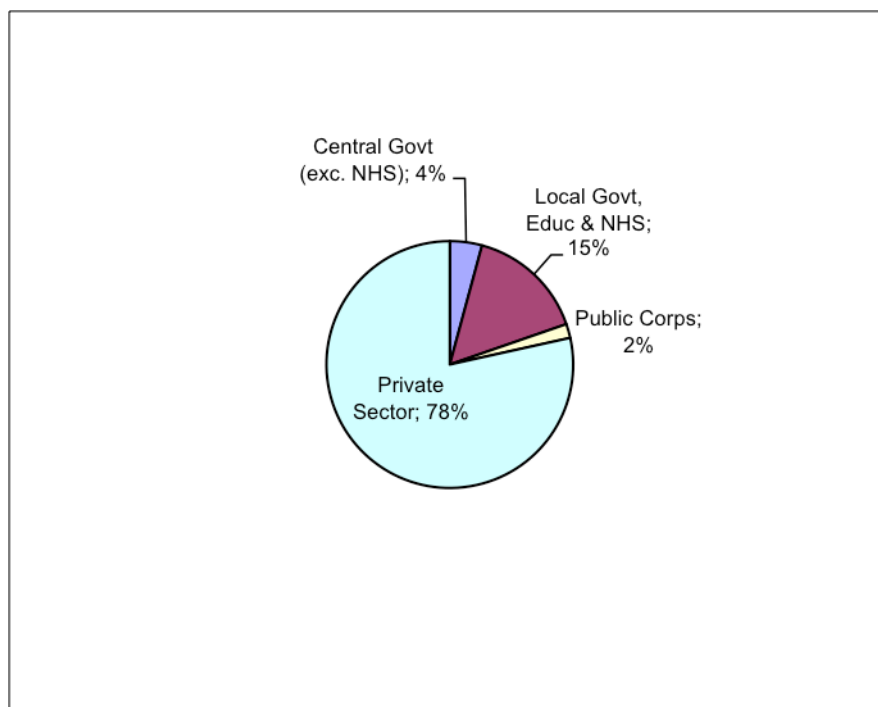


## Civil Service Statistics

Updated March 2011

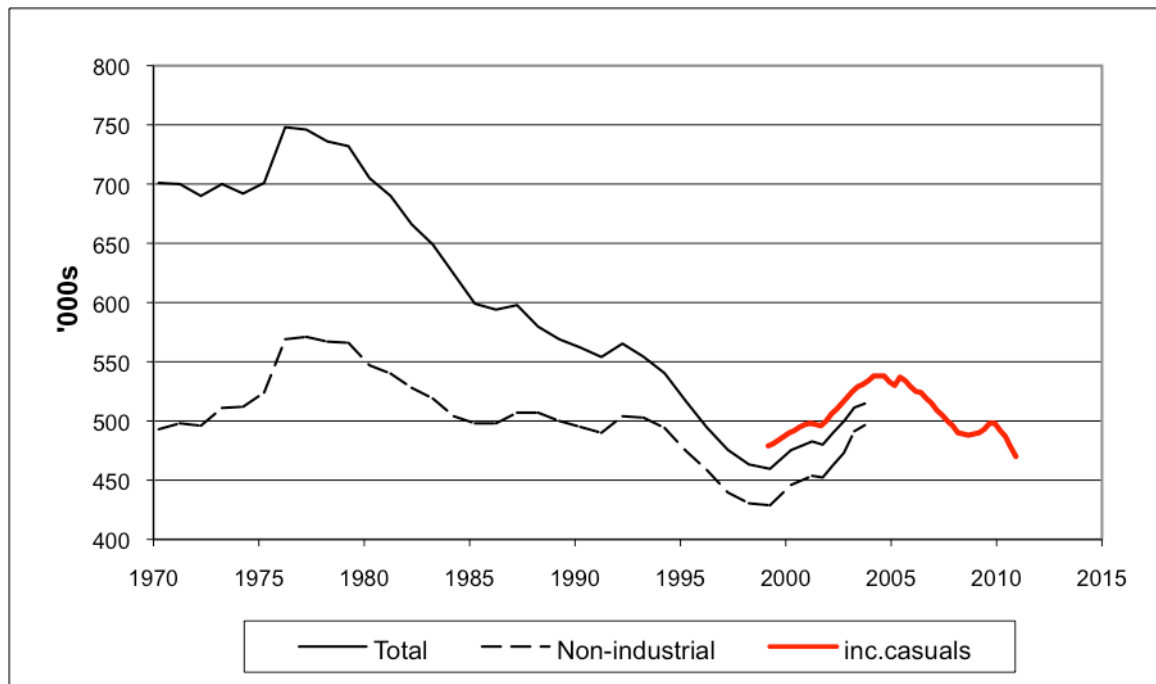
The UK workforce currently totals around 29 million of which around 6m work in the public sector, of which only around 520,000 (less than 10% of public servants) are in the civil service.



### Notes:

1. All these figures are “headcount”, i.e. part-timers count as 1 each.
2. Other central government is principally the NDPBs and the Armed Forces. The National Health Service (NHS) is also within “central government” for the purposes of government statistics, but not in the above chart.
3. Public corporations are mainly the BBC, Royal Mail Group and BNFL, plus late additions Lloyds TSB and RBS.
4. Local government includes the police and most of the education sector.
5. See <http://www.civilservant.org.uk/definitions.shtml> for a detailed discussion of the various categories of public servant.
6. A chart showing changes in these figures over time is at the end of this note.

The next chart tracks various measures of the number of “full time equivalent” (fte) civil servants since 1970. There were about 470,000 fte civil servants in post in Quarter 4 2010, including casual/temporary staff. Only around 18% of them work in London.



#### Notes:

1. (fte means that half-timers, for instance, are counted as 0.5.) (Total headcount (where every part-timer counts as 1.0) is significantly higher (c.40,000 in 2007).)
2. Until 2003, the Cabinet Office published regular statistics excluding casual staff (c.11,000 in 2004) and separating out “non-industrials” (i.e. office staff) from “industrials” (i.e. blue collar workers). These are the two thin lines in the above chart. However, the Office of National Statistics has recently become the main provider of reliable statistics. Their figures include both “industrials” and casual staff, and are shown in the thick red continuous line in this chart.

#### Historical Overview

Back in 1902, there were only 50,000 non-industrial civil servants. By 1939, this number had risen to 163,000, and there were also 184,000 “industrial” or “blue collar” civil servants working in various locations such as the Royal Naval dockyards.

By 1944, towards the end of the war, the totals had reached 505,000 and 658,000 respectively, a grand total of 1,164,000 civil servants. The number of industrial civil servants then began to fall, aided by privatisation and contracting out, so that there were only 18,200 in post as at October 2003.

The number of white collar (non-industrial) civil servants has not fallen in anything like the same way. Indeed, it hit a maximum of 571,000

(excluding casuals) in 1977, before declining to a low of 479,000 (now including casuals) in Q1 1999. This number then started to rise again, plateauing at around 538,000 in 2004 before Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown announced in July 2004 that he intended to cut c.84,150 posts, whilst creating a number of new posts in the front line so that the net reduction would be c.70,600. Civil service numbers were subsequently increased by the transfer of 11,000 fte magistrates court staff from local authority control to the new central government courts service. The then Chancellor's (and then Prime Minister's) target therefore became around 480,000. In the event, the target was nearly reached as numbers had fallen to 488,000 before the deadline of the end of 2008. It subsequently rose slightly before continuing its downward trend from early 2010, falling to a historic low of 470,000 by Q4.

It is interesting to note that these reductions were accompanied by a significant increase in the number of Senior Civil Servants (SCS). According to the 2009 report of the Senior Salaries Review Body, total SCS staff in post rose by 35% from 3108 in 2000 to 4212 in 2008.

The civil service now comprises only 1.8% of the total UK workforce, compared with 2.4% in 1992.

#### The Civil Service:- More detail

The fte grade split of the civil service in 2010 (to the nearest 100) was as follows, according to the Cabinet Office. (For descriptions of each grade, see *How to be a Civil Servant*.) There were:

- 4,900 in the Senior Civil Service (SCS)
- 34,900 in Grades 6/7
- 231,700 in the executive grades, and
- 250,000 in the administrative grades.

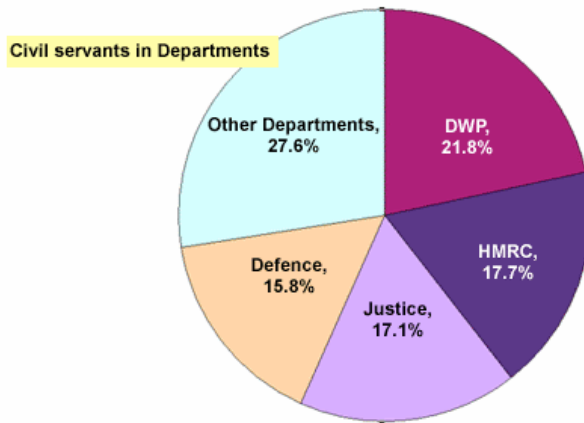
33% of the SCS are now women, compared with c13% in 1996. And 3.6% are from the ethnic minorities. In 2008 there were around 3200 in Pay Bands 1 and 1A, 750 in Pay Band 2, 180 in Pay Band 3, and 40 Permanent Secretaries.

Only c.16% of civil servants retire at or above their normal retirement age. Over 60% resign to follow other careers etc. (See also "Can Civil Servants be Dismissed?" at

<http://www.civilservant.org.uk/dismissal.shtml> .)

As the following chart shows, the majority of civil servants work in only four very large departments. Three or four of the smallest departments have fewer than 50 staff.

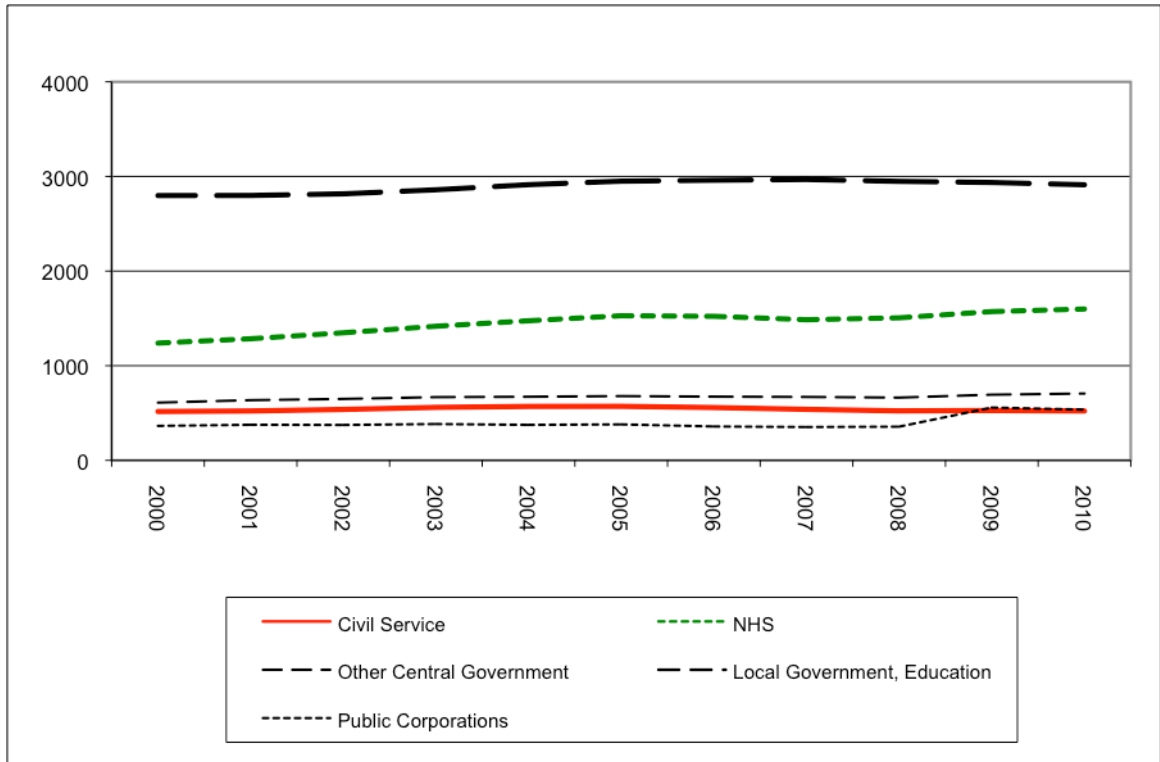
72 per cent of civil servants work in one of the four main departments - the DWP, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defence and HM Revenue & Customs. (QPSES Q3 2008)



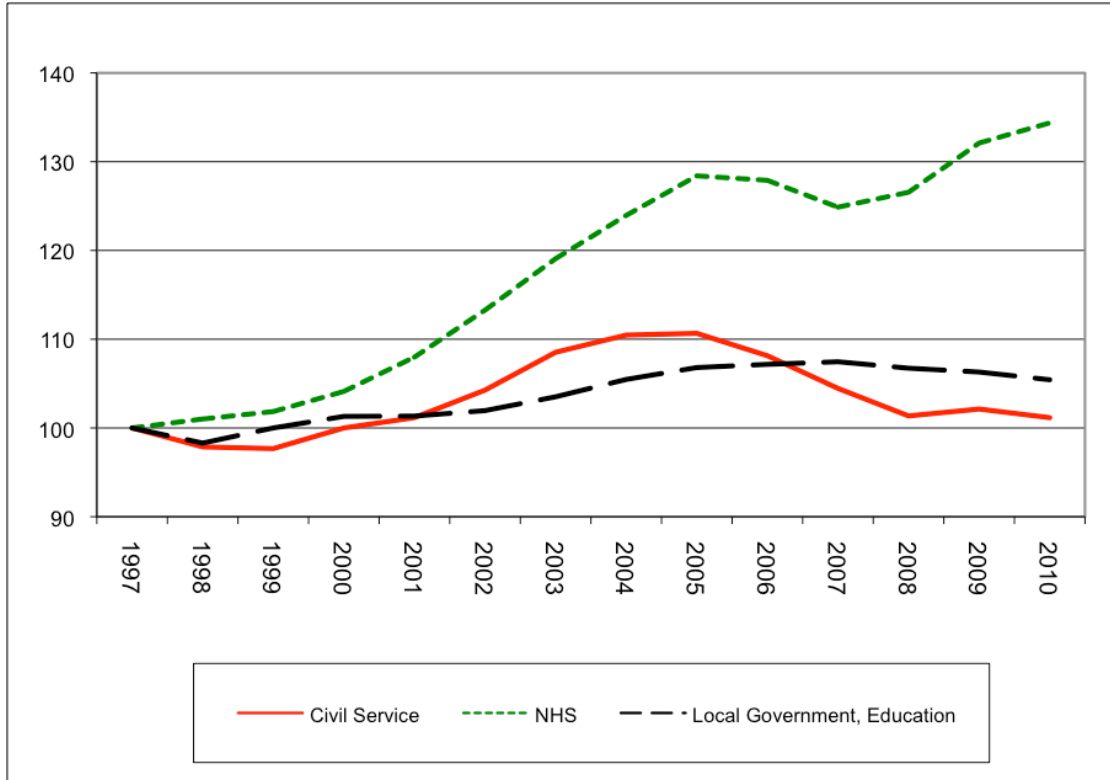
There were 105 Executive Agencies as at 1 April 2000. Three departments (HM Revenue & Customs, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Serious Fraud Office) also operated on similar lines. 78% of civil servants worked in these organisations.

### Trends over time

The following chart shows changes in the percentage of public servants in the total workforce. Since the Labour Government was elected in 1997, the numbers of those employed in the NHS – and to a lesser extent local government (inc. education) – have increased, whilst most other numbers have stayed fairly level, save only for the increase in numbers employed in public corporations following the nationalization of some major banks following the credit crunch.



The trends are shown rather more starkly in the following chart, in which numbers in 1997 are re-based to equal 100.



**Further detail** is on the National Statistics, Cabinet Office and Treasury websites, and also in the annual reports of the Senior Salaries Review Body.

Martin Stanley

[martin.stanley@civilservant.org.uk](mailto:martin.stanley@civilservant.org.uk)