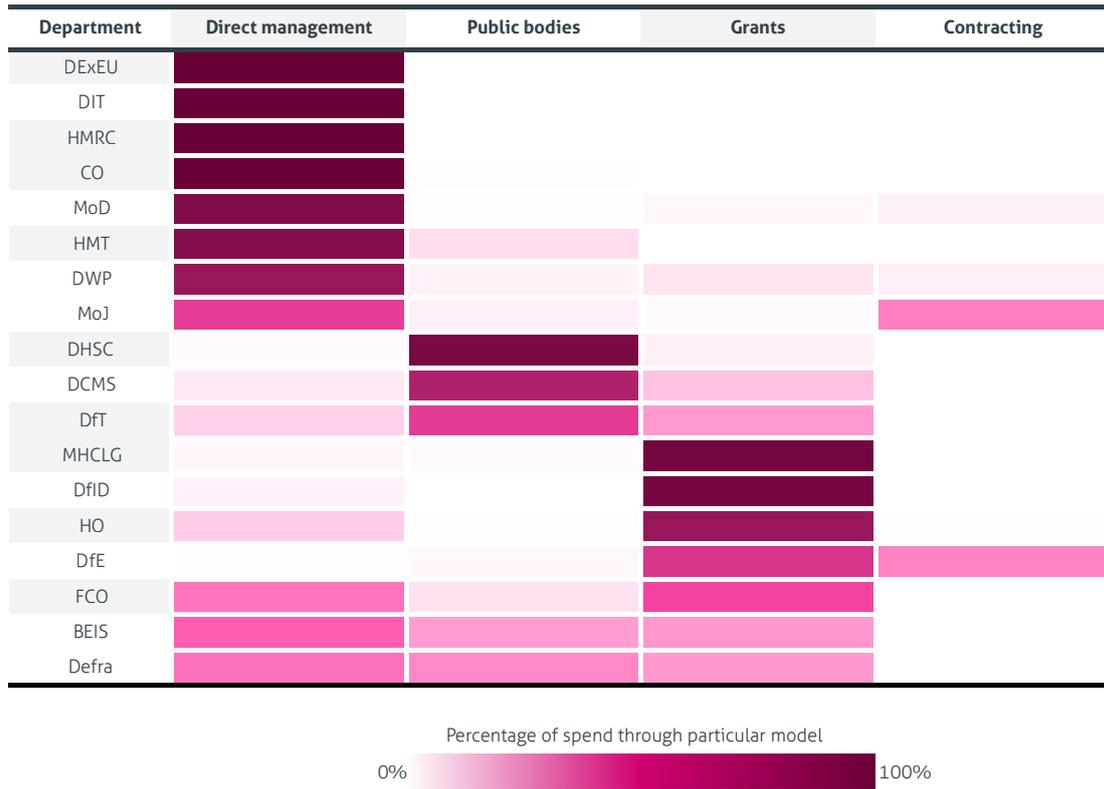
Across government, RDEL (39%) and CDEL (7%) together make up just under half of all government spending. AME makes up the remainder, with by far the largest single element being social security benefits and tax credits (including pensions).

As noted, AME spending cannot be controlled directly. While savings have been made, for example by cutting the real-terms value of working-age benefits, overall AME has increased in real terms since 2010 (due to a growing population, there being more pensioners – with more generous pensions – and higher debt interest), while departmental spending has fallen.

Some departments have little direct control over the spending that is attributed to them. Most of DWP's budget is spent on social security payments that are determined by pre-set eligibility rules. Likewise, Cabinet Office and HMRC spending is dominated by public service pensions and tax credits respectively. While each of these departments is designated a large amount of TME, they are not responsible for the money spent in any meaningful sense (as most of their budget falls into AME rather than DEL).

By contrast, 'spending departments' have big DEL budgets. Spending on the NHS at DHSC, on schools at DfE and on army personnel and equipment at the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is included within DEL. DEL budgets are subject to more control from the department.

Figure 1.4 How departments managed their day-to-day budgets (RDEL), 2018/19



Source: Institute for Government analysis of HM Treasury, Online System for Central Accounting Reporting (OSCAR), and departmental annual reports and accounts for 2018/19. Indicative only.

This does not mean that all DEL spending is under the direct management of the department.

Departments differ in how they manage their spending. Some have a lot of control over how their resources are deployed (direct management), which includes staff costs as well as spending on goods and back-office services. Others fund public bodies (also known as arm’s-length bodies or quangos), which have varying degrees of day-to-day independence from ministers but whose strategic objectives are set either by them or by government departments.

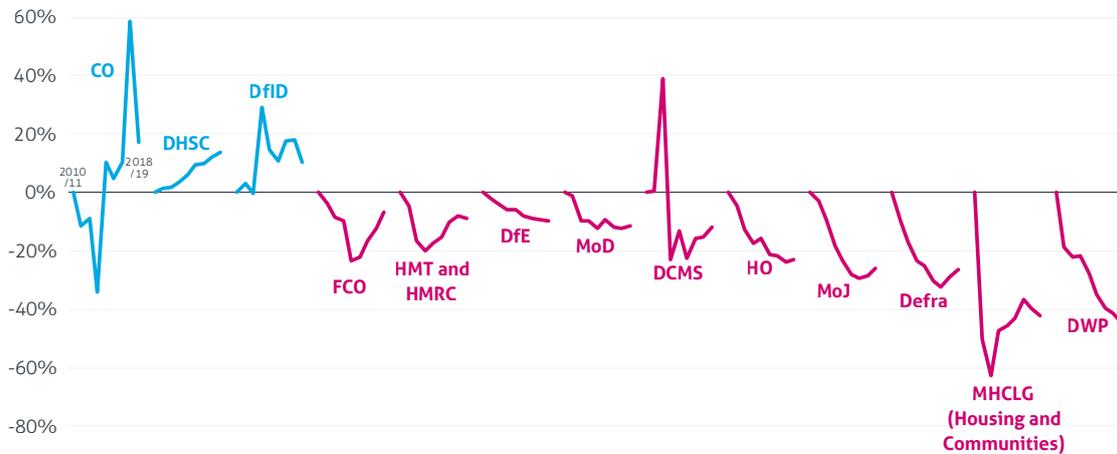
Some departments pay organisations that are independent of central government (for example, local government) in the form of grants, which gives central government limited control over how the money is spent.

Finally, although not the dominant funding model of any department, some day-to-day spending is disbursed through contracts with third parties – such as businesses or charities – which help to run a public service.

In cases where DEL spending is not subject to direct departmental management, the department still maintains meaningful control over the amounts spent, if not how that money is spent. Given that our focus in this report is on Whitehall, the rest of this chapter looks specifically at RDEL spending – day-to-day spending on administration, policies and programmes.

Day-to-day spending is lower for most departments than in 2010, but is now rising in most areas

Figure 1.5 Real-terms change in departments' RDEL budget since 2010/11



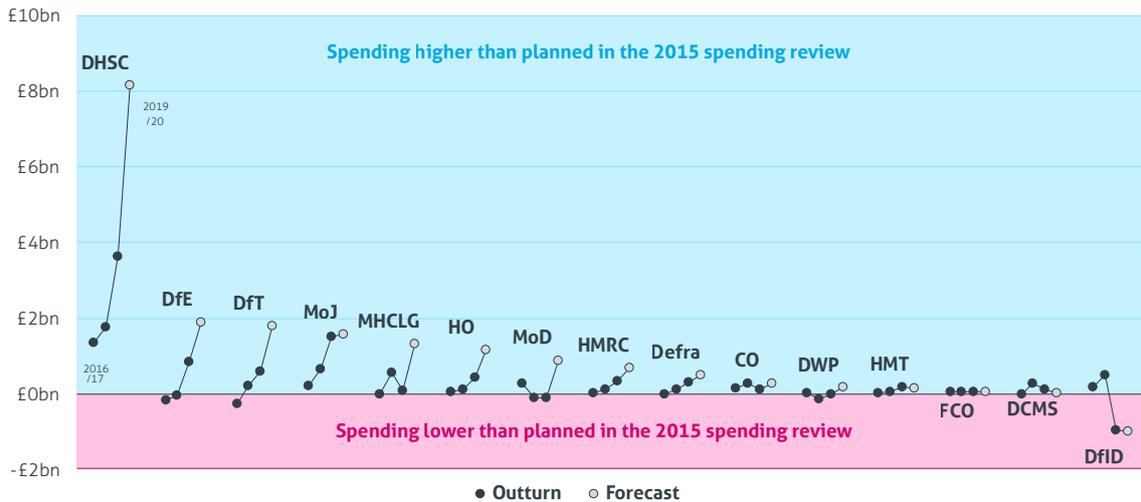
Source: Institute for Government analysis of HM Treasury, PESA 2016–19. Covers changes resulting from policy decisions, rather than machinery of government or classification changes.

Only the Cabinet Office, DHSC and the Department for International Development (DfID) have larger budgets now (in real terms) than they did in 2010. This is because parts of DHSC's and DfID's budgets were ring-fenced; the recent spike at the Cabinet Office was due to the cost of holding the 2017 general election. The election in December 2019 means that we can also expect a spike in Cabinet Office spending in 2019/20.

Other departments' budgets were cut far more steeply between 2010/11 and 2016/17, in some cases by more than a quarter – for example the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), MoJ, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and DWP.

Since bottoming out in 2016/17, spending is now increasing in most departments. Budgets for 2019/20 (the current fiscal year) are higher in real terms than in 2016/17 in all departments except for DfID, MHCLG and DWP – though this still leaves most departments with significantly smaller budgets than in 2010. That said, it is notable that, for most, budgets have not been cut in real terms over the last couple of years.

Figure 1.6 Departmental RDEL spending compared with 2015 spending review plans



Source: Institute for Government analysis of HM Treasury, PESA 2016–19. Covers changes resulting from policy decisions, rather than machinery of government or classification changes.

Any real-terms increases that have materialised over the last couple of years were not planned at the 2015 spending review, which in setting budgets up to 2019/20 pencilled in further real-terms cuts beyond 2016/17 for most departments. This is because, for the most part, the limits set out in the spending review have not been observed, largely as a result of haphazard additional funding announcements made since autumn 2016.

In 2018/19, DHSC spent £4bn more than initially planned as a result of additional spending announcements made after the spending review, and is now expected to spend £8bn more than the 2015 settlement in 2019/20. DfE, the Department for Transport (DfT) and MoJ all spent over £500 million more than budgeted for in 2018/19.

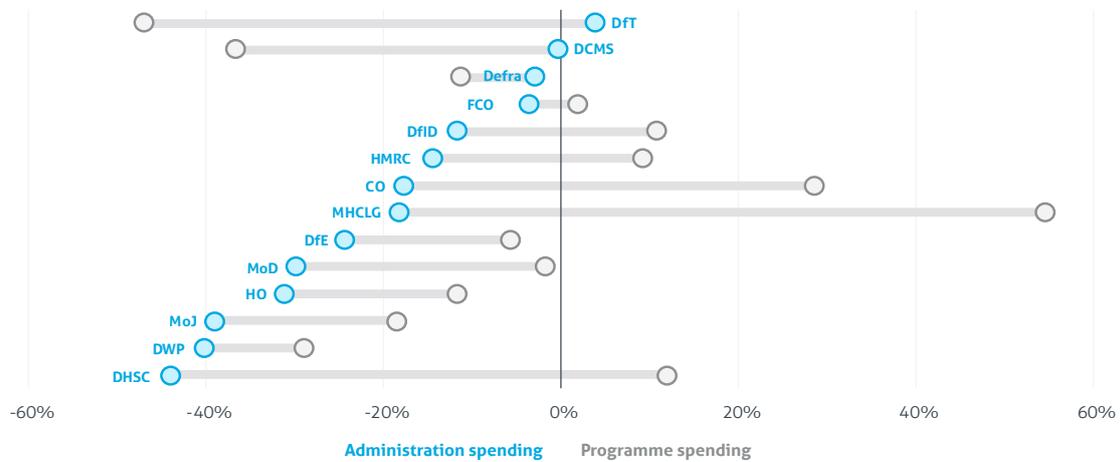
The only department that is spending much less than planned is DfID, which spent £1bn less than originally planned in 2018/19. This is mainly because the government has a target to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income on overseas aid each year; with economic growth being slower than anticipated, overseas aid spending has therefore also risen more slowly.

In recent years, spending plans have been effectively abandoned, as the level of cuts proposed proved to be infeasible if public services were to be kept at a level deemed acceptable by government and the public. This highlights serious problems with the spending review process. Recent Institute for Government research has highlighted that spending reviews tend to be dominated by clashes between ministers for scraps of cash, rather than being based on long-term planning that focuses on the results of spending and the performance and efficiency of public services.⁷

The 2019 spending round committed to real-terms increases for the NHS (DHSC) and schools (DfE), with further real-terms increases planned for most departments in 2020/21. However, even these increases will still leave most departments with budgets that are significantly smaller than in 2010.

Administrative spending remains further below its 2010 level than programme spending

Figure 1.7 Change in programme and administrative spending, 2012/13 to 2018/19 (real terms)



Source: Institute for Government analysis of HM Treasury, PESA 2016–19, tables 1.5 and 1.7.

A relatively small fraction of departments’ day-to-day budgets is spent directly on the operation of Whitehall. Total net administrative spending within RDEL in 2018/19 was £10bn, just 3% of the total. Most goes on civil service staff (£7bn) and the procurement of goods and services (£4bn), while the sale of goods and services generates an income of £1.5bn to partly fund these expenditures.

Administrative spending has fallen by more than programme spending in most departments and in total has fallen by 26% since 2012/13 in real terms. This represents a significant squeeze in resources for Whitehall operations, and includes a 20% fall in real-terms spending on staff. Given the current planned pace of spending increases over the next five years,⁸ unless administration receives a disproportionate funding increase it is likely to remain well below 2012 levels for many years to come.



2 Ministers

After nearly a decade of coalition, small-majority and minority government, the 2019 general election gave Boris Johnson the largest parliamentary majority since 2001 and the largest Conservative majority since 1987. This should make it much easier for his government to get legislation through Parliament and to deliver its agenda – but turnover of ministers and special advisers, as well as possible changes to the structure of Whitehall departments, could add other difficulties.

The 2017–19 parliament began with Theresa May as prime minister, governing thanks to a confidence and supply agreement with the Democratic Unionist Party, having lost the slender Conservative majority in the 2017 general election. That parliament encompassed an unprecedented number of ministerial resignations, more changes of political allegiance (as MPs defected or had the whip removed – and restored) than in any other parliament since at least the second world war and more government defeats in the House of Commons than in any parliament since the 1970s, thanks largely to the political consequences of Brexit.

It ended with Boris Johnson as prime minister, who then led the Conservatives to a comprehensive victory in the December 2019 general election.

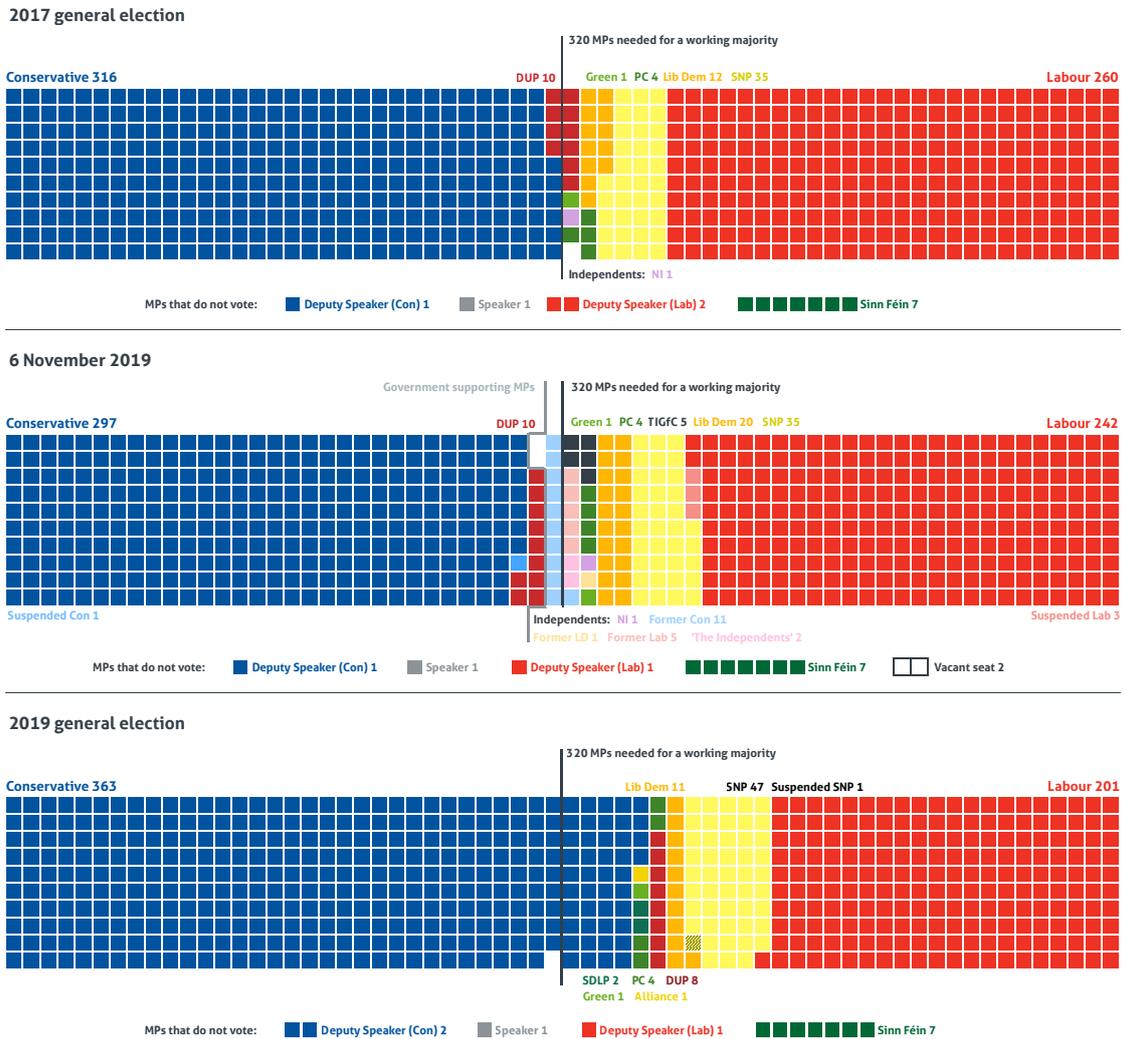
A working parliamentary majority of 87 should make it easier for the government to pass the Withdrawal Agreement Bill (at the time of publication currently in the House of Lords, third reading scheduled for 21 January), which should lead to the UK formally leaving the EU on 31 January 2020. The new government will also want to stamp its authority through reshuffles and changing the departmental landscape.

But with this comes possible pitfalls: excessive ministerial turnover could disrupt the government's attempts to deliver on its promises, with three quarters of all current ministers already having only been in post since July 2019. Similarly, the process of creating, merging or abolishing government departments costs time and energy.

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The Johnson government has the largest parliamentary majority since 2001

Figure 2.1 Composition of Parliament as at 2017 general election, 6 November 2019 and 2019 general election



Source: Institute for Government analysis of parliament.uk and election results via BBC News.

When the MPs that do not vote (the Speaker, Deputy Speakers and Sinn Féin) are taken into account, the government has an effective working majority of 87.¹ This should make it much easier for it to pass legislation – in stark contrast to the parliamentary and political complications of the previous parliament.

In the course of the 2017–19 parliament, in which Theresa May was prime minister for all but three months, the government lost 39 votes in the House of Commons. Tony Blair’s majority government lost only five in 10 years; Margaret Thatcher’s just four in 11 and a half. James Callaghan is the only post-war prime minister to have suffered more Commons defeats than May.

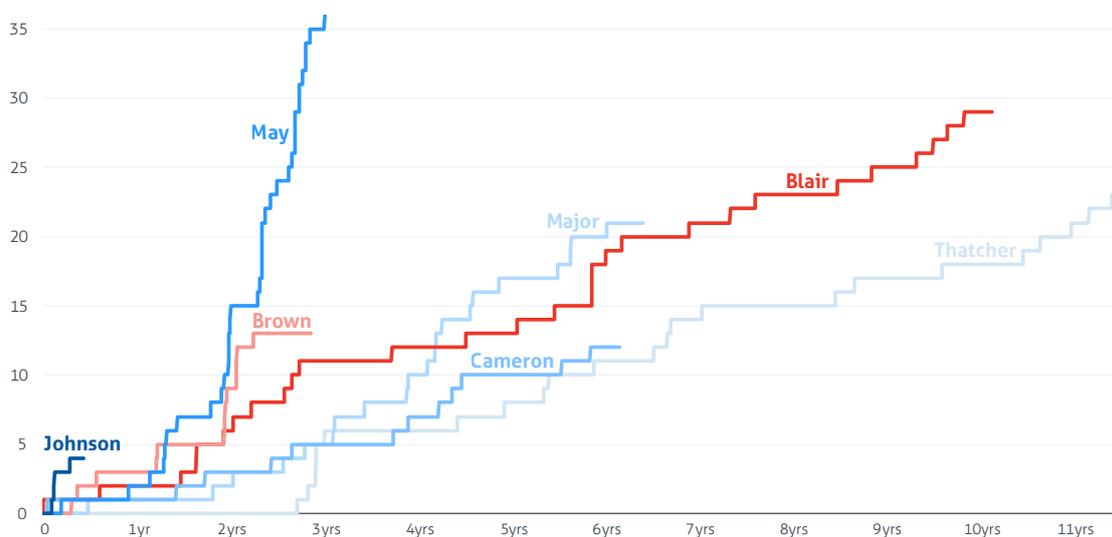
There were 89 changes of allegiance, by 52 different MPs, as they defected or resigned the whip – or had the whip suspended, removed and restored. These were prompted variously by disagreements over Brexit policy and party leadership, allegations of sexual harassment and criminal investigations. This is a post-war record – more than

the 35 changes during the 1979–83 parliament, when the Social Democratic Party was formed, and the 56 in 1966–70, which included 24 Labour MPs having the whip withdrawn for a month.

By way of illustration, the Liberal Democrats had 12 MPs after the 2017 general election, lost one (Stephen Lloyd) over their position on a second EU referendum, but gained nine through defections from other parties – a number of whom had left their original party for Change UK/The Independent Group for Change, and then left that party for The Independents.

The Conservatives lost 22 MPs on a single day in September 2019 – most dramatically Phillip Lee, who ‘crossed the floor’ to defect to the Liberal Democrats as Johnson was delivering a speech in the Commons. The party then withdrew the whip from 21 MPs, including former Cabinet ministers, over their voting against the government on a no-deal Brexit.

Figure 2.2 **Number of ministerial resignations outside reshuffles, 4 May 1979 to 31 December 2019**



Source: Institute for Government ministerial database and analysis of sources including: Butler D and Butler G, *Twentieth-Century British Political Facts 1900–2000*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2000; the House of Commons Library; and King A and Allen N, ‘Off with their heads: British prime ministers and the power to dismiss’, *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 40, no. 2, pp. 249–78. Leave comments, corrections or suggestions at <http://bit.ly/20XZ81a>. We have excluded those resignations announced before a reshuffle but effectively taking place during it – for example, Hurd (1995), Smith/Blears/Hughes/Watson (2009) and Dunlop (2017) – and sackings.

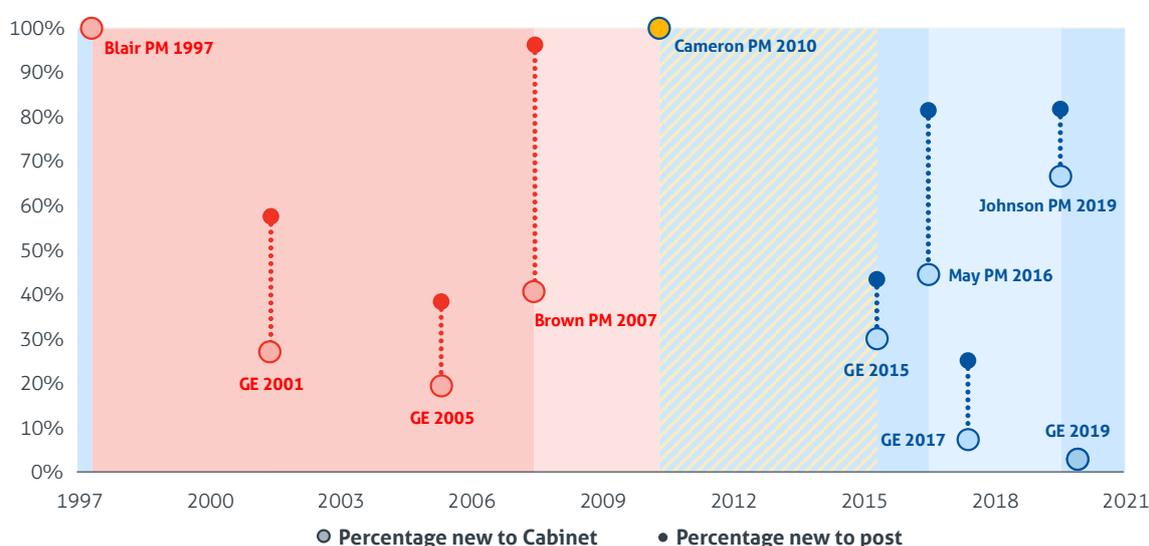
Perhaps most infamously, 38 ministers, including 11 ministers in or attending Cabinet, resigned outside reshuffles during the parliament. This does not include Alun Cairns, who quit as Wales secretary the day after Parliament was dissolved; Gavin Williamson, who became the first minister to be sacked outside a reshuffle since 1981; three other ministers who announced in advance they would stand down at a reshuffle; or one who stood down temporarily.² On one day in November 2018, four ministers resigned – the most in a single day since 1932.³

May's premiership included a record number of ministerial resignations under a British prime minister since at least 1900 – 36 in all, including 24 over political or policy disagreement, 22 of which related to Brexit (the other two being Greg Hands over Heathrow, and Tracey Crouch over fixed-odds betting terminals).

Four ministers then resigned in the first four months of the Johnson premiership: George Young (who has served as a minister under every Conservative prime minister since Thatcher) over Johnson's decision to prorogue Parliament; Amber Rudd over Brexit and the decision to expel the 'rebel' Conservative MPs; Jo Johnson (the prime minister's brother), who was "torn between family loyalty and the national interest"; and Alun Cairns over claims he knew about a former aide's role in the collapse of a rape trial.⁴

Although the December 2019 reshuffle was minimal, recent ministerial turnover remains high

Figure 2.3 Cabinet turnover following general elections and new prime ministers



Source: Institute for Government ministerial database and analysis of news coverage. Includes full Cabinet members and Cabinet attendees. GE = general election.

Following the 2019 general election, only one Cabinet position changed hands, with Simon Hart replacing Alun Cairns as secretary of state for Wales. Nicky Morgan (who did not stand in the election) and Zac Goldsmith (who lost his seat) both maintained their positions in and attending Cabinet, respectively, after being elevated to the House of Lords. Excepting where the party of government changed, this was the lowest percentage turnover following a general election or change of prime minister since at least 1997.⁵

Johnson's July 2019 'reshuffle' – in effect, the formation of a new government – after becoming prime minister was a very different story.⁶ A higher percentage of ministers – 22 out of 33, or two thirds – entered Cabinet than at any other reshuffle after a general election or change of prime minister since at least 1997 (again excepting where the party of government changed). Nineteen ministers left Cabinet altogether – higher than the reshuffles when John Major succeeded Margaret Thatcher, Gordon Brown succeeded Tony Blair, and Theresa May succeeded David Cameron.

Thirteen ministers attended Cabinet for the first time – again, higher than the number following any recent change of prime ministers from the same party.

Six of those entering Cabinet had previously served and then resigned under May: Boris Johnson himself, Dominic Raab (foreign secretary), Priti Patel (home secretary), Andrea Leadsom (business secretary), Esther McVey (housing minister) and Jo Johnson (universities minister; he resigned in September 2019).

Six ministers stayed in the same role: Steve Barclay (Brexit secretary), Matt Hancock (health secretary), Amber Rudd (work and pensions secretary; she also would resign in September 2019), Baroness Evans (Lords leader), Alun Cairns (Wales secretary; he resigned in November 2019) and Geoffrey Cox (attorney general).

Figure 2.4 Secretaries of state (or equivalent) at each department since May 2010 (as at 16 December 2019)

Department	Post holders							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DCMS	Hunt	Miller	Javid	Whittingdale	Bradley	Hancock	Wright	Morgan
MoJ	Clarke	Grayling	Gove	Truss	Lidington	Gauke	Buckland	
DWP	Duncan Smith	Crabb	Green	Gauke	McVey	Rudd	Coffey	
MoD	Fox	Hammond	Fallon	Williamson	Mordaunt	Wallace		
CO	Maude	Hancock	Gummer	Green	Lidington	Dowden		
DFID	Mitchell	Greening	Patel	Mordaunt	Stewart	Sharma		
Defra	Spelman	Paterson	Truss	Leadsom	Gove	Villiers		
FCO	Hague	Hammond	Johnson	Hunt	Raab			
DfT	Hammond	Greening	McLoughlin	Grayling	Shapps			
DfE	Gove	Morgan	Greening	Hinds	Williamson			
NIO	Paterson	Villiers	Brokenshire	Bradley	Smith			
DCLG/MHCLG	Pickles	Clark	Javid	Brokenshire	Jenrick			
Scot	Alexander	Moore	Carmichael	Mundell	Jack			
Wal	Gillan	Jones	Crabb	Cairns	Hart			
HO	May	Rudd	Javid	Patel				
DExEU	Davis	Raab	Barclay					
DH/DHSC	Lansley	Hunt	Hancock					
HMT	Osborne	Hammond	Javid					
DIT	Fox	Truss						
BEIS	Clark	Leadsom						
DECC	Huhne	Davey	Rudd					
BIS	Cable	Javid						

Key

- Appointed by Boris Johnson
- Appointed by Theresa May
- Appointed by David Cameron
- Liberal Democrats

Source: Institute for Government ministerial database, using sources including GOV.UK/government/ministers.

A new prime minister will obviously want to put a stamp on his or her new administration through appointing people to new roles. But the Institute for Government has written extensively about the disruption caused by extensive ministerial turnover, as both new ministers and their departments take time to adjust to new priorities and personalities. Former chancellor Kenneth Clarke told the Institute that:

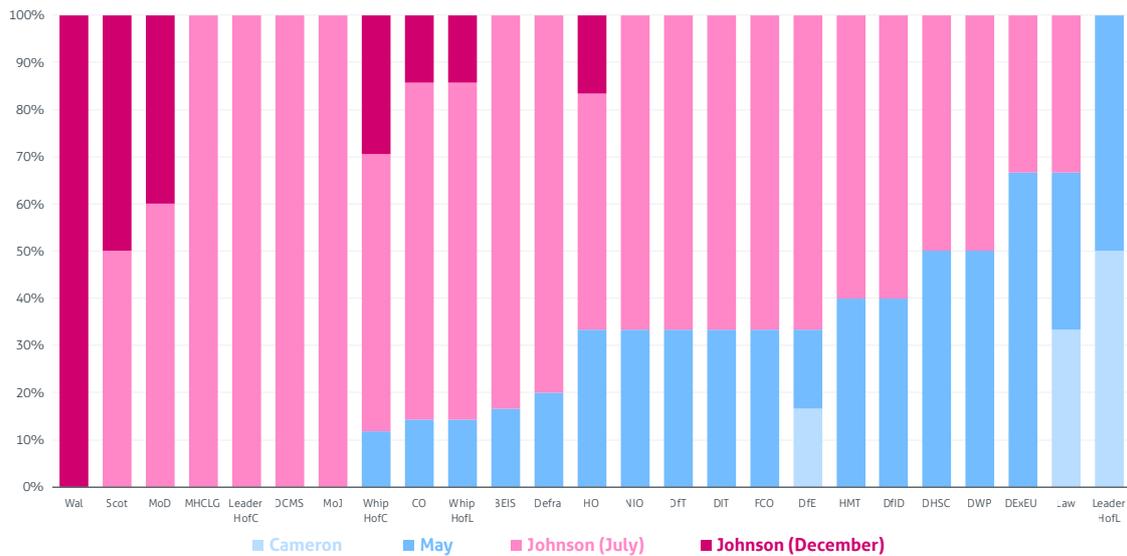
“After six months... you have got an agenda. You know exactly what you are going to do. The next stage, after two years, you are really on top of it. I mean, you really are comfortable, you are doing things. But you realise that the decisions you took after six months were wrong and you have changed your mind. After two years, you are sitting in control now, behind your desk, where you are really going to do this, this, and this. And then the phone rings and the prime minister is having a reshuffle and you move on to the next department and you are back at the beginning, there you are, panicking again.”⁷

Some departments have had more changes at the top than others over the last decade. Nicky Morgan is the eighth secretary of state at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) since May 2010 – a department that has grown considerably (a 77% increase in staff numbers since 2010) and taken on significant new responsibilities including government data, the digital economy and the charity sector.

Robert Buckland is the seventh secretary of state at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) since 2010 (and the fourth since July 2016), a department which has had to deal with issues from rising prison violence to probation reform. Thérèse Coffey is the seventh secretary of state at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) – which has been grappling with the Universal Credit rollout – in the same period, and the sixth since Sir Iain Duncan Smith’s resignation in March 2016.

Before his resignation, Alun Cairns had been the longest-serving Cabinet attendee in the same post, David Cameron having appointed him as Wales secretary in March 2016. This leaves Nick Gibb (a junior minister at the Department for Education, DfE), Lord Keen of Elie (advocate general for Scotland) and Lord Howe (deputy leader of the Lords) as the only ministers across the whole of government still in posts given to them by David Cameron.

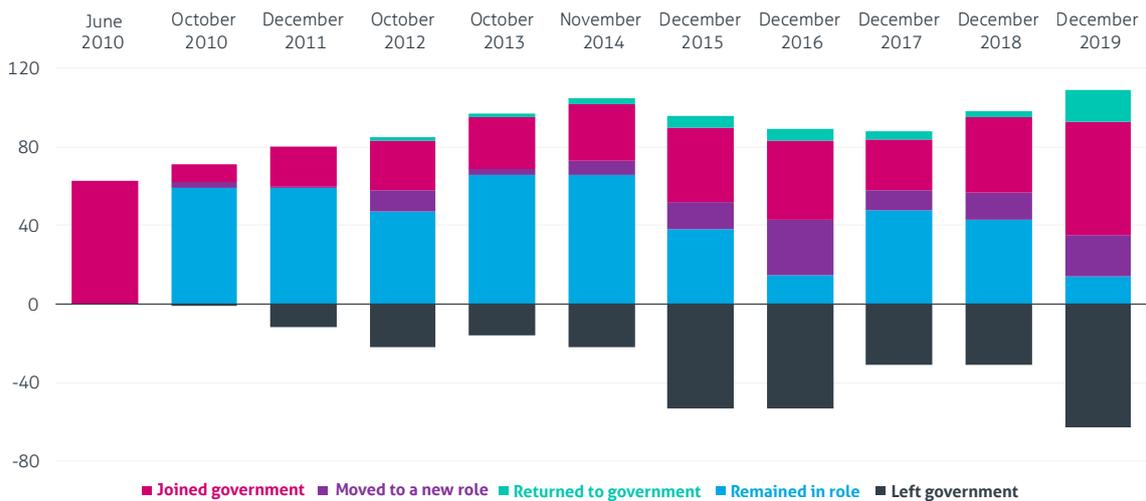
Figure 2.5 Which prime minister appointed ministers to their current post, as at 31 December 2019



Source: Institute for Government ministerial database, using sources including GOV.UK and parliament.uk. Johnson (July) includes all changes before December (for example, in response to resignations in September).

Turnover at junior ministerial level also matters, with junior ministers often doing much of the work driving policies through and representing their departments in Parliament. Across the whole of government, nearly three quarters of all ministerial roles – the majority of which are at junior ministerial level – are held by ministers appointed since July 2019 (and one in 10 by people appointed in that December). In some departments, every minister is new to their role since summer 2019, including DCMS, MoJ, the Ministry of Defence (MoD, although some ministers have at least been promoted to new roles within the department) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Figure 2.6 Turnover of special advisers, June 2010 to December 2019



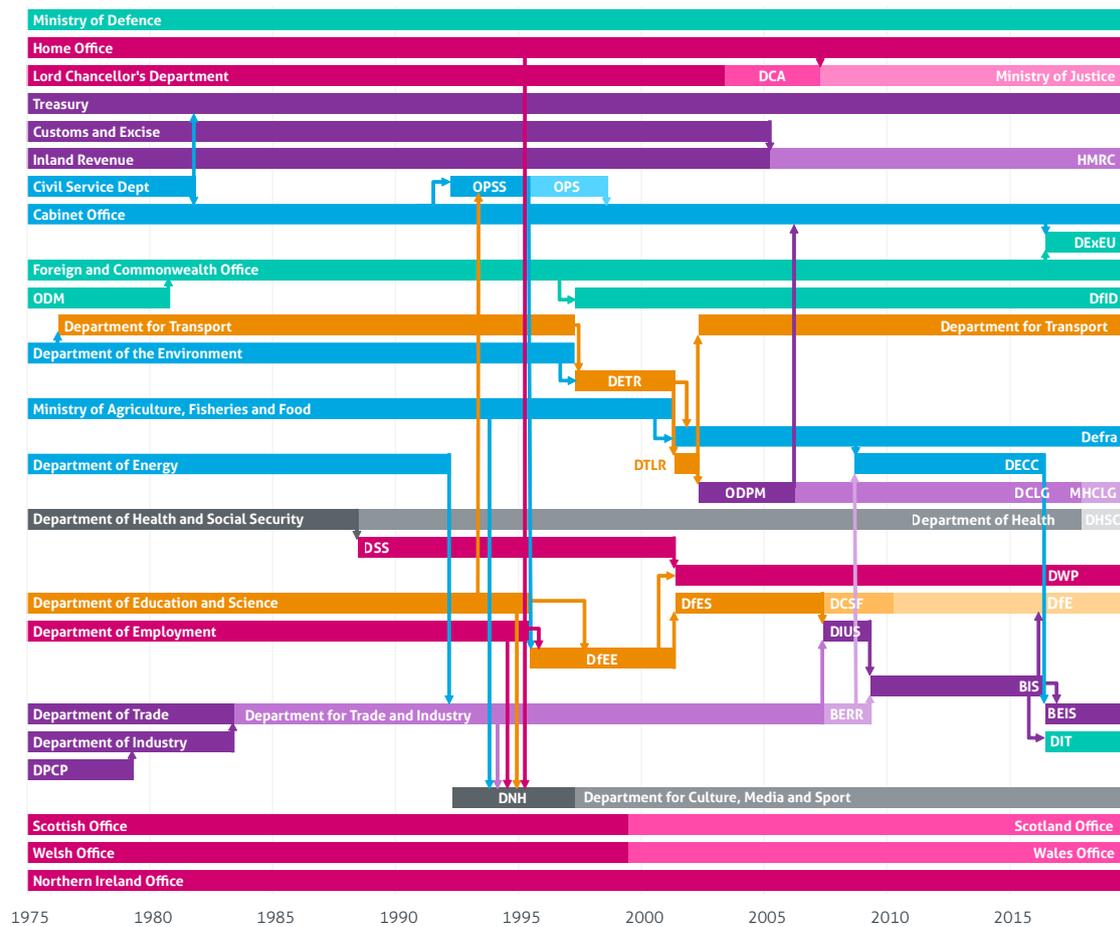
Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office, special adviser data releases, June 2010 to December 2019. Categories calculated as change from previous data point. 'Moved to a new role' indicates a change of department.

Ministerial changes often prompt turnover of special advisers (SpAds; temporary civil servants who provide political support to ministers).⁸ Sixty-three SpAds who were in post in December 2018 had left government by December 2019, more than between any of the other annual data releases since 2010 – including the departure of all Liberal Democrat SpAds in 2015 and the transition from Cameron to May in 2016. Only 14 stayed in the same post (fewer than at any other point since 2010) and 21 moved between departments.

More than half (58, or 53%) of the current total are new to government, while 16 are returning to government after some time away. This number includes Dominic Cummings, the prime minister’s chief adviser, who was a SpAd at the Department for Education (DfE) between 2011 and 2013. There are also more SpAds – 109 – than at any point since at least 2010.

There may be more change to come

Figure 2.7 History of departmental reorganisations, 1 January 1975 to December 2019



- DCA: Department for Constitutional Affairs
- HMRC: Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs
- OPSS: Office of Public Service and Science
- OPS: Office of Public Service
- DExEU: Department for Exiting the European Union
- ODM: Ministry of Overseas Development
- DFID: Department for International Development
- DETR: Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
- Defra: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- DTLR: Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
- DECC: Department of Energy and Climate Change
- ODPM: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
- DCLG: Department for Communities and Local Government
- MHCLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- DHSC: Department of Health and Social Care
- DSS: Department for Social Security
- DWP: Department for Work and Pensions
- DfES: Department for Education and Skills
- DCSF: Department for Children, Schools and Families
- DFE: Department for Education
- DIUS: Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
- DfEE: Department for Education and Employment
- BIS: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
- BERR: Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
- BEIS: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- DIT: Department for International Trade
- DPCP: Department of Prices and Consumer Protection
- DNH: Department of National Heritage

Source: Institute for Government analysis of data from the House of Commons, and Butler D and Butler G, *Twentieth-Century British Political Facts 1900–2000*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2000. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) added 'Digital' to its title in July 2017. It was announced in December 2019 that DExEU would be abolished on 31 January 2020.

Further ministerial change is expected shortly after 31 January 2020, when the UK formally leaves the EU. But reports in the media suggest that the prime minister could implement 'machinery of government' changes as existing departments are created, merged or abolished.

Since 2010, three new departments have been created, all in July 2016: the Department for International Trade (DIT), Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), which brought together parts of the old Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

Ministers

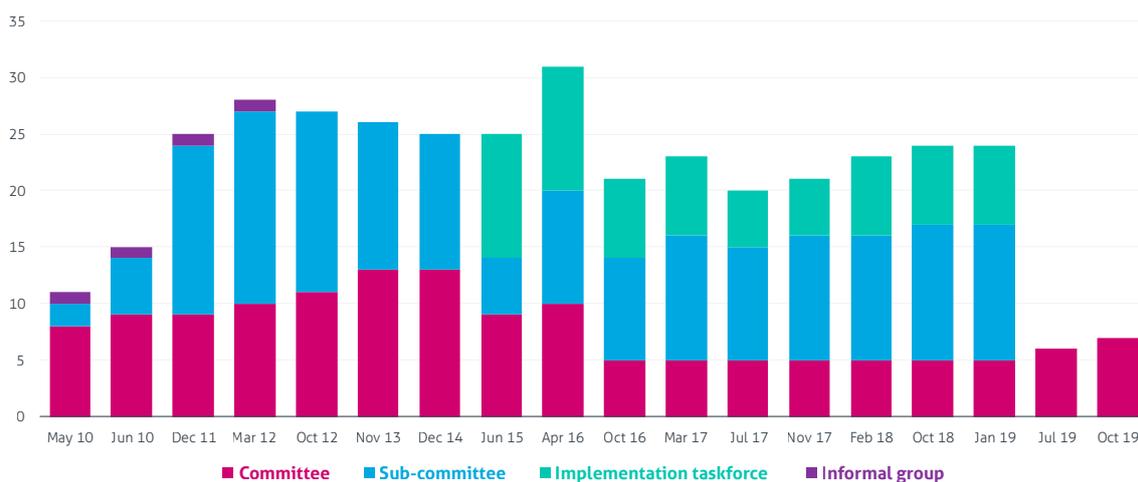
There have also been a few name changes: the Department for Children, Schools and Families became DfE in 2010, 'Digital' was added to DCMS's name in 2017, while in January 2018, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Department of Health (DH) became the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), respectively, without those departments gaining any additional policy responsibilities.

There may be good reasons for a new government wanting to reshape departments to bring together particular policy areas and focus on new priorities.⁹ But creating and dismantling departments comes with a cost: direct costs of around £15 million (m), and up to £34m in productivity costs as staff settle into the new institutional arrangements – although it has been much higher in some cases. The estimated cost of setting up DWP in 2001 exceeded £170m.¹⁰

The government has confirmed that DExEU will close at the end of January 2020, with responsibility for the EU negotiations moving to the Cabinet Office. This is a sensible decision that allows the prime minister, to whom the Cabinet Office is directly responsible, to keep a close eye on future negotiations.

Other possible changes that have been mooted include spinning out borders and immigration from the Home Office (which the Institute for Government has previously argued should be considered);¹¹ resurrecting a standalone department to tackle climate change; replacing the territorial Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland offices with a department of the Union; and various changes involving BEIS (whether taking over DIT or parts of DCMS's brief). In all of these cases, the government must think carefully about what it is trying to achieve, especially given the scale of some of the possible changes.

Figure 2.8 Number of Cabinet committees by type of body, May 2010 to October 2019



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office, 'List of Cabinet Committees', May 2010 to October 2019.

The Johnson administration has already made changes to part of the government machinery: Cabinet committees. These are groups of ministers smaller than full Cabinet that can take decisions that are binding across government.¹² Before May stepped down as prime minister, there were five Cabinet committees, 12 sub-committees and seven implementation taskforces, a Cameron-era innovation designed to 'monitor and drive delivery' of key, cross-cutting government priorities.

By contrast, Johnson's government started life with just six Cabinet committees (a seventh, on climate change, was created in October 2019):

- EU Exit Strategy (XS)
- EU Exit, Economy and Trade (XET)
- EU Exit Operations (XO)
- Domestic Affairs and the Union (DAU)
- Parliamentary Business and Legislation
- National Security Council.

This considerably slimmed-down system of committees appears to reflect the belief that the Cabinet is too big for making decisions, held by the prime minister's chief adviser, Dominic Cummings, who has said: "The idea of a cabinet of over 30 people is a complete farce; it should be maximum of probably six or seven people."¹³ Although the Cabinet itself is currently as large as it has ever been (with 33 ministers attending), this number would naturally fall if Johnson moves to abolish or merge departments after 31 January (though probably not as drastically as Cummings has suggested).

And there could be further reforms to Cabinet committees, with suggestions they could be "replaced by groups in which ministers, officials and advisers from across departments worked together on specific projects".¹⁴



3 Civil service

The civil service continues to grow – the number of civil servants working on Brexit has risen since 2016, and tripled since 2018. Since the 2016 EU referendum, the civil service has become more senior and more likely to be based in London. Gender diversity is increasing and there are more women in senior roles, although they remain under-represented in such roles, as are minority ethnic and disabled civil servants.

Civil service staff numbers have increased in every quarter since the EU referendum was held in June 2016. While some of this is due to changes in policy responsibilities (such as further and higher education moving to the Department for Education, DfE, from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, BIS) and other political issues (for example, the Ministry of Justice, MoJ, hiring more prison officers), much of the increase is in departments most affected by Brexit, such as the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the Cabinet Office.

There are currently around 25,000 civil servants working on Brexit; this is more than the number in the nine smallest Whitehall departments combined. The total number of staff working on Brexit has more than tripled since the summer of 2018. Departments have been loaning each other staff, which means Brexit has had an impact even on parts of government not directly affected by it.

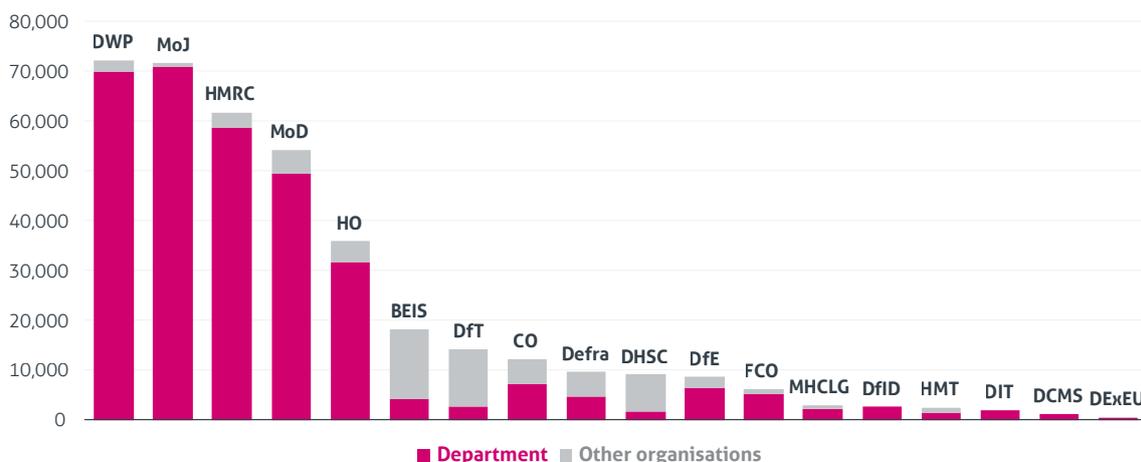
'Generation Brex' – those civil servants hired since the referendum – is changing the civil service. Although most civil servants hold junior roles, the number of civil servants in the most senior grades is growing, with more civil servants employed in the three most senior grades of the civil service than in 2010. The percentage of civil servants aged under 30 has grown steadily as the recruitment freezes put in place after 2010 have thawed, although overall the median age of civil servants has increased. Successive governments of all political persuasions have committed to move more civil servants out of London, but the number of staff based in London continues to grow and two thirds of senior civil servants are based in the capital.

The civil service has continued to make improvements on key diversity measures like gender, ethnicity and disability since 2010. There has been a clear increase in the number of women in the most senior grades. Even so, the share of minority ethnic and disabled civil servants in the senior civil service remains below that in the overall working-age population, and below that across the civil service as a whole (not including the wider public sector).

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The civil service has grown in every quarter since the EU referendum

Figure 3.1 Civil service staff numbers (FTE) by department (including other organisations), September 2019



Source: Institute for Government analysis of ONS, Public Sector Employment (table 9), Q3 2019. 'Other organisations' includes executive agencies, non-ministerial departments and Crown non-departmental public bodies. Note that 'department' includes public bodies that are directly line-managed.

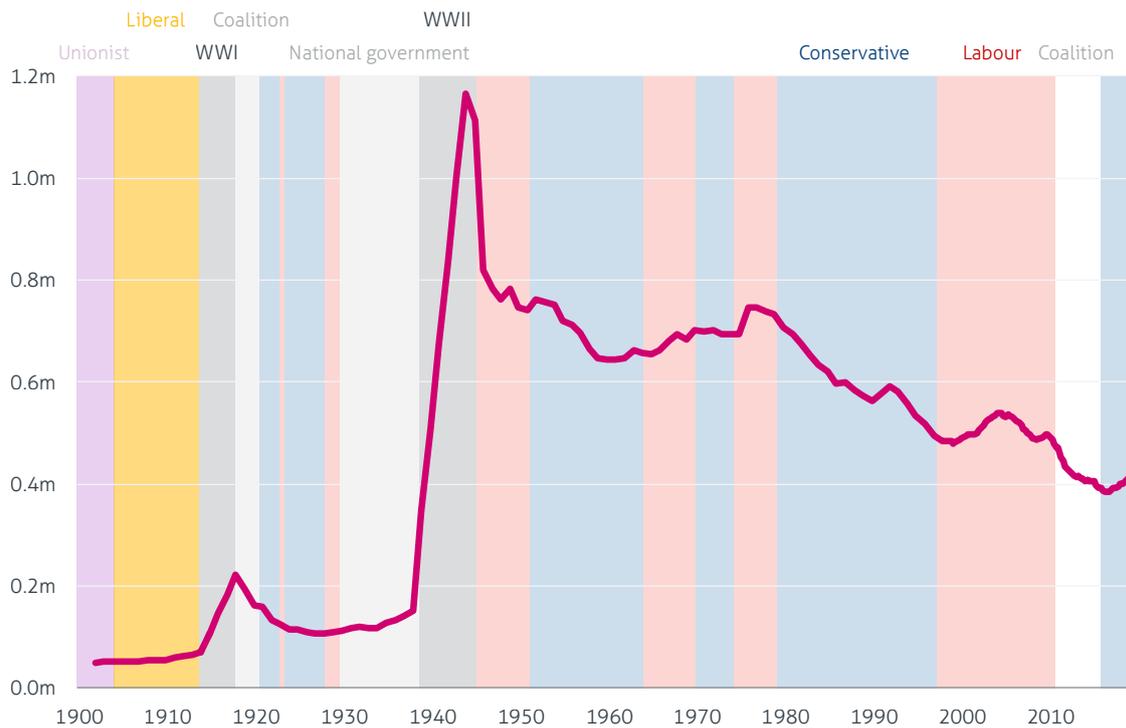
There were 419,120 civil servants (full-time equivalent) in September 2019 – around 35,000 more than in June 2016.

The five largest delivery departments – the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), MoJ, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Home Office (HO) – employ nearly 85% of all civil servants working in government departments and their directly line-managed public bodies. Policy departments tend to be much smaller. These include the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Exiting the EU (DExEU, created in 2016 to oversee negotiations to leave the EU following the referendum, and which will close on 31 January 2020).

In most cases, civil servants are employed either by the department itself or by public bodies directly line-managed by the department. DWP employs most of its staff directly, while MoJ employs around 4,300 in the department but a further 67,000 in public bodies it directly manages such as HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS).

By contrast, the Department for Transport (DfT), the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) are good examples of departments with large civil service workforces in public bodies that have greater autonomy, such as the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA, at DfT), HM Land Registry (BEIS) and NHS England (DHSC).

Figure 3.2 Civil service staff numbers (FTE), 1902 to September 2019



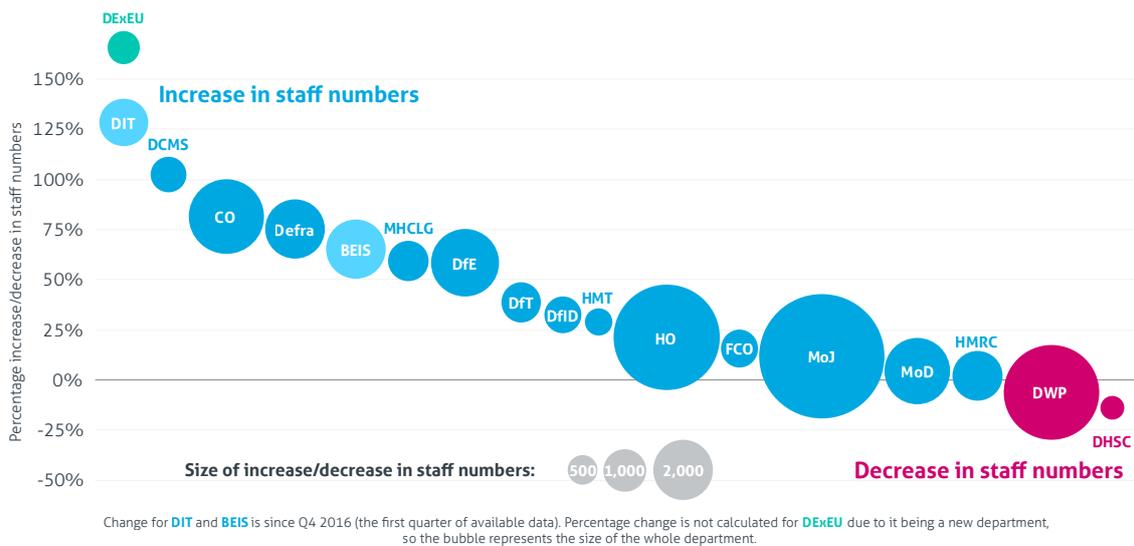
Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office, Civil Service Statistics, 1902–90; ONS, Public Sector Employment, 1991–98 annual, 1999–2019 quarterly. Excludes Central Government Security from 1999. Governments and world wars are highlighted.

Civil service staff numbers have increased from 2016, when they were at their lowest since the second world war. There were spikes in employment during both world wars, followed by reductions in numbers, albeit to higher levels than pre-war figures. The recruitment drive in the early years of the second world war was a success story. It was achieved through a major planning effort with universities and a central registry set up in the years before the war to plan where staff should be allocated.

Between the war and the early years of the Thatcher government, many 'industrial civil servants' were employed by public service industries such as the railways, or to work in dockyards. The late 1970s saw the start of a reduction in the size of the civil service. The Conservative government set targets to cut the civil service by around 100,000 by 1984. They were exceeded. Cuts fell mainly on industrial civil servants whose numbers declined by 100,000 between 1979 and 1992.¹ Overall reductions in the size of the civil service continued nearly uninterrupted, apart from some brief increases, including under New Labour after 1997.

After 2010, the coalition government reduced the size of the civil service workforce. The 2012 *Civil Service Reform Plan* expected that the civil service would be 23% smaller in 2015 compared with 2010, with around 380,000 staff.² This expectation was not met, despite reductions bringing the size of the civil service to 384,260 in 2016.

Figure 3.3 **Change in departmental staff numbers (FTE) since the EU referendum (up to September 2019)**



Source: Institute for Government analysis of ONS, Public Sector Employment (table 9), Q2 2016 to Q3 2019. These figures exclude transfers of staff that were the result of machinery of government changes.

The 2016 EU referendum was followed by a period of growth for the civil service as it began preparations to deliver Brexit. The number of civil servants has increased in every quarter since the referendum.

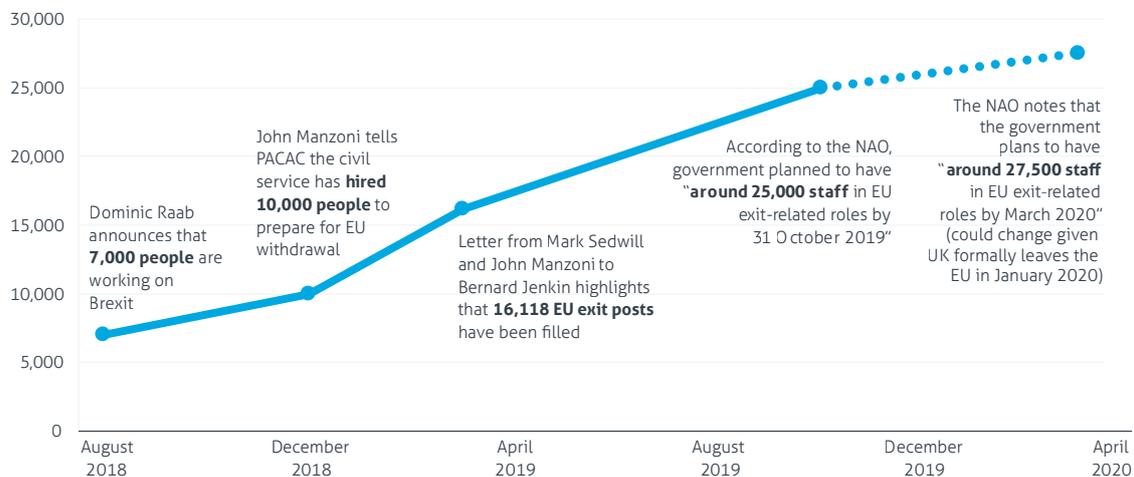
Many of the largest percentage increases in staff numbers have been in departments with workloads affected by Brexit, including DCMS, the Cabinet Office, Defra and BEIS. According to the National Audit Office (NAO), in 2017 BEIS had more programmes of work relating to Brexit (69) than any other department, with Defra and DCMS also in the top five.³ Defra and BEIS are also among those that have received the largest amounts of Brexit funding from government since 2017. The Home Office has been the largest recipient of such funding. It has been given nearly £1 billion (bn) over the period, notably to deliver new migration arrangements by 2021.⁴ Staff numbers at the Home Office have increased by more than 20% since the EU referendum.

Not all increases in staff numbers have been caused by Brexit. For example, DCMS has broadened its remit to include policy areas such as the digital economy (reflected in it changing its name to include 'Digital' in 2017).⁵ Similarly, the need to manage relationships with the growing number of academy schools has driven growth at DfE. The department has also recruited additional staff to deal with new responsibilities after higher and further education were transferred from the now-defunct BIS in 2016. The largest increase in absolute staff numbers since 2016 has been at MoJ (around 7,500 staff). This was caused by a drive to recruit prison officers following a 26% decline in numbers between 2009/10 and 2013/14, which likely contributed to a surge in prison violence.⁶

Staff numbers have fallen at two departments since 2016: DWP and DHSC. The latter planned cuts of around a third by 2020 as part of the 'DH2020' improvement programme, designed partly to reduce the size of the department.⁷ As part of this, the department faced redundancy rounds, including many voluntary exits in 2016–17; nearly 580 staff were awarded exit packages.⁸

Although it is impossible to quantify precisely, digitisation may have had an impact on staff numbers in departments like DWP and HMRC, as some administrative tasks (such as sending letters to customers) are now automated (for example at HMRC).⁹ Some of the reductions in staff numbers in large departments such as HMRC may obscure additional hires in other parts of the department to meet the demands of Brexit.¹⁰

Figure 3.4 **Number of civil servants working on Brexit**



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Dominic Raab’s speech on no-deal planning (23 August 2018); evidence given by John Manzoni to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC, Oral evidence: The work of the Cabinet Secretary, HC 1250, 13 December 2018, Q157); letter from Sir Mark Sedwill and John Manzoni to Sir Bernard Jenkin (PACAC evidence session clarification, ‘Annex: recruitment and secondments in the Civil Service’, 28 March 2019); and Comptroller and Auditor General, *The UK Border: Preparedness for EU exit*, Session 2019–2020, HC 98, National Audit Office, 16 October 2019, p. 23.

The number of civil servants working on Brexit has more than tripled since Dominic Raab, then secretary of state for exiting the EU, announced in August 2018 that 7,000 civil servants were working on Brexit.¹¹ In October 2019, there were 25,000 according to the NAO – more than the total number of staff in the nine smallest Whitehall departments combined – and it expected that this figure would be 27,500 come March 2020, although this could change in light of the UK’s formal departure from the EU in January 2020.¹²

This continuous increase partly reflects the civil service gearing up for exiting the EU in March 2019, and again in October 2019 – and stepping up no-deal planning ahead of these two deadlines. Mainly it is a reflection of the shift between policy preparations for Brexit and the delivery of these preparations.

Initially, staff numbers went up in departments that needed to fill policy roles in the early days of Brexit preparations:

- The number of civil servants in Defra has grown every quarter since the referendum and the department has gained more than 1,700 staff during the period – a 75% increase.
- The workforce in BEIS has gone up by nearly 1,700 since 2017 – a 65% increase.

Brexit still creates high demand for policy experts. According to the government, around 64% of the 5,800 civil servants recruited or seconded in departments to fill priority Brexit roles as of February 2019 were policy professionals.¹³

However, as the government began implementing programmes to deliver Brexit, the need to meet operational requirements – such as managing the UK's borders and revamping the immigration system – drove the continued growth in civil service numbers. Delivering such changes tends to require more staff than policy work does.

- The former chief executive of HMRC, Sir Jonathan Thompson, told Parliament that in the event of a no-deal Brexit, HMRC expected to hire more than 5,000 staff.¹⁴ This would have represented around a third of the 16,000 civil servants the government initially believed would be required to work on Brexit across all departments.¹⁵
- In the past year alone, the size of the workforce at the Home Office has grown by 8% (around 2,500 people). Among other initiatives, it set up an EU Settlement Resolution Centre staffed by 250 people to support EU citizens with their application to obtain the right to settle in the UK after Brexit.¹⁶

Many roles relating to Brexit were filled through staff loans and transfers between departments. In early 2019, around 4,000 civil servants from five departments – including DfE, MoD and DWP – were asked to volunteer to work on no-deal planning ahead of the March 2019 Brexit deadline.¹⁷ In the summer of 2019, the government made further plans to move 2,000 civil servants between departments, in part to prepare for the October 2019 exit date.

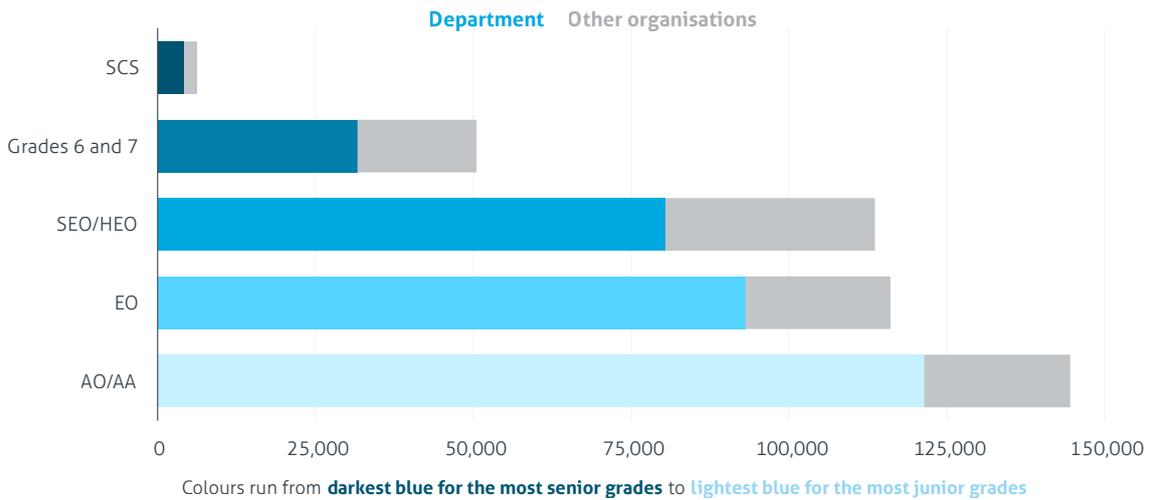
To achieve this, the civil service set up partnership arrangements, matching some departments with others, to make it easier to share staff in order to boost capacity in DfT, Defra, DExEU and HMRC. Under these arrangements, DfE loaned 100 staff to Defra in the summer of 2019, while DfT was due to receive 40 staff from MoJ.¹⁸

These transfers meant that even departments that were, in theory, less affected by Brexit had to reallocate staff. For example, 600 civil servants – one in five of all staff – at the Department for International Development (DfID) were told in December 2018 that they would be redeployed to departments that faced staff shortages due to Brexit.¹⁹ In July 2019, the BBC revealed that around 75% of the 1,036 civil servants moved for no-deal Brexit work for March 2019 had returned to their post, but such moves are disruptive to the other work of the civil service.²⁰

Many of the civil servants recruited as part of Brexit will need to stay in post even after the UK has left the EU. We have argued before that “there will be work going on across Whitehall for years to adjust to life outside the EU – whether it is developing new systems for the UK's borders or building capacity in new public bodies”.²¹ This will include new systems or processes to manage borders and customs, but also staffing new regulators or institutions, for instance to secure new trade deals or to ensure the safe use of chemicals, if the UK decides to replace EU agencies.²²

The number of civil servants in the most senior grades is rising

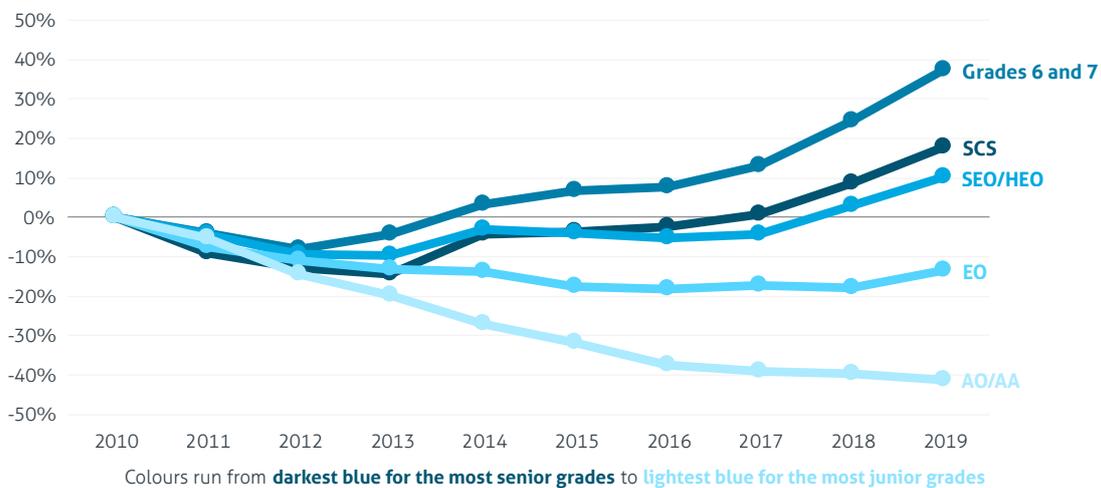
Figure 3.5 Civil service staff numbers (FTE) by grade, 2019



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office, Civil Service Statistics, 2019. SCS includes civil servants at equivalent levels. 'Other organisations' includes executive agencies, non-ministerial departments and Crown non-departmental public bodies. Note that 'department' includes public bodies that are directly line-managed.

Around 60% of civil servants work in the most junior grade bands – AO/AA (administrative officer/administrative assistant) and EO (executive officer). These roles include delivering support functions ranging from IT to diary management, or working as benefits centre staff or prison officers.

Figure 3.6 Percentage change in civil servants at each grade, 2010 to 2019 (headcount, where known)



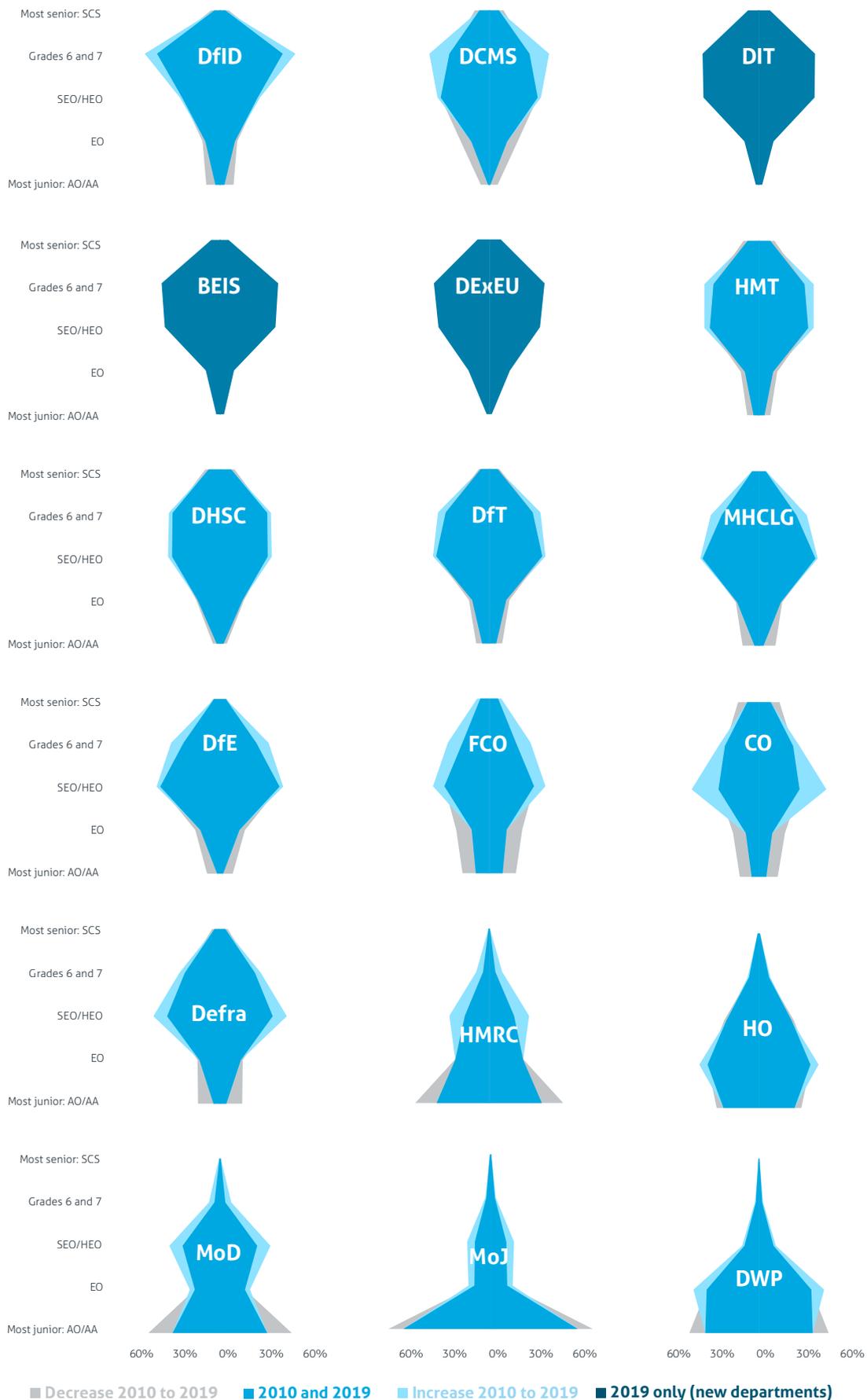
Source: Institute for Government analysis of ONS, Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2010–18; Cabinet Office, Civil Service Statistics, 2019. SCS includes civil servants at equivalent level.

Staff numbers in these junior grade bands are lower than in 2010. The most junior grade – AO/AA – has shrunk every year since 2010, and now makes up a third (34%) of all civil servants, compared with nearly half (47%) in 2010. This is likely to have been caused by a reduction in administrative and delivery staff in departments like DWP, MoD and MoJ. This fall may reflect the impact of recruitment freezes as well as the digitisation of some roles or back-office processes.

The former chief executive of HMRC argued that the impact of technology is leading to 'diamond-shaped' departments, characterised by a lower number of junior staff and a higher proportion of civil servants in more senior grades.²³

By contrast, after a fall in numbers across all grades between 2010 and 2012, the number of civil servants working in some of the more senior grades has increased. The number of senior civil servants (SCSs – and equivalents, like military personnel, health professionals and senior diplomats) and civil servants working in Grades 6 and 7 (usually senior officials with significant policy responsibilities) has grown by 18% (900 people) and 37% (14,000 people) respectively since 2010.

Figure 3.7 Grade composition by department, 2010 to 2019 (percentage of staff at each grade, headcount)



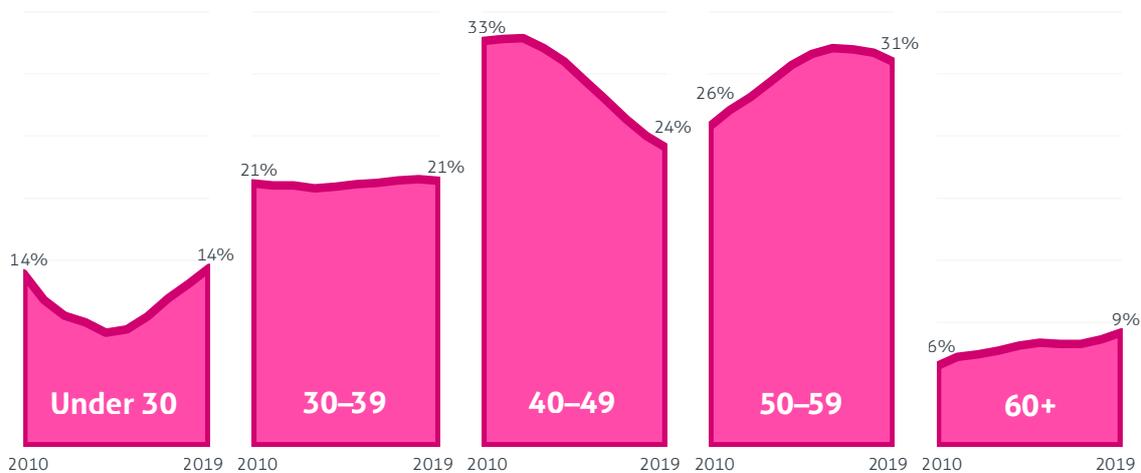
Source: Institute for Government analysis of ONS, Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2010; Cabinet Office, Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2019. Ordered by percentage of SCS and Grade 6 and 7 civil servants. SCS includes civil servants at equivalent level.

The grade structure of departments varies depending on whether their main focus is policy or delivery. Policy departments such as DfID, DCMS and HM Treasury (HMT) tend to have more people in senior roles, which gives a diamond or kite shape. By contrast, staff in departments that directly deliver services to the public, including MoJ, DWP and HMRC, tend to work mainly in junior roles, creating a pyramid or dome shape.²⁴ For example, 86% of the total workforce at DWP are in AO/AA and EO grades.

Most departments reflect the changing grade balance of the civil service as a whole, with more of their civil servants in more senior grades than in 2010.

Around 40% of civil servants are over the age of 50 – but the proportion of staff aged under 30 has increased

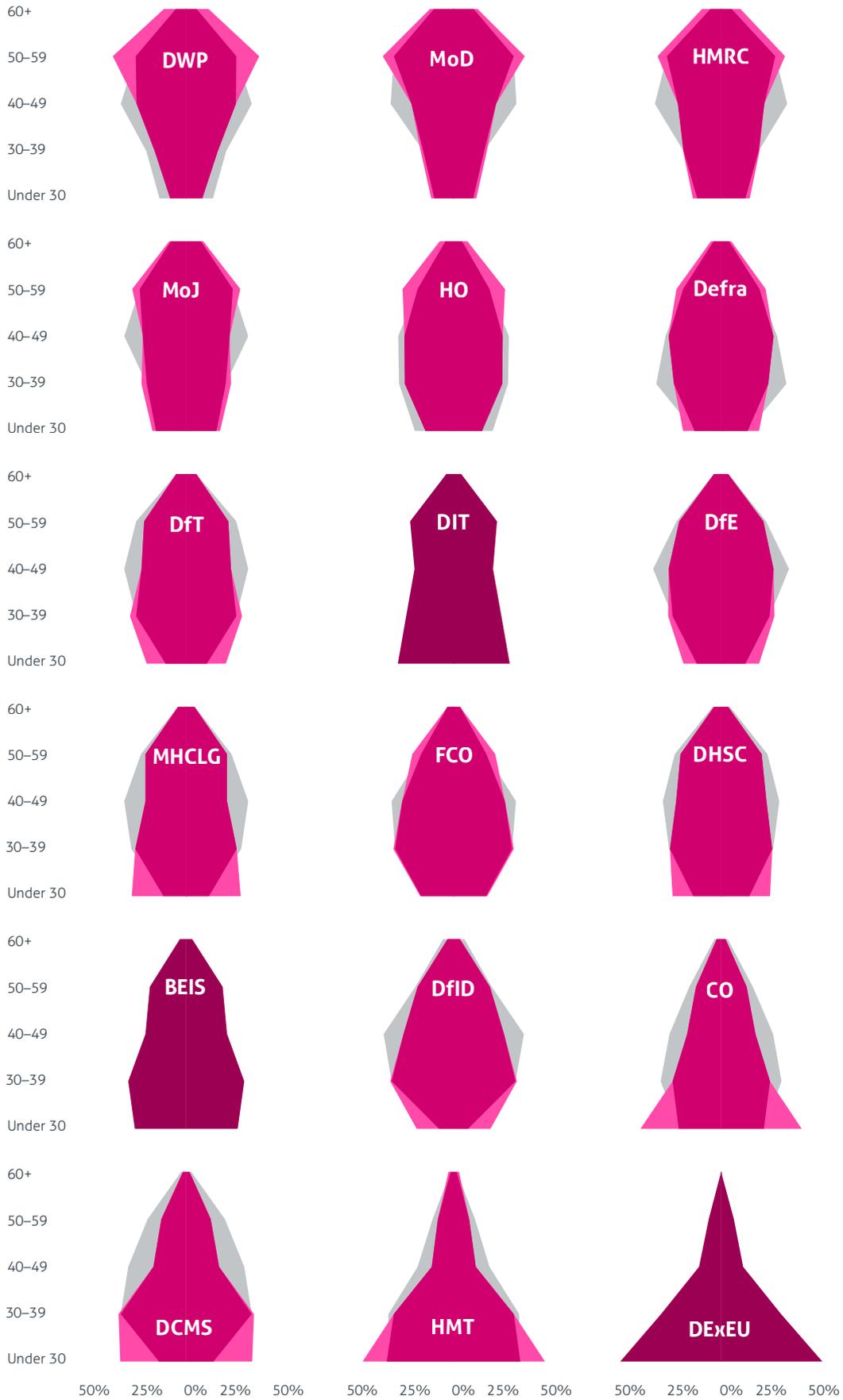
Figure 3.8 Percentage of civil servants in each age group, 2010 to 2019 (headcount, where known)



Source: Institute for Government analysis of ONS, Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2010 to 2018; Cabinet Office, Civil Service Statistics, 2019.

More civil servants are in older age bands than ever before. Two in every five civil servants are aged 50 or over – up from one in every three in 2010. The median age of civil servants has increased to 46, compared with 44 in 2010.²⁵ The percentage of civil servants aged under 30 is the same as in 2010 (14%), but has increased after reaching a low of 9% in 2014 following recruitment freezes, which had an impact on the age profile of the civil service, and possibly its skills base.²⁶

Figure 3.9 Age composition by department, 2010 to 2019 (headcount)



■ Decrease 2010 to 2019 ■ 2010 and 2019 ■ Increase 2010 to 2019 ■ 2019 only (new departments)

Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office, Civil Service Statistics, 2019; ONS, Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2010. Ordered by percentage aged 50 or over.

The overall age profile of the civil service is influenced by the big delivery departments, including DWP, MoD and HMRC, where nearly 50% of employees are aged 50 or over. The workforce in these big delivery departments is also getting older; at the Home Office, the proportion of staff aged 50 or over has gone up by more than 10 percentage points since 2010, to 34% in 2019.

By contrast, policy departments like DExEU, DCMS and HMT are staffed by younger civil servants, and the age profile of staff is getting younger. In 2019, DExEU had no permanent civil servants aged 60 or over, and less than 15% of civil servants at DExEU, HMT and DCMS were aged 50 or over. At the same time, the proportion of the workforce aged under 40 has gone up in departments including the Cabinet Office, DCMS, HMT and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) since 2010.

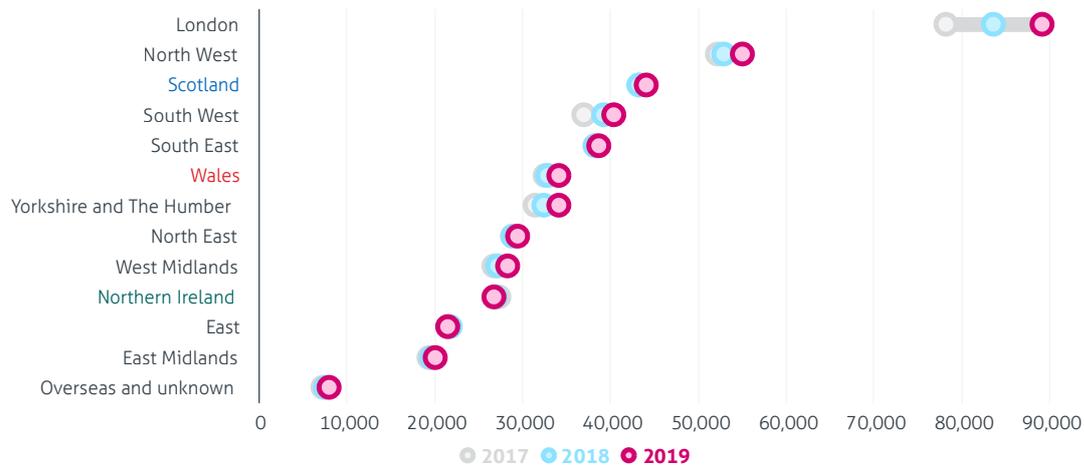
The consequences of having different age profiles across the civil service are not given enough attention, given their impact on the skills and experience available to departments. For instance, age is only mentioned a handful of times in the civil service's diversity and inclusion strategy, although it is one of the characteristics reported in the civil service's diversity and inclusion dashboard.^{27,28}

A younger workforce is more likely to bring certain skills (for example, in areas such as digital) into departments, but could also potentially result in a lack of experience. In addition, some of the departments with younger workforces like DExEU and the Cabinet Office tend to experience higher turnover.^{29,30}

There is also a risk that skills and organisational knowledge are lost as people move roles or retire. In the past year, turnover meant that around a third and a quarter of DExEU and Cabinet Office staff left their respective departments.

The number of civil servants based in London continues to grow

Figure 3.10 Number of civil servants in each region, 2017, 2018 and 2019 (headcount)



Source: Institute for Government analysis of ONS, Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2017 and 2018; Cabinet Office, Civil Service Statistics, 2019; NISRA, Northern Ireland Civil Service Employment Statistics, 2017 to 2019. Northern Ireland includes Home Civil Service and Northern Ireland Civil Service.

One in five civil servants (89,000) are based in London, followed by 55,000 in the North West and 44,000 in Scotland (including the 18,600 civil servants working in the Scottish government).

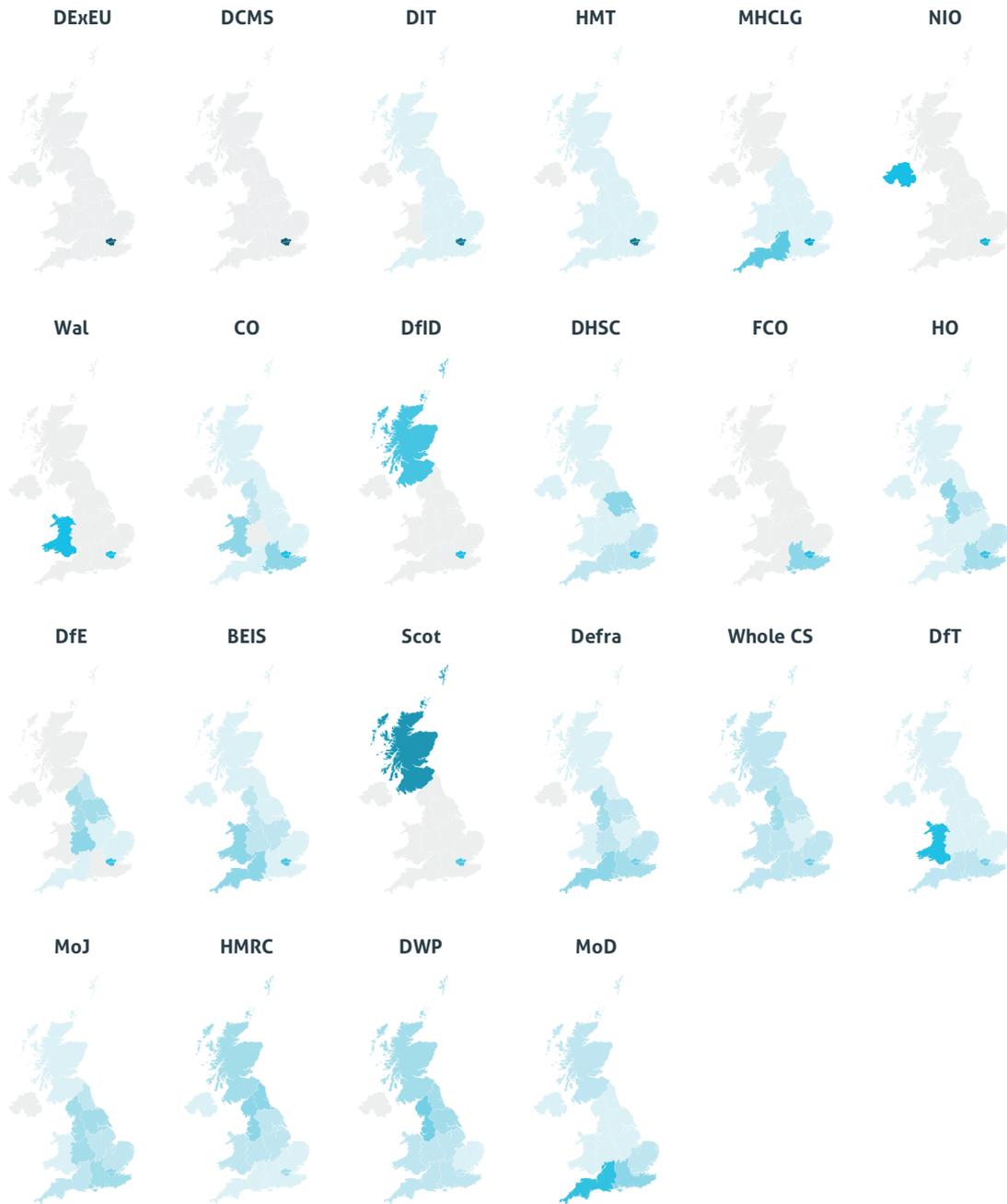
Successive governments have had longstanding ambitions to move the civil service out of London to save costs and to bring the civil service closer to the public.³¹ Both the 2017 Conservative Party manifesto and the updated 2018 Government Estate Strategy set out the government's ambition to relocate thousands of jobs outside of London in the next few years.³²

More recently, the chief executive of the civil service, John Manzoni, highlighted that the Cabinet Office would set targets for departments to move senior officials out of London in the next few years as part of the upcoming spending review.³³

Despite these ambitions and increases in the number of civil servants in nearly all regions, the growth in the number of staff based in London (14% since 2017) continues to outpace growth in all other regions of England, which have experienced less than 10% growth in the number of staff over the same period. Many of the policy specialists hired to fill Brexit roles are based in London, with 64% of all civil service policy professionals based in the capital. Other professions, such as economics (75%) and international trade (72%), are more likely to be located there, too.³⁴

However, there have been notable increases elsewhere; for instance, in the past year the number of Home Office staff in the north-west of England increased by nearly 1,600, and the number of MoJ staff located outside London went up by around 2,600.

Figure 3.11 Location of civil servants by departmental group, 2019 (percentage of staff in each region, headcount)



Source: Institute for Government analysis of ONS, Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2019. Departments are ordered by highest percentage of staff in London to lowest. Departmental group includes departments and all of their civil service-staffed public bodies.

Civil servants in many policy-focused departments and their public bodies are mainly based in London. Both DCMS and DEXEU house 100% of their staff in London, compared with 85% for DIT, although 51% of Cabinet Office staff are located in other regions (this includes other organisations that Cabinet Office ministers are ultimately responsible for, like the Office for National Statistics, ONS).

Staff working in departments that directly deliver services to the public are more evenly spread across the UK. Some combination of the five largest delivery departments (Home Office, HMRC, MoJ, DWP and MoD) makes up the top three civil

service employers in all parts of the UK except in Scotland (where the Scottish government is the top civil service employer) and Wales (where DfT is top, and the Welsh government is third).³⁵ In Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is the largest civil service employer by far; the number of UK Home Civil Service staff based in Northern Ireland has declined by around 600 in the past two years.

Some departments are spread across the UK because their core functions are located there. For instance, MoD's procurement organisation, Defence Equipment and Support, is based near Bristol, and many DfID staff are located in East Kilbride in Scotland. Other departments appear more evenly spread because the public bodies they manage are located outside of London. This is the case for DfT and DVLA, which is based in Swansea, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), which manages Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) in the south-west of England.

Figure 3.12 **Location of civil servants by grade, 2019 (percentage of grade in each region, headcount)**

Region	Whole civil service	AO/AA	EO	SEO/HEO	Grades 6 & 7	SCS
London	20%	9%	17%	26%	46%	68%
South West	9%	6%	8%	13%	10%	5%
Scotland	10%	12%	11%	9%	8%	5%
Wales	8%	9%	7%	7%	5%	5%
West Midlands	6%	7%	7%	6%	4%	3%
North West	13%	15%	14%	10%	7%	3%
Yorkshire and The Humber	8%	8%	9%	7%	6%	3%
South East	9%	10%	10%	8%	6%	3%
East	5%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%
North East	7%	10%	6%	5%	3%	2%
East Midlands	5%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%
Northern Ireland	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%

Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office, Civil Service Statistics, 2019. SCS includes equivalent grades.

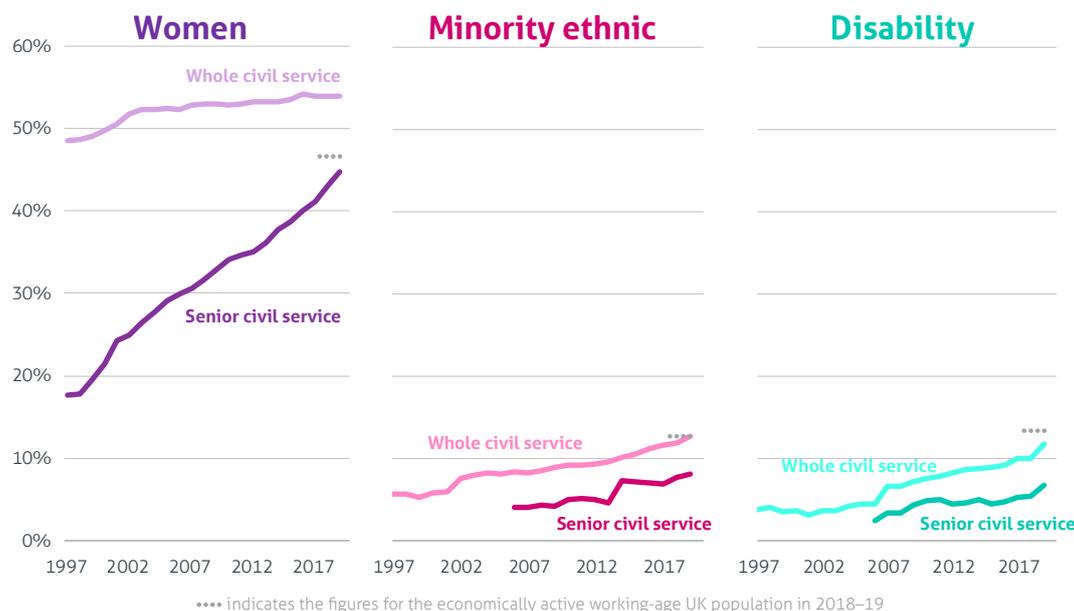
The concentration of policy staff in London and delivery staff in the regions is reflected in the location of civil servants by grade. More than two thirds of senior civil servants are based in London, even though only a fifth of all civil servants are based there. By contrast, 13% of the civil service is located in the north-west of England but only 3% of senior civil servants are based there, compared with 15% of the most junior AO/AA grade.

Senior staff are becoming more concentrated in London, with 68% of senior civil servants based there in 2019 compared with 63% in 2015. If future Brexit hires continue to be more senior and more likely to be based in London, and if cuts to junior staff continue while the number of civil servants in senior roles increases, the discrepancy in grades between London and the regions is set to continue.

This will make it more challenging for the civil service to implement its vision to "enable better career paths for public servants outside London".³⁶

Diversity and gender balance are improving, although progress is slower in the senior civil service

Figure 3.13 Diversity in the civil service, 1997 to 2019 (headcount, where known)



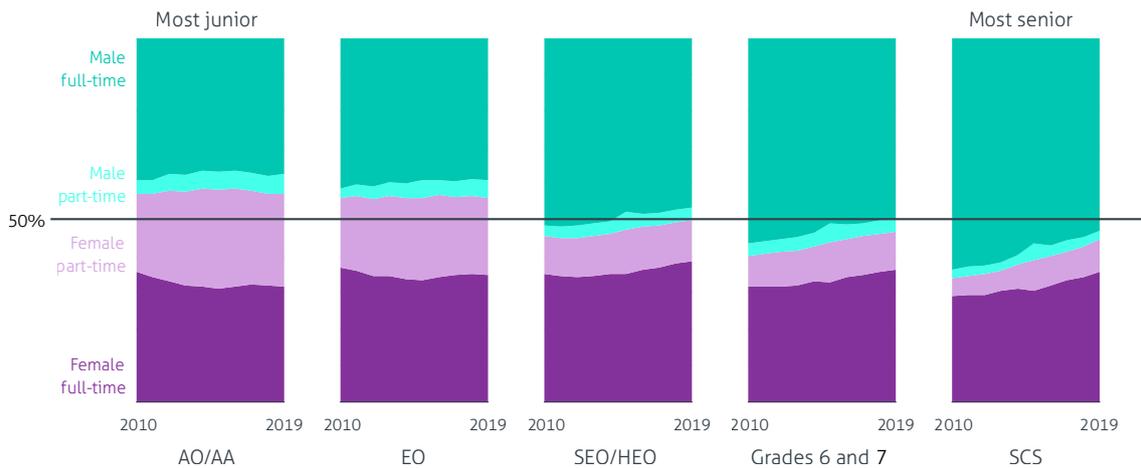
Source: Institute for Government analysis of ONS, Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 1997–2018; Cabinet Office, SCS database 1996–2006; Cabinet Office, Civil Service Statistics, 2019; ONS, Labour Force Survey: economically active total population and female population (UK, aged 16–64, thousands); ONS, Labour market overview, UK: November 2019 (Table A08: Economic activity of people with disabilities aged 16–64: levels, UK, and Table A09: Labour market status: economically active by ethnicity: people (not seasonally adjusted)). The population benchmarks were calculated by dividing the averages from quarter 4 (Q4) of 2018 (Oct–Dec), Q1 2019, Q2 2019 and the third quarter (Q3) of 2019 to seasonally adjust the data, given that data for Q4 2019 had not been published at the time of writing.

The civil service’s 2017 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy aimed to make the civil service the UK’s “most inclusive employer by 2020”, recognising that getting this right was crucial to “delivering better services and outcomes for the public”.³⁷ The strategy promised a diversity and inclusion dashboard, which has been published, and targets to increase the flow of disabled and minority ethnic staff into senior civil service roles, which have now been set.

There have been improvements since 2010 on key measures like gender, ethnicity and disability (although the data on disability and ethnicity should be interpreted with caution due to high rates of non-response). In addition, the civil service has made 2020 the ‘Year of Inclusion’.³⁸

Gender balance is improving at the top. The percentage of senior civil servants who are women is now the highest ever, having risen by 11 percentage points from 34% in 2010 to 45% in 2019. There has also been a clear increase – seven percentage points since 2010, from 40% to 47% – in the number of women in Grade 6 and 7 roles, which serve as a potential pipeline into the senior civil service. Still, the proportion of women in senior civil service roles does not reflect the gender balance in the overall working population.

Figure 3.14 **Gender balance in the civil service, by grade and working pattern, 2010 to 2019 (headcount)**



Source: Institute for Government analysis of ONS, Annual Civil Service Employment Survey, 2010 to 2018; Cabinet Office, Civil Service Statistics, 2019. SCS figure includes those at equivalent SCS level.

At the very highest level, in November 2019 a third of permanent secretaries in charge of Whitehall departments (six) were women, although one – Melanie Dawes, the permanent secretary of MHCLG – was recently tipped to become chief executive of Ofcom.³⁹ Although this is higher than the 2010 figure (four), it remains well below the short-lived high (for half a week) in March 2011, when nearly half of permanent secretaries (eight) were women.

The permanent secretaries of the Scottish and Welsh governments are both women, as is the newly appointed permanent secretary for the Northern Ireland Office.

The share of disabled or minority ethnic senior civil servants continues to rise after some stalling. Around 7% of those senior civil servants who declared their disability status were disabled in 2019, up by 1.4 percentage points in the past year alone, compared with a 0.6% increase between 2010 and 2018.

However, at 7% and 8% respectively, the percentages of disabled and minority ethnic staff in the senior civil service are lower than across the civil service as a whole, and lower than in the working-age population.

The percentage of women in a given grade drops with every step up in seniority. Women make up 57% of the most junior (AO/AA) grades and 56% of EO civil servants, but less than half of Grades 6 and 7 and senior civil servants.

The government’s chief people officer, Rupert McNeil, has recently reiterated the civil service’s commitment to flexible working.⁴⁰ Overall, part-time working occurs at all grades, but it is more common in junior grades; around 30% of AO/AA staff work part time, but the proportion of civil servants working part time at senior executive officer/higher executive officer (SEO/HEO) grades is half that (15%) and continues to decline with each step up the civil service career ladder. Only 11% of senior civil servants work part time.

In addition, part-time working is more prevalent among women than men. Four out of five civil servants who work part time are women. The share of women working part time in senior civil service positions nearly doubled from 5% to 9% between 2010 and 2019, while the share of men employed in the senior civil service working part time remained flat during this period.

The 2017 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy contained a commitment to publish baseline data on the socio-economic background of civil servants by 2020.⁴¹ The Civil Service People Survey, which measures employee engagement, asked questions about civil servants' socio-economic background for the first time in 2019, following pilots with the senior civil service in recent years.⁴² The Institute for Government has called for data on the background of civil servants to be made available in the past and looks forward to analysing it in due course.⁴³

The civil service is taking action on social mobility although it is hard to measure the impact of social mobility activities without data. The third edition of the Social Mobility Foundation's Employee Index, which ranks organisations according to how much they do to support the social mobility agenda in the workplace, saw 15 civil service organisations placed in the top 75, many for the first time.⁴⁴

There is some data about the Fast Stream, the civil service's graduate programme, which makes more than 1,000 appointments each year. Overall, applicants from higher socio-economic backgrounds are over-represented in the Fast Stream. In 2018, 55% of applicants had parents in higher managerial, administrative or professional occupations, whereas 13% of applicants had parents working in routine or manual occupations. However, 68% of those appointed to the Fast Stream in 2018 came from the first group – which only represents 10% of the UK working-age population.⁴⁵

By contrast, those with parents working in routine or manual occupations made up 8% of those appointed to the 2018 Fast Stream. This is an improvement on 4% in 2015, although it still does not fully represent the 11% of the working population in routine occupations.⁴⁶ At 4.3% in 2018, the success rate of applicants from higher socio-economic backgrounds was twice as high as that for applicants from lower socio-economic backgrounds (2.1%).⁴⁷

Sexual orientation and faith were other areas of focus in the 2017 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The strategy set out goals to record sexual orientation for at least 70% of the civil service. In recent years, the civil service has encouraged civil servants to submit this data, although response rates remain low – in 2019, 57% on sexual orientation and 55% on faith, although this is higher than in 2018 when fewer than 50% of civil servants had responded to these questions.⁴⁸ In 2019, around 95% of the civil servants who reported this information were heterosexual, 3% were gay or lesbian and 1% were bisexual.

Among those who reported their faith, 51% were Christian, 38% had no religion, 4% were Muslim, 2% were Hindu and 1% were Sikh. This means most religions were under-represented in the civil service compared with the UK population in 2011 as recorded by the census, apart from the group declaring they had no religion, who were over-represented compared with the wider population.⁴⁹ In 2019, the civil service released the 'faith and belief toolkit' to improve religious inclusion.⁵⁰

It is possible that civil servants are reluctant to answer questions on personal characteristics. However, this makes it more difficult to understand what progress the civil service is making in "becoming the UK's most inclusive employer", as it stated in its 2016–20 Workforce Plan and in its 2017 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.⁵¹



4 Managing people

The civil service has made concerted efforts to improve its skills and capabilities. But it is unclear exactly how much progress has been made due to the limited amount of publicly available information on these reforms. Turnover of staff in many roles and departments is still well above the civil service average – and although staff morale is generally holding up, there are signs that Brexit-related workloads are contributing to stress levels.

More than half of all civil servants work in operational delivery roles, which often involve delivering services, such as processing benefits, directly to the public. Around a quarter work in specialist roles such as finance, commercial or digital. In 2013, the civil service began reforms that aim to professionalise these activities across all departments, and is continuing to invest in them. However, it is difficult to assess the progress of these due to a lack of publicly available information.

Pay in the civil service is comparable to the wider public sector, notably doctors, teachers and police officers, but varies considerably both between Whitehall departments and even within individual grades. This is partly due to the grade mix across departments. It also reflects the civil service hiring, for example, junior staff to deliver front-line services around the country and more senior staff at policy departments in London.

Turnover among civil servants continues to be high – it has risen in five departments – which makes it more difficult to maintain expertise in certain areas, not to mention institutional memory. This, in turn, has an impact on how effectively the civil service makes and delivers policy. Turnover of senior civil servants is particularly damaging. They have, on average, been in their posts for less than two years. This is especially true for Brexit-related roles: more than 10 senior civil servants in charge of key aspects of Brexit, including permanent secretaries, changed roles in 2019.

Civil service morale, as measured by the annual Civil Service People Survey, has held up in recent years. Civil servants are more satisfied on almost every theme than they were when the data was first collected in 2009. There is one exception – pay and benefits – which has consistently scored lowest since the survey began.

Pay restraint is one reason given by civil service unions for a record number of civil servants affected by stress, anxiety and depression since the Labour Force Survey started collecting data on this 20 years ago. The Brexit-related workload is another likely contributing factor – and Boris Johnson's commitment not to extend the transition period beyond December 2020 points to another busy year for civil servants.

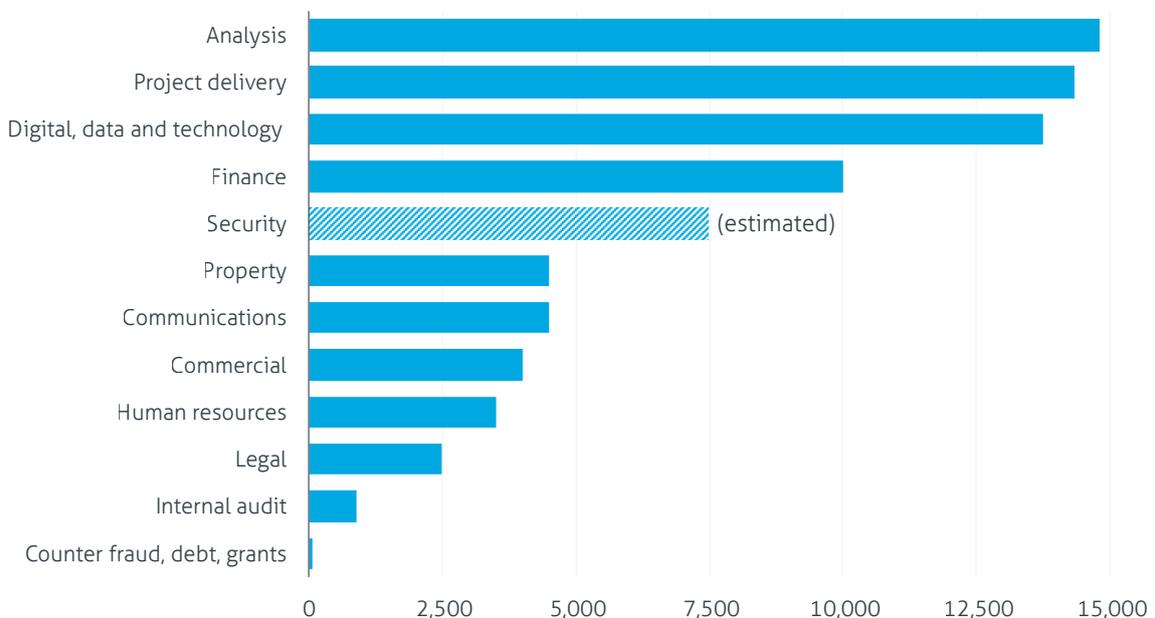
Get the latest analysis at
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One in 10 civil servants (42,210) work in a **departmental specialism** relevant to one, or a handful, of departments. The largest of these is tax – all but up to three of the 13,000 civil servants in this area working in HMRC, the others being based in the Department for International Development (DfID). The next largest is science and engineering. This group is overwhelmingly based in MoD – which employs 85% of these 2,000 specialists – with the remainder deployed in Defra and the Home Office.

We do not know what profession nearly one in 10 civil servants belong to. Although this is an improvement on last year – when DWP did not submit data to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), leading to the profession of one in four civil service posts being ‘unknown’ – the figure remains higher than figures in previous years. Information on staff skills and capability, and how these evolve over time in response to reforms, is crucial to effective workforce planning and should be readily available to departmental leaders.

The civil service is developing specialist skills and future talent

Figure 4.2 **Size of the different civil service functions (headcount, approximate) in 2019**



Source: Institute for Government analysis of sources including webpages dedicated to specific functions on GOV.UK; Cabinet Office, *Civil Service Statistics, 2019*; and correspondence with individual functions. Larger estimates exist for the digital, data and technology profession (17,000) but we have used the function’s latest own estimates. The counter fraud, debt and grants functions are now counted as three separate entities. Numbers for security were drawn from the *Civil Service Statistics 2019* figures for the profession.

The civil service has long recognised the need to have the right skills and capabilities in place to deliver its priorities.⁴ But a lack of focus on developing these skills across government has been a contributing factor in recent high-profile failures that ended up costing the public dearly. These include the cancellation of the InterCity West Coast franchise competition (2012) and the failure to efficiently process EU common agricultural policy payments to English farmers (2015).

The civil service has stepped up efforts to professionalise cross-government specialisms in the past few years. In 2013, it set up 10 ‘functions’ ranging from commercial (negotiating and writing government contracts with companies) to project delivery (planning and managing the delivery of government’s policy or infrastructure

projects). These reforms aim to develop these areas of expertise in a consistent fashion across government.⁵ Building the civil service's specialist skills is key to improving the way it conducts its core activities, and the Institute for Government has been supportive of this reform agenda since its inception.⁶

The number of functions has continued to grow since 2013, with the analysis function being formally set up in late 2017, and security in 2018. There are currently 14 functions. The largest are analysis, project delivery, digital, and finance, each of which have 10,000 or more members across government.

Government functions complement – and sometimes overlap with – existing professions, but the two differ:

- **Professions** focus on people and *skills*. They are groupings of officials with similar expertise, sometimes in broad areas (such as tax) or with specific skills (such as veterinarians). Given the broad range of skills covered by these groupings, most civil servants are part of a profession.
- **Functions** focus on key *activities* that apply across all departments and arm's-length bodies, such as finance, commercial or project delivery. Functions play more of a co-ordinating role, and are typically run by central units and leaders in the Cabinet Office – such as the government chief commercial officer or the government chief people officer (for the HR function) – or in dedicated bodies such as the Government Internal Audit Agency. These central teams play a major role in ensuring that the right capability is in place, including by setting out career progression for each specialism.⁷ A function can draw on the skills of individuals from different professions.

Each function delivers services to departments and to the civil service as a whole. Together, they are responsible for giving expert advice, “setting cross-government strategies... developing capabilities... setting and assuring standards”, ensuring continuous improvement and developing and delivering services needed across organisations to ensure that the activities they oversee are delivered consistently across government.⁸

Although there is little publicly available information on the performance of government functions themselves, some of the heads of specialisms (HR, finance, policy, operational delivery and project delivery) noted in a series of speeches at the Institute for Government in 2018 and 2019 that they had made progress in developing specialists and in integrating them into decision making. In particular:

- HR and project delivery are among the specialisms to have developed career frameworks identifying the skills required for each role.
- The collaboration between commercial, finance and HR specialisms helped the government respond to Carillion's collapse in 2018 by developing contingency plans to minimise disruption to public services. The chief executive of the civil service, John Manzoni, commented in a speech given at the Institute for Government in 2018 that this response “would simply not have been possible even two or three years ago” without specialisms to shape cross-government strategies.⁹

Still, the leaders of specialisms who spoke at the Institute recognised that pushing reforms further would be a challenge. For instance, some will need to encourage specialists to take on more strategic roles in their departments.

Six functions have now published 'functional standards' that set expectations for how the activity overseen by the standard (commercial, security, etc.) should be managed. For instance, in the area of project delivery, clarifying what robust project-, portfolio- and programme-management should entail. Others have developed career paths for their members (some of which are available online)¹⁰ and at least six have made their strategies publicly available.¹¹ In the last year, the civil service has made progress in developing and releasing career paths to help members of specialisms develop their careers.

These are important developments, but more could be done. For example, there is scope for government to explain in more detail how the functions and professions work together and to publicise the concrete benefits they deliver. There is also more to be done to represent specialists at the highest levels of the civil service. Sir Chris Wormald is the only specialism head who is represented on the Civil Service Board (CSB), and that is in his role as permanent secretary of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), although Sir Peter Schofield and Sir Tom Scholar – the permanent secretaries at DWP and the Treasury respectively – provide an operational delivery and finance perspective.

Looking ahead, it is also important that the central teams working on improvement programmes within the functions can secure stable funding, given that some are currently not guaranteed funding from one year to the next.¹² This is vital to ensure the continuity of the reforms in the medium to long term.

In addition, turnover also has an impact on specialisms at a senior level. In the past year alone, the specialism heads of operational delivery (Sir Jonathan Thompson), analysis (John Pullinger) and project delivery (Sir Tony Meggs) have all left. Of them, only Sir Tony Meggs had been in post as head of specialism for more than two years. As we have noted previously, such changes can have a negative (if temporary) impact on both strategic decision making and the sense of direction of the specialisms, while new heads are recruited and bed into the role.¹³

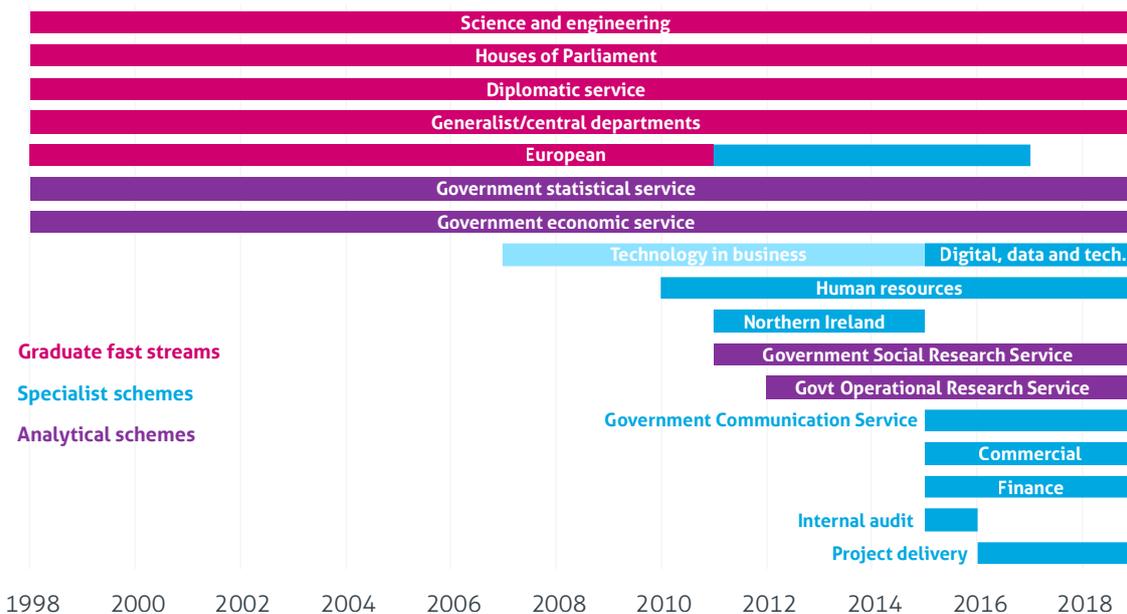
There have also been changes in the leadership of the digital, data and technology (DDaT) function. Following Kevin Cunningham's change in role (to become director general of the International Government Service and Digital Envoy for the UK) after being director of the Government Digital Service (GDS) and head of the DDaT function, the government has begun recruiting for a new government chief digital information officer. The chosen candidate will also lead GDS and DDaT, and is to be appointed at one of the most senior grades in government (second permanent secretary level).

The seniority of the role is a welcome sign of the importance of DDaT across government. However, it is unclear how it will fit with the mooted chief data officer position that the Institute for Government has called for, and which the government has promised to create since at least 2017.^{14,15}

Finally, the functions and associated reforms have become closely associated with the chief executive of the civil service, John Manzoni. We have found that having key people, and well-designed structures, in place to push policies and reforms can be instrumental in driving them through. However, there is a risk that if those key individuals move on, or if political will is lacking, the momentum for reform can fade.¹⁶

Political interest in civil service reform has waned since Francis Maude was minister for the Cabinet Office (2010–15). But Johnson’s senior adviser, Dominic Cummings, has written extensively about reforming the civil service, which might signal renewed interest in these issues – though such reforms will also need a senior ministerial lead.¹⁷

Figure 4.3 Individual fast streams by creation date, 1998–2018



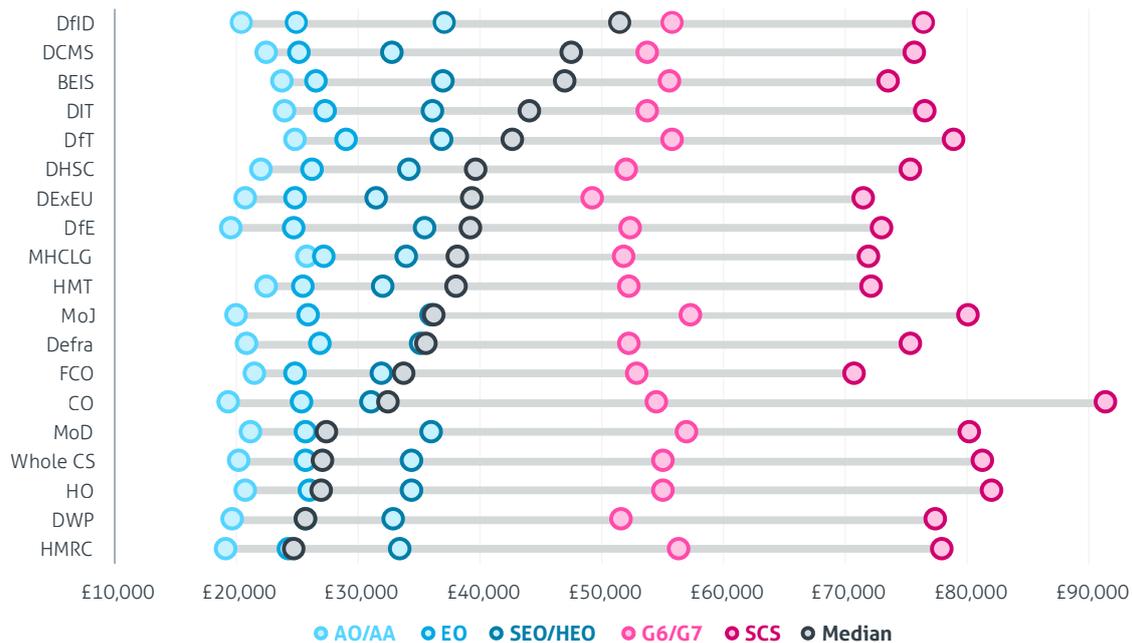
Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office, 'Fast Stream Annual Reports', 1998 to 2018.

In the past few years, the civil service has also made changes to the Fast Stream – its accelerated development programme for graduates – to help develop specialist skills to better meet its changing needs.

The Fast Stream is composed of 14 individual streams (down from 15, after the European stream was discontinued following the 2016 EU referendum). Following the reforms to develop specialist skills through the functions, several new streams were set up such as communications, commercial, and finance (set up in 2015), and project delivery (2016). In total, six of the current 14 streams relate to specialist skills that match those of some functions. Four of the top five streams by number of applications in 2018 had a matching government function.¹⁸

Average salaries vary widely between departments and within grades

Figure 4.4 Median pay by department and grade, 2019



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office, Civil Service Statistics, 2019.

In recent years, the civil service has tried to bring more coherence to its pay structures, notably by agreeing common definitions for certain job roles. Nonetheless, pay varies considerably between government departments (which have had delegated responsibility for pay below SCS grades since 1994); for example, the highest median salary at DfID (£51,500) is more than twice that of its HMRC equivalent (£24,670). Some of this reflects the differences in pay bands across departments for grades below senior civil service (SCS) level.¹⁹

The difference in median pay mainly reflects the focus and grade mix of departments. Large delivery departments such as HMRC, DWP or the Home Office are more likely to employ staff in junior grades around the country. By contrast, policy departments (the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), DfID or the Cabinet Office) employ more senior policy staff, who tend to be based in London.

Although the median salary at the Cabinet Office is the fifth lowest in government, it is also the department with the highest median SCS pay by far. There is a difference of almost £10,000 between the median SCS pay at the Cabinet Office and at the department with the second-highest median SCS pay, the Home Office.

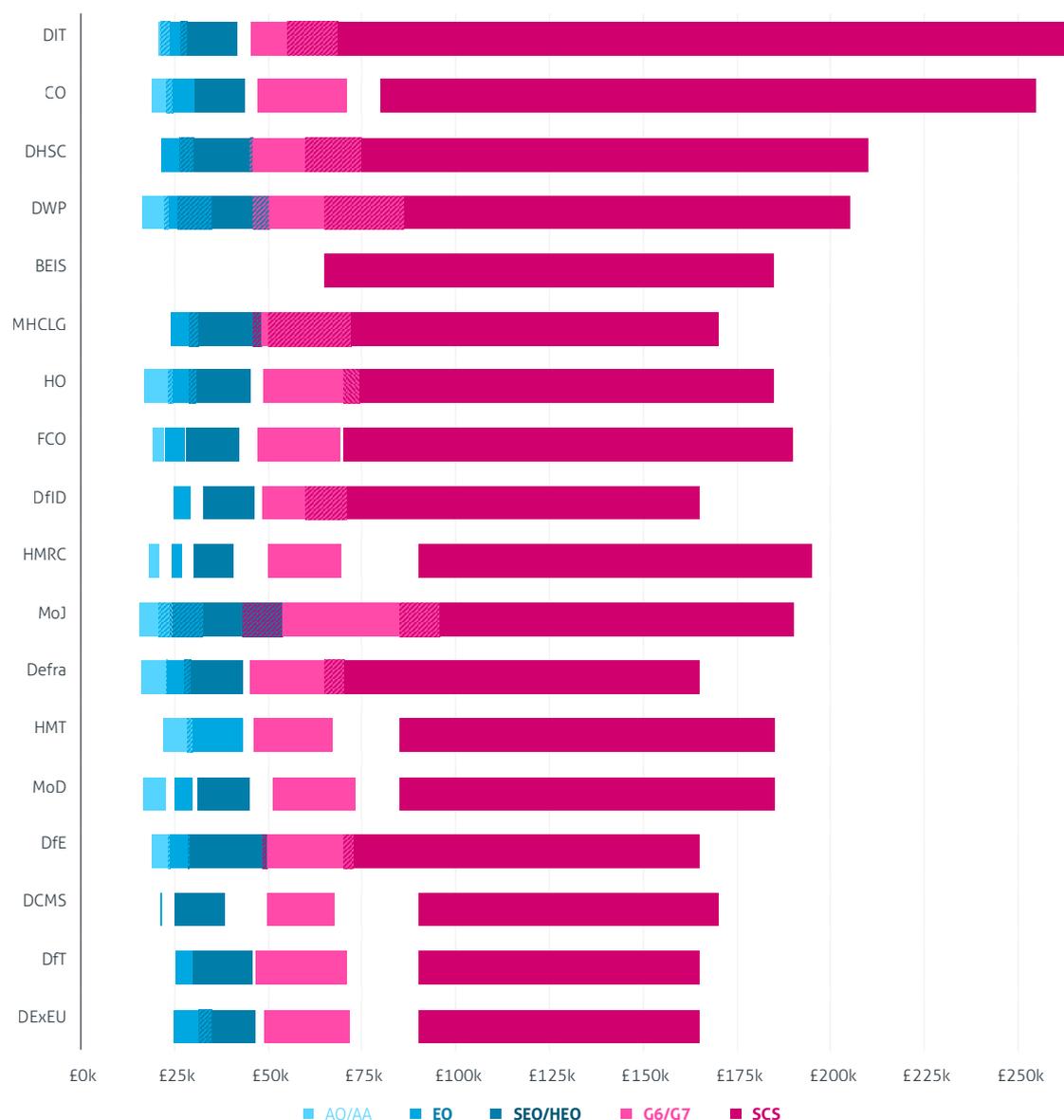
Civil service pay remains comparable to other parts of the public sector. Median pay in the SCS is £81,230, which is comparable to the pay of police chief superintendents (£84,849) and NHS consultants in their first year (£79,860). In junior roles, such as administrative assistants, the median salary of £20,230 compares with junior police constables' £20,880 (although is lower than the starting salary of classroom teachers located outside London, who earn £23,720).²⁰

The civil service pay cap, which limits pay rises for civil servants to 1% per year, remains in place after the government decided during the 2015 spending review only to make funding available for 1% average pay awards between 2015 and 2019.

However, in 2019, departments were given flexibility to spend an additional 1% on pay awards “provided it is affordable within budgets” – although the Cabinet Office was allowed by the Treasury to increase the pay of its lowest-paid employees by 10%.^{21,22} This flexible pay increase (totalling up to 2%) is an increase on the 1.5% last year, but departments can decide to target increases for specific skills or roles.²³

Still, these pay awards for civil servants remain below the 2.5–2.9% award given to other parts of the wider public sector – members of the armed forces, teachers and police officers – earlier in 2019, after the pay cap for some public sector workers was lifted from 2017.^{24,25}

Figure 4.5 **Civil service pay ranges by grade, 2019 (indicative, based on departmental organograms)**



Source: Institute for Government analysis of departmental organograms published between 2016 and 2019 on data.gov.uk. Departments are ordered by range of SCS pay (largest to smallest). For SCS staff, we have only counted individuals who worked full time (one FTE). We have also excluded grades where either minimum or maximum pay was not available. Some of the data for SCS at DExEU was inferred from the department’s annual reports and accounts for 2019. The Cabinet Office has declined to publish junior staff data for 2019. The data for DHSC and Defra was last published in 2016; no data for junior staff was available for BEIS.

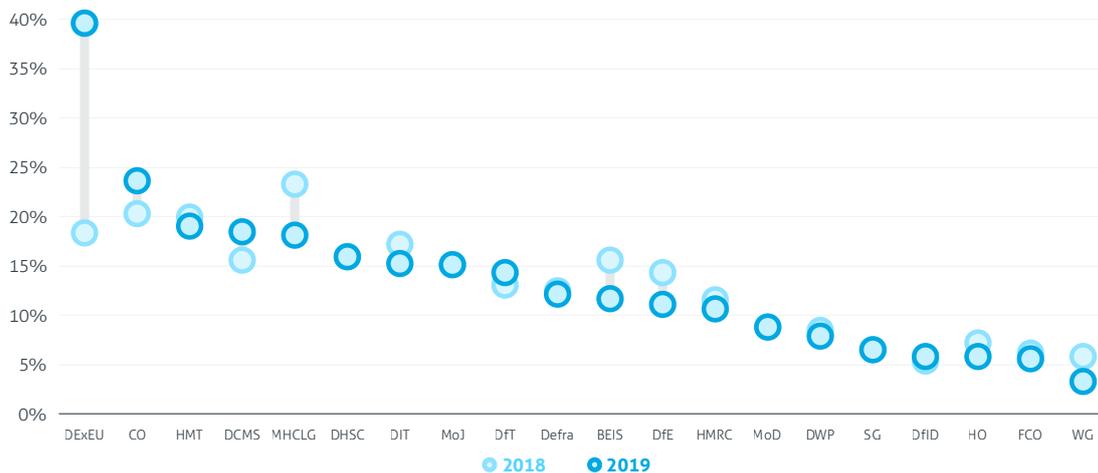
Pay also varies within grades, and these differences grow larger with seniority. At the most junior grade (AA, or administrative assistant), the difference between the minimum and maximum pay bands is around £8,000 – from £15,500 at MoJ to £24,000 at the Department for Education (DfE). These discrepancies reach £41,000 between Grade 6 roles (those immediately below the SCS). Some Grade 6 staff at DWP are paid 1.6 times as much as their counterparts at Defra.

Some of these differences may reflect differences in skills or seniority – Grade 6 staff at DWP include medical officers working in London, while the same grade in Defra includes policy officers based outside the capital. It may also explain why MoJ pays both the minimum salary for the senior executive officer (SEO) pay band (to some of its IT managers), as well as the maximum salary within the band (for deputy prison governors).

Variations may also reflect the degree to which departments rely on staff with specialist skills, notably in senior grades including the SCS, and how they recruit them. For example, the departments with the highest range of senior civil service pay – DIT, the Cabinet Office and DHSC – employ senior government officials with specific skills. For instance, the chief trade negotiation adviser is employed at DIT, the Cabinet Office employs the government chief commercial officer, while the chief medical officer is based at DHSC. Similarly, some professions such as property or commercial tend to have a higher proportion of external recruits (those coming from the private sector) who are offered higher salaries to attract experienced private-sector professionals.²⁶

High staff turnover remains a problem – and has hampered Brexit preparations

Figure 4.6 Percentage of civil servants who left their department in 2017/18 and 2018/19



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office, Civil Service Statistics, and ONS, Public Sector Employment. Numbers are for departments excluding all agencies and public bodies.

Staff turnover – the proportion of staff leaving their department each year, either by moving to another department or by leaving the civil service altogether – has been a known problem in Whitehall for a long time. Published over 50 years ago, the 1968 Fulton report noted that key civil servants “rarely stay in one job longer than two or three years before being moved to some other post”.²⁷

More recently, the Institute for Government argued that excessive turnover is a problem because:

- it is expensive, costing the civil service up to £74 million each year
- it hampers the successful delivery of major projects
- it damages government's ability to make policy due to lost expertise
- it makes it more difficult for the Treasury to maintain a grip on public spending.²⁸

Yet despite this long history of critique, the structure of the civil service still actively encourages staff to move roles to develop their career.

The annual rate of civil servants leaving the civil service altogether was 9% in 2017/18 (the latest year for which data is publicly available).²⁹ This overall figure appears to compare favourably with the rate of turnover within the private sector. In 2017/18, turnover across private sector organisations was estimated at 16.5%, although this includes sectors like retail where turnover is traditionally high. Some professional services firms – whose work is more comparable to the work of core government departments in Whitehall – estimate that their rate of staff turnover is 12–14%.³⁰

However, using an overall figure for the civil service is potentially misleading as it treats the civil service as a single organisation. As such, the figure does not include moves between departments – or, indeed, moves within departments – both of which are known to cause problems; including such moves, the turnover figure would be much higher.³¹

The department experiencing the highest level of turnover – either through people moving to another department or by leaving the civil service – is the Department for Exiting the EU (DExEU), which lost 40% of its staff, or 230 people, in 2018/19. (This does not include Fast Streamers who rotate between years – DExEU had more Fast Streamers than any other department in autumn 2018.) This is partly due to the department's staffing model, which relies on fixed-term contracts as well as staff loans or secondments from other departments.³²

For similar reasons, the next-highest turnover rate is that of the Cabinet Office, which lost close to a quarter of its staff, or 1,340 people, in 2018/19. DExEU and Cabinet Office are two of the five departments with higher turnover in 2018/19 compared to 2017/18 (the others were DCMS, the Department for Transport – DfT – and DfID).

Policy departments tend to experience higher turnover; rates of 18–19% put the Treasury, DCMS and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) third, fourth and fifth in the turnover table respectively. Officials in these departments are more likely to be based in London, which means more job opportunities are available to them (some of which have been created within the civil service itself by Brexit).

Some of these departments also have a younger workforce, for whom moving roles presents a quick route to promotion. And this might be based on longer-term career aims as well as immediate ones: younger staff studying the career paths of permanent secretaries may judge that experience across a range of departments is key to reaching the upper echelons of the civil service.³³

Senior civil servants play a crucial role in delivering government's main policies and projects, from Brexit to Universal Credit. Turnover figures for the SCS are not yet available for 2018/19, but figures for previous years show that senior civil servants stay in post for just under two years on average (and for far shorter times in some departments).³⁴

High turnover in the SCS is particularly damaging, especially to the delivery of Brexit.³⁵ DExEU has had three permanent secretaries since it was created in 2016; in 2019 alone, it lost its permanent secretary (to early retirement), two of its three director generals and five of its 10 directors.³⁶

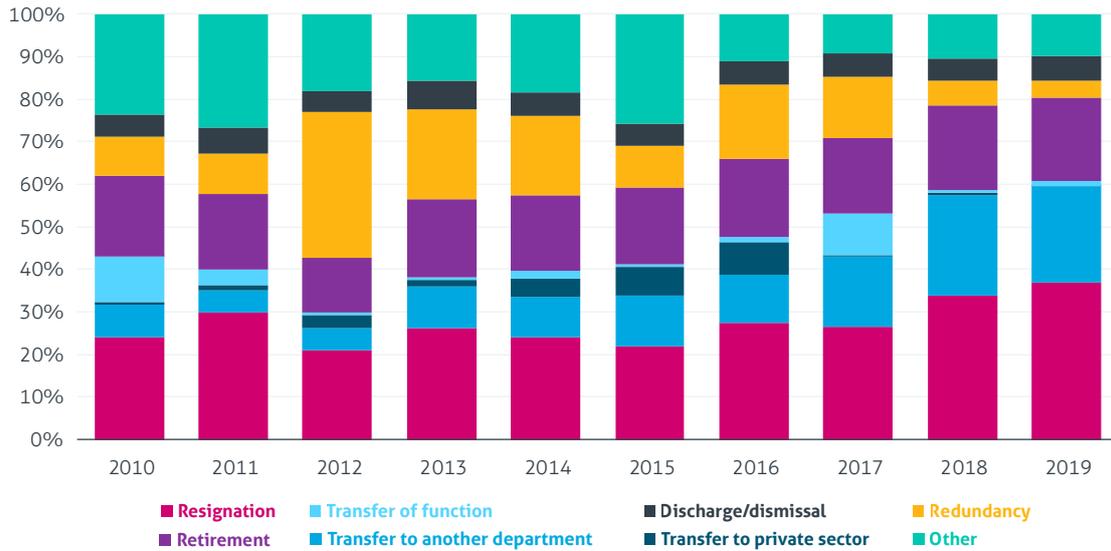
In the same period, the permanent secretaries of HMRC (Sir Jonathan Thompson) and Defra (Clare Moriarty) – two departments that are particularly affected by Brexit – left (although Moriarty was appointed to DExEU, so some valuable experience would have been retained here). Finally, two successive director generals who were leading the Border Delivery Group – the body responsible for the smooth-running of the UK's borders after Brexit – left between the 29 March 2019 exit date and the revised October 2019 exit date.^{37,38,39}

Departments need data on turnover to manage their workforce well; this information also serves as a barometer of an organisation's health.

However, there is little data on turnover, and key figures are difficult to calculate, which contributes to the issue not being taken seriously enough. The Institute for Government has repeatedly called for data to be published,^{40,41} and welcomes the Treasury's recommendation in the 2019 *Government Financial Reporting Review* that turnover figures should be published in all departments' annual reports in a consistent way.⁴² Only two departments – DWP and the Treasury – included these figures in their 2018/19 annual reports. We expect to see more departments publish this information this year following the Treasury's recommendation.

The government has introduced initiatives to retain staff, such as targeted pay progression for high-performing senior civil servants; it has already proposed to do this in the near future for senior specialist roles in finance and digital.⁴³ This is a first step, but there are still many other opportunities to establish targeted pay progression throughout the civil service, as we recommended in *Moving On: The costs of high turnover in the civil service*.⁴⁴

Figure 4.7 Reasons for civil servants leaving their department, 2010–19



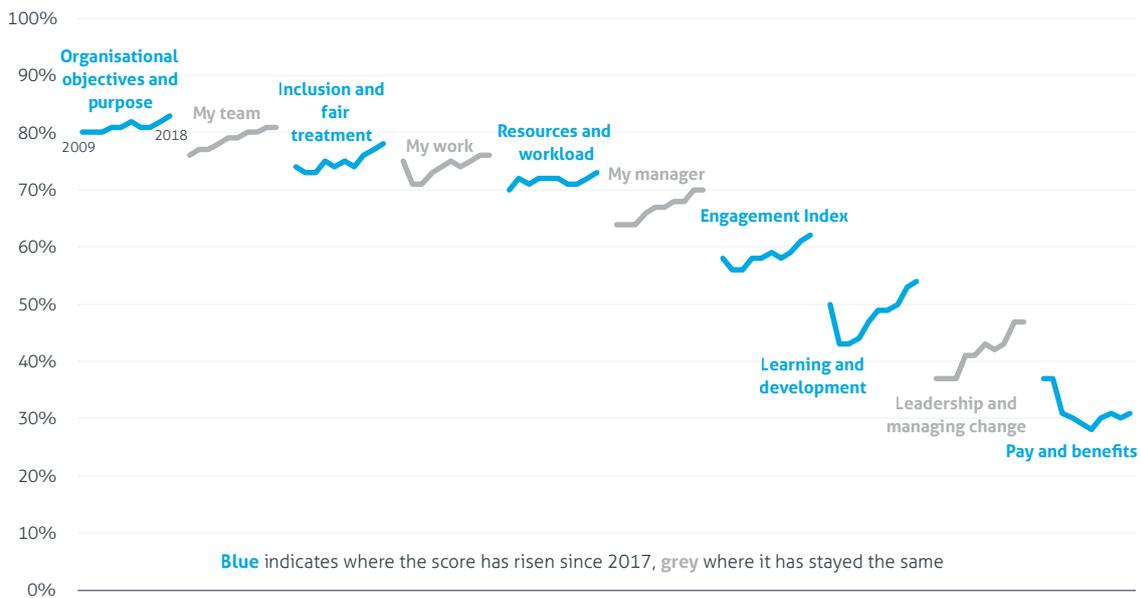
Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office, Civil Service Statistics, 2019.

Since 2010, resignations have remained the single main reason why civil servants leave their department; the only exception was 2012, when redundancies were the main cause of departures. The number of staff resignations went up in 2019 and represented more than a third of all exits, up from around a fifth in 2015. The number of staff moving to other departments accounted for nearly a quarter of all moves in 2019, which was comparable to 2018 levels.

Retirement was the third main reason for civil servants leaving departments in 2019, accounting for 20% of all leavers – although at 8,100 the number of retirements was the lowest it has been since 2015.

Morale has held up despite signs of strain

Figure 4.8 Civil Service People Survey – theme scores, 2009–18



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office, 'Civil Service People Survey', 2009 to 2018.

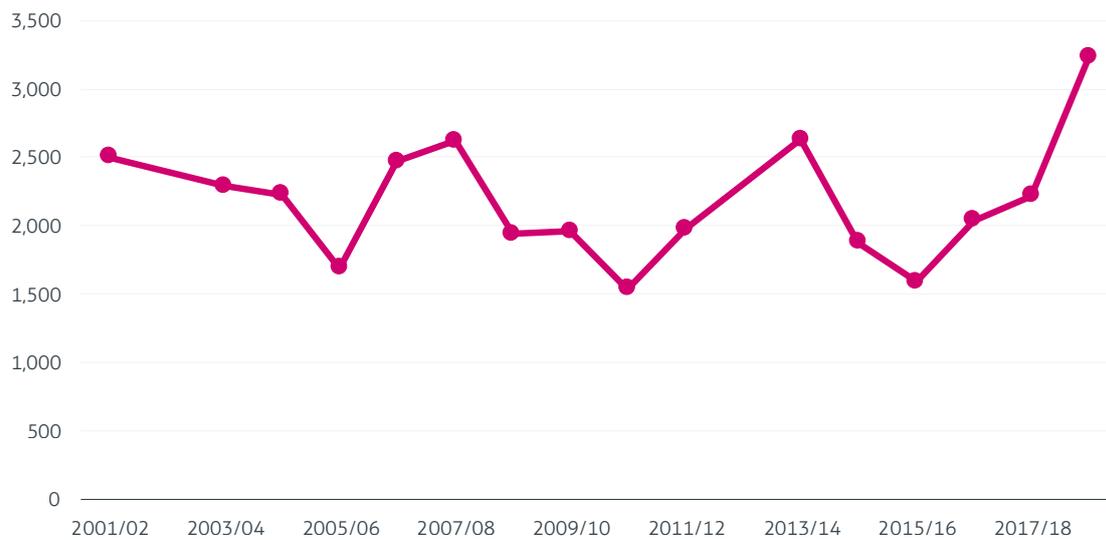
The civil service's overall Engagement Index score – which relates to the attachment civil servants have to their organisation, their pride in the civil service and the extent to which they would recommend their organisation as a place to work, among other factors – brings good news. It has increased over the past three years to its highest-ever level (62%).

Some departments have much higher scores than others – around 70% for the Treasury, DfID, the Foreign Office and DCMS, versus the 50% recorded among HMRC staff, the lowest of any of the main departments – but scores at most departments have risen in recent years.

This suggests that civil servants are, or remain, happy in their jobs day-to-day – in spite of clear political challenges – and that civil service leaders are trying to improve performance in this respect. An increase in morale may also reflect new joiners entering the civil service and its changing composition: administrative delivery staff tend to have lower engagement scores, so the proportional increase in higher-level positions across the civil service may be driving some of this increase.

Satisfaction is higher now than in 2009 across all but one of the survey's themes. The one exception is the lowest-scoring of all themes, pay and benefits (31%), down six points on 2009 – but even this is an increase on recent years, being up one point from 2017 and three points higher than its lowest ebb in 2014.

Figure 4.9 Incidents of self-reported stress, anxiety or depression caused by current job (per 100,000 employees working in 'public administration, defence, compulsory social security'), 2001–19



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Office for National Statistics, Labour Force Survey 2019 (accessed on the Health and Safety Executive's website), Self-reported work-related ill-health and workplace injuries by industry, Table 5. No data on ill-health was collected in 2002/03 and 2012/13.

But the engagement score, while positive, may not tell the whole story, and there are signs that stress is increasing across the civil service. In 2018/19, more than 3,200 cases of stress, anxiety or depression were recorded per 100,000 employees in the 'public administration' sector (which includes the civil service and related jobs), the highest rate recorded for any industry in the two decades these statistics have been recorded. In 2018/19, the sector with the next-highest reported incidences of stress was education, with just over 2,300 per 100,000 staff.

Civil service unions have claimed that increasing workloads, added pressures created by Brexit and years of pay restraint have contributed to these figures. Civil servants sometimes refer to 'the fog of the fortnight ahead' – a constant lack of clarity over milestones in the weeks ahead, which has had consequences for staff morale. Although some departments are taking measures to combat this – through counsellors, and lunchtime sessions on workload and wellbeing – this is likely to remain a challenge as the civil service works on Brexit.⁴⁵

Once the UK leaves the EU in January 2020, the prime minister has vowed that he would not seek an extension to the transition period ending on 31 December 2020. As the government starts negotiations in 2020 that will govern the relationship between the UK and the EU for decades, covering complex questions ranging from trade to security co-operation and fishing rights, there is no sign of respite for the civil service.⁴⁶



5 Major projects

Beyond Brexit, government departments are delivering more than 130 major projects. While this number has fallen in recent years, it is still too many – the government will have a tough job prioritising its new and existing major projects in the face of political pressure.

The Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP, 'the portfolio') contains around 130 of government departments' most expensive and complex projects. Over their lifetime these projects are projected to cost nearly £450 billion (bn). Major projects contained within the portfolio include: infrastructure developments like Crossrail and the High Speed 2 (HS2) railway line; ICT projects across government; major transformations to how public services are delivered, such as the reform of the courts and tribunals system; and military projects including the construction of seven new submarines for the Royal Navy.

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA), a joint unit of the Cabinet Office and the Treasury, publishes an annual assessment of how likely these projects are to be delivered on time and on budget. It also serves as a base of expertise at the centre of government and is responsible for developing project-delivery skills and providing direct support to the most complex and significant projects.

The size of the portfolio has remained stable – at 133 projects for 2018 and 2019, with an equal number of projects entering and leaving the portfolio – but has fallen since 2016 and 2017 (both 143). However, civil service leaders have repeatedly argued that this is still too many, with departments tasked with delivering too many projects to do so well. The portfolio does not include the various Brexit-related workstreams. These projects, run by 25 government departments, are funded from a separate £6.3bn allocation (that runs until March 2020), and include the EU Settlement Scheme and upgrades to technology used at the UK's borders.

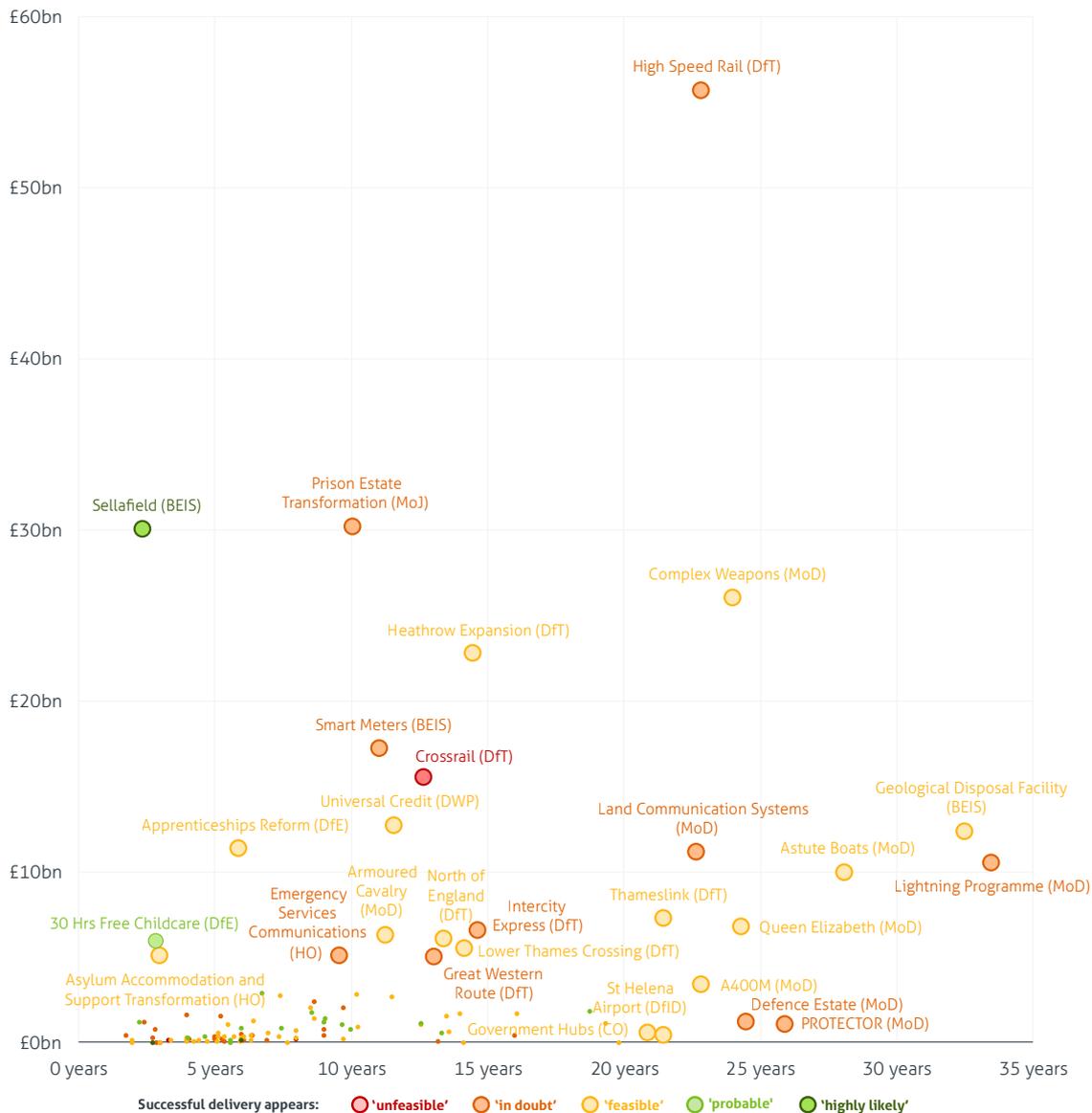
Most projects leaving the portfolio in the past year were delivered successfully (though some were stopped early or replaced). But within the portfolio around a third of projects are categorised as 'unfeasible' or 'in doubt', and this proportion is increasing. The IPA's confidence in the successful delivery of military projects has increased, but a higher percentage of ICT and transformation projects are at risk of failure than in 2018.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has the highest number of projects of any department, though confidence in these is stable. The Department for Transport (DfT) has the highest value of projects deemed to be at risk of not being delivered on time and on budget (rated red or amber/red), including Crossrail, the delivery of which has slipped from 'feasible' to 'infeasible' over the last year.

Get the latest analysis at
www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/majorprojects

There are currently 133 major government projects, with a total cost of over £442bn

Figure 5.1 Major government projects by delivery confidence rating, duration and whole-life cost, 2019



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Infrastructure and Projects Authority annual report, 2019. Data as of previous September. Projects with costs above £5bn or duration above 20 years enlarged and labelled. Projects with exempt confidence ratings, whole-life costs or durations not included although we have estimated a duration for Crossrail based on public statements.

The GMPP is a collection of the most complex and expensive projects that departments are currently running. The portfolio is overseen by the IPA, which was established to support and scrutinise departments as they deliver major projects.

For the fourth year in a row, DfT's HS2 has the highest whole-life costs by far. With an estimated cost of nearly £56bn over 23 years, it is around £26bn more expensive than the next costliest projects: the Sellafield Model Change (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, BEIS) and Prison Estate Transformation (Ministry of Justice, MoJ). And HS2's true costs are probably closer to £72–78bn.¹

The scale and cost of the project has drawn particular attention in the media – with support and opposition coming in from groups across the political spectrum.

Of the 133 projects in the portfolio, 25 have a whole-life cost of more than £5bn. Crossrail (DfT) is the only one of these the IPA has rated red – meaning that successful delivery is 'unfeasible'. This has deteriorated from the amber ('feasible') rating it was given in 2018.

According to the IPA, a "combination of inter-connected factors" were responsible for delaying the project from opening the central London tunnel in December 2019.² These included "the late delivery of critical infrastructure" and needing more time for testing and assurance. Many of these problems stemmed from a series of failures by Crossrail Ltd – the government-owned company responsible for delivering the project – to manage the large number of contractors it needed.³

In response, project sponsors have conducted governance and finance reviews and made changes to the board and executive team. Delivery of the project is now earmarked for late 2020, although Bond Street station is unlikely to be ready to open at that time.⁴

Each year, the IPA assesses the likelihood that major projects will achieve their objectives on time and on budget. Every project is awarded a red/amber/green (RAG) delivery confidence rating as follows:

- **green** – successful delivery appears highly likely
- **amber/green** – successful delivery appears probable, but attention is needed to ensure that risks don't develop into major issues
- **amber** – successful delivery appears feasible, but there are significant issues and intervention is required to bring the project back on track
- **amber/red** – successful delivery appears in doubt, and urgent intervention is required to address problems or to assess whether they can be resolved
- **red** – successful delivery appears to be unachievable, and the project may need to be rescoped or have its overall viability reconsidered
- **rating reset** – a project undergoes a significant change to its baseline which involves its business case being refreshed or changed.

Across the whole portfolio, 32 existing projects (those that have been in the portfolio for more than one year) saw their delivery confidence ratings improve, while only 19, including Crossrail, fell; 59 stayed the same. MoD's £9.97bn programme to build seven *Astute*-class submarines was among those that improved, rising from red to amber, with the fourth vessel expected to commence sea trials in 2020.⁵ Similarly the £151 million (m) NHS e-Referral Service saw its delivery confidence improve from 'in doubt' (amber/red) to 'highly likely' (amber/green).

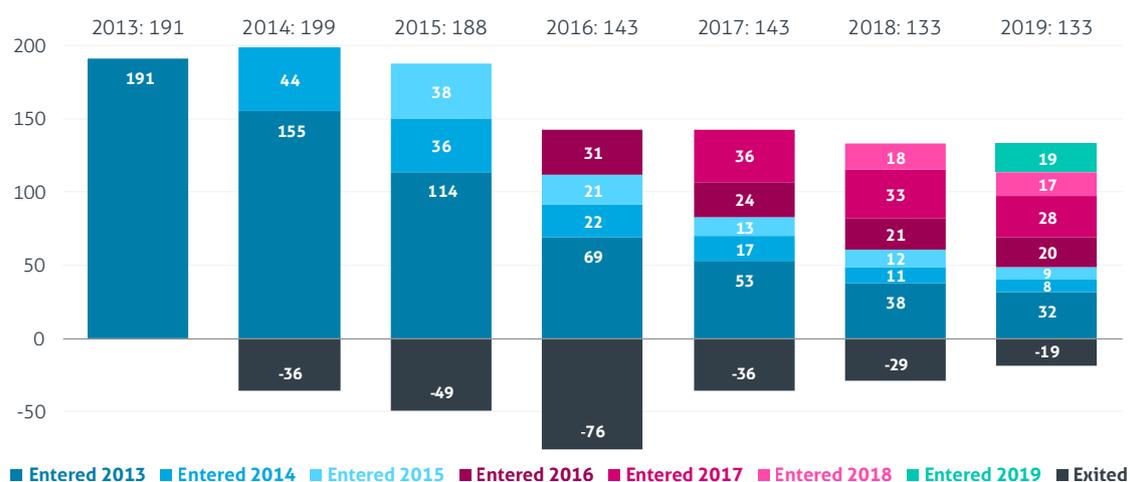
The government has also committed £6.3bn of funding for departments to support their Brexit workstreams. Some of these projects would seem to meet the criteria for inclusion in the portfolio. For example, the EU Settlement Scheme is a major government transformation project, as is the work being done to build capacity for customs checks and trade monitoring at the UK's borders; this also spans infrastructure and ICT.

Keeping these projects separate from the portfolio deprives them of the support and scrutiny that the IPA can offer, which may increase the risk that they fail, are not delivered on time or run up excess costs.

Following the December 2019 election, the new Conservative government has announced a range of major new programmes in line with its manifesto promises. These include further infrastructure investments, such as upgrading or building roads and railways, and developing capacity for gigabit-capable broadband. Given that – in the view of expert officials – the government currently has too many ongoing programmes, it will be important to carefully prioritise any new projects that could enter the portfolio.

The number of major projects is the same as last year – but that is still too many

Figure 5.2 Number of projects in the GMPP, 2013 to 2019



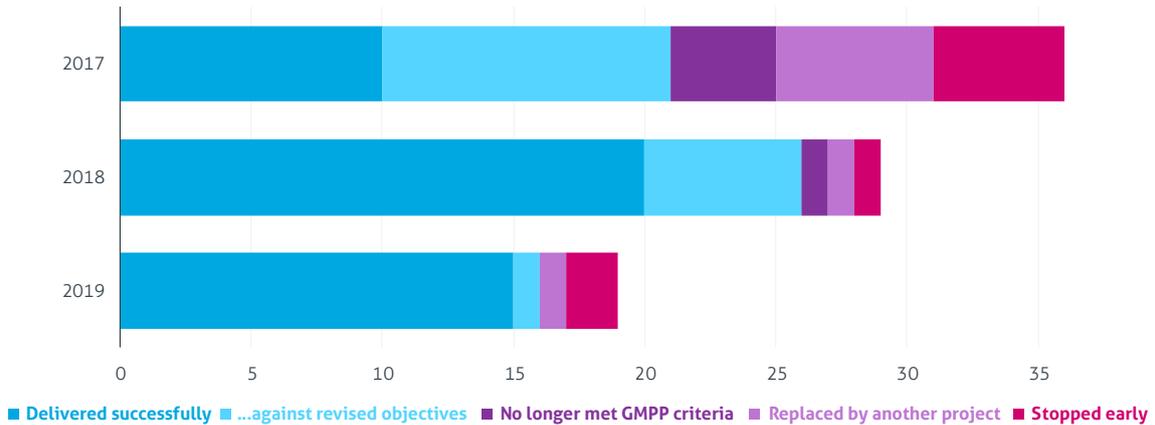
Source: Institute for Government analysis of Infrastructure and Projects Authority annual reports, 2013–2019. Data in each report as of previous September.

From a high of 199 projects in 2014, the overall size of the GMPP shrank substantially in 2016, though this was largely due to timing; a greater-than-usual number of projects were scheduled to be completed at the end of the 2015 Parliament and subsequently left the portfolio.⁶ Since then, the number of projects entering and exiting the portfolio has been reasonably balanced. The size of the portfolio in September 2019 was unchanged from 2018, with a total of 133 projects.

In 2019, 19 projects exited the portfolio. These included a £2.4bn Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) programme to expand 'superfast' broadband coverage and the £5.9bn Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) 'people and locations' programme.⁷ At the same time, another 19 projects joined, including those to manage the development and delivery of the new T Level qualifications and the UK's use of 5G technology.⁸

Civil service leaders have argued that the portfolio still contains too many projects. John Manzoni, chief executive of the civil service, has previously said that the civil service does “too much to do it well”.⁹ Tony Meggs and Matthew Vickerstaff – the former chief executive and current deputy chief executive of the IPA – have respectively said that there needs to be a focus on doing “fewer things really well” and a “renewed effort on proper prioritisation”.¹⁰

Figure 5.3 **Reasons why projects left the GMPP, 2017, 2018 and 2019**



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Infrastructure and Projects Authority annual reports, 2017–2019. Data in each report as of previous September.

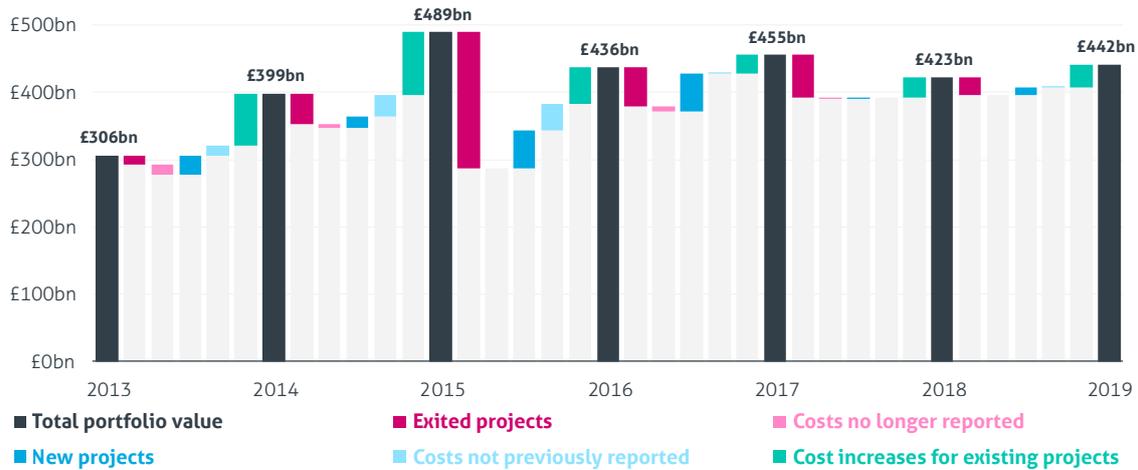
Of the 19 projects that left the portfolio in 2019, 16 were delivered successfully – though one of these did so against revised objectives. This was a greater percentage than in both 2017 and 2018 (although fewer projects were delivered).

Of the three that were not delivered, the Cabinet Office’s project on developing commercial capability across the civil service was stopped and replaced by a similar project with a broader scope. The original project had focused on improving the capability of the top 500 contract managers in government by 2020; its replacement aims to improve the capability of all contract managers, around 30,000 people, by 2022.

Two other projects were also stopped early: HMRC plans to make tax digital for individuals were stopped due to Brexit projects taking priority; while the digital transformation programme at the National Offender Management Service (NOMS, now HM Prisons and Probation Service) was stopped “as a result of re-prioritisation”.¹¹

Cost increases to existing projects drove an increase in the whole-life cost of the portfolio

Figure 5.4 Total whole-life cost of the GMPP, 2013 to 2019



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Infrastructure and Projects Authority annual reports, 2013–2019. Data in each report as of previous September.

The IPA's use of 'whole-life' costs is designed to take in not just the immediate costs of construction and delivery, but also the planning and design work that comes at the start of a project, and the ongoing operational and maintenance costs that may follow. While the number of projects in the GMPP has remained steady, the whole-life cost of those currently in the portfolio increased slightly between 2018 and 2019, from £423bn to £442bn.

There are several reasons for this increase. Since 2013, the whole-life cost of projects that have exited the portfolio – predominantly due to completion – is £410.8bn. However, in 2019 only £26.5bn-worth of projects exited the portfolio, the lowest amount since 2013. And while the expected whole-life cost of new projects entering the portfolio was relatively small, at £10.2bn compared with £57.3bn in 2016 and £56.8bn in 2017, the portfolio also saw an increase in expected costs to existing projects at £35.6bn. This is the largest single-year increase since 2016.

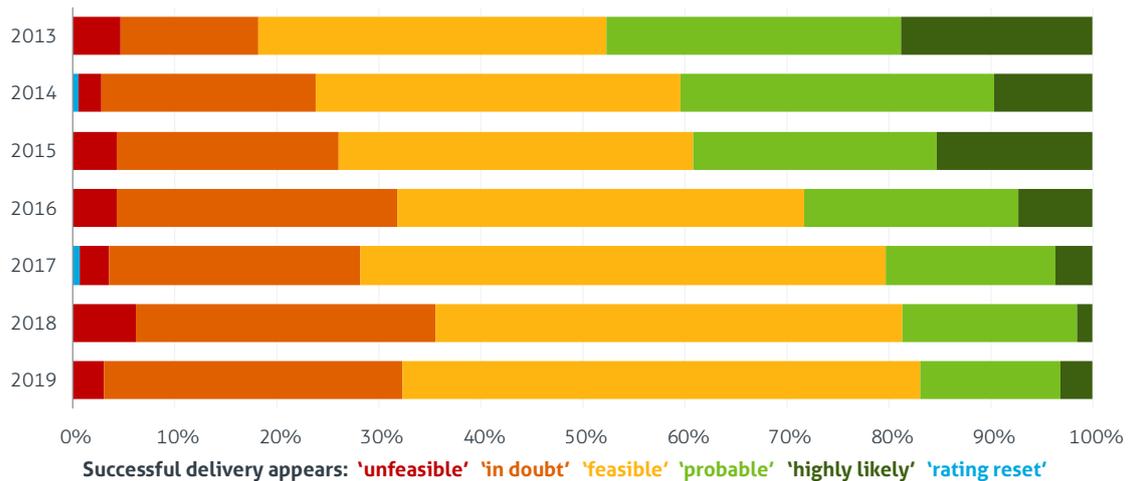
Most of the increase in existing project costs can be attributed to those of the Asylum Accommodation and Support Transformation Programme (Home Office), which rose drastically from £8m to £5.1bn, and the Prison Estate Transformation Programme (MoJ), whose listed whole-life cost rose from £0 to £30.2bn. These projects have been in the portfolio since 2017 and 2016 respectively, but had not received final sign-off on their business cases from the Treasury. They received this approval in the past year, and their whole-life costs were subsequently revised to reflect the fact that they were now actively going ahead.

The 30 Hours Free Childcare project (Department for Education, DfE) also saw a steep rise in cost, from £1.9bn to £5.9bn. This project was successfully delivered in 2019, in line with government commitments made as part of the Childcare Act 2016. The substantial rise in cost followed revisions to the forecast for demand for this service. DfE's initial assumptions about the average number of hours of childcare that people would claim proved to be far too low once the first data showing the actual take-up of the offer became available.

Some of these rises were offset by reductions in cost elsewhere. Most substantially, the PHE Science Hub's cost – a Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) project to establish a national 'centre of excellence' for public health science – fell from £11.6bn to £2.7bn during 2019. This change follows a recalculation of the programme's costs to only reflect the amount of capital and revenue needed to effect immediate changes. This change excludes the whole-life costs beyond the implementation date.

IPA confidence that projects will be delivered on time and on budget continues to fall

Figure 5.5 Delivery confidence for GMPP projects, 2013 to 2019



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Infrastructure and Projects Authority annual reports, 2013–2019. Data in each report as of previous September, and projects with exempt delivery confidence ratings are not included.

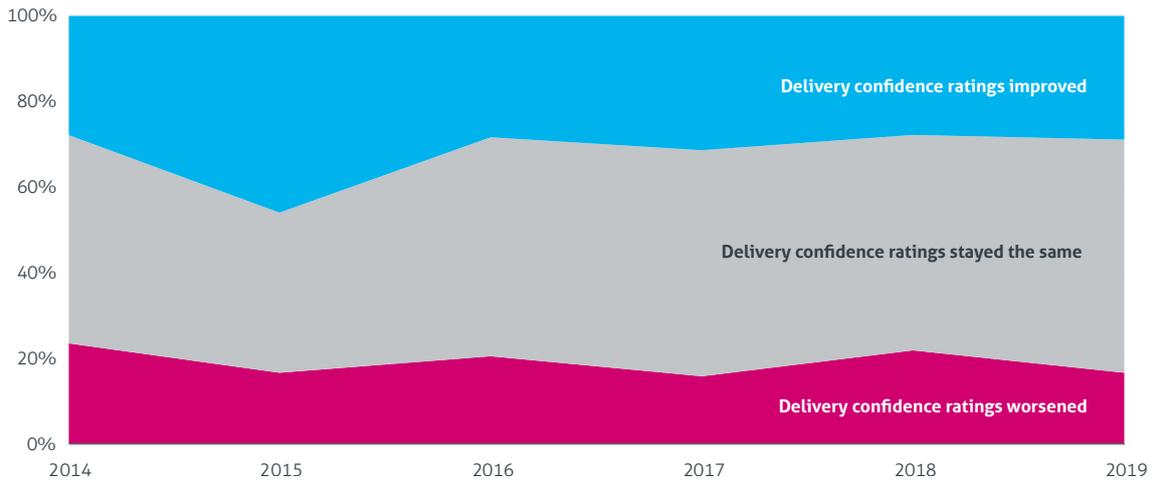
The IPA's overall confidence about the delivery of projects within the portfolio has been falling steadily since 2013. A smaller proportion of projects are considered to be on track this year than ever before, with only 22 rated as 'probable' or 'highly likely' to be delivered on time and on budget. Only four projects are rated as highly likely; these include the Sellafield Model Change and the NHS e-Referral Service. This trend is driven in part by the IPA's focus on the hardest and most challenging projects – therefore we would expect to see a smaller proportion of projects rated green or amber/green. The portfolio has also grown smaller overall as a result of this.

Just under a third of projects are in the highest risk categories – rated red ('unfeasible') or amber/red ('in doubt') – a slight improvement compared to 2018, with the percentage of projects rated amber ('feasible') rising from 44% to 50%.

There is no general correlation between the IPA's confidence ratings and the cost or duration of a project; longer and more expensive projects are not deemed inherently riskier than shorter or cheaper ones. Given how diverse these projects are, it is not surprising that the specific risks associated with any project depend on similarly specific characteristics and management.

The level of risk within the portfolio may have increased because newly added projects are inherently riskier than established ones, and the fact that, by its very nature, the portfolio only includes the government's most-complex projects.

Figure 5.6 Year-on-year changes to delivery confidence ratings for GMPP projects, 2014 to 2019



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Infrastructure and Projects Authority annual reports, 2013–19. Data in each report as of previous September, and projects with exempt delivery confidence ratings are not included.

Projects tend to see their confidence ratings improve while in the portfolio, and those exiting the portfolio tend to have the best ratings. Since 2014, around half of the projects that remain in the portfolio year-to-year see no change. Around a third see their ratings improve; around one sixth see their ratings deteriorate.

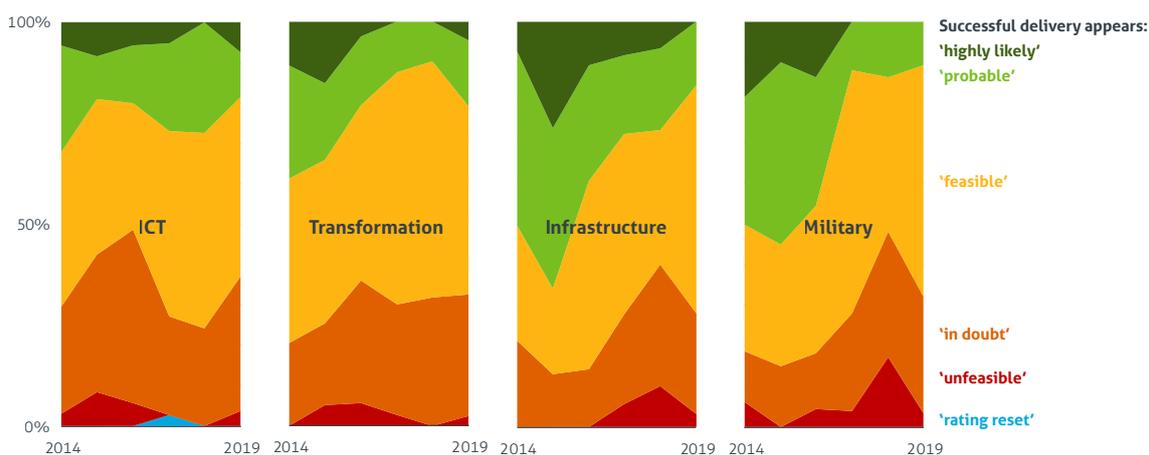
Projects that remain in the portfolio year-to-year and see a change in their delivery confidence rating have been around twice as likely to see this improve than fall. This suggests that being in the portfolio benefits these exceptionally complex and costly projects, increasing the likelihood that they are delivered while reducing the risk of cost overruns or falls in delivery quality.

Over time, this means that the portfolio has accumulated projects with lower confidence ratings, many of which have remained for longer-than-average periods. At some point, we should expect the portfolio to reach a rough equilibrium, with the higher risk ratings of new and more challenging projects being cancelled out by improvements in the delivery confidence of projects that have been in the portfolio for years.

The hope is that lessons learned from project delivery become embedded within the IPA, helping it to improve the scoping of future projects and reducing the likelihood that the government commits to risky or unfeasible projects.

The Johnson government promised a range of new major projects and programmes in its 2019 election manifesto. But it must be careful. If it continues to add risky projects to its portfolio without any improvement in ongoing projects, this will lead to an ever-growing number of risky, unresolved challenges in the GMPP.

Figure 5.7 **Delivery confidence ratings for different categories of GMPP projects, 2014 to 2019**



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Infrastructure and Projects Authority annual report, 2019. Data as of previous September, and projects with exempt delivery confidence ratings are not included.

Within the portfolio there are four major categories of government project:

- **ICT projects** aim to reduce costs or boost productivity by improving or replacing government ICT systems. There are currently 27 ICT projects within the portfolio, with a median whole-life cost of around £400m and duration of 6.7 years. Many departments are undertaking major ICT projects, including the Home Office (with seven, including biometrics, digital border technology and immigration), HMRC and DHSC (four each). The most expensive is the MoJ's Future IT Sourcing Programme, which has a projected whole-life cost of £2.9bn.
- **Transformation projects** aim to make the delivery of public services more efficient and improve the experience of users. There are 43 transformation projects currently within the portfolio, with a median whole-life cost of around £357m and duration of 5.3 years. These projects are owned by departments from across government, although MoJ (nine) and DHSC (seven) have the most. The most expensive is the Sellafield Model Change, which has a projected whole-life cost of over £30bn. This project concerns the transfer of ownership of the operating company, Sellafield Ltd, from private ownership to being a fully owned subsidiary of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, an agency of BEIS.
- **Infrastructure projects** add to the UK's stock of fixed building assets and help to promote growth in the economy. There are 32 infrastructure projects within the portfolio – more than half of them at DfT (17) – with a median whole-life cost of £1.6bn and duration of 11.6 years. Currently, the most expensive is the HS2 rail link, which has a projected whole-life cost of £55.7bn – though the chairman of HS2 believes the actual whole-life cost of the project will be in the range of £72–78bn (in 2015 prices).¹²
- **Military projects** help to develop the UK's armed forces so that they can maintain national security. All projects in this category are associated with the MoD. There are 31 of these within the portfolio and they have a median whole-life cost of £2.0bn and duration of 16.1 years. The most expensive is the design, development

and delivery of four new *Dreadnought*-class ballistic missile submarines. This has a projected whole-life cost of £30bn.

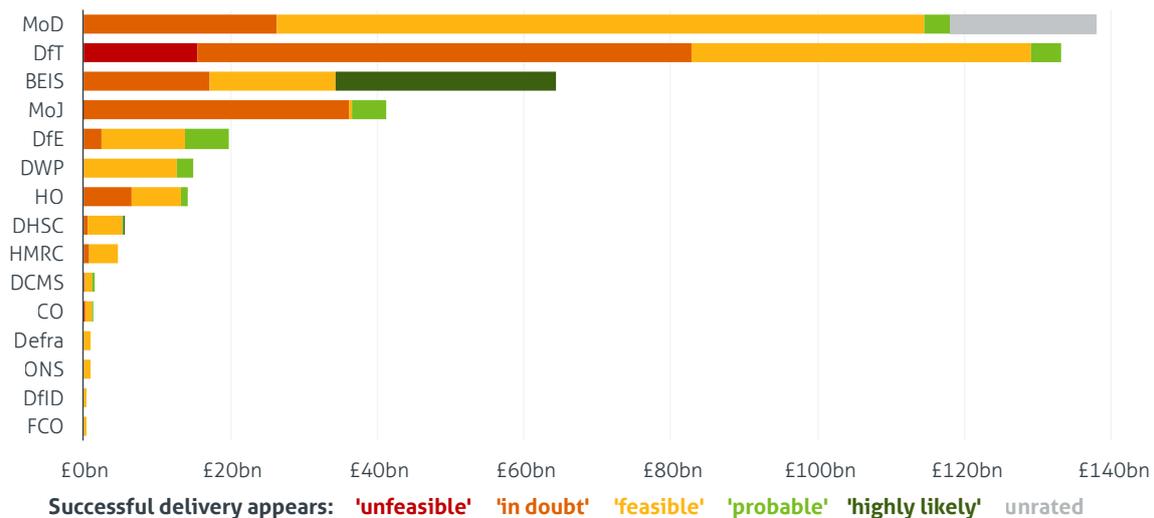
In 2018, military projects carried the highest level of risk, with nearly half rated red ('infeasible') or amber/red ('in doubt'); this improved in 2019, where only a third had these ratings. The previous explanation offered for this was "an over-programmed portfolio", although the total number of military projects has only fallen by one, from 32 last year to 31 in 2019.

For the third year in a row, there are no military projects whose delivery is rated as 'highly likely' and the proportion rated as 'probable' has also fallen.

The ICT category now has the highest percentage of projects rated 'infeasible' or 'in doubt' – 37%, up from 24% – and the percentage of transformation projects with these ratings has also risen slightly, from 32% to 33%. However, both of these project types also have around a fifth of projects where successful delivery is 'highly likely' or 'probable'.

DfT has the costliest portfolio of at-risk projects

Figure 5.8 **Whole-life costs of major projects by delivery confidence rating and department, 2019**



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Infrastructure and Projects Authority annual reports, 2019. Data in each report as of previous September, and projects with exempt whole-life cost estimates are not included.

MoD has more major projects than any other department (35) and the greatest whole-life costs associated with them (nearly £140bn). But it is at DfT, which has the second-highest number of projects in total (18), where the value of projects at risk of not being delivered successfully is highest – £83bn out of £133bn (62%).

Most controversially, the £15.5bn Crossrail project has had its status downgraded to 'unfeasible' (red). It is joined by four more projects rated as 'in doubt': HS2 (£55.7bn); the Intercity Express Programme (£6.6bn); the modernisation and electrification of the Great Western Route (£5bn); and the Rail Franchising Programme (£20.1m).

BEIS has the greatest proportion of projects which are considered on-track for delivery. These include the UKRI Implementation Programme, which combines nine research funding bodies into a single public body (£10.4m), and the Sellafield Model Change (£30bn).

The UK begins 2020 under the leadership of a new and ambitious government. The Conservatives' manifesto described a large number of major programmes that are designed to boost the country and transform government. However, delivering all of these will not be easy. While the IPA continues to demonstrate its value by helping the government to successfully manage its portfolio of major projects, there is a limit to what it can do.

Getting all its manifesto pledges done will require the government to carefully prioritise its time and resources – otherwise it risks overburdening itself with an unmanageable slate of projects.



6 Digital services

The government continues to use digital technology to transform the way it operates, but results are mixed. Many existing platforms and services continue to grow, and there have been increasingly ambitious forays into new technology. Others, such as GOV.UK Verify, continue to be mired in issues and government still faces problems in upgrading older legacy IT systems.

Since 2011, the Government Digital Service (GDS), a unit of the Cabinet Office, has supported the government's programme of digital transformation. In that time, it has overseen the consolidation of the government's web presence, for both information and services, into a single online portal: GOV.UK.

GDS has also built a set of 'common components', such as Notify, Pay and Verify, which can be incorporated into the various digital services provided by other government organisations to add specific functions such as online payments. Of these, Notify and Pay continue to grow, being adopted by more organisations to support a wider range of services and handle ever more transactions.

In contrast, Verify, the government's flagship identity assurance scheme, continues to fall short of targets and has been heavily criticised by the National Audit Office (NAO) and Parliament. This component has failed to build its intended user base and it is not delivering the efficiencies that the government sought.

'Digital government' is a fluid concept. The technologies available and their potential applications change constantly, while the expectations of users also evolve. Organisations across government have risen to this opportunity, launching pilot schemes and trials of technologies from artificial intelligence (AI) to drones to improve the way they operate.

But despite this ambition, many of these new technologies are immature and their use in government, in the near future at least, is likely to be limited. The inconsistent and incompatible approach from government to the management and use of its data is a further obstacle to all forms of digital transformation. The NAO reported that "despite years of effort and many well-documented failures, government has lacked clear and sustained strategic leadership on data".¹ The government has also struggled to manage and upgrade existing IT systems. Government leaders should focus on these fundamental issues before embarking on bold new technological initiatives.

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Increased use of the GOV.UK site reflects the growing use of digital public services

Figure 6.1 Weekly traffic volumes to GOV.UK and its predecessors, 2010–19 (unique users)



Source: Institute for Government analysis of GOV.UK Performance Platform, www.gov.uk/performance/site-activity/site-traffic

In 2013, GOV.UK replaced Directgov and Businesslink as the single online portal for all central government activity. Since then, its use has grown steadily (with seasonal dips every year around Christmas) from around four million unique visitors each week to almost 18 million.

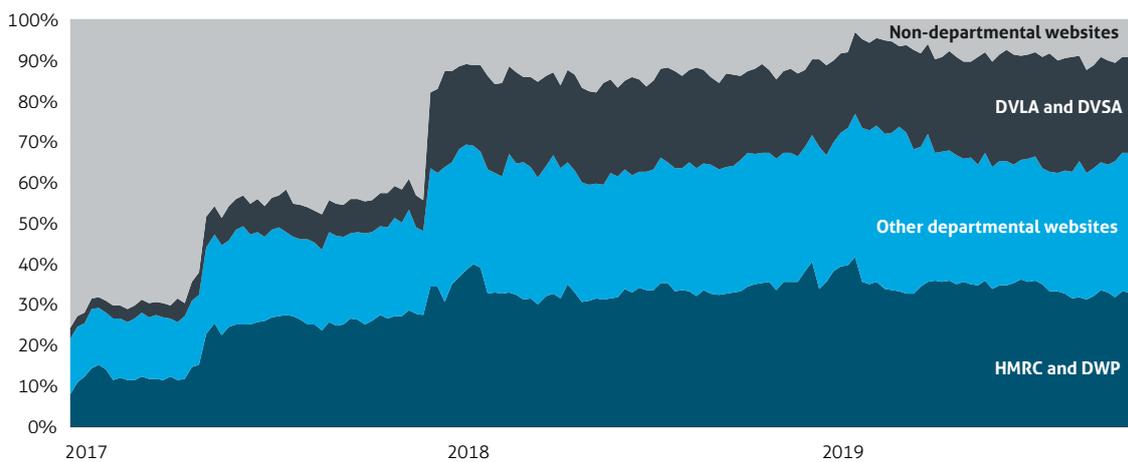
GOV.UK brings together thousands of websites for individual organisations, ranging from the largest departments to individual committees. People are increasingly using GOV.UK not just to obtain information but also to access the growing number of digital public services. Some of these are for flagship government programmes and have millions of users, for example the service to access a Universal Credit account. Others are far more niche, such as the one through which companies apply for a licence to put a satellite into orbit.

The four busiest organisational websites are those of HMRC, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), which provide many of the most-used digital services. Taken together, these have accounted for more than half of all visits to GOV.UK every week for the past two years.

HMRC and DWP combined get about half of all visits to central department websites, predominantly from people signing into their personal tax or Universal Credit accounts respectively.

The DVLA and DVSA account for almost three quarters of all visits to non-departmental websites within GOV.UK, and attract more traffic each week than any main department other than HMRC and DWP. This is largely driven by people using digital services, such as checking the tax status of a vehicle (DVLA), or booking or changing a driving test (DVSA).

Figure 6.2 Departmental and non-departmental shares of GOV.UK web traffic (unique visitors, weekly)

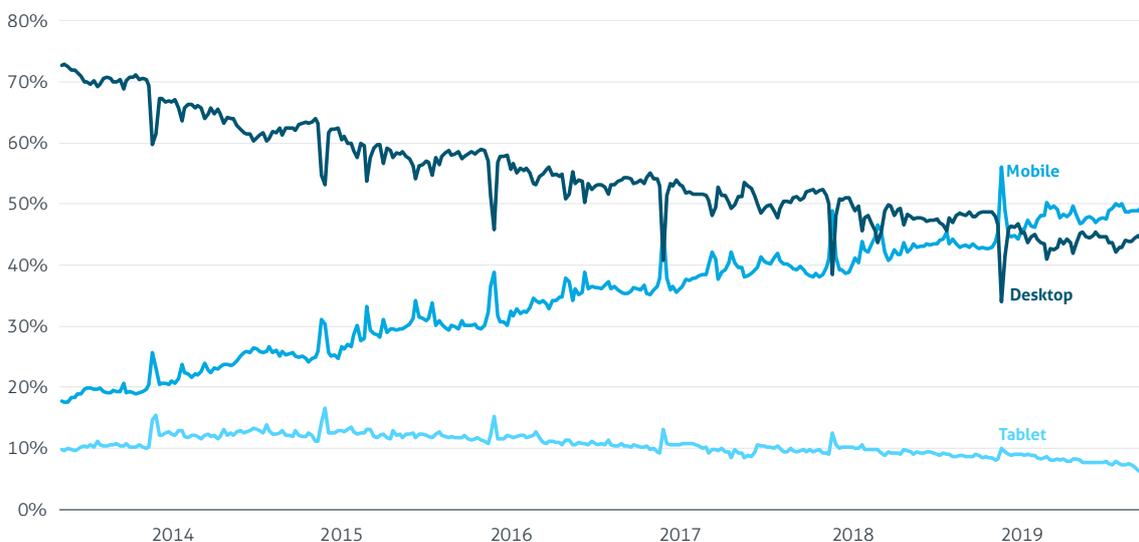


Source: Institute for Government analysis of GOV.UK Performance Platform, www.gov.uk/performance/site-activity/site-traffic

Some digital services, such as Universal Credit, have a constant stream of traffic through GOV.UK. In other cases, traffic is seasonal or linked to specific events. Following the announcement of an early general election in November 2019, for example, web traffic to the Cabinet Office site rose by around 430% in a week as people sought information on how to vote or apply for a postal vote, and access the 'register to vote' digital service.

Digital services are supposed to be cheaper to run, to reduce the administrative burden on departments and to make it easier for people to access the services they need. And it seems that they are fulfilling these aims: in 2019, HMRC saw the number of paper-based tax-return submissions fall 7% as more people do their taxes online;² similarly, DWP's service to apply for a National Insurance number helped to reduce unnecessary calls to the relevant helpline by around 21,000 per month.³

Figure 6.3 How users accessed information and services on GOV.UK, 2013–19



Source: Institute for Government analysis of GOV.UK Performance Platform, www.gov.uk/performance/site-activity/site-traffic

The overall share of visits to GOV.UK coming from mobile devices overtook desktop computers for the first time in 2019. Previously, mobiles had only surpassed computers around Christmas, but since February 2019 mobiles have been the preferred means each month. The share of visits from tablets continues to fall and reached an all-time low of 6% in November 2019. This trend has been seen as a positive sign, one that suggests that GOV.UK is more accessible than it was in the past, and has prompted ongoing work by GDS to ensure that all of government's digital output works on mobiles.⁴ Over time, the growing use of mobiles to interact with government services will continue to influence how those services are designed.

Of the busiest websites, DWP gets almost two thirds of all its traffic from mobile devices. Much of this comes from people signing into their Universal Credit account, which is the single most-accessed digital service on the whole of GOV.UK. Similarly, the DVLA and DVSA also saw the majority of their web traffic in 2019 coming from mobiles.

However, HMRC bucks this trend. Desktop computers have consistently accounted for more than half of the traffic to its site. It may be that the people who access HMRC's services are simply more likely to use a computer, or that they may prefer not to do complex and sensitive transactions, such as filling out a tax self-assessment, on a phone.

GOV.UK Notify and Pay continue to grow well – but Verify stutters

One of GDS's early goals was to create platforms to enable 'digital transformation' within government – that is, to move information and services online.⁵ There are three particularly significant platforms that are used as components within other government services to do this:

- **GOV.UK Notify**, which automates messages by email, text message or letter
- **GOV.UK Pay**, which handles small financial transactions
- **GOV.UK Verify**, which provides a secure system of identity assurance.

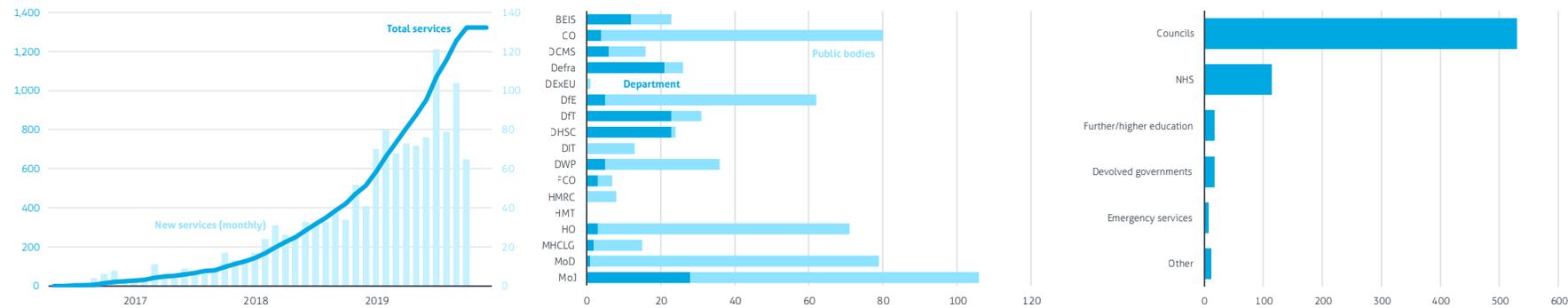
These make it easier for government organisations to build services that require such functions, for example handling payments to a local council for parking permits or enabling a GP surgery to send out SMS appointment reminders.

Within central government, departments make use of Notify and Pay in various ways. For example, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has built Notify into services managing jury summons, home detention curfews and prison visits, and uses Pay to make it easier to send money to a prisoner or pay probate fees.

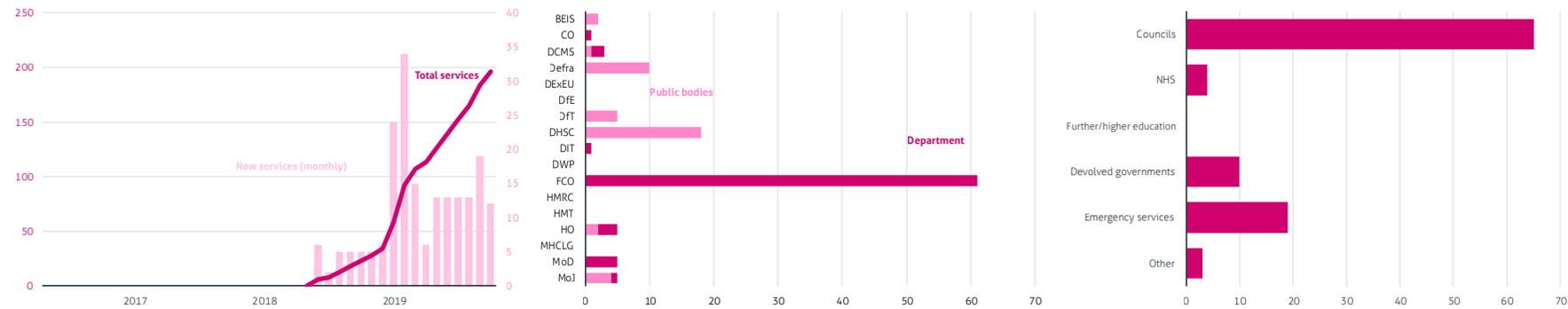
In contrast, while Verify was adopted more widely in 2019, it is still only a component in 21 digital services, all of which are in central government (it is not yet available to organisations outside of central government). This naturally has limited its growth⁶ – see Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4 Digital public services using GOV.UK Notify, Pay and Verify across central and local government

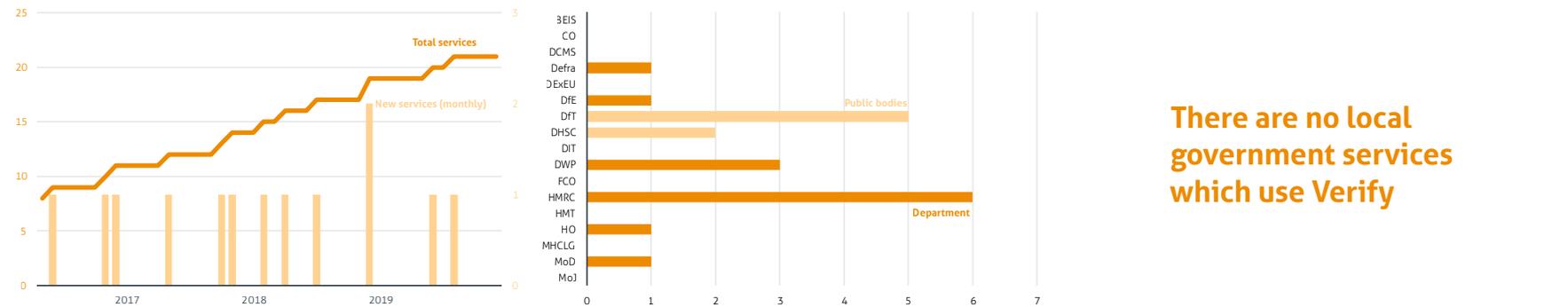
GOV.UK Notify by department, including public bodies, and outside central government



GOV.UK Pay by department, including public bodies, and outside central government



GOV.UK Verify by department, including public bodies, and outside central government



There are no local government services which use Verify

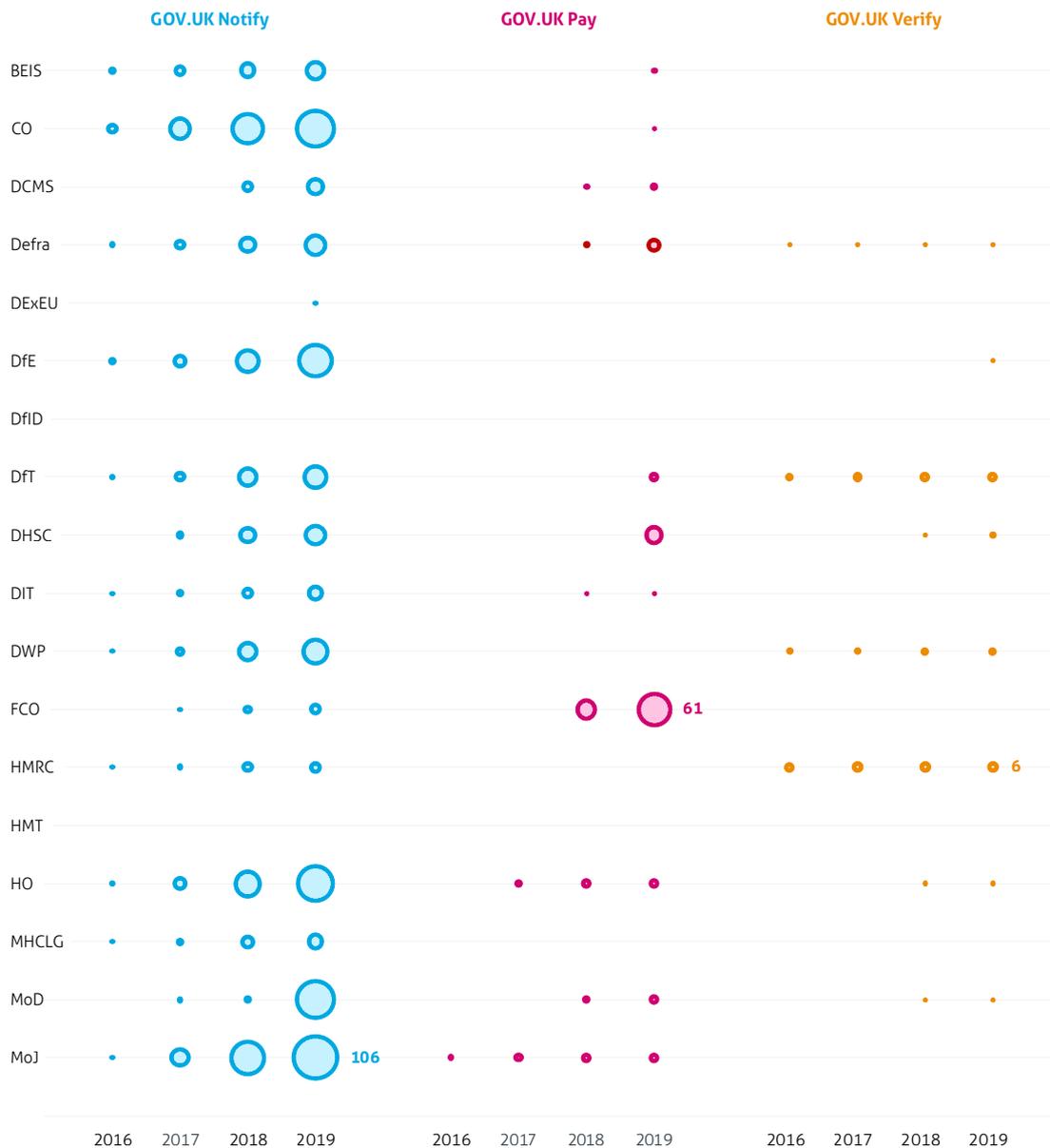
Source: Institute for Government analysis of the GOV.UK Performance Platform, www.gov.uk/performance/other

The services that use Verify include many of the busiest within government. These include DWP's Universal Credit, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra) Rural Payments system, several of HMRC's tax services and the Home Office's disclosure and barring service. Given the small number of services into which Verify is incorporated, it is not surprising that its use is limited to a few departments. However, the 21 services in 2019 is still a long way from the 2016 target of 46 services to be using Verify by 2020.⁷

Verify has struggled in other ways, too. It has failed to be incorporated into other digital services as widely as planned, has not built anything close to its target user base and is struggling to realise the financial benefits and long-term viability that it needs to justify its continued support and development.⁸ The government has said that it will cease funding Verify from March 2020.

However, the need for a consistent and secure system of digital identity verification will remain and is likely to grow as the interactions between the government and individuals become increasingly digital. GDS must find a way to make Verify work better, soon, or start looking for an alternative solution.

Figure 6.5 Digital services using Notify, Pay and Verify by department (includes public bodies)



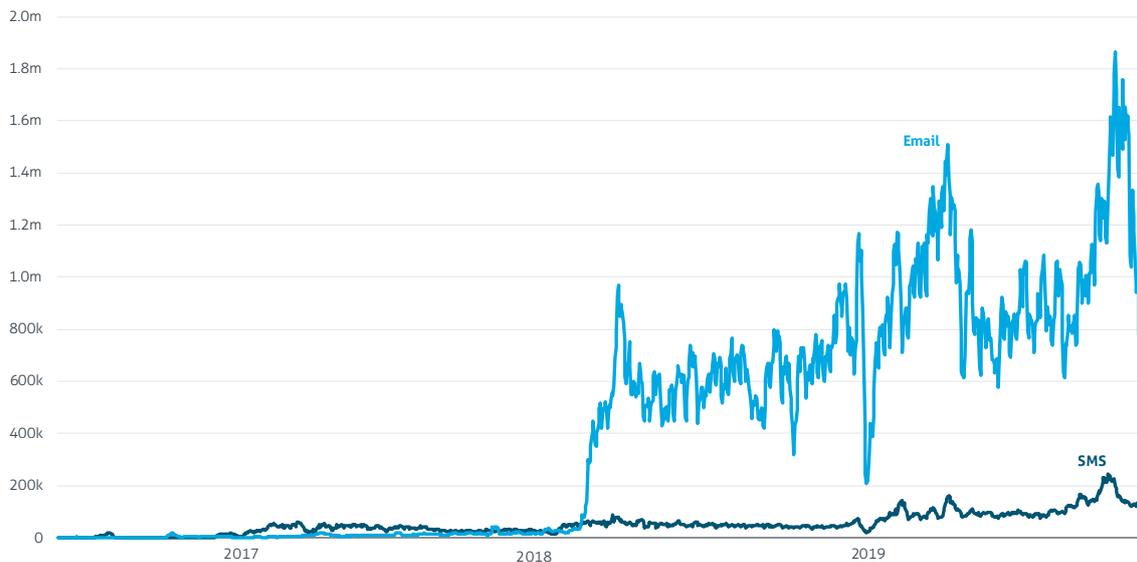
Source: Institute for Government analysis of GOV.UK Performance Platform, www.gov.uk/performance/other

The adoption of Notify, Verify and Pay has varied between government departments. While only eight of the major departments use Verify in any of their services, over half are using Pay, and all but two use Notify.

Neither the Treasury nor the Department for International Development (DfID), nor any of their public bodies, make use of any of these common components at all yet. It is not clear why this is the case; it may just be a matter of developing the right use for these organisations. It is possible that this could change suddenly, and rapidly: in 2018, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) only had three services using Notify, but added 76 in 2019 – mostly linked to services provided by military health care facilities, in a surge that mirrors the adoption by NHS clinics. It now has the third most services using Notify of any department, behind MoJ and the Cabinet Office.

Use of GOV.UK Notify and Pay grew in 2019

Figure 6.6 Emails and SMS messages sent via GOV.UK Notify, April 2016 to November 2019 (seven-day average)



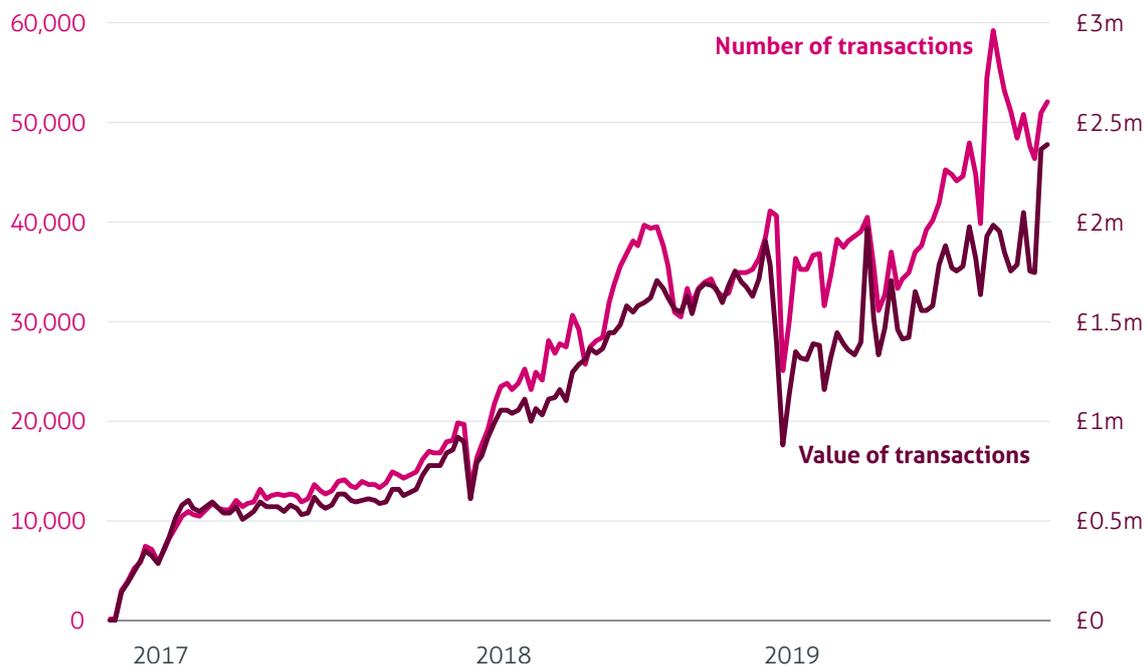
Source: Institute for Government analysis of GOV.UK performance data, www.gov.uk/performance/govuk-notify

GOV.UK Notify is being incorporated into an increasing number of digital services offered by an increasing number of public organisations – especially local authority and public service organisations, such as GP clinics. This has driven continued growth in the number of messages that are served via Notify.

Since launching in May 2016, government organisations have used Notify to send nearly 600m messages, including 525m automated emails and 67m SMS messages.

Notify saves money by reducing the amount that the government and its organisations need to spend on contact centres or other staff to communicate directly with people or chase up information. The Cabinet Office estimates that the service will save the government £35m per year over the next five years.⁹ This is clearly a healthy saving, though is £10m per year less than originally projected.¹⁰

Figure 6.7 Weekly total number and value of transactions via GOV.UK Pay, November 2016 to November 2019



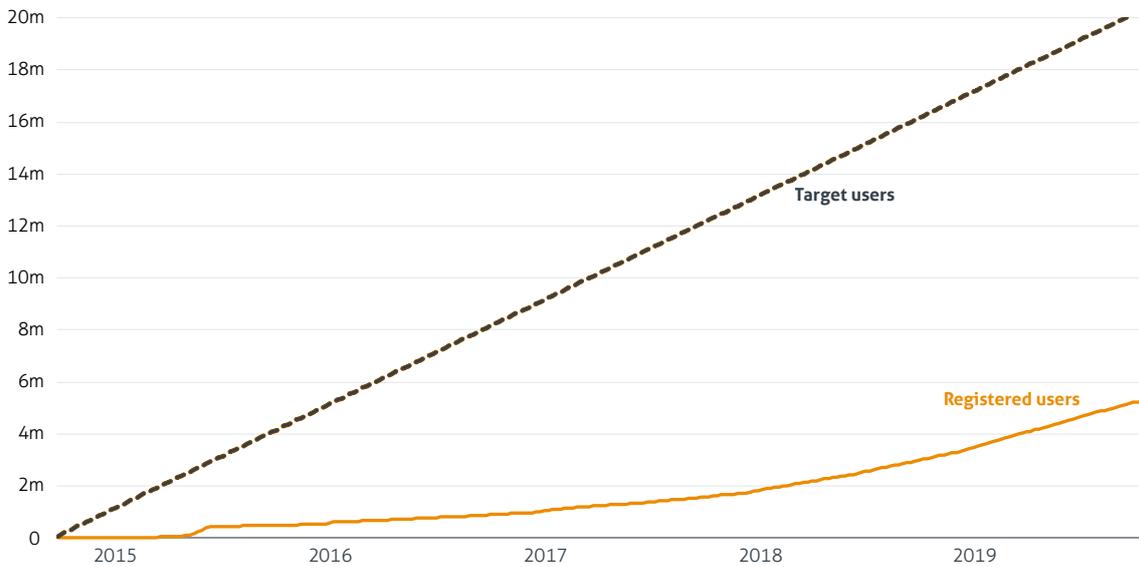
Source: Institute for Government analysis of GOV.UK performance data, www.gov.uk/performance/govuk-pay

Similarly, as the number of services using GOV.UK Pay has grown, so too has the number of transactions the platform handles, and their total value. Since the service launched in 2016, Pay has handled over 4.3m transactions worth over £184m.

At the end of 2018, there was a sharp drop in both the value and volume of transactions, coming around the Christmas period. In 2019, following the rebound, the volume of transactions grew faster than the value of transactions. This means that the average value of each transaction handled by Pay in 2019 (to 14 November) was £39.38, down from £47.42 in 2018 and £46.40 in 2017.

GOV.UK Verify is struggling to meet targets

Figure 6.8 Total GOV.UK Verify registered users compared with target registrations, October 2014 to November 2019



Source: Institute for Government analysis of GOV.UK performance data, www.gov.uk/performance/govuk-verify

GOV.UK Verify, the third major component alongside Notify and Pay, continued to struggle in 2019 and lags behind its targets for both registered users and services incorporated.

While more users are signing up – there were over 5.3m registered users as of November 2019 – this is still more than 14m short of the original target set for the service. And although it added more users per day in 2019 than in previous years, the figures were still below expectation: to be considered on track, Verify would have needed to add over 76,000 per week over the past year, which it did not do once (and in fact has only done on one occasion since its launch in 2015).

A major NAO investigation into Verify concluded that the project was not on track and that the cost benefits to the government were limited and far below projections.¹¹ These savings would accrue from departments not having to build their own identity systems, lower resource costs from having a single standard system and reduced fraud.¹² GDS estimated that Verify would realise benefits worth £873m between 2016 and 2020; the actual benefits for this period are now estimated to be closer to £217m.¹³ At the same time, the Infrastructure and Projects Authority has downgraded its confidence rating that the project will be delivered on time and on budget from amber ('feasible') to red ('unfeasible').¹⁴

Lastly, in a damning report, the Public Accounts Committee concluded that GDS had "vastly overestimated the benefits" of Verify, and that users had been "badly served by an onerous system that is not fit for purpose".¹⁵



7 Transparency

Government departments are withholding information in response to an increasing number of Freedom of Information requests – and many are still failing to publish transparency data on time.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gave members of the public the right to request information from the government. In the years since 2005, the number of Freedom of Information (Fol) requests made by the public has doubled, but a smaller proportion of these requests are being granted in full by the government. Reasons for this may include a lack of political will behind Fol, departments not matching the increase in requests with greater resources to deal with them, or more openly available government data meaning Fol requests are now more complex or seek sensitive information.

In Parliament, MPs continue to make use of written and oral questions to access information from the government. In line with previous years, questions are concentrated on departments that deal with the major issues the public is concerned with: namely, health care, education and immigration.

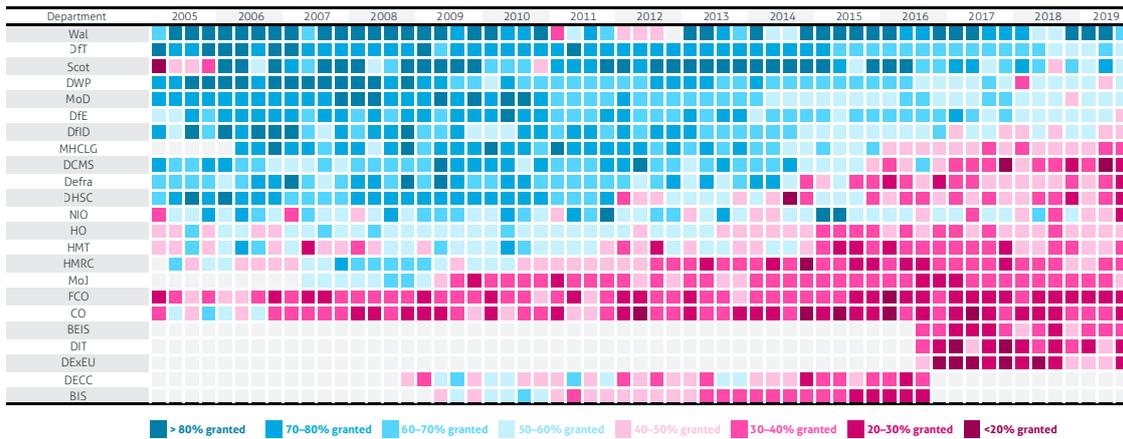
While the government is releasing some key 'transparency data' – a suite of datasets which departments have been mandated to publish by the prime minister – it is doing so later and less reliably than previously. Departments have been particularly patchy in their publication of 'organogram' data, although some are retrospectively publishing organograms from multiple years ago. Most departments are late in publishing monthly records of their spending over £25,000. By contrast, departments are better overall at publishing data on ministers' hospitality, although timeliness has deteriorated since 2018.

The Institute for Government and parliamentary select committees have long called for improvements to the way government departments report financial information. In 2019, the Treasury made recommendations and changed the guidance it issues to departments. In future years, we will analyse how much of a difference this has made – particularly in areas where departments are not currently publishing information, such as staff turnover.

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Fewer Fol requests are being granted in full

Figure 7.1 Percentage of Fol requests granted in full, Q1 2005 to Q3 2019



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office/Ministry of Justice, Government Fol Statistics, Q1 2005 to Q3 2019. Ordered from highest average percentage granted to lowest. Resolvable requests with known outcomes only.

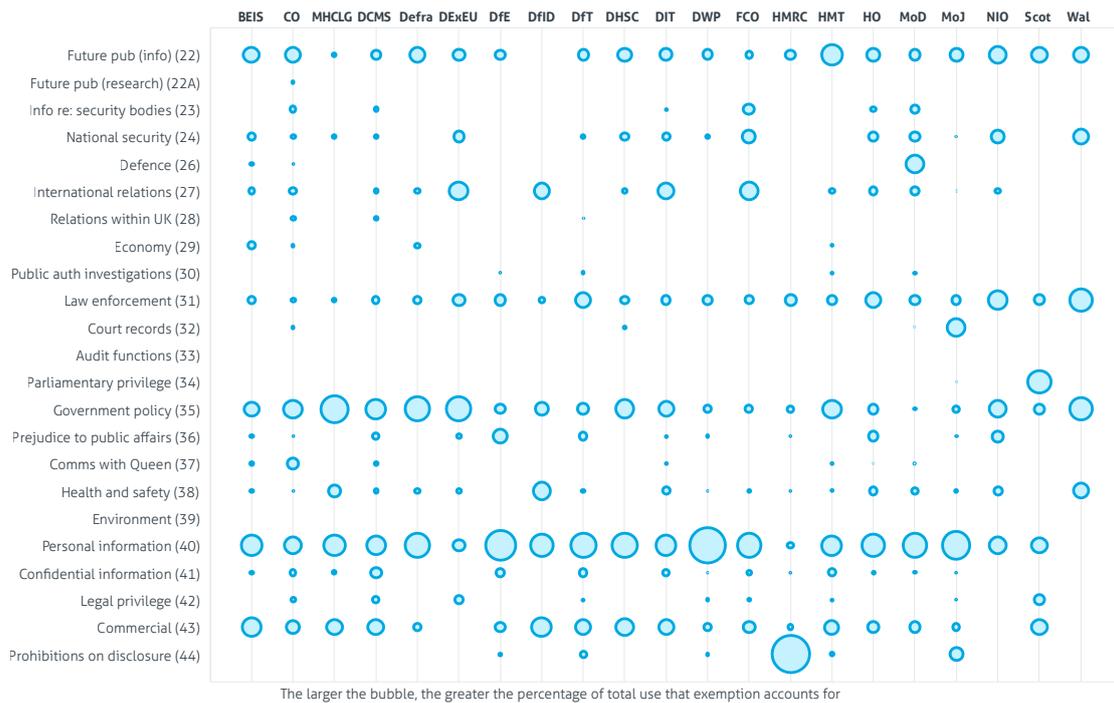
The percentage of Fol requests that are granted in full has been steadily decreasing since 2005. In the third quarter of 2019, there were 9,654 Fol requests made to government departments, of which 7,171 were 'resolvable' – the department was clear about what information the requester wanted, and held some of that information. Of these, 39% were granted in full and 11% were partially withheld. However, close to half (44%) were withheld in full. (The outcome is not known for the remainder.) This compares to 25% being fully withheld in the third quarter of 2010, and just 15% in the same quarter of 2005.

Certain departments, such as the Foreign Office and Ministry of Justice (MoJ), have always tended to withhold information. In the third quarter of 2019, the former granted only 24% of requests in full, and MoJ only 40%. This could be due to the subject matter, as Fol requests broaching topics such as international relations or court records can be exempt from requiring a response.

The decrease in granting of requests has been consistent across all departments, however, though for many the rates only slipped to levels below 50% from early 2016 onwards. This is the case for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Government departments can withhold an Fol request on various grounds. A small number – around 2% – are refused for being repeated or 'vexatious' (causing "a disproportionate or unjustifiable level of distress, disruption or irritation").¹ Most common is cost: over the past year or so, around a quarter of all resolvable requests were denied because departments say they would cost more than £600 to process. Not far behind is departments applying the various exemptions available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, amounting to around a fifth of requests.

Figure 7.2 **FoI exemptions, as a percentage of each department's total number, Q3 2019**



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Cabinet Office, Government FoI Statistics, Q3 2019.

There are 23 possible exemptions available to departments, including the requested information containing personal details, being intended for future publication or encroaching on a 'safe space' – an environment in which authorities can develop ideas and make policy decisions free from outside interference and distraction.²

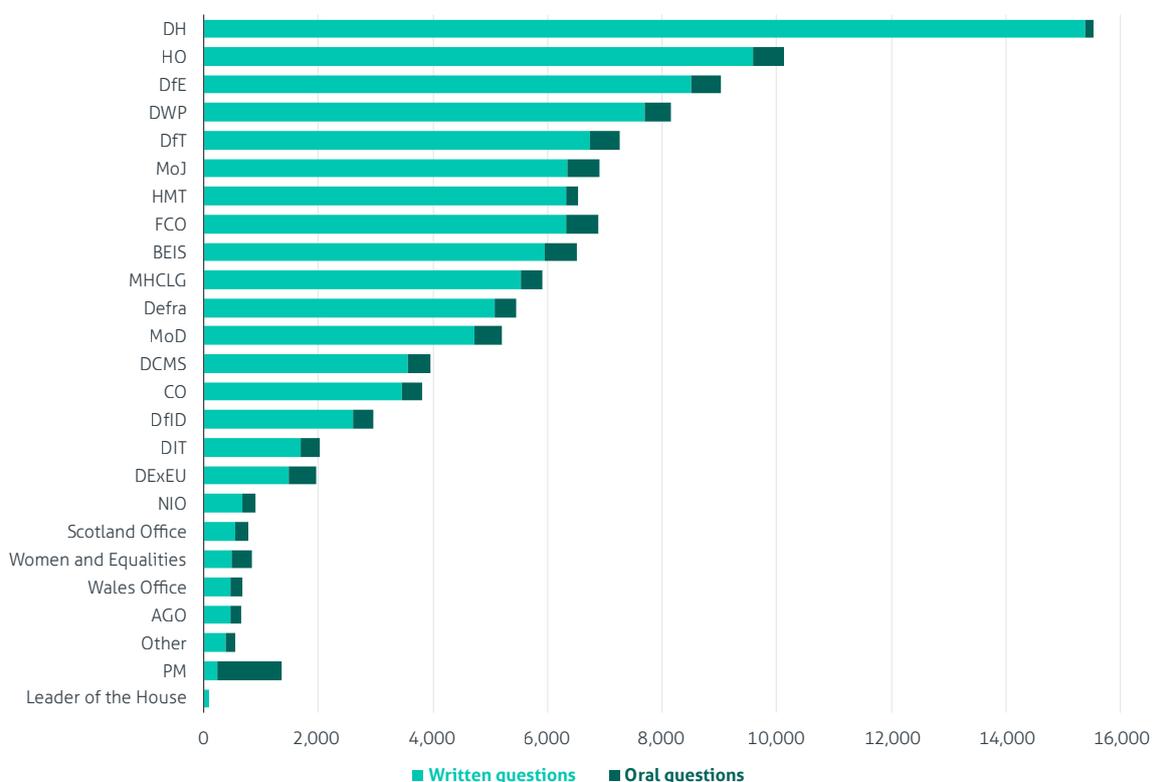
Departments are applying exemptions in a similar way to previous years. Personal information is the most common exemption, accounting for just under half of all exemptions used by departments in Q3 2019.³ This is followed by government policy and future publication. Some of the exemptions allowed by the Act have not been used for a while: the last time the 'environment' exemption was applied was in the second quarter of 2016, when it accounted for 8.2% of all exemptions.⁴

There are several reasons behind the fall in requests being granted. One is a possible lack of resources. The volume of FoI requests is increasing, rising from around 4,000 across all government departments in Q3 2005, to 7,500 in Q3 2010, to 9,600 in Q3 2019, but many departments have not expanded their capacity to be able to cope.⁵ Another is the lack of support from senior politicians in recent years (even David Cameron, a driving force behind open data in government, described FoI requests as "clutterations" and "buggerations").⁶

Others have suggested that with more information being published by government, the public is better equipped to make increasingly complex requests, or to attempt to get more sensitive information released.⁷

Parliamentary questions continue to be concentrated on health, education and home affairs

Figure 7.3 Number of questions tabled in the Commons to each government department, 2017–19 parliamentary session



Source: Institute for Government analysis of Parliament.uk online database of parliamentary questions and answers. 'Other' includes church commissioners, House of Commons Commission, Public Accounts Commission, Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The 2017–19 parliamentary session ran from 21 June 2017 to 8 October 2019.

Parliamentarians can attempt to get the government to release information by asking formal questions. These are tabled by MPs and lords and the government is obliged to give a response, either orally or in writing. Responding to these questions is the responsibility of individual departments.

Over the 2017–19 parliament (which, at 349 sitting days, was the longest session in modern history),⁸ MPs tabled 114,087 questions, over 90% of which were written.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Department for Education (DfE) and Home Office received the most written questions. Some of this was undoubtedly driven by casework issues that frequently come up in MPs' constituency offices, which tend to be about hospitals and GPs, schools and visas.⁹ The concentration of these questions is in line with some of the key issues of concern to the public as a whole: health care, education and immigration.¹⁰

The UK's longest parliamentary session on record was followed by the 2019 parliamentary session, which, at 15 sitting days, was the shortest since 1948. A comparatively few 3,833 questions were asked in this session, at an average of 256 per sitting day – also significantly fewer than the 327 average of the 2017–19 session.

Parliamentary questions and Fol requests are not the only way parliamentarians can try to get information out of government. MPs and peers can also write to ministers (known as ministerial correspondences). Typically, the volume of these requests is roughly 150,000 per year, with UK Visas and Immigration (part of the Home Office), DHSC and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) receiving significantly more than other departments. Departments set a target time for replying, usually around 15 days after the request has been received.

This data should be useful to departments, as the correspondence received helps them understand which issues are of most concern to the public and its representatives, and their timeliness in responding acts as a useful indicator of a department's administrative health. Data on the volume of requests and timeliness of replies is usually published once a year – but to date this has not happened since June 2018. We submitted an Fol request for the data from 2018. The Cabinet Office replied (late), rejecting our request on the grounds that it does not yet hold this information.

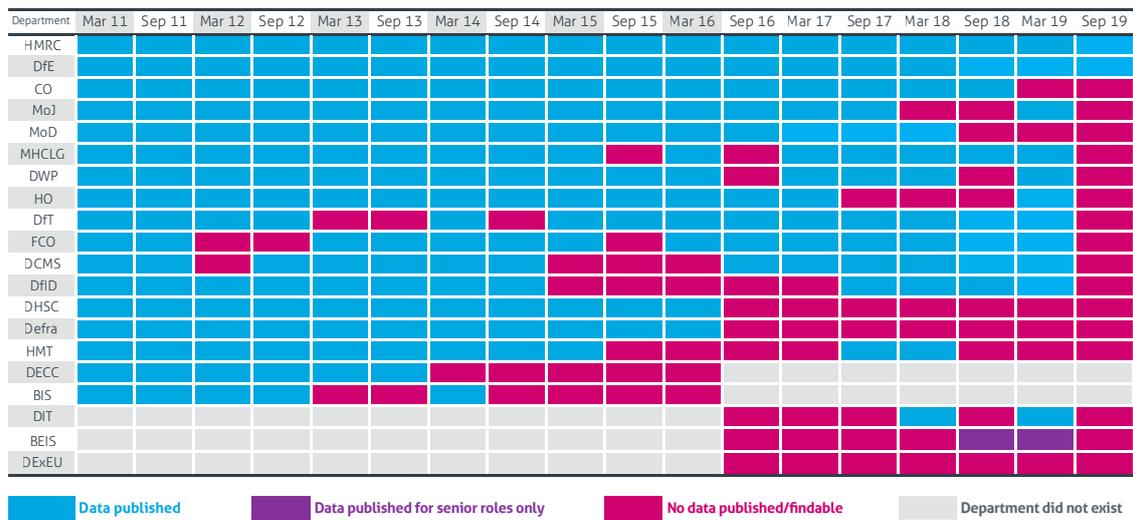
This blackspot in departmental reporting is damaging to accountability, but also for departments wanting to better understand themselves and the issues they face.

Most transparency data releases for 2019 were published late

In 2010, David Cameron wrote a letter to government departments, urging them to 'open up' government data by regularly publishing their datasets online.¹¹ In 2017, Theresa May reiterated the importance of publishing these datasets, accompanied by Cabinet Office guidance on how and when to publish them.¹² Here we evaluate the performance of government departments in publishing three of the mandated datasets:

- organograms of staff positions (every six months)
- spending over £25,000 (monthly)
- records of hospitality received by ministers (quarterly).

Figure 7.4 **Publication of departmental organograms, 2011–19 (as at 6 January 2020)**



Source: Institute for Government analysis of data.gov.uk and GOV.UK publications of departmental organograms.

Organograms give us a snapshot of each department's staff, containing information about their grades, salaries, job titles and professions. They are meant to be published twice a year: one snapshot as at 30 September by 6 December, and another as at 31 March by 6 June. Organograms are separated into junior and senior staff members, with only the most senior civil servants being named individually.

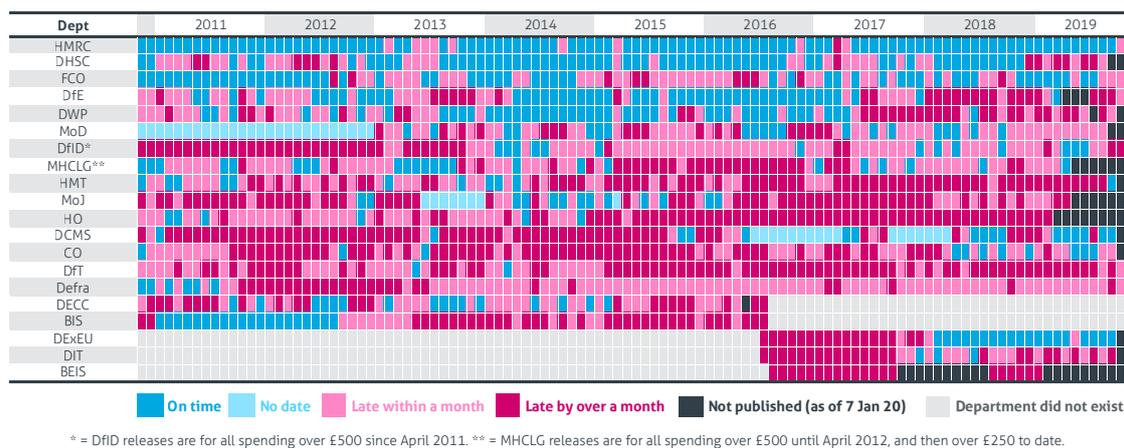
Many departments are still not publishing organograms on time. Only 11 of 18 departments have published their organograms for March 2019 (down from 12 of 18 for March 2018). Some have been poor at organogram publication for some time. Defra, DHSC and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) have not published complete data since September 2016. The Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) has never published a complete organogram since its creation in September 2016 (although it has published some organisation charts of senior staff).

Even when organograms are published, they are usually published late. But at least some government departments have started publishing old organograms having previously not done so: DfE has published junior organograms from March 2017 to September 2018; Defra, the Cabinet Office and MoJ have published theirs from 2015, 2017 and 2018 respectively. This shows that there is some ongoing effort within certain departments to publish – even if months, or even years, late.

Some departments tend to publish organograms of their senior staff before those of junior employees, and some have only published organograms of senior roles for certain time periods (such as BEIS for September 2018 and March 2019).

Poor data quality can also make the organograms difficult to use – and they can be difficult to find in the first place. Online links to the organograms are not labelled with a date, and the file upload date listed on data.gov.uk can be inaccurate, sometimes listing a date that occurred months before the data in the file itself was collected. Some departments also fail to give specific descriptions of roles, instead listing the bulk of employees as ‘team members’, in the case of the DWP.

Figure 7.5 Departmental publication of £25,000 spend, November 2010 to October 2019



Source: Institute for Government analysis of data.gov.uk and GOV.UK, 'Monthly spend over £25,000', 2010 to 2019.

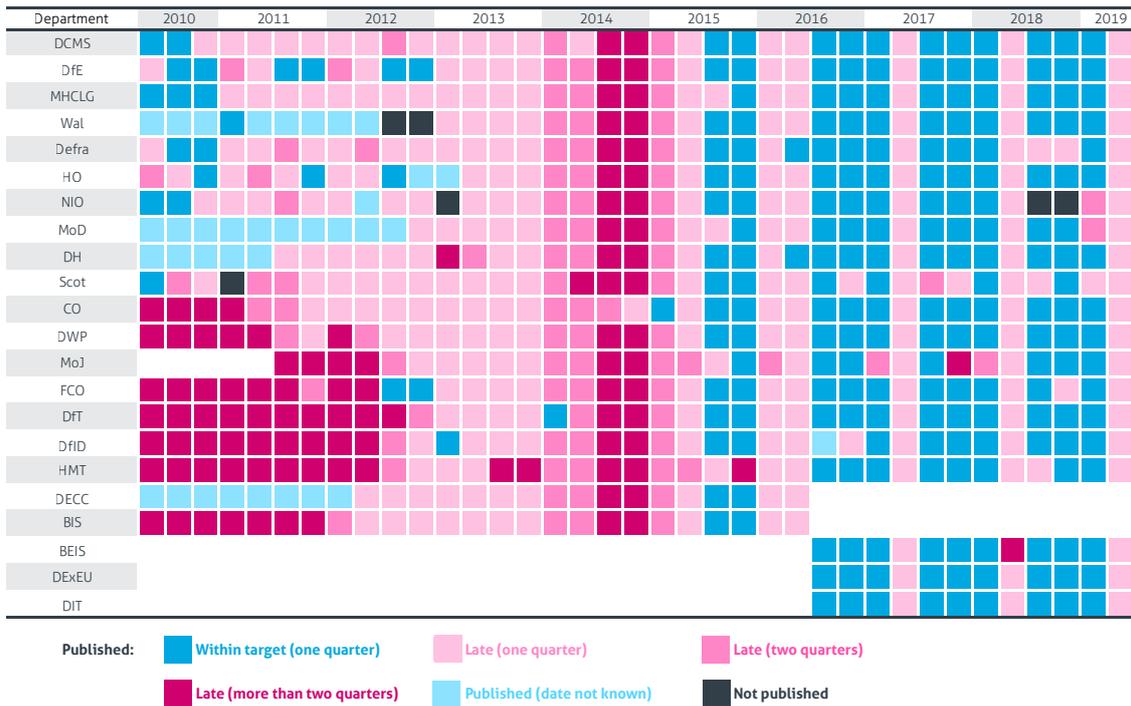
Every month, departments are required to publish all their spending over £25,000. This information should be released by the last working day of the month after the month they relate to.¹³ Timeliness of publication has always been poor, but has worsened compared to five years ago: in 2014, 38% of data releases were on time; as of January 2020, only 21% of 2019's releases have been on time.

Most data releases on spending over £25,000 are published late; around half are late by a month, and the rest by more. Many of the monthly datasets for 2019 are still yet to be published. The availability of this data has declined over the past year. In 2018, three departments published at least 10 of their 12 monthly datasets on time; for 2019, only two departments, HMRC and DExEU, have a chance of doing this. This marks a change from 2018, when timeliness of publication had marginally improved from the year before.

Transparency varies dramatically between some departments. HMRC has reliably published spending on time since 2010, while BEIS has never published on time since its creation in 2016, and many releases remain unpublished. Some departments, such as DExEU, DCMS and the Cabinet Office have improved their timeliness over the years.

In contrast, others have worsened: both DfE and DWP consistently published spending on time from 2014 to 2017, yet in the years since have rarely published something less than two months late.

Figure 7.6 **Publication of travel, meetings, gifts and hospitality data for ministers, Q2 2010 to Q2 2019**



Source: Institute for Government analysis based on Transparency International UK, collation of departmental gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings releases published on GOV.UK, 2010 to Q3 2017, complemented by IfG research since.

Government departments are also required to publish quarterly data about spending on ministers’ travel activities and meetings, and the monetary value of any gifts and hospitality they receive. In contrast to the publication of organograms and spending over £25,000, the publication of hospitality data has become more consistent and timelier since the second quarter of 2015.

Three departments stand out as exceptions. Since the second quarter of 2018, the Northern Ireland Office has failed to publish two datasets, with the rest published late, and the Scotland Office and Defra’s publications have been late every quarter bar one. Fewer publications from Q1 2019 have been published on time in comparison to a year earlier, with three datasets already late or unpublished, in contrast to only one in Q1 2018.

All departments are consistently late in publishing data for the second quarter of each year, and not a single department has published their Q2 hospitality data on time since 2016, when only two departments did. Major political events – referendums in 2014 and 2016, and general elections in 2015 and 2017 – may have had an impact, through restrictions on publication and departments deploying resources elsewhere.

The Treasury has recommended how departments can improve their financial reporting

Figure 7.7 Transparency of departmental annual reports for 2018/19

Theme	Criteria	HMRC	DfID	DWP	DCMS	DfE	DfT	HMT	CO	Defra	MHCLG	BEIS	DHSC	FCO	MoD	DE&EU	DIT	HO	MoJ
Understanding and explanation	Reporting on progress against single departmental plan goals	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Average	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
	Presenting data in a useful and accessible way	Strong	Average	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	Average	Weak	Average	Average	Strong	Average	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	Average
	Multiple years of comparative trend data with explanation	Average	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Average	Average	Average	Average	Weak	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
	Referencing accounting officer system statements	Strong	Average	Average	Strong	Average	Strong	Strong	Average	Strong	Average	Average	Strong	Strong	Average	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
	Publishing staff turnover figures	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak
Openness and accessibility	Publishing core tables in a spreadsheet	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
	Landing pages link to previous years and relevant reports	Strong	Average	Weak	Weak	Average	Strong	Strong	Strong	Average	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
	Publishing other featured data in a spreadsheet	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong

■ Strong performance/Yes
 ■ Average performance/Partial
 ■ Weak performance/No

Source: Institute for Government analysis of government departments’ annual reports.

Better, clearer, more accessible reporting by government on the money it spends matters. The Institute for Government has argued that departments’ annual reports and accounts could be improved – for example, by making them more easily understandable, allowing comparisons between years, publishing data in an open format, and drawing a clearer link between spending and performance. We have also recommended more consistent publication of other data, such as staff turnover figures.¹⁴

The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee (PACAC) has also called for departments to improve their financial reporting, in its 2017 *Accounting for Democracy* and follow-up report.¹⁵ This prompted the Treasury to convene an advisory group (including the Institute for Government, the independent fact-checking organisation Full Fact, and the House of Commons Scrutiny Unit) for a Government Financial Reporting Review (GFRR).

The review published its findings in a report in April 2019, with sensible recommendations including:

- presenting information more clearly and accessibly
- linking annual reports with other reporting documents, such as the single departmental plans (SDPs) that measure departments’ performance against priorities, and accounting officer system statements which set out what departments are responsible for
- making sure comparative data for previous years and staff turnover data are included in any reporting
- publishing the data in a spreadsheet format.¹⁶

The report could have been more convincing in its response to specific PACAC recommendations. For example, it called for the House of Commons and others to be able to scrutinise spending announced through departmental press releases and ministerial announcements through the annual reports – something the Treasury argues would lead to delays in publishing annual reports; it also disagrees that they should be 'repurposed' to track ministerial commitments.

Nonetheless, it provides useful criteria against which we can judge future annual reports, once changes have been made to the government's statutory guidance to departments – the financial reporting manual (the FReM). This year's analysis is therefore a baseline, allowing us to analyse how much of a difference the new guidance has made when the 2019/20 annual reports are published later in 2020.

In general, most departments are now reporting on their SDP priorities, with some providing charts and explanation. Similarly, most – though not all – are publishing core financial data from the reports in spreadsheets, something already required by the Treasury. Performance is more variable between departments when it comes to presenting data in useful and accessible ways (including charts), referencing data showing trends from previous years and the accounting officer system statements that show what departments are responsible for, collecting previous annual reports together in a single place on GOV.UK, and publishing data (other than the core financial data) used in the reports in a spreadsheet.

Lastly, only two departments (DWP and the Treasury itself) published staff turnover figures in 2018/19, underlining the need for the revised guidance. We expect to see improvements across all categories for the 2019/20 annual reports.



Methodology

How we define departments (throughout)

Where possible, we group bodies into 'departmental groups' according to where ministerial responsibility lies, even when these are reported under a separate departmental heading in the original data. For instance, we group Ofsted with DfE and not as a separate department.

We then make the following distinction within each departmental group:

- **Department:** the core department, and other bodies within it, that are directly line-managed by the department (for example, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service within MoJ, and the Education and Skills Funding Agency within DfE).
- **Other organisations:** other bodies employing civil servants – executive agencies, non-ministerial departments and Crown non-departmental public bodies – for which ministers in the department have responsibility (for example, Ofsted in DfE, the DVLA in DfT) but which are not part of the department's line management structure.

A table listing the departments and their associated organisations is found overleaf.

This isn't always possible, and there are some other occasions where we are not able to make this distinction.

- We apply our definition of 'department' in our analysis of staff numbers, grade, age, gender, ethnicity, disability, professions and pay ranges.
- We use the wider 'departmental group' in our analysis of location.
- We use the department as defined by the data producer on engagement, pay, functions, turnover, major projects, Freedom of Information, spend over £25,000 and organograms.

Acronym	Department	Other organisations
AGO	Attorney General's Office	Crown Prosecution Service; Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate; Government Legal Department; Serious Fraud Office
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (created July 2016)	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service; Companies House; Competition and Markets Authority; HM Land Registry; Insolvency Service; UK Intellectual Property Office; Met Office; Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem); Ordnance Survey; UK Space Agency
CO	Cabinet Office Office of the Parliamentary Counsel	Buying Solutions; Central Office of Information; Charity Commission; Crown Commercial Service; Government Procurement Service; National School of Government; UK Statistics Authority; Government in Parliament; Government Property Agency
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	Royal Parks; National Archives
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Animal and Plant Health Agency; Animal Health; Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency; Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science; Food and Environment Research Agency; Government Decontamination Services; Marine Fisheries Agency; Ofwat; Rural Payments Agency; Veterinary Laboratories Agency; Veterinary Medicines Directorate
DExEU	Department for Exiting the European Union (created July 2016, to be abolished January 2020)	N/A
DfE	Department for Education Education and Skills Funding Agency; Education Funding Agency; National College; National College for Teaching and Leadership; Standards and Testing Agency; Teaching Regulation Agency; Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation; Ofsted; Skills Funding Agency
DfID	Department for International Development	N/A
DfT	Department for Transport	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency; Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency; Driving Standards Agency; Government Car and Despatch Agency; Highways Agency; Maritime and Coastguard Agency; Office of Rail and Road; Office of Rail Regulation; Vehicle and Operator Services Agency; Vehicle Certification Agency
DHSC (formerly DH)	Department of Health and Social Care, formerly Department of Health (name change January 2018)	Food Standards Agency; Meat Hygiene Service; Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency; National Healthcare Purchasing and Supplies; NHS Business Services Authority; Public Health England

DIT	Department for International Trade (created July 2016)	Foreign and Commonwealth Office Services; Security and Intelligence Services; Wilton Park Executive Agency; Export Credits Guarantee Department/UK Export Finance
	Department for Work and Pensions	
DWP	Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission; DWP Corporate and Shared Services; Jobcentre Plus; Pensions and Disability Carers Service	The Health and Safety Executive; The Rent Service
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	Security and Intelligence Services; Wilton Park Executive Agency; Foreign and Commonwealth Office Services
HMRC	HM Revenue and Customs	Valuation Office Agency
HMT	HM Treasury	Asset Protection Agency; Debt Management Office; Government Actuary's Department; Government Internal Audit Agency; National Savings and Investments; Office for Budget Responsibility; Office for Government Commerce; OGC Buying Solutions; Royal Mint; National Infrastructure Commission
HO	Home Office	UK Border Agency; Criminal Records Bureau; Her Majesty's Passport Office; Identity Passport Service; National Fraud Authority; National Crime Agency
MHCLG (formerly DCLG)	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly Department for Communities and Local Government; name change January 2018)	Fire Service College; Planning Inspectorate; Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre
	Ministry of Defence	
MoD	HM Courts and Tribunals Service; HM Courts Service; Legal Aid Agency; National Offender Management Service (Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service since 2017); Scotland Office (incl. Office of the Advocate General for Scotland); The Office of the Public Guardian; Tribunals Service; Wales Office	Defence Equipment and Support; Defence Science and Technology Laboratory; Defence Support Group; UK Hydrographic Office; Royal Fleet Auxiliary; Defence Electronics and Components Agency; Submarine Delivery Agency
MoJ	Ministry of Justice	HM Courts and Tribunals Service; HM Courts Service; Legal Aid Agency; National Offender Management Service (Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service since 2017); Scotland Office (incl. Office of the Advocate General for Scotland); The Office of the Public Guardian; Tribunals Service; Wales Office; UK Supreme Court; Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority
NIO	Northern Ireland Office	N/A

Note: The table above includes some organisations that no longer exist, but may be included in some calculations back to 2010.

Managing public spending, pages 7 to 14

For each department we calculated the total amount of Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (RDEL) minus depreciation, using 2018/19 data in the Treasury's Online System for Central Accounting and Reporting (OSCAR). This provided us with a 100% departmental spending figure.

Individual spending lines for each department were then ranked from largest to smallest and calculated as a percentage of the total RDEL figure. Each department's spending lines were categorised as direct management, public bodies, grant funding or contracting. For each department we categorised approximately 75–100% of total RDEL spending. Negative spending lines (i.e. income, such as at the Home Office for UK Visas and Immigration) have not been categorised. In certain areas we used departmental annual reports and accounts to supplement our understanding of spending.

The net result of this process was a percentage breakdown into four component parts of each department's total RDEL. This percentage breakdown forms the underlying basis of the heat map, Figure 1.4 on page 11.

Changes of MPs' allegiance, pages 15 to 17

We count each change of allegiance 'event' as a separate change – so an MP having the whip withdrawn and subsequently returned is recorded as two changes. We have tried, where possible, to apply this methodology to historical changes of allegiance; the Wikipedia page cited does not always do so.

The 2017–19 parliament is likely to hold the record for number of changes of allegiance going back further than 1945, although we have not been able to review the data sufficiently to be absolutely certain, not least as party identity was more fluid earlier than then, especially in the 19th century. That said, the record for changes of allegiance is likely to be held by the parliament between the 1885 and 1886 elections, where around 100 Liberal MPs defected to the Liberal Unionists.

Commons defeats, page 16

Commons defeats are more difficult to count than you might expect: see our IfG colleague Alice Lilly's post <https://twitter.com/aliceolilly/status/1169559451910758401> for some indication of the difficulties. This means our numbers may differ very slightly from others'.

Ministerial resignations, pages 16 to 18

Our tally of resignations includes only those outside of reshuffles; those during reshuffles are often difficult to discern from sackings (although we do include Jonathan Aitken's resignation in 1995, where he resigned to fight a libel action). We do not count those who announced in advance they would step down at the next reshuffle, or those who were sacked (although these are listed in our open spreadsheets of resignations at <http://bit.ly/2OXZ81a> and <http://bit.ly/2DOVxr6>). This again means our numbers may differ very slightly from others'.

Reshuffle analysis, pages 18 to 19

We consider a minister to have changed role if they move department, move rank (e.g. from parliamentary under-secretary of state to minister of state), or the policy areas their role covers substantially change or increase. Because our analysis tends to take place as a reshuffle is unfolding, ministerial responsibilities might occasionally change without our recording a minister as having changed role. In our analysis of Cabinet ministers, we tend to include all ministers who attend Cabinet, those who are full members and those who are listed merely as 'attending'.

Workforce analysis, pages 25 to 54

The Office for National Statistics (*Annual Civil Service Employment Survey*, to 2018) and Cabinet Office (*Civil Service Statistics*, from 2019) report staff numbers in any given category to the nearest 10, and therefore numbers may not be exact. We have rounded any numbers lower than five to three.

Some data releases report certain roles such as health professionals, military personnel and senior diplomats as 'Senior Civil Service', but the Cabinet Office does not consider these roles to be part of the actual Senior Civil Service (SCS). We therefore refer to 'senior civil service and equivalent' in our analysis of ONS data.

Staff numbers, pages 26 to 30

For staff numbers, we use Table 9 from the ONS' quarterly 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.

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. In our analysis of the Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU), we have used the ONS' estimate of total headcount, which includes all members of staff on loan from other departments. This means that some employees will be counted twice (under DExEU and their home department).

There is a slight discrepancy between data sources (ONS data and historic data) for the time series on the number of civil servants between 1902 and 2019. This only applies to the years 2009–2015 and is around 1.5% on average over this period. We have used historic staff numbers up to 2015, and ONS figures from the first quarter of 2016 onwards.

Pay, pages 51 to 52

Our analysis of pay ranges is based on data from the organograms of staff roles and salaries published by departments as at November 2019. Where available, we have used data on minimum and maximum pay for each junior and senior grade in each department. Data from 2019 was available for all but six departments; the data for Defra and DHSC dates back to 2016. Ten departments did not report pay bands for

SCS1 staff, and eight did not include data on the AA pay band (which may simply reflect that it is not used within the organisation). Senior civil servants who represented less than one FTE post were excluded from the analysis.

Other adjustments for specific departments include:

- **BEIS:** no data was available for junior staff at the time of writing.
- **CO:** data on national and London pay bands was retrieved from data published by *Civil Service World* at: www.civilserviceworld.com/articles/news/cabinet-office-agrees-pay-deal-10-wage-boost-lowest-paid. We assumed that Band C spanned AA/AO grades, and that B2+ and A+ grades corresponded to SEO and G6 respectively.
- **Defra:** we have excluded Fast Stream and veterinary officer (two FTE posts) grades.
- **DExEU:** pay bands for SCS3 (director general) and SCS4 (permanent secretary) were inferred from the department's Annual Report and Accounts 2018–19.
- **DfE:** we have included pay bands for both London and national roles. The department aggregates AA/AO and EA/AA bands, and only reports two employees at EA/AA levels.
- **DfID:** we have excluded DESA (direct entry) and 'ETP' grades since it was not possible to match them to the overall grade structure.
- **DHSC:** we have excluded Fast Stream grades.
- **DIT:** we have excluded Fast Stream grades. According to the data, the department only employs one person at AA grade.
- **DWP:** the department's data includes pay bands for London, national and legacy roles.
- **HMRC:** we have excluded Band T, Band D, apprentice, legal officer and legal trainees grades since it was not possible to match them to the overall grade structure.
- **HMT:** we have excluded students (seven FTE posts) from the analysis. The department aggregates SEO/HEO as Band D.
- **MoD:** the data is for 'Head Office and Corporate Services'. We have excluded Fast Stream, MSF, DSTL, OF, OR, TTO, STTO, HTTO, police, fire services, NHS, Skills Zone 1, 2 and 3, and patent officer grades to restrict the analysis to the core department, or because it was not possible to match them to the overall grade structure.
- **MoJ:** the analysis focuses on MoJ headquarters, excluding bodies that are directly line managed by the department such as Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. According to the data, all G6 staff are located in HMPPS, but there are no G6 staff within the core department.

Professions and functions, pages 45 to 49

We have grouped the 29 different civil service professions reported by the ONS into four overarching categories:

Profession	IfG category
Commercial	Cross-departmental specialisms
Communications	Cross-departmental specialisms
Corporate finance	Cross-departmental specialisms (included in the finance sub-category)
Digital, data and technology (DDaT)	Cross-departmental specialisms
Economics	Cross-departmental specialisms (included in the analytics sub-category)
Finance	Cross-departmental specialisms
Human Resources (HR)	Cross-departmental specialisms
Inspector of education and training	Departmental specialisms
Intelligence analysis	Departmental specialisms
Internal audit	Cross-departmental specialisms
International trade	Departmental specialisms
Knowledge and information management	Cross-departmental specialisms
Legal	Cross-departmental specialisms
Medicine	Departmental specialisms
Operational delivery	Operational delivery
Operational research	Cross-departmental specialisms
Planning	Departmental specialisms (included in the planning sub-category)
Planning inspectors	Departmental specialisms (included in the planning sub-category)
Policy	Cross-departmental specialisms
Project delivery	Cross-departmental specialisms
Property	Cross-departmental specialisms
Psychology	Departmental specialisms
Science and engineering	Departmental specialisms
Security	Departmental specialisms
Social research	Cross-departmental specialisms (included in the analytics sub-category)
Statistics	Cross-departmental specialisms (included in the analytics sub-category)
Tax	Departmental specialisms
Veterinarian	Departmental specialisms

The total number of functions (14) is derived from recent government publications, and was agreed with the Cabinet Office. We report numbers on 12 functions in our chart, but the debt, counter fraud and grants functions are counted as three separate entities within government, which brings the total to 14 functions:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|-----|----------------------|
| 1. | Analysis | 8. | Grants |
| 2. | Commercial | 9. | Human resources (HR) |
| 3. | Communications | 10. | Internal audit |
| 4. | Counter fraud | 11. | Legal |
| 5. | Debt | 12. | Project delivery |
| 6. | Digital, data and technology (DDaT) | 13. | Property |
| 7. | Finance | 14. | Security |

The number of individuals in individual functions is calculated based on the data reported by individuals on their departmental HR system, rather than an objective classification. Since it is based on individuals' decisions to self-identify with a specific function, any changes in numbers over time are likely to be caused by an increase in the number of people self-identifying rather than an increase in the numbers, although this is difficult to untangle.

Hospitality releases, page 86

We are grateful to Transparency International UK for compiling all quarterly hospitality releases published by government departments for ministers, special advisers and senior officials, which we first used in *Whitehall Monitor 2018*. They have a website that allows users to search the data at <https://openaccess.transparency.org.uk>. Our analysis has looked only at the ministerial releases. More recently, we have sought to identify which releases have or haven't been published ourselves, and through helpful correspondence with the Cabinet Office.

We understand that departments are supposed to publish a quarter in arrears. We have given a few days' grace in our calculations, and so our analysis may be slightly more generous than the reality.

Spending over £25,000, page 85

We searched for £25,000 spend data on GOV.UK and data.gov.uk for releases covering the period November 2010 to October 2019 in line with David Cameron's initial instruction to government departments and our own publication schedule.

Where we could not find a file, we corresponded with the Cabinet Office; we also did the same if we could not find a publication date, and also used the history function on data.gov.uk. If a release still could not be located, we marked the file as 'Not published' (and if its date could not be found, 'Date unknown').

Treasury guidance (https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130102173628/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/government_spend_guide_2012.pdf#page=6) says the releases should be published by the end of the following month (e.g. the September 2019 file should have been published by 31 October 2019). Releases that

came out up to 60 days after the first day of the month to which the data refers were classified as 'on time'. Releases that came out 61–90 days after the first day of the month were classified 'late within a month', and 91+ days after as 'late over a month'.

Organograms, page 84

We searched for organogram data on GOV.UK and data.gov.uk and recorded whether or not we could find the file for each six-month period, and complemented this exercise through helpful correspondence with the Cabinet Office. Guidance says departments should publish their 31 March organograms by 6 June, and the 30 September versions by 6 December. We issued Freedom of Information requests to eight departments for the March 2019 organograms. Our final data was collected on 9 January 2020 as departments were due to have published their organograms for September 2019 by 6 December. Some organograms may therefore have been published in the meantime, though they would still be late.

Financial transparency, pages 87 to 88

We have ranked each government department according to how closely its annual report aligns with standards outlined in the *Government Financial Reporting Review*, published in April 2019. This exercise creates a baseline for analysis of future annual reports, as the Treasury updates guidance for those producing annual reports and accounts. We ranked departments red for 'no' or 'weak performance', amber for 'partial' or 'average performance', and green for 'yes' or 'strong performance' in each category.

If departments reported against every single one of their single departmental plan goals, they achieved a green rating. If they did not report their progress in detail, they received amber, and red if they did not report against every goal.

Clear explanations of what results mean, and consistent data visualisation aiding user understanding, warrant a green rating for presenting data in a useful and accessible way.

'Multiple years of comparative trend data with explanation' is defined as at least three consecutive years of data in a chart or table, accompanied with text explanation of trends in the data, or reasons behind changes across the period. 0–2 separate instances of data and explanation give a department a red rating; 3–5 instances lead to an amber rating; 5+ instances a green rating.

If the annual report references the accounting officer system statement more than twice, or links to the statement, a department achieves a green rating. If the annual report references the statement only one or two times it receives an amber rating, or a red rating if it does not mention the statement at all.

If departments link to previous reports on their landing pages and publish staff turnover figures in the annual report, and core tables and other featured data in spreadsheets, they receive a green rating in these categories. Absence of turnover figures, core tables and featured data means that departments receive a red rating.

We then ordered departments from left to right according to which scored the lowest to highest along these measures: one point for every green tile, two for every amber and three for every red. When departments scored an equal amount of points they were put in alphabetical order.

List of abbreviations

Acronym	Organisation name
AGO	Attorney General's Office
APA	Asset Protection Agency
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
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 (now MHCLG)
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change
DE&S	Defence Equipment and Support (part of MoD)
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DExEU	Department for Exiting the European Union (to be abolished 31 Jan 2020)
DfE	Department for Education
DfID	Department for International Development
DfT	Department for Transport
DH	Department of Health (now DHSC)
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
DMO	Debt Management Office
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, the Foreign Office
GAD	Government Actuary's Department
GDS	Government Digital Service
HCS	Home Civil Service (all civil servants in UK, Scottish and Welsh governments)
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury, the Treasury
HO	Home Office
HofC	House of Commons
HofL	House of Lords
IPA	Infrastructure and Projects Authority
Law	Law officers (AGO, Office of the Advocate General for Scotland)
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MPA (now the IPA)	Major Projects Authority (part of CO)
NAO	National Audit Office
NHS	National Health Service
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NS&I	National Savings and Investments
OBR	Office for Budget Responsibility
ONS	Office for National Statistics
Scot	Scotland Office
SG/Scot Gov	Scottish Government
Wal	Wales Office
WG/Welsh Gov	Welsh Government

Acronym	Definition
AME	Annually managed expenditure
AO/AA	Administrative officer/administrative assistant (civil service grade)
ACSES	Annual Civil Service Employment Survey
ALB	Arm's-length body
API	Application Programming Interface
AR	Annual report
BUD	Budget
CAME	Capital Annually Managed Expenditure
CDEL	Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit
CS	Civil service
DEL	Departmental Expenditure Limit
DLC	Delegated Legislation Committee
DPM	Deputy Prime Minister
EO	Executive officer (civil service grade)
EU	European Union
FTE	Full-time equivalent
FoI	Freedom of Information
G6, G7	Grade 6 and Grade 7 (civil service grades)
GaaP	Government as a Platform

GDP	Gross domestic product
GE	General election
GFRR	Government Financial Reporting Review
GMMP	Government Major Projects Portfolio
HS2	High Speed 2
IFG	Institute for Government
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMG	Inter-ministerial group
InCiSE	International Civil Service Effectiveness Index
IT/ICT	Information technology/Information and communications technology
MoS	Minister of State
NCS	National Security Council
NDPB	Non-departmental public body
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODM	Opposition Day Motion
OSCAR	Online System for Central Accounting Reporting
PaaS	Platform as a Service
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PACAC	Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee
PESA	Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses
PM	Prime Minister
PMDU	Prime Minister's Delivery Unit
PPS	Parliamentary private secretary
PSA	Public Service Agreement
PUSS	Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Q (Q1 etc.)	Quarter
QDS	Quarterly Data Summary
RAG	Red/amber/green (rating scheme for delivery confidence in projects)
RAME	Resource Annually Managed Expenditure
RDEL	Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit
SCS	Senior civil service
SDP	Single Departmental Plan
SEO/HEO	Senior executive officer/higher executive officer (civil service grades)
SI	Statutory instrument
SoS	Secretary of State

SR	Spending Review/Spending Round
SRO	Senior responsible owner
SRP	Structural Reform Plan
TME	Total managed expenditure
UQ	Urgent question
VAT	Value Added Tax
WGA	Whole of Government Accounts
WMI	Workforce Management Information

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