

## **Good Governance and Civil Service Reform – call for evidence**

**The Public Administration Select Committee has issued an invitation to submit written evidence for its inquiry into Good Governance and Civil Service Reform. The deadline for submitting written evidence is noon on 14 January 2011.**

Speaking to civil servants last July the Prime Minister saw government moving “*into a post-bureaucratic age*”. He wanted to turn government on its head; taking power away from Whitehall and putting it into the hands of people and communities. He wanted to give people the power to improve the country and public services, through transparency, local democratic control, competition and choice.

Current circumstances also provide new pressures. The Spending Review has confirmed expectations of a significant cut in the size of the civil service, with reductions in administration budgets of around a third over four years. At the same time the Government has sought to push ahead with a reform agenda which has included greater decentralisation; public service reform in significant areas such as education; health and welfare; more transparency with the publication of the details of government expenditure online; and a drive for efficiency and economy with tight, central control of procurement and other “back-office” functions. As the Prime Minister asked in his July speech:

*The real question is: how can we achieve these aims when there is so little money?  
How can this circle be squared?*

His answer was “*reform – radical reform*”.

This has major implications for Whitehall. At the same conference, Francis Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office spoke about “*a new chapter of reform*”. He went on to describe the “Civil Service of 2020” as: smaller and more strategic; modern and flexible; high performing; less hierarchical and more innovative and able to deliver more efficiently and effectively itself and through others.

Successive governments have sought to reform the civil service. However, the continued need for reform – and the number of constantly recurring issues – is indicative, arguably, of a failure to deliver the promised transformation.

**The Committee would like to receive written evidence on the following issues in particular:**

- 1. What is meant by the term, “*post-bureaucratic age*” and what are its implications for good governance, for Whitehall Departments and for the wider civil service?**
- 2. Can the traditional ‘Whitehall’ model of civil service governance and accountability continue to function effectively in the post-bureaucratic age?**

3. **In what ways do civil service departments need to adapt to a post bureaucratic age, and in particular to the current Coalition Government's decentralisation agenda?**
4. **What should the aim of civil service reform be at a time of significant change and reducing administrative budgets?**
5. **How can such reform be realised and sustained?**

In addition, the inquiry seeks to determine a framework, or set of principles, within which the Civil Service can be effectively scrutinised and measured.

6. **Is it possible to establish a set of key principles of good governance?**
7. **Are these (below) the right elements for such principles? Can there be fewer or should others be included?**

**1. Accountability**

- a. Accountability to ministers, Parliament and to the public
- b. Propriety and ethics
- c. Transparency and openness

**2. Performance**

- a. Efficiency and value for money
- b. Strategic thinking and contingency planning
- c. Procurement and project management
- d. Use of IT

**3. Skills and structure**

- a. Recruitment and training
- b. Career and grade structure
- c. Knowledge management and external advice

**4. External relationships and customer focus**

- a. Relationship to civil society and local communities
- b. Citizens' experience of public services

8. **How can they be most clearly and usefully expressed?**
9. **How could they be made useful for the measurement and assessment of good governance?**

## How to respond

Responses should be submitted by **14 January 2011** by email to [pasc@parliament.uk](mailto:pasc@parliament.uk). If you do not have access to email, you may send a paper copy of your response to the Clerk of the Public Administration Select Committee, Committee Office, First Floor, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA.

Each submission should:

- be no more than 3,000 words in length;
- begin with a short summary in bullet point form;
- have numbered paragraphs; and
- be in Word format or a rich text format with as little use of colour or logos as possible.

Submissions should be original work, not previously published or circulated elsewhere, though previously published work can be referred to in a submission and submitted as supplementary material. Once submitted, your submission becomes the property of the Committee and no public use should be made of it unless you have first obtained permission from the Clerk of the Committee.

Please bear in mind that the Committee is not able to investigate individual cases.

The Committee normally, though not always, chooses to publish the written evidence it receives, either by printing the evidence, publishing it on the internet or making it publicly available through the Parliamentary Archives. If there is any information you believe to be sensitive you should highlight it and explain what harm you believe would result from its disclosure; the Committee will take this into account in deciding whether to publish or further disclose the evidence.

For data protection purposes, it would be helpful if individuals wishing to submit written evidence send their contact details in a covering letter or e-mail. You should be aware that there may be circumstances in which the House of Commons will be required to communicate information to third parties on request, in order to comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.