Registers of Scotland

RoS Board

9th/10th March 2026

Civil Service People Survey (CSPS) update

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to update RoS Board on the key data from the CSPS 2025 and the follow up plan to address findings from the results.

2. As this is a paper for noting RoS Board are asked to note the contents of the report and intended next steps.

Background

3. The 2025 CSPS ran between 23 September and 21 October and had an 87% response rate which was an increase from 83% in 2024. This met the KPI of reaching a response rate of over 80%. Our rate was equal to 11th out of 102 participating organisations across the Civil Service.

4. At the December 2025 RoS Board, the Director of People and Operational Services gave an initial summary of the headline data coming from the CSPS which had just been released. This summary included that:

a. We have maintained our Engagement Index (EI) at 67% which is our highest level since CSPS began in 2009. Our latest EI is 2% above the Civil Service benchmark of 65% which meets our KPI.
b. In line with our typical pattern, the Directorate that includes Operational Services has the lowest EI of our four Directorates however when looking only at Operational Services the EI rose by 1% to 65%
c. We have maintained our percentage positive results for three of the main themes: My Work, My Team and Learning and Development. There have been small decreases across five themes, with organisation objectives and purpose having the biggest decrease (-3%) while the Pay and Benefits theme was the only one to see an increase (+4%). None of these changes were statistically significant.

5. The Board were also reminded of the three current themes for the current RoS wide action plan which are: how you are treated, how you learn and how you progress.

6. Since the December 2025 update, in depth analysis has been carried out on the CSPS results and comments. We also reviewed the reports from the 2025 Investors in People accreditations including the recent We Invest in Wellbeing reaccreditation which resulted RoS reaching the Platinum level of accreditation. This analysis has informed our approach to action planning.

CSPS *Further analysis*

7. Analysis of the 487 free-text responses to the question about the one change colleagues most want RoS to make in the next 12 months revealed nine key themes:

a. **Training & Development:** Colleagues want wider access to role-specific learning and more cross-training; continued calls for Grow Our Own programmes to develop in-house talent.
b. **Communication & Involvement:** Desire for earlier, clearer communication about changes and opportunities to raise concerns before decisions are taken.
c. **Systems / IT Tools:** Ongoing dissatisfaction with current tools; requests for fewer, more efficient, better-tested systems.
d. **Promotion & Recruitment:** Concerns about fairness, consistency, and the use of temporary promotions.
e. **AI/automation:** Mixed feelings - excitement about potential benefits alongside concerns about job security, environmental impact and output quality.
f. **Pay and benefits**: Ongoing frustration with delayed pay rises, cost-of-living pressures, and fairness of the DDAT pay supplement approach.
g. **Workload and targets:** Continued worries about perceived unrealistic expectations, stretch goals and individual targets
h. **4-day working week:** Some colleagues remain keen to trial a shorter working week.
i. **Working from outside the UK:** Ongoing interest in opportunities to work abroad for short periods.

Most of these themes have been seen in previous CSPS analysis except the theme around AI/automation which is new.

8. Benchmarking results place RoS in the top or second quartile for all themes and indexes when compared to the 102 Civil Service Organisations. More detail can be found in **appendix 1.**

RoS Wide action planning - focus for 2026

9. Since 2020 we have produced a RoS wide action plan to support the actions coming from the analysis. The actions on the plan can be ones that are achievable within a year, but many actions require multiple years to implement and embed. With the overall RoS results not showing any major changes from 2024 it was decided that the current themes (how you are treated, how you learn and how you progress) are still relevant, with some new actions proposed against these themes. Through the analysis of the questions and free text comments, we have decided to include a fourth theme around ‘how you experience change.’ These themes will be tested with colleagues at the all-colleague webinar on 24 February. An updated action plan will follow.

10. Alongside the RoS wide plan, we will:

a. Develop actions responding to free text themes.
b. Continue targeted HR support to selected teams with clusters of low scores or of declining scores.
c. Ensure managers complete local action planning.

Wider Assurance

11. The data from the CSPS is used to provide assurance on the impact of our people strategy. Within our people delivery plan, which underpins our strategy, we have a range of health measures that are tracked through the CSPS. We will continue to review the data to track progress against our people outcomes.

12. Currently the CSPS is a once-a-year assurance tool. However, we have other approaches, such as the mandatory People Pulse survey, that act as assurance throughout the year where we can track progress against the wider people strategy. The People Pulse survey will run three times this year in January, April and July and will track EI (engagement index), PERMA (a wellbeing index, which is also measured in the CSPS) and our own Performance Index. This year we have also included one-off questions to collect data on topical areas throughout the year.

Future of CSPS

13. Cabinet Office have been reviewing the future of the CSPS and are now procuring a new platform which is expected to include:

a. Streamlined annual employee experience survey.
b. Optional pulse survey capabilities.

Timelines are still to be finalised. RoS will continue to monitor developments.

Conclusion

14. The existing themes for the RoS wide action plan will carry forward into 2026-27, with the addition of a new theme on how colleagues experience change.

15. Common themes from the comments will be acted upon either through the action plan or through direct responses on RoSnet. Support will also be given to three identified teams/clusters of teams and local action planning will take place across the organisation.

16. The CSPS results along with IIP assessments, and the People Pulse survey will continue to be used as an assurance tool to ensure people activities are having the desired impact.

17. The RoS Board is asked to note the content of this paper.

Colleague Experience Manager
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Appendix 1: Benchmark against other 102 Civil Service organisations for all themes and indexes

Theme/factor	2025 RoS score	2024 change	Civil service average	RoS ranking (102 orgs)
Engagement Index	67	0	65	30=
Proxy Stress Index (lower is better)	23	0	27	11=
PERMA Index	75	0	74	31=
My work	84	0	82	21=
Organisational objectives and purpose	89	-3	83	23=
My manager	80	-1	78	27=
My team	83	0	82	38=
Learning and development	56	0	54	39=
Inclusion and fair treatment	85	-2	80	13=
Resources and workload	83	-2	75	10=
Pay and benefits	66	+4	43	7
Leadership and managing change	56	-1	53	39=