



Cabinet Office

# Civil Service People Survey 2015

## Summary of Findings

September 2016, Analysis and Insight Team

# This report looks at key findings from the 2015 survey across five areas

## **1) Engagement, Theme Scores and Bullying and Harassment across priority groups**

Sets out the descriptive statistical analysis of how engagement, theme scores, career opportunities and respect varies across the four Talent Action Plan priority groups.

## **2) Regression analysis of Engagement scores across priority groups**

Provides a more sophisticated regression analysis to understand if differences in the priority groups' engagement scores are still present after controlling for other personal and job characteristics.

## **3) Comparing UK Civil Service results internationally and to the private and public sectors**

Assesses the progress of the UK Civil Service with regards to international counterparts and public and private sectors, using the data from questions which are worded similarly and therefore comparable.

## **4) Understanding the relationship between engagement, bullying and absenteeism**

Provides both descriptive statistical analysis, and more complex regression analysis to explore the relationship between engagement, bullying and absenteeism.

## **5) Summary of the Wellbeing scores**

Summarises the Wellbeing scores showing the distribution of the results of each of the questions. In addition shows the link between wellbeing and engagement data.

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# Section 1

Engagement, Theme Scores and Bullying and Harassment across priority groups

# Employee engagement is highest for the BAME group, and lowest for those with a disability or health condition

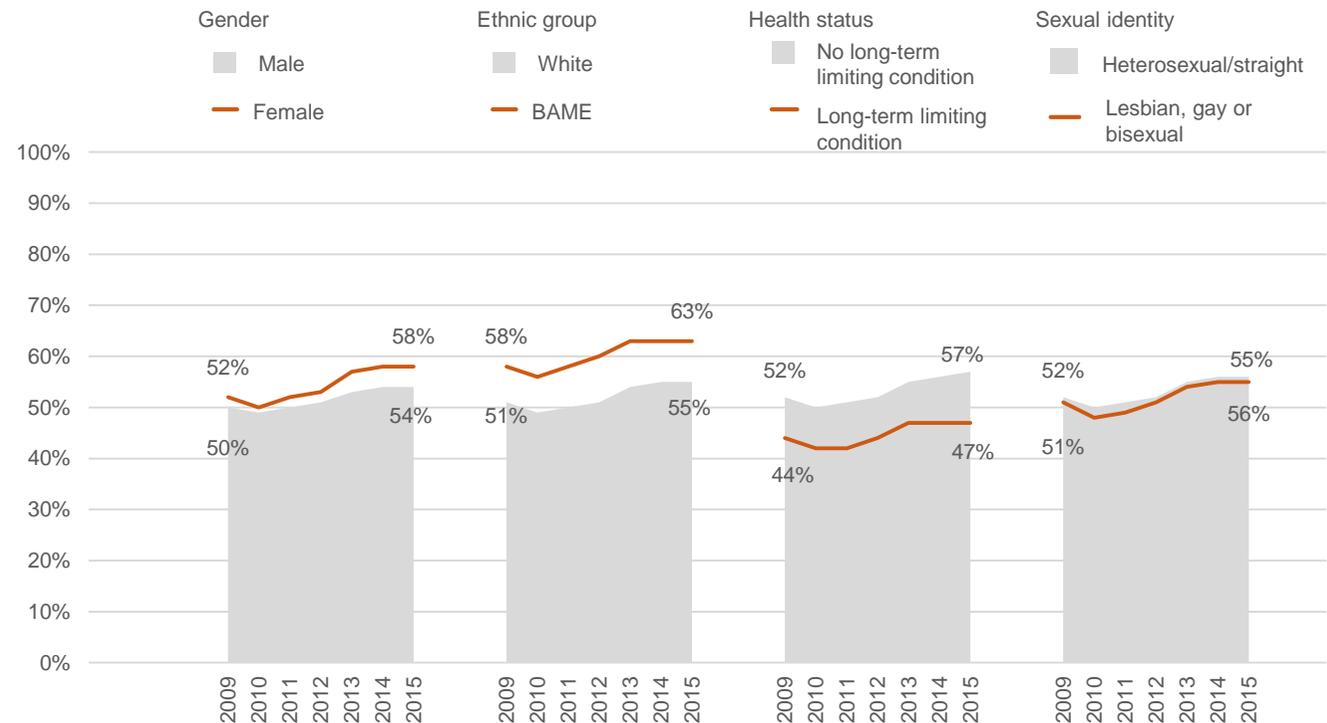
Alongside questions asking about our staff's perceptions and experiences of work, the Civil Service People Survey (CSPS) asks respondents for a number of personal characteristics. Almost 280,000 civil servants responded to the CSPS in 2015.

The chart below shows the employee engagement index for the four priority areas covered by the *Talent Action Plan* from 2009 to 2015.

Overall, the trends are unchanged from 2014:

- women are more engaged than men;
- staff from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background are more engaged than those from White backgrounds;
- staff with a long-term limiting condition are less engaged than others;
- there are minimal differences when looking at scores by sexual identity.

Engagement index for all respondents by the four *Talent Action Plan* priority areas, 2009-2015



# Differences in engagement scores hide variation by grade

The overall results for all respondents by the four priority groups mask important differences within these groups of interest.

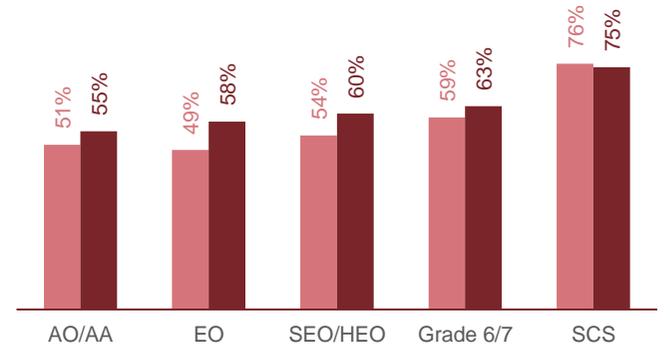
The results show that female respondents have higher levels of employee engagement than their male counterparts apart from in the Senior Civil Service.

Similarly, when looking at results by grade and ethnic group we see that junior staff from a BAME background are more engaged than their colleagues from a White background. However, in the Senior Civil Service BAME staff are less engaged.

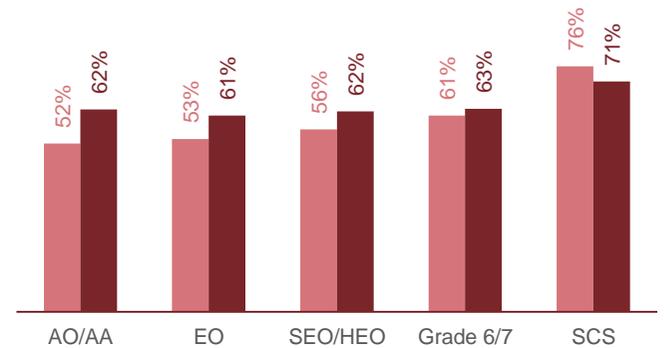
Staff with a long-term limiting illness, disability or health condition are less positive than their peers irrespective of grade.

Lesbian, gay or bisexual respondents are also less positive than heterosexual staff at all grades, although to a lesser extent.

Engagement index by grade and gender



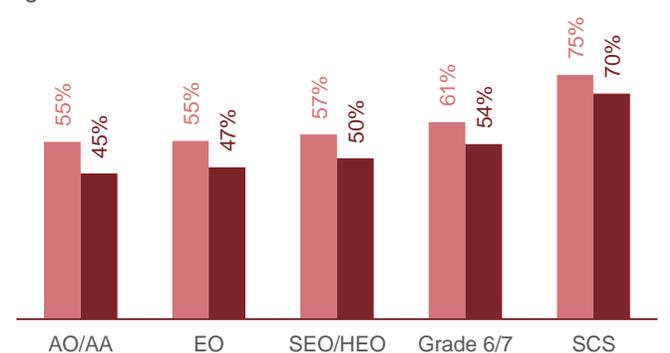
Engagement index by grade and ethnic group



Engagement index by grade and sexual identity



Engagement index by grade and health status



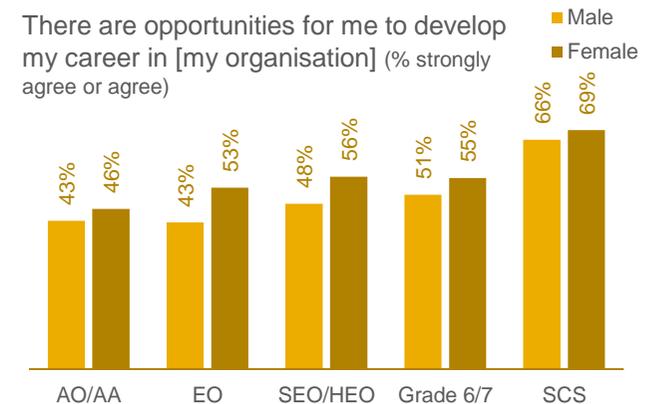
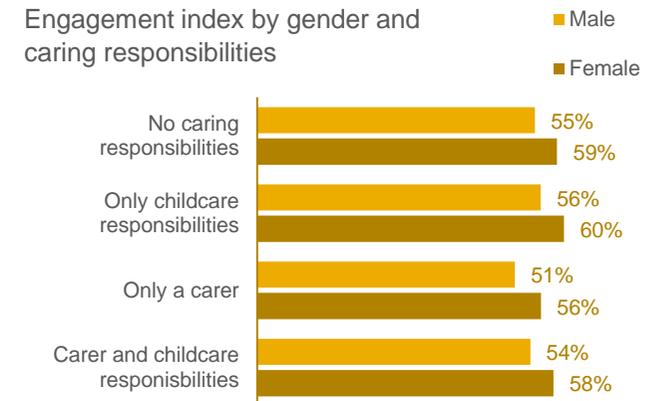
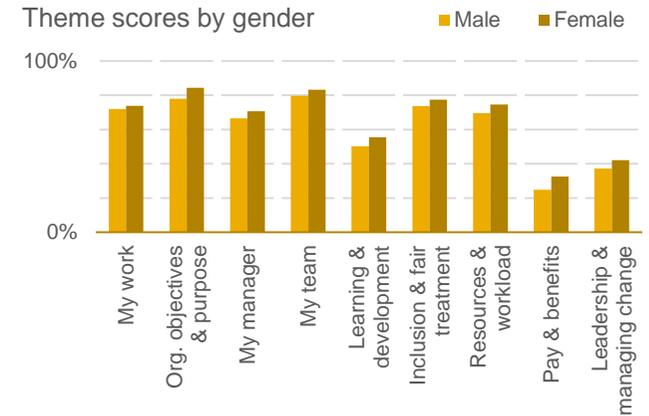
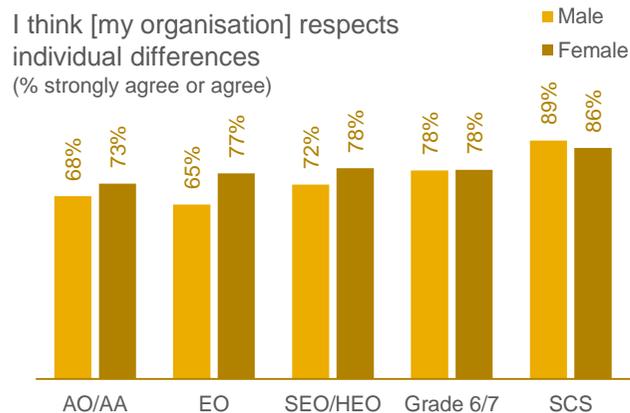
# Women are more positive about career opportunities across all grades

**Theme:** For each of the nine employee engagement driver themes female respondents are more positive than male respondents. The largest differences are for pay & benefits (32% to 25%) and organisational objectives & purpose (84% to 78%). The smallest difference is found in the my work theme where women score 74% and men 72%.

**Engagement:** Female respondents with caring responsibilities are more engaged than male carers. They are also more likely to have caring responsibilities.

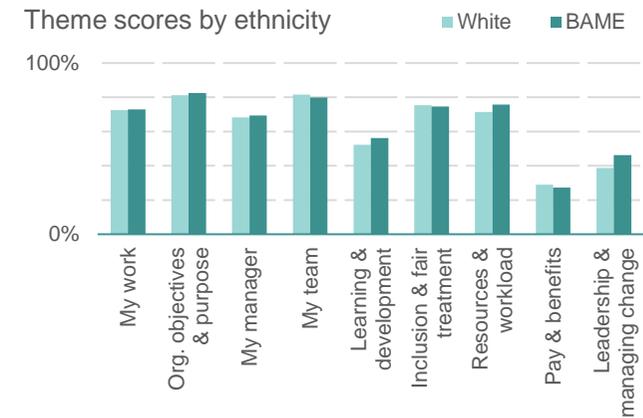
**Career opportunities:** At every grade women are at least three percentage points more positive than men about whether there are opportunities to develop their career. The largest difference is at the EO grade where women are ten percentage points more positive than men.

**Respect:** Women below Grade 6/7 are more likely to think that their organisation respects individual differences, and at Grade 6/7, 78% of both woman and men think their organisation respects individual differences. While both SCS men and SCS women are more likely to think their organisation respects individual differences than their junior colleagues, men are more positive than women (89% to 86%).

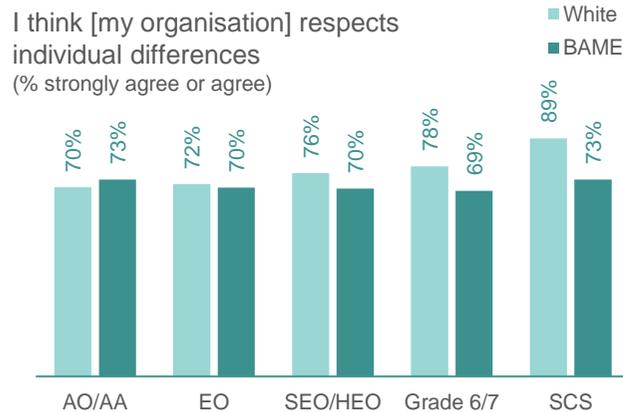
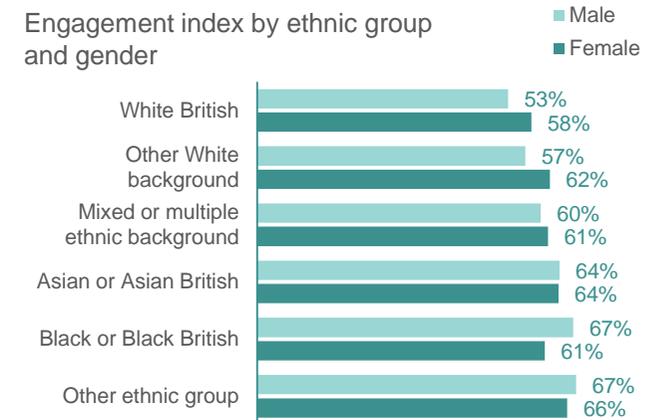


# SCS BAME staff are less likely to think their organisation respects individual differences

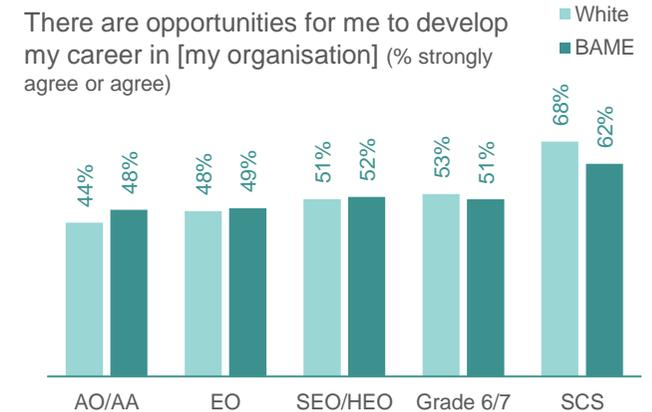
**Theme:** While Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff tend to be more engaged than those who identify as White, differences in the drivers of employee engagement tend to be smaller. For three themes the difference between BAME and White respondents is 4 percentage points or more – Learning & development (BAME: 56%, White: 52%), Resources & workload (BAME: 76%, White: 72%) and Leadership & managing change (BAME: 46%, White: 39%)



**Engagement:** When looking at ethnicity and gender we see that 'White' and 'Mixed ethnic' women are more engaged than men of the same ethnic groups. However, 'Black' or 'Other ethnic' women are less engaged than their male counterparts. There is no difference in engagement levels between male and female respondents from 'Asian' backgrounds.



**Career opportunities:** In junior grades (AO/AA, EO and SEO/HEO) BAME colleagues are more likely to say that there are opportunities to develop their career than White colleagues. However, in senior grades (Grade 6/7 and the SCS) BAME colleagues are less likely to say there are opportunities for them to develop their career.



**Respect:** BAME respondents in the EO grade and above are less likely to say they think their organisation respects individual differences. This gap increases with seniority, with the largest difference at SCS level (BAME: 73%, White: 89%).

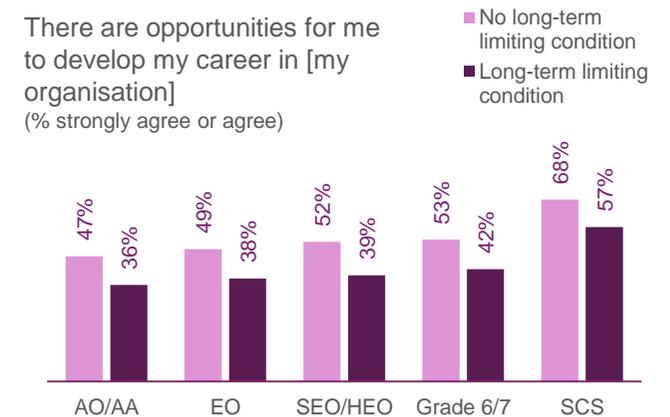
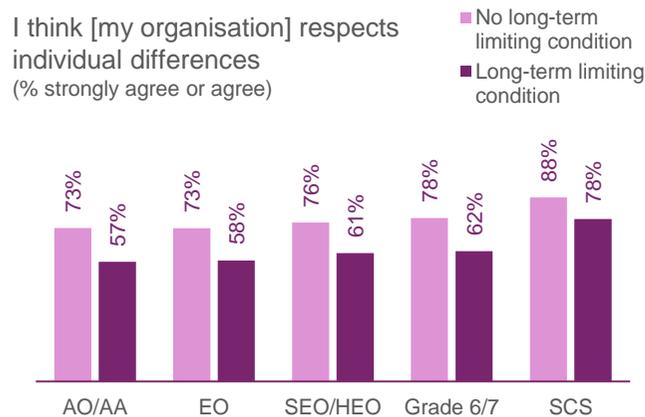
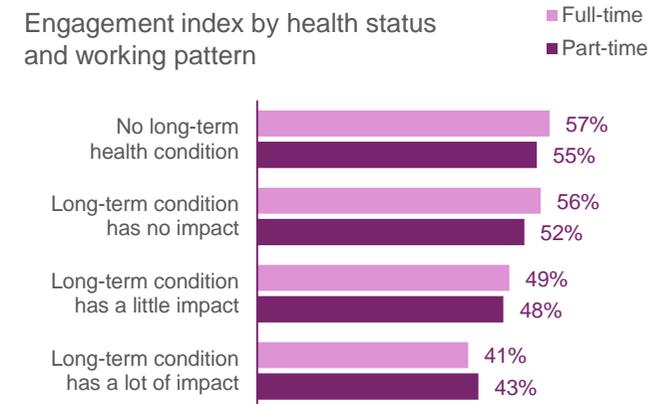
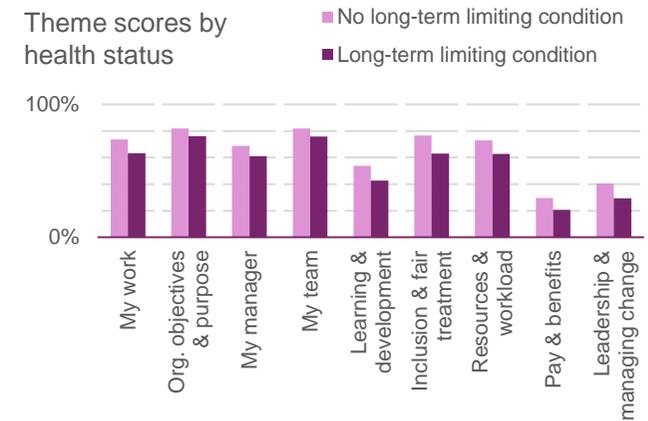
# Staff with a long-term limiting illness, disability or health condition are less positive than those without

**Theme:** Respondents with a long-term limiting illness, disability or health condition are less positive than their peers. Across the nine themes that drive levels of employee engagement the difference ranges from 6 percentage points (Organisational objectives and purpose and My team) to 14 percentage points (Inclusion and fair treatment).

**Engagement:** Respondents with a long-term limiting condition are more likely to work part-time (27% compared to 20% of all other respondents). When we look at the engagement index by health status and working pattern we only see small differences between full-time and part-time respondents.

**Career opportunities:** Respondents with a long-term limiting condition at all grades are less likely to believe there are opportunities to develop their career. The difference is at least ten percentage points at all grades.

**Respect:** One of the questions with the largest difference between respondents with a long-term limiting health condition and those without is “I think my organisation respects individual differences”. The difference in scores for this question is largest for AO/AA and Grade 6/7 where there is a 16 percentage points difference.



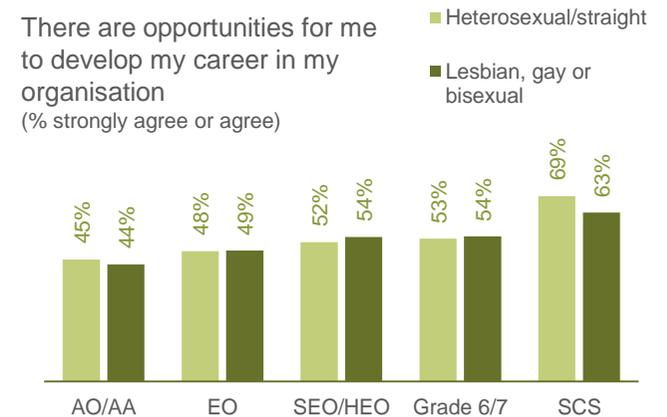
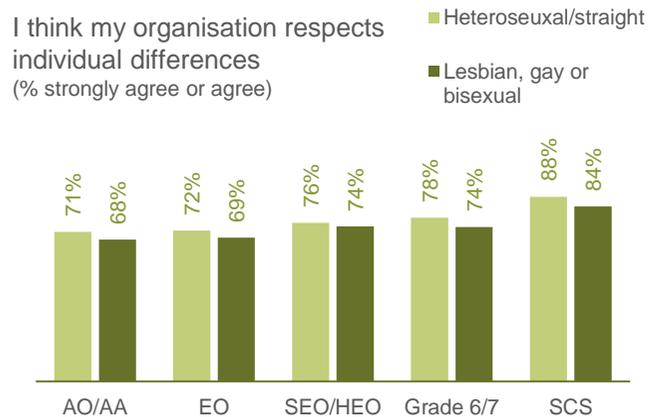
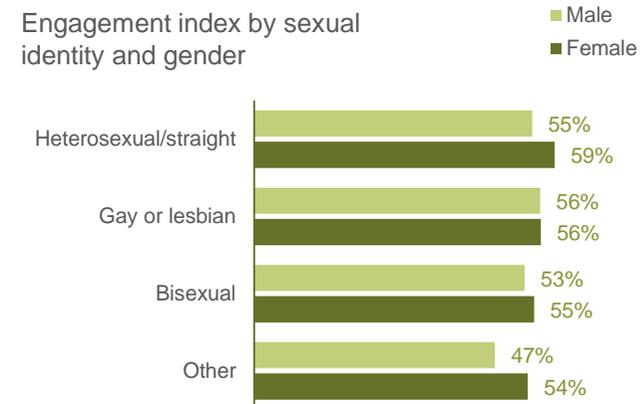
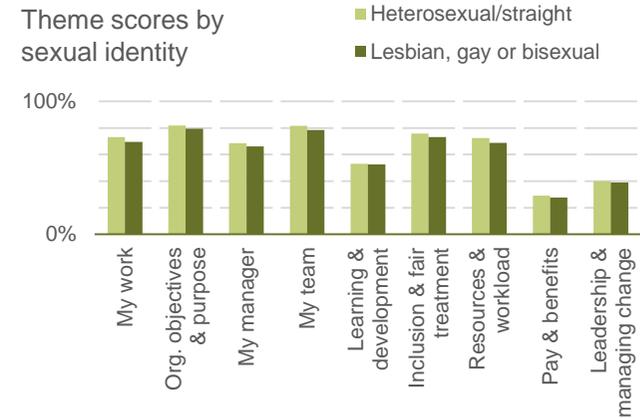
# LGB respondents are less likely to agree that their organisation respects individual differences

**Theme:** LGB respondents are less positive for all themes, ranging from -4 percentage points (Resources and workload and My work) to -1 percentage point (Leadership and managing change, Pay and benefits and Learning and development).

**Engagement:** Looking at the engagement index by sexual identity and gender shows no difference for lesbian and gay respondents by gender. In contrast, bisexual males are 2 percentage points less engaged than bisexual females. Heterosexual/straight male respondents are 4 percentage points less engaged than their female colleagues. Male respondents who do not identify as heterosexual/straight or LGB are less engaged than their female counterparts (Males: 47%, females: 54%).

**Career opportunities:** LGB respondents at AO/AA and SCS grades are less likely than their heterosexual/straight colleagues to say there are opportunities for them to develop their career, at SCS the difference is 6 percentage points. This is a change since 2014 when LGB respondents in the SCS were 2 percentage points more likely to think there are opportunities for them to develop their career.

**Respect:** When asked if they think their organisation respects individual differences, LGB respondents are less positive than heterosexual/straight peers, across all grades, with the largest difference at the SCS grade (88% to 84%).



# The largest differences in experiences of discrimination, bullying or harassment are seen in health status and sexual identity

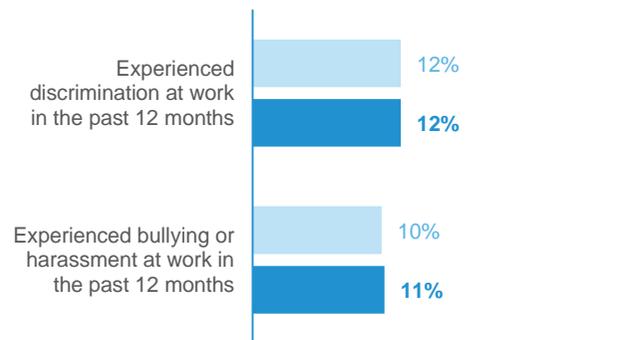
There is a one percentage point difference in the proportion of male and female respondents that experienced bullying/harassment at work in the past 12 months, and no difference in the proportion that experienced discrimination.

Those from a BAME background are slightly more likely than those from a White background to report experiencing discrimination (+3pp) or bullying/harassment (+2pp).

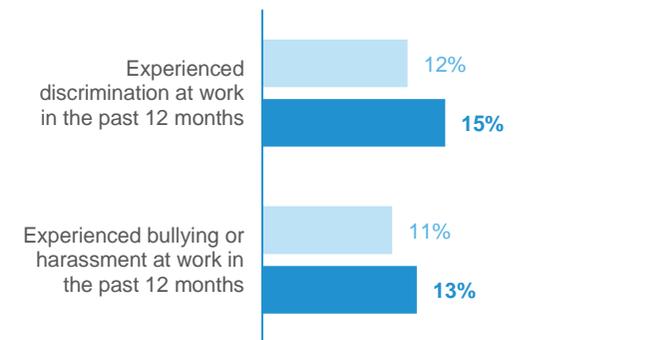
Respondents with a long-term limiting condition are two-and-a-half times more likely to report experiencing discrimination or bullying/harassment than those who do not have a long-term limiting condition.

LGB respondents are also much more likely to report experiencing discrimination or bullying/harassment (+7pp for both measures).

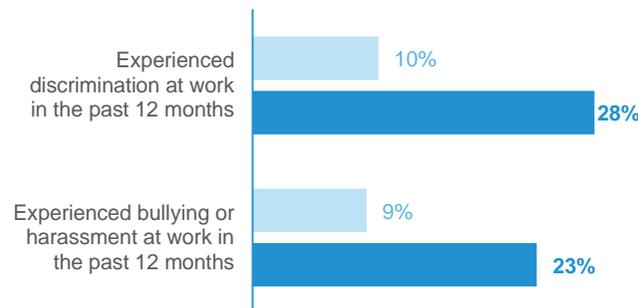
Discrimination, bullying and harassment at work by gender



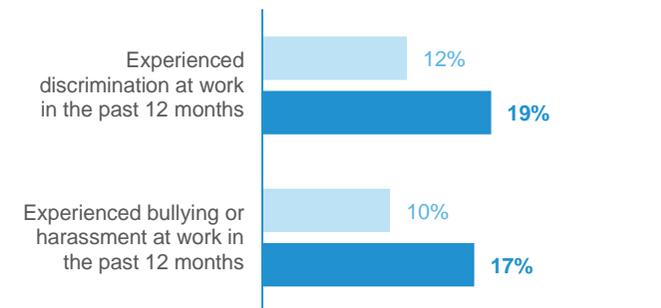
Discrimination, bullying and harassment at work by ethnicity



Discrimination, bullying and harassment at work by health status



Discrimination, bullying and harassment at work by sexual identity



# Section 2

Regression analysis of Engagement scores across priority groups

# Conditional analysis allows us to identify the specific effect of different characteristics

Each individual has a different mix of personal and job characteristics – but sometimes there are clear overlaps, for example female staff are more likely to be in more junior grades and to work part-time; disabled staff are more likely to work in operational roles.

We can use statistical analysis to control for these overlaps and identify the effect of a specific characteristic – this is called “conditional analysis”. Technical details of the analysis are provided in Appendix 1 on page 27.

The following pages summarise the results of conditional analysis carried out on the 2015 survey results.

## Explanation of how to interpret the charts in this section

The grey dot shows the difference between the given category and its reference category in the raw data – e.g. when we compare SCS engagement levels to those of SEO/HEO staff we see a difference of 19 percentage points.

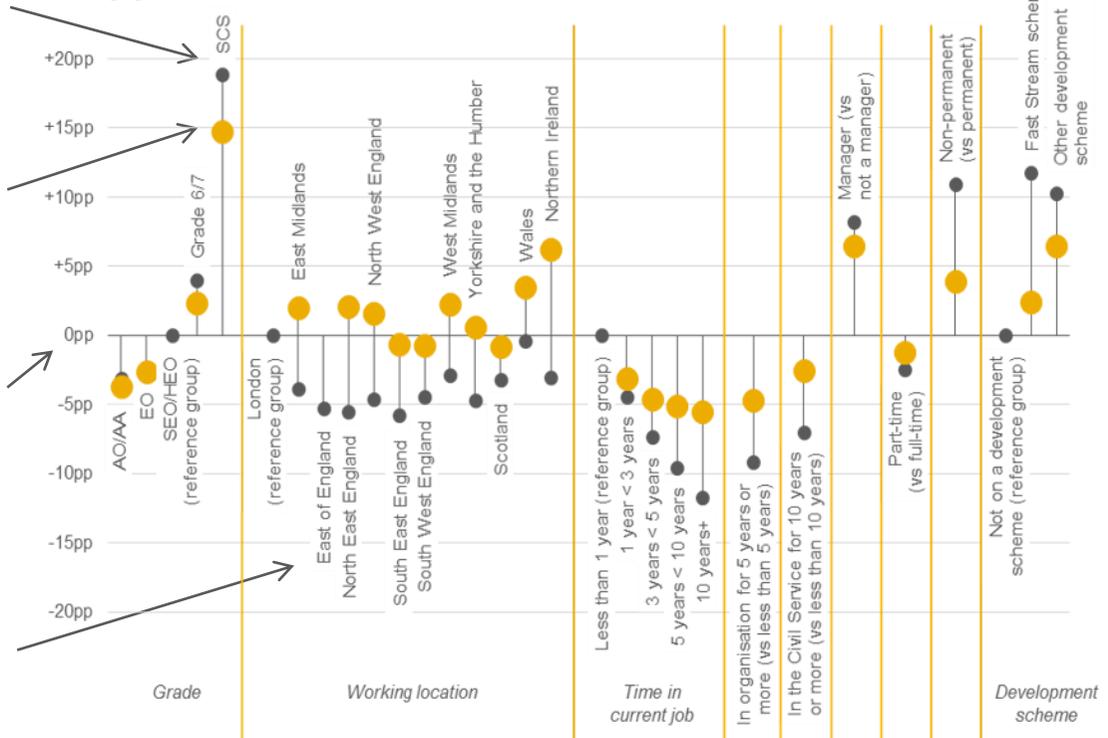
The yellow dot shows the difference estimated by the statistical analysis once other characteristics have been controlled for – this analysis shows that compared to SEO/HEO staff SCS are 15 percentage points more engaged once accounting for other characteristics.

The analysis looks at differences within characteristic groups (grade, working location, role, gender, age, etc); for each group a reference category is chosen from which differences can be calculated against. Effects above the horizontal axis mean that the group is more engaged than the reference category, effects below the axis mean that the group is less engaged than the reference category.

All observed effects (grey dots) are shown. Only controlled effects (yellow dots) which are statistically significant are shown, so where no yellow dot is shown the effect is not statistically significant. E.g. after controlling for other characteristics there is no statistically significant difference in engagement between those working in London and those working in the East of England.

Conditional analysis of job characteristics on the engagement index

● Observed differences ● Difference after controlling for other factors



# The effect of different personal characteristics on engagement tends to reduce after controlling for other factors

After controlling for a range of factors (set out on slides 14 and 15), we note that the differences between groups' engagement scores change. Specifically:

**BAME:** After controlling for other factors, the BAME group is still on average more engaged compared to the White group, but the difference fell from 8pp to 4pp.

**Gender:** Female engagement remains higher on average compared to males, by 5pp after

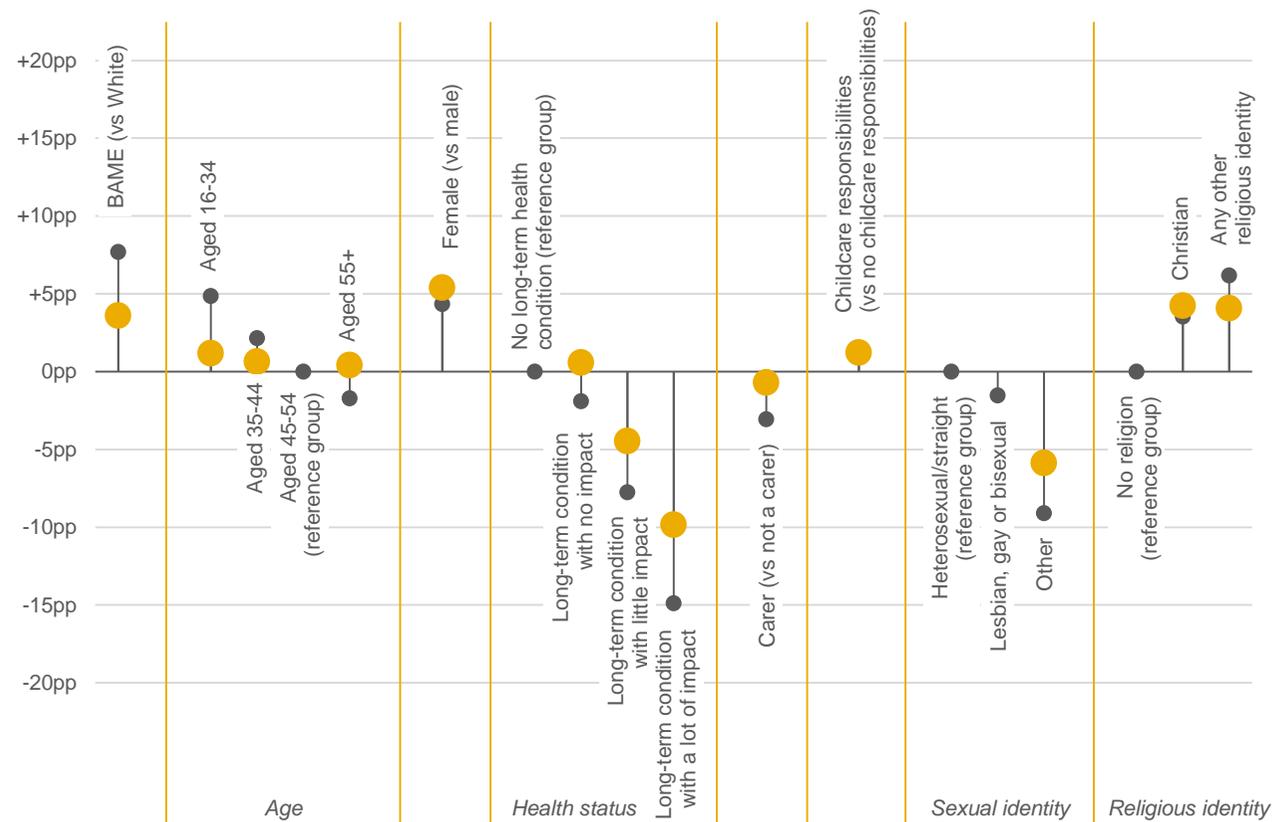
controlling for other factors.

**Long-term health condition:** Controlling for factors reduces the 15 percentage point difference in engagement seen by those who say their condition limits what they can do "a lot" to 10 percentage points, compared to those with no condition.

**LGB:** After controlling for other factors there is no significant difference in engagement for this group compared to heterosexuals.

Conditional analysis of personal characteristics on the engagement index

● Observed differences ● Difference after controlling for other factors



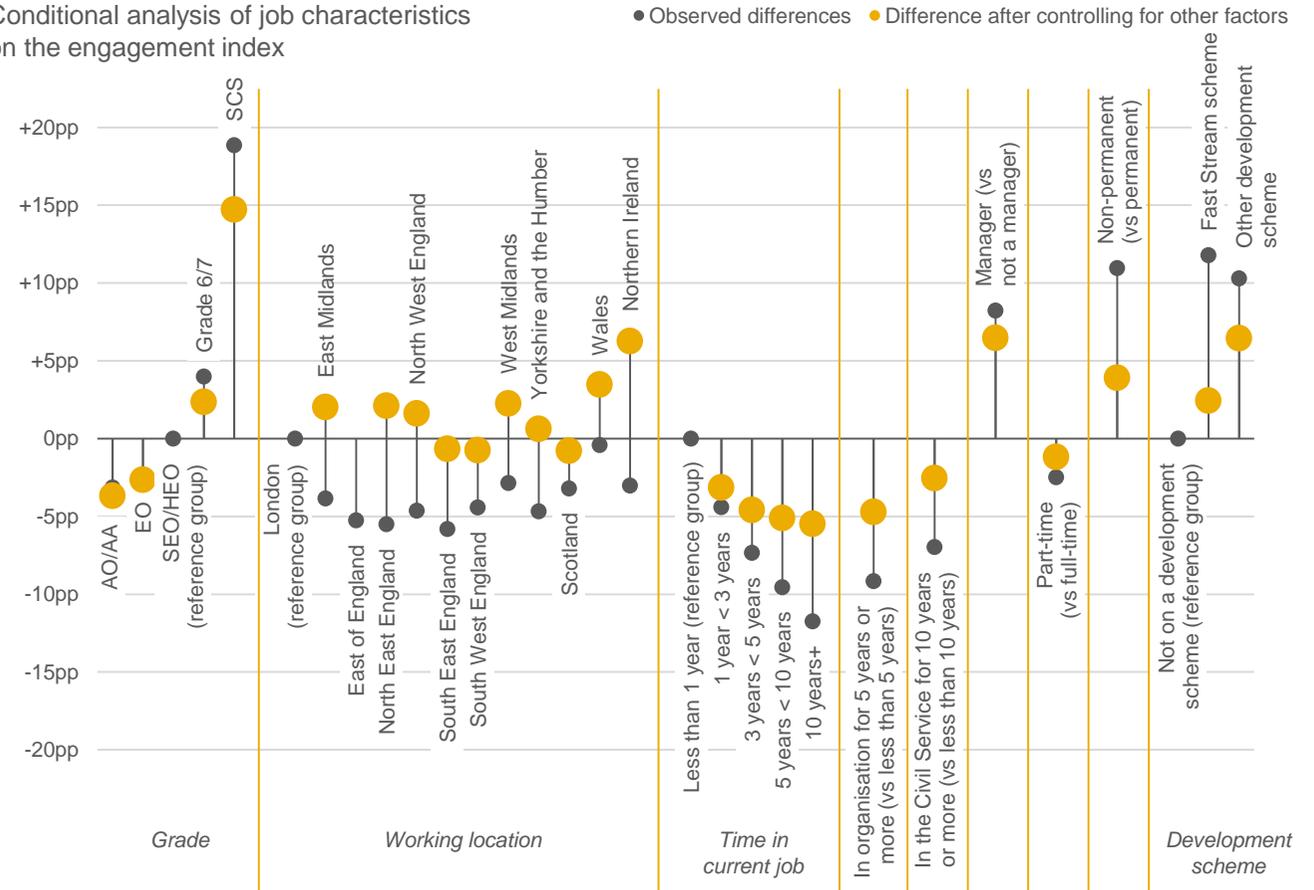
# Controlling for other factors typically reduces the effect of job characteristics on engagement

The regression enables us to understand, in addition to the four priority groups, the impact of job characteristics on engagement.

After controlling for other factors we see that the conditional effect of specific job characteristics on engagement tends to be lower than the effect we observe in the raw data.

For example, looking at the raw results shows us that respondents based in the South East of England are 6 percentage points less engaged compared to London, however once controlling for other factors this difference is just 1 percentage point.

Conditional analysis of job characteristics on the engagement index



# Controlling for factors reverses some differences in the engagement levels between occupations

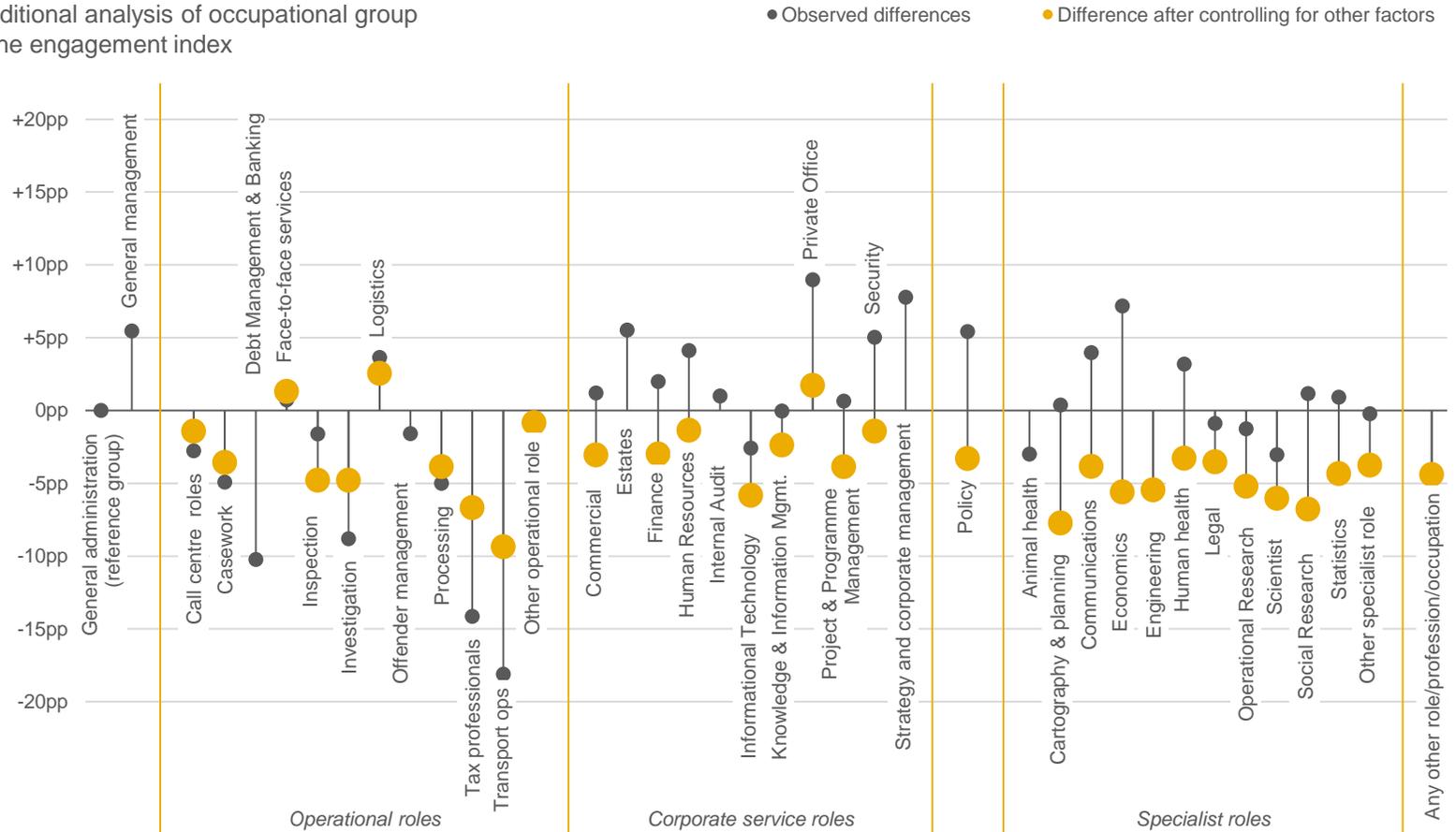
Looking at overall results by occupation shows that respondents working in a transport operations roles have the lowest levels of employee engagement in the Civil Service. However, once we control for factors such as location, grade and organisation the difference with those working in transport operations roles is nearly halved.

At a descriptive level, compared to respondents working in a general administration role we tend to see that respondents who work in a corporate

service, policy or specialist role are typically more engaged.

However, these respondents (especially policy and specialists) are more likely to be at a more senior grade and/or based in London. After controlling for other factors, those working in corporate services, policy or specialist roles have, on average, lower engagement compared to general administrators.

Conditional analysis of occupational group on the engagement index



# Section 3

Comparing UK Civil Service results internationally and to the private and public sectors

# The UK scores well on staff recognition from managers when compared internationally

Across a number of measures we are able to compare the UK CSPS 2015 results to the federal civil services of Australia, Canada and the United States of America.

Comparisons have been made with questions which had very similar or identical wording to those of international counterparts. Variation in question wording may be the cause of some of the observed differences between the UK CSPS results and those of international comparisons, see page 28 for further details.

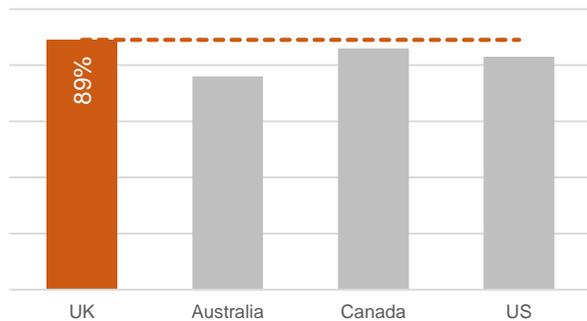
The countries looked at all score well on staff being interested in their work and being clear of what is expected of them.

The UK Civil Service scores particularly well on staff receiving recognition from their manager.

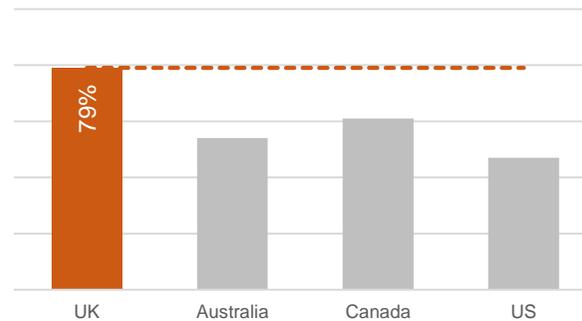
There is however room for improvement with regards to the actions of senior managers being consistent with their organisation's values.

The charts below represent the percentage of respondents who answered agree or strongly agree.

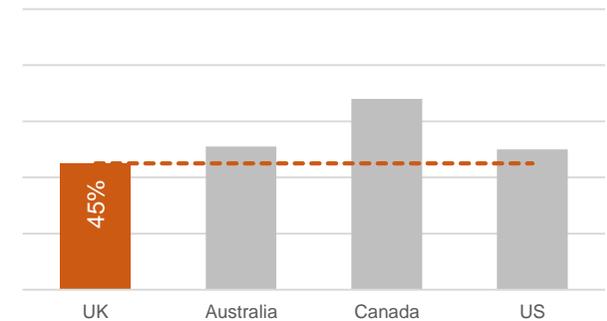
I am interested in my work



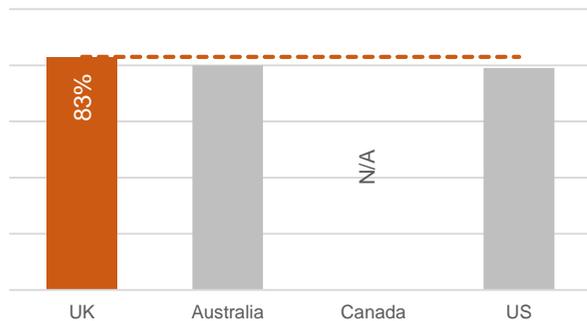
My Manager recognises when I have done my job well



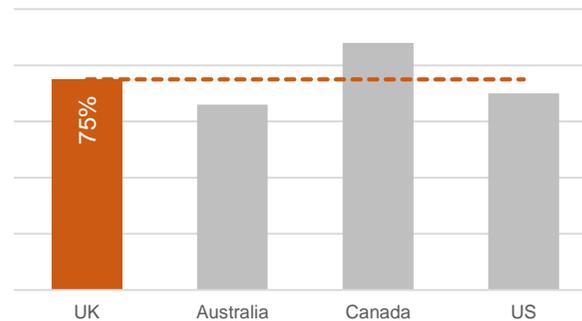
I believe the actions of [senior managers] are consistent with [my organisation's] values



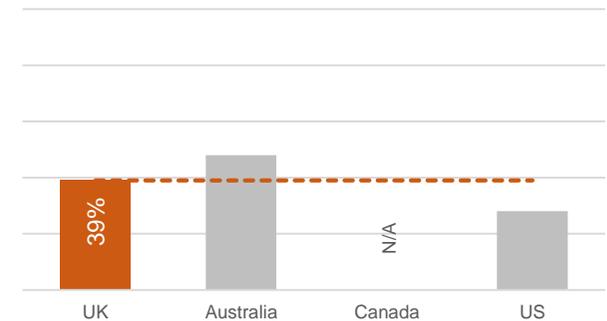
In my job I am clear what is expected of me



My work gives me a sense of personal accomplishment



Poor performance is dealt with effectively in my team



# The Civil Service scores lower in effective dealing of poor performance compared to other sectors

We have also compared the UK Civil Service People Survey results to the private sector and wider public sector.

As with the foreign counterparts the UK civil service scores well in staff receiving recognition from their line manager.

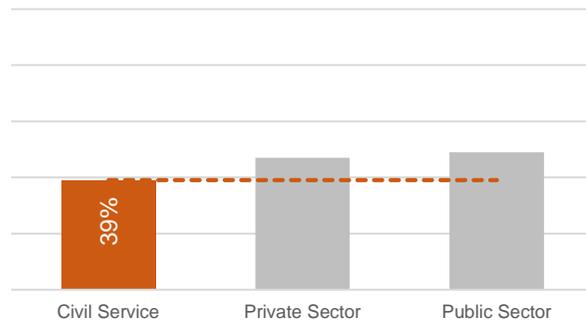
The Civil Service however scores lower than both the private and public sector in how poor performance is dealt with and in whether staff are clear what is expected of them.

The Civil Service also scores considerably lower than the private sector in the actions of senior managers being consistent with their organisation's values.

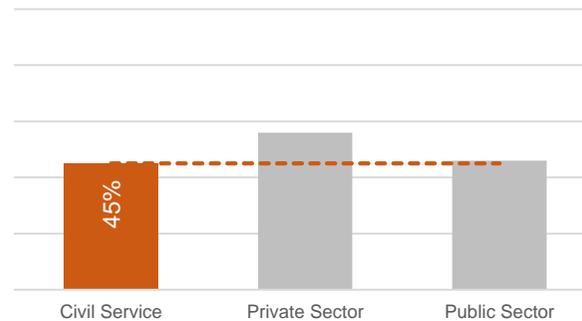
The charts below represent the percentage of respondents who answered agree or strongly agree.

Sources: UK private sector and public sector benchmarks from ORC International.

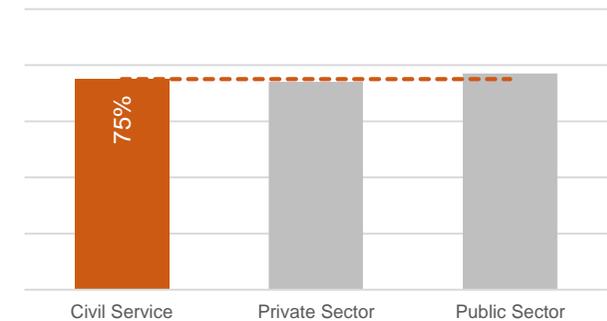
Poor performance is dealt with effectively in my team



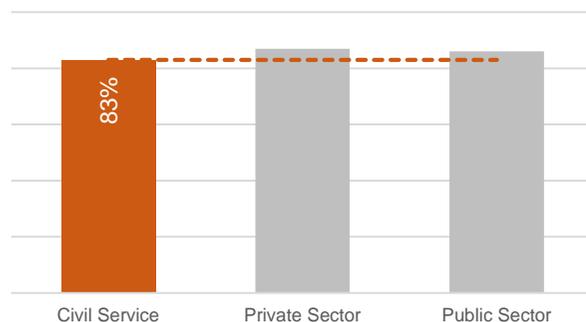
I believe the actions of [senior managers] are consistent with [my organisation's] values



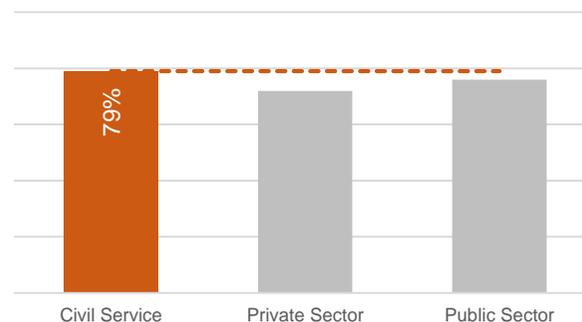
My work gives me a sense of personal accomplishment



In my job I am clear what is expected of me



My Manager recognises when I have done my job well



# Section 4

Understanding the relationship between engagement, bullying and absenteeism

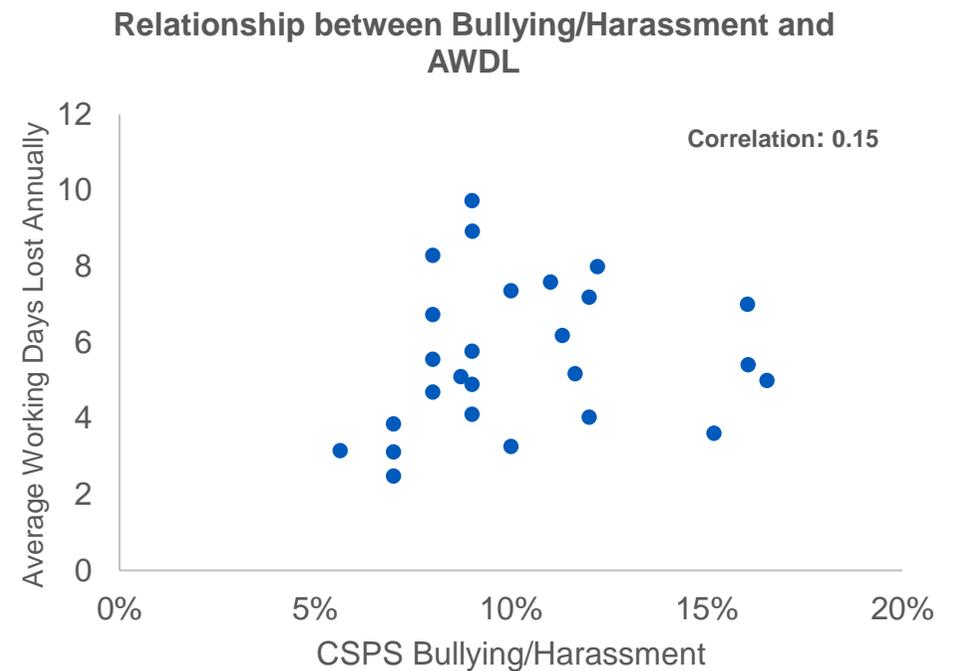
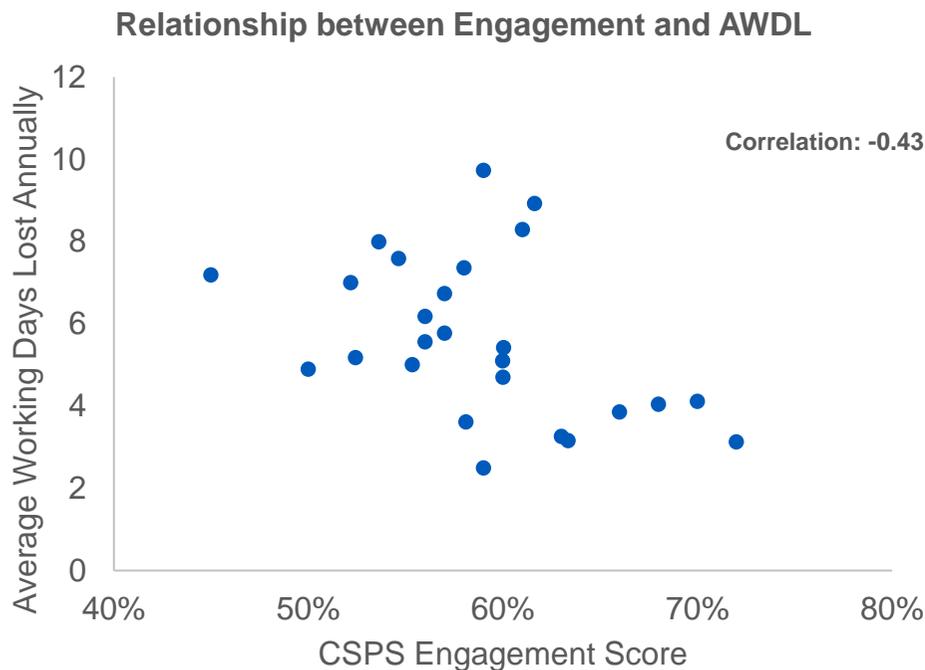
# A higher engagement score is associated with lower absenteeism

Correlation analysis showed that a higher engagement score is associated with a lower average number of working days lost annually (AWDL). This is shown in the correlation score of -0.43 between absenteeism and engagement.

The regression analysis on these variables found that this is a statistically significant relationship (adjusted  $R^2=0.1534$ ).

Looking at the relationship between AWDL and the number of people who reported bullying/harassment in the past 12 months shows a weak positive correlation (0.15)

The regression analysis, which took into account the shape of the curve (for details see end note 4 in appendix 3), identified a statistically significant relationship between the AWDL and bullying/harassment (adjusted  $R^2=0.1206$ ).



# A higher engagement score is associated with lower absenteeism in female staff

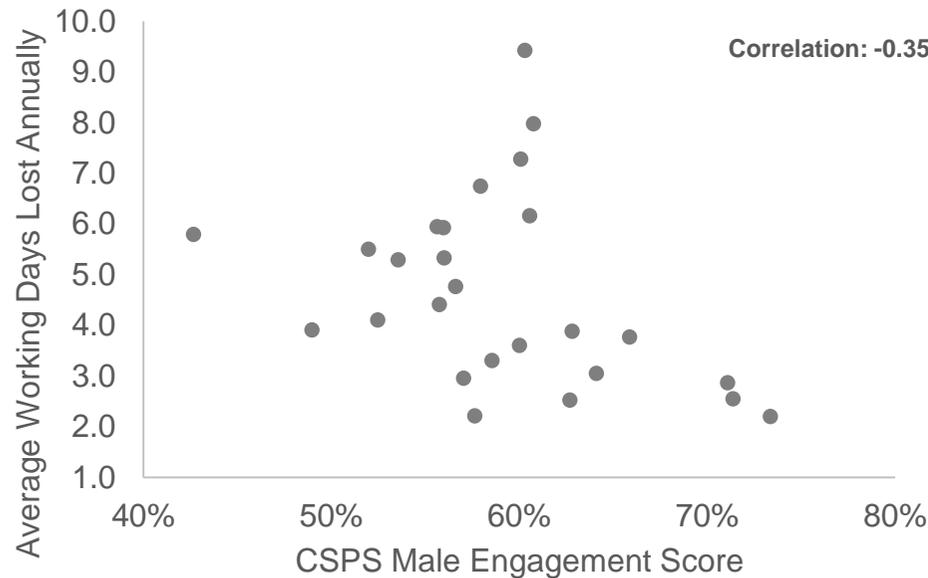
Both male and female average number of annual working days lost (AWDL) and engagement scores have moderate negative correlations implying that higher engagement scores are associated with a reduction in absenteeism in men and women. There is however a stronger correlation between female engagement and absenteeism.

Regression analysis confirmed a relationship between female engagement and

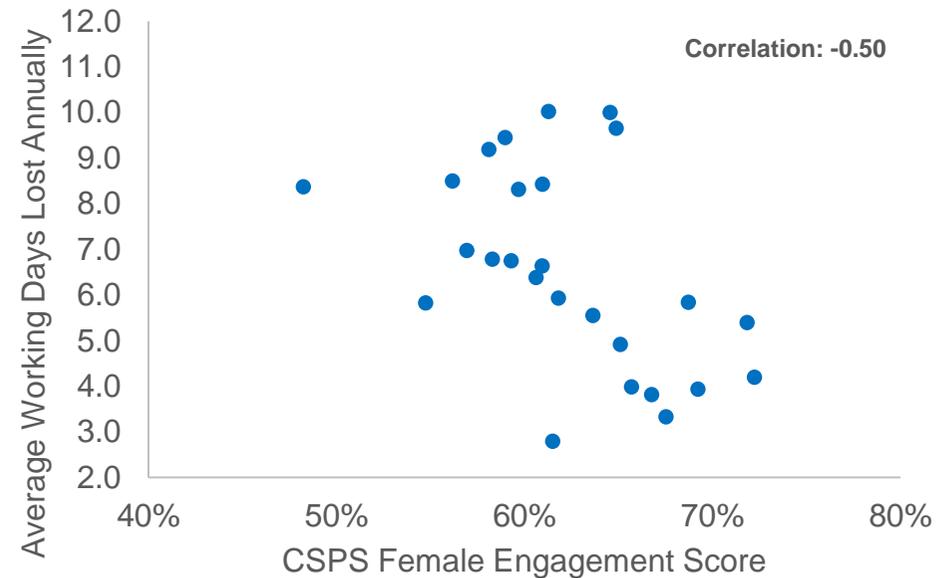
absenteeism ( $R^2=0.2139$ ) but no statistically significant relationship was found for males (adjusted  $R^2=0.0894$ ).

We also tested the relationship between bullying/harassment and AWDL by gender. This regression analysis found there to be no significant relationship between the male AWDL and bullying/harassment (adjusted  $R^2=-0.0188$ ) or Female AWDL and bullying/harassment (adjusted  $R^2=-0.0042$ ).

Relationship between Engagement and AWDL in Male staff



Relationship between Engagement and AWDL in Female staff



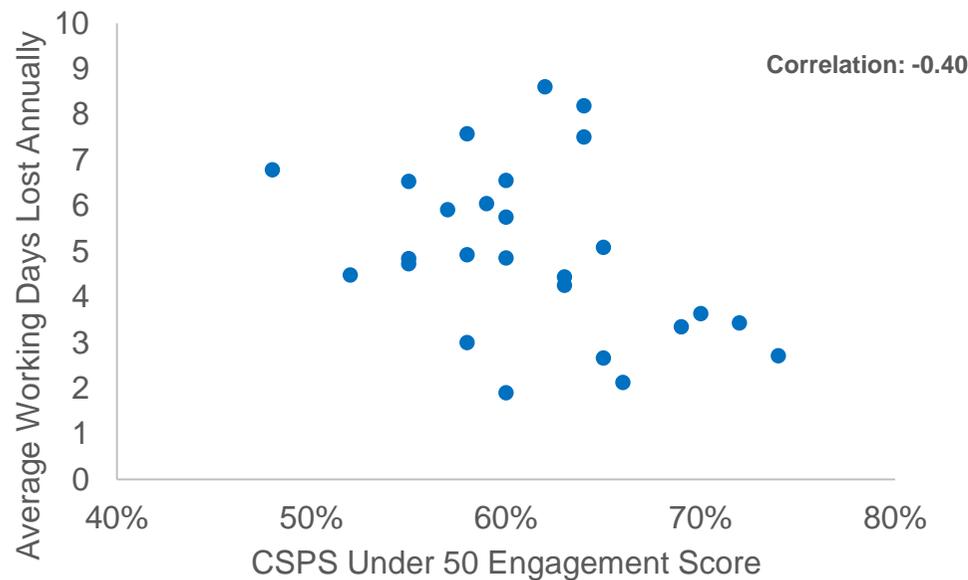
# A higher engagement score is associated with lower absenteeism for staff under 50 years old

The relationships between annual working days lost and Engagement for staff over 50 years of age and under 50 both show moderate negative correlations.

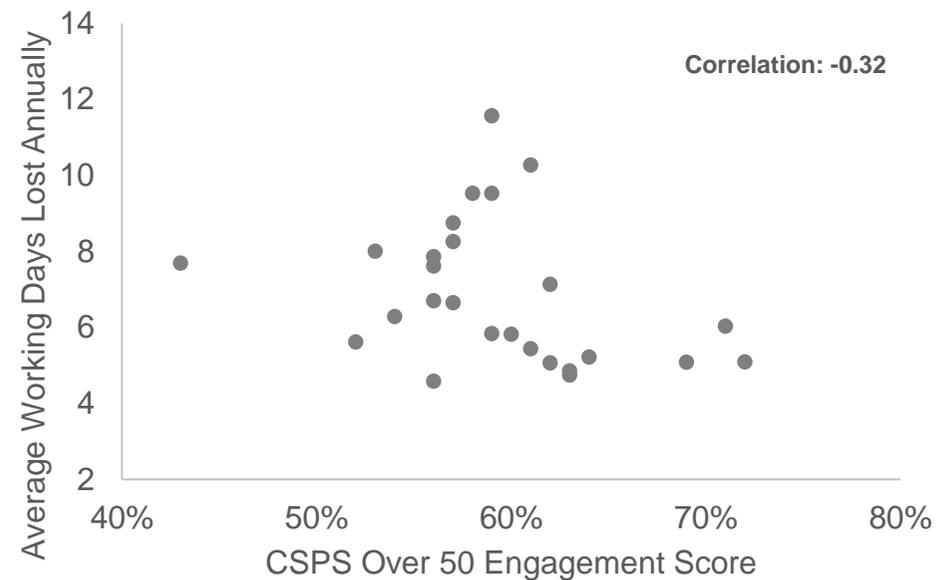
Regression analysis found there to be a statistically significant relationship between the engagement score of staff over 50 years of age and absenteeism (adjusted  $R^2=0.1569$ ) but no relationship for the over 50 relationship (adjusted  $R^2=0.0655$ ).

We also tested the relationship between bullying/harassment and AWDL by age group. Here, no statistically significant relationship was found between over 50 or under 50 AWDL and bullying/harassment data.

Relationship between Engagement and AWDL in staff under 50



Relationship between Engagement and AWDL in staff over 50



# Section 5

Summary of the Wellbeing scores and relationship with engagement

# Improving levels of engagement impacts on wellbeing as well as organisational performance

The four subjective wellbeing questions are those used by the Office for National Statistics as part of their Measuring National Wellbeing programme.

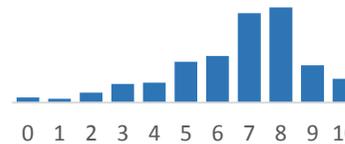
Each of the four questions is measured on a 0-10 scale where 0 means not at all and 10 means completely (e.g. Not at all satisfied, or Completely anxious).

Following best practice from the ONS the headline approach to reporting these questions will be to report the percent

responding 7 to 10 for the three positively worded questions (life satisfaction, worthwhile activity and happiness yesterday) and the percent responding 0 to 3 for the anxiety question.

Three of the four wellbeing questions on life satisfaction, worthwhile activity and happiness yesterday have strong correlations with Engagement. The fourth question on anxiety however has a weak correlation.

**Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?**



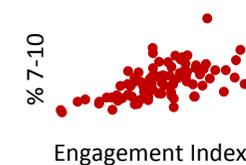
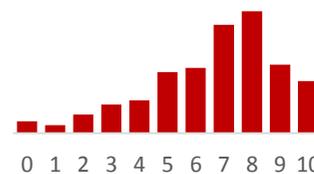
**Civil Service Benchmark** 65%  
Highest Score 84%  
Lowest Score 51%

**Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?**



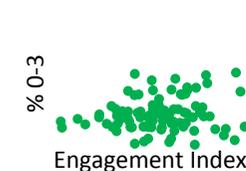
**Civil Service Benchmark** 71%  
Highest Score 86%  
Lowest Score 59%

**Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?**



**Civil Service Benchmark** 62%  
Highest Score 81%  
Lowest Score 54%

**Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?**



**Civil Service Benchmark** 50%  
Highest Score 63%  
Lowest Score 42%

# Appendix

# Appendix 1 – Diversity notes

1. The figures displayed on the charts are rounded to the nearest percentage point. The percentage point differences referred to in the text are based on the unrounded figures. This means that there may be a difference that appears to be slightly larger or smaller than the figures on the charts, but not by more than 1 percentage point.
2. The charts on pages 12-16 summarise the results of our analysis into the effects of job and personal characteristics on levels of employee engagement. The approach uses ordinary least squares regression to provide a simple estimate of the mean differences between different demographic categories and is based on the approach used by Ferrer-i-Carbonell and Frijters (2004).

For each demographic question dummy variables are generated representing each of the various categories within that question. A regression model is then run with the engagement score as the dependent variable and the dummy variables as the independent variables. The resulting coefficients from the model are then used to create the charts on pages 12-16. Only coefficients that are statistically significant to five percent are displayed in the analysis (i.e. only those with a p-value $\leq$ 0.05). For binary questions (e.g. gender, disability, managerial responsibility) only one dummy variable was entered, for questions with more than two demographic categories (grade, working location, occupation, age) a reference category was chosen. To minimise the potential for colinearity the questions on length of service in the organisation and in the Civil Service were converted into binary variables. The model used for this analysis had an eligible sample of 148,446 observations, an adjusted R-square of 0.1633, and an F-statistic of 171.41 with 170 degrees of freedom.

Ferrer-i-Carbonell A and Frijters P (2004) How important is methodology for the estimates of the determinants of happiness? *The Economic Journal* 114: 641-659, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-0297.2004.00235.x

# Appendix 2 - International Comparisons

(UK) Civil Service People Survey question	Australian Employee Census question	Canadian Public Service Employee Survey question	US FedView survey question
I am interested in my work	I enjoy the work in my current job	My job is a good fit with my interests	I like the kind of work I do
My work gives me a sense of personal accomplishment	My job gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment	I am proud of the work that I do	My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment
My manager recognises when I have done my job well	I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for doing a good job	I receive meaningful recognition for work well done	How satisfied are you with the recognition you receive for doing a good job?
Poor performance is dealt with effectively in my team	My supervisor appears to manage underperformance well in my workgroup		In my work unit, steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve
In my job, I am clear what is expected of me	I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are		I know what is expected of me on the job
I believe the actions of [senior managers] are consistent with [my organisation's] values	Senior managers in my agency lead by example in ethical behaviour	Senior managers in my department or agency lead by example in ethical behaviour	My organization's senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity

Sources:  
 Australia State of the Service Employee Census 2015;  
 Canada Public Service Employee Survey 2014;  
 US FedView Survey 2015.

## Appendix 3 – Absenteeism notes

1. The data used for this analysis comes from 26 organisations at an organisational level rather than individual level. Absenteeism data is the total number of working days lost in the organisation divided by the total number of staff years from the previous 12 month period. The Engagement scores and number of people who reported bullying or harassment in the previous 12 months are the mean averages for each organisation taken from the CSPA.
2. When controlled for other variables such as wellbeing questions, or theme scores from the people survey the regressions find that the relationship between absenteeism and engagement or bullying are not statistically significant. This however is not unexpected as these drivers of engagement are also correlated with bullying scores.
3. The data broken down by demographic relies on those who have reported their age or gender in the CSPA. There were however people who selected 'Prefer not to say' for these demographic questions, particularly when reporting bullying or harassment. This is particularly an issue as the absenteeism data is collected separately.
4. Due to the shape of the scatterplot between bullying and harassment and average working days lost annually, a

squared term was included in the regression analysis between the two variables. When the bullying and harassment squared term was included as a controlling factor, the regression analysis identified a statistically significant relationship between the AWDL and bullying & harassment (adjusted  $R^2=0.1206$ ).

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or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

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