

Civil Service Commissioners
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**Permanent Secretaries
Chief Executives**

20 January 2010

Dear Colleague

CIVIL SERVICE CODE: AUDIT AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

When I wrote to you and other Permanent Secretaries and Chief Executives on 30 March 2009 it was to let you know of the launch of the Civil Service Commissioners' first audit of departments' activities to uphold and promote the values in the Civil Service Code. We had agreed with Gus that the Commissioners should introduce a more comprehensive and systematic investigation of activity across the Civil Service so as to provide robust and credible public assurance and to enable the identification of good practice. Your commitment to this process has been invaluable. Thank you.

The results of the audit were published in our Annual Report 2008-09, and we have, as I explained when I came to a Wednesday morning meeting, continued our analysis of the audit returns. Detailed recommendations and examples of good practice have been identified for each of the thirty questions in the audit and we are sending these to all HR Directors hoping that they will prove to be a valuable resource for departments.

We also promised specific feedback on your own department's audit return and your Link Commissioner will be putting this on the agenda at your next meeting.

From the more detailed analytical work we have identified four key areas: Leadership, Implementation,; Support; and Training. I enclose a very short paper that outlines these high level messages. While we have discovered examples of good practice across the Service, the key messages do indicate that in too many organisations the basic building blocks for success have not yet been firmly anchored.

The most important message to emerge however was the importance of high level and visible leadership on the values. Civil servants should know how to raise concerns and perhaps even more importantly, they should know that they are encouraged and supported in doing so from the very top of the organisation. In managing the reputational risk to the Service posed by a lack of adherence to the values, this is vital.

You will also know that the standard staff survey launched across the Civil Service in October contained a number of questions on the Code. It specifically asked whether civil servants were aware of the Code, if they knew how to raise concerns within their own organisation, and whether they were confident that any concerns they raised would be investigated properly. The results, both overall and by department when available, should provide us with another important part of the picture.

Finally, you will want to know that we have published three new documents that outline the Commissioners' approach to hearing an appeal under the Civil Service Code:

- *The Civil Service Code: A Guide to bringing an appeal to the Civil Service Commissioners*
- *The Civil Service Code: A Guide for departments subject to an appeal to the Civil Service Commissioners*
- *The Civil Service Code: Policies and Procedures: The Civil Service Commissioners*

The documents are now available on our website http://www.civilservicecommissioners.org/Civil_Service_Code/Appeals_under_the_Code/ . We hope that they will prove valuable to civil servants and departments, in understanding what constitutes a valid appeal under the Civil Service Code and how the Commissioners will approach their investigations. It would be helpful if you could include a reference or link to the guide for civil servants in your own organisation's Code material and resources.

As always, I would value feedback on this, and any other aspect of the Commissioners' work.

Yours

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Janet', written in black ink.

Janet Paraskeva
First Civil Service Commissioner