

Addressing leadership & skills issues in Civil Service

Contributed by ORC International
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The Cabinet Office has recently conducted its first ever leadership and skills survey among all 3,900 senior civil servants working across central government. Research consultancy ORC International was commissioned to manage the project, designed so managers could offer their opinions on the key behaviours and skills that are seen as being necessary in first-rate leaders.

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The study investigated how they felt about their skills, work and career development, and asked them to rate the leadership skills of their peers. The resulting data provided a wealth of information. For example, the respondents had positive views about managers in relation to treating colleagues with respect, and encouraging staff to work together to do a good job. It also highlighted areas to focus on including managing change and performance.

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The research has provided the Civil Service management board with an invaluable snapshot of where they are doing well and not so well on leadership issues. The results are being used to inform policy, leadership development and career management throughout all Civil Service departments.

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Commenting on the survey, Craig Myers of the senior leadership strategy team at the Cabinet Office said: "This is the first ever SCS-wide survey on leadership and skills commissioned by the Civil Service management board. It is a key instrument for measuring progress on the people aspects of our reform work, and has yielded some interesting and useful results. We are grateful for to ORC International for the help they have provided to make this happen."

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The survey was a direct offshoot of the Delivery and Reform work to improve leadership and skills across the Civil Service. The survey formed an important element of the feedback exercise on the Professional Skills for Government programme, which recognises effective leadership as being conducive to efficient service delivery and a more progressive working culture.

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