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An International Comparison of the United Kingdom's Public Administration

Report – 22nd of October, 2008



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Executive Summary

Background, purpose and key findings

Over the past decade, the United Kingdom’s government has undertaken extensive reform of its public administration.

The purpose of this study is to assess whether the United Kingdom’s public administration possesses qualities and operates in a manner that is comparable to public administrations that are generally acknowledged to be among the most advanced and sophisticated in the world.

By public administration, we mean the combination of people, institutions, processes and practices that go towards the implementation and delivery of what the electorate has mandated government to do, regardless of what the mandate is. In this sense, public administration is a function of government and not government itself. Nor is public administration the same as public services, which are the “products” that government, in part through its public administration, offers to citizens.¹

As a result of this focus on public administration, this study does not examine or assess policy decisions and choices taken at the political level within government. Nor does it seek to assess the outcomes and results of specific public services such as health, education, or social services. Studies on specific services are carried out by the National Audit Office through their Value for Money studies. We are aware that for these reasons, the characteristics and indicators may not reflect citizen’s explicit expectations of government departments

In order to assess the UK’s public administration, we have reviewed it against a series of characteristics of good public administration. These characteristics are underpinned by a series of indicators that help us measure the extent to which administrations possess or operate by them. This combination of characteristics and indicators form the framework of good public administration (see Table 1).

Values	Outcomes	Enablers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive • Transparent • Accountable • Equitability • Public service ethos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality services • Public confidence and trust • Well-informed policy advice • Culture of seeking value for money • Stability and continuity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of performance management • Appropriately skilled public administration • Good leadership • Capacity for change

Table 1: Framework of good public administration

The National Audit Office and Accenture developed this framework of good public administration following a literature review and in consultation with a series of subject matter experts and academics. The characteristics and indicators themselves reflect current thinking and guidance on public

¹ Kevin Smith and Michael J Licari, *Public Administration: Power and Politics in the Fourth Branch of Government*, 2006

administration excellence from organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU). As a consequence, the characteristics represent the most important elements that go towards making up a good, efficient and effective public administration. They represent what have been generally acknowledged as essential values for a public administration to operate by; the outcomes it should achieve; and the most sophisticated management processes that are being used by the best public administrations around the world.

The indicators used reflect the evidence available. They are not necessarily a comprehensive measure of the characteristics set out in Table 1, but allow meaningful comparisons to be made. For two characteristics, “equitability” and “continuity and stability”, we were unable to identify indicators that allowed for meaningful comparison.

The UK’s public administration is also compared against a selection of eight national public administrations that are generally acknowledged as being among the most advanced in the world in studies by the United Nations Public Administration Network (EUPAN), OECD, the World Bank and the World Economic Forum. These public administrations are the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, France, Sweden and Finland.

At a practical level, these are all industrialised democracies and all OECD countries, so data sources and evidence of these public administrations are available and reliable.

Of the countries examined in this report, some are centralised and some operate federally. For the purposes of this report, we are focusing on the operations of the central or federal public administration, and not those of specific sub-state divisions of government. In the case of the United Kingdom, this means that while the public administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland operate differently from that of England in some cases, we are looking at the UK as a whole.

The public administrations of the chosen countries are influenced by the larger historical and political trajectories of countries. This is made clear in books such as “Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis” by Christopher Pollitt and Geert Bouckaert, who situate public management reform around the world in larger historical contexts. While this is interesting and important, it is not within the remit of this report to do the same. However, where context is important in illuminating any findings, we will refer to it.²

The methodology used for this report is desk-based research of existing data sources for evidence of the quality of the chosen countries’ public administrations.

The sources in question are reports, surveys, polls and studies from organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United Nations, the World Bank, the European Union, the World Economic Forum, Ipsos MORI and the Institute for Management Development. The full sources are listed in the bibliography appendix of this study.

Using evidence from the sources, we have assessed how the UK compares with the chosen countries. What this study has found is that:

- The UK’s public administration, like those of the countries examined in this report, possesses characteristics of good public administration.

² Christopher Pollitt and Geert Bouckaert, *Public management reform: A comparative analysis*, Oxford University Press, 2004

- It operates in ways that are comparable to the administrations of those countries which are consistently rated as being the most efficient, effective or competitive in rankings from the UN, the OECD, the World Bank and the World Economic Forum.
- The United Kingdom has good levels of transparency. It has good mechanisms in place to make data and information available to the public and other stakeholders. It also has internal and external audit regimes in place.
- The United Kingdom is also relatively well placed at the more operational levels. Its public administration has good performance management systems in place, good leadership structures, and by comparison to other countries, has effective capacity for change.
- The United Kingdom ranks amongst those countries that are concerned with instilling a culture of value for money, and has the processes, systems and culture in place to enable this.
- Despite possessing characteristics that together make the UK's public administration comparable to those of Canada, New Zealand or Sweden, the British public have a lesser level of confidence, trust and satisfaction with the performance levels of their public services.
- Finally, the public in the UK feel particularly pessimistic about how public services will progress in the coming years. They also feel as if they have no influence over how public services are delivered.

1. Introduction

In this section we outline the characteristics and indicators of good public administration.

Accenture was commissioned by the National Audit Office (NAO) in August 2008 to undertake a five week study of the UK’s public administration, assessing it against a set of internationally accepted characteristics of good public administration, using publicly available, internationally accepted evidence in order to appraise the performance of the UK’s public administration.

We also compared the UK’s public administration against those of a selection of countries. These countries are the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, France, Finland and Sweden.

The purpose of this assessment and comparison is to understand whether, after a decade of steady and systematic reform, the UK’s public administration can be said to rank among the best in the world in terms of the values it operates by, the results it achieves, and the mechanism and processes it has adopted.

Characteristics of a good public administration

In order to examine the public administrations of the selected countries, Accenture and the National Audit Office determined a series of characteristic of good public administration against which different administrations can be assessed. These characteristics are not exhaustive but we consider them essential components that good public administrations currently possess or should aspire to. They have been drawn from and reflect work that has already been done on public administrations from organizations such as the OECD, the EU and the UN.

The characteristics are underpinned by a series of indicators. These indicators allow us to measure and appraise to what extent administrations possess or operate by the characteristics. In some instances, however, the existence of a characteristic or mechanism in the public administration does not guarantee it is effective.

The indicators used in this study are also not exhaustive. In some cases they are not direct measures of the characteristics. Rather, they are proxy measures which, when taken together, allow us to make informed inferences about whether a given public administration possesses the characteristic in question.

Together, these characteristics and indicators form a framework of good public administration, set out in the following paragraphs.

Values	Outcomes	Enablers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive • Transparent • Accountable • Equitability • Public service ethos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality services • Public confidence and trust • Well-informed policy advice • Culture of seeking value for money • Stability and continuity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of performance management • Appropriately skilled public administration • Good leadership • Capacity for change

Table 2: Framework of good public administration

A good public administration operates by a particular set of values

- **Responsive** – a good public administration understands and is guided by the needs and expectations of citizens and stakeholders.
- **Transparent** - the machinery and business of public administration is visible to stakeholders and citizens, information is available, and institutions are subject and open to formal and informal scrutiny.
- **Accountable** – that individuals and institutions within the public administration can explain their actions, are answerable to others besides themselves (e.g. to citizens). Public administrations have mechanisms and processes in place to enable individuals and institutions to be held responsible for actions and results where appropriate.
- **Equitability** – the public administration is not simply delivering or working for some citizens, but the public administration is committed to ensuring equal services for all.
- **Public service ethos** – public administration encourages and operates by a public service ethos, affirming the value of public service and maintaining high standards of conduct and service in the public's interest.

A good public administration achieves certain outcomes

- **High quality services** – public administration provides services that meet high quality standards and expectations of users, and are conveniently and easily accessible.
- **Public confidence and trust** – public administration inspires and maintains public confidence in its institutions, people, processes and in the information it provides.
- **Well-informed policy advice** – public administration is capable of providing evidence-based advice to Ministers and politicians to help with formulation of policy.
- **Value-for-money** – public administration functions in a way that is efficient and represents the most effective use of resources and finances.
- **Stability and continuity** – public administration is capable of providing a continuous, reliable level of service even as it implements new policies or accommodates changes that result from shifts in political structures and administrations.

A good public administration is enabled by

- **Performance management regime in place** – having the process and tools that contribute to the effective management of performance and results, with the aim of achieving higher levels of organizational performance.
- **Appropriately skilled public administration** – public administration has appropriate skills to carry out its functions efficiently and effectively, regardless of whether these skills are available within the public administration itself, or through collaboration and partnership working with others.
- **Good leadership** – public administration has senior leadership in place, with the appropriate skills to develop and guide the organization's strategic direction, and to lead and manage change.
- **Capacity for change** – this means that the structures, processes and professionals within the public administration are flexible, dynamic and able to adapt in a timely manner to changing citizen needs, policies and/or political environment.

In order to determine how well public administrations measure up to these characteristics, each of them is measured through a series of indicators.

Value	Indicators
Responsive	Indicator 1: Existence of systematic user and stakeholder consultation programmes Indicator 2: Existence of citizen-centred outcomes
Transparent	Indicator 1: Publicly available performance information Indicator 2: Publicly available budget information Indicator 3: Existence of a regime of scrutiny in the form of parliamentary committees and/or audit organizations
Accountable	Indicator 1: Existence of means of public recourse such as complaints departments and ombudsmen Indicator 2: Clear disciplinary processes and consequences for individual and/or institutional failures
Equitability	NA
Public service ethos	Indicator 1: Existence of a code of civil service conduct Indicator 2: Structures for linking individual performance and organizational results and for rewarding individuals accordingly
Outcomes	Indicators
High quality services	Indicator 1: Public perception of services Indicator 2: Existence of customer charters and/or service quality standards Indicator 3: Availability of government services online, availability of citizen/user portals, extended opening hours, one-stop shops.
Public confidence and trust	Indicator 1: Levels of public trust Indicator 2: Levels of compliance in the tax system
Well-informed policy advice	Indicator 1: Civil service independence Indicator 2: Systematic data collection and analysis of demographic trends and horizon scanning activities
Culture of seeking value for money	Indicator 1: Culture of cost-benefit appraisals before investment decisions Indicator 2: Existence of cost-saving programmes and/or cost saving targets Indicator 3: Existence of Value for Money audits
Stability and continuity	NA

Enablers	Indicators
Culture of performance management	Indicator 1: Existence of administration wide performance management processes and tools Indicator 2: Performance management system is tied to budget planning
Appropriately skilled public administration	Indicator 1: Open competition for post and emphasis on professional experience in recruiting civil servants Indicator 2: Ongoing skill-based training and development programmes
Good leadership	Indicator 1: Existence of a career grade of senior/executive civil servants with leadership responsibilities Indicator 2: Existence of a leadership strategy Indicator 3: Future leaders programmes or leadership development courses
Capacity for change	Indicator 1: Existence of change directors Indicator 2: Existence of dedicated professional change teams Indicator 3: Existence of organizational learning practices that build capacity for ongoing reflections, fostering innovation and dynamism in the civil service

Table 3: Characteristics and indicators of good public administration

In the course of our research and in validating the characteristics with a panel of subject matter experts and academics, two of the characteristics emerged as being particularly difficult to define and measure. These are “equitability” and “stability and continuity”. Equitability or equity is a notoriously difficult area to discuss and measure. Equity can refer to equality of access and/or equality of outcomes. There is much debate about the relationship between the two. Ways of understanding and determining how equitable a given public administration might be are equally contentious. Stability and continuity too, while easier to define, presents significant problems when it comes to the elaboration of indicators. In most cases, it can only be measured through negative indicators such as any failures of public administration to maintain an adequate, basic level of service.

Because of the complexities of these two indicators, “equitability” and “stability and continuity”, we have agreed with the NAO not to determine any indicators and therefore assess or compare public administrations against them. We have, however, opted to retain them as part of the framework of good public administration because we believe they are an important quality and outcome that public administrations should possess or aspire to.

In the next section of this report, we look at each of the characteristics in more detail and discuss how the UK performs when compared to other countries

2. Assessment and comparison of the UK’s public administration

In this section we assess how the UK matches up against each of the characteristics of good public administration by presenting evidence of the UK’s performance. We also compare the UK’s performance to those of selected countries.

Value	Indicators
Responsive	Indicator 1: Existence of systematic user and stakeholder consultation programmes Indicator 2: Existence of citizen-centred outcomes

Summary of the UK’s performance

The UK’s public administration, while placing great importance on citizen, user and stakeholder consultations, does not consult to the extent that countries such as Canada, Australia and Finland do. Nor does consultation take place in as systematic a manner as it does in the countries cited above.

Further to this, the United Kingdom has also not implemented electronic products and services that facilitate e-information, e-consultation and e-decision-making to the same extent as the United States, Sweden, France, Australia, New Zealand and Canada have.

With respects to having a citizen-centred approach, evidence also shows that the UK’s public administration lags behind the US, Canada, Sweden, Finland and Australia when it comes to focusing organizational goals around outcomes for citizens.

Presentation and analysis of evidence:

According to the OECD report, “Citizens as Partners: Information, Consultation, and Participation in Policy-making”, policy-making in “all OECD countries rests on the foundation of representative democracy. Within this framework, many OECD countries have long standing traditions of extensive citizen involvement. All are looking for new ways to include citizens in policy-making”.³

Different countries have taken different steps towards engaging citizens and do so with different priorities in mind (Table 4 overleaf).

In the United Kingdom, one of the first systematic approaches to user consultation was the People’s Panel. It was established in 1998 by the Cabinet Office’s Modernising Public Services Group. This panel consisted of 5000 members of the public, with a profile that was representative of the population in terms of age, gender, region and a wide range of other demographic indicators.

³ OECD, *Citizens as Partners: Information, Consultation, and Participation in Policy-making*, 2001, pp12.

Strengthening democracy through increased public participation	Canada, United States,
Enhancing transparency and accountability of the public administration	Finland, Sweden
Being more responsive and driving better public service delivery	Australia, New Zealand, UK, Germany

Table 4: Purpose of citizen engagement in chosen countries (Source: OECD)

Throughout the past decade, a variety of smaller, more ad hoc public consultation programmes have also been launched. This is the case of the launch of direct, online petitions to the Prime Minister’s Office. Some agencies and departments have also launched unilateral e-consultation programmes. The Department for Children, Schools and Families is a case in point. Larger scale projects include the recently launched Citizens’ Juries. The first of these juries, focusing on children, took place in September 2007. Its purpose is to harness the “experience and wisdom” of the British people and develop "new ways and means" of bringing citizens together. Future events aim to consult with the public on crime and communities as well as the future of the National Health Service (NHS).⁴

The People’s Panel and the Citizens’ Juries, while ambitious in nature, have not always been sustained. The People’s Panel ended in 2002, and it is unclear when additional Citizens’ Juries will take place. More importantly, there does not appear to be a strategy for systematic public consultation. Nor is there a clear direction about how best to use information and insight from citizens to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness in the public administration’s operations. For instance, it is not clear how the “experience and wisdom” of the British people, culled from the first Citizens’ Jury, has been used by the public administration.

This is in contrast to Canada for instance, which also has long traditions of citizen consultation and engagement. One of the good practices that the OECD cites across its citizen engagement literature is “Health Forum Canada”. While it has now been surpassed by other citizen consultation activities, Health Forum Canada has set the tone for other initiatives that have followed.⁵

Health Forum Canada took place between 1994 and 1997. It was chaired by Prime Minister Chrétien and included the Health Minister as well as representatives from provincial ministries, policy analysts and experts, community activists, doctors, and groups of Canadian citizens. The purpose of the exercise was to engage as many stakeholders as possible in discussing and deciding the direction of health policy in the country. The forum interacted via multiple means – through internet discussion groups, telephone surveys, conferences and deliberative events and through ongoing polling. All of this culminated with a report to the Prime Minister entitled “Canada Health Action: Building on the Legacy”.⁶

What is of note in Health Forum Canada is that it made tangible impact and has served as a model of citizen engagement in Canada and beyond. Citizens that took part in Health Forum Canada reported that they felt engaged, influential and were given a strong sense of ownership over the direction of health policy in the country. According to the OECD, the Forum’s work also resulted in the

⁴ From the Official Site of the Prime Minister at <http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page13091>

⁵ OECD, *Engaging Citizens in Policy—Making: Information, Consultation and Public Participation*, 2001 and OECD, *Citizens as Partners*, 2001.

⁶ *ibid*

establishment of the Aboriginal Health Institute and the Canadian Health Information Network, which has morphed into “Public Health Online”, part of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

Citizen engagement is still a cornerstone of PHAC, taking place through a unit called “Risk Communications in Public Involvement”. This unit is the first of its kind to emphasize risk communication, evidence-based communications, and public involvement and has been responsible for creating the Health Canada Policy Toolkit for Public Involvement in Decision-Making.⁷

Another area where some countries have invested more and taken more strategic steps than the UK is in using electronic mean of public engagement. This is reflected in the UK’s sliding ranking within the United Nations e-Government index, although part of the reason for the UK’s drop in rankings is the migration of e-participation products and services from its national portal to local government portals that the UN survey does not examine. In the latest UN e-Government Survey: From e-Government to Connected Governance, the United Kingdom experienced a large drop in its e-participation ranking. It descended from being in the leader position in 2005 to 25th in 2008.⁸ The e-participation index assesses the governmental implementation of products and services concerning e-information, e-consultation and e-decision-making (see Table 5 overleaf).

France, Australia, Sweden and the United States have higher rankings because they have all built on their public engagement programmes over the years. They have moved forward more strategically, and have invested significantly in developing and implementing more easily accessible, convenient, electronic means for citizens to interact with government.

In 2008’s e-participation Index, the United States scored the highest. According to the UN report, this was primarily due to it being significantly stronger than most countries in the e-information and e-consultation areas. This has enabled citizens to become far more interactive with government and its public administration. For example, GovGab (<http://blog.usa.gov>) is a blog written by the Federal Citizen Information Center of the United States of America to give citizens a more informal channel for information and communication.

France also rose 21 places in the rankings, from 24th place in 2005 to 4th place in 2008. This has largely been driven by the country’s focus on e-decision making. To be more specific, France allows its citizens to participate in the e-decision-making process through the French National Commission of Public Debate (CNDP). The CNDP uses e-decision making tools to provide its citizens with several proposals on a specific project and the data necessary for them to make an informed judgment.

It was difficult to obtain data on citizen-centred outcomes. Accenture’s Leadership in Customer Service (LCS) rankings may provide some related insights. LCS is a decade long tracking of the progress that countries have made in public service administration and delivery. The existence of citizen-centric outcomes is a key measure of Leadership in Customer Service. To be more precise, LCS “assesses how well governments have addressed the four dimensions of leadership in customer service—citizen-centered, multi-channel, cross-government service delivery, and proactive communication and education.” An important component of scoring in the latest ranking has been the introduction of citizen survey and polling into the scoring of individual countries.

⁷ See <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>

⁸ The United Nation Public Administration Programme, *UN e-Government Survey: From e-Government to Connected Governance*, 2008

	Country	2008 Ranking	2005 Ranking	Change 2008-2005
1	United States	1	3	2
2	Republic of Korea	2	4	2
3	Denmark	3	7	4
4	France	3	24	21
5	Australia	5	9	4
6	New Zealand	6	6	0
7	Mexico	7	7	0
8	Estonia	8	11	3
9	Sweden	9	14	5
10	Singapore	10	2	-8
11	Canada	11	4	-7
12	Japan	11	21	10
13	Luxembourg	11	61	50
14	Ukraine	14	28	14
15	Jordan	15	90	75
16	Netherlands	16	10	-6
17	Norway	16	26	10
18	Vietnam	16	63	47
19	Bhutan	19	90	71
20	Austria	20	24	4
21	China	20	50	30
22	Lithuania	23	36	13
23	Argentina	23	36	13
24	Brazil	23	18	-5
25	Columbia	25	12	-13
26	Mozambique	25	30	5
27	United Kingdom	25	1	-24
28	Belgium	28	17	-11
29	Bolivia	28	73	45
45	Lebanon	28	69	41
31	Switzerland	28	22	-6
32	El Salvador	32	57	25
33	Malta	32	19	-13
34	Costa Rica	34	90	56
35	Spain	34	73	39

Table 5: UN e-Participation Index 2008: Top 35 Countries (Source: United Nations)

According to the latest, 2007 set of LCS rankings, the United Kingdom ranked 8th in customer service maturity, behind the United States, Canada and Finland. It was tied with Australia. Singapore was ranked highest (see Chart 1).

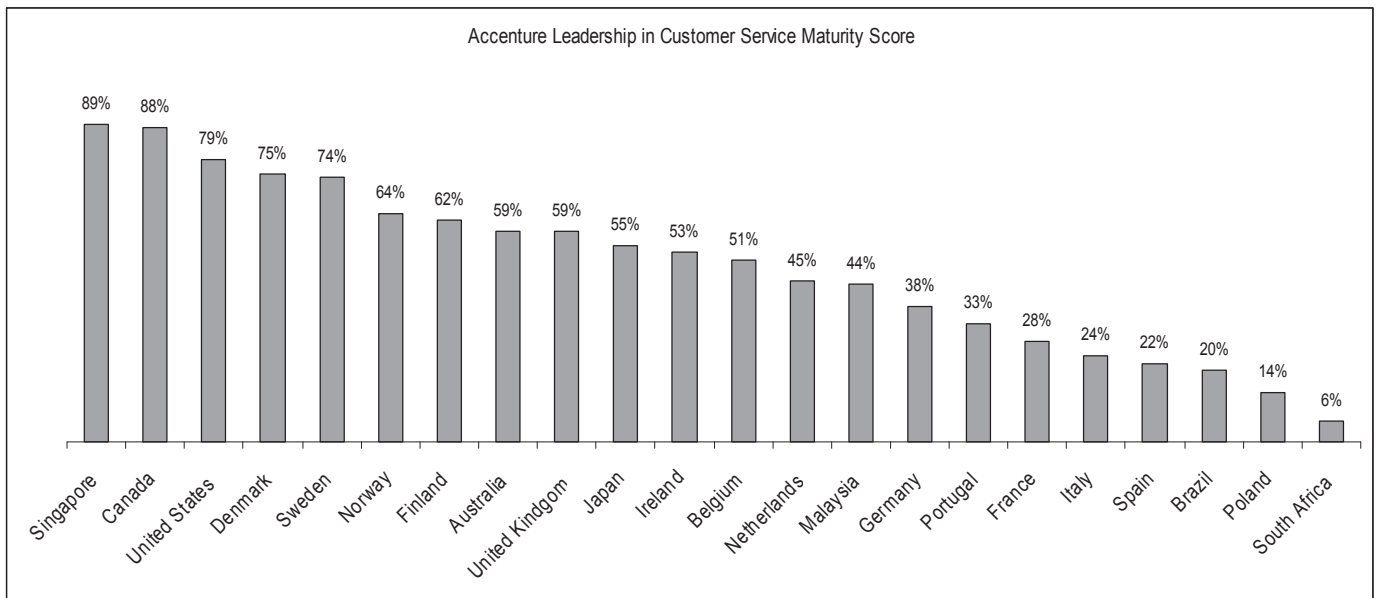


Chart 1: Leadership in customer service maturity ranking 2007 (Source: Accenture)

According to the LCS report, the UK has “just introduced a dramatic new vision of value-led citizen service and we looked forward to the action plan that would lay out the government’s next steps. This year, through the action plan, we see evidence that the government has smart plans for translating its promise into practice. The challenge the government faces now stems from its starting point in citizen perceptions. While we saw the United Kingdom move into the top 10 of our rankings this year, our research also shows that right now, citizens do not perceive services as having improved relative to three years ago. In addition, factors external to the service transformation agenda have eroded citizen confidence and may affect the speed at which government is able to push critical initiatives forward in the near future.”⁹

Countries that ranked above the United Kingdom, Australia for instance, scored highly through taking a consistent approach to citizen-centricity and responsiveness. Australia’s citizen-centricity strategy, “Responsive Government: A New Service Agenda,” was launched in April 2006. It focuses on service transformation in order to create better value for citizens. As for Canada, LCS notes, “Canada has one of the most far-reaching and inspirational visions of truly citizen-centric customer service in the world. We have noted the government’s smart approaches to building a complete picture of its wants and needs through the activities and assets of its Institute for Citizen-Centred Service.”¹⁰ In both Canada and Australia, and in marked contrast to the UK, citizens surveyed for the ranking expressed high levels of satisfaction with the level of services provided.

⁹ Accenture, *Leadership in Customer Service: Delivering on the Promise*, 2007, pp121

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp87

Value	Indicators
Transparent	Indicator 1: Publicly available performance information Indicator 2: Publicly available budget information Indicator 3: Existence of a regime of scrutiny in the form of parliamentary committees and/or audit organizations

Summary of the UK’s performance

Evidence shows that while all of the countries examined for this study make performance and budgetary information available, there are nuances around how much information is available and how easily accessible it is. The United States, for instance, has made performance and budget information available from the Office of Management and Budget website. It has taken action to make information as jargon-free as possible, and is clearly translated into results that make sense to individuals. By way of contrast, Germany’s output-focused approach to goals and objectives means that the achievements of the public administration resonate less well with the public.

Generally, the UK has good levels of transparency, even if exceptions do exist. The World Bank ranking of countries on matters of governance has the UK performing in the 94th percentile when it comes to voice and accountability (see Chart 2). This involves measuring how transparent the government and public administration is. This is echoed by surveys from organizations such as Transparency International, which also rates the United Kingdom favourably.¹¹

In the UK, both performance and budget information is made available. It is also done so in an accessible manner. Her Majesty’s Treasury operates a budget micro site, which sets out what a budget is and where taxpayer money is spent. Public Service Agreements are written and communicated in a manner that is relatively accessible, and attempt to make policies and aspirations more explicit by focusing on broad, citizen-focused outcomes that aim to make the goals of government less abstract to citizens.

Freedom of Information regimes are in place in all of the chosen countries. In comparison with the UK, some countries have longer standing, more wide-ranging regimes in place.

Presentation and analysis of evidence:

According to the World Bank’s Governance Matters rankings of 2008, the UK fares well when it comes to “voice and accountability”. This indicator includes measuring how transparent a given country’s institutions are. The UK, while not ranked as highly as Finland or Sweden is nevertheless better positioned than Canada, the US, France or Australia (see Chart 2).

¹¹ <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wqi/index.asp> and http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2008/cpi2008/cpi_2008_table

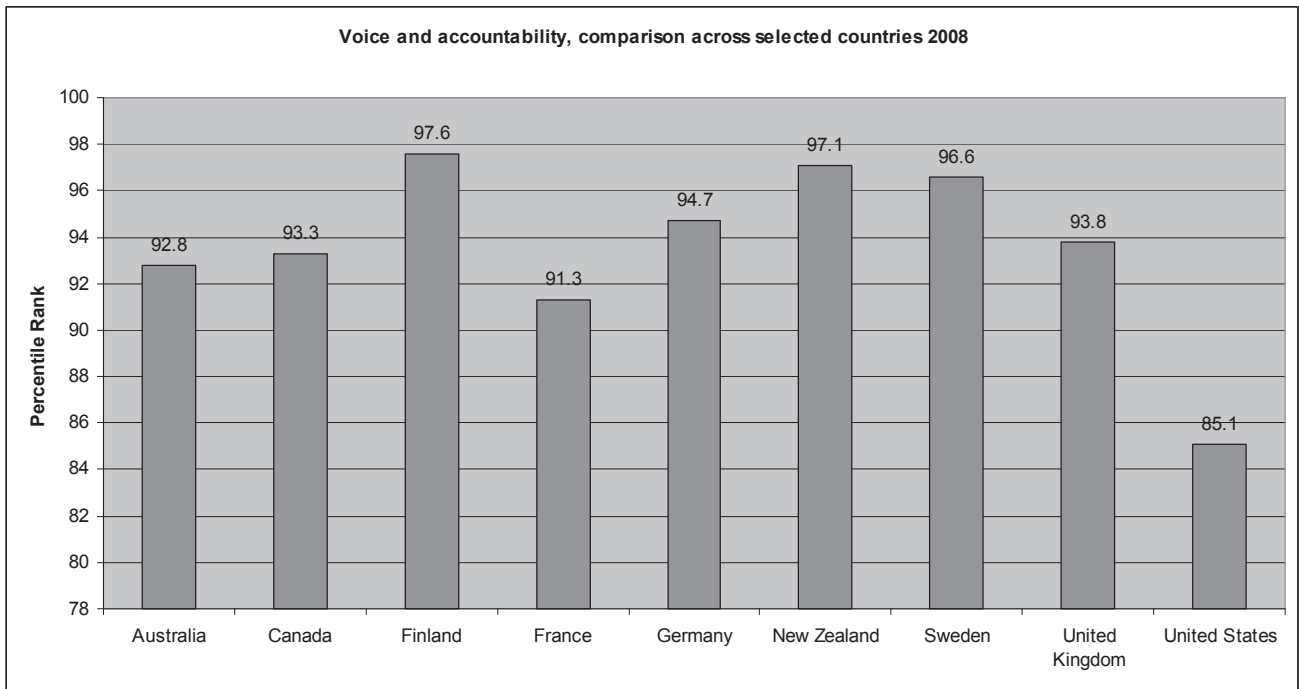


Chart 2: World Bank Governance Matters voice and accountability rankings 2008

All of the countries we have examined for this report make performance and budgetary information available to citizens in some form (see Table 6 overleaf). The nuances lie in how much information is made available, how systematic the process is, as well as how easily accessible and understandable the information is. In the next section on accountability, we also discuss how performance and budget information is used to hold public administration and public officials to account.

Taking the indicators together, the evidence clearly shows that the UK has the appropriate mechanisms and processes in place to ensure that performance and budget information are available to the public. The Public Service Agreement (PSA) regime has helped the UK's public administration attempt to explain what goals departments and agencies have to achieve. They set out the improvements that the public can expect from public expenditure, with clear targets for the service improvements that departments are aiming to achieve. For instance, the Home Office's Migration PSA is to "Ensure controlled fair migration that protects the public and contributes to economic growth". This PSA is then broken down into four more detailed strategic objectives. For instance, one of the strategic objectives is "Strengthen our borders; use tougher checks abroad so that only those with permission can travel to the UK; and ensure that we know who leaves so that we can take action against those who break the rules." These PSAs and strategic objectives are clearly communicated to the public via the internet. Indeed, the existence of PSAs is to allow departments and agencies to be held publicly accountable for delivering outcomes to citizens.¹²

¹² See http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/6/4/pbr_csr07_psa3.pdf

	Performance Information (examples of how and where it is available)	Budget Information (examples of how and where it is available)
Australia	The Australia Public Service Commission publishes a State of Public Service Report	Budget information is available at a dedicated website http://www.budget.gov.au/
Canada	The Treasury Board of Canada submits an annual report on Canada's Performance, with a section that focuses specifically on the performance of the public administration	Dedicated budget site, with a number you can call
Finland	Through a dedicated portal, www.netra.fi and also through individual departments and agencies	Dedicated area on the Ministry of Finance website for the budget, which includes Budget Reviews from the last 5 years, as well as explanatory notes on the budget process and annual timeline. Also clear information on fiscal policy and budget performance.
France	Through a dedicate website "Le Forum de la Performance"	Through a dedicated budget information website
Germany	Ministry of Interior website	Through the Ministry of Finance website
New Zealand	Each department publishes annual performance report	The Treasury's website contains historical fiscal data, as well as a dedicated area for the budget at http://www.treasury.govt.nz/budget/2008
Sweden	Each department publishes annual performance report	http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2798 - site on the Central Government budget, which contains information on the budget and the budget process as well.
United Kingdom	Public Service Agreement Regime, Departmental Annual Reports	Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) HM Treasury website
United States	A dedicated website, www.Expectmore.gov – where performance information is published	Through the Office of Management and Budget - http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/ There is a section called Budget Transparency, which contains a series of Federal Agency Scorecards Citizens can also find the Financial report of the US Government

Table 6: Performance and budget information in chosen countries (Source: OECD and individual country websites)

The United States also makes performance information available in a clear fashion and from a single point of access to citizens through the recently launched website www.expectmore.gov. This website was established to allow Americans to see how well federal programmes are performing. To date, the US administration has carried out reviews of approximately 800 federal programmes, representing 80 percent of the federal budget. These assessments are in jargon-free language and are made available so that taxpayers know which programmes have been most successful and which need to improve.¹³ www.expectmore.gov complements www.results.gov, which was set up in 2002. This website has provided detailed information on the President's agenda for improving Federal agency management. It also tracks agencies' progress in meeting their goals. Federal agencies are held accountable for developing and adopting better management disciplines under the President's Management Agenda. The status of agencies' management reform efforts is made public through scorecards updated on Results.gov every quarter.¹⁴

Finland also emerges as being particularly successful in this area. www.netra.fi is a dedicated portal of the Finnish Treasury. It has been set up to “to openly report the performance and personnel information and expenditures of the Finnish state. In the first phase you (citizens) have access to monthly information in the state central bookkeeping system, as well as to a collection of official documents concerning economic and operational planning and follow-up.”¹⁵ Information is centralised, easily searchable and presented in ways that are accessible to citizens.

When it comes to the availability of budget information, the picture is similar to that of the availability of performance information. According to the Open Budget Index (see Table 7), the United Kingdom ranks at the very top of the index alongside France, New Zealand and the United States.¹⁶

The Open Budget Index 2006	
Provides extensive information to citizens	France, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States
Provides significant information to citizens	Botswana, Brazil, Norway, Czech Republic, Peru, Poland, Romania, South Korea, Sweden
Provides some information to citizens	Bulgaria, Columbia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Namibia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Russia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Turkey
Provides minimal information to citizens	Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Ecuador, El Salvador, Georgia, Honduras, Nepal, Uganda, Zambia
Provides scant information to citizens	Angola, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Mongolia, Morocco, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Vietnam

Table 7: Results of the Open Budget Index, 2006

¹³ See www.expectmore.gov

¹⁴ See www.results.gov

¹⁵ See www.netra.fi

¹⁶ The Open Budget Index is available at <http://www.openbudgetindex.org/>. The Open Budget Index is an initiative of the International Budget Project, and is the first index to rate countries on how open their budget books are to their citizens. It is intended to provide citizens, legislators, and civil society advocates with the comprehensive and practical information needed to gauge a government's commitment to budget transparency and accountability. Finland and Australia were not assessed. A country's placement in a performance category is determined by averaging the responses to 91 questions on the Open Budget Questionnaire related to information contained in the key budget documents that all countries should make available to the public.

In the UK, Her Majesty's Treasury is responsible for making budget information available to citizens. The Treasury makes a guide to the budget as well as the full report available on their website. Citizens can also opt to download and listen to the Budget speech as an MP3, and watch the preparations of Budget day via HM Treasury dedicated channel on the internet. In order to make budgetary information as accessible as possible, the Treasury also operates a budget micro site. This micro site is dedicated to presenting information in a manner that is easily digestible, within summaries of the key point and information that allows taxpayers to see where their money has been spent.

Another indicator of how open or transparent is the existence of Freedom of Information Regimes. As Table 8 shows, all of the countries examined for this report have Freedom of Information Regimes or arrangements in place. In some cases, these are long standing regimes.

	Law on Access to Information and Documents
Australia	1982 Freedom of Information Act
Canada	1983 (updated 2001) Access to Information Act
Finland	1999 Act on Openness of Government Activities (Publicity of Official Government Documents Act) – first established in 1951 http://www.om.fi/23963.htm
France	1978 Law No. 79 583 on access to administration documents
Germany	2005 Freedom of Information Law
New Zealand	1982 Official Information Act
Sweden	1994 Freedom of Information Act
United Kingdom	2000 Freedom of Information Act
United States	1966 Freedom of Information Act, Freedom of Electronic Information Act, 1996

Table8: Laws on access to information and documents in chosen countries (Source: OECD)

According to “Freedom of information around the world 2006: A global survey of access to government information laws”, countries such as Sweden, Canada, New Zealand and the United States have more wide-ranging Freedom of Information regimes than the UK. In Sweden, the Freedom of the Press Act is one of the four fundamental laws that make up the Swedish Constitution. Any changes to the law require a longer procedure over two Parliaments. In Canada, the courts have given Freedom of Information law a high legal status, stating that the Access to Information Act is quasi constitutional. In New Zealand, the Court of Appeals said in 1988 that “the permeating importance of the [Official Information] Act is such that it is entitled to be ranked as a constitutional measure”.¹⁷

The UK, by contrast, has excluded certain bodies from its Freedom of Information law. For instance, the security and intelligence services are excluded from the scope of the law. Some of the literature suggests that this may impact the overall effectiveness of the regime.¹⁸

¹⁷ David Baniser, “Freedom of information around the world 2006: A global survey of access to government information laws”, 2006 at www.privacyinternational.org

¹⁸ *ibid*

Value	Indicators
Accountable	Indicator 1: Existence of means of public recourse such as complaints departments and ombudsman Indicator 2: Clear disciplinary processes and consequences for individual and/or institutional failures Indicator 3: Existence of a regime of scrutiny in the form of parliamentary committees and/or audit organizations.

Summary of UK's Performance

While the UK has many of the same institutions, procedures and systems in place to allow for public recourse and to help hold both individuals and institutions to account, enough questions have been raised about the efficacy of these instruments to position the UK in the middle of the group.

This is not to say that the public administration of the United Kingdom is not accountable. Indeed, the opposite is true. Global governance rankings and transparency indexes all rank the UK highly. For instance, in the World Bank's Governance Matter 2008 ranking of countries on governance issues such as voice and accountability and control of corruption, the UK performs consistently well. In terms of Voice and Accountability, the UK operates within the 90th to 100th percentile. It is outranked by Finland, which comes in first place, New Zealand, Sweden and Germany, but comes out ahead of Canada, France, Australia and the United States, which operate in the 75th to 90th percentile.¹⁹

What the evidence does show is that relative to high performers such as Finland, Sweden, Australia and Canada, some systemic and institutional issues may curtail the effectiveness of the UK's accountability systems. Three specific issues emerge in the evidence. The first issue is the independence of the Ombudsman system from the systems and institutions it is intended to regulate and in some cases, criticise. A second issue is how far the public has taken up and used the Ombudsmen system. Finally, questions have been posed as to how truly accountable the civil service can be in a system where the doctrine of ministerial responsibility effectively means ministers, and not civil servants, are ultimately responsible.

Presentation and analysis of evidence:

In all of the countries examined for this report, individual departments and agencies operate complaints departments or customer interaction/service units with remit to collect and handle complaints from citizens. The extent to which these departments are effective, how satisfied citizens are with their performance, and what impact complaints have in improving organizational performance, while important, is not within the scope of this report. The focus here is on the existence of Ombudsmen services within public administrations, and more importantly, whether institutions and individuals are held accountable for their actions.

A variety of ombudsmen organizations exist in the UK. In 1967 the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration was created. Its remit covered the activities of central government departments. Soon after, a separate organization was created for the National Health Service. The

¹⁹ World Bank, *Governance Matters 2008: Worldwide Governance Indicators*, 2008

Local Government Ombudsman for England and Wales was created in 1973 and for Scotland in 1974. Since that time, a variety of other specific ombudsman organizations have been created.²⁰

Despite the existence of these various modes of public recourse in the UK, the United Nations Public Administration Network's (UNPAN) country profile of the UK poses some questions as to how effective the system is and how much uptake it has among the public. According to the UNPAN profile, critics of the UK system have questioned the independence of the Ombudsmen system from the institutions that it is meant to regulate. Moreover, in the UK, while ombudsman schemes have become more prevalent, citizens still choose to pursue grievances through their local elected official, Members of Parliaments or through the court system.

Ombudsmen systems in countries such as Finland and Sweden appear more effective. Finland and Sweden share a similar system, the Office of Parliamentary Ombudsman. In Finland, the Ombudsman has extensive oversight and investigative powers. They can access all government facilities, demand documents and information, and trigger police investigations where appropriate. Because of the prosecutorial powers invested in the Ombudsman, his or her recommendations are strictly followed. In Sweden, the role of the Ombudsman is enshrined in the constitution. However, their powers are more limited than those of Ombudsmen in Finland. The Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over the actions of members of the Swedish Riksdag (Parliament), the government or individual members of the cabinet, the Chancellor of Justice or members of county or municipal councils.²¹

The United States and Canada do not operate ombudsmen systems at a federal level. Instead, in Canada, there are nine provincial Ombudsmen and two territorial ones. Similarly in the United States, a number of states, counties and municipalities have established offices similar to ombudsmen. These offices are usually directed by individuals who are guaranteed independence by the terms of office. These offices are created by constitution, charter, legislation or ordinance; with the responsibility to receive and investigate complaints against governmental agencies and with the authority to criticize governmental agencies and officials within its jurisdiction and to recommend corrective action.²²

The existence of means of public recourse is only one aspect of accountability. Having processes and procedure to ensure appropriate action is taken to hold institutions and individuals accountable for their actions and conduct is equally important. The evidence shows that there are two very different distinct aspects to this.

On the one hand, evidence obtained through the OECD report "Trust in Government" shows that two thirds of OECD members oblige their civil servants to report misconduct and provides procedures to report it. In addition, all OECD countries have designed disciplinary procedures for dealing with breaches of conduct. In most OECD countries, these disciplinary processes are defined by legal provision (see Chart 3).²³

²⁰ United Nations Public Administration Network UK Country Profile, 2006

²¹ United Nations Public Administration Network Finland Country Profile, 2006; United Nations Public Administration Network Sweden Country Profile, 2006; Parliament of Sweden; and Parliamentary Ombudsman in Sweden

²² United Nations Public Administration Network United States Country Profile, 2006; Forum of Canadian Ombudsman; United States Ombudsman Association (2004)

²³ OECD, *Trust in Government*, 2007

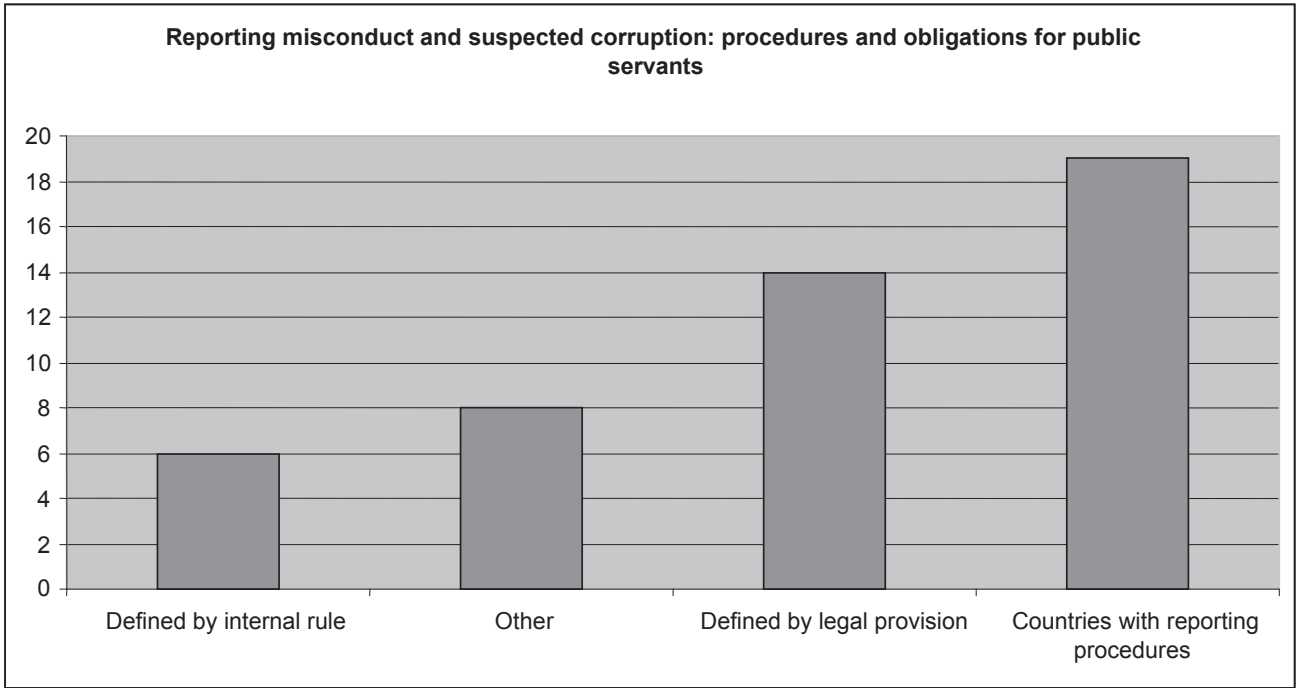


Chart 3: Number of OECD countries with procedure for reporting public servant misconduct (Source: OECD)

On the other hand however, there appears to be far less accountability when it comes to a failure to perform, a failure for instance, to meet organizational or individual targets. According to the OECD's "Modernising Government" report, 46 percent of OECD countries have no reward or sanctions to apply if performance targets are not met (see Chart 4).²⁴

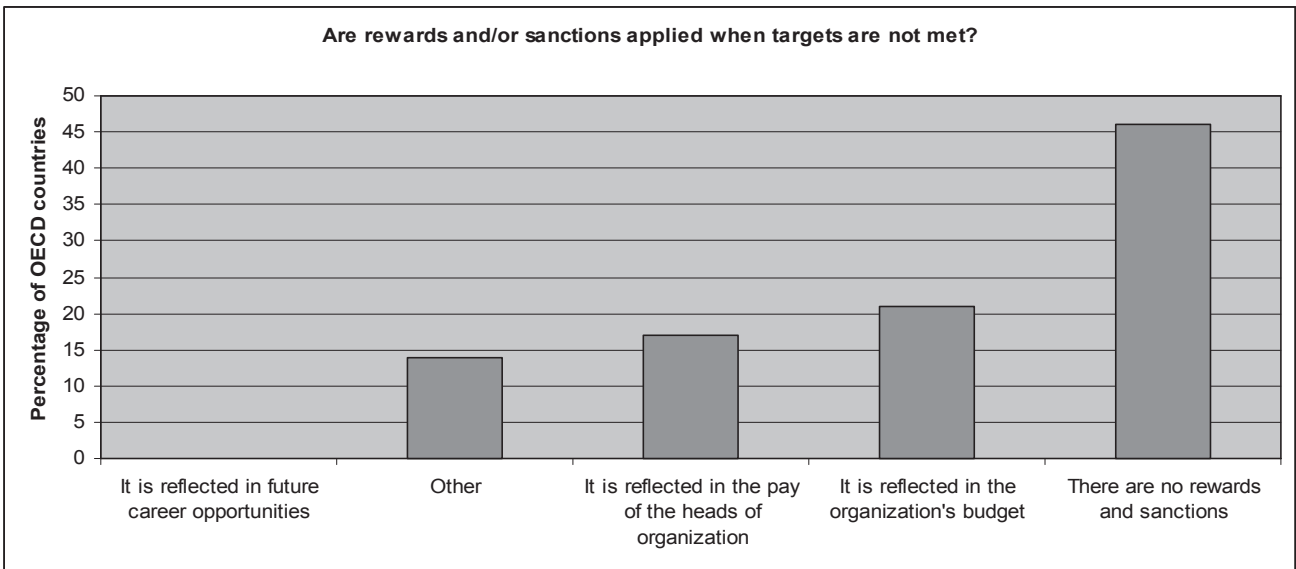


Chart 4: Rewards and sanctions applied when performance targets are not met (Source: OECD)

²⁴ OECD, *Modernising Government*, 2005

The discrepancy may be explained in part by the fact that in many cases, civil service codes of conducts and disciplinary processes have long been a part of civil services in many countries. Performance management regimes, particularly ones where individual performance are tied to organizational results, are still relatively new.

Performance management will be discussed in more detail later in this report.

	Example of audit bodies	Examples of parliamentary or other committees
Australia	Australian National Audit Office	Parliamentary Committees with mandates to undertake inquiries
Canada	Auditor General	Parliament exercises oversight over the actions of the government administration by holding hearings in committees
Finland	National Audit Office for Finland	NA
France	French National Audit Office, "Cour des Comptes"	Hearing in committees, oral and written questions to specific agencies and departments
Germany	The Bundesrechnungshof, which is Germany's national auditing body	Hearing in committees, oral and written questions from parliament to specific agencies and departments
New Zealand	New Zealand Office of the Auditor General	There are up to 13 subject-area select committees, plus any number of ad hoc committees set up from time to time for particular purposes. Select committees often ask the public for input when they are conducting an inquiry.
Sweden	National Audit Office of Sweden	Committees of inquiry and missions to Government departments
United Kingdom	National Audit Office, the Audit Commission	Parliamentary Committees such as the Public Accounts Committee
United States	General Accounting Office	House select committees Special investigations and prosecutors

Table 9: Audit and parliamentary bodies in chosen countries (Source: OECD and United Nations)

With regard to accountability for civil servants, all of the countries we have examined for this report have both formal and clearly defined reporting and disciplinary processes in place for holding public servants to account. However, the UK stands out against the rest of the countries in that, for most part, civil servants are insulated from material, public accountability of the type that the public increasingly expect. This means being able to hold individual officials to account for the power they exercise and the resources they spend.²⁵

²⁵ OECD, *Modernising Government*, 2005

The IPPR report “Innovations in Government: International Perspectives on Civil Services Reform” suggests that important questions need to be raised “about the constitutional relationship between ministers and officials” in the UK. For the IPPR, the sort of public accountability described by the OECD and demanded by citizens would “demand a reappraisal of the constitutional position of civil services...governed as they are by the doctrine of ministerial responsibility, which dictates that ministers, and ministers alone, are accountable for everything that happens in their departments. In other words, the flipside to ministerial responsibility is the non-accountability of the civil service. Such arrangements leave lines of accountability unclear, and roles and responsibilities confused.”²⁶

When it comes to institutional accountability, all of the countries examined have some form of external oversight and scrutiny of the operations and performance of the public administration (see Table 9). This chimes with the findings the OECD report, “Modernising Government”. According to the report, an overwhelming number of OECD countries have mechanisms for conducting external audits of performance information. (see Chart 5).²⁷

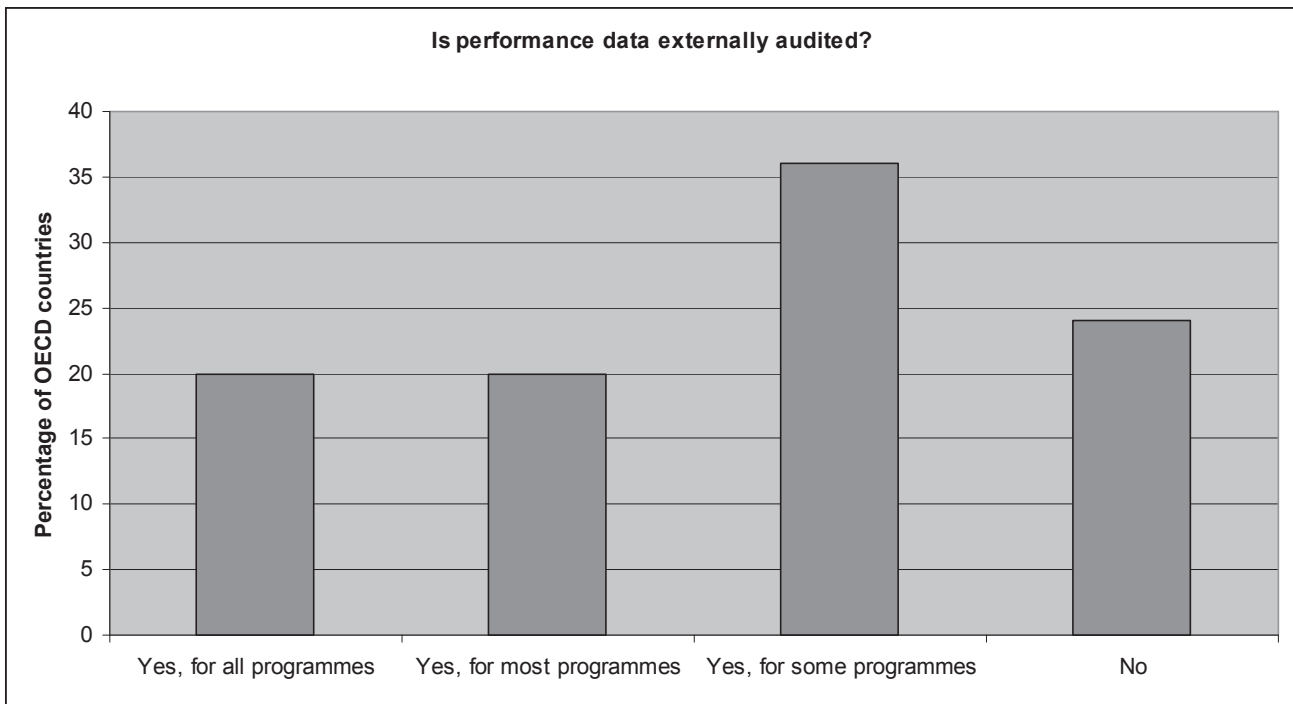


Chart 5: Percentage of OECD countries that have external audits of performance data (Source: OECD)

²⁶ IPPR, *Innovations in Government: International Perspectives on Civil Services Reform*, 2007, pp11

²⁷ OECD, *Modernising Government*, 2005

Value	Indicators
Public service ethos	Indicator 1: Existence of a code of civil service conduct Indicator 2: Structures for linking individual performance and organizational results and for rewarding individuals accordingly

Summary of the UK’s performance

Again, the UK performs well when assessed against this characteristic, but not as well as countries such as Finland, Sweden, Australia or New Zealand. This is because while the UK has a strong Code of Civil Conduct which emphasizes values such as integrity, impartiality and honesty, it appears to have less advanced mechanisms for actually fostering public service ethos. This is the case, for instance, with the use of performance-related rewards.

Research has suggested that performance-related rewards are a good mechanism for fostering public service ethos. It helps organizations tie individual objectives to larger institutional outcomes. This, research shows, motivates civil servants, who are often driven by working for the greater good and helping citizens. The UK has adopted performance-related rewards in some places, and according to the OECD, the results have generally been positive.²⁸ However, the UK is not a pioneer in the implementation and use of performance-related rewards. The public administrations of New Zealand and Finland have longer standing practices in place, and as a result, their approaches have been honed over the years. Consequently, their performance-related mechanisms are more sophisticated and more effective.

Presentation and analysis of evidence:

In OECD’s 2007 report, “Trust in Government”, public officials stated that it was important to operate by a series of values. These values are “justice”, “responsibility”, “equality”, “efficiency”, “transparency”, “integrity”, “legality” and “impartiality”. Of these, “impartiality” emerged as a most important (see Chart 6).

²⁸ OECD, *Performance related pay policies for Government Employees: Brief overview*, 2005 and OECD, *Paying for Performance: Policies for Government Employees*, 2005

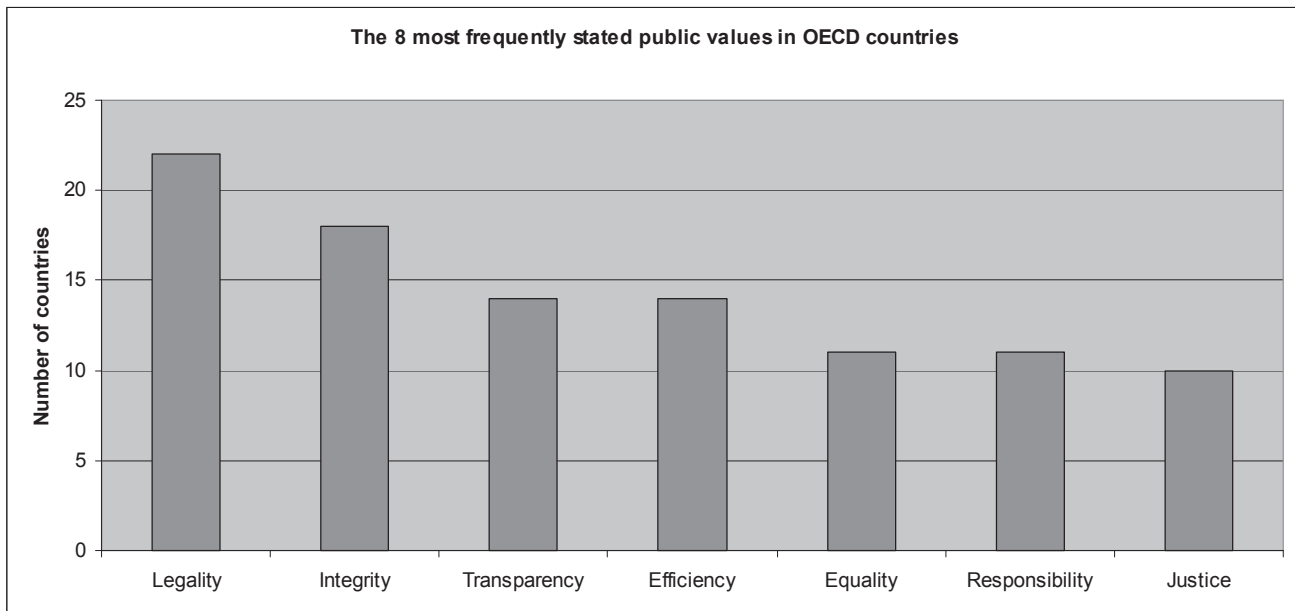


Chart 6: Public values in OECD countries (Source: OECD)

The findings of the OECD report are not surprising. Many of the values cited in the report are built into civil service codes of conduct of public administrations around the world. All the countries we have looked at for this report possess some form of civil service or public servant code of conduct. The UK’s public administration, for example, has a Code of Civil Conduct which states, among other things, that “as a civil servant, you are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and are expected to carry out your role with dedication and a commitment to the Civil Service and its core values: integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality. In this Code ‘integrity’ means putting the obligations of public service above personal interests; ‘honesty’ is being truthful and open; ‘objectivity’ is basing advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence; and ‘impartiality’ is acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving equally well Governments of different political persuasions.”²⁹

Australia’ public administration operates by the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct, which promotes values such as “apolitical, impartial and professional; responsive and accountable”.³⁰ In New Zealand, civil servants are governed by the Public Service Code of Conduct. The United States operates by the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch and the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service is in place in Canada.

In addition to civil service or public servant codes of conduct and standards of behaviours, some countries also have bodies whose role is to examine and uphold certain standards of behaviour for individuals holding public office. They may also conduct inquiries when these standards are breached. The UK, for example, has a Committee on Standards in Public Life. Its role is to examine or conduct inquiries into the standards of conduct of all holders of public office. The Office of the Ethics Counselor in Canada undertakes a similar role. It provides advice on ethical issues to federal and provincial departments and agencies (and to foreign governments and private sector organizations.) Its responsibilities have included: being available to the Prime Minister to investigate allegations against

²⁹ See the UK Civil Service Code of Conduct at <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/iam/codes/cscode/code.asp>

³⁰ See the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct at <http://www.apsc.gov.au/values/conductguidelines.htm>

his Ministers and senior officials involving conflict of interest or lobbying; administering the Prime Minister's *Conflict of Interest Code* for public office holders (all members of the Federal Cabinet, their spouses and dependent children, ministerial staff and senior public servants); and having responsibility for the *Lobbyists Registration Act*.

The existence of standards of behaviour, codes of conduct and ethical guidelines for civil servants and public officials in all of the countries examined is not surprising. These mechanisms are integral parts of good governance: building greater transparency and accountability. What seems to differentiate public administrations from each other is whether they have mechanisms in place to motivate civil servants into having the best interests of citizens at heart. One means of doing this is by linking the work of individual civil servants to larger organizational achievements, demonstrating the impact they have on citizens.

Performance management is an effective way of helping public administrations articulate individual performance to larger organization achievements. More specifically, performance-related rewards are considered a good mechanism for tying individual performance to larger goals and results, and as such, serve to motivate public servants.³¹

A 2004 OECD report on the main trends of performance management shows that two thirds of OECD member countries have introduced performance-related rewards for civil servants. This figure has remained consistent, and in Accenture's own research from 2007, 72 percent of the 150 public administration executives surveyed said performance-related rewards schemes were available in some form within their organizations or units.

The extent to which these schemes have been embedded, however, is unclear. It is equally unclear to what extent these performance-related rewards have been used to motivate civil servants and foster a greater sense of public service ethos. What is clearer however is that performance management systems that focus on both organizational and individual outcomes as opposed to outputs are better positioned to link individual and institutional performance. As Diagram 1 shows, this is certainly the case for Australia, Finland and Sweden, and to a lesser extent, for the United Kingdom and Canada.

³¹ Accenture, *Managing current and future performance*, 2007; OECD, *Performance budgeting in OECD countries*, 2007; OECD, *Performance based management: Good practices and new challenges*, 2007

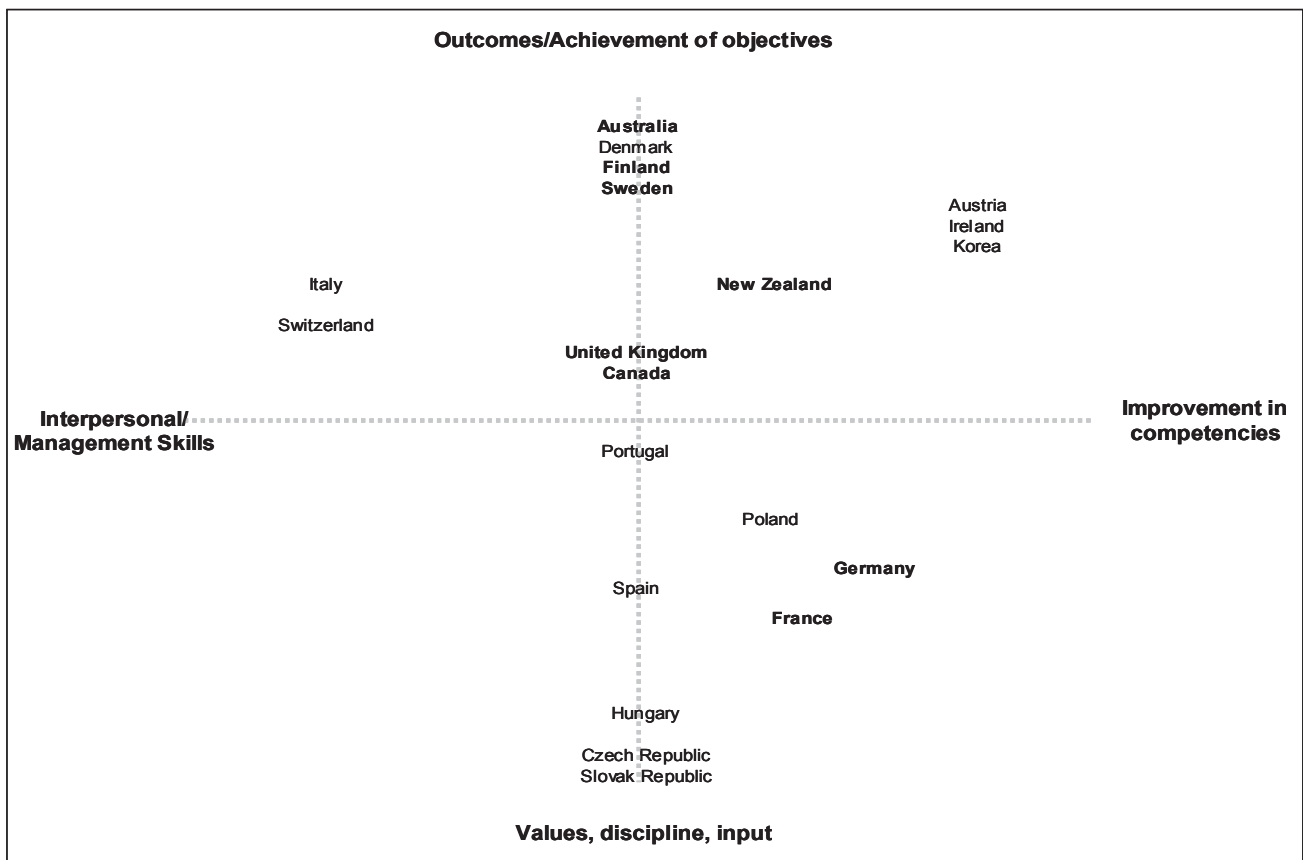


Diagram 1: What performance appraisals are based on in OECD countries (Source: OECD)

New Zealand is one of the pioneers of performance-related rewards, although they are not as outcome focused as Australia, Finland and Sweden. In New Zealand, each department and agency is an employer in its own right and performance-related rewards were initially introduced as a part of a move towards more control for agencies over employment. Since its introduction in 1998, the system has progressed significantly and is used as a means to reward those employees, who year after year, exceed the normal expectations of the job in striving to contribute to organizational outcomes.³²

Finland began to adopt performance-related rewards schemes in the early 1990s. The State Employer's Salary and Wage Policy Programme, known commonly as the New Pay System (NPS), was launched in 1992. Ministries and departments implement the NPS within a framework that has been set by central government. Like the system in New Zealand, once implemented individual ministries and departments have responsibility for performance appraisals and for funding this system.

The most interesting element of the Finnish system is RBR, or Results-Based Rewards. This system seeks to motivate and harness the efforts of entire units or team, and individuals are appraised on how effectively they co-operate in order to deliver cross-agency outcomes. The main result of performance-related rewards in Finland is improved civil service morale.³³

³² OECD, *Paying for Performance: Policies for Government Employees*, 2005

³³ OECD, *Performance related pay policies for Government Employees: Brief overview*, 2005

The system in the UK, like those in Finland and New Zealand, is fairly advanced. Evidence from the OECD shows that performance-related reward schemes have worked well where they have been implemented. There are several reasons for this. In the first instance, employees are closely involved in the scheme, helping to ensure clear performance goals and objectives are set, and that these link back to organizational objectives and outcomes. In addition, transparency and a sense of fairness have also helped make these schemes successful.³⁴

Germany and France emerge as the outliers when it comes to performance-related rewards. This is largely because neither public administration has particularly outcome focused performance management regimes in place.

³⁴ OECD, *Paying for Performance: Policies for Government Employees*, 2005; OECD, *OECD Performance Related Pay in the Public Service*, 2002; United States Government Accountability Office, *Designing and Managing Market-Based and More Performance-Oriented Pay Systems*, 2005; United States Government Accountability Office, *Enhancing Agency Use of Performance Information for Management Decision Making*, 2005

Outcome	Indicators
High Quality Services	Indicator 1: Public perception of services Indicator 2: Existence of customer charters and/or service quality standards Indicator 3: Availability of government services online, availability of citizen/user portals, extended opening hours, one-stop shops.

Summary of the UK's Performance

While public administration should not be confused with specific public services, a public administration is nonetheless responsible for ensuring that individual services are of a high standard.

What has emerged from the evidence is that the UK ticks many of the same boxes as the countries we have looked at: the existence of service quality and charters that govern public service provision; e-services that the United Nations has praised.

However, a discrepancy exists. Where public perception of services in countries such as Australia and Canada are high and appear commensurate with the level of services offered, public perception of services in the UK does not appear to be commensurate with the level of services offered. Generally, the public is pessimistic about the progress of public services in the years ahead.

Research shows that there could be several reasons for this, all of which merit further investigation. In this first instance, the expectations of users in different countries may condition how they rate and judge the quality of services provided to them. As the Ipsos MORI report "Measuring and Understanding Customer Satisfaction" states, "Expectation have a central role in influencing satisfaction with services, and these in turn are determined by a very wide range of factors". These factors include word of mouth, personal needs, previous experience and personal values about the role of the public sector more generally. Where the service reputation is good and expectations high, there is a risk that satisfaction rates may be low by comparison.³⁵

Secondly, the methods by which public perceptions have been collected may also affect the assessments of service users. Information culled via door-stop surveys and online polling can differ from information culled during more deliberative events such as citizens' juries.

Finally, and according to research conducted for the Citizen-Centred Service Network of the Canadian Centre for Management Development, "other elements which may influence perceptions of public sector services include citizens' trust and confidence in the government, politicians, and public servants".³⁶ It can often be unclear whether users are reacting to a specific service, or the policies that inform those services and how they are provided, "the distinction between politics, government and the public service may seem blurry in the eyes of many...the public's perception of honesty and integrity in their government will affect their assessment of the services they receive..."³⁷

³⁵ Ipsos MORI, *Measuring and Understanding Customer Satisfaction*, 2002

³⁶ Geoff Dinsdale and D. Brian Marson, *Citizen/Client Surveys: Dispelling Myths and Redrawing Maps*, 1999, pp9 and pp

³⁷ Quoted in Ipsos MORI, *Measuring and Understanding Customer Satisfaction*, 2002

Regardless of the reasons behind the discrepancy, the evidence nevertheless points to generalised disappointment and pessimism about the UK's public services. For this reason, the UK is positioned at the lower end of the spectrum relative to the other countries we have looked at for this report.

Presentation and analyses of evidence:

In Ipsos MORI's Government Delivery Index, when asked whether they expect the quality of public services to improve or drop over "the next few years", service users exhibit a pessimistic view of the development of public services in the UK. When questioned about the development of the National Health Service (NHS), 25 percent of respondents felt it would get worse and 12 percent thought it would get much worse. A large proportion of the respondents felt that public services would not progress or drop in quality, with 37 percent believing that the quality of the NHS would remain the same. The same dynamic plays out in the quality of education, with 42 percent of respondents thinking it would remain the same, and 19 percent thinking it would get worse (see Table 10).

The pessimism trend is reinforced when the results of November 2007 are compared to the results of March 2008. While the proportion of those surveyed who thought services would "get better" grew in the months between November 2007 and March 2008, it is also true that those who felt services would "get *much* worse" grew as well.

	The National health Service		The quality of education		Public transport		Opportunities for young people		Skills in Britain's workforce	
	Nov 07	Mar 08	Nov 07	Mar 08	Nov 07	Mar 08	Nov 07	Mar 08	Nov 07	Mar 08
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Get much better	2	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	4
Get better	21	22	27	30	26	26	23	28	23	24
Stay the same	37	35	42	38	38	37	37	31	38	34
Get worse	28	25	19	19	24	22	28	25	26	24
Get much worse	11	12	4	5	5	8	6	8	6	8
Don't know	2	3	3	5	5	5	3	4	4	6

Table 10: Perceptions of key public services in the UK (Source: Ipsos MORI Delivery Index)

The results of how the public think the quality of public services in the United Kingdom will develop is further compounded by what can be described as a generalised sense that citizens have no real influence over how government services are delivered. 70 percent of those polled tended to disagree or strongly disagree with the assertion that they have influence over how public services are delivered. This is in contrast to the 18 percent who agreed or strongly agreed that they have influence over how public services are delivered (see Table 11).

	I trust the government to act in the best interest of the country	I trust the government to tell the truth	I have influence over the government's policies	I have influence over how public services are delivered
	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree	10	6	3	4
Tend to agree	30	15	10	14
Neither agree nor disagree	6	8	6	9
Tend to disagree	23	25	32	35
Strongly disagree	30	44	47	35
Don't know	2	1	2	2

Table 11: How influential the British feel in the delivery of public services (Source: Ipsos MORI Delivery Index)

Citizen perceptions of public services in the UK differ from those in the chosen countries. This is particularly true when the UK is examined in relation to Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Canadian citizens seem to have a positive perception of their public service.

In Canada, the latest Citizens First survey gives an overall approval rating of 68 percent for Canada's public services. For the year 2007, 68 percent of citizens in New Zealand approved of their public services. In neighbouring Australia, the Public Service Commission's most recent annual report, "State of the Service 2006-07", shows that users of government services generally report high levels of satisfaction with the services provided. The average satisfaction level for all services is 87.2 percent.

The United States is interesting. The evidence shows that on the whole, citizen satisfaction with federal government's provision of services is below the private sector. On a 100-point scale the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) for federal government services in 2007 was 67.8 percent. Satisfaction for government electronic services, though, was higher. The score there was 73.4 percent.³⁸

The case of the United States suggests that increasingly, citizens prize the convenience and ease that electronic services afford them. Part of the reason for the UK public's negative perception of services therefore, might be bound up with how widespread and effective electronic transactional services are. In the United Nations e-Government Survey of 2008, the United Kingdom, Germany, Finland and New Zealand do not figure in the top ten rankings of e-transaction services (see Table 12).

United Nations e-Government Survey Transaction Services Top 10 Countries	
Ranking	Country
1	Sweden
2	Denmark
3	Norway
4	United States
5	United Arab Emirates
6	Republic of Korea
7	France
8	Spain
9	Australia
10	Canada

Table 12: United Nations e-Government survey transaction services rankings, 2008 (Source: United Nations)

As Table 13 shows, Scandinavian countries perform best when it comes to the availability of electronic transactional services for citizens. Sweden tops this ranking. The UN report highlights Sweden's revamped e-services portal, Norway with its redesigned primary site and Denmark's citizen portal.³⁹ All three countries employ a similar strategy, which is to have a primary site that is content heavy and function as a gateway for a whole plethora of additional e-services. Using this approach, each of the Scandinavian countries scored very high on the availability of services and transactions.

The UN report also highlights the United States and Canada as being particularly noteworthy when it comes to the provision of e-Services. The US federal web system is still a model for e-government. The fourth place ranking in the e-transaction table, therefore, does not point to any real shortcomings of the system in that country, but rather reflects the fact that some agencies still have not made e-transaction and e-commerce widely available. For the UN, "the USA.gov web portal remains one of the most comprehensive and effective government websites in existence. Its effectiveness and success is made all the more incredible because of the vast size of the U.S. government and the enormous amount of information and services provided, all online. In 2008, the USA.gov web portal includes new features such as numerous RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds for news and other information (although it has no feed specifically for e-participation), a comprehensive mobile government web page and enhancements to its leading edge e-rulemaking (the U.S. equivalent to consultation) feature."⁴⁰

³⁸ From the American Customer Service Satisfaction Index

http://www.theacsi.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=176&Itemid=62

³⁹ See Sweden, <http://www.sverige.se>; Norway, <http://www.regjeringen.no> and Denmark, <http://borger.dk/>

⁴⁰ UNPAN, *UN e-Government Survey: From e-Government to Connected Governance*, 2008, pp29-30

In the case of Canada, its 10th place in the 2008 rankings shows the relative progress that other countries have made - the Canadian web portal is still a leader, especially given the fact that all information and services provided at the site are equally available in both English and French. The national web portal is packed with information and services, yet remains user-friendly.

Outcome	Indicators
Public confidence and trust	Indicator 1: Levels of public trust Indicator 2: Levels of compliance in the tax system

Summary of the UK's performance

Levels of public confidence in the UK are not as high as those in countries such as France, Germany or Australia. According to the Ipsos MORI Global @dvisor Survey from October 2007, the public of the UK and the US have relatively low levels of confidence in how well their governments tackle the main problems of the country.⁴¹

The evidence pulled together for this characteristic chimes with the evidence presented in the previous section, where broadly speaking, perceptions of public services are less than positive. However, mitigating factors do exist. Just as a series of issues affect how the public perceive individual public services; a similar set of issues can affect data about the levels of public confidence.

In much the same way as expectations of citizens in different countries can affect how they go about judging the quality of public services; expectations can also condition levels of confidence. Secondly, and as research as shown, citizens can often be reacting to individual political figures, the political process or individual policies and not necessarily the public administration system itself. Finally, it is also true that the public often rates national institutions differently from regional or local ones. Because this study focuses on public administrations at a national level, it is not within our remit to examine whether differences exist between levels of confidence at national and local levels.

Despite these caveats, it is nevertheless clear that levels of confidence in the UK are not as high as those in countries such as France or Canada. This suggests that despite the UK's public administration having systems and process that are comparable to the chosen countries, there is still a gap when it comes to public perception of service quality and levels of confidence.

Presentation and analyses of evidence:

According to the Ipsos MORI Global @dvisor survey from 2007, 63% of respondents in the UK were "somewhat unconfident" or "unconfident" when asked "how confident do you feel in the way government is tackling the main problems facing the country?" Only the US had a comparable figure, with 70% of respondents feeling "somewhat unconfident" or "unconfident".⁴²

By contrast, respondents in France and Germany had the highest level of confidence. In France, 55% of those surveyed were "very confident" or "somewhat confident", and in Germany, the figure is 48%. In Australia, respondents were split evenly down the middle (see Charts 7 and 8)

⁴¹ Ipsos MORI, Global @dvisor Survey 2007. Global @dvisor runs in April and October each year. In October 2007, Ipsos interviewed a total of 23,306 adults online (c. 1,000 in each of 23 markets: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, US). Data have been weighted to reflect the national online population in each market. Fieldwork was conducted 18-31 October 2007.

⁴² *ibid*

However, when these figures are broken down further, it is clear that when it comes to the very lowest levels of confidence, respondents in the UK were not as pessimistic as those in Sweden, the US or even Australia. In the UK, 18% of respondents felt “very unconfident”. In Sweden this figure is 20% and in Australia 22%. 45% of US respondents were “very unconfident” (see Chart 7).

In a similar dynamic, the highest confidence level, “very confident”, was also not particularly pronounced in the UK. According to the survey, 4% of respondents reported feeling very confident, which is in fact the lowest percentage of the countries looked at. Respondents in France and Australia emerged as the most confident, with 19% and 16% respectively (see Chart 7).

What all of this seems to suggest is that public sentiment and confidence in the UK is not as polarized as it appears to be in some other countries. In the UK the overwhelming majority of respondents feel somewhat confident or unconfident, indicating perhaps a more generalized or diffused sense of pessimism as oppose to any sense of extreme or overwhelming negativity.

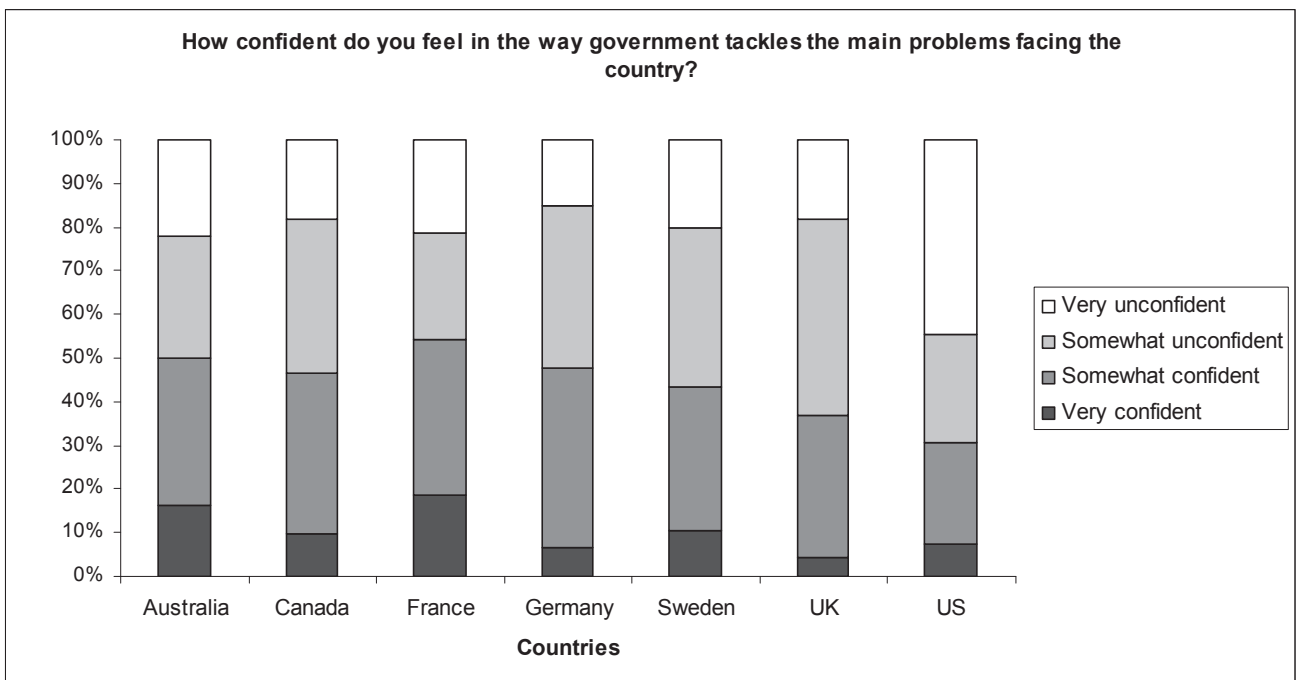


Chart 7: Levels of public confidence in how governments tackle problems affecting countries (Source: Ipsos MORI)

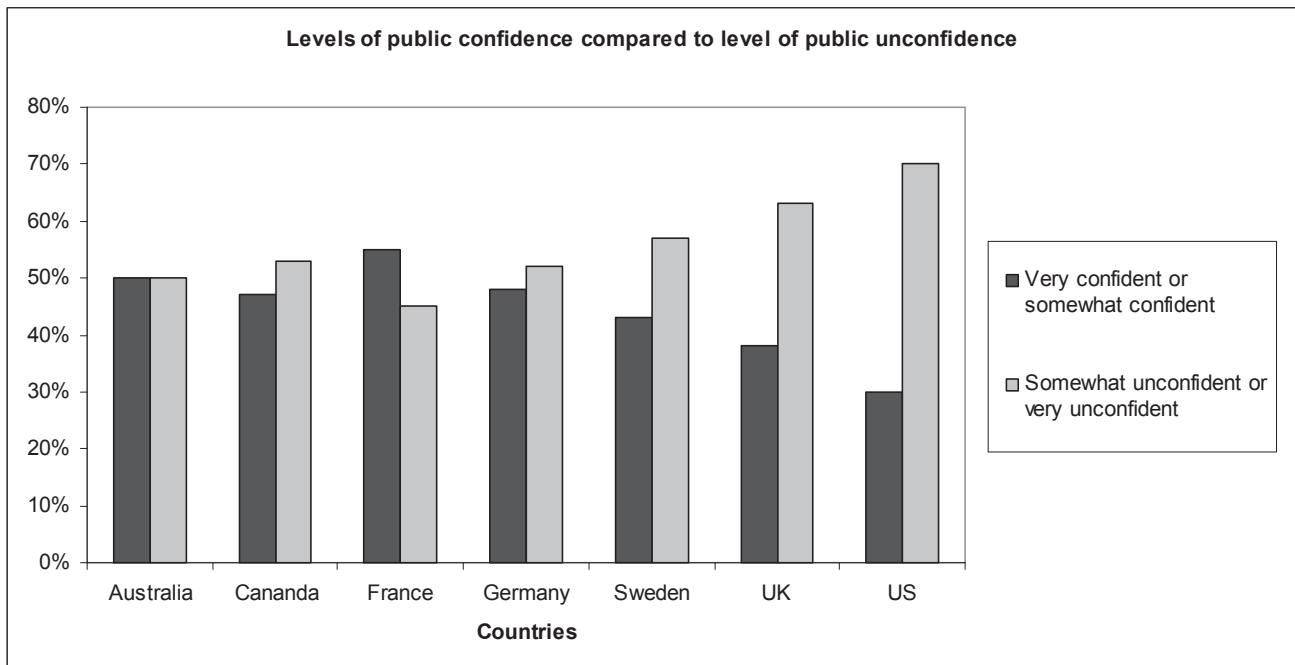


Chart 8: Levels of public confidence compared to levels of public unconfidence (Source: Ipsos MORI)

The level of citizen compliance in the tax system is a good indicator how much citizens trust the system. According to research, public trust and confidence “will affect the extent to which the public contribute to work of government, especially through taxation...”⁴³ In this sense, therefore, the level of compliance in the tax system can be an indicator that citizens feel their money is well-spent by the public administration, or that they feel it is a good investment in their own well-being.

According to OECD research from 2006, Sweden has the lowest rate of unpaid taxes relative to net annual revenue collection in 2004, 2.7 percent. Generally speaking, most other countries hover around the 5 to 6 percent mark. Canada, however, emerges as the country with the highest proportion of unpaid taxes relative to net annual revenue collection, at 9 percent. OECD data is not available for the UK, but another source puts the UK’s tax gap at 8 percent, bringing it close the levels of Australia and Finland (see Table 13).

While a good proxy indicator for citizen levels of trust in the public administration, it should also be noted that the tax compliance rates can also be affected by factor such as the efficacy of the tax collection system or the efficacy of the debt collection system where unpaid taxes are due.

⁴³ See J. Nye, P. Zelikow and D. King (eds), *Why People Don't Trust Government*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1997, pp4; J. Nye., *Finding ways to improve the public's trust in government*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January and Neal Ryan, *Public Confidence in the Public Sector*, Discussion paper prepared for the Auditor General of Western Australia, 2000.

Country	Total year-end gross debt (incl. disputed debt) / net annual revenue collections %		
	2002	2003	2004
Australia	9.3	8.5	8.1
Canada	8.3	8.7	9.0
Finland	8.2	7.9	7.5
France	7.4	6.7	5.9
Germany	5.3	5.3	4.8
New Zealand	6.1	6.7	6.2
United Kingdom	NA	NA	8.0
United States	5.9	6.1	6.2

Table 13: Total year-end gross debt/net annual revenue collections (Source: OECD)

Outcome	Indicators
Well-informed policy advice	Indicator 1: Civil service independence Indicator 2: Systematic data collection and analysis of demographic trends and horizon scanning activities

Summary of the UK's performance

The UK performs at a level that is consistent with most of the chosen countries on being able to provide well-informed policy advice to politicians and ministers. More specifically, the UK performs particularly well when it comes to good and effective knowledge creation and sharing. The work of the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit looks at how emerging issues and future trends might impact the UK. Their research and analysis serve as good evidence and insight for policy making. This is a particularly noteworthy point as, broadly speaking, knowledge creation and management is not particularly advanced across public administrations from around the world.

The UK, however, is not as strong as the United States. Research has shown that the US has a particularly well-developed capacity for supporting policy making with evidence and analytics.

The UK has also been judged as having a less independent civil service than all of the countries examined here. In the Institute for Management Development (IMD) World Competitiveness Yearbook of 2008, which measures how independent public administrations and services are from political interference, the UK is ranked relatively low. Of the 8 countries examined here, it is ranked the lowest, at 36th. France, which is the second lowest ranked country, is at the 32nd position. 4 countries feature in the top ten, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Germany.

The IMD does not give readers any reasons for the UK's rankings. Some possible reasons might have to do with how open the recruitment process into the civil service is, or how far civil servants are held accountable for their actions.

Presentation and analyses of evidence:

In an OECD study on political involvement in senior staffing and the delineation of responsibilities between senior civil servants and ministers, the authors write that "neutrality, in the sense of political non-partisanship in public administration, is of course a precondition for ensuring that, regardless of their political orientation, citizens are treated fairly and in an equitable manner".⁴⁴ Neutrality is also important in helping civil servants give well-informed, impartial, evidence-based policy advice to ministers and politicians. This impartial advice means that policy choices and decisions can be made with the best interests of citizens at heart.

⁴⁴ Alex Matheson, Boris Weber, Nick Manning and Emmanuelle Arnould, *Study on the political involvement in senior staffing and on the delineation of responsibilities between ministers and senior civil servants*, 2007, pp5

In the 2008 edition of the Institute for Management Development (IMD) World Competitiveness Yearbook, the United Kingdom ranked 36th on the “public services” criterion. “Public services”, in this case, refers specifically to how independent the public administration is from politics and political interference. The UK’s 36th rank is the lowest among the countries examined in this report. Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Germany all feature in the top ten, at 3rd, 4th, 6th and 9th respectively (see Table 14).⁴⁵

Ranking	Country
1	Denmark
2	Netherlands
3	Australia
4	Canada
5	Switzerland
6	New Zealand
7	Hong Kong
8	Ireland
9	Germany
10	Jordan
12	Sweden
18	Finland
19	USA
32	France
36	United Kingdom

Table 14: Public service independence rankings (Source: IMD)

The IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook does not provide information as to why the UK is ranked in 36th. But how open competition is in civil service recruitment (discussed later in this report) or how the doctrine of Ministerial responsibility affects civil service accountability (which is discussed earlier in the report) may go some way in explaining the UK’s ranking.

The OECD “Study on the Political Involvement in Senior Staffing and on the Delineation of Responsibilities between Ministers and Senior Civil Servants” also points out in the UK; the pressure on the civil service to be responsive has resulted in it being less independent. This is because, over the years, in order to redress what ministers have often felt to be a lack of dynamism in the civil service, ministers have increasingly “intervened *ad hoc* on a day-to-day basis when they felt it necessary”. Policy units and agencies were also created, many outside of the civil service system, in order to bypass the bureaucracies that underpinned the lack of responsiveness of the civil service. The proliferation of agencies and policy units slowly eroded the dominance of the senior civil servants who have traditionally held the monopoly of advice to ministers. In the absence of this monopoly, the OECD suggests that politicians were allowed to gain primacy over the public administration, therefore attenuating its neutrality and independence.

The UK has a fairly systematic approach to undertaking data collection and analysis of demographic trends and horizon scanning activities in order to improve policy advice. The Cabinet Office Strategy Unit is a clear example of an organization that is dedicated to thinking strategically about the direction of the country. It conducts research and analysis in order to help civil servants and politicians alike

⁴⁵ Institute for Management Development, *World Competitiveness Yearbook*, 2008. One of the measures of overall country competitiveness is “government efficiency”. Government efficiency is gauged via the assessment of 73 criteria, ranging from “government budget surplus/deficit”, “management of public finances”, “central bank policy” to “competition legislation”.

make better, more informed decisions. Recent work by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit includes work on how to make increase excellence in the provision of public services and ensure that they are fairer. Another piece is a horizon scanning activity, mapping out key future challenges likely to impact that the UK's government and public administration.

Finland and New Zealand also have well-developed research and analysis practices, many of which go toward grounding policy in evidence. The Finnish public administration's performance management system involves assessing policy effectiveness as a specific practice. This means that Finnish officials are consistently analyzing performance and other data to determine whether specific policies are effective. Data is used to improve and inform changes where appropriate.

A successful initiative in New Zealand is "The Navigator Network". This Network has been set up in association with the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology (MoRST) specifically to identify emerging science trends and innovations; and to further explore those that may raise significant economic, social or environmental issues for New Zealand. The primary end-users of the Network's findings are public agencies. Findings from the Network provide input for policy and operations across the public administration and government, including science policy, regulatory settings and public engagement.

What also distinguishes the Navigator Network from other similar schemes around the world is that it has been designed from scratch with specific characteristics in mind. It is arms-length from Government and political interference, and is far more interested in knowledge creation than just simply data mining. In order to facilitate the uptake of the knowledge, public administration and government are embedded in the knowledge creation process, and senior officials are invited to attend knowledge creation workshops in order offer their own insights into future implications for New Zealand.

The US however, appears to have the broadest approach to well-informed policy advice. Academics have suggested that the US has a particularly strong capacity in analytical and evidence gathering to support effective policy making. There are several reasons for this. First, civil servants in the US tend to be specialists rather than generalists. Secondly, policy making in the US is supported and informed by a large number of non-governmental institutions. These are think tanks, research centres, universities and even advocacy groups. Finally, the system of checks and balances that is inherent to the US's system of government dictates that policy must be grounded in evidence and analysis. The various branches of government would expect this before passing judgment on policy.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ See, for example, Steven Kelman, Policy Evaluation: Tools to improve government and/or shrink it? at http://www.soumu.go.jp/hyouka/pdf/symposium_result_4.pdf; Tim Besley, Political Institutions and Policy Competition, London School of Economics, 2005

Outcome	Indicators
Culture of seeking value for money	Indicator 1: Culture of cost-benefit appraisals before investment decisions Indicator 2: Existence of cost-saving programmes and/or cost saving targets Indicator 3: Existence of Value for Money audits

Summary of the UK's performance:

While the UK has a less comprehensive approach than other countries, taken as a whole, the UK's performance on this characteristic is comparable to the more advanced countries.

On the first two of the indicators, Canada, Australia and Finland have the most comprehensive and formalized budgeting and financial management systems to ensure *ex-ante* and *ex-post* control of spending. These are intended to deliver greatest value for taxpayer money. The UK's comprehensive spending review, while farsighted in its attempt to build stability into the system through longer budget cycles, lacks some of the more rigorous controls and demands of, for instance, the Canadian system, which tests requests for budget appropriations for relevance, efficiency and excellence before allocating them. Canada, Australia and Finland also clearly link budget to outcomes, this being another mechanism to driver greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The UK, however, has effective *ex-post* control in the form of VFM audits. Alongside Sweden, it has one of the most formalized and targeted VFM audit systems. This is not the case of some of the countries examined. They possess relevant audit bodies, but these often audit to determine whether appropriate accounting practices have taken place, or whether financial regulations have been met.

Presentation and analyses of evidence:

It has been difficult to establish specifically whether cost-appraisals exist before investment decisions in all of the countries we are examining. It has also been difficult to establish whether cost-saving programmes, or how many, exist within the public administrations of the chosen countries. What the evidence does allows us to infer, however, is whether public administration operate by value for money principles generally, and whether a culture of economy, efficiency and effectiveness exist.

Canada, Finland and Australia are particularly strong when it comes to having a culture of seeking value for money. The evidence shows that they have adopted budgeting and financial managements processes that require both *ex-ante* and *ex-post* justification for the appropriation of funds. They have also adopted fiscal rules aimed at both ensuring the value of limited resources are maximised and safeguarding fiscal sustainability

Canada presents the most comprehensive approach to ensuring value for money. At every stage of the financial cycle, there is *ex-ante* and *ex-post* budget control procedures. Throughout the budgeting process, for instance, an expenditure management system is used where all federal spending is reviewed and tested for relevance, efficiency and excellence. The results of these tests guide the

budget design and allocation process, allowing officials to better allocate resources. It also helps them to determine where funding reductions can take place, for instance, by eliminating or improving programmes that are not efficient and effective. The resulting savings are then reallocated to high-priority areas. The Canadian Treasury Board has designed a “VFM profile tool” in order to help public officials prepare funding requests that pass the test of relevance, efficiency and excellence, and to help officials assess the value for money of their plans and programmes.⁴⁷

Australia and Finland also have *ex-ante* and *ex-post* budget controls in place, both of which are aimed at helping link spending to outcomes. To be specific, Australia operates a devolved, outcome focused budgeting framework, focused on ensuring results for money spent. Every department and agency is required to identify comprehensive and explicit outcomes, outputs, quality, price and evidence of effectiveness. There is a requirement to report on these items and any major evaluations in budget plans and in annual reports.

In Finland, for agencies and departmental units to receive budget, they must clearly link the funds to a series of outcomes and performance targets. They must also later prove that budgets allocated have in fact helped to achieve intended results.⁴⁸

The UK has the Comprehensive Spending Review which, unlike many other countries, is a highly centralized budgeting system. This triennial approach aims to reallocate budget to key priorities and to improve efficiency and delivery of public services. Performance information is discussed as part of the spending review, but there is no automatic link between results and budget allocation.⁴⁹

However, even if formal mechanisms are not in place in a way that they are in Canada, a culture of value for money exists within the UK’s public administration. VFM guidance and tools are widely available to civil servants. In the National Audit Office, the UK has one of the more effective *ex-post* control systems in place.

Evidence also shows that all of the countries we have looked at for this report have mechanisms in place for conducting audits (see Table 16). However, this is not to say that the work of these audit bodies is dedicated specifically to Value for Money audits. The Audit Office of New Zealand was set up to ensure that “public sector organizations are operating, and accounting for their performance, in keeping with Parliament’s intentions”. It is unclear from this whether this includes looking particularly at VFM. Indeed, stakeholder feedback to the Auditor General of New Zealand shows that there is a desire for the organization to have a more consistent VFM approach; to provide greater value for money assurance to Parliament.⁵⁰

In the United States, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is responsible for auditing the finances of the federal administration. Its role, however, is dedicated largely to ensuring financial compliance and regularity. Increasingly, it is the Office of Management and Budget that has looked into the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of federal programmes and initiatives.

In contrast, the UK and Sweden have audit bodies that are clearly dedicated to the investigation of value for money. Sweden was the first country to officially adopt cost-effectiveness auditing. The Swedish National Financial Management Authority has a specific mandate to look at public sector

⁴⁷ Odette Madore, *Federal government spending: A priori and a posteriori control mechanisms*” Economics Division, Parliament of Canada, 2006

⁴⁸ OECD, *Performance budgeting in OECD countries*, 2007

⁴⁹ *ibid*

⁵⁰ Office of the Auditor General of New Zealand

expenditure in relation to effectiveness. This is also true of the National Audit Office (NAO) in the United Kingdom, which is specifically interested in investigated whether public money is economically, efficiently and effectively used

Country	Audit Organizations
Australia	The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) is the national auditor for the Parliament of Australia and Government of Australia. It reports directly to Parliament but is administratively located in the Portfolio of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) supports the Auditor-General of Australia, who is an independent officer of the Parliament of Australia. The Auditor-General is responsible, under the Auditor-General Act 1997, for providing auditing services to the Parliament and public sector entities.
Canada	The Auditor General of Canada is an Officer of Parliament who audits federal government departments and agencies, most Crown Corporations, and many other federal organizations. It reports publicly to the House of Commons on matters that the Auditor General believes should be brought to its attention. The introduction of value for money auditing in Canada was accompanied by a number of other institutional innovations, all of which were designed to increase the accountability of public sector organizations.
Finland	Finland's National Audit Office is an independent expert body that operates in connection with parliament. Its task is to audit the legality and propriety of the state's financial management and compliance with the state budget.
France	France's National Audit Office is the Cour des Comptes. This office is a quasi-judicial body. Its remit is to carry out audits of public institutions, and of some private sector bodies as well. It has three core missions. First, the body verifies whether organizations' accounts are in order and comply with financial regulations. Secondly, it assesses whether public funds have been appropriately employed. Finally, it provides assistance to Parliament and government on financial and accounting matters.
Germany	The Bundesrechnungshof is a supreme federal authority that examines federal financial management. Within the hierarchy of federal authorities, it has the same status as the Office of the Federal President, the Federal Chancellery and the federal government departments. The work force of the Bundesrechnungshof and its nine subordinate regional audit offices totals 1300. Headquarters are located in Bonn.
New Zealand	The Public Finance Act of 1977 provided for an independent audit agency - the Audit Office. It consists of the Auditor General, his Deputy, officers of the Audit Department and any other persons whom the Auditor General may appoint to carry out his functions. It provides Parliament with independent assurance that public sector organizations are operating in ways that are commensurate with Parliament's intentions.
Sweden	Sweden was the first European country to formally adopt effectiveness auditing through the National Financial Management Authority. The link between financial auditing and effectiveness auditing is provided by an examination of the systems of internal control which are expected to provide management with both accounting and non-accounting information. An assessment of an agency's effectiveness addresses these three questions: "To what extent do the effects of activities agree with their goals?"

	<p>“How well is an agency run?” “Is productivity satisfactory?”</p>
United Kingdom	<p>The VFM audit body in the UK is the National Audit Office (NAO). Its mandate is to audit the accounts of all central government departments and agencies and report to Parliament on how economically, efficiently and effectively they have used public money.</p>
United States	<p>The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is headed by the Comptroller General of the USA who is appointed for a fixed term of fifteen years. The Comptroller General and his department perform a dual role. On the one hand, the GAO formulates the overall principles, standards and requirements for the accounting systems of individual federal agencies and also the central accounting system of the Treasury Department. On the other hand, the GAO is provided with powers and duties which entail the federal administration comply with financial regulations.</p>

Table 15: Different audit bodies in chosen countries (Source: OECD, EUPAN and UNPAN)

Enabler	Indicators
Culture of performance management	Indicator 1: Existence of administration wide performance management processes and tools Indicator 2: Performance management system is tied to budget planning

Summary of the UK's performance

The UK's public administration has performance management processes and systems in place that are in line with those of other countries looked at for this report. Similar to the processes of countries such as the United States, New Zealand, France and Sweden, the UK's approach offers a blend of outcome and output measures. Though the two are not formally or always linked, performance information is often used to inform budget decisions.

The UK, however, is highlighted in some of the literature as having a particularly target-driven approach to performance management, something that is unique. Questions have been posed about the effectiveness of such a target-driven system, as have questions about whether targets serve as perverse incentives that drive unintended behaviours.

Finland and Canada emerge with the most sophisticated practices. The Finnish system in particular is extremely outcome focused and contains a variety of measures, including "policy effectiveness", to clearly guide organizations towards greater effectiveness and efficiency in achieving results. Budgeting and performance management are also closely linked in through *ex-ante* and *ex-post* budget control systems.

Presentation and analyses of evidence:

Performance management is a mechanism that allows public administrations to measure and understand whether the combination of people, processes and systems they have orchestrated to deliver citizen-centric outcomes are in fact doing so, and if so, whether it is effective and efficient. Performance management gives public officials the information to make modifications to policies, programmes, services and budgets to improve organizational performance where this is required.

According to a 2005 survey performance management practices conducted by the OECD, 77 percent of respondents introduced their first government-wide initiative on performance during the 1990s. Today, mechanisms and systems to assess the performance of public administrations are accepted as a normal part of day-to-day work in the majority of OECD countries.⁵¹

⁵¹ OECD, *Performance Information in the Budget Process: Results of the OECD 2005 Questionnaire*, OECD Journal on Budgeting, Volume 5, No.2, 2005

However, countries follow a variety of different methods to assess performance, including qualitative evaluations and benchmarking. In the 2005 OECD survey, 26 out of the 28 responding countries stated that they use both performance measures and evaluations to assess performance. It is also apparent that benchmarking as a tool is becoming increasingly popular, with 12 countries adopting this approach.⁵²

What the OECD survey also shows is that performance management as a process and system is constantly refined. For example, countries such as Finland, New Zealand, Australia, Sweden and the United Kingdom have transitioned from having output based performance management systems towards a far more outcome focused way of managing operational performance. The different ways in which performance measures are being used by OECD countries is reflected in Chart 9.

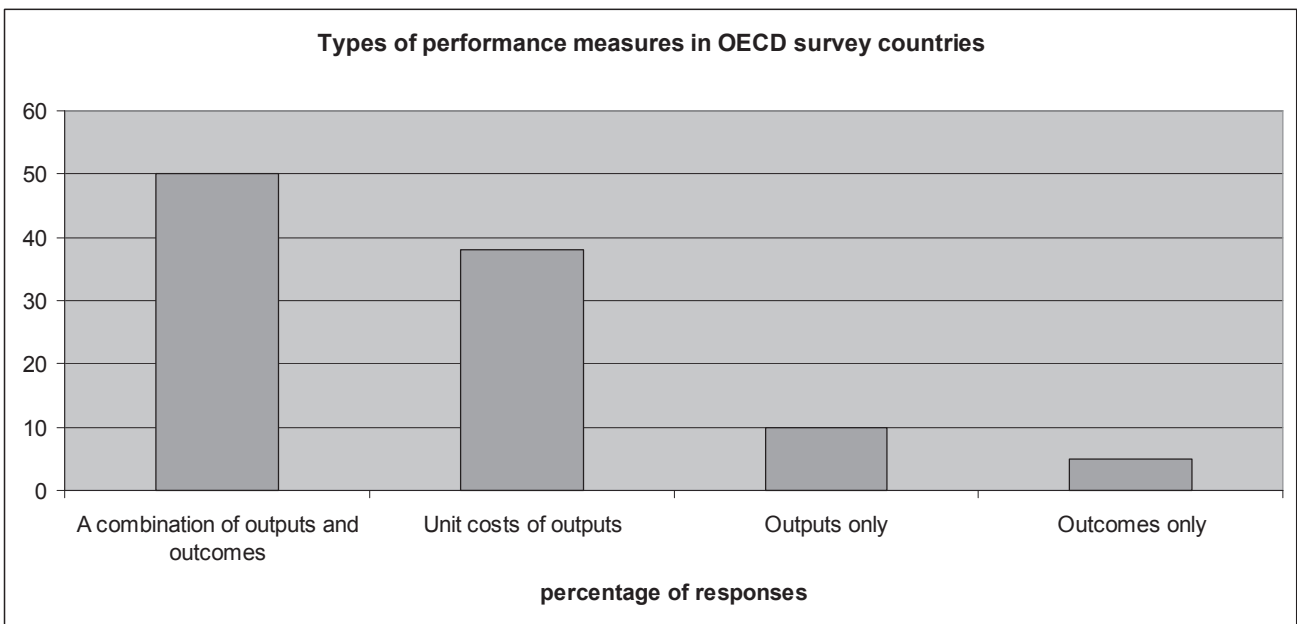


Chart 9: Types of performance measures in OECD countries (Source: OECD)

According to the OECD and recent research that Accenture has conducted on performance management practices around the world, Finland and Canada appear to have the most sophisticated systems in place. Over the years, Canada has introduced a plethora of performance management initiatives to ensure that the public administration functions smoothly, delivers value for money and achieves results for citizens. These include “Results for Canadians”, the “Management Accountability Framework” and “Management Resources and Results Structures.” Finland, for its part, has created an outcome focused performance management process that clearly distinguishes between outcomes and outputs, and provides a rigorous balance of resources on the one hand, and societal gains on the other. This has been important in ensuring that desired outcomes are achieved as cost efficiently as possible. Furthermore, the Finnish government implemented other key components to develop greater sophistication in their performance management system: tying performance to budgeting and linking performance objectives to employee incentives, for instance.

Both the Canadian and Finnish systems are overseen centrally. In Canada, the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) has the overall responsibility for performance management. The Finnish performance management system was largely designed by Ministry of Finance.

⁵² *ibid*

The United Kingdom's Public Service Agreement regime is also generally acknowledged as being particularly innovative. As discussed elsewhere in this report, PSAs are a good mechanism for defining citizen-centric outcomes that serve as guides and measures of operational performance. However, questions have been posed about the target driven nature of the PSA regime, which is a unique feature of the UK's performance management system.

To be specific, when the PSA regime was first introduced in 1998, performance objectives were underpinned by over 600 separate, detailed and specific targets. According to the OECD, this can be problematic, "too many targets create information overload and make it difficult to select priorities."⁵³ It is also true that a target-driven system and culture can drive undesirable behaviours. Some metrics can have the unintended consequence of acting as perverse incentives that encourage types of behavior that an organization does not wish to cultivate. For example, doctors can inadvertently be encouraged to neglect complex clinical cases if doing so helps them achieve other, seemingly more important, targets such as reduced waiting times. The performance management system of the UK's public administration has suffered from this. Corrective action, though, has been taken. The 600 targets were reduced to 130 in 2002.

Performance management in the United Kingdom is led by HM Treasury in what the OECD calls a "total system approach", i.e. a centralised, administration-wide approach. However, despite being led from the Treasury, performance and budgeting are not always necessarily linked in the UK, though performance information does inform budget discussions and decisions. OECD research shows that this is very much the trend in most countries and the UK's practices are therefore, very much in line with those of the United States, New Zealand and France, for example. A small group of public administrations, though, are slowly moving towards an approach where performance information not only informs budget decisions, but completely determines them.⁵⁴

⁵³ OECD, *Modernising Government*, 2005, pp77

⁵⁴ OECD, *Performance Information in the Budget Process: Results of the OECD 2005 Questionnaire*, OECD Journal on Budgeting, Volume 5, No.2, 2005

Enabler	Indicators
Appropriately skilled public administration	Indicator 1: Open competition for posts and emphasis on professional experience in recruiting civil servants Indicator 2: Ongoing skill-based training and development programmes

Summary of UK's performance

Evidence suggests that Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Finland have the best combination of mechanisms to help their public administrations be as appropriately skilled as possible. However, the UK is also performs well, and presents a relatively comprehensive approach to ensuring the right skills are in place.

When it comes to whether there is open competition for posts and an emphasis on professional experience in recruiting civil servants, the UK is well-positioned. Competition is not as open as it is in Finland and New Zealand, but it is more so than other countries such as France. The OECD cites the UK as operating a “position-based” recruitment system, which emphasises the recruitment of the best-suited, most appropriately skilled individual to a specific position. But the nuance is that in the UK, there is only *partial* open competition for middle and senior levels posts. This poses some questions as to just how “best-suited” certain candidates might be.

The UK though, is currently placing emphasis on developing coherent, long-term learning and development strategies for civil servants The recently launched “skills strategy” means the UK is performing well in terms in terms of skills and knowledge development. This is noteworthy because some of the literature suggests that “life-long” learning strategies are rare public administrations, with only Germany, Sweden and Australia having particularly sophisticated approaches to this.⁵⁵

Presentation and analyses of evidence:

The public administrations examined in this report have adopted one of two systems for recruiting, promoting and organising civil servants. One is the career-based system, where civil servants are usually hired at the very beginning of their career and are expected to remain in the public service more or less throughout their working life. Initial entry is mostly based on academic credentials and/or a civil service entry examination. Promotion is based on a system of grades attached to the individual. The second system is a position-based system. This focuses on selecting the best-suited candidate for each position, whether by external recruitment or internal promotion or mobility. Position-based systems allow more open access, and lateral entry is relatively common.

Both systems have their strengths and weaknesses, but broadly speaking, a career-based system tends to emphasise collective values and collective performance. A position-based system tends to

⁵⁵ See, for example, OECD, *Knowledge Management: Learning by Comparing Experiences from Private Firms and Public Organisations* Summary Record of the High Level Forum, Copenhagen, 8-9 February 2001, Paris and Institute for Public Policy Research, *Innovations in Government*, 2007

emphasise a more individualistic performance culture, which is sometimes seen as compromising the “spirit” or public service ethos of the administration. It is unclear from the evidence whether this is true. What is clearer, though, is that with position-based systems, public administrations are better positioned to ensure that specialisation takes place across services, and therefore, that specialist functions are carried out by relevant specialists.

As can be seen from Table 16, which is from OECD research into trends in human resources management, the United Kingdom operates a more position-based system of recruiting and promoting civil servants.⁵⁶ This is similar to all of the countries examined here, with the exception of France, which has adopted a more career-based system. However, when looked at in more detail, the UK in effect operates a more blended approach. As Table 17 demonstrates, the UK does not use open competition for posts as extensively as other countries. For instance, Finland and New Zealand allow open competition for *all* posts at middle and senior levels in order to select the best-suited candidate for each position. Australia, Canada and Sweden have competition for roles except for those at the most senior levels. The United Kingdom, by contrast, only has some roles at middle and senior level open to competition. The rest tend to be filled through internal career-progression methods, much like France.

⁵⁷

Emphasis on competition for posts and professional experience	Emphasis on competitive examinations and education
Australia Canada Denmark Finland Iceland New Zealand Norway Sweden Switzerland United Kingdom United States	Czech Republic France Greece Hungary Ireland Japan Korea Luxembourg Spain

Table 16: Recruitment in the civil service: a difference on emphasis (Source: OECD)

Policies		Countries
In principle, all levels of posts are open for competition...	...including posts at senior and middle levels	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland , Hungary, New Zealand , Slovak Republic and Switzerland
	...except the most senior level posts which are filled by appointment	Australia , Canada , Italy, Norway, Sweden
Posts at senior and middle levels are partially open for competition		Korea, Luxembourg, UK
No posts are open for competition...	...both at senior and middle levels	Japan, Spain
	...with the exception of some roles at middle levels	France , Ireland

Table 17: Openness of government posts (Source: OECD)

⁵⁶ OECD, Trends in Human Resources Management Policies in OECD Countries: An analysis of the results of the OECD survey on strategic human resources management, 2004

⁵⁷ ibid

When it comes to training, evidence suggests that public administrations with position-based systems tend to provide more training to their staff. This is particularly true in the case of Scandinavian countries. Canada and the United States also have extensive training programmes, but these tend to be dedicated to senior or executive civil servants, who are often highly specialised.

Overall then, there is little evidence to show that consistent or “life-long” training and learning is a reality in most countries. Of the countries looked at here, Australia, Germany and Sweden are three countries that have more coherent and consistent approaches in place. The OECD cites Australia as being one of the most advanced countries, where life-long learning is part and parcel of the staff performance management system.

The public administration in the United Kingdom has not articulated life-long learning strategies in a clear manner or embedded it into performance management systems. But evidence shows that training and development is important and initiatives have been put in place to enable a more consistent approach. Indeed, a “skills strategy” was launched in 2008. The objectives of the skills strategy are to “raise standards and enhance individual performance, improve organizational capability and ultimately the quality of public services.” According to the report, this is a strategy for “all staff across the sector, not just for those at the top of the Civil Service. It addresses the deep-seated skills needs of staff in front-line posts and those managing the delivery of public services across the UK.”⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Government Skills, “Building Professional Skills for Government – a strategy for delivery”, 2008, at http://www.government-skills.gov.uk/research_and_publications/skills_strategy/index.asp

Enabler	Indicators
Leadership	Indicator 1: Existence of a career grade of senior/executive civil servants with leadership responsibilities Indicator 2: Existence of a leadership strategy Indicator 3: Future leaders programmes or leadership development courses

Summary of the UK's performance

The UK and Canada perform well in the area of leadership. The UK in particular appears to have placed a strong emphasis on leadership in a bid to make the public administration more professional and to drive greater standards of excellence in public service provision. A recent publication by the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit on world class public services makes this very clear. In this document, which lays out the ingredients of a fair and excellent public service, professionalism is highlighted as a critical factor.⁵⁹

The importance of leadership in the UK is manifested by the public administration having a clear leadership strategy and a specialised group of Senior Civil Servants who are expected to have strong leadership competencies. Moreover, training and development in strategic leadership is available to these individuals, as well as prospective civil servants, through the National School of Government.

All of this is not to say that other countries do not have leadership and leadership development on their agendas. The US, for instance, is also very strong in this area. But in the UK, having leaders, developing leaders and promoting leadership all reinforce each other and function as a coherent whole. This is less the case, for instance, in Sweden and France, which also has an executive class of public officials and leadership development programmes. In this case, while programmes appear to be very strong, the role, positions and expectations of leaders are less clear than those of the UK. The same is true of Finland. In this case, evidence shows that leadership is increasingly important, but whether it has been fully embedded and exploited within the public administration is unclear.

Presentation and analyses of evidence:

The OECD report "Public sector leadership for the 21st century" states that increasingly, "leadership is a critical component of good public governance...it is an important and crucial variable that leads to enhanced management capacity as well as organizational performance".⁶⁰

Among OECD countries, approaches to the development of leadership capacity have varied. Some countries have adopted a high level of central intervention. They have identified leaders from within the civil service and nurtured individuals throughout their careers and into leadership positions. Other countries adopt what the OECD calls a "market-style" approach, or what is described as a "position based" approach in the previous section.

⁵⁹ Cabinet Office, UK, *Excellence and fairness: Achieving world class public services*, 2008

⁶⁰ OECD, "Public Sector Leadership for the 21st Century", 2001, pp7

Despite these differences, the OECD has identified some common trends among countries. These trends include the development of comprehensive leadership strategies; setting up new institutions for leadership development, and the designing of “executive leadership” layers or career-grades.

A separate senior or executive civil service can serve many functions. It can serve a mediating function between political and administrative spheres, or act as bridges between different sectors, groups or units within a public administration. It can be created to overcome fragmentation of the administrations; create stability or to build and embed a corporate culture. Most importantly, though, a senior civil service can be created to foster and guide reform, enact change, and lead public administrations towards their goals.

The OECD report, “Towards Government at a Glance: Identification of Core Data and Issues Related to Public Sector Efficiency”, states that over two-thirds of OECD countries have a separate senior civil service, which in many cases has been a relatively recent development (See Table 18). Those that do not have a differentiated senior civil service, though, tend to have a senior management function within the civil service.

Existence of separate senior civil service	Country
Yes	Australia , Belgium, Canada , Czech Republic, Finland , France , Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand , Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, South Korea, Turkey, UK, US
No	Austria, Denmark, Germany , Ireland, Mexico, Spain, Sweden , Switzerland
No answer	Greece

Table 18: Separate group of senior civil servants (Source: OECD)

What the evidence also shows, however, is that while public administrations may separate senior or executive civil services, not all of them have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for them. According to the OECD, this is critical. Competencies required for leadership roles is not the same as competencies required for the rest of the civil service. Nor do the public administrations as a whole have clear leadership strategies or development programmes in place. This resonates with the evidence presented in the previous section, which shows that very few countries have comprehensive approaches to training, development and life-long learning.

Taking all three indicators together, Canada, the UK and the US appear to have the most comprehensive approach to leadership.

For over 15 years, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in the United States has been focused on enhancing the leadership skills of the senior civil service in order to derive better organizational performance. One of the major strategies to achieve this has been the development of a set of key characteristics and leadership competencies, called the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQ). The ECQ forms the basis for selecting members to the Senior Executive Service (SES). It is constantly validated by OPM through an ongoing programme of research that is conducted by in-house psychologists. There are 5 ECQ, and they are made up of 27 competencies. The 5 ECQs are shown in Table 19.

The Executive Core Qualifications from the Office of Personnel Management in the US	
Leading change	Encourages creative thinking, integrating programme and national goals to enhance overall performance of the public administration
Leading people	Maximising employee potential and maintaining high ethical standards
Results driven	Placing stress on results through continuous improvement
Business acumen	Using new technologies and information resources to improve decision making
Building coalitions and communications	Explain, advocate and communicate ideas and vision in a convincing manner, ability to negotiate with multiple stakeholders, ability to develop an expansive network

Table 19: The Executive Core Competencies of the US Senior Executive Service (Source: OECD)

The Executive Core Qualifications also form the US public administration's management and executive development programme. Training and development is offered through the Office of Executive Management and Development (OEMD). More specifically, the OEMD's Federal Executive Institute places public officials on a pathway to leadership called the "the Leadership Journey". This journey is made up of assessments programmes, seminars and continuous learning opportunities.

According to the OECD report "Public Sector Leadership for the 21st Century", the results of the United States efforts have been good. However, the programme does face some challenges in, for instance, developing more sophisticated succession planning in a time of rapidly aging workforces, and in managing workforce diversity.

In the United Kingdom, the "Senior Civil Service" (SCS) was established in 1996 in a bid to encourage and drive an overall vision of professionalism, organizational efficiency and effectiveness throughout the public administration. The 1999 Civil Service Reform report reinforced this. It set out an ambitious programme to create a more open and diverse civil service. The programme is based on 6 core themes: strong leadership with a clear sense of purpose; better business planning; sharper performance management; improvement in diversity; more openness to ideas, innovation and new talent; and better conditions for staff. The report recognised in particular the leadership is crucial to achieving change.

From its inception, therefore, the SCS was given a leadership role. Indeed, this is clearly set out in the SCS competency framework, which sets out 6 core behaviours and expectations for Senior Civil Servants. These six expectations are shown in Table 20.

Senior Civil Service Competency Framework
To give purpose and direction
Make personal impact
Think strategically
Get the best from people
Learning and improving
Focusing on delivery

Table 20: The SES Competency Framework (Source: OECD)

The Centre for Management and Policy Studies (CMPS) was also established in 1996. This has now been constituted as the National School of Government. The CMPS was designed to support Senior Civil Servants, offering incumbent and potential members of the Senior Civil Service research and apprenticeship programmes to assist reforms and to improve management. These training programmes cover the entire range of competencies and knowledge required for senior executives, particularly in the area of leadership. Today, the National School of Government continues the work of the CMPS, offering a variety of courses in the area of strategic leadership.

Canada also has a group of senior officials, the “Executive Group” who are specifically given a strategic leadership function. Competencies that members of the Executive Group are expected to have include: cognitive capacity, creativity, vision, capacity to build the future, organizational understanding, team work and partnering. A “leadership network” exists to sponsor and embed leaders and leadership practices throughout the public administration. This network has the responsibility for collective management of the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) community in particular, as ADMs are those most responsible for creating and instilling a vision.⁶¹ The network also has responsibilities for career development and support of leaders.

Countries such as Finland and France also have separate senior officials. However, their roles and responsibilities, particularly as it pertains to providing visible leadership, are less well defined. In the Finnish public administration, senior official roles have myriad expectations attached to them, ranging from being “brokers” and “achievers” to “facilitators” and “coaches”. Being a “director” and creating a vision is but one of these expectations.⁶² The evidence also shows that while training and development are important matters for these public administrations, the approach taken is not as concerted as those in the UK or Canada.

⁶¹ Public Policy Forum Canada, *Leaders, the leadership environment, and Canada's Public Service in the 21st Century*, 2007

⁶² European Union Public Administration Network (EUPAN), *Structure of the Civil and Public Services in the Members and Accession States of the European Union*, 2008

Enabler	Indicators
Capacity for change	Indicator 1: Existence of change directors Indicator 2: Existence of dedicated professional change teams Indicator 3: Existence of organizational learning practices that build capacity for ongoing reflections, fostering innovation and dynamism in the civil service

Summary of the UK’s performance

Though the evidence shows that the UK is not as advanced as Australia or New Zealand in organizational learning, it nevertheless stands out as attempting explicitly to improve its capacity for change. This is particularly the case UK’s performance on leadership is taken into account, which is an important component of capacity for change.

Overall, it was difficult to obtain evidence of what different public administrations have done in this area. This is possibly due to the fact that knowledge management is still not particularly well developed as a practice in many countries. Consequently, the data is patchy. What is available are examples of discrete or ad-hoc initiatives. This has made it difficult to construct an overall picture of where public administrations are relatively to each other.

Presentation and analyses of evidence:

Much of the evidence discussed in the last section applies to this particular characteristic, as leadership is bound up with a public administration’s ability to properly carry out and manage change. As such, it is not surprising that the public administrations that have placed the highest premium on leadership also appear to be the most developed in this area. Taking Canada as an example again, not only are members of the Executive Group expected to have the right skills to lead change, but this change is formalised in the “Management Accountability Framework”. This framework clearly sets out the expectations of senior public service managers for good public service management, in particular to “plan organizational change, promote organizational learning, and systematically assess results to facilitate continuous improvement and innovation”.⁶³

The same is true in the UK’s public administration. Again, Senior Civil Servants are expected to be able to lead and manage change. To this end, the National School of Government in the UK has a specific course called “Leading Change”. Two further things stand out. First, in the UK’s public administration, change director roles have been created and given power and resources to drive change. Secondly, in

⁶³ Treasury Board, *Managing the Government of Canada*, http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/spsm-rgsp/cci-acg/cci-acg05_e.asp

the UK, departments are assessed and reviewed specifically to gauge their capacity for change. The Capability Reviews programme, which aims to improve the capability of the Civil Service to meet today's delivery objectives and be ready for the challenges of tomorrow, examine the leadership capability of departments to check if it can "take responsibility for delivery and change". If this capability is found to be weak, areas for actions are identified to help departments improve.

Another indicator of whether a public administration has capacity to change is whether it has systematic organizational learning practices. Organizational learning, whether it be through intelligence/data, experience or experiment, is increasingly critical to any organization's capacity to react, adapt or change. It builds capacity for ongoing reflections, fostering innovation and dynamism in the public administration.

It has already been pointed out elsewhere in this report that knowledge management is still relatively underdeveloped in many public administrations. With the exception of New Zealand and Australia, research conducted for this study did not unearth any examples of public administrations that were engaged in organizational learning in a particularly systematic manner. Discrete activities and general practices do exist.

By contrast, performance in Australia and New Zealand seem to be more uniform. One of the key organizational learning mechanisms that is worth highlighting is the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG). This was established as a joint venture between the governments of New Zealand and Australia, as well as 12 leading universities and business schools. ANZSOG exists to provide postgraduate education and professional development courses for current and future public sector leaders. It is widely seen as an international leader for a variety of reasons. One of the reasons is the reach of ANZSOG. It draws on all levels and units of the public administration and government and right across the public sector as a whole. Secondly, ANZSOG is collaborative and works in a cross-jurisdictional manner. This, coupled with its multi-institutional make-up, allows for the spread of knowledge, the sharing of experiences and ideas and innovation. What results is a culture of learning.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ ANZSOG, <http://www.anzsoq.edu.au/> and Institute for Public Policy Research, *Innovations in Government*, IPPR, 2007, pp. 27

3. Conclusion

The UK performs well when it comes to “transparency”, “culture of seeking value for money”, “appropriately skilled public service” “leadership” and “capacity for change”. It performs at a level consistent with the chosen countries in being “responsive”, “accountable”, having a “public service ethos”, “public confidence and trust”, “well-informed policy advice” and “culture of performance management”. The UK, however, performs less well than the chosen countries when it comes to providing “high quality services”, with the public largely dissatisfied with service provision and pessimistic about them becoming better.

Overall, therefore, evidence shows that the UK’s public administration has the right set of enablers to help it function efficiently and effectively. It achieves important outcomes and operates by a set of values that are generally seen as desirable. In this sense, it is comparable to countries that have public administrations that are seen as being the most advanced in the world.

However, there is a discrepancy between how well the public administration functions and actual results as citizens perceive them.

This discrepancy merits far more attention. Because this report did not assess the outcomes of public services such as health or education, it is difficult to determine whether public sentiment actually reflects poor outcomes or is the function of something else, such as how opinion polls were conducted, or whether citizens were reacting to actual service levels or specific policies.

Another area that merits further study is whether public administrations perform at a qualitatively different level depending on the size of the public administration or the size of the country in question. A further interesting aspect is whether different public administrations at state or local levels perform better, worse, or differently than those at central, federal or national levels.

All of the factors outlined above go towards assessing whether issues of scale, distance and relationship between public administration and citizens impact on the functioning of public administrations. Subject matter experts and academics we have consulted consider that these factors are likely to affect how well a public administration functions and how it is perceived by the public. Indeed, in the course of sourcing evidence for this report, it was found that in many cases where performance in one aspect or other was poor at federal or central level, that opposite was true at regional or local levels.

Finally, a future study might seek to situate the UK’s public administration within its larger historical and political contexts. This would go towards illuminating some of the idiosyncrasies of the public administration such as its target-focused nature.

4 Appendix

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