



BRIEFING PAPER

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Civil Service statistics

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Inside:

1. Civil Service staffing
2. Distribution by department
3. Distribution by region
4. Demographics of civil servants
5. Earnings



Contents

Summary	3
1. Civil Service staffing	4
2. Distribution by department	5
3. Distribution by region	7
4. Demographics of civil servants	9
4.1 Gender	9
4.2 Ethnic origin	10
4.3 Age	11
5. Earnings	12
5.1 Earnings by region	12

Summary

This briefing summarises statistics regarding the Civil Service. Comprehensive data are available in the annual National Statistics publication [Civil Service Statistics](#). The 2017 edition, along with editions back to 2012, are available on the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\) website](#). Editions prior to 2012 were published by the Cabinet Office and are available from the [National Archives website](#).

Civil Service staff

There were 388,610 full-time equivalent (FTE) Civil Service employees at 31 March 2017. This is 35% of the Civil Service staff in 1945 and slightly more than half the employees in 1976 (751,000).

Distribution by department and region

One fifth of all employees worked for the Department for Work and Pensions and its agencies. 20% of the Civil Service staff level worked in London (19%), followed by the North West (12%) and Scotland (10%).

Gender breakdown

54% of civil servants were female. 35% of female employees worked part-time, compared with 9% of men. Women made up 45% of all full-time employees. Men outnumber women in more senior posts, comprising 59% of the Senior Civil Service Staff (SCS).

Ethnic breakdown

Approximately 12% of civil servants were from an ethnic minority with the majority of them concentrated in lower level grades.

Age breakdown

Since 1991 the age profile of the Civil Service has become older: in 2017 more than two-thirds of all employees were aged over 40, compared with 44% aged over 40 in 1991.

Median earnings

As of March 2017, the median gross earnings for permanent employees, including the full-time equivalent income of part-time staff, were £25,900. This marks an increase of around 13% compared with the median salary in March 2010, in cash-terms. However, when adjusted for inflation, real-terms earnings between 2010 and 2017 decreased by 1%. Employees working overseas were paid on average the most (£38,200), followed by London (£33,390) and the South West (28,210).

The House of Commons Library Standard Note [Civil Service Reform](#) summarises reforms to the Civil Service to 2010. An in-depth analysis of past Civil Service reform and chronology can be found in House of Commons Library Research Paper 03/49, [Whither the Civil Service?](#)

1. Civil Service staffing

Chart 1 shows permanent full-time equivalent (FTE) staff numbers since 1945. There are several minor inconsistencies in the series, including reclassifications of some small groups and changes in calculation standards. The data should therefore be considered indicative only.¹

Chart 1: Estimated Civil Service staff numbers, 1945-2017

Full-time equivalent permanent staff at 31 March, 000s



- There were well over one million Civil Service staff in 1945 but numbers fell sharply in the post-war period to below 650,000 by 1959. Since then there has been an overall decrease in the Civil Service staff with employees being less than 500,000 in every year since 2008.
- There were approximately 388,600 FTE Civil Service staff at 31 March 2017; around 1,990 (0.5%) more than at 31 March 2016 and 135,000 (26%) fewer than the recent peak in 2004.

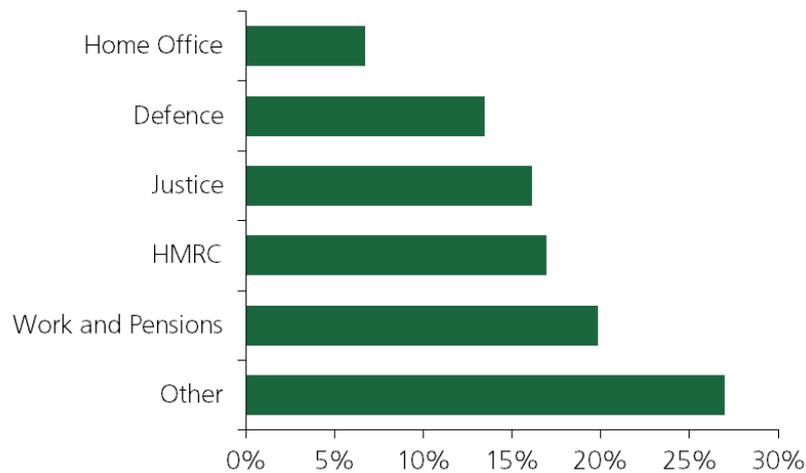
¹ ONS, *Civil Service Statistics*, various editions. This note counts all home Civil Service employees. Civil Service estimates exclude the Northern Ireland Civil Service and other Crown servants, for example, employees of Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs).

2. Distribution by department

Chart 3 summarises the distribution of Civil Service staff at 31 March 2017 by department. A full breakdown can be found in the [Civil Service Statistics](#).

Chart 3: Civil Service staff by department, 31 March 2017

All staff, full-time equivalent



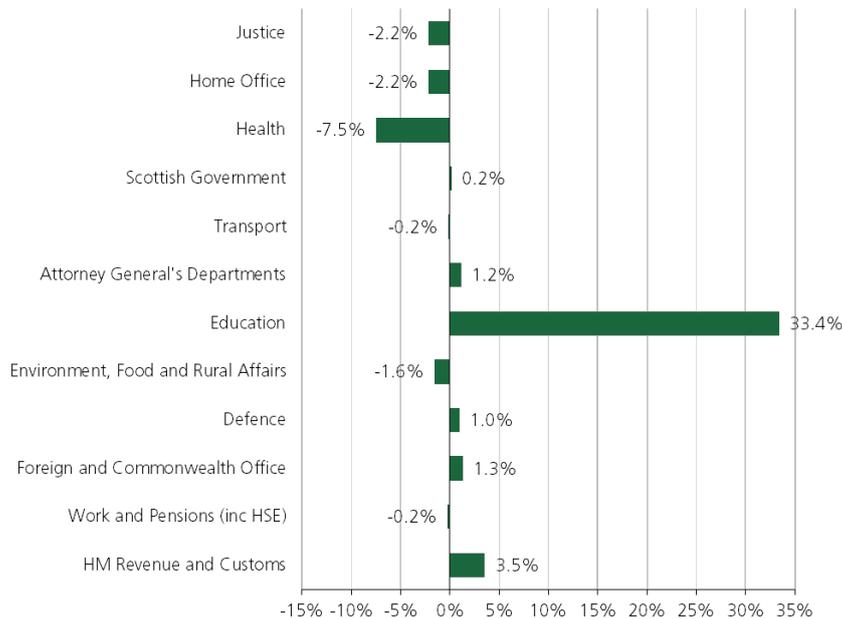
- On 31 March 2017, a fifth of FTE Civil Service staff were employed by the Department for Work and Pensions or its agencies. 16% were based in the Ministry of Justice, another 16% in HMRC and the Ministry of Defence accounted for 13%.
- On 1 April 1997, the breakdown was: Defence 23%; Social Security 20%; Inland Revenue 11%; Home Office, including HM Prison Service, 10%; Education and Employment, 7%; and others, 24%.²

Chart 4 shows the *percentage change* in staff numbers between 31 March 2016 and 31 March 2017 by department. Departments with less than 5,100 staff are not displayed.

² National Statistics, [Civil Service Statistics 1997](#), p5

Chart 4: Percentage change in Civil Service staff numbers by department March 16 to March 17

All staff, full-time equivalent



There was an increase of approximately 1,990 in total FTE Civil Service staff numbers (including temporary staff) from March 2016 to March 2017:

- Education saw the largest relative increase in FTE staff, 33.4% compared with March 2016. HMRC experienced a net gain of 2,300 employees (3.5%) – the highest increase in absolute terms. This is because in July 2016 the Skills Funding Agency was moved from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to the Department for Education.
- There was a 1,270 (-9.3%) net decrease in FTE civil servants at the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills compared with March 2017; the largest percentage net decrease of any department and its agencies. This was followed by Health which saw a reduction of 570 (-7.5%) FTE civil servants since March 2016.

Machinery of Government changes in 2016:

Machinery of Government changes refers to structural changes to the overall organisation of the executive i.e. creating new departments, merging or abolishing old ones.

A new Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) was created, set to oversee and coordinate Brexit negotiations. As of March 2017, there were 210 FTE civil servants at the department.³ A new Department for International Trade (1,070 FTE staff) was also created, responsible for developing a new trade policy for the UK. The functions of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) in regards to higher education policy were transferred to the Department for Education (3,090 FTE staff). The Department for Energy and Climate Change was merged with BIS to form a new Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2,660 FTE staff).

³ As all DExEU employees are on loan, some still remain on home department records. To avoid double counting, DExEU has only reported the employees officially transferred to the department as at March 2017.

3. Distribution by region

About one fifth of all civil servants were based in London at 31 March 2017, as shown in Chart 5. 12% of civil servants worked in the North West, 10% worked in Scotland and 9% in the South East and the South West.

Chart 5: Civil Servants by region: 31 March 2017

Percentage of full-time equivalent total

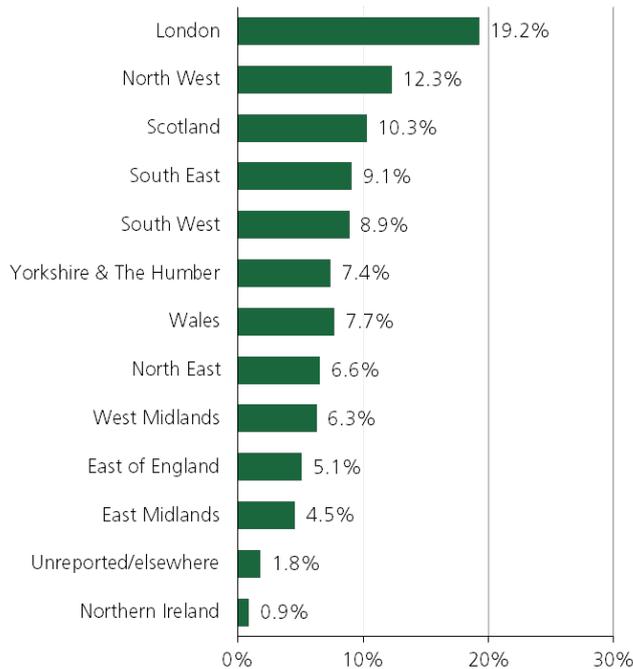


Chart 6 shows how the number of Civil Service employees in each region has changed since 1997:

Chart 6: Percentage change in Civil Servants by region, 1997-2017

Full-time equivalents, excluding those unreported or overseas



The only regions where civil servant numbers have increased since 1997 are Wales and the North East, although the two regions together only accounted for 14% of all civil servants in 2017.

In contrast, FTE civil servant numbers in the South East have fallen by almost 85.5%, followed by the South West (-46.5%) and Northern Ireland (-42.1%). Numbers in London were about the same in 2010 as they were in 1997, but have fallen in the last few years to around 11.6% below those levels.

Compared with March 2016, the number of FTE civil servants has increased the most in Wales (1,300) and decreased the most in the South East (-820).

4. Demographics of civil servants

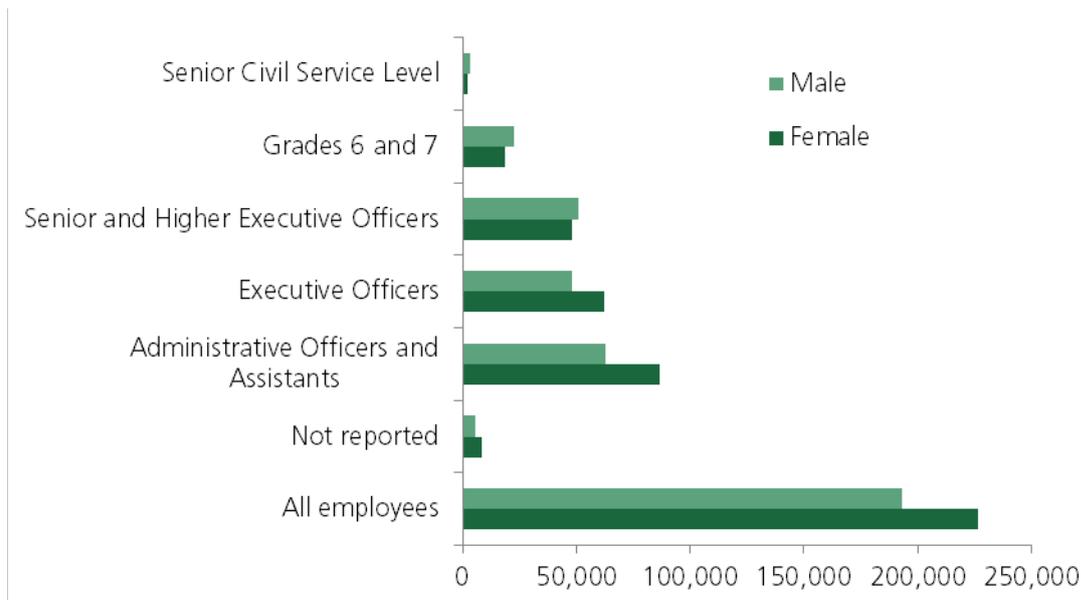
4.1 Gender

Chart 7 shows the number of civil servants at 31 March 2017, broken by grade and gender.

- On 31 March 2017, 54% of civil servants were female, the same proportion as in 2016. Women, however, comprised 45% of full-time employees and accounted for the majority of part-time employees (82%).
- In higher grades there were more men than women and in lower grades there were more women than men. Women comprised 41% of Senior Civil Service (SCS) staff (34% at 31 March 2010), but 58% of staff at Administrative Officer/Administrative Assistant level (57% at 31 March 2010).

Chart 7: Civil Service staff by grade and gender

All employees at 31 March 2017, Headcount

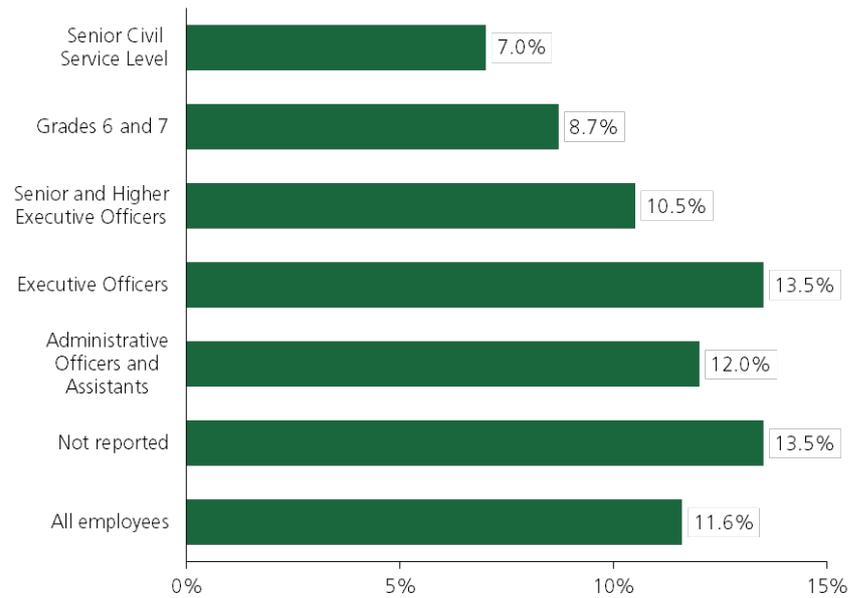


4.2 Ethnic origin

Chart 8 shows the proportion of civil servants from an ethnic minority (based on a headcount of civil servants volunteering an ethnic origin) at 31 March 2017:

Chart 8: Ethnic minority civil servants as a proportion of known ethnic origin by grade

Headcount of all staff at 31 March 2017



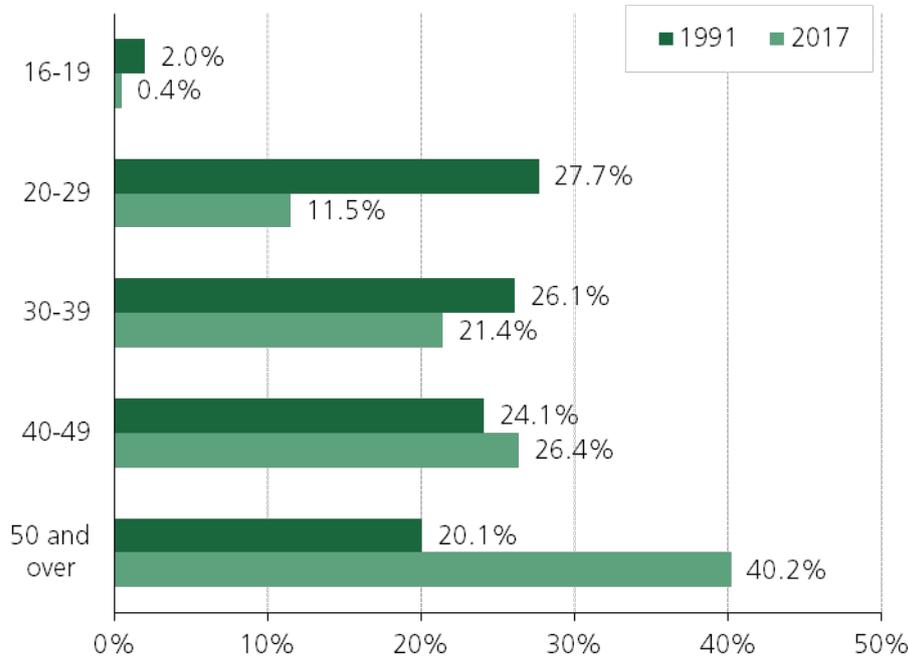
- At 31 March 2017, 11.6% of all civil servants volunteering an ethnic origin were from an ethnic minority.
- Despite a narrowing gap, the reported proportion of higher grade staff from an ethnic minority was still smaller than the proportion in lower grades. Ethnic minority staff made up 7.0% of those at SCS grade volunteering an ethnic origin (up from 4.8% in March 2010), and 12% of Administrative staff.
- Information on ethnicity was not declared or not reported for 13.5% of civil servants.

4.3 Age

Chart 9 shows the proportion of permanent civil servants by age band at 1 April 1991 and at 31 March 2017, on a headcount basis.

Chart 9: Civil servants by age: 1991 and 2017

Headcount at 31 March 1991 and 31 March 2017



- The age profile of the Civil Service has become older. In 1991, 30% of civil servants were aged under 30 compared with 12% in 2017.
- 44.2% of civil servants were aged over 40 in 1991. In 2017 the proportion increased to 66.6%.

5. Earnings

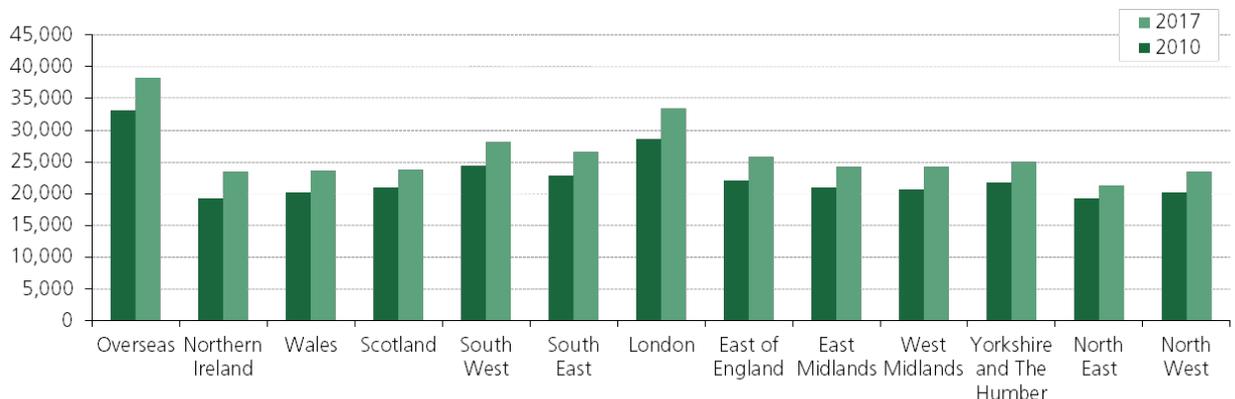
- The median gross annual earnings for all permanent civil servants at 31 March 2017 were £25,900 (representing the full-time equivalent earnings of part-time employees).
- Median earnings for full-time permanent female employees were £25,680 compared with £28,840 for full-time male employees. The gender pay gap for all full-time employees was 11%, down from 12% in 2016.
- 1,110 civil servants had an annual salary greater than £100,000 (based on employees' full-time equivalent earnings). Of these civil servants, 420 had an annual salary greater than £125,000 and 130 earned more than £150,000.

5.1 Earnings by region

- Chart 10 compares the median cash-terms earnings by region at 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2017. Median earnings increased from £22,850 at 31 March 2010 to £25,900 at 31 March 2017, an increase of 13.3%. However, when adjusted for inflation, real-terms earnings between 2010 and 2017 decreased by 1%.
- Cash-terms median earnings increased across all regions and countries in the UK. The largest percentage increase in cash-terms median earnings between 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2017 was overseas in Northern Ireland (21.7%), followed by the West Midlands (17.6%) and the East of England (16.8%).

Chart 10: Median earnings by region: 2010 and 2017

FTE, all employees, £ - cash terms



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