

# **Performance Management Arrangements for the Senior Civil Service**

**HR Practitioners' Guide  
(April 2019)**



## 1. Introduction

1. Effective performance management is critical for creating a high performance culture, with a focus on quality service delivery. It comprises rigorous individual performance planning and assessment together with personal development. Good performance management enables leaders to:
  - be clear and consistent in focusing individual performance and development on the delivery of strategic business priorities;
  - motivate people to give their best;
  - manage succession planning, career and personal development; and
  - make informed reward decisions that recognise individual contribution and achievement.
2. Performance management is at the heart of how leaders and their team work together and with others. It is a core business process that involves building a shared understanding of what success looks like and how it can be delivered and maintained. **Open, honest, and frequent dialogue between an individual and their line manager is essential. Everyone needs to be clear about expectations and required outcomes and how these will be assessed and rewarded.**
3. There are three key roles in performance management – in practice many of the Senior Civil Service (SCS) play more than one:

### Manager

- translates organisation and project objectives into individual contribution;
- supports continuous improvement through feedback and coaching;
- is open, honest and transparent in performance discussions;
- assesses delivered performance outputs against targets;
- makes reward recommendations; and
- communicates reward decisions and rationale to the individual.

### Job Holder

- clarifies understanding of objectives and identifies issues;
- delivers performance in line with the objectives and emerging issues;
- seeks and acts on performance feedback; and
- makes the most of performance discussions providing evidence of achievements for reviews and articulating development goals.

### Senior management

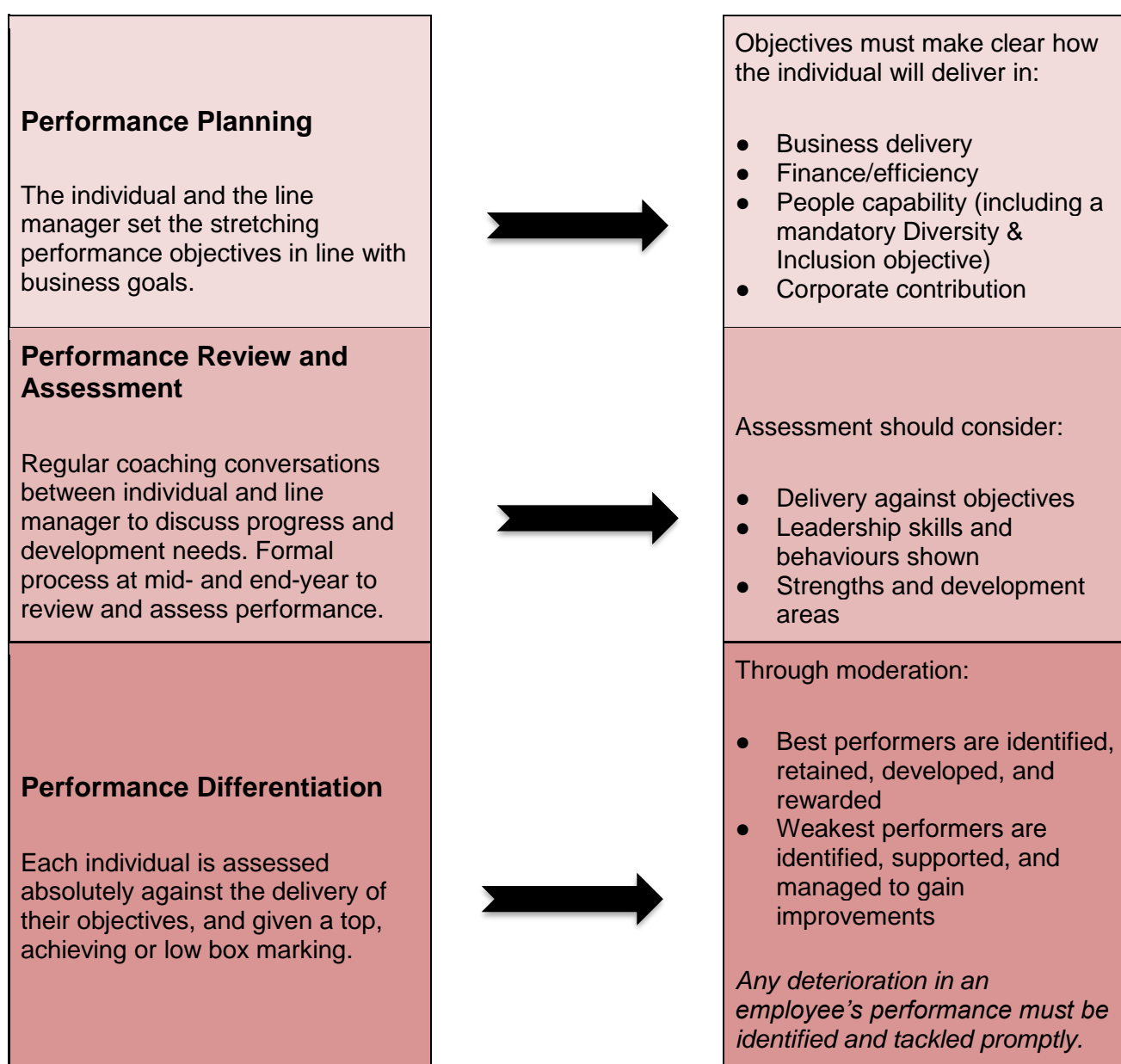
- provides business direction, focuses on results and builds departmental capabilities;
- guides and moderates performance objectives and assessments and reward decisions; and



- ensures good, fair and transparent process is followed.
4. The **Civil Service Management Code** sets out that the performance of all members of the SCS must be managed by departments and agencies within a framework determined by the Cabinet Office. This guide outlines the arrangements for managing performance in the SCS, below Permanent Secretary level (for whom a separate, related, process is in place). It provides:
- a **common framework** for the SCS to facilitate cascade of objectives, and create alignment through the SCS encouraging a wider corporate contribution than delivering in the individual's own business area;
  - links **business and personal objectives**;
  - emphasis on the **importance of leadership and seeking feedback from stakeholders** to inform performance assessment;
  - **clear and transparent implications for reward**; and
  - advice on **dealing with dips in performance and gaining improvements in those identified as 'low' performers**.
5. This guide does not cover the formal process for managing poor performance. This is set out in a separate guide, '*Managing Poor Performance Policy Procedures for the Senior Civil Service (April 2019)*' – this can be found on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

## 2. Performance Management Process

1. Performance management involves **performance planning** at the beginning of the annual business cycle to provide individuals with direction and stretching objectives; **performance review** throughout the business cycle to ensure objectives remain relevant and good progress is being made; and **formal performance assessment** at both mid and end-year points. Managers should also be holding regular performance discussions throughout the year enabling performance progress to be informally assessed on a continuous basis.





2. Clear timelines for performance planning, review and assessment activities to which everyone should adhere will be set. This is an essential discipline and a critical factor in ensuring that individual performance management is taken seriously and has the required impact on business achievement. Failure to adhere to departmental deadlines (for example, a manager not completing the objective setting process on time) should feature in an individual's performance assessment. Overall departmental results are reviewed by Permanent Secretaries.

## Success Profiles

3. Business objectives identified at the beginning of the year will set out "what" you need to achieve over the year. It is also important to understand "how" you need to work to achieve those objectives.
4. From early 2019, departments will use the Civil Service Behaviours element of Success Profiles in order to understand 'how' we want people in the Civil Service to work. This replaces the Civil Service Competency Framework (CSCF) which was in use from April 2013 until early 2019. The full scope of CS Behaviours is available [here](#).
5. CS Behaviours has been designed to complement professional competency frameworks that have been developed by the Civil Service professions/functions. If you work as part of a profession with a separate framework, the CS Behaviours should be used alongside it.

## Leadership Statement

6. In October 2014, the Civil Service Reform Plan Progress report included a commitment to develop a Leadership Statement. This was in response to evidence and feedback from a wide range of sources on the need to explicitly set out what is expected of leaders throughout the Civil Service to encourage a positive change in culture.
7. In February 2015 the Civil Service Leadership Statement was published ([here](#)). The Statement describes the behaviours that the Civil Service can expect of their leaders at all grades, and was launched with its own set of implementation resources.
8. The statement challenges leaders to take responsibility for the effective delivery of the Government's programme and Ministers' priorities, living the Civil Service's values and serving the public. The behaviours are based on three key themes; being inspiring about our work and its future; building confidence through engagement; and empowering teams to deliver.
9. All SCS are expected to reflect the Leadership Statement in their performance management objectives.



10. The SCS 360 degree tool was designed around the Leadership Statement. Information on its use is available on CS Learning, and it is sent out to participants for completion. Some departments have particular alternative arrangements that their SCS should be made aware of.
11. The tool evaluates how behaviours and attitudes are perceived in your work environment. The questionnaire will ask the participant to rate your performance against a series of behaviours drawn from Success Profiles. The results should be taken into consideration when discussing performance with the job holder and in looking at 'how' the job holder has achieved their objectives or otherwise.

## **Diversity and Inclusion**

12. The Civil Service is committed to delivering the best possible public service. A key enabler in achieving this is establishing an inclusive organisation that reflects the society that we serve. SCS need to role model inclusive leadership to create an inclusive culture and environment where staff can bring their best selves to work.
13. Leading from the front on creating a diverse and inclusive environment – at all levels of management – continues to be vital. This means leadership across all aspects of diversity including: ethnicity, gender, gender identity, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, people who work part-time and alternative working patterns, people with different educational and social backgrounds, and people with caring responsibilities.
14. These considerations should underpin all objectives set out by all SCS. In addition, the Civil Service Diversity & Inclusion Strategy, published in October 2017, committed all SCS to setting an objective to improve diversity and inclusion.
15. All SCS are required to make a commitment to delivering an element of the Diversity and Inclusion strategy set out by their department, profession or function, as part of their mandatory People and Capability objective.
16. Showing leadership in creating an inclusive workplace also includes being cognisant of causes for, and ensuring measures are in place to deliver performance management outcomes which are based on performance and merit and where bias has been eliminated.



### 3. Performance Planning and Objective Setting

1. **All members of the SCS must have the core objectives listed below.** (Annex A provides further guidance for job holders on objective setting).
2. **Each member of the SCS must have at least one stretching objective under each of the following headings**
  - ***Business delivery;***
  - ***Finance/efficiency;***
  - ***People/capability including a mandatory Diversity & Inclusion objective; and***
  - ***Corporate contribution.***
3. **These objectives must mirror commitments made in the relevant Single Departmental Plan (SDP).** It would be expected that every departmental objective that is applicable to the job holder's role is mirrored in the job holder's objectives and that there is a clear line of responsibility. Where there is a finance/efficiency objective in a SDP this must be reflected under this category. In the case of the mandatory Diversity & Inclusion objective, this should link explicitly to goals set out in both an SDP and a department or profession's Diversity & Inclusion strategy.
4. ***Finance / efficiency objective:*** Where, exceptionally, an SCS job holder has no individual budgetary responsibilities, this should be set at a wider corporate level. This should capture what they, as a leader of the department or agency, will do in this area to help others save money or maximise efficiency.
5. ***People/capability including a mandatory Diversity & Inclusion objective:*** This should show clearly what the job holder will do in terms of creating an inclusive workplace culture, increasing the capability of their teams, and supporting their department / profession's D&I objectives. This should clearly map onto the behaviours and standards set out in the Leadership Statement, in line with the three core principles – inspiring, confident and empowering leadership:
  - In addition, an objective under this heading must capture the core leadership role the SCS play in creating an inclusive culture and delivering organisational diversity and inclusion goals, through the following or similar wording: "I will lead and manage others to achieve an inclusive culture and the specific goals outlined by my department/profession's diversity and inclusion strategy".
  - Specific action plans underpinning this commitment should be agreed by the SCS and their line managers, with appropriate input from Heads of Diversity and other departmental or professional leads. There is no requirement for these to be captured within the text of this objective.
  - Tools for measuring success will be informed by the context of key indicators and sources of information used in the development of departmental diversity and inclusion action plans, with



care also given to selecting information sources that are most helpful and relevant to individual circumstances. Consideration should be given to measuring both specific activities and more general behaviours.

- Such tools may include:
  - 360 feedback tool
  - Analysis of the People Survey results, including but not limited to: bullying and harassment results; comments on inclusion and fair treatment; issues relating to wellbeing including workload
  - Learning and development
  - Departmental/local diversity and inclusion measures and/or goals
  - Specific departmental/local information
  - Learning from best practice
  - Culture audits

6. **Corporate contribution:** This mandatory objective expects all members of the SCS to make a contribution to the running, performance and reputation of the Civil Service, over and above their day job. It encourages staff to work in a joined up way outside their teams, improves knowledge sharing across teams and enhances the effectiveness of the Civil Service as a whole. Some of the ways in which the objective could be fulfilled include:

- Contributing to learning and development and raising the capability of staff in their wider department/agency, and the Civil Service as a whole. For example, 70% of their time may be devoted to their role; 20% devoted to raising the capability of the department; and 10% devoted to the capability of the wider Civil Service;
- Fostering an ethos of volunteering across their team, unit or department/agency;
- Championing for corporate initiatives like Civil Service Reform, Smarter Working, Digital Skills etc.

The list is not intended to be exhaustive and job holders are encouraged to set out, in their context, how they would contribute to and support programmes in the wider Civil Service.

7. An **SCS Development objective** should focus on professional capability. All SCS members should be mindful of the core capabilities – change management, digital, commercial and project management. Where the SCS member is a clear member of a Function or Profession, this should be clearly recorded, and any developmental objectives connected to this recorded.

8. **Job holders must record the staff engagement scores from the Civil Service wide People Survey for the team for which they are responsible, where this disaggregation is available.** If this information is not available at team level they should record their department, or agency-level,





engagement scores. These survey scores should form part of the mid and end-year narrative provided on steps taken, or to take, in response to these scores.

9. The **onus is on the job holder** to take responsibility for drafting their objectives, which should then be agreed with their manager.
10. **Objectives should be SMART (Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Relevant; Timed).** For each objective job holders should record the main actions to be carried out with deadlines wherever possible, and the measures or targets which will be used to assess whether the objective has been successfully delivered.
11. **Once finalised and agreed, the objective form must be cascaded by the job holder to at least the management level below.** The SDP responsibilities mapped out in SCS objectives should be reflected in team objectives on the whole.
12. Cabinet Office will monitor objective setting within and across departments/agencies through random sampling. If contacted by Cabinet Office for this purpose, departments will be asked to collect a sample of SCS objectives and send these to the Cabinet Office in an anonymous format.
13. **Objectives should be reviewed regularly (at least once a quarter) by job holders with their managers,** to ensure continuing relevance and stretch. The objective form should be updated as necessary.
14. **Within departments, performance objectives should be moderated for relevance, completeness and stretch.** The intention is that objectives are appropriate both individually and collectively, and that they are developed, agreed and recorded on time. Departments should check that those operating at the same pay band have a comparable level of challenge and stretch to ensure that the end of year performance assessment is made on a consistent basis.



## 4. Performance Reviews

1. **Performance reviews refer to mandatory regular one-to-one coaching conversations between the manager and the job holder.** This is distinct from formal performance assessment at the mid- and end-year points, which is covered in section 5.
2. Performance reviews are part of an on-going process and provide an opportunity to discuss the continued appropriateness of the job holder's objectives, how the job holder is doing, and any short-term or long-term development needs. Objectives must be reviewed regularly, and at least quarterly.
3. As part of performance reviews managers should take account of how the job holder is progressing, and the degree to which individuals are demonstrating the standards of behaviour set out in the Leadership Statement, the Civil Service Competency Framework, and the Civil Service Code.
4. **During performance reviews:**
  - **managers and job holders should discuss objectives originally agreed and moderated, and whether they should be revised in light of changing priorities. Objectives should be revised in line with changing Governmental and departmental priorities, and should reflect any amendments to the Single Departmental Plan.** If this is the case, the original objectives should not be changed; the revised objectives should be recorded alongside them. This ensures that end-year performance assessment can take matters fully into account;
  - managers may want to give and record **feedback and follow-up action** by both parties may be agreed as a result;
  - **managers and job holders should make time to discuss development needs, longer-term career aspirations and options.** This discussion may require more time to be available and so could take place outside of the performance review discussions. Success Profiles and CS Behaviours will help frame development conversations. Departments should also consider how the '9-box Performance and Potential Grid' can be used to help assess, retain and develop those high calibre employees who show the potential to become top performers. Departments will be asked to provide details of their 9 box grid assessments to the Senior Leadership Committee (SLC); and
  - where the performance of the job holder is not up to the standards of the grade, in terms of either the achievement of objectives, or the behaviours being demonstrated, this should be brought to the attention of the job holder immediately. **Managers must not wait until the mid or year-end point to raise performance issues.** Section 8 covers 'poor performance' in more detail.



## 5. Formal Performance Assessment

1. **Performance must be formally assessed at both the mid-year and end-year point.** As performance is informally and continuously assessed throughout the year through regular performance reviews, there should be no surprises in terms of the messages communicated to job holders in the formal assessment. Job holders are responsible for seeking feedback on their performance from their managers, peers and staff, where appropriate, and building up a portfolio of evidence for use in mid and end-year performance assessments. Ministerial feedback will be collated centrally and cascaded as necessary.
2. Mid-year reviews should take place in October/November. Job holders and managers must agree a written record of the discussion and this should be recorded on the review form. If objectives have changed these should be recorded. There is no requirement to assign a performance grouping to individuals at the mid-year review.
3. End-year reviews should take place close to the reporting year-end in March/April.
4. Job holders must be in post for 60 days or more to be eligible for moderation.
5. If a job holder leaves their post within 60 days of mid or end-year review then they are still eligible for moderation. If they have left 60 days before moderation, they should be moderated in their new department.
6. **The performance of job holders must be assessed by taking account of both, ‘what’ they have achieved, and ‘how’ they have achieved it.** Managers should make a judgement over whether objectives have been met, not met or exceeded using the following criteria:
  - **‘What’ they have achieved** - whether objectives in the business delivery, finance/efficiency and people/capability (including diversity and inclusion) parts of the common framework have been **met** or not, and to what degree;
  - **‘How’ they achieved it** – the degree to which they have demonstrated the behaviours in the Leadership Statement, Success Profiles, and their department or profession’s diversity and inclusion strategy, including how they have managed the resources for which they are responsible (people and financial)
  - **Demonstration of Civil Service values** – individuals have a contractual duty to observe the Civil Service Code, and leaders are expected to exemplify these values; and
  - Additional consideration should also be given to the **degree of difficulty or ease** of meeting the objectives in light of actual events.



7. Actual performance in relation to these criteria is considered in the round. For example, it is not sufficient to deliver business results at the expense of good team leadership, or to deliver business objectives at the expense of mismanaging poor performance. Unacceptable performance in any part of the common framework should be dealt with promptly.
8. Unconscious bias. Analysis of performance outcomes for employees with protected characteristics indicates that imbalances in performance ratings can occur between different groups of employees. This is in line with the experience of both the private and wider public sector, under varying designs of performance management system. SCS must ensure they complete the unconscious bias e-learning available on CS Learning as this will inform their approach to the appraisal process.
9. A great deal of effective work is already being done in departments to ensure that the performance management system is operated in an equitable and consistent manner. As a key part of this, SCS are responsible for focussing on improving the quality of performance management overall by strengthening the capability of managers.
10. When completing the Performance Agreement Form it is important to be aware of the need to set aside any personal bias, conscious or unconscious, to ensure an objective appraisal of the person you are reporting on.
11. 360-degree feedback on the job holder must be collected as part of the end-year appraisal process. To ensure people are being assessed against the same set of leadership qualities, CS Learning in conjunction with key stakeholders across Government, developed a 360-degree feedback tool that reflects the values of the leadership statement. This use of this tool is mandatory for all SCS except in departments where alternative arrangements exist.
12. This 360-degree feedback should cover a variety of stakeholders, including staff, peers, customers, where applicable, and **Ministers**, where staff frequently work with them (see Para 14 in this section). Staff feedback is particularly important for measuring leadership, performance management and capability building skills. **Peers** in other business units and departments are also in a position to give useful feedback on leadership, particularly corporate leadership. Other **stakeholders** should also be involved where possible, and could provide insight about the individual's customer service skills. SCS have to take a proportionate approach to requesting feedback by carefully considering how many respondents they will approach. The job holder must agree who the respondents they will seek feedback from with their line manager. The feedback should be collected prior to the end-year performance discussion so that it can be discussed with the job holder.
13. Ministerial feedback should be given on the performance of SCS staff, where Ministers see their work. This feedback will be collected in advance of mid-year and end-year performance discussions by the Permanent Secretary and HR Director. The feedback, once collected, will be cascaded by the Permanent Secretary and DGs to the relevant line managers. Managers will use Minister's views, as well as other feedback, to inform performance discussions with job holders.



14. The moderated end-year performance ratings for staff on whom Ministers have provided feedback will be shared with the relevant Ministers for information.
15. Job holders must also record information about budgets for which they are responsible on their objective form, as well as staffing responsibilities, and number of SDP commitments they have responsibility for.
16. A copy of the Performance Agreement Form is at Annex B.

## 6. Performance Differentiation and Moderation

1. Departments should assess SCS members' performance absolutely against their objectives, assigning individuals to one of the three performance groups: Top, Achieving, and Low. As of 2018/19, forced distribution has been removed for the SCS. **However, as with any normal large organisation, performance differentiation is expected to take the shape of a bell curve, with the highest proportion of SCS falling in the middle box (Achieving) and the smallest proportion in the bottom box (Low).**
2. Managers should consider the following conditions while adjudicating a performance marking:
  - if an individual does not meet their finance/efficiency objective then they cannot be ranked higher than in the 'achieving' performance group.
  - an individual can only be placed in the "top" performance group if they have exceeded at least one finance/efficiency objective.
3. Job holders who are assigned to the "Top" performance group should be considered for any departmental/agency talent management procedures to retain and develop them further. Job holders who are assigned to the "Low" performance group should have performance development plans drawn up, if appropriate, to help bring them up to at least the "achieving" standard. Departments/agencies should also put in place processes to facilitate the drawing up of performance development plans for each SCS job holder according to their individual business needs.
4. Job holders who are assigned to the "Low" performance group should be made aware that they are currently not meeting their objectives. This should not be a trigger for formal poor performance procedures, but rather for intensive support, training and coaching. This might include:
  - coaching to enhance performance further;
  - setting more stretching goals;
  - tailoring development to build confidence and experience;
  - plugging competency gaps; and
  - looking at ways to re-energise in the current role, considering whether they have been in the role too long.
5. End-year performance markings must be moderated. Moderation is a checkpoint to appropriately challenge the given performance marking and ensure consistency across a cohort of staff, not to meet any particular performance distribution across the department. Therefore, if managers share



their recommendations with individuals they should make clear that it is an initial recommendation and is subject to change at moderation. (Annex D provides a helpful guide to support our most senior Civil Servants in conducting moderation sessions).

6. Moderation arrangements will vary according to the circumstances of particular departments/agencies and the number of SCS. Where feasible, moderation should be done grade by grade. Small departments/agencies that do not have sufficient numbers of SCS to moderate effectively should make arrangements with others to moderate across departments/agencies.
7. Moderation panels should use the following criteria to discuss and offer appropriate challenge on performance markings by considering and assessment of an individual's performance against their objectives, including:
  - the leadership behaviours exhibited in the achievement of objectives;
  - an assessment of the management of resources. Wherever possible finance professionals should attend moderation panels to provide professional insight on the degree to which job holders have demonstrated sound financial management as an additional checkpoint to ensure the conditions on exceeding finance/efficiency objectives that have outlined in para 2 of this section are being respected;
  - job weight. All other things being equal, good performance in bigger jobs and on stretching objectives should be considered for a higher marking than similar performance in smaller jobs; and
  - the degree to which the job holder has contributed to the Civil Service as part of the wider corporate community, including contributing to the running, performance and reputation of the Civil Service, leadership communication and fostering an ethos of volunteering.
8. **Formal poor performance procedures** should only be triggered if performance is below the required standard, and day-to-day management intervention has failed to achieve improvements.
9. Job holders whose performance has triggered formal poor performance procedures should have a formal end-year appraisal in order to generate sufficient evidence to feed into moderation discussions, and allow the job holder's performance to be considered absolutely against their objectives, and identify appropriate support.



## 7. Handling Dips in Performance

1. Many things, inside and out of the work environment, can affect an individual's performance. **A good manager will identify poor performance and work with the individual to understand why it is happening and what can be done to resolve it.**
2. It is important to understand whether the issue is a one-off dip in performance (maybe at a particular time or in a particular discipline) or an on-going performance problem where the individual is clearly not operating at the required level. A one-off dip in performance may be caused by a particular event or situation, such as bereavement, ill health, relationship problems and financial worries. Whilst the manager cannot resolve these issues, support to bring performance back to an acceptable level should be given. This may include helping the job holder access support services such as Employee Assistance Programmes or allowing time off/adjusting working patterns to assist the individual to resolve the issue.
3. There are a variety of reasons for an on-going dip in performance; some are given below with suggestions for addressing these.

Reasons for ongoing dips in performance	Suggestions for addressing these
Skills or knowledge gaps	Training, coaching or mentoring
Misunderstanding of performance expectations between the job holder and their manager	Clarify expectations
Impact of management style	Consider how you communicate, set directions and clarify expectations
Workplace relationships, including manager / job holder	Consider mediation
Will or motivation of the job holder	Explore career aspirations

4. The longer that poor performance is allowed to linger, the greater the problem for the individual and organisation when it is finally tackled. **The impact of on-going poor performance is high.** Poor performers:
  - do not deliver required business outcomes or value for money;
  - impair the standard, reputation and professionalism of the Civil Service;
  - disrupt the flow of work and increase the workloads of their colleagues;
  - cause resentment and lower morale; and





- set a bad example to those they manage.
5. It is particularly important that members of the Senior Civil Service tackle poor performance to demonstrate the expected behaviours and to help promote a performance management culture within the Civil Service. **When dips in performance have been identified, managers should talk to the job holder as soon as possible.** The aim being to explore the reasons for a drop in performance and discuss with the job holder how best to restore performance to the required level. A good practice guide to improving performance and handling difficult conversations is at Annex C.
  6. **If performance continues to remain below the required standard then managers must move to formal poor performance procedures** set out in 'Managing Poor Performance Policy Procedures for the Senior Civil Service (April 2019)' – this can be found on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).
  7. Sometimes the root cause of performance problems is ineffective recruitment. Managers should therefore **recruit with care**, being clear about why recruitment is taking place, what is sought, and searching for this from a wide, diverse pool of talent, with selection on merit being the core principle. Probation assessments should also be made with care.



## 8. SCS Performance Management Reporting Requirements

1. In order to ensure that the SCS performance management system meets the vision of a high-performing senior Civil Service, and that there is appropriate central oversight of performance across departments, there are expectations that appropriate data is shared with the Cabinet Office as part of an evaluation and assurance framework.
2. This includes data on:
  - number and percentage of top performers in the department
  - number and percentage of SCS marked 'low' performing in the department
  - SCS under formal poor performance measures
  - consecutive year poor performance
3. Departments will be accountable to their Permanent Secretaries for ensuring that objectives are stretching for all SCS, departmental consistency checks are in place, and reward controls are respected.

## Annex A - Guide for Job Holders: SCS Objective Setting

**As a member of the SCS it is essential to have agreed objectives in place, so you can be clear about what you are expected to achieve, and what you are accountable for, by when.** You should record these in the form of a performance agreement to help you track and measure your progress. The number of objectives you have will depend on your role but these should cover your main responsibilities and, where possible, be restricted to no more than 8 key live objectives at any one time.

Performance objectives identified at the beginning of the year will set out “**what**” you need to achieve over the year, while CS Behaviours and Leadership Statement will set out “**how**” these will be achieved. The Leadership Statement describes the behaviours that the Civil Service can expect of their leaders at all grades, and was launched with its own set of implementation resources including a 360 feedback tool.

### How to write your objectives:

- You are responsible for drafting your objectives, and agreeing them with your manager.
- Objectives should be SMART, and cover:
- **Business delivery:** objectives should be those for which you are personally accountable. These should directly reflect commitments made in the Single Departmental Plan;
- **Finance / efficiency:** objectives should cover what you will do to control costs or drive efficiencies. You should also record budgets for which you are responsible on the form. Again, these should directly reflect commitments made in the Single Departmental Plan;
- **People/capability:** Objectives should reflect the principles set out in the Leadership Statement, with the emphasis on inspiring, confident and empowering leadership behaviours. In addition, this objective must include a commitment to delivering an element of your department or profession’s diversity and inclusion goals;
- **Corporate contribution:** As a member of the SCS your objectives should reflect your wider corporate role. Describe what significant personal impact/influence you have had on wider performance and/or Civil Service success and how this has created/added value;
- Objectives should be reviewed at least every quarter to ensure continued relevance

### How you will be assessed:

- At all times you have a contractual duty to observe the Civil Service Code and its values.
- Your performance will be formally assessed by both “what” you achieve (whether your objectives are met/not met/exceeded) and “how” you achieved it, by demonstrating the leadership behaviours expected of the SCS (the Leadership Statement and CS Behaviours).
- You should seek informal feedback on your performance on a continuous basis. If this isn’t forthcoming, tell your countersigning officer.
- At the mid-year point you should have a more structured conversation and record the main points.
- At the end of year your performance will be measured by a number of key stakeholders as part of a robust 360-degree feedback process.
- Your manager will formally assess your performance absolutely against your objectives, and assign a box marking, which a moderation panel will discuss and challenge appropriately, if necessary.
- You are responsible for building up a portfolio of evidence during the year on how you have performed against objectives and behaviours.

### What a good objective looks like - An example:

Objective Type (What you are accountable to deliver) - eg. Business delivery etc.	To Include (How you will achieve it and by when, include what good looks like and how you’ll know you’ve been successful) - includes ‘what’ (expectations, measures, outcomes/deliverables, timeframes etc. are required) and ‘how’ (achieved by skills, knowledge, competencies, behaviours, values applied, measured against feedback from stakeholders etc.)
<u>Business delivery.</u>  To publish a White Paper on the future of widgets by November 20xx.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree terms of reference with Ministers (May) - White Paper delivered on time and within budget of £x,000.</li> <li>• Ensure resource arrangements for project team are signed off (June) - Positive feedback from staff / stakeholders on demonstration of leadership behaviours.</li> <li>• Meet with key stakeholders (July) - Examples of issues resolved due to my intervention.</li> <li>• Provide my team with clear strategic direction and support through fortnightly programme meetings - Findings of peer review of project.</li> </ul>

## Annex B - SCS Performance Agreement Form

Name		Job title	
Line Manager		Period of Report	

### Relevant context about the role:

Please include:

- Budgetary responsibilities: type (e.g. admin/capital/programme), value and description (what the budget is for)
- Staffing responsibilities: number of staff and grade distribution, last People Engagement score
- Any additional relevant context

### Development and career planning:

Record of development activity in the reporting period, including utilisation of 5 days learning and development.

### Mid-year performance:

Job holder assessment of performance
Record performance to date, citing evidence against the 'what' and 'how' from objectives set at Annex A. Include strategies to meet agreed objectives by year-end.
Reporting manager assessment of performance
Discuss performance to date, citing evidence against the 'what' and 'how' from objectives set. Include progress against development.
Mid-year rating: <b>Low / Achieving / Top</b>
Agreed by: <b>Job holder   Line manager</b>

### End-of-year performance:

Job holder assessment of performance
Record performance for reporting year citing evidence against the 'what' and 'how' from objectives set, measured against stakeholder and 360° feedback. Have you undertaken 360° feedback? <b>Yes / No</b>
Reporting manager assessment of performance
In making this end of year assessment, it is important to acknowledge and set aside any personal bias,

*conscious or unconscious, to ensure an objective appraisal of the person you are reporting on. By checking this box I confirm acknowledgement of this statement.*

End-of-year rating: **Low / Achieving / Top**

Agreed by: **Job holder | Line manager | Countersigning Officer**

## Annex A: Performance Objectives

Members of the SCS should have at least one stretching objective against each of the following headings:

- Business/delivery;
- Finance/efficiency;
- People/capability including a mandatory Diversity & Inclusion objective; and
- Corporate contribution.

Objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed) and assess 'what' needs to be achieved (outcomes/deliverables) and 'how' it will be achieved (skills/behaviours).

Objectives should be revised in line with changing governmental and departmental priorities, and should reflect any amendments to the Single Departmental Plan. If this is the case, the original objectives should not be changed; the revised objectives should be recorded alongside them. This ensures that end-year performance assessment can take the whole year's work fully into account.

#	Objective type	'What' and 'How'
1	Business delivery	
2	Finance / efficiency	
3	People Capability (including D&I)	
4	Corporate Contribution	
5		
6		
7		

## Annex C - Good Practice Guide: Improving Performance

### 1. Tackle performance every day – on the day

**You should make time to address performance every day – good and bad. Hold regular and constructive discussions and coaching conversations.** Make sure you tackle poor performance on the day it occurs and in more detail in the first one to one that follows – do not wait for a six monthly or annual review. Talking to people about issues when they occur is vital, backing this up when needed with a file note you share with them enables and supports any formal process. Filing a note you haven't shared with the person undermines any formal process rather than assisting it.

### 2. In tackling extremes don't miss the majority

While you can sometimes find you concentrate your time and effort on the excellent and problem performers, the majority are usually in between. **There is real performance improvement here which is within your grasp.** Identifying those whose performance is improving or declining and managing accordingly can make a real difference to individual and team performance. Most people genuinely welcome feedback that helps them to improve and want to do well.

### 3. How people get things done is important as well as getting them done

**Attitude and behaviour are part of performance – you can and should manage them.** As communicators how we present ourselves, handle situations and market our profession are part of getting the job done well. You need to address attitude and behavioural problems even if 'technical' performance or delivery is good. This isn't about deeming a specific leadership style better or worse than any other, but about demonstrating both the corporate and organisational behavioural expectations. Corporate expectations are set out in frameworks like the Leadership Model. They also form part of our Civil Service values set out in the Civil Service Code. Departments should set out clearly any organisational expectations so that objectives can be linked to the business aims. In both cases job holders and managers need to be clear about what is expected of them and how this will be measured.

### 4. You need a different approach to managing behaviour and attitudes than managing capability

Capability problems are best tackled by clear task based objectives; behavioural and attitude problems by being very clear with people on the behaviour you want and don't want. For capability issues a reasonable timeframe for improvement can be put in place to take account of any training/coaching requirements. Behaviour and attitude can be transformed very quickly if you actually tackle it with people and then keep tackling it.

### 5. What individuals can do to engender good performance management

- **Set clear objectives** - It may be self-evident but the start of good performance management is clarity about the objectives that are expected to be achieved, both in business outputs and the way business is conducted. The need for specific performance measures and criteria will vary from



circumstance to circumstance but the key requirement is that both parties are clear about what has to be done and how they will assess how well it has been done.

- **Establish the right relationship** – It is very important to establish and maintain the authority to engage in performance management. That comes from being very clear from the start about the standards that matter to your business and the organisation. It is also helpful to separate the individual from their performance. You are not reviewing the individual's intrinsic worth. You are reviewing what they have done. This is particularly important when challenging poor performance.
- **Be generous** – Good performance managers are generous with their time, with their support and coaching and, above all, with their aspiration that the individuals they manage should have the opportunity and support to grow and improve. They do not separate development from performance management. Their goal is for performance to improve and their skill is in helping their people to do that. This is nearly always accompanied by a style of leadership and management which is empowering – by being clear about outputs and helping their staff to learn and grow as they discover the best ways to deliver them – rather than specific and detailed checking and intervention.
- **Be tough when necessary** – These characteristics enable good performance managers to be extremely tough when they need to be. They have established the moral authority to be a robust and vigorous as necessary.

## Good Practice Guide: Handling Difficult Conversations

### Preparing

- What is the issue? Is this a one-off situation and what impact has it had, for example on achievement of objectives or on others?
- Identify a specific example that illustrates the behaviour or situation that must change.
- What is your contribution to the problem? Should you recognise shared responsibility?
- Consider your emotional response to the situation and be aware of any unconscious bias.
- Consider if there is anything you could do differently to help resolve the issue.
- Prepare the points to cover and be clear about the outcome you wish to achieve.
- Arrange a suitable time for the discussion and think about the location.

### During the Conversation

- Be clear about why the conversation is necessary. Be specific and give examples.
- Clarify why it is important.
- Be mindful of your body language and tone of voice.
- Let them know that you want to resolve the problem.
- Use open questioning and ask the other person's perspective, for example:
  - How do you feel things have been going? / How do you see the job developing?



- How do you feel about that?
- Tell me, why do you think that happened?
- What do you think you could do differently next time?
- Check your understanding and paraphrase:
  - Have I got the right impression?
  - Do you mean that...?
- Invite the other person to respond and do not interrupt them.
- Ensure the other person knows you understand their views, feelings, position etc.
- Be ready for reactions – these could be any number of emotions from upset to anger or the individual may become quiet and withdrawn. It may be useful to take a break in the conversation to give individuals time to calm down or reflect.
- Keep it professional – don't let the conversation become like one between a parent and a child.

#### Moving On

- Where are we now?
- What do we need to do to resolve this?
- What is our new understanding and how we go forward from here?
- What happens next?

#### Reviewing

- Set a SMART target for change in behaviour or situation.
- Review regularly until there is evidence of change in performance and/or behaviour.



## Annex D – Guidance for conducting a moderation panel

Once a performance mark has been provisionally agreed by the job holder and the line manager, it is then taken to moderation. The objective of the moderation panel is to discuss and appropriately challenge the job holder's performance marking and ensure consistency across a cohort of staff.

This guidance note outlines the key principles and best practice recommended to deliver the moderation process effectively and consistently.

### Performance Differentiation

1. Departments should assess the performance of their SCS absolutely against their own objectives, and assign each individual a 'top', 'achieving' or 'low' mark.
2. There is no forced distribution but as with any normal large organisation, we would expect there to be a bell curve of performance differentiation, with the largest proportion of SCS in each department falling in the middle box ('achieving') and the small proportion in the bottom box ('low').

### Performance Assessment

3. It is recommended best practice that:
  - an employee's performance assessment is entirely **evidence based**; and
  - this evidence base is the sole determinant of the individual's assigned performance marking.
4. The purpose of the moderation meeting is to allow managers to review performance evidence, check for consistency across the peer group, and challenge performance markings where necessary.
5. Moderation panels must use the following criteria to come to judgements on performance groups:

Assessment of performance against objectives, including:

- the leadership behaviours exhibited in the achievement of objectives, reference to the Civil Service Leadership Statement to support evidence will be key;
- an assessment of the management of resources. Wherever possible finance professionals should attend moderation panels to provide professional insight on the degree to which job holders have demonstrated sound financial management;
- job weight. All other things being equal, individuals who perform well in bigger jobs should be ranked ahead of individuals who perform well in smaller jobs; and



- the degree to which the job holder has contributed to the Civil Service as part of the wider corporate community, including contributing to the running, performance and reputation of the Civil Service, leadership communication and fostering an ethos of volunteering.

In addition, the following conditions will apply for performance group distributions:

- if an individual does not meet their finance/efficiency objective then they cannot be ranked higher than in the 'achieving' performance group
- an individual can only be placed in the "top" performance group if they have exceeded at least one finance/efficiency objective.

### **Further Guidance**

6. Guidance on how to conduct moderation panels for SCS is very similar to that provided for the delegated grades. For further information you may wish to approach your HR Director or HR Business Partner who will be supporting you with your senior performance discussions.