Government Statistical Service

Government Statistician Group

GSS People Plan

April 2019 to March 2024

RECRUITMENT

DEVELOPMENT

COLLABORATION

LEADERSHIP

DIVERSE TALENT

FOREWORD

The work done by the UK Statistical Community is more important than ever. Economic, social and political changes need our analysis to help the people of the UK better understand the world around us, giving opportunity for informed choices and the ability to reach better decisions. To achieve this, the GSS needs skilled people from diverse backgrounds drawing from a variety of experiences, sharing ideas and networking. By growing our deep expertise and broadening skills as a profession we will grow and develop and become leaders within and outside of government.

I am pleased to introduce and endorse this GSS People Plan. The plan will aid both individuals and the GSS as a whole in building increased capability and a more inclusive working culture. It provides clarity about the strategic direction of the GSS and GSG profession and will allow us to set priorities to achieve the aspirations set out in the plan.

This plan links directly to the Better Statistics, Better Decisions Strategy which was launched in 2014. Part of the strategy involved providing you with the skills and tools necessary to perform your jobs and maximise your potential while developing a diverse, inclusive, capable and resilient workforce within the Statistics Profession. This People Plan aims to tackle the challenges set out by this objective.

The Civil Service has many professions and to ensure consistency we have used the Profession's Best Practice Frameworks six essential foundations to align our aspirations. These are: Governance, Leadership, Strategic Workforce Planning, Standards and Competencies, Curriculum and Qualifications, and Networks. We have used these essential foundations to identify our short, medium and long term goals. Achieving these will bring about the significant change required to increase the professional 'offer' available from our community and will help in strengthening our profession across government.

The aspirations have clear links to the work of the wider Analysis Function, which supports the Civil Service's analytical professions, and we will encourage and promote collaboration with our colleagues.

For departmental Heads of Profession, I need your support to help embed this plan and be the ambassadors for the GSS. You are responsible for building the capability of your people and monitoring progress by regularly reviewing the progress of your teams in line with the goals of this plan.

As statisticians, I need you to be an advocate of this plan and be committed to developing your own capability. I encourage you to actively get involved by volunteering for the task and finish groups which will be formed to help achieve the priorities of this plan.

Over the next five years, I believe that this plan will bring about the change needed to help you grow and develop, allow you to be proud of who you are and what you do, build your identity within the profession, across the Analysis Function and wider government to deliver better outcomes for the UK.

**John Pullinger
National Statistician**

INTRODUCTION

GSS/GSG - Who we are and what we do

The Government Statistical Service (GSS) is the community of people involved in, and supporting, the production of official statistics in the UK. It includes people that are 'badged' statisticians, making them members of the Government Statistician Group (GSG) i.e. the statistics profession, and others who are not badged or may be in a different profession.
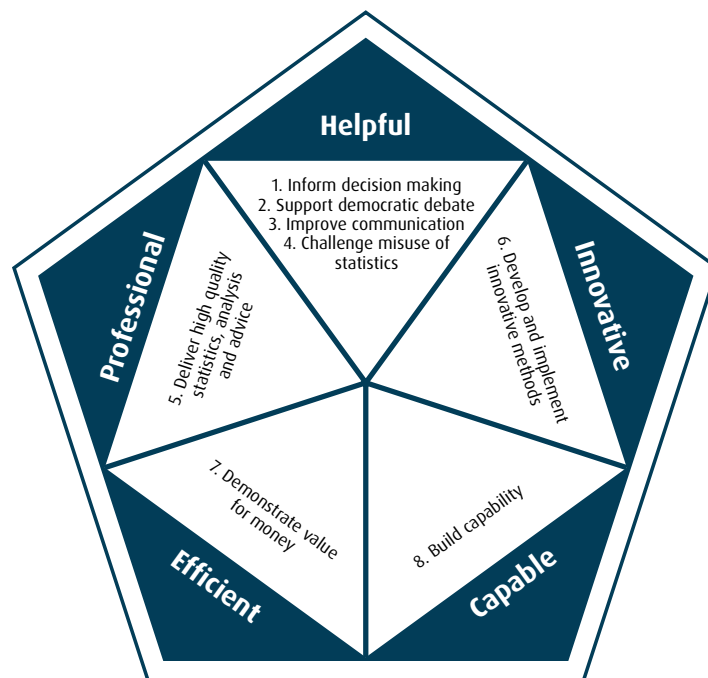
The GSG profession is one of seven government analytical professions that together form part of the Analysis Function (AF). We provide evidence and data for those making decisions on policy and operationally.

The GSG profession is made up of approximately 1750 civil servants who have been 'badged' in recognition of their statistical knowledge, skills and experience. We work in a range of specialist, policy, analytical and operational roles. We undertake analysis and provide evidence to support operational delivery and to inform policy decisions.

We fulfil an important role as an intelligent supplier and customer for statistics in government.

It is the breadth and depth of expertise that makes working in statistics in government unique to the GSS/GSG and that government relies on every day to provide the important evidence and analysis that underpins its work.

Our greatest asset is our people. We aim to maximise all our people's potential regardless of their sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation disability, faith, age or socio-economic backgrounds through the aspirations of this plan. Through our GSG members, and the wider GSS community, government is able to access the vital skills, knowledge and expertise that will enable the **Better Statistics, Better Decisions (BSBD) strategy*** to be realised.

Helpful
1. Inform decision making
2. Support democratic debate
3. Improve communication
4. Challenge misuse of statistics

Professional
5. Deliver high quality statistics, analysis and advice

Innovative
6. Develop and implement innovative methods

Efficient
7. Demonstrate value for money

Capable
8. Build capability

*To be reviewed when BSBD strategy is renewed in late 2019

What is the GSS People Plan?

This GSS People Plan supports the 'Better Statistics, Better Decisions' (BSBD) Strategy launched in 2014. It covers parts of the wider GSS community and specific areas just for GSG members.

The GSS People Plan sets out our aspirations for GSS/GSG against six essential foundations. These are the six recognised strands of the professions best practice framework (See fig. 1) used by professions across government to assess their maturity. Using this framework will give assurance to the National Statistician of how the people capability strand of GSS strategy will be delivered by ensuring the GSS has the right skills and capability now and into the future.

The People Plan is owned by the GSS Careers team based in ONS' Knowledge, Learning and Capability team on behalf of the National Statistician. Work is overseen and prioritised by the GSS People Committee via its two steering groups, various task and finish groups and an iterative action plan. The People Committee will report on progress bi-annually to Heads of Profession and the National Statistician.

Who is it for?

The People Plan is for all the GSS community. There are some elements that will only be relevant to badged members of GSG, this is shown clearly within the plan by italic text.
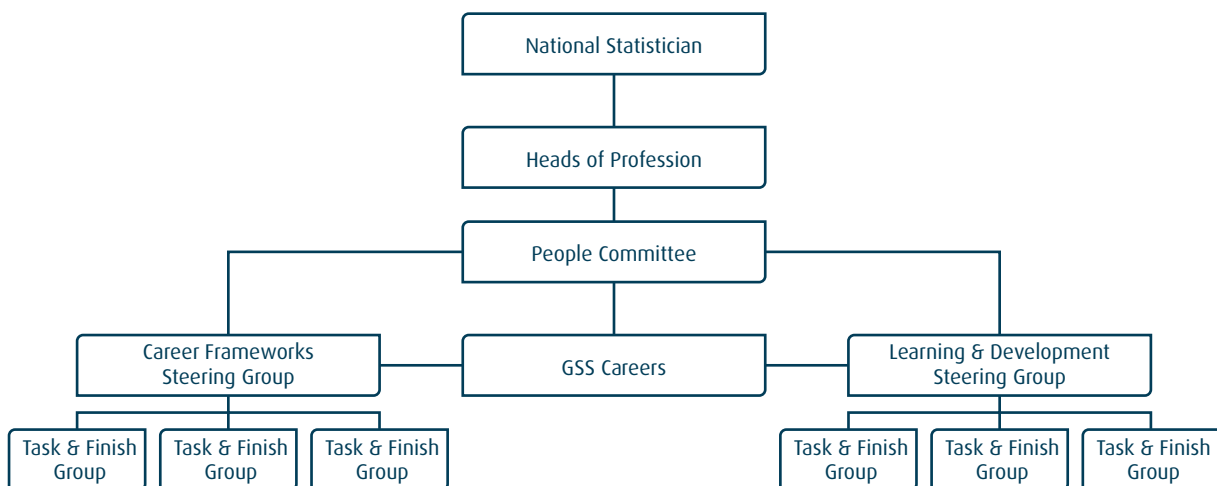

GOVERNANCE

LEADERSHIP

STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLANNING

Professions

Civil Service Workforce Plan

STANDARDS AND COMPETENCIES

CURRICULUM AND QUALIFICATIONS

NETWORKS

Fig. 1 :The framework supports continuous development and consistency across the professions

Ownership of the GSS/GSG People Plan

The Senior Responsible Owner of this plan is the Head of ONS' Knowledge, Learning and Capability Team.

The GSS People Committee, our senior level, cross department committee for people capability issues, is responsible for the strategic direction and prioritising delivery of the plan, for regularly reviewing progress and providing the line of sight to Heads of Profession (HoPs).

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Implementation of the GSS/GSG People Plan

The People Plan has been intentionally kept at a high level. It provides an overarching framework which can be adapted and supported in departments to meet their own needs, but the plan can only be achieved with the support of you, the GSS community and GSG members.

What's in it for me?

The GSS People Plan provides clarity to the GSS community and GSG professionals on how people capability will be delivered. It demonstrates the commitment from the National Statistician and HoPs to supporting and developing you, and of rewarding careers.

It commits to evolving our approach and doing more in areas such as loans and secondment, the effective management of our most talented people, developing a more diverse and inclusive culture and provision of flexible career pathways. It shares and provides assurance enabling alignment across government.

Elements of the ideas captured are aspirational but form the basis of our drive to improve 'the offer' to wider GSS and GSG members.

We want this GSS People Plan to inspire more of you to recognise the benefits of being part of the GSS/GSG and the opportunities it presents.

We have worked closely with departmental HoPs, your colleagues across the civil service through the GSS People Committee and the Steering Groups to ensure we provide a professional GSS People Plan that reflects what you, in both GSS and GSG, want.

What does the GSS People Plan expect of you?

The GSS People Plan requires:

● You to be committed in keeping your skills and knowledge up to date.

● Leaders to actively encourage participation in the Task and Finish Groups, Steering groups and the GSS People Committee to support and achieve the aspirations and goals for each of the workstreams.

● Individuals to contribute to the work of the Task and Finish Groups to help achieve the goals.

● Your departments to support each other with recruitment, loans and secondments.

● You to be an advocate and champion the GSS community and the statistics profession

● You to share your experiences and your successes.

Aims

To develop our people to be the best they can be, supporting individuals, managers and departments to build professional capability, aligning with **Better Statistics, Better Decisions**.

Aspirations

To provide a suite of products and interventions that support the building of professional capability both organisationally and individually to fully support the delivery of Better Statistics, Better Decisions by focussing on six key work streams recognised as 'professional' best practice:

- **Governance** – the roles and responsibilities, and decision-making processes within a profession that help achieve the profession's objectives

- **Leadership** – the accountabilities of the Leadership (i.e. departmental Heads of Profession and senior leaders) within the profession

- **Strategic Workforce Planning** – the process for professions to understand and identify the future skills, numbers and shape of their workforce

- **Standards and competencies** – defining the skills, knowledge and behaviours required within the profession

- **Curriculum and qualifications** – the recommended learning and development activities to enable professionals to build the skills, knowledge and behaviours required

- **Networks** – how the profession communicates and builds relationships with professional bodies and external partners.

Goals and Actions

We have produced a set of goals** which demonstrate how we will achieve our aspirations* for each of these workstreams. The goals have indicative short, medium and long-term timescales to enable us to monitor and track our progress .

From these goals the People Committee and Steering Groups will produce an action plan that will set out and prioritise how we plan to bring about these changes to achieve our aspirations and goals.

The aspirations and goals will be reviewed to ensure they remain current and relevant and will be updated annually. The action plan will be the iterative work plan of the People Committee which due to the need to be regularly updated won't be published but will be available from GSS.careers@ons.gov.uk if anyone wishes to view it.

*The aspirations can be found in Table 1

**A summary of GSS Goals can be found in Table 2

TABLE 1 – ASPIRATIONS

Workstream	Our aspirations – what good looks like in the statistics profession
Governance	
	Clear and effective governance, through task and finish groups, steering groups and GSS People Committee to HoPs providing timely decision-making at the right level.
	Clear and visible links to the Analysis Function.
Leadership of the profession	
Statistics and policy engagement	*GSG HoPs and members understand their role as leaders in the statistics profession, are deployed in the policy cycle at the right time and are proactive, identifying where they can add value, responding in a timely manner with professional and effective advice in a user-friendly format.*
	*The skills, knowledge and expertise of the statistics profession are recognised, understood and used effectively by Ministers and other leaders to support government decision making enabling **Better Statistics, Better Decisions**.*
	Senior Statisticians will know their community and support their most talented.
	Senior leaders act as role models to promote and support a diverse and inclusive workforce.
Raising the profile and building pride	*Statisticians are proud of their statistical background.*
	Statistics input is embedded in the policy cycle and in operational delivery.
	HoPs are ambassadors for the profession and feel supported by members who in turn feel valued for their contribution. New talent is motivated to pursue a career in GSG.

TABLE 1 – ASPIRATIONS (continued)

Workstream	Our aspirations – what good looks like in the statistics profession
Strategic workforce planning Attract and Retain through:	
Employee Offer	*A clear and competitive reward offer for specialists across GSG.* *Members understand the tangible and subtle benefits to being a badged member.* *Access to good quality people data and information from exit interviews, used strategically to improve recruitment and retention.* *Interaction with other analytical professions to ensure workforce planning takes account of other professions to maximise and complement the value of Analysis Function, not compete against each other.*
Talent management and leadership	*A clear succession plan for identified critical roles is held and regularly reviewed and updated.* *Good knowledge transfer across the profession and function, and the ability to source and replace lost/diminishing specialist skills.* *A culture that attracts, develops, retains and engages a diverse population across the profession through inclusivity.* *The statistics profession is well represented in the Senior Civil Service (SCS).* *The profession is able to attract, develop and retain talented individuals with the right skills and leadership capabilities for now and the future.* *Active promotion of all opportunities via social media, regular outreach work and direct sourcing of opportunities for GSG members to make lateral moves between departments.* *Recruitment standards and processes will be consistent between departments and for external recruitment and will ensure growth in our diversity.* *Statistical leaders live the values of the leadership statement, so it is embedded across the statistics profession using data from the People Survey to assess success.* *Leadership offer identifies talent and develops appropriate interventions and support for leaders and statisticians.*
Loan, secondment and interchange	*GSG members are able to move seamlessly across departments and temporarily between sectors to upskill, learn new skills and strengthen existing skills to support their Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and to increase the number of career options available to them.*
Diversity and Inclusion	*The GSG profession is diverse and inclusive with membership reflecting society in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual-orientation, disability and socio-economic background.* *We are an exemplar for the Civil Service Talent Action Plan.*
Mentoring	*The GSG profession recognises the benefits of mentoring, promoting best practice, ensuring access to resources and a consistent mentoring offer across the membership.* *The GSG profession recognises and rewards the valuable contribution made by mentors in target areas such as diversity, CPD and professional career framework.*

TABLE 1 – ASPIRATIONS (continued)

Workstream	Our aspirations – what good looks like in the statistics profession
Standards and competencies	
Professional career framework	All members understand the GSG professional career framework which can be found on the GSS website, and it is used by all leaders in recruitment and performance management activity. Professional career frameworks are clearly signposted and movement across other professions and functions are understood.
Professional competencies	The Professional Competencies are regularly reviewed, kept current and relevant.
Badging	All members of GSG badged at the point of entry. A central databank of badged membership.
Assessor Training	All assessors to be trained to a consistent and agreed standard for both GSS run and departmental recruitment.
Success profiles	Success Profiles embedded into the recruitment process to enable the GSG to improve the performance and diversity of its workforce. Assurance and effective evaluation of materials and recruitment standards. Independent monitoring of recruitment standards and provision of management information.
Curriculum and qualifications	
Capability and skills	GSG members have the right skills, knowledge and expertise, and are able to deliver against the government's priorities and meet their department's business needs, promoting the value of analysis within their profession and beyond. GSG members are able to access support and training to enable them to progress in their careers, irrespective of whether working in specialist, policy or leadership roles. GSS community (including apprentices) are able to access the appropriate professional learning and development, to support them via the GSS Learning Academy, Good Practice Team and other sources to aid them in a wide variety of roles within the GSG, GSS, wider Analysis Function and further across government.
Networks	
Collaborating and networking	Effective Networking opportunities across the statistics profession.
Profession outreach	The networks are self-organising and self-sustaining and include other professions.

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TABLE 2 – SUMMARY OF HIGH-LEVEL GOALS

Workstream	Our goals – How do we achieve our aspirations?		
	6-12 months	**12 months – 2 years**	**2 – 5 years**
Governance			
	Effective governance giving clear line of sight from task and finish groups, steering groups, GSS People Committee through to HoPs. Clear and visible links to the Analysis Function.	HoPs and members approach committee and steering groups to suggest new areas to develop activity. Statistics profession contributes to AF plan for leadership of analysis in government.	Review regularly and apply changes swiftly. Governance of analytical professions is clear and understood.
Leadership of the profession			
Statistics and policy engagement	*Build further engagement with policy profession ensuring the voice of statistics is represented.* *Senior leaders support and promote 'A Brilliant Civil Service' vision.*	*Build relationships to pull together people capability issues across GSS.*	*Statisticians are accepted as experts and involved in policy making and decision making at an early stage.*
Raising the profile and building pride	*Develop a strategic communications and events plan.*	*Support events such as CS Live, with a clear articulation of the professional 'offer'.*	*Review and develop ideas continuously.*
Strategic workforce planning			
	Develop approach that models current and future demand (including Fast Stream) and feeds into AF. *Review data to ensure robust recruitment offer is supporting departments successfully.* *Review approach to recruitment and workforce planning.*	*Effective Strategic Workforce Planning that uses reliable data and is trusted by departments.* *Monitor demand and ensure future requirements are considered.*	*GSS to be seen as an exemplar profession feeding into the Analysis Function.*

TABLE 2 – SUMMARY OF HIGH-LEVEL GOALS (continued)

Workstream	Our goals – How do we achieve our aspirations?		
	6-12 months	12 months – 2 years	2 – 5 years
Strategic workforce planning Attract and Retain through:			
Employee Offer	*Clear articulation of Employee Offer to attract and retain talent.*		
Talent management and leadership	*Develop and launch GSG Talent Strategy to ensure that all individuals are developed to reach their potential and a pipeline of diverse talent is assured.* *Align to developing Analysis Function Talent Strategy.* *Embed the Civil Service Leadership Statement.* *Promote cross government talent programmes as talent development routes for our most talented G6/7 and SCS1/2 leaders.* *Review entry point for Students following successful completion of 1-year placement.*	*Understand the professional talent landscape and each individual's aspirations allowing for appropriate talent interventions.* *Make changes to meet changing demand and future skills requirements.* *Promote and contribute to AF masterclasses for GSG professionals.* *Assure the talent pipeline for effective succession planning.* *Expand professional offer across GSG in a consistent manner creating opportunities for all with transparency.* *Sandwich and summer student placements in all depts with a GSG presence.*	*GSG to be seen as an exemplar profession as per the Civil Service Talent Action Plan.*
Loan, secondment and interchange	*Explore the development of a portal to host opportunities.*	*Promote and embed the portal.*	*Review, evaluate and continuously improve.*
Diversity and Inclusion (D&I)	*Develop D&I approach for GSG linking with AF.*	*Expand offer across AF professions.* *Increase diverse population within GSG.* *Develop a best practice – ways of working in GSG profession.*	*High Awareness of diversity data.*
Mentoring		*Develop a GSG mentoring scheme exploring link to loans/ secondment portal.*	*Recognised for having an exemplar mentoring scheme.*
Success Profiles	*All departments to recognise the value of using success profiles.*	*Continuous review of Success Profile practice.*	*Review for consistency, accessibility and best practice.*

TABLE 2 – SUMMARY OF HIGH-LEVEL GOALS (continued)

Workstream	Our goals – How do we achieve our aspirations?		
	6-12 months	**12 months – 2 years**	**2 – 5 years**
Standards and competencies			
Professional career framework	Clear articulation of the GSG 'career' offering to those outside of the profession helping attraction.	Communications campaign to promote and embed.	Review to keep current and anticipate future requirements.
Professional competencies	Clear guidance published.	Commission review of professional competencies to ensure that they remain current and consider future skills requirements. Consider 'associate' membership of GSG for level 4 apprentices and others in stats producing/supporting roles.	
Badging	All departments to have clear guidance on badging process and standards.	Process and standards for badging to be applied.	Continuous review of process.
Success profiles	Embed success profiles into professional career framework. Ensure G7 recruitment standards are reviewed and refreshed. Review and evaluate recruitment standards to provide assurance.	Further develop role profiles to reflect skills for the future identifying blend of skills, knowledge and experience through success profiles.	Continuous review and refinement of role and success profiles.

TABLE 2 – SUMMARY OF HIGH-LEVEL GOALS (continued)

Workstream	Our goals – How do we achieve our aspirations?		
	6-12 months	12 months – 2 years	2 – 5 years
Curriculum and qualifications			
Capability and skills	Learning pathways embedded and forming part of regular development discussions. *Continued review and development of GSG mandatory learning: Induction; Foundation; Career Checkpoint.* Develop statistics for policy learning. Review and update CPD log in line with CS behaviours.	Horizon scanning for future skills and capability requirements.	Review, evaluate and continuously improve the offer.
Apprenticeships	Promote benefits of professional accreditation increasing uptake of conversion of existing staff. Establish Level 6 Data Science degree entry point into GSG.	Review standards. Recognised by all departments as an entry point into the profession. Create a diverse talent pipeline to encourage apprentice growth within the profession.	

TABLE 2 – SUMMARY OF HIGH-LEVEL GOALS (continued)

Workstream	Our goals – How do we achieve our aspirations?		
	6-12 months	12 months – 2 years	2 – 5 years
Networks			
Collaborating and networking	Explore new collaboration and networking opportunities. Enhancing links with Best Practice and Impact team.	Promote profession through external outreach particularly apprenticeship entry. Promote opportunities for other professions to come into Statistics to job shadow. Regional GSG events – regional hubs collaborating. Build networks to support strategic geographical communities.	Evaluate, monitor and develop ideas.
Profession outreach	Publicise external networking opportunities. Produce a GSG map – Better data on where our statisticians are and import content.		

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The goals from the GSS People plan feed into an Action Plan which has been developed using the feedback received from the departmental Heads of Professions (HOPs). The priorities in this Action Plan will be achieved by the various task and finish groups set up by the People Committee.

It will be available on request from GSS Careers.

They can be contacted at:

GSS.Careers@ons.gov.uk.

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                    People Committee
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Career Frameworks     GSS Careers     Learning & Development
 Steering Group                          Steering Group
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