

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT: GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AGENDA

What is Transparency?

The Government has set out the need for greater transparency across its operations to enable the public to hold public bodies and politicians to account. This includes commitments relating to public expenditure, intended to help achieve better value for money.

The publication [‘The Coalition: our programme for Government’](#) set out the Government’s agenda for greater transparency across its operations so that the public could hold politicians and public bodies to account; to help achieve greater transparency in how central government spends public funds; to help to realise significant economic benefits by enabling businesses and non-profit organisations to build innovative applications and websites using public data; and to help deliver better value for money.

The Transparency Agenda as a whole is being overseen by the Public Sector Transparency Board, which has been established in the Cabinet Office. The Board is chaired by Francis Maude, the Minister for the Cabinet Office. The Board’s role will include providing support to departments as they deliver the Government’s transparency commitments.

As part of the Transparency Agenda, Government has made the following commitments with regard to procurement and contracting, as set out in the Prime Minister’s letter of 29th May 2010:

1. All new central Government ICT contracts to be published online from July 2010.
2. All new central Government tender documents for contracts over £10,000 to be published on a single website from September 2010, with this information to be made available to the public free of charge.
3. All new central government contracts to be published in full from January 2011 via the cross Government [Contract Finder database](#).

In addition to contract information, Departments are also obliged to release information on the salary of senior officials, departmental organograms, details of Business expenses and gifts, hospitality received, travel and meetings, and detailed Business Plans which are linked to a set of input and impact performance indicators.

These requirements apply to all central Government Departments including their agencies, all Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB), NHS bodies and Trading Funds. Departments are responsible for meeting these requirements. Separate requirements are in place for the wider public sector such as local authorities.

On 7th July 2011 the Prime Minister wrote again to Cabinet Ministers to celebrate these achievements and to maximise the benefits of transparency he announced that:

1. All government spending data will include plain English descriptions explaining the scope and purpose of every transaction, from September 2011.
2. Every department, working with the Cabinet Office Transparency team, will produce an action plan in November 2011 for improving the quality and comparability of data.

At the same time he announced the intention to publish on Departmental websites, from the end of September 2011, Government procurement card spend data for transactions above £500 in value.

A copy of the Prime Minister’s letter can be found [here](#).

How is the MOD responding to these requirements?

Procurement & Contracting

As described above, the Department is obligated to release certain information on procurement and contracting. Given the sensitive nature of some MOD procurement, there will inevitably be information contained within either the

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT: GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AGENDA

tender or contract documents which, if released into the public domain, could compromise National Security, the security of those who work for or with us, the capability and effectiveness of our Armed Forces, or the legitimate commercial interests of both the MOD and those we contract with.

The MOD has therefore agreed a number of concessions with the Efficiency Reform Group and Her Majesty's Treasury regarding the application of Transparency to MOD contractual activities. These concessions will be reviewed in October 2011 and include an exemption to publication of tenders and contracts for 'Warlike Stores' as defined in the EC Council List of Items Defining The Scope Of Article 346 of the Treaty for the Functioning of the European Union, and described on the [MOD website](#). This concession is in addition to those tenders and contracts which would normally be exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information Act (2000).

A full description of those items which come under this exemption and are therefore excluded from the Transparency data can be found [here](#).

The exclusion of a large part of MOD contract expenditure has led to an inevitable divergence between data published in *UK Defence Statistics* and that released under Transparency, and this will continue for the foreseeable future. More detail on how these differences impact on individual UKDS Tables can be found in the [Statistical Notice](#) which accompanies **Table 1.17** and **Table 1.17a**.

During 2010 the Government announced plans to publish a monthly-updated list of all financial transactional spending over £25,000 made by the Ministry of Defence and its family organisations as part of the Government's commitment to transparency within its business activities. The data can be found [here](#).

Further release of contracting and procurement data has followed, including:

- Since July 2010 all new central government ICT contracts have been published online.
- From September 2010 all new central government tender documents for contracts over £10,000 have been published on the MOD website, with this information being made available to the public free of charge.
- From January 2011 all new central government contracts have been published in full via the cross [Government Contract Finder](#) database.

Salaries of Senior Officials

The names, grades, job titles and pay rates for the most senior Civil Servants and NDPB officials have also been released under Transparency. The Senior Staff remuneration dataset which gives corresponding information on MOD civilian salaries of those working at Director level and above can be found [here](#).

Expenses

Along with other Government Departments, the Ministry of Defence now publishes the minutes of Senior Staff meetings with external organisations. In addition to publishing the hospitality received by our most senior Civil Servants, the Department also publishes details of the hospitality received by the most Senior Officers of the Armed Forces and Special Advisers on a quarterly basis.

A quarterly-updated list of gifts, hospitality received by ministers; travel undertaken and meetings between ministers in the Ministry of Defence and external organisations is also published and details can be found [here](#).

Departmental Organograms

Charts giving details of the top structure of the Department and its senior posts to Military 1* and Senior Civil Service Deputy Director (Pay Band 1) have been published. Supporting datasets can be found [here](#).

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT: GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AGENDA

MOD Business Plan

The MOD published its Business Plan on 8 November 2010 along with all other Government Departments. Refreshed 2011/12 business plans were published in May 2011 to reflect an updated assessment of when the Government will implement commitments set out in the Programme for Government.

The MOD Business Plan makes commitments to the publication of key data sets that will improve the transparency of the public service. At the same time, it commits to providing data that is of good quality so that it can be used for effective comparison, and to publishing this information in such a way so that it is as accessible as possible. In addition, departments are expected to work with data users to promote awareness of new data sets as they are published so that they become the focus of innovation and enterprise.

Department Business plans set out in detail the work of the Government, and include data such as financial information, Structural Reform Plans and department priorities.

The latest MOD Business Plan can be accessed [here](#).

In addition, Departments are required to produce a quarterly data summary. These summaries provide the latest data on indicators included in Departmental Business Plans as well as other published data and management information. This quarterly snapshot is designed to show how each department is spending its budget, the results it has achieved and how it is deploying its workforce.

[Monthly updates](#) on the implementation of the Structural Reform Plan element of the MOD Business Plan are also available on the MOD website.

Common Areas of Spend

This data aims to let the public compare MOD operations against other public and private sector organisations, by setting out the cost of common operational areas against common data standards. Here, departments have set out historical data from 2009/10 to form a baseline for future updates.

During the baseline year, few of the data standards above were available for consistent comparison across government as historical data has not always been prepared on a consistent basis. Departments have set out caveats and exceptions that explain how their data fits with the common standard and these are critical to understanding this data.

More detailed data, the caveats, definitions and supplementary information is available in [Annex A](#) of the Business Plan.

MOD publishes updates ([Quarterly Data Summaries - QDS](#)) to this information as part of its regular reporting of business plan data.

Input & Impact Indicators

Transparency is key to improved outcomes and productivity in public services. Public reporting of data promotes higher quality and more efficient services, choice and accountability. As part of the business plan Departments are required to publish information that will allow taxpayers to assess the efficiency and productivity of public services (in the form of input and impact indicators), holding them more effectively to account. The commitments in this section will be kept under continuous review. Figure 1 below provides the most recent set of indicators published in the Department's Annual Report and Accounts. A full list of input and impact metrics is provided in the [MOD Business Plan](#). More detailed data, caveats, definitions and supplementary information is available in [Annex A](#) of the Business Plan.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT: GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AGENDA

Figure 1: Input-Impact Indicators published in MOD Annual Report & Accounts 2010/11

Input		Impact	
Indicator	Data	Indicator	Data
Additional cost of operations in Afghanistan, per service person deployed	£340,947	Progress towards a stable and secure Afghanistan	88%
Additional cost of new equipment (urgent operational requirements) for operations in Afghanistan, per Service person deployed	£56,632	Number of Service personnel deployed to support civil agencies (e.g. police and fire service) during emergencies	3,241 ¹
Cost of standing military commitments/tasks and contingent operations per committed Service person	This is a new dataset and will not be reported until Quarter 2	Number of attaches and advisors deployed in support of conflict prevention and defence diplomacy activities	110 covering 143 countries
Average percentage by which the cost of the MOD equipment programme varies compared to forecasts in year	0.15%	Number of Service and MOD civilian personnel deployed on all operations in a year	New data set. Not available until 2012
Cost of Major force elements, per ship, per brigade, per aircraft (fixed wing), per helicopter	Ship: £28 million ² Brigade: Not available until Jul 11 Aircraft (fixed wing): £6.5 million ³ [Helicopters: Not available at this time, to be reported from Quarter 2]	Number of Force Elements (typically ships, aircraft or ground force sub units) showing critical or serious weakness against the total number of Force Elements for Strategy for Defence priorities	8 (30%) ⁴
Cost/Benefit ratio of the major change and efficiency programmes being undertaken by Defence	1 : 1.75 ⁵	Average number of months that the MOD equipment programme is delayed In year	0.39 months per project ⁶
Percentage of non-front line costs versus front line costs, split by service	New data set, to be reported from Quarter 2	Percentage of Service personnel that are deployable	92%
Direct personnel costs, per Service person	£49,000	Percentage change in filling skills top 3 areas where there are Insufficient trained service personnel to meet the specified requirements	Royal Navy: 9/12/47 Army: 31/46/62 RAF: 25/14/15
Direct personnel costs, per MOD civilian	£32,000	Percentage of Service personnel (split by Officers and Other Ranks) who are satisfied with Service life in general	Officers: 70% ⁷ Other Ranks: 57% ⁷
Defence Spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product	Not available until Quarter 2	Overall public favourability of the UK Armed Forces	88% ⁸

Notes

1. This figure includes those held at readiness, number covers the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011.
2. Frigate: £386m / 14, Destroyer: £142M / 5
3. Tornado: £722M/136, Typhoon: £615M/71
4. Defence attributes 27 Force Elements against Strategy for Defence priorities. Out of these 8 are reporting critical or serious weakness which represents 30%.
5. *For every £1 spent the MOD gains an additional £1.75.* This Cost Benefit Ratio (CBR) was calculated from data provided by programmes within Level 1 of the Defence Change Portfolio (DCP). The DCP has very recently been subsumed into the new Defence Transformation Portfolio, and so any future CBR will be calculated for spend to save programmes within Tier 1 of this new Portfolio.
6. Total net slippage of 15 months reported in-year against 38 projects.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT: GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AGENDA

7. Key Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) 2010 findings, from 31 Mar 2011 Report
8. Polling conducted Mar 11.

External Assistance

External Assistance is the term used by the MOD to cover a wide range of external manpower resources. It extends beyond traditional Management Consultancy to include other specialised services such as legal, accountancy, IT and estates specialist advice. The table below shows MOD expenditure on External Assistance during 2009/10 and 2010/11. These figures are normally held in the House of Commons Library however, in order to move the Transparency work forward, the Department is keen for these figures to be published more widely so appear for the first time in this supplement. From next year this table and the Input-Impact Indicators, shown on the previous page, will have their own table in the Departmental Resources section when an additional years worth of data will be available.

VAT exclusive at Current Prices (£ million)

	2009/10	2010/11
Total	78.54	25.781 ¹
Total by Category²	78.54	25.78
Strategy	7.46	1.30
Finance	13.06	5.03
Legal	5.67	2.24
HR & Training	1.82	0.60
Organization and Change Management	4.45	3.80
Marketing and Communication	0.81	0.01
Programme and Project Management	6.17	2.68
Technical	2.89	3.31
IT/IS	30.86	3.19
Property	3.15	3.45
Procurement	2.20	0.18
Total by Organisation	78.54	25.78
Core Organisation	71.45	23.37 ³
Central	24.26	5.38
Defence Estates	4.24	2.94
CJO	1.69	0.03
Defence Equipment & Support	22.48	6.83
Navy	0.36	0.81
Army	17.43	6.91
Air	1.00	0.47
Trading Funds	7.09	2.41
DSTL	1.72	0.42
Meteorological Office	1.33	0.11
Defence Support Group	2.20	1.45
Hydrographic Office	1.84	0.44

1. Because of restrictions on consultancy spend and the clearance process through the Cabinet Office for lengthy or high value contracts, some expenditure may not have been cancelled but merely deferred to a later year.
2. Categories are Cabinet Office standard for reporting External Assistance.
3. Figure excludes £0.182M of insurance brokerage advice for 2010/11.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT: GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AGENDA

Where can I find out more?

There are a number of useful websites containing reference material about the Government plans under the Transparency Agenda. These include:

- <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/Transparency/> - The Transparency Section on the MOD website details the programme of work underway by the Department and a full list of datasets released to date.
- http://www.ogc.gov.uk/policy_and_standards_framework_transparency.asp - The Office for Government Commerce website provides further information of plans to make available information relating to public sector procurement and contracting.
- <http://transparency.number10.gov.uk/> - The Prime Minister's website which includes the publication 'The Coalition: our programme for Government' which sets out the Government's agenda for greater transparency across its operations so that the public can hold politicians and public bodies to account.

Further work is underway to embed the principles of Transparency across the Department, including its Trading Funds. The principles and benefits will be included in plans and in letters of delegation. In addition, work is ongoing to identify additional classes of data and new datasets for publication. New datasets will, wherever possible, be published in reusable format, and with accompanying underlying data to help users understand the published dataset. New datasets will be clearly signposted on www.data.gov.uk.

Statistical Reports

The MOD is unable to publish the underlying raw datasets behind some statistical reports for data protection reasons, since it would be possible to identify individual service personnel and MOD civilians from the raw data. However, the wider data behind many MOD official statistics publications can be accessed in aggregate format via the MOD's Build Your Own Table statistical tool available at www.dasa.mod.uk.