

YouGov - Civil servants

Sample: 101 civil servants of HEO rank or higher

Fieldwork Dates: 3rd - 19th July 2025



Total	Gender		Age				Civil Service level		
	Male	Female	18-39	40-49	50-59	60+	SEO / HEO	Grades 6 and 7	Senior Civil Service

Do you think that the Whitehall Civil Service is working well or working badly?

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
Very well	7%	11%	2%	7%	-	8%	23%	9%	2%	19%
Fairly well	48%	48%	49%	37%	57%	63%	28%	56%	43%	57%
Fairly badly	23%	24%	23%	32%	13%	19%	33%	2%	33%	14%
Very badly	12%	15%	8%	13%	14%	8%	10%	6%	15%	6%
Don't know	10%	3%	18%	12%	16%	3%	6%	26%	6%	5%

When it comes to the Whitehall Civil Service, on the below scale please indicate which answer comes closest to your own view.

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
1 - Has too many generalists and not enough staff with deep expertise in specific areas [1]	11%	10%	13%	7%	13%	13%	22%	21%	7%	16%
2 [2]	26%	24%	28%	38%	10%	24%	27%	22%	25%	32%
3 [3]	29%	31%	28%	25%	44%	27%	11%	28%	28%	38%
4 [4]	22%	22%	21%	13%	29%	27%	23%	23%	25%	9%
5 - Has an appropriate number of staff with deep expertise in specific areas [5]	9%	12%	6%	13%	4%	6%	17%	6%	11%	6%
Not sure	3%	1%	5%	6%	-	3%	-	-	5%	-

When it comes to the Whitehall Civil Service, on the below scale please indicate which answer comes closest to your own view.

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
1 - Work is produced slowly [1]	10%	12%	9%	7%	7%	16%	22%	8%	10%	13%
2 [2]	26%	24%	28%	32%	26%	21%	11%	23%	28%	21%
3 [3]	34%	31%	38%	36%	34%	36%	22%	38%	34%	32%
4 [4]	19%	26%	11%	20%	20%	17%	17%	24%	14%	30%
5 - Work is produced quickly [5]	4%	5%	2%	-	-	5%	28%	7%	3%	4%
Not sure	7%	3%	11%	6%	13%	5%	-	-	12%	-

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When it comes to the Whitehall Civil Service, on the below scale please indicate which answer comes closest to your own view.

Unweighted base		101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base		101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
1 - Work is produced to a poor standard [1]		8%	9%	6%	7%	7%	8%	16%	6%	8%	8%
2 [2]		6%	1%	12%	12%	-	3%	11%	13%	1%	17%
3 [3]		18%	15%	21%	19%	26%	10%	12%	20%	19%	14%
4 [4]		49%	50%	47%	43%	54%	54%	39%	49%	53%	32%
5 - Work is produced to a high standard [5]		12%	18%	6%	7%	10%	20%	23%	12%	8%	28%
Not sure		7%	6%	8%	13%	3%	5%	-	-	12%	-

When it comes to the Whitehall Civil Service, on the below scale please indicate which answer comes closest to your own view.

Unweighted base		101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base		101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
1 - Civil servants typically seek to block ministerial directions and/or find reasons why things cannot be done [1]		5%	7%	3%	7%	3%	3%	11%	4%	6%	3%
2 [2]		4%	5%	4%	7%	3%	-	10%	6%	5%	-
3 [3]		15%	13%	17%	13%	14%	21%	17%	11%	16%	19%
4 [4]		41%	45%	38%	38%	51%	44%	23%	39%	46%	28%
5 - Civil servants typically seek to fulfil ministerial directions and proactively seek to overcome obstacles to their fulfilment [5]		28%	28%	27%	31%	23%	25%	34%	38%	18%	50%
Not sure		6%	1%	12%	6%	6%	8%	5%	2%	10%	-

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When it comes to the Whitehall Civil Service, on the below scale please indicate which answer comes closest to your own view.

Unweighted base		101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base		101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
1 - Civil servants are too reliant on established procedures and are unable to adapt to new challenges [1]		14%	18%	9%	13%	10%	13%	28%	6%	17%	12%
2 [2]		25%	26%	24%	25%	30%	25%	11%	26%	23%	32%
3 [3]		28%	17%	39%	31%	23%	31%	16%	39%	25%	22%
4 [4]		18%	19%	17%	6%	31%	22%	27%	12%	22%	14%
5 - Civil servants are dynamic in the face of challenges and proficient in adapting and improving processes as the need arises [5]		12%	17%	7%	19%	7%	6%	17%	17%	8%	20%
Not sure		3%	1%	5%	6%	-	3%	-	-	5%	-

When it comes to the Whitehall Civil Service, on the below scale please indicate which answer comes closest to your own view.

Unweighted base		101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base		101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
1 - The Whitehall Civil Service is too risk averse and closed to new ideas [1]		16%	16%	15%	19%	16%	8%	22%	15%	15%	18%
2 [2]		27%	32%	22%	19%	24%	44%	22%	24%	32%	12%
3 [3]		32%	28%	37%	43%	27%	27%	17%	46%	21%	56%
4 [4]		16%	17%	15%	13%	24%	11%	28%	11%	18%	15%
5 - The Whitehall Civil Service is willing to try new ideas and take calculated risks where necessary [5]		2%	4%	1%	-	-	6%	11%	4%	3%	-
Not sure		6%	3%	10%	6%	10%	5%	-	-	10%	-

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When it comes to the Whitehall Civil Service, on the below scale please indicate which answer comes closest to your own view.

Unweighted base		101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base		101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
1 - Civil servants do not face appropriate repercussions for failing to perform [1]	25%	22%	28%	32%	16%	21%	32%	30%	26%	13%	
2 [2]	35%	39%	30%	44%	30%	36%	6%	32%	33%	45%	
3 [3]	20%	18%	24%	6%	34%	27%	28%	6%	25%	22%	
4 [4]	13%	17%	10%	13%	14%	11%	23%	28%	6%	20%	
5 - Whitehall is effective at improving or weeding out underperforming civil servants [5]	1%	2%	-	-	-	3%	6%	4%	1%	-	
Not sure	5%	2%	8%	6%	6%	3%	6%	-	8%	-	

When it comes to the Whitehall Civil Service, on the below scale please indicate which answer comes closest to your own view.

Unweighted base		101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base		101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
1 - Whitehall is too prone to groupthink and tends to hire, retain and promote civil servants with orthodox views [1]	17%	24%	9%	20%	10%	19%	22%	6%	17%	32%	
2 [2]	27%	21%	33%	18%	36%	27%	34%	49%	20%	22%	
3 [3]	22%	19%	25%	31%	18%	18%	5%	16%	21%	31%	
4 [4]	19%	24%	14%	7%	23%	30%	28%	15%	21%	15%	
5 - Whitehall is open to a wide range of ideas and seeks out and encourages civil servants with a range of perspectives [5]	7%	9%	5%	13%	4%	3%	6%	4%	10%	-	
Not sure	8%	3%	14%	12%	10%	3%	5%	11%	10%	-	

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When it comes to the Whitehall Civil Service, on the below scale please indicate which answer comes closest to your own view.

Unweighted base		101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base		101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
1 - Leadership within the Whitehall Civil Service is very poor [1]		9%	7%	12%	-	7%	18%	32%	6%	11%	8%
2 [2]		31%	40%	22%	38%	27%	30%	17%	36%	29%	33%
3 [3]		34%	39%	28%	38%	37%	27%	23%	38%	34%	27%
4 [4]		15%	10%	22%	12%	16%	16%	28%	5%	15%	31%
5 - Leadership within the Whitehall Civil Service is very good [5]		1%	1%	-	-	-	3%	-	4%	-	-
Not sure		9%	3%	16%	12%	13%	5%	-	11%	12%	-

Do you think that allowing Whitehall civil servants to work from home in recent years has had more of a positive or more of a negative impact, if any on...

Your department

Unweighted base		101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base		101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
Much more positive		42%	51%	33%	44%	27%	44%	79%	39%	44%	39%
Somewhat more positive		31%	27%	36%	31%	39%	30%	10%	55%	23%	33%
Mixed impact		16%	12%	21%	13%	26%	16%	6%	4%	18%	27%
Somewhat more negative		4%	3%	4%	-	4%	10%	-	-	6%	-
Much less negative		3%	5%	1%	7%	-	-	5%	2%	4%	-
No impact		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know		3%	2%	5%	6%	4%	-	-	-	5%	-

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The Whitehall civil service in general

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
Much more positive	35%	40%	31%	38%	31%	32%	50%	41%	29%	52%
Somewhat more positive	31%	35%	26%	32%	20%	41%	28%	32%	33%	21%
Mixed impact	18%	12%	24%	13%	33%	15%	-	8%	20%	22%
Somewhat more negative	6%	3%	9%	6%	3%	5%	17%	13%	4%	5%
Much less negative	5%	6%	3%	7%	3%	5%	-	4%	6%	-
No impact	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know	5%	4%	7%	6%	10%	-	5%	2%	8%	-

And in more specific terms, do you think that allowing Whitehall civil servants to work from home in recent years has had more of a positive or more of a negative impact, if any, on...

Employee productivity

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
Much more positive	39%	48%	29%	38%	37%	36%	63%	61%	32%	37%
Somewhat more positive	39%	35%	44%	43%	33%	43%	26%	29%	42%	41%
Mixed impact	11%	6%	16%	6%	23%	11%	-	4%	11%	22%
Somewhat more negative	5%	6%	4%	-	7%	8%	11%	6%	6%	-
Much less negative	3%	5%	1%	7%	-	3%	-	-	5%	-
No impact	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know	2%	-	5%	6%	-	-	-	-	4%	-

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Public service delivery

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
Much more positive	23%	24%	22%	18%	23%	25%	40%	50%	13%	26%
Somewhat more positive	34%	37%	31%	38%	34%	30%	33%	26%	36%	38%
Mixed impact	19%	21%	17%	13%	23%	29%	-	4%	23%	22%
Somewhat more negative	10%	4%	17%	12%	10%	8%	11%	13%	8%	14%
Much less negative	3%	5%	2%	7%	3%	-	-	4%	4%	-
No impact	6%	7%	5%	7%	3%	8%	11%	-	10%	-
Don't know	4%	2%	6%	6%	4%	-	5%	2%	5%	-

Policy development and decision-making

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
Much more positive	16%	17%	14%	13%	16%	14%	34%	29%	10%	18%
Somewhat more positive	29%	29%	29%	19%	43%	30%	27%	27%	27%	40%
Mixed impact	27%	27%	27%	38%	20%	24%	6%	24%	25%	38%
Somewhat more negative	5%	7%	4%	-	7%	8%	17%	2%	8%	-
Much less negative	3%	5%	2%	7%	3%	-	-	4%	4%	-
No impact	15%	12%	18%	18%	7%	19%	11%	11%	19%	4%
Don't know	5%	3%	7%	6%	4%	5%	5%	2%	8%	-

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Employee satisfaction

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
Much more positive	61%	72%	49%	51%	74%	65%	50%	50%	66%	55%
Somewhat more positive	22%	19%	25%	24%	14%	22%	39%	36%	17%	22%
Mixed impact	8%	6%	11%	13%	6%	3%	11%	2%	7%	18%
Somewhat more negative	5%	1%	10%	6%	6%	5%	-	11%	4%	5%
Much less negative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
No impact	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know	4%	1%	6%	6%	-	5%	-	-	6%	-

Ability to attract and retain talent

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
Much more positive	54%	64%	44%	57%	53%	49%	62%	61%	52%	55%
Somewhat more positive	31%	26%	36%	24%	33%	41%	21%	19%	33%	36%
Mixed impact	7%	4%	10%	6%	7%	8%	11%	15%	4%	9%
Somewhat more negative	2%	1%	3%	-	6%	-	6%	4%	2%	-
Much less negative	3%	5%	-	7%	-	-	-	-	4%	-
No impact	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know	3%	-	6%	6%	-	3%	-	-	5%	-

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Communication and collaboration

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
Much more positive	17%	19%	16%	13%	16%	22%	29%	41%	10%	13%
Somewhat more positive	26%	27%	26%	18%	33%	27%	39%	37%	26%	14%
Mixed impact	29%	34%	22%	38%	24%	24%	10%	5%	30%	51%
Somewhat more negative	13%	8%	18%	6%	20%	16%	10%	2%	13%	22%
Much less negative	8%	6%	11%	13%	3%	8%	6%	15%	8%	-
No impact	5%	6%	3%	7%	3%	3%	5%	-	7%	-
Don't know	2%	-	5%	6%	-	-	-	-	4%	-

Performance monitoring

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
Much more positive	11%	16%	5%	7%	10%	14%	23%	4%	8%	28%
Somewhat more positive	18%	22%	13%	25%	14%	9%	23%	33%	12%	18%
Mixed impact	31%	32%	31%	20%	46%	37%	21%	19%	35%	35%
Somewhat more negative	19%	9%	30%	24%	20%	8%	27%	35%	13%	18%
Much less negative	7%	8%	6%	7%	7%	10%	-	4%	10%	-
No impact	9%	9%	10%	6%	3%	22%	5%	6%	13%	-
Don't know	5%	5%	5%	13%	-	-	-	-	8%	-

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And which of the following do you think would be the most appropriate work from home policy in the Whitehall civil service would be?

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
Allowing all civil servants who want to work from home as often as they want to	27%	33%	21%	25%	24%	27%	52%	42%	20%	37%
Mandating 3 or 4 days in the office each week, and allowing civil servants to work from home the rest of the time if they wish	18%	17%	20%	13%	24%	21%	17%	2%	21%	27%
Mandating 1 or 2 days in the office each week, and allowing civil servants to work from home the rest of the time if they wish	52%	50%	54%	57%	53%	52%	32%	56%	55%	36%
Requiring all civil servants to be in the office every day	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know	2%	-	5%	6%	-	-	-	-	4%	-

What impact do you think that greater use of artificial intelligence in the Whitehall civil service, along lines proposed by the government, will have overall over the next few years?

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
A very positive impact	20%	22%	19%	25%	16%	17%	23%	27%	9%	52%
A fairly positive impact	48%	53%	43%	51%	47%	52%	32%	37%	62%	13%
Won't make much difference	15%	11%	19%	18%	7%	18%	11%	19%	12%	17%
A fairly negative impact	8%	7%	8%	-	10%	13%	17%	5%	8%	9%
A very negative impact	1%	2%	-	-	-	-	12%	2%	-	3%
Don't know	8%	5%	11%	6%	20%	-	5%	10%	8%	5%

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And in more specific areas, what impact do you think that greater use of artificial intelligence in the Whitehall civil service, along lines proposed by the government, will have overall over the next few years in terms of...?

Increasing productivity

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
A very positive impact	22%	22%	21%	25%	16%	25%	12%	35%	7%	56%
A fairly positive impact	53%	58%	47%	57%	46%	52%	54%	29%	70%	19%
Won't make much difference	12%	10%	14%	6%	17%	16%	12%	21%	11%	4%
A fairly negative impact	4%	1%	8%	6%	3%	3%	6%	2%	1%	18%
A very negative impact	2%	3%	1%	-	-	5%	12%	2%	2%	3%
Don't know	7%	5%	9%	6%	17%	-	5%	10%	8%	-

Saving money

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
A very positive impact	18%	22%	15%	19%	23%	17%	6%	27%	15%	20%
A fairly positive impact	38%	31%	46%	37%	37%	40%	43%	41%	34%	51%
Won't make much difference	25%	29%	20%	32%	17%	22%	28%	20%	30%	14%
A fairly negative impact	10%	11%	9%	7%	13%	13%	6%	-	12%	13%
A very negative impact	2%	3%	1%	-	-	5%	12%	6%	1%	3%
Don't know	6%	4%	9%	6%	10%	3%	5%	6%	8%	-

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Improving public service delivery

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
A very positive impact	18%	24%	11%	26%	13%	11%	17%	27%	9%	40%
A fairly positive impact	39%	41%	36%	44%	29%	44%	27%	31%	43%	35%
Won't make much difference	26%	18%	34%	24%	24%	29%	34%	26%	28%	17%
A fairly negative impact	5%	5%	6%	-	14%	5%	6%	4%	6%	5%
A very negative impact	4%	5%	3%	-	3%	8%	12%	6%	4%	3%
Don't know	8%	7%	9%	6%	17%	3%	5%	6%	11%	-

Improving policy development and decision-making

Unweighted base	101	51	50	16	30	37	18	18	67	16
Base	101	53	48	40	27	27	8	21	63	17
A very positive impact	9%	9%	8%	13%	10%	3%	6%	11%	2%	30%
A fairly positive impact	23%	25%	21%	25%	20%	20%	33%	36%	19%	22%
Won't make much difference	43%	40%	47%	57%	29%	45%	16%	36%	50%	26%
A fairly negative impact	10%	12%	8%	-	24%	8%	17%	2%	11%	14%
A very negative impact	7%	8%	6%	-	3%	16%	23%	8%	8%	3%
Don't know	8%	6%	11%	6%	14%	8%	5%	6%	10%	5%

Cell Contents (Column Percentages)