Succeeding in the Civil Service – a question of culture

Research into the under-representation of women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities in the Senior Civil Service.

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Purpose And Structure Of This Report

The purpose of this report is to provide readers with an insight into the research findings. It highlights the main conclusions and provides the key data that supports these. It also makes 24 recommendations – steps that can be taken to improve the representation of women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities at the top of the Civil Service.

The report is divided into three parts:

1.0   The Executive Summary

2.0   The Research Findings

3.0   The Recommendations

This report, therefore, does not contain all the wealth of material generated by the research and is supported by two separate documents.

I.   Full Questionnaire Results

II.   Quotable Quotes

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1.0   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research looked at the experiences of women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities in the Senior Civil Service and in the feeder grades to it.

The research was conducted between August and November 1998 and involved a questionnaire to over 3,000 employees and one-to-one discussions and focus group discussions involving 60 further civil servants.

Key Results

- Equal opportunities is not yet seen as central to an effective, modern Civil Service and there is a significant minority who regard it as "window dressing";
- Only 25% feel that promotions are entirely based on merit and this figure falls to 10% for ethnic minorities;
- There is a strong perception that networking and patronage are too influential as factors in development;
- The current culture encourages those who are different to conform to the "norms" in order to get on;
- Working long (and specifically late) hours is regarded as the key enabler for success;
- Only 43% feel that there is leadership on this issue at the top of their Departments and this falls to 34% for ethnic minorities and 32% for people with disabilities.

Why under-representation?

In essence, the main barrier is perceived to be a deeply embedded culture, which has the impact of excluding those who are different. In the main, this is not a question of overt discrimination or prejudice, it is an altogether more subtle (and less conscious) process.

Norms, the ways things are done, have been built up over the years (literally centuries in some cases) and many have served the Civil Service well in the past. It is perceived, however, that this culture has the impact of sustaining the predominance of a very exclusive (particularly in terms of the more senior parts of the Civil Service and possibly excluding) highly homogenous group – primarily middle class, middle-aged white men.

Why is this important?

Any organisation needs to care about the motivation and commitment of its employees – even more so one, like the Civil Service, that depends so heavily upon "knowledge workers". The questionnaire results show a disparity between the views of white males and those in under-represented groups. Frustration amongst ethnic minority respondents looks particularly high. It would be poor practice indeed to ignore these indications.

More particularly, how can the Civil Service deliver on modern, radical advice without becoming a much more inclusive organisation? Increased diversity will provide the different experiences, which will help civil servants, draft policies that are in touch with the needs of the increasingly diverse British citizen.

Finally, but not irrelevantly, image matters. It will be difficult for a Senior Civil Service that looks so out of touch to sustain the confidence of the public.

What might be done about it?

Should the Civil Service really wish to change, then action needs to take place both centrally, through the auspices of the Cabinet Office, and within Departments.

This needs to be a strategic intervention which impacts not only on the way in which civil servants are managed, but also upon the policy advice that is given to ministers.

Supported by a whole-hearted restatement of the importance of management, permanent secretaries need to have clear accountabilities for progress on equal opportunities in their Departments. In turn, they need to have ways of holding their senior managers accountable.

Four issues – behaviours of those in leadership positions, lack of transparency in promotion and development processes, development of ethnic minority staff, and family friendly working – have assumed such a symbolic importance that a re-invigorating approach to equal opportunities could not be launched credibly without explicitly addressing these concerns.

The change, of course, must primarily take place within Departments and in our recommendations in Part 3.0 of this report we have outlined a process for gaining and sustaining Departmental ownership and drive. The Cabinet Office role is to support and facilitate this change.

2.0   RESEARCH FINDINGS

2.1   Research Aims And Methodology

For over 20 years, the Civil Service has been undertaking efforts (many establishing benchmarks for best practice) to improve equal opportunities. Yet, the number of ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities who have made it through to the Senior Civil Service (SCS) is low. Whilst more women are in senior positions, they are still under-represented.

The rationale behind this research was, for the first time, to carry out a systematic review with those in the Senior Civil Service and the "feeder" grades to tap into their experience and to ascertain what they felt the enablers and barriers to success to be.

The research involved:

- a questionnaire (see separate document for the full questionnaire and results) distributed to a representative sample of 3,400 employees.
- a highly commendable return rate of 50% (1701) was achieved, and the responses were broken out as follows:

Senior Civil Service	582	White men	788
Grade 6	215	Ethnic minorities	127
Grade 7	524	People with disabilities	132
Fast Stream	308	Women	723
Not Stated	72		

Table 1: Breakdown of questionnaire returns by grade, gender, ethnicity & disability.

- carrying out 28 one-to-one discussions with employees and 2 with recent leavers.
- running 3 focus group discussions – one each with ethnic minorities and people with disabilities, supplemented by a group with a mix of employees – involving a further 30 employees.

2.2   Overall Perceptions Of Equal Opportunities In The Civil Service

The relevant results from the questionnaire are illustrated in graphs 1, 2, page 37 of this report and graphs 3 & 4, page 38 of this report.

- Over 70% agreement that the Civil Service takes equal opportunities seriously.
- Highest agreement (over 80%) amongst white men.
- Significantly lower agreement amongst under-represented groups – and particularly amongst ethnic minorities (c 50%).
- Equal opportunities is not yet seen as central to an effective, modern Civil Service and there is a significant minority who regard it as "window dressing".

Equal Opportunities in the Civil Service

Of course, people do not look at equal opportunities in isolation from the rest of the employment relationship. Overall, just over 80% of respondents felt that "on the whole, the Civil Service is a good employer" – this is a strong base from which to build.

The figures fall when looking at equal opportunities specifically. 76% consider the Civil Service to be an equal opportunities employer, and 72% that it is an organisation that takes equal opportunities seriously. There is general recognition that efforts have been made but, as one woman in the Senior Civil Service put it:

"At the moment, there's too much of good intentions and not enough follow through on implementation"

Significantly, these questions throw up important differences between responses from different groups.

White men are very satisfied with progress (84% and 79%) – but this view is not as widely shared by members of under-represented groups. The figures for women fall to 70% and 67% and for people with disabilities to 67% and 66%.   More particularly, the figures for ethnic minorities are sharply lower at 56% and 49%.

Not surprisingly, these results correlate with the anecdotal feedback from the focus groups and one-to-one discussions.   It is on the basis of their experiences that the under-represented groups are recording lower agreement rates.

"I was promoted to Grade 5 at age 35 and seen to be a high flyer.   I got side-lined when I chose to go part-time" (f, scs)

"I feel strongly that if I were not in an under-represented group due to my ethnicity, I would have been promoted by now" (m, em, grade 7)

"Being softly spoken, I fall into the category of passive Asian girl" (f, em, grade 7)

"A barrier has been assumptions about effects of disability and the inability of my line manager to separate health concerns from assessment of performance" (m, with a disability, grade 6)

"Kindness can impede development" (f, with a disability, scs)

White men may well believe that there aren't problems with equal opportunities because the sorts of dilemmas faced by the under-represented groups and illustrated here in the above quotations are simply outside their ken.

The picture that emerges is not one of outright discrimination and prejudice. The culture at the top of the Civil Service is inevitably determined by the sorts of people who are in those positions – overwhelmingly white, middle-class, middle-aged men. They may well have been educated primarily with others like themselves and as career civil servants, their main work experience will be within the Civil Service.

People stereotype because they simply haven't met many people who are different from themselves. As one very much aware man commented: *"There is an appearance of commitment and a lot of words – but no real understanding at a personal level of what it is to be 'different'"* (m, scs)

Nor have managers been helped as much as they might, to appreciate some of these differences. As one ethnic minority in the SCS commented: *"A barrier is lack of cultural understanding on the part of the managers e.g. 'politeness' interpreted as 'timidity'."* And as one respondent noted, lack of awareness and hence the temptation to stereotype can effect us all: *"White, middle class reserve can come across as indifference."*

Not surprisingly therefore, there are very different views about how central, or important, equal opportunities is to the future of the Civil Service (see graphs 3 and 4). Whilst only 58% of white men agree that "we have to make significant progress on equal opportunities if we are to live up to the expectations of a modern Civil Service", this rises to 66% of employees with disabilities, 74% of women and 85% of ethnic minorities.

It is worth pointing out that as many as 15% of white men disagree with this statement. As one male in the SCS reflected: *"There is a significant proportion who believe all this equal opportunities stuff is window-dressing".*

Looking at these results on the basis of grade, not surprisingly, it is the fast streamers who have the highest agreement rate (73%) and seem to regard this as self-evidently true. Interestingly and encouragingly, the message is getting through to those in the Senior Civil Service (69%) but there appears to be much more to do with those in grades 6 (61%) and 7 (63%).

As one male fast streamer put it: *"If the Civil Service is to pursue a radical agenda, it must change to reflect a broader cross-section."*

2.3   Perceptions Of Promotion And Development Processes

The relevant results from the questionnaire are illustrated in graph 5 on page 39 of this report.

- On average, 25% feel that promotions are entirely based on merit, lower for all under-represented groups and down to 10% for ethnic minorities.
- There is a strong perception that networking and patronage are too influential as factors in development.
- Expectations over the experiences required for progression, based on past models, constrain thinking about who might succeed.
- There is a need to invest time and effort in identifying those with high potential who have not come through the normal fast stream route.

Promotion And Development

Who gets developed and promoted speaks very eloquently of an organisation's culture. Perceptions about these processes often reveal the sharpest dissatisfaction and there cannot be said to be equal opportunities until under-represented groups (and white men as well of course) feel that the processes are fair and do not disadvantage them. In other words, the processes not only have to be fair, they have to be felt to be fair.

It is almost axiomatic for organisations to aspire to be a "meritocracy". Accordingly, they seek to develop policies and procedures, which are open, skill-based and transparent.

What happens in practice, however, may be rather different.

One of the most startling results from the questionnaire is that overall only 25% felt that promotions "are entirely based on merit". There were higher levels of agreement amongst men (33%) but lower amongst all under-represented groups – 20% of employees with disabilities, 19% of women and (compellingly) only 10% amongst ethnic minorities.

Similarly, whilst 58% of white men felt that the "policies and procedures for promotion do not discriminate against under-represented groups" (a figure which again highlights a lack of awareness) this falls to 39% of employees with disabilities, 34% of women and 25% of ethnic minorities.

Indeed, 40% of respondents indicated that the promotion process itself constituted a barrier to their own development.

This is a revealing result, and it needs to be considered in the light of the feedback that suggests that **many people simply do not understand the various development processes and how they inter-relate**. In particular, the relationships between succession planning and open-resourcing are, at best, opaque. Different Departments clearly have different guidelines.

Where there is not clarity and transparency, there is plenty of room for people to read in their own assumptions about how things work.

For many, what seemed to them to influence appointment decisions most was "who you know not what you know".   This perhaps contributes to the tendency for people to stay within one Department (in other words so that they don't lose their network of contacts) *"People think that if you change Departments at Grade 7, you'll lose out"* *(f, scs)*.   As one senior woman put it: *"There's a boys' network – it's funny how they seem to follow each other around".* Another, turned down for a job, was told: *"you're not well enough known round the Department".*

Above all, there seemed to be very standard expectations of the sorts of experiences required for success – many of which seemed to be predicated on the basis of the CVs of those who had already made it to the top. (The assumption being that what has worked well in the past is what is required in the future.)

"It is hard to establish the 'right' CV unless you are a member of the 'right' group – ie fast stream, under 26 on entry" *(m, with a disability, grade 7)*

These standard, and somewhat narrow, expectations would obviously have the impact of disadvantaging all sorts of people – those who join later in careers as specialists, those who gained their qualifications overseas, those who have taken time out for family reasons.   Some of these are reflected in the comments people have made to us:

 "You pay a high penalty for the limited time in a career when you can't deliver at all hours" *(f, scs)*

"Ensure women do not suffer ageism – they may be mid 40s by the time families have grown up" *(f, grade 7)*

"There were suspicions because my basic education was in India" *(m, em, scs)*

Moreover, because these expectations obviously influence thoughts about who has the potential to succeed, there is every likelihood that they would continue to limit the sorts of people who can succeed.

The most powerful indicator of this concern is the very low levels of agreement (19% on average) with the statement that the Civil Service is "good at identifying people, outside those who join as fast streamers, who have high potential".   Again, revealingly, this figure falls to 9% of ethnic minority respondents.

This must constitute a waste of talent (there must be people outside the fast streamers who have the skills and potential desired) – and has a disproportionate impact on some groups (for instance ethnic minorities) who have a higher representation outside the fast stream.

All of which, of course, perpetuates the rather narrow range of people at the top of the Civil Service. Or as one young female fast streamer herself put it (rather more pejoratively):

"The sort of people who get promoted the quickest are either those who have patronage or they are arrogant and loud and work awfully long hours – usually men – the sort of people who give fast streamers a bad name."

2.4   Acceptance And Respect

The relevant results from the questionnaire are illustrated in graph 6 on page 39 of this report.

> - The culture welcomes those who fit in and share the values and backgrounds of those at the top.
> - 61% of white men feel that individuals from under-represented groups are accepted and respected, but…
> - 49% of employees with disabilities, 40% of women and 30% of ethnic minorities feel this to be the case.
> - This encourages those who are different to conform to the "norms" in order to get on.
>
> *Acceptance & Respect*

Clearly, there are major differences in culture between the various Departments and the following will not apply in the same measure to all.

The first point to make is that for some, the Senior Civil Service has a very comfortable, welcoming (indeed familiar) culture.   Indeed, for those who have come direct from say an Oxbridge college, they may not notice much change.   This in itself is a barrier *"the cosiness of the fast stream, current and former, needs to be addressed". (m, with a disability, grade 7)*

This is, of course, beginning to be addressed and for some *"there's a mourning of the end of the club" (m, scs).*

It is clear, however, that for people who are different (and, by definition, all those in under-represented groups are 'different') they have faced additional hurdles to overcome in getting accepted.

Thus, while 61% of white men feel individuals in under-represented groups are 'readily accepted and respected' this falls to 49% of employees with disabilities, 40% of women and just 30% of ethnic minority respondents.

"It's a very male culture – everyone by surname on correspondence.   No one introduced at meetings. You have to break in – difficult as a woman in a room full of men" (f, scs).

"There's an expectation that Asian women aren't as ambitious" (f, em, scs).

"People don't understand the implications of my hearing loss – they assume I can't do things" (m, with a disability, scs).

Also, there are particular demands placed on those few who have made it through: *"Everything has to be brilliant – it's emotionally draining"* (m, em, scs).

Whilst there clearly are more women in senior positions, they still report basic problems with being accepted on their own terms at work. For instance, professional women pick up phones and routinely find that they are deemed to be secretaries (or on one occasion being asked "is anyone there?" – on the basis presumably that women don't count). Similarly, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities cannot take acceptance and respect as a right;

"You hear phrases like 'Nigger in the woodpile'" (m, em, scs).

"If your impairment effects your appearance, this is perceived as negative and is likely to frustrate your career progression" (focus group of employees with disabilities).

Not surprisingly, **all this has the potential to exclude those who are different. For many, what it encourages is fitting in and adapting to the prevailing norms**:

"I analysed how other people got on and adopted male norms. I started blowing my own trumpet." (f, scs)

2.5   Working Hours

The relevant results from the questionnaire are illustrated in graphs 7 and 8 on page 40 of this report.

- Working long (and specifically late) hours is regarded as the key enabler for success.
- This increasingly presents difficulties for both men and women – under 50% feel that they can balance home and work without hindering career progression.
- Potential benefits of part-time working are not being embraced consistently across the Civil Service.
- Progress on this issue will be taken as a symbol of the sincerity of the approach to equal opportunities.

Working Hours

One aspect of an organisational culture that can have a dramatically excluding impact is that of working hours. Clearly, long working hours, particularly for those in senior positions, are a characteristic of the UK economy and the Civil Service does not stand in isolation from this trend.

Being prepared to work long and additional hours was the highest ranked enabler for success – identified by 66% of the respondents. 43% of respondents agreed with the statement that "working long hours is the only way to get into the Senior Civil Service" (51% of women and 37% of men, 39% of those already in the SCS).

Obviously, the peculiar nature of Parliamentary working hours, has an impact.   As one woman in the SCS put it, it's not just a question of how many hours you put in, but when you do them: *"late/late is more culturally acceptable than early/early."* Clearly, there is an important role here for Ministers in setting appropriate expectations.

"No-one minds the exceptions, it's the routine meetings that shouldn't be called for non family-friendly times" (f, scs).

Not surprisingly, it is difficult for people to balance home and work without hindering their career (below 50% agreement rates for most groups) It is noticeable that the levels of agreement were very similar for men and women (43% and 47% respectively) and this is supported by anecdotal feedback: *"It's changing as younger men come through with working wives, sharing domestic responsibilities too"(f, scs).* One man stated: *"I challenged the prevailing office culture of 10 – 7, I wasn't prepared to do that" (m,scs).*

It is easy to under-estimate the degree of feeling that tensions between home and work create: *"I really dislike the expectations and assumptions – the higher you get, the more your life is theirs" (f, scsc)* and of the impact they can have *"one of the main reasons I left was because of the ridiculous working hours – and I couldn't see an end to them".*

Not surprisingly, it is those in their thirties and forties who express lowest levels of agreement (36% of those in the 41-45 age bracket).

Of course, one of the most obvious ways of seeking to get a better balance is through moving to a part-time contract. This can have significant advantages for an organisation – not least the fact that most part-timers are more productive per hour than their full-time equivalents, and also because (where the boss is the part-timer) it facilitates much greater empowerment. As one person commented: *"My HEOD regarded it as great – two days in the office when I wasn't around. He had the chance to run the show"* (f, scs).

Moreover, in an environment where the Civil Service is unlikely to be able to match the potential rewards available in the private sector, being able to offer more family-friendly working practices could be a distinctive and powerful recruitment aid. (A number of lawyers expressly talked about joining from private practice for that reason.)

Indeed, there are some good examples of people working on a part-time basis highly successfully in very prestigious policy roles. (As one woman in the SCS was told: "I'd rather have you part-time than someone else full-time".) Unfortunately, these are not well-known **and there are some Departments and some parts of Departments, where part-time working is far from being accepted** (let alone being seen as of benefit to the organisation):

"Our Grade 5 went part-time but wouldn't tell anyone. He chose two different afternoons each week" (f, scs).

"When the senior management review was done all the part-time jobs were initially due to be downgraded … this was rank prejudice" (f, scs).

"The sense is that part-timers haven't got a proper job or it couldn't be done on a part-time basis" (fast streamer, f).

"I have a very able part-time grade 7 now but I can't give her the demanding job she needs now because she won't go full-time" (f, scs).

Of course, part-timers quintessentially challenge the assumption that work needs to be done in the way it has always been done. In a culture where difference is frowned upon, part-timers are a particularly noticeable carbuncle.

As one part-timer explained: *"A lot of managers are not good at managing part-timers. They are used to being able to press a button at any time and people will respond"* (f, scs).

In addition, there was a universal feeling amongst part-timers themselves that moving to a part-time contract had a significant adverse impact on career progression. People could think of senior part-time women, but not of those who had been promoted as part-timers (as opposed to choosing, when already in a senior grade, to become part-timers).

This, together with the feeling that Departments get more than they pay for with part-timers, could lead to a significant resentment. *"You end up practically full-time,*

but without full-time prospects" (f, scs).   It also means that the Civil Service, by not appearing to promote part-timers, is wasting an important pool of talent.

Moreover, as far as women are concerned, **the way in which working hours and part-time working is tackled will send very powerful signals about the intent of the Civil Service to deliver on its good equal opportunities intentions.**

2.6   Management Skills

The results for question 4.4 are particularly relevant to the points discussed in this section (a full breakdown of these is available on page 33 of this report).

We should not be surprised that general management skills, like promotion processes and working hours, have a significant bearing on whether people feel the Civil Service is living up to its equal opportunities policies.

- Good management is good equal opportunities.
- Only 53% of respondents agree that their line manager is "good at encouraging me to develop and progress".
- Coaching and mentoring are regarded as vital enablers for success.
- Strong view that policy skills are really prized and managerial competencies are not.

Management Skills

Simple good management featured very highly in the factors that respondents identified as enablers for success:

- Getting noticed by senior people early in my career (58%).
- Having bosses who encouraged me and took risks to facilitate my development (48%).
- Having a senior person who took time to guide me into the ways of the Civil Service (34%).

In other words, this is not "rocket science". As one woman now in the SCS commented of an influential boss *"he could tell me what his fellow Grade 3s would be looking for – he coached me, gave me support, and released me when the opportunity came up"*. Good managers help develop their people and thus will be seen to be "good" at equal opportunities. As people in the disability focus group commented: *"The good stories are all about good individual managers"*.

It is encouraging that 53% of respondents agreed that their line manager "is good at encouraging me to develop and progress" – but it would be better still if this figure were much higher.

Another encouraging aspect is that people were able to point to some leaders, who are actively trying to set out a more managerial ethos.

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, poor management features strongly in the barriers to success:

- Managers not prepared to take risks with me (31%).
- Lack of mentors (28%).

It was also a very conspicuous element of feedback from people in one-to-one discussions and focus groups.

It was noticeable to fast streamers (who, early in the careers, are perhaps most vulnerable and even more in need of good management and good role models). *"We all see poor managers rewarded"*(f, fast streamer), *"there is no sign that being a terrible manager is bad for your career"* (f, fast streamer). It is perhaps surprising that only 63% of fast streamers felt that their line manager "is good at encouraging me to develop and progress" – surely, the rationale above all else for having a fast stream is that they should have the potential to move on quickly and must be stretched? Sadly, one fast streamer reported: *"my first boss didn't have time to deal with me, he gave me photocopying and organising meetings"* (f, fast streamer).

This message regarding "under management" was echoed in numerous comments from those higher up in the organisation: *"many not only don't have the time to manage, they don't want to"* (f, scs), *"I don't think management ability is taken into account at all"* (m, scs).

It is ironic, and more of a problem now, **because this persistent under-management coincides with a shift in management responsibilities away from personnel to line management. Too many have simply not been equipped to cope**. As one fast streamer reported about his manager *"he was really saying that he was a bit embarrassed that I have to judge you"* (m, fast streamer).

It is not perhaps so odd that it is members of under-represented groups who should feel the impact of this lack of good management most acutely. Because they are different from the "norm", there is anyway a danger that bosses might feel that it too much of a "risk" to put a woman, or an ethnic minority, or a person with a disability into that high-profile role. So, the lack of empowerment and poor people management simply becomes exacerbated. Moreover, those who are "different", and cannot look up and see role models like themselves, may be particularly in need of the good management skills - *"more needs to be done to improve confidence in those who have ability but lack self esteem" (grade 7, with a disability).*

Many people's explanation of the relative dearth of good management skills was that, despite recent efforts, the qualities that were really prized in the Civil Service were to do with intellect and policy-making. As expressed by those in the disability focus group it was described as: "*Those who can draft, manage...what they manage is policy and pieces of paper".*

The notion that the "product" or "deliverable" for Whitehall – advice to the government – is significantly dependent not only upon brain power itself, but also upon the quality of the interactions between civil servants, and their motivation and commitment, is not yet fully part of the prevailing management style. One person commented that in her first interaction with her Grade 2, his only feedback was that she might use more gerunds in her minutes.

As many people argued: *"We must shift what is perceived to be good management"(f, scs).*

There is not a conflict between "policy" and "management" – good policy-making requires good management. Having clarity around the sorts of behaviours that are expected of managers, and reinforcing this through intelligent use of 360-degree feedback processes, would do much to improve everyone's career development – particularly those in under-represented groups

2.7 Leadership

The relevant results from the questionnaire are illustrated in graphs 9 and 10 on page 41 of this report.

It is self-evident that the leaders of an organisation need to "walk the talk" if their pronouncements, for instance about the importance of equal opportunities and management style, are to be believed.

Whilst permanent secretaries have signed up, for instance, to the CRE's Leadership Challenge, our research would indicate that there is still much to be done to convey, throughout their Departments, the sincerity of their commitment.

> - On average only 43% feel that there is leadership on this issue at the top of their Departments.
> - This figure is lower for women (40%) for ethnic minorities (34%) and people with disabilities (32%).
> - Clearly, this picture differs between Departments and there are examples of where clear leadership is already making a difference.
> - Consistent, demonstrable leadership across the SCS is likely to make a huge difference to the ability of the Civil Service to translate its good intentions into organisational reality.
>
> *Leadership*

Of course, **the picture differs markedly between Departments** – and there are already indicators of the positive effect that clear leadership in this field can achieve. It is noticeable, for instance, that the response rate to the questionnaire varied significantly between Departments and versus an average of 50% was particularly high at Customs and Excise (67% generating 75 responses) and Inland Revenue (62% and 309 responses).

So for some Departments attention can focus on those in leadership positions in the middle of the organisation (all the change literature highlights the ability of this group to frustrate change). As one person argued *"There is commitment at the top. The trick now it to gain the commitment of middle management and below"* (f, em, grade 7).

We should not forget, however, that there are other Departments where there still needs to be work on gaining senior management's commitment (without which, in any case, it would be very difficult to secure middle management commitment). This was starkly expressed in the following view: *"Senior management do not support equal opportunities for ethnic minorities and they protect and support others who discriminate"* (m, em, grade 7).

This variation between Departments is also evident in the responses to the one question in the questionnaire, which specifically asked for a Departmental response: "There is real commitment at the top in my Department to improve performance on equal opportunities now".

Graphs 9 and 10 tell a not very surprising tale. White men are most likely (at 47%) to believe that there is real leadership commitment, but this is not as widely shared amongst other groups (40% of women, falling to 34% of ethnic minorities and 32% of people with disabilities). Similarly, the belief in the commitment falls at each layer of the organisation – down from 50% of Senior Civil Servants to 38% of fast streamers.

Not too much comfort should be drawn from the SCS result – it may be the highest level of agreement, but it is still pretty low. It is worth pointing out that 33% of SCS members indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and 16% actually disagreed.

Unless there is consistent and demonstrable leadership from senior management it is highly unlikely that the situation of under-represented groups will improve. Conversely, active leadership can act as just the catalyst required for change. As one senior woman put it: *"one person in a powerful position can make a lot happen"*.

2.8   A Question Of Culture

The relevant results from the questionnaire are illustrated in graphs 11 and 12 on page 42 of this report.

Why then are women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities under-represented at the top of the Civil Service?

What people from these groups do not say is that there is some sort of sinister, deliberate intent to keep them out. What does happen, however, is much more subtle and just as excluding – it is a question of culture.

- The challenges to do with promotion, acceptance, long working hours, management style and leadership highlighted in previous sections of this report are primarily cultural.
- The top enablers for success, and the main barriers, identified by respondents are cultural in nature.
- There is a significant proportion of people, predominantly white men, who are comfortable with how things are and do not see the way in which the culture excludes under-represented groups.
- This is not, in the main, down to prejudice and discrimination. This is to do with the way that certain assumptions and practices are built into the very fabric of the organisation – the way things always have been, are, and will be.

A Question Of Culture

As the mixed focus group participants explained: *"you are appraised on artistic merit – you can be marked down on the style in which you achieve your objectives"*. The difficulty is that the "unwritten rules" are implicit and not necessarily known by those who don't share a common background.

All the top enablers for success that people identified are cultural in nature:

- Being prepared to work long/additional hours (66%).
- Adopting a working style consistent with others (65%).
- Having people I could look to as role models who are senior to me (53%).

Networking is obviously key, but as one senior woman puts it: *"I don't join a club in Whitehall, I haven't got the time or interest to play golf and so I don't do the out of hours networking or bonding"*.

Just as many of the enablers are cultural, so too many of the barriers:

- Assumptions (gender, ethnicity, disability, age).
- Not knowing the unwritten rules (36%).
- Feeling excluded from the dominant culture (34%).
- Being expected to achieve results in a certain way (26%).

This is supported by the results of question 5.5 (a full breakdown of results is available on page 33 of this report) which asked whether progress of under-represented groups was related to stereotypical perceptions.

66% of women, 76% of people with disabilities and fully 84% of ethnic minorities felt this to be the case. Even 58% of white men agreed with this analysis.

Indeed, many of the questionnaire results suggest strongly that there is a significant proportion of employees – predominantly white men – who are very comfortable with the way things are and do not have the experience, or imagination, to understand what it is like to be in an under-represented group.

This is well-indicated by the question (5.1) where we asked people whether they felt it was just a question of time – that the numbers of under-represented groups will improve as people at junior levels are appointed on merit. 65% of white men felt this to be the case. This fell to 54% of respondents with a disability, 50% of women and 38% of ethnic minorities.

This picture of a somewhat complacent majority is reinforced by the results for the statement "nothing is going to change until/unless we change the Civil Service culture". Only 38% of white men felt this to be the case, but agreement levels rose to 59% of people with disabilities, 62% of women and 72% of ethnic minorities.

What people are saying is that it is aspects of a deeply embedded culture that keeps certain groups under-represented at the top of the Civil Service. It is not simply a question of time.

Considerable and admirable efforts have been made over the last twenty years or so to improve equal opportunities, but they have not been accompanied by a systematic attempt to modernise the working culture.

As one male senior civil servant argues: *"we need a change of culture (to one) that recognises the importance of behaviour and attitude and values a more diverse workforce".*

2.9   Changing Culture And Setting Targets

Clearly, over the years, progress has been made in improving equal opportunities in the Civil Service, but it is not yet part of the "bloodstream".

More progress has certainly been made for some groups than for others. Indeed, one senior woman argued: *"I believe the incremental approach is working for women".*

This speaks to a self-evident truth – that increasing the number of people in under-represented groups will itself shift a culture. Women are in senior positions in all Departments and no longer have to fight for the right to be there. Therefore, the bemusement faced by senior women two decades ago is not common place now. The same cannot necessarily be said for ethnic minorities and people with disabilities – and they, of course, are not present in nearly the same numbers as women.

This leads to a key question. **Is the answer, therefore, to increase the representation of women, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities and use their sheer presence to shift the organisational culture?**

In our view, the answer to this question is that, in itself, this is not enough. As respondents noted, some Departments have more or less "macho" cultures. So, one action that could be taken is to move people deliberately between Departments to help generate a more consistently "inclusive" culture (succession planning would be a highly useful tool in this regard).

However, the evidence from the US, and from the private sector in the UK, is that to use recruitment and development processes **to increase significantly the numbers of those from under-represented groups, whilst doing nothing about the overall organisational culture, is counter-productive.** It leads to "backlash" and, more pointedly, increases turnover from the very under-represented groups themselves - people arrive, find the culture excluding and leave. As one woman who left a very male dominated Department told a colleague "I just want to go somewhere where I will be normal."

Increasing the numbers of people from under-represented groups will certainly have an impact on the culture but we should not expect them to lead the change – this needs to come from within.

Nor is setting numerical targets actually something that is supported by people in under-represented groups. The three focus groups were as one in disliking this sort of special treatment. Moreover, this specific issue was tackled in the questionnaire (see page 33 for the results).

Respondents were asked to score three different options for setting direction and measuring progress. They awarded 0 points for any which they would not support, 1 for any that they would support and 2 for any that they would strongly support. Average scores above 1 therefore indicate support.

Setting targets for the improvement of staff perceptions of fair treatment was the only option with widespread support – an average score of 1.46 with strong support across all the different groups.

Setting numerical targets for entry into the SCS or even for recruitment was not supported (average scores of 0.58 and 0.56 respectively). It is interesting that the level of support is marginally higher amongst under-represented groups but still below 1 (0.87 for ethnic minorities, 0.69 for women, 0.52 for people with disabilities).

Cultural Change To Overcome Inertia

From the questionnaire results it is clear that there is a significant group of people who see no need for change. This is illustrated most clearly by one of the questions, which deliberately looked at the support for more radical change. The results are shown in graph 13.

Overall there was 34% support for the radical option. Not surprisingly, the level of support was very different amongst different groups. Whilst 68% of ethnic minorities supported radical change, only 22% of white men did so and fully 46% actively disagreed. Moreover, given the need for senior management leadership, more members of the SCS actually disagreed with the proposition than agreed (36% v 34%).

Any strategies clearly need to take into account ways of including those, predominantly white men, who are resistant (either actively or passively) to change.

In our view, therefore, there is no one simple mechanism for speeding up the progress of under-represented groups, it must involve fundamental cultural change, and in section 3.0 of this report we set out our recommendations.

At the core of these proposals is the need to embrace cultural change wholeheartedly and this requires an inter-related set of interventions. In particular, as one senior woman warned: *"The ability to procrastinate and block is great, performance must be monitored and checked against."*

2.10   Some Priorities

Making The Decision

The first priority must be to decide whether the case for fundamental change is sufficiently made. Moreover, **this will need ministerial as well as top Civil Service support.** Ministers are the most immediate customers for Whitehall's officials and, as such, do much to determine the working culture.

There are risks associated with either outcome. The risks of not going for fundamental change are that there continues to be frustration and waste of talent amongst under-represented groups. Moreover, this would add fuel to any perception of the Civil Service being out of touch. The ultimate risk is that Whitehall is unable to deliver on radical advice and modern government.

On the other hand, we should not ignore the risks of embracing fundamental change. The first risk is, of course, that actually the change is not as fundamental as it needs to be and that passive resistance (much more likely than active obstruction) wins out. **In order to avoid this, it would not be sensible to under-estimate the energy, time and resources required**. A further risk of going this route is that such a fundamental change will in itself cause discomfort and disruption.

Advocacy And Integration

Should the decision be to embrace change, then the next priority will be to explain the nature of the desired culture and why it matters. This needs to be carefully worked through and the arguments need to be deeply held by those charged with leading the change. Space and time needs to be given so that they can work through any reservations and concerns.

Also, the evidence from the private sector is that these sorts of changes really get internalised when they are seen to directly relate to the business of the organisation. In the case of the Civil Service this means the policy-making process. The considerable brain power available to the Civil Service should be directed to ensuring that new policies sit appropriately with equal opportunity considerations.

Holding People Accountable

One reading of the feedback in this research is that people do not feel that those at the top have been held sufficiently accountable. Expecting change without having ways of holding people accountable is a triumph of hope over experience.

Processes need to be developed at two levels – centrally and Departmentally. At the centre, permanent secretaries can be held accountable and this should act as a very powerful lever for getting consistent and positive leadership. In reality, however, culture is (in the main) Departmentally determined and each permanent secretary needs to have ways of holding his or her senior managers accountable for change.

Tackling The Difficult Issues

There are some issues, which have such symbolic significance that they must be tackled in order to retain any sense of credibility in a renewed effort on equal opportunities.

We would highlight the four following issues: (1) leadership behaviours, (2) the transparency of development processes, (3) the development of ethnic minority staff and (4) family friendly working.

These priorities inform the recommendations described in the next Section of this report.

3.0　The Recommendations

In total we are making 24 recommendations. These have been developed in order to address the priorities described in section 2.10 of this report:

Making The Decision – see 3.1 recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4.

Advocacy And Integration – see 3.1 recommendations 2 and 5, and 3.2 recommendations 1, 2, 3.

Holding People Accountable – see 3.2 recommendations 4,5, 6, 7 and 8.

Tackling The Difficult Issues – see 3.1 recommendations 1,2, 3 and 4, see 3.2 recommendations 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14 and see 3.3 recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

These recommendations are based on our experience of helping organisations manage change. In addition, they take account of the input from focus groups, one-to-one discussions and responses to questions regarding future strategies.   The results from these questions can be found on page 33 of this report.

3.1　A Framework For Getting Buy-In

As outlined in the preceding section of the report, the first priority is to make the decision about whether to go for fundamental cultural change. (Whilst it is clear that there is plenty of potential for blocking change, another way of looking at the results to the question regarding shifting to a more radical approach, is to note that at least 34% were willing to embrace this route. In itself this is an interestingly high figure and does suggest that there is appetite for significant change amongst an important minority.)

Inevitably, discussions around the scope for change will need to be an iterative process and should not be rushed. The following might be a possible process:

1. Review research findings – with Permanent Secretaries, with ministers, with Departmental Personnel Directors.

2. Work with key people to develop the description of the desired culture, the case for change, proposals and the resources required to implement them.

3. Review these with external experts – perhaps some Commissioners, industrialists, union officials, and campaigning organisations.

4. Agree the proposals at the Civil Service Management Board.

5. Launch through a high-profile joint announcement by the Prime Minister and Sir Richard Wilson.

3.2   Central Processes

There was strong support from people in one-to-ones for a tougher line being taken on these issues by the Cabinet Office and not leaving so much room for Departmental discretion. *"If we want a corporate ethos, we can't just leave it to Departments" (f, scs)*.

In these recommendations we have followed the principle that the Cabinet Office should be doing the things that can only be done at the centre. Like an HQ of a commercial organisation, they need to ensure that they do enough to set direction and appropriate expectations, whilst leaving enough scope for local ownership and drive.

The first raft of recommendations here have to do with integrating equal opportunities more effectively at a strategic level:

1. Put equal opportunities on the agenda of the new Civil Service Management Board agenda initially on a quarterly basis.

2. Restate the importance of management in performance.

3. Issue guidelines for reviewing policies to ensure that equal opportunities considerations are taken into account.

The next set of recommendations are to do with measures for reporting progress and holding people accountable.

4. Set a requirement for Departments to set perception goals, and develop strategies for achieving them (the goals and strategies themselves would, of course, be determined by the Departments).

5. Require Departments to publish these results.

6. Consider the possibility of an award for progress achieved within Departments.

7. Develop a common set of questions relating to equal opportunities which can be included in Departmental attitude surveys (and allows comparison of results).

8. Ensure a meeting is held by each permanent secretary with Sir Richard Wilson at least annually to review equal opportunities progress.

There are then some other "core" systems and processes that need Cabinet Office attention:

9. Explain promotion and development processes – in particular the relationships between open resourcing (e.g. advertising of vacancies) and succession planning.

10. Review any high-profile appointments to ensure that they re-inforce the message of the importance of management.

11. Deliberately use succession planning as a vehicle for giving under-represented groups (particularly ethnic minorities) exposure, moving high potential people into personnel, and using inter-Departmental moves to create a more consistently inclusive culture.

The last group of recommendations are to do with the centre's vital role as an enabler for Departmental action. This is about creating a positive environment for change by expanding the sense of the possible by sharing and stimulating best practice:

12. Share best practice through developing case studies, which feature individuals who are in under-represented groups and are successful – e.g. senior part-timers, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities.

13. Issue guidelines for Departments based on the Framework (see 3.3 below) and provide specific support and encouragement for training in Departments.

14. Provide a menu for policies and strategies, pulling together things that Departments could do (very action biased) to tackle the "difficult" issues identified in 2.10:

- Recruitment – marketing to ethnic minority applicants
- Identifying high potential
- Use of assessment centres
- Management development courses
- Mentoring and succession planning
- Using 360 degree feedback
- Working hours and expanding part-time working opportunities
- Behavioural training
- Use of surveys and focus groups

Menu For Departments

3.3   A Framework For Departments

The following is a sequential framework for Departments, which should help them, translate the good intents into organisational reality. It is firmly based on our experience of helping organisations to change.

This process builds real commitment and ownership across the Board whilst recognising that, as busy people, they will need the support of a working team to do a lot of the preparation and follow through.

In particular, the diagnostic phase (step 2 below) ensures that each Department identifies their own issues and develop their own goals and strategies.

After all, it is within Departments where the working culture is determined. The energy for change must come from the Departments and they will need to devote time, energy and resources to the following sort of process:

1. **The permanent secretary sets up a mixed team** (including people from different levels and ensuring a good representation from under-represented groups) to lead the work.

2. **This team gathers data on the current situation –** carrying out a diagnosis, perhaps using Departmental results from this questionnaire and focus groups and one-to-one discussions to establish the Departmental views of priorities for action.

3. **A workshop is held for the Board and working team to:**

    - review the data gathered by the team
    - go through an experience together and consider their leadership
    - decide goals, benchmarks
    - agree strategies to identify and develop those with potential
    - agree strategies for other Departmental priority issues
    - agree strategies for training and line management support

4. **The team leads the refinement and implementation of these strategies** – this is in itself a considerable task and the team will need (or include) dedicated personnel support.

5. **Formal mechanisms and timescales agreed for reporting** – so that the permanent secretary can hold the team and senior management accountable for progress.

Cabinet Office Survey on Under-Represented Groups in the SCS

Question 4.4. My current line manager is good at encouraging me to develop and progress.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Reply	Total
Total	255	638	439	258	82	29	1701
	15.0%	37.5%	25.8%	15.2%	4.8%	1.7%	
White Male	98	294	238	113	34	11	788
	12.4%	37.3%	30.2%	14.3%	4.3%	1.4%	
Ethnic Origin							
Ethnic Minorities	17	54	31	15	9	1	127
	13.4%	42.5%	24.4%	11.8%	7.1%	0.8%	
White	238	579	402	242	73	28	1562
	15.2%	37.1%	25.7%	15.5%	4.7%	1.8%	
Disability							
People with Disabilities	10	46	31	27	15	3	132
	7.6%	34.8%	23.5%	20.5%	11.4%	2.3%	
People without Disabilities	245	592	408	231	67	26	1569
	15.6%	37.7%	26.0%	14.7%	4.3%	1.7%	
Gender							
Female	130	263	155	123	36	16	723
	18.0%	36.4%	21.4%	17.0%	5.0%	2.2%	
Male	108	333	262	123	41	12	879
	12.3%	37.9%	29.8%	14.0%	4.7%	1.4%	
Grade							
1) Fast stream	61	133	73	32	6	3	308
	19.8%	43.2%	23.7%	10.4%	1.9%	1.0%	
2) Grade 7	73	194	125	93	35	4	524
	13.9%	37.0%	23.9%	17.7%	6.7%	0.8%	
3) Grade 6	31	76	58	35	11	4	215
	14.4%	35.3%	27.0%	16.3%	5.1%	1.9%	
4) SCS	79	206	167	90	23	17	582
	13.6%	35.4%	28.7%	15.5%	4.0%	2.9%	

RECOMMENDATIONS

	Total	EMs	PWDs	F	White Men
Q5.6 We should increase the openness and transparency of all our development and appointment processes – including succession planning	80.2%	89.6%	87.2%	84.3%	75.5%
Q5.5 Under-represented groups will be able to progress in the Civil Service if they receive fairer treatment based on their merits rather than stereotypical perceptions	63.1%	84.2%	75.8%	65.9%	57.5%
Q5.1 Given time, those from under-represented groups who are currently at junior levels in the Civil Service will have opportunities to be promoted on merit and thus their representation will improve	56.2%	37.8%	53.8%	50.2%	65.1%
Q5.3 Nothing is going to change unless we change the Civil Service culture	50.4%	71.6%	59.1%	62.0%	38.3%
Q5.2 The key to improved representation of those from under-represented groups in the SCS is better and more diverse recruitment at more junior levels	50.3%	55.9%	53.1%	50.2%	50.4%
Q5.4 We have been trying the incremental approach to equal opportunities within the Civil Service for years, it is now time for something more radical	34.2%	67.8%	35.6%	44.2%	22.1%

Proposals for setting direction and measuring progress

	Total	Total Av	Em Av	Pwd Av	F Av
Setting targets for the improvement of staff perceptions of fair treatment	2484	1.46	1.54	1.39	1.48
Setting numerical targets for entry into the SCS	986	0.58	0.87	0.52	0.69
Setting numerical targets for representation at all levels	949	0.56	0.91	0.49	0.68

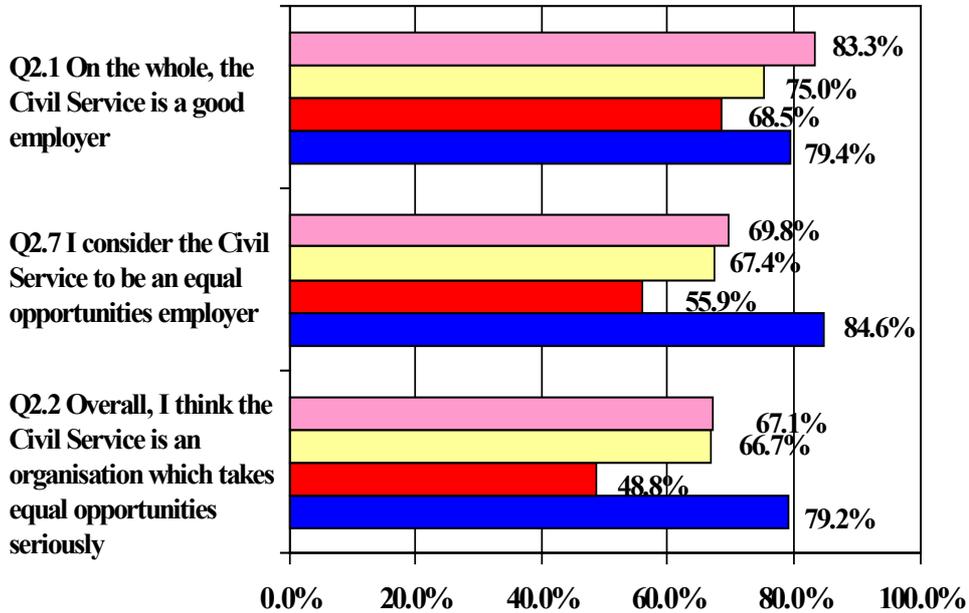The following are graphs of results referred to in the text of this report.

The full questionnaire and the results are available in a separate document.

The key below indicates the groupings by which the results have been analysed. In most cases, it is the split of responses into the equal opportunities groupings (white men, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, women) that is most revealing. Where the analysis by grade or age has a particular story to tell, we have included these graphs too.

KEY

TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNS = 1701

GRADES

Group	Number	Percent
White Men	788	46.3%
Ethnic Minorities	127	7.5%
People with Disabilities	132	7.8%
Women	723	42.5%

Grade	Number	Percent
Fast Stream	308	18.1%
Grade 7	524	30.8%
Grade 6	215	12.6%
SCS	582	34.2%

AGE GROUPS

Age	Number	Percent	Age	Number	Percent
25 and under	107	6.3%	41-45	323	19.0%
26-30	170	10.0%	46-50	365	21.5%
31-35	137	8.1%	51-55	282	16.6%
36-40	200	11.8%	56 and over	103	6.1%

Graph 1

OVERALL PERCEPTIONS OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Q2.1 On the whole, the Civil Service is a good employer
- 83.3%
- 75.0%
- 68.5%
- 79.4%

Q2.7 I consider the Civil Service to be an equal opportunities employer
- 69.8%
- 67.4%
- 55.9%
- 84.6%

Q2.2 Overall, I think the Civil Service is an organisation which takes equal opportunities seriously
- 67.1%
- 66.7%
- 48.8%
- 79.2%

0.0%   20.0%   40.0%   60.0%   80.0%   100.0%

Graph 2

PERCEPTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL TREATMENT

Q4.2 I do not feel intimidated or harassed at work
- 81.9%
- 72.0%
- 79.5%
- 84.9%

Q4.1 I feel that I have been fairly treated as an employee in the Civil Service
- 70.1%
- 60.6%
- 59.8%
- 75.9%

0.0%   20.0%   40.0%   60.0%   80.0%   100.0%

Graph 3

EXPECTATIONS

Q2.4 We have to make significant progress on equal opportunities if we are to live up to the expectations of a modern Civil Service

74.2%

66.0%

85.1%

57.5%

0.0 20.0 40.0 60.0 80.0 100.0

Graph 4

EXPECTATIONS

Q2.4 We have to make significant progress on equal opportunities if we are to live up to the expectations of a modern Civil Service

72.8%

62.6%

60.9%

69.0%

50.0% 55.0% 60.0% 65.0% 70.0% 75.0%

Graph 5

PERCEPTIONS OF PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

Q3.4 The policies and procedures we have for promotion do not discriminate against under-represented groups
- 34.4%
- 39.4%
- 25.2%
- 58.1%

Q3.5 Promotions within the Civil Service are entirely based on merit
- 19.1%
- 20.4%
- 10.3%
- 33.1%

Q3.3 We are good at identifying people, outside those who join as Fast Streamers, who have high potential
- 15.7%
- 22.3%
- 8.7%
- 23.0%

0.0%   10.0%   20.0%   30.0%   40.0%   50.0%   60.0%   70.0%
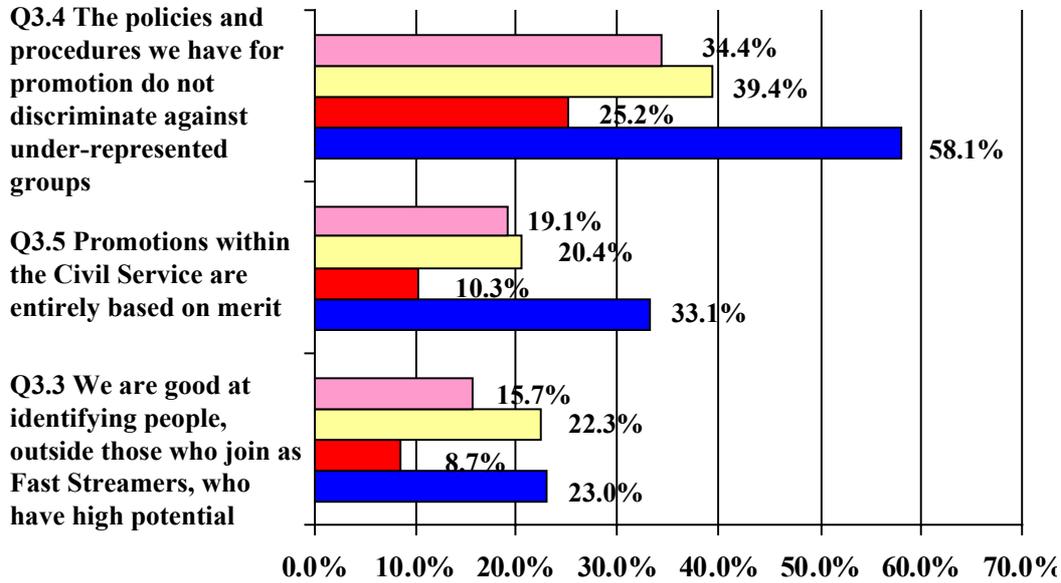
Graph 6

ACCEPTANCE AND RESPECT

Q2.3 I think individuals who are in under-represented groups are readily accepted and respected in the Civil Service
- 40.4%
- 49.2%
- 29.9%
- 60.5%

0.0%   10.0%   20.0%   30.0%   40.0%   50.0%   60.0%   70.0%

Graph 7

WORKING HOURS

Q4.5 I have been able to balance home and work without hindering my career progression

- 43.3%
- 39.3%
- 54.3%
- 47.3%

0.0% 10.0% 20.0% 30.0% 40.0% 50.0% 60.0%

Graph 8

WORKING HOURS

Q4.5 I have been able to balance home and work without hindering my career progression

- 57.0%
- 52.4%
- 42.3%
- 45.0%
- 36.2%
- 43.2%
- 47.5%
- 61.2%

0.0% 10.0% 20.0% 30.0% 40.0% 50.0% 60.0% 70.0%

Graph 9

LEADERSHIP

Q2.6 There is a real commitment at the top in my Dept to improve performance on equal opportunities now

39.0%

34.1%

33.8%

47.0%

0.0%   10.0%   20.0%   30.0%   40.0%   50.0%

Graph 10

LEADERSHIP

Q2.6 There is a real commitment at the top in my Dept to improve performance on equal opportunities now

37.6%

39.0%

42.3%

49.8%

0.0%   10.0%   20.0%   30.0%   40.0%   50.0%   60.0%
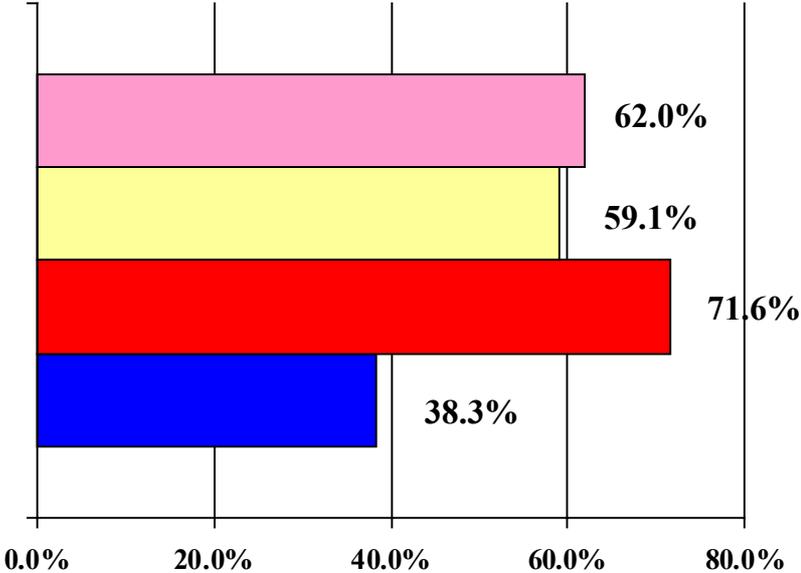
Graph 11

A QUESTION OF CULTURE

Q5.1 Given time, those from under-represented groups who are currently at junior levels in the Civil Service will have opportunities to be promoted on merit and thus their representation will improve

50.2%

53.8%

37.8%

65.1%

0.0% 10.0% 20.0% 30.0% 40.0% 50.0% 60.0% 70.0%

Graph 12

A QUESTION OF CULTURE

Q5.3 Nothing is going to change until/unless we change the Civil Service culture

62.0%

59.1%

71.6%

38.3%

0.0% 20.0% 40.0% 60.0% 80.0%

Graph 13

SUPPORT FOR RADICAL CHANGE

Q5.4 We have been trying the incremental approach to equal opportunities within the Civil Service for years, it is now time for something more radical

44.2%

35.6%

67.8%

22.1%

0.0% 20.0% 40.0% 60.0% 80.0%
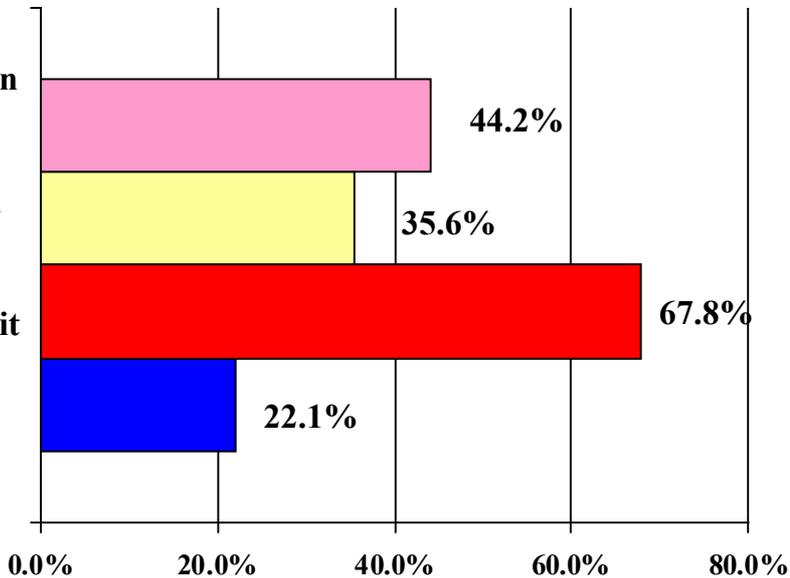
Graph 14

SUPPORT FOR RADICAL CHANGE

Q5.4 We have been trying the incremental approach to equal opportunities within the Civil Service for years, it is now time for something more radical

29.3%

37.5%

32.5%

34.1%

0.0% 10.0% 20.0% 30.0% 40.0%
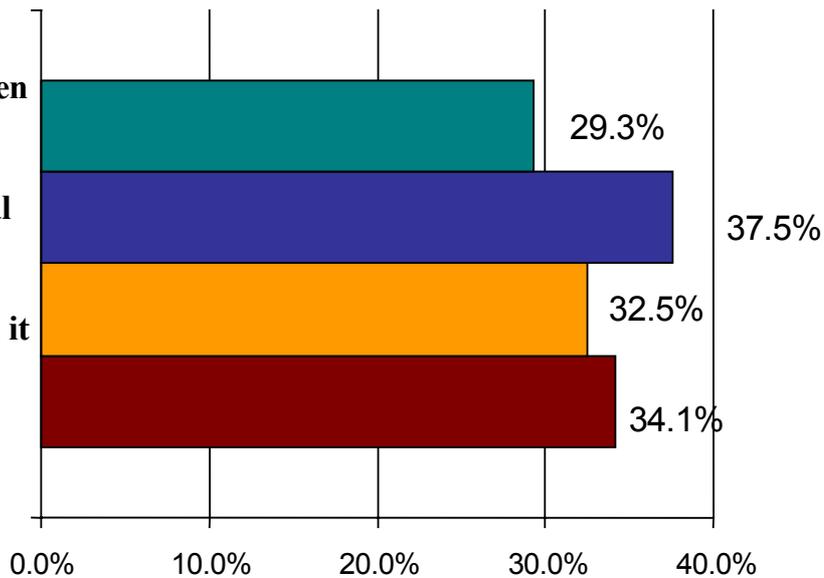
The Research Team

The consultancy team was diverse with members of each of the under-represented groups. **Sandra Sanglin-Grant** led the work with ethnic minorities, **Phil Friend** the work with people with disabilities, and **Gill Jackson** rang the mixed focus group and, like the others, carried out a number of one-to-one discussions. The team was led by **Robin Schneider**, who also conducted the majority of the one-to-one discussions. He also wrote this report and takes responsibility for any shortcomings. Particular thanks are due to **Sandra Sanglin-Grant** who was 8 months pregnant by the time she gracefully bowed out of the project.

The questionnaire analysis was carried out by **Jenny Walsh** whose persistency and determination was much appreciated.

The excellent office support for the research was mainly provided by **Julie Field**, with the able assistance of **Cerry Hakes** and our Office Manager **Alexis Walmsley.**