

New Government New Deal



Matching commitments to resources

Over the last five years the civil service has delivered massive reductions in spending, yet maintained quality public services.

All of this comes at a cost to civil servants. Currently more than one in ten FDA members work an extra 15 hours a week, more than half work at least an extra six and a majority can't take all of their annual leave. A burnt-out workforce is an unproductive workforce.

With more to come in the next Parliament, the new Government must:

- demonstrate how further savings will be made without adding to the workload of an already overworked civil service;
- ensure that civil servants are compensated for all the hours they work; and
- use the drive to digital as a tool to improve public services and the working lives of public servants.

Pay

Pay in the civil service fails to recruit, motivate or reward the greatest asset the civil service has: its people.

The pay system has remained unreformed for more than two decades. The current system of partial delegation, pay review bodies and overall Treasury control is incoherent, inefficient and doesn't work for employers, civil servants or the public.

The new Government must:

- comprehensively review the approach to pay in the civil service for all grades; and
- work with the FDA and other unions to introduce a new system that will reward and motivate public servants to deliver ever better public services and attract the next generation of world-class civil servants.

Valuing civil servants

Regrettably, the debate around civil service reform has been conducted against a backdrop all too often peppered with public criticism and denigration of its value and performance.

Politicians have often stooped to unfair and unbalanced public criticism of the people and the service that they rely upon to deliver their programme of Government.

The civil service's core values of impartiality, objectivity, integrity and honesty support good Government and help the civil service to gain and retain the respect of Ministers, Parliament and the public.

The new Government must:

- ensure that its Ministers do not undermine the integrity and impartiality of the civil service;
- make sure that there is a clear dividing line between impartial civil servants and political appointments; and
- reverse the recent changes to the Civil Service Code on media contact.

Skills

If civil servants have access to the right professional development they will be willing and able to develop flexible and challenging careers and improve the services that they deliver.

By focusing primarily on cost rather than value we now have a lighter and narrower training provision, which does not always meet the needs of civil servants or government.

The new Government must:

- recognise that high-quality training and development outcomes require a genuine resource and time commitment;
- review training requirements across the civil service to keep what is working and enhance the offer to civil servants; and
- commit to seeking synergies across the public sector in delivering learning and development for public servants.

Engagement

It's hard to imagine a time when civil servants had less influence over their working lives. HR policy is developed and promulgated with little opportunity for unions to influence, the Treasury refuses meaningful engagement over pay and on the key strategic issues, and consultation is rarely more than a ritual.

True partnership takes commitment from all sides, but is essential if public services are to be reformed and ready to face the challenges that lie ahead.

The new Government must:

- commission an external review of industrial relations involving those unions that are prepared to engage, and seek solutions with a commitment to act quickly on its recommendations; and
- reform the role of the Treasury, Cabinet Office, CS Resources and CS Employee Policy, to ensure that meaningful consultation is a requirement of all central HR policy development.

