



Continuing Professional Development Handbook

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Foreword



The handbook builds on and incorporates the Government Social Research (GSR) Competency Framework that we published in 2005. Now, for the first time as a Government Social Researcher, you have a formal and comprehensive guide which covers every aspect of your professional development at every stage of your career. As well as setting out the skills, behaviours and competencies required, it acts as your personal development planner. You can use it to assess your competencies, identify development needs and capture evidence of achievement.

Developed using a wide range of externally validated evidence and a comparative study of development frameworks in other government departments, the GSR Professional Development Handbook also enables you to engage directly and simply with the Professional Skills for Government (PSG) framework. This makes it a unique and powerful tool – both for you as an aid to your career progression and as a way of enhancing the reputation of the GSR profession across government.

A big part of my role is about raising awareness of the professional skills, knowledge and expertise of all those who work in the GSR profession. By using this handbook, you too will be able to gain recognition for your own achievements, combined with the added value of working in a network with a fast-growing reputation for professionalism and value.

Sue Duncan
Chief Government Social Researcher
Government Social Research Unit

Introduction

1.1 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is about always seeking to increase your **knowledge** and improve your **professionalism**. It involves routinely reflecting on your learning and experience, and keeping up to date, and is the key to optimising your career opportunities, both today and for the future.

1.2 This handbook provides the basic tools for planning your professional development, namely:

- the GSR Competency and PSG Skills Frameworks;
- self-assessment forms;
- suggested development activities;
- Development Plan template; and
- Development Record template.

1.3 To use the handbook you should follow these steps:

1. **Assess** your current knowledge, skills and experience against the GSR competencies for your grade and, if appropriate, against the Professional Skills for Government (PSG) standards (see [Section 4](#)).
2. **Explore** how best to meet your learning needs and improve your performance, and identify the best sources of information and guidance available to you (see the Development Plan, suggested development activities, and case studies in [Section 5](#)).
3. **Record** your educational and career achievements to date (see Development Record in [Section 6](#)).

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GSR CPD Principles

1.2 The following Government Social Research (GSR) CPD principles are critical to GSR members and their managers:

1. **Professional standards** – the GSR competencies are the core standards for anyone working in GSR. The Competency Framework was launched in August 2005, and is relevant to every member of GSR.
2. **All GSR members are expected to take responsibility for structuring their own learning and development, and for keeping a record of their CPD** (see [Section 5](#) and [Section 6](#)).
3. **A guideline of 100 hours' CPD per year has been set for GSR members.** The development should support the full range of GSR competencies but at least 50 hours should be on social research and analysis methods.
4. **All line managers of GSR members are expected to recognise CPD as a professional requirement of a Social Researcher in Government** (see [Section 5.3](#)).
5. **GSR members to have the option of a senior Social Researcher signing off their CPD** and commenting on the quality of their social research work.
6. **GSR members will follow a range of career paths** and the GSR function should be open to people transferring from social research to policy/operational delivery, and from inside to outside government.
7. **GSR members to have a CPD objective if desired** and line managers to be aware of it.

'The most important aspect of CPD is the outcome, not the precise amount of input. Anything can count as evidence as long as you can show you have learnt something from it.'

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

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The GSR Competencies and Professional Skills for Government

The GSR competencies

2.1 The purpose of the GSR framework is to clarify and define a comprehensive set of competencies relevant to the broad spectrum of research work and grades in GSR. Government Social Researchers have a wide range of responsibilities, including:

- designing research;
- analysis of large data sets;
- designing interviews;
- managing research;
- literature reviews;
- drawing together an evidence base, etc.

The competencies are described in terms of behaviours so that they can be used for recruiting, promoting, appraising and developing GSR members. However, it is important not to lose sight of the core technical skills which underpin the competencies and distinguish Social Researchers from the other analytical professions in Government – see the **Government Social Research skills list** ([Section 9](#)).

2.2 There are nine competencies in all, as follows:

Delivery skills

1. Policy and delivery focus.
2. Delivering results.
3. Learning and improving.

Intellectual capacity

4. Critical analysis and decision-making.
5. Constructive thinking.
6. Professional expertise.

Interpersonal skills

7. Developing constructive relationships.
8. Communicating with impact.

Leadership and management

9. Leading and directing.

2.3 **The framework is relevant to every member of GSR.** It sets out the core standards for anyone working in GSR. Departments may build on the standards or adapt the language slightly to reflect their organisational context, but the content should remain the same as it sets the minimum professional standards for all Government Social Researchers. You will receive specific guidance from your Line Manager or Head of Profession about how the framework will be implemented and used in your department.

Professional Skills for Government

2.4 Professional Skills for Government (PSG) is a key part of the Government's Delivery and Reform agenda. It is a major, long-term change programme that is designed to ensure that civil servants, wherever they work, have the right mix of skills and expertise to enable their departments or agencies to deliver effective services. PSG will also provide clarity about the skills that individuals need in order to develop and progress in the civil service, and access to more consistent opportunities to develop those skills.

2.5 **There is considerable overlap between the nine GSR competencies and the four dimensions of PSG.** A key element of PSG is that everyone at Grade 7 (or equivalent) and above will need to demonstrate skills and expertise in four areas – **leadership**, **core skills** (i.e. the skills everyone needs no matter what job they are doing), **job-related professional expertise**, and – for those in, or aspiring to, the Senior Civil Service (SCS) – **broader experience**. These levels have been chosen as career transition points in the civil service. But PSG will apply to people earlier in their career too, and we have set out the GSR professional standards for every grade in the GSR Competency Framework.

2.6 The PSG Framework can be represented as follows:



2.7 People will need to be able to demonstrate skills and expertise in four areas:

- **Leadership** – PSG sits alongside and complements the Improving Leadership Capacity vision agreed by Permanent Secretaries. The GSR Framework captures this vision.
- The **core skills** that **every** civil servant at, or aspiring to, Grade 7 and above needs. At Grade 7 these are **people management, financial management, programme and project management, and analysis and use of evidence**. In addition, those in, or aspiring to, the SCS will need to demonstrate skills in **strategic thinking** and **communications and marketing**. The GSR Competency Framework captures these requirements to some degree (completely in terms of people management and analysis and use of evidence, but less so in relation to financial management and programme and project management). You should assess yourself against the specific requirements for your current grade and the grades that you aspire to (see [Section 4](#)).
- **Job-related professional expertise** that relates to the kind of work you do. As the majority of Social Researchers work in a **policy delivery** environment, we have ensured that the GSR Competency Framework takes account fully of the new skill requirements for this career grouping. It also covers many of the requirements of the **operational delivery** career grouping – for Social Researchers working in this environment, the emphasis should be on understanding the specific needs of their customers and other stakeholders, and understanding how social research may assist in the delivery of effective services.
- **For SCS members, and those aspiring to the SCS, broader experience** of other ways of working. This could be within the civil service or in other sectors.

2.8 Further information is available from the PSG website at <http://psg.civilservice.gov.uk/>

The Competency Framework

Skill Set	Competency	High level description
DELIVERY SKILLS	Policy and delivery focus	Understands and directs effort to meet the customer's needs. Works in partnership with other analysts, policy colleagues and wider customers to provide a relevant and high-quality contribution that adds value to government policy decision-making.
	Delivering results	Plans work activities, reviewing and prioritising as necessary, to achieve high standards and meet deadlines; is proactive and uses initiative when problems arise or progress is slow. Shows resilience under pressure and does not let setbacks affect performance.
	Learning and improving	Acknowledges own development needs and seeks new skills, knowledge and opportunities for learning; learns from others; adapts quickly and effectively to new people, situations and task demands; operates effectively in a range of roles and contexts, including times and situations of uncertainty.
INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY	Critical analysis and decision making	Critically evaluates data and information with accuracy and perception, and is able to synthesise and use data from a variety of different methods appropriately. Makes sound, evidence-based decisions (and/or helps others to do so); assesses risk, and defends decisions and action; responds effectively to unforeseen situations.
	Constructive thinking	Thinks imaginatively whilst keeping the goal in mind; understands the bigger picture and can make the link between issues; shows an open mind with the intellectual rigour to generate original ideas and develop practical solutions from them; able to facilitate, encourage and build upon the ideas of others.
	Professional expertise	Demonstrates the detailed knowledge and experience necessary for the job of Government Social Researcher; expressing the core technical capability, knowledge and awareness.
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	Developing constructive relationships	Uses interpersonal and other communication skills to build rapport with others; shows an awareness of the effects of own behaviour on others, and understands their situations and concerns; values diversity and shows flexibility of style.
	Communicating with impact	Communicates written and oral information clearly, concisely and persuasively; communicates own viewpoint succinctly and defends it appropriately; facilitates discussions effectively to achieve clear outcomes.
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	Leading and directing	Takes an active and prominent role in providing direction to staff and contractors; champions high standards; gains the trust, commitment and co-operation of others.

4

Assessing yourself against the GSR competencies and PSG

4.1 Your first step should be to establish the grade(s) you are benchmarking yourself against. You will want to take into account your current grade first, and possibly the grade to which you aspire.

4.2 You can then use the self-assessment forms for those grades (on the following pages) to examine your current competency level and decide whether it is a strength, a capable area, or a minor or major capability gap for you. Try to be honest and note down the evidence next to it that you are drawing on to make your assessment. On the opposite page you will find the key information to help you make your judgement. The positive indicators set out what kind of knowledge and understanding you should expect to have and suggest the kind of tasks you might have undertaken or be doing to demonstrate effective performance. You may want to start collecting examples of evidence to support your longer-term assessment and continuing professional development.

4.3 **If you are at, or aspire to, Principal Research Officer (PRO) or above, you will also need to assess yourself against the PSG requirements detailed on pages [42–45](#).** This should be quick to do as you will have already completed the GSR assessment and there is considerable overlap between the two sets of standards. However, you should pay close attention to the core skills of financial management and Programme Project Management, which feature less prominently in the GSR framework.

4.4 Before finalising your assessment, you should talk it over with your manager. They will be able to provide their own perspective on your capability and take a wider view across other staff as a comparison. Your evidence will be important here so that you can have an informed discussion.

4.5 You can then use your assessment as the analysis on which to plan your development. **You can find some ideas about development options in [Section 5](#) and [Section 8](#).**

Research Officer		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap			
Policy & Delivery Focus	Understands and directs effort to meet the customer's needs. Works in partnership with other analysts, policy colleagues and wider customers to provide a relevant and high-quality contribution that adds value to government policy decision-making.					<p>Identifies who the customer and key stakeholders are for each project; works with others to identify the customer's needs.</p> <p>Responds supportively to the customer's requests.</p> <p>Tailors approach and frames research output in a way that is directly relevant to the customer's needs.</p> <p>Actively explores with customers a range of possible solutions and offers alternatives if cannot help directly.</p> <p>Delivers appropriate and timely analysis to support policy making and policy implementation, seeking support from senior colleagues where appropriate.</p> <p>Understands the policy context of own work and how it fits into GSR and the wider work and objectives of the department.</p>	<p>Provides services that are technically sound but not customer relevant.</p> <p>Has a 'them and us' attitude to customers and colleagues from other disciplines.</p> <p>Overly perfectionist.</p> <p>Impolite or unhelpful to customers.</p>	
Delivering Results	Plans work activities, reviewing and prioritising as necessary, to achieve high standards and meet deadlines; is proactive and uses initiative when problems arise or progress is slow. Shows resilience under pressure and does not let setbacks affect performance.					<p>Plans and manages time effectively, prioritising as necessary.</p> <p>Breaks a complex research question into a series of manageable tasks, sets realistic deadlines, and monitors and checks that project milestones are reached.</p> <p>Puts contingency plans in place; revises plans; proposes solutions to problems.</p> <p>Takes responsibility for driving a research project forward; for example, asks questions when there is a lack of progress.</p> <p>Shows energy to redirect an approach if the first attempt at a task is not successful.</p> <p>Maintains own performance under pressure of time/task or from colleagues.</p> <p>Works within the agreed budgetary constraints of a project.</p>	<p>Randomly checks the progress of a task; fails to monitor progress.</p> <p>Just points out problems.</p> <p>Fails to act in a timely manner.</p> <p>Takes pressure out on others.</p> <p>Ignores budgetary constraints.</p> <p>Focuses on the research process rather than on getting results.</p>	
Learning and Improving	Acknowledges own development needs and seeks new skills, knowledge and opportunities for learning; learns from others; adapts quickly and effectively to new people, situations and task demands; operates effectively in a range of roles and contexts, including times and situations of uncertainty.					<p>Demonstrates a readiness to learn more and develop own performance; takes responsibility for own development.</p> <p>Good awareness of the broad range of skills needed to progress and develop across GSR, including the 'softer skills' of communicating and influencing.</p> <p>Pursues training and development opportunities that have been identified through discussions with own Line Manager.</p> <p>Learns from experience.</p> <p>With the help of constructive feedback from manager(s), can identify own strengths and areas for development.</p> <p>Is not reticent in requesting feedback or support from manager(s); knows who to ask and where to look should a problem arise.</p> <p>Aware of how own role contributes to GSR/team's objectives.</p> <p>Understands and keeps up-to-speed with the policy context in which working; for example, through reading key strategy documents, policy statements, etc.</p>	<p>Rejects feedback or development opportunities offered by own Line Manager.</p> <p>Fails to set personal achievement goals.</p> <p>Attends courses without identifying clear aims and purpose, or without putting the learning into practice.</p> <p>Needs to be nominated for tasks; does not volunteer.</p> <p>Waits to be told what to do.</p>	

Research Officer		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap			
Critical analysis and decision making	Critically evaluates data and information with accuracy and perception, and is able to synthesise and use data from a variety of different methods appropriately. Makes sound, evidence-based decisions (and/or helps others to do so); assesses risk, and defends decisions and action; responds effectively to unforeseen situations.					<p>Prepares accurate statistics.</p> <p>Summarises verbally and numerically expressed research information accurately.</p> <p>Accurately interprets data (verbal and numerical) and research papers, for example makes an accurate interpretation of the key findings from a literature search.</p> <p>Demonstrates attention to detail in checking information/evidence for accuracy and validity, for example checking an interim research report from a contractor.</p> <p>Critically assesses research findings against an established standard or specification.</p> <p>Uses logic to evaluate new ideas and alternatives, for example critically assesses new hypotheses or new methodologies.</p> <p>Defines research questions, and re-defines where necessary.</p> <p>Knows when to consult with others, for example with other GSR or policy colleagues.</p>	<p>Analysis and presentation of numerical and verbal information is inaccurate.</p> <p>Overlooks errors and inconsistencies in information and evidence.</p> <p>Fails to apply logic and sound reasoning when evaluating ideas and potential alternatives.</p> <p>Deals with the research question as stated, i.e. does not reframe it to produce a more coherent or meaningful outcome.</p> <p>Fails to recognise when requires input/help from others.</p>	
Constructive thinking	Thinks imaginatively whilst keeping the goal in mind; understands the bigger picture and can make the link between issues; shows an open mind with the intellectual rigour to generate original ideas and develop practical solutions from them; able to facilitate, encourage and build upon the ideas of others.					<p>Puts forward new ideas to others, for example to other GSR or policy colleagues.</p> <p>Builds on or develops ideas with others or from within the frame of the material.</p> <p>Presents managers or project leaders with proposed solutions, not only problems.</p> <p>Remains open-minded and flexible; brainstorms new ideas effectively; questions accepted approaches, assumptions, research methods and processes.</p> <p>Shows the intellectual curiosity to run with unusual or different approaches in the search for better solutions.</p> <p>Applies self to new research topic areas at short notice; multi-tasks.</p>	<p>Accepts the status quo.</p> <p>Takes information at face value only.</p> <p>Has a fixed view on how to approach research issues.</p> <p>Proposes solutions which lack intellectual rigour.</p> <p>Spends too long generating ideas and so fails to act.</p>	
Professional expertise	Demonstrates the detailed knowledge and experience necessary for the job of Government Social Researcher; expressing the core technical capability, knowledge and awareness.					<p>Knowledge of research and analytical methodologies, and the ability to demonstrate practical application of both qualitative and quantitative approaches through project-based work, for example a suitable level of experience would be that obtained from gaining a first or upper-second class degree, or a postgraduate qualification in a social science discipline, that includes a substantial element of social research methods and training.</p> <p>Working knowledge of a range of research methods.</p> <p>Broad awareness of the role of quantitative and qualitative social research methods and their application, i.e. knowing when their application is appropriate and when it is not.</p> <p>Uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches to undertake small in-house pieces of work while under supervision.</p> <p>Designs small-scale and less complex research projects for either in-house work or commissioned projects; understands how to get things done in the civil service.</p> <p>Helps own Line Manager identify areas for new research.</p> <p>Understands the role and social research needs of policy divisions and can link that to own output.</p> <p>Carries out analytical tasks under direction.</p> <p>Makes use of different sources of information and carries out a basic analysis of key datasets by producing frequencies and cross-tabulations; interprets the key findings from this.</p> <p>Uses computer software in the analysis and presentation of information.</p> <p>Working knowledge of relevant data analysis packages, particularly SPSS and Excel, and qualitative packages. Packages to be determined by the particular role and job content.</p> <p>Clear knowledge of the format and style required to report research results; able to report research information clearly in writing.</p> <p>Aware of key departmental procurement procedures.</p> <p>Writes and designs draft research specifications for less complex projects.</p> <p>Judges accurately the merits of less complex research tenders.</p> <p>Manages the deadlines and budgets for less complex projects.</p> <p>Alerts own Line Manager to quality or timetable problems with projects.</p> <p>Supports team members in managing more complex external research projects.</p> <p>Working knowledge of ethical issues in research; knowledge of Government Social Research Unit (GSRU) principles on research ethics and Social Research Association's guidance; with support, is able to apply these when develops appropriate solutions/proposals.</p> <p>Working knowledge of legal requirements surrounding research, particularly data protection and the Freedom of Information Act; knows when to seek further support.</p> <p>Sensitive to legal requirements that may surround particular departmental research agenda; knows when to seek further support.</p>	<p>Knowledge of research methods is too narrow; fails to consider a range of research methods when addressing a problem.</p> <p>Fails to link work output with the social research needs of policy divisions.</p> <p>Data analysis fails to give appropriate weight to key sources of information.</p> <p>Exceeds authority and experience in dealing with legal and ethical issues; lacks awareness of the key ethical and legal issues in research.</p> <p>Insufficient depth of knowledge on key IT data analysis packages.</p> <p>Rejects supervision.</p>	

Research Officer		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap			
Developing constructive relationships	Uses interpersonal and other communication skills to build rapport with others; shows an awareness of the effects of own behaviour on others, and understands their situations and concerns; values diversity and shows flexibility of style.					<p>Works effectively as part of a small team, for example with other researchers and support staff.</p> <p>Is able to build relationships with people from diverse backgrounds, for example with more senior colleagues and research contractors.</p> <p>Shares information to deliver successful outcomes.</p> <p>Works co-operatively with others in a shared outcome, for example with policy colleagues.</p> <p>Uses the GSR network to increase awareness of cross-cutting research possibilities.</p> <p>Stays in touch with work done by other researchers/analysts and sees potential for co-operation.</p> <p>Listens effectively, consults well with others, and takes on board their views and opinions.</p> <p>Remains diplomatic in difficult situations, whether with colleagues, contractors or customers.</p>	<p>Isolates self from other colleagues.</p> <p>Acts independently, rather than involving others.</p> <p>Takes little/no action to develop relationships within or outside the team.</p> <p>Overlooks the needs or issues of others in determining the way forward.</p>	
Communicating with impact	Communicates written and oral information clearly, concisely and persuasively; communicates own viewpoint succinctly and defends it appropriately; facilitates discussions effectively to achieve clear outcomes.					<p>Written communication is concise, punchy and well structured, for example research results.</p> <p>Listens actively to others in order to understand the idea or viewpoint being expressed.</p> <p>Questions and clarifies where necessary; structures questions well to obtain key information from others.</p> <p>Adapts communication style to suit the needs and understanding of different audiences.</p> <p>Uses technology and presentation styles/formats in order to enhance the quality and the impact of findings.</p> <p>Persuades others to support the research process, for example industry bodies to release the necessary information or persuading policy customers of the value of social research.</p> <p>Defends own position/viewpoint in the face of opposition or challenge.</p>	<p>Oral and written communication lacks clarity and verbal/visual impact.</p> <p>Key points are not separated from incidental facts.</p> <p>Does not listen to the points made by others.</p> <p>Takes what is said at face value; does not use questions.</p> <p>Is reluctant or unable to defend own position or decision.</p>	
Leading and directing	Takes an active and prominent role in providing direction to staff and contractors; champions high standards; gains the trust, commitment and co-operation of others.					<p>Contributes to and encourages co-operation between team members to achieve shared outcomes.</p> <p>Co-ordinates the input of a number of different contractors.</p> <p>Establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with all senior staff.</p> <p>Able to give constructive feedback to contractors to focus them on getting the job done.</p> <p>Provides leadership on 'technical' matters in a particular field; has command of a specific evidence base to reassure colleagues when they are uncertain.</p> <p>For those who line manage</p> <p>Co-ordinates the work of direct reports; gives constructive feedback on their performance.</p>	<p>Works in an isolated fashion without involving others.</p> <p>Discourages collaboration and co-operation.</p> <p>Does not draw the activity of relevant contractors together to ensure co-ordination of effort.</p> <p>Fails to have sufficient command of a specific evidence base to reassure colleagues; lacks technical 'authority'.</p>	

Senior Research Officer		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap			
Policy and delivery focus	Understands and directs effort to meet the customer's needs. Works in partnership with other analysts, policy colleagues and wider customers to provide a relevant and high-quality contribution that adds value to government policy decision-making.					<p>Engages actively with customers to clarify and determine their needs; ensures those needs are addressed.</p> <p>Evaluates own performance on the basis of whether the customer's need is satisfied.</p> <p>Helps customers make full use of the available social research evidence, even when it is not perfect.</p> <p>Identifies when the customer's needs change and responds accordingly.</p> <p>Spots opportunities to add value to the customer's work.</p> <p>Attuned to the concerns of customers – so is able to identify potential conflicts of interest or resistance to service delivery.</p> <p>Manages the customer's expectations by communicating clearly what can be achieved within the available resources, timeframe or knowledge base.</p> <p>Delivers appropriate and timely analysis to support policy making and policy implementation.</p> <p>Understands the background and political context of a request so can better address the 'real' needs of that customer.</p>	<p>Does not anticipate a customer's concerns.</p> <p>Does not put things right when they go wrong.</p> <p>Promises something they cannot deliver.</p> <p>Has a narrow definition of customer/stakeholder.z</p>	
Delivering results	Plans work activities, reviewing and prioritising as necessary, to achieve high standards and meet deadlines; is proactive and uses initiative when problems arise or progress is slow. Shows resilience under pressure and does not let setbacks affect performance.					<p>Clarifies and agrees research objectives and outcomes.</p> <p>Plans and sets clear goals, prioritises research work and reviews plans regularly.</p> <p>Translates broad project aims into researchable questions, for example turns policy requirements into well-designed research specifications.</p> <p>Breaks down complex and changing requirements into manageable tasks with key stages of delivery.</p> <p>Uses a robust project planning mechanism, is realistic about timeframes and budgets, sets targets, milestones and appropriate monitoring processes.</p> <p>Anticipates the difficult aspects of a research contract and undertakes contingency planning; authorises actions; takes action early to remove blockages.</p> <p>Matches research resources to priorities and shifts them as the priorities change to deliver objectives on time.</p> <p>Aligns programmes of work with policy and strategic objectives.</p> <p>Balances the needs of one project against another, and completes important activities within deadlines and budgets, even when extra effort is required.</p> <p>Despite setbacks, demonstrates persistence in pursuing objectives.</p>	<p>Always wants to check every detail.</p> <p>Haphazard approach to planning work, i.e. little evidence of using appropriate tools.</p> <p>Reactive approach to taking action; sits back and waits for things to happen.</p> <p>Fails to consider the need for contingency plans.</p> <p>Does not deliver to the agreed specification, quality or deadline.</p> <p>Finds it difficult to adapt plans and priorities when the unexpected arrives.</p> <p>Exceeds budgetary constraints without good justification.</p>	
Learning and improving	Acknowledges own development needs and seeks new skills, knowledge and opportunities for learning; learns from others; adapts quickly and effectively to new people, situations and task demands; operates effectively in a range of roles and contexts, including times and situations of uncertainty.					<p>Proactively expands own knowledge and breadth of experience where professional skills are less developed.</p> <p>Takes responsibility for identifying wider training and development needs, and prioritises these with own Line Manager.</p> <p>Quickly learns from observing others and from own experience; is able to reflect on the process and what was learnt from it.</p> <p>Welcomes constructive feedback and is able to formulate positive action from it.</p> <p>Understands the policy-making process and the role of the 'professional in government' in order to maximise own contribution.</p> <p>Makes use of a wide range of tools and resources (for example, consulting departmental strategy documents, in-house libraries, research databases and online facilities, is able to pick a good mentor, etc.) to develop both professional skills and awareness of the policy area(s).</p> <p>Proactively seeks out opportunities to learn from a range of external sources, for example other government departments and from organisations outside the civil service.</p>	<p>Ignores or fails to act on feedback information.</p> <p>Just focuses on the development of technical skills.</p> <p>Makes same errors repeatedly; does not learn.</p> <p>Waits for learning or development opportunities to come to them; is not proactive in seeking out opportunities.</p> <p>Becomes disconcerted without clear rules and role requirements, and performance fluctuates or tends to decline.</p>	

Senior Research Officer		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap			
Critical analysis and decision making	Critically evaluates data and information with accuracy and perception, and is able to synthesise and use data from a variety of different methods appropriately. Makes sound, evidence-based decisions (and/or helps others to do so); assesses risk and defends decisions and action; responds effectively to unforeseen situations.					<p>Accurately and thoroughly evaluates complex information for the purposes of advice or recommendation; does so in a timely fashion.</p> <p>Assesses the relevance of research information to the task in hand.</p> <p>Accurately identifies where there are gaps in the evidence base and makes sound recommendations for how this can be managed.</p> <p>Identifies salient points and trends from research or other information, and draws out sound, logical inferences, for example picks out the key messages from dense datasets.</p> <p>Provides well-researched options, weighing and balancing conflicting information.</p> <p>Assesses the suitability for purpose of alternative research methods.</p> <p>Conducts a risk analysis of an evidence base to ensure that the advice is sound, for example understands the trade-offs in balancing the quality and timing of a project delivery.</p> <p>Rigorously assesses outcomes against original objectives.</p>	<p>Decisions, advice and appraisals of information are based on snap judgements or scanty/inappropriate evaluation.</p> <p>Misunderstands complex datasets.</p> <p>Misapplies research methodology.</p> <p>Does not conduct risk assessments or outcome appraisals.</p> <p>Fails to integrate and weigh conflicting evidence.</p> <p>Becomes distracted by unimportant information; fails 'to see the wood for the trees'.</p>	
Constructive thinking	Thinks imaginatively whilst keeping the goal in mind; understands the bigger picture and can make the link between issues; shows an open mind, with the intellectual rigour to generate original ideas and develop practical solutions from them; able to facilitate, encourage and build upon the ideas of others.					<p>Looks beneath the surface of a request for advice or a piece of research; thinks laterally and explores different angles critically and analytically.</p> <p>Challenges the accepted wisdom and assumptions in order to find better ways of doing things.</p> <p>Develops scenarios from possible outcomes, identifying associated risks and ways to counter them.</p> <p>Reframes a vague or unhelpful research question to one that can provide outputs that meets the customer's needs.</p> <p>Actively explores and develops own ideas; facilitates others in generating ideas.</p> <p>Brings a fresh approach to devising research methods, for example designing questionnaires and modifying a methodology.</p> <p>Generates imaginative and useful hypotheses which can be tested.</p> <p>Balances the need to focus on detail while taking account of the 'big picture'.</p>	<p>Considers only one approach to the problem-solving process.</p> <p>Always recommends the precedent without considering other options.</p> <p>Inflexible; prematurely rejects unusual ideas as impractical rather than seeking to develop them.</p> <p>Produces few ideas or lacks imagination, creativity or new insights.</p>	
Professional expertise	Demonstrates the detailed knowledge and experience necessary for the job of Government Social Researcher; expressing the core technical capability, knowledge and awareness.					<p>As for Research Officer, plus the following:</p> <p>At least two years' or more successful experience of working in applied social research, in which strong analytical skills have been clearly demonstrated. This can include work towards the successful completion of a postgraduate qualification with a strong research/research methods component.</p> <p>Experience of having had direct responsibility for the management of commissioned research or for undertaking social or other relevant research projects of a significant scale. The above also needs to include some experience of having worked with other analysts, for example economists and statisticians.</p> <p>Thorough and detailed knowledge of the main quantitative, qualitative and evaluation research methods, and experience of their use in more complex projects.</p> <p>Understands the pros and cons of different research methods so can advise, critique and make independent direct use of same.</p> <p>Uses a range of analytical techniques to carry out in-house analysis and briefing work.</p> <p>Up-to-date knowledge of methodological developments, including the role of innovative methodologies; applies innovative methods when and where appropriate; makes use of appropriate new developments from outside the civil service.</p> <p>Draws upon a track record of designing medium-sized, or more complex, projects to translate a policy question into a viable research specification or in-house project.</p> <p>Specifies, commissions and manages research projects; works within agreed budgets.</p> <p>Understands the basics of research planning, including bidding timetables, the need to think ahead and to liaise with policy divisions.</p> <p>Meets the social research needs of several divisions and areas, for example through consulting with other stakeholders and analysts at an early stage, clarifying objectives and setting deliverable goals.</p> <p>Contributes effectively to research steering groups and advisory boards.</p> <p>Has appropriate IT skills where the post requires them.</p> <p>Good knowledge of analytical techniques and the ability to apply them to address key questions.</p> <p>Weighs up competing sources of data and identifies a clear line to take.</p> <p>Assesses whether a contractor's report is based on a sound approach and robust analysis.</p> <p>Aware of the appropriate format and style for oral and written communication for a range of customers.</p> <p>Overall an ability to manage independently the entire procurement process for all but the most complex projects, including budgetary requirements.</p> <p>Effective project management and organisational skills, and an ability to deliver to demanding deadlines.</p> <p>Works with policy customers and contractors, and is able to identify problems and solutions.</p> <p>Makes sound judgements about when a piece of work is fit for purpose.</p> <p>Negotiates trade-offs between quality and timeliness in a credible way</p> <p>Takes responsibility and action to ensure that the legal and ethical compliance needs of research projects are met; knows when to seek further support on legal or ethical issues.</p> <p>Incorporates best practice guidance into research specification and management.</p> <p>Liaises successfully with ethics committees, and other monitoring/compliance committees, for particular projects.</p> <p>Applies data protection principles, where appropriate, to particular projects.</p> <p>Responds in a positive way to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.</p>	<p>Sticks to using a narrow range of analytical techniques whatever question is being addressed.</p> <p>Fails to apply new methods where that would be appropriate.</p> <p>Displays poor judgement in assessing whether a piece of work is fit for purpose.</p> <p>Unable to trade off timeliness and quality in a way that meets the needs of the customer.</p> <p>Fails to manage key components in project management processes, for example neglects deadlines or budgets.</p> <p>Fails to incorporate best practice ethical guidelines when drawing up research specifications.</p> <p>Lacks precision in ensuring that legal issues are addressed.</p>	

Senior Research Officer		Your current assessment		Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable			
Developing constructive relationships	Uses interpersonal and other communication skills to build rapport with others; shows an awareness of the effects of own behaviour on others, and understands their situations and concerns; values diversity and shows flexibility of style.				<p>Is able to build productive and co-operative relationships with people from diverse backgrounds, for example contractors, Senior Civil Servants and academics.</p> <p>Works co-operatively and effectively with others in a shared outcome, including working with other teams.</p> <p>Develops and utilises internal and external networks, for example invites external representation on advisory and steering groups and proactively assists others to commission and manage research.</p> <p>Makes use of the GSR network to explore opportunities for cross-cutting research.</p> <p>Listens actively and demonstrates an understanding of the motivations and concerns of others, for example is able to broker a negotiation with a contractor.</p> <p>Involves others in co-operative decision-making and checks that agreement has been reached.</p> <p>Accurately anticipates the impact on others of actions taken and manages the downside.</p>	<p>Decisions and actions suggest that the concerns or issues of others are overlooked.</p> <p>Does not support or mentor colleagues.</p> <p>Does not network inside or outside the team.</p> <p>Resists efforts to encourage co-operation, preferring to work independently.</p> <p>Interacts with few colleagues.</p>
Communicating with impact	Communicates written and oral information clearly, concisely and persuasively; communicates own viewpoint succinctly and defends it appropriately; facilitates discussions effectively to achieve clear outcomes.				<p>Communicates written and oral information clearly; avoids the unnecessary use of jargon and technical terms.</p> <p>Presents a compelling argument, in writing or verbally, for a particular course of action.</p> <p>Able to stimulate interest in social research and its applications; persuades others – such as Senior Civil Servants – of the value of social research to the policy process.</p> <p>Develops effective communication links with other Social Researchers and analysts to provide appropriate collaborative support to the policy process.</p> <p>Selects the most appropriate method and style of communication to have the maximum impact on a diverse range of situations and audiences.</p> <p>Communicates professional judgements regarding the application of social research methods; defends position/viewpoint in the face of opposition or challenge.</p> <p>Summarises the salient points in a debate or disagreement.</p> <p>Can present difficult or unwelcome news or information in a constructive fashion.</p> <p>Demonstrates effective timing when asserting or defending own position.</p>	<p>Oral and written communication lacks clarity; too much jargon and too many technical terms.</p> <p>Is reluctant or unable to defend own position or judgement.</p> <p>Unable to adjust influencing style to suit the needs of the audience.</p> <p>Fails to communicate difficult messages.</p> <p>Oral and written communication is poorly structured, poorly timed and/or the message lacks persuasiveness.</p>
Leading and directing	Takes an active and prominent role in providing direction to staff and contractors; champions high standards; gains the trust, commitment and co-operation of others.				<p>Motivates and encourages co-operation between team members to achieve shared outcomes.</p> <p>Delegates effectively and encourages team members to carry out tasks.</p> <p>Establishes clear objectives, for example when managing research contracts.</p> <p>Gives timely and constructive feedback.</p> <p>Manages research processes and contractors so ensuring the quality of results and methodological rigour.</p> <p>Monitors and reviews the performance and progress of research contractors and anticipates necessary action.</p> <p>Provides support and mentoring to colleagues and to new, or less experienced, members of staff.</p> <p>Readily provides technical leadership and support for colleagues and/or the department for a specific topic area.</p> <p>Demonstrates sufficient technical 'authority' by taking the lead in recommending solutions to fill strategic gaps.</p> <p>Is able to reassure colleagues on social research issues.</p> <p>For those who line manage:</p> <p>Establishes clear objectives with direct reports; delegates effectively, and gives timely and constructive feedback on performance.</p>	<p>Either fails to delegate or does not take into account the strengths/development needs of each team member when allocating tasks.</p> <p>Does not provide feedback (either positive or constructive criticism) relating to aspects of performance.</p> <p>Objectives are poorly defined or are not explained.</p> <p>Does not actively oversee the activity of contractors to ensure co-ordination of effort.</p>

Principal Research Officer		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap			
Policy & Delivery Focus	Understands and directs effort to meet the customer's needs. Works in partnership with other analysts, policy colleagues and wider customers to provide a relevant and high-quality contribution that adds value to government policy decision-making.					<p>Invests time to understand the customer's 'core' needs and priorities; demonstrates that understanding to the customer; develops services to meet those needs.</p> <p>Identifies new customers and their needs, and expands services to existing customers.</p> <p>Measures customer satisfaction and acts on this information.</p> <p>Shapes the customer's expectations and needs by educating them about what social research can achieve.</p> <p>Works in partnership with other analysts and departments to achieve joint customer goals.</p> <p>Anticipates and manages potential conflicts of interests with different customers.</p> <p>Aware of what is going on in the political and civil service world, so remaining focused on what is important.</p> <p>Ensures the provision of appropriate and timely analysis to support policy making and policy implementation.</p> <p>Anticipates potential long-term consequences for customers and stakeholders of the work done.</p> <p>Challenges customers helpfully.</p>	<p>Lacks a clear understanding of the customer's needs.</p> <p>Fails to anticipate or predict the impact on the customer of the action taken.</p> <p>Fails to take account of external changes which may impact on the customer.</p> <p>Waits for the customer to make contact.</p>	
Delivering Results	Plans work activities, reviewing and prioritising as necessary, to achieve high standards and meet deadlines; is proactive and uses initiative when problems arise or progress is slow. Shows resilience under pressure and does not let setbacks affect performance.					<p>Sets out clear research objectives and expected outcomes; defines key delivery objectives for staff/department.</p> <p>Prioritises effectively between conflicting demands in order to meet deadlines.</p> <p>Adapts plans to account for changed circumstances; takes corrective action following a setback; delivers even where there are complex and changing requirements.</p> <p>Organises resources to deliver within time and budget, and in accordance with acceptable standards, for example managing multiple external commercial research projects.</p> <p>Manages budgets effectively, estimating, forecasting and monitoring spends and taking action to deal with any overspends; ensures the legal aspects of projects are managed effectively.</p> <p>Reviews programmes of work for alignment with policy and strategic objectives; systematically monitors progress against plans; identifies risks and acts to deal with obstacles or setbacks.</p> <p>Resilient and flexible; maintains 'can do' attitude when the pressure is on.</p>	<p>Spends too much time analysing problems at the expense of finding solutions.</p> <p>Does not comply with organisational or legal requirements.</p> <p>Continually 'fire fighting'.</p> <p>Getting bogged down in the technical detail.</p> <p>Automatically blames self when things go wrong; too self-critical.</p> <p>Only takes responsibility when things go well.</p> <p>Avoids dealing with difficult problems.</p> <p>Reactive approach to taking action; sits back and waits for things to happen.</p> <p>Fails to control the budget.</p>	
Learning and Improving	Acknowledges own development needs and seeks new skills, knowledge and opportunities for learning; learns from others; adapts quickly and effectively to new people, situations and task demands; operates effectively in a range of roles and contexts, including times and situations of uncertainty.					<p>Is aware of own training needs.</p> <p>Takes responsibility for own training and development needs, and seeks opportunities to develop, for example deputising for more senior colleagues.</p> <p>Actively seeks feedback, including from own staff, for example engages in 360 degree feedback on own performance.</p> <p>Is able to make use of ambiguous or blunt feedback to formulate positive action points for self and the team.</p> <p>Is proactive in keeping up to speed with new methodological developments and how they might be used within the department in different policy contexts.</p> <p>Learns from experience to develop relationships; understands how best to adapt own style to maximise influence with policy makers.</p> <p>Gives sufficient priority to staff development/performance management and assists staff in prioritising training and development needs.</p> <p>Reviews work in order to learn from past experience or mistakes, and shares lessons to be learned with the team.</p> <p>Readily able to switch attention between different projects.</p> <p>Performs effectively in ambiguous or new situations where there may be the need to define own role.</p>	<p>Fails to seek feedback on performance; too sensitive or vulnerable to receive or make use of feedback.</p> <p>Lacks awareness of personal strengths and development areas.</p> <p>Fails to adjust own ways of working in light of changed circumstances; does not adapt to changed priorities.</p> <p>Unable to apply existing skills/knowledge to new situations.</p>	

Principal Research Officer		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap			
Critical analysis and decision making	Critically evaluates data and information with accuracy and perception, and is able to synthesise and use data from a variety of different methods appropriately. Makes sound, evidence-based decisions (and/or helps others to do so); assesses risk and defends decisions and action; responds effectively to unforeseen situations.					<p>Makes objective and timely decisions based on the best available evidence and sound analysis.</p> <p>Provides convincing arguments to justify a course of action.</p> <p>Uses evidence-based arguments, even when under pressure.</p> <p>Decides on a course of action independently, or with others, as the need arises.</p> <p>Takes considered risks and assesses and manages the risks; is not deterred by incomplete or inconclusive data.</p> <p>Manages crises effectively and gives confidence to others; quickly finds solutions, acts decisively and pragmatically.</p> <p>Gets to the heart of an issue; subjects information to a thorough analysis in order to ensure high-quality decisions and recommendations.</p> <p>Evaluates and integrates research information from a variety of sources to come to logical conclusions.</p> <p>Communicates decisions clearly and explains the reasons.</p> <p>Rigorously assesses outcomes against original objectives.</p>	<p>Fails to evaluate the consequences of an intended course of action.</p> <p>Decisions overlook the weight of evidence or are made on a subjective basis; based on opinion or hearsay.</p> <p>Depends on the input from others in taking decisions/action; does not act on own initiative.</p> <p>Hesitates to make decisions unless data are 100% sound.</p> <p>Lacks confidence and assertiveness in defending actions.</p> <p>Overlooks problems and/or allows them to escalate.</p> <p>Does not communicate decisions to others.</p>	
Constructive thinking	Thinks imaginatively whilst keeping the goal in mind; understands the bigger picture and can make the link between issues; shows an open mind, with the intellectual rigour to generate original ideas and develop practical solutions from them; able to facilitate, encourage and build upon the ideas of others.					<p>Explores creative ways to solve problems, putting forward ideas outside familiar boundaries.</p> <p>Champions and encourages others to develop new approaches or address problems in new ways.</p> <p>Accurately assesses the value of a good idea or new approach; builds upon and develops those further.</p> <p>Open to insights and new ideas, but looks for evidence to support them.</p> <p>Thinks around a problem; reframes it; questions assumptions, for example is able to reframe a research question to maximise assistance to the customer.</p> <p>Shows a grasp of linkages between an existing problem and applications from other situations.</p> <p>Looks beyond the immediate issue – identifies trends and areas for further research or analysis.</p> <p>Identifies gaps in the social research evidence base that relate to key policy objectives and suggests methodologically robust ways to fill them.</p>	<p>Solves problems reactively.</p> <p>Encourages a ‘play it safe’ mentality among own staff.</p> <p>Sticks firmly with what has worked in the past; always thinks within the box.</p> <p>Seeks to close down further discussion as soon as a workable solution has been identified.</p> <p>Fails to grasp the bigger picture or to make the relevant links between different issues.</p> <p>Fails to think laterally when framing research questions.</p>	
Professional expertise	Demonstrates the detailed knowledge and experience necessary for the job of Government Social Researcher; expressing the core technical capability, knowledge and awareness.					<p>As for Senior Research Officer, plus the following:</p> <p>Established track record (at least four or more years) in designing, carrying out or managing social research, and providing research-based advice and briefings.</p> <p>Established track record of developing and managing research projects, employing the full range of research methods.</p> <p>Supports Senior Research Officers/Research Officers in the selection of methods and can deal with more complex problems without detailed knowledge of a project.</p> <p>Provides an overview of research methods for a wide portfolio of projects, and provides a supervisory/sounding board for team leaders where appropriate.</p> <p>Draws upon extensive experience of the design, development, commissioning and management of projects and on in-house analytical activity to ensure appropriate social research input to policy decisions.</p> <p>Proactive in helping policy divisions and directorates identify their information needs and evidence gaps; translates unfocused requests and ideas into effective research designs.</p> <p>Brings a strategic view to the planning process and is able to assess priorities.</p> <p>Understands, and can work within, the budgetary requirements at the research project level.</p> <p>Provides and supervises briefing activity based on analytical work.</p> <p>Raises the level of debate by encouraging greater co-operation and communication between researchers across the department and further afield; provides links between academic and GSR colleagues.</p> <p>Reports complex and often conflicting research information to senior non-specialists/customers; assists them to isolate the key facts, discern trends and draw implications.</p> <p>As Senior Research Officer but can draw upon more extensive experience of research procurement and contractor and financial management.</p> <p>Strong organisational and work planning skills.</p> <p>Ability to anticipate and manage risk on key projects.</p> <p>Widens and manages the contractor base; identifies the appropriate contractor for the job and negotiates effectively.</p> <p>Develops a research co-ordination strategy; understands what other analysts can contribute (for example economists and statisticians) and how their own (and their own team’s) work fits into the strategy.</p> <p>As Senior Research Officer, but with an overview knowledge to apply to multiple, or complex, or potentially controversial or high-profile projects.</p>	<p>Fails to identify the key messages from complex research information.</p> <p>Needs a long lead time before able to offer constructive support to other Social Researchers on a project.</p> <p>Policy divisions and directorates are left to identify their own research and information needs.</p> <p>Sticks to a very limited pool of contractors when commissioning research.</p> <p>Gives too much weight to one priority.</p> <p>Neglects budgetary constraints.</p> <p>Lacks a clear understanding of how other analysts can work constructively with Social Researchers.</p> <p>Misapplies legal advice or ethical considerations to the design and management of complex research projects.</p>	

Principal Research Officer		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap			
Developing constructive relationships	Uses interpersonal and other communication skills to build rapport with others; shows an awareness of the effects of own behaviour on others, and understands their situations and concerns; values diversity and shows flexibility of style.					<p>Is able to build rapport with a wide range of people, even in difficult situations; seeks to make colleagues feel comfortable when they are expressing different points of view.</p> <p>Co-operates and works well with others in the pursuit of social research goals.</p> <p>Encourages and accommodates working across teams.</p> <p>Balances assertiveness and consideration in dealing with others.</p> <p>Invests time in networking with colleagues and potential clients; builds strategic alliances with others.</p> <p>Uses the GSR network effectively to actively pursue options for cross-cutting research.</p> <p>Anticipates conflict and implements solutions, for example accurately appraises the behaviour of others and uses this to constructively manage a difficult situation.</p> <p>Does not allow stress or difficult situations to undermine relationships.</p> <p>Develops relationships on the basis of trustworthiness, integrity and reliability.</p>	<p>Does not engage effectively with peers, subordinates and/or superiors.</p> <p>Has little interest in collective benefit.</p> <p>Spends little time networking.</p> <p>Tends to reinforce 'silo' mentality.</p> <p>Is dismissive or authoritarian when others express their views and opinions.</p> <p>Withholds information.</p> <p>Relationships are undermined when under pressure.</p>	
Communicating with impact	Communicates written and oral information clearly, concisely and persuasively; communicates own viewpoint succinctly and defends it appropriately; facilitates discussions effectively to achieve clear outcomes.					<p>Presents complex and ambiguous oral or written information in a user-friendly way in order to facilitate understanding.</p> <p>Influences and negotiates effectively with a range of stakeholders/contractors and in different situations, even when the audience is sceptical or hostile; adapts style to the needs of each situation; can overcome resistance in others.</p> <p>Provides impartial and balanced advice, using a sound application of knowledge and expertise, for example communicates an understanding of policy realities but still represents social research evidence.</p> <p>Writes in a clear, succinct and engaging manner, incorporating financial and analytical information as necessary; can edit and summarise written or visual material.</p> <p>Listens and takes account of diverse views; summarises and reflects back own understanding.</p> <p>Encourages and supports staff in developing their ability to communicate with impact in the policy process.</p> <p>Questions and challenges others in order to promote own and others' understanding of alternative ideas and viewpoints, for example can chair a meeting effectively.</p> <p>Plans effective communication and dissemination strategies that are based on an understanding of the needs of diverse audiences.</p> <p>Liaises with media and communications colleagues to ensure the timely and representative release of key evidence findings.</p> <p>Is an enthusiastic advocate of social research; can sell an idea or argument.</p>	<p>Is unable to adjust the tone or content of a message to suit the needs of the audience.</p> <p>Poor timing and/or lacks assertiveness when defending own position.</p> <p>Advice and judgements are partial and lack balance.</p> <p>Fails to act on opportunities to advocate the value of social research.</p> <p>Does not listen effectively and/or fails to take on board points made by others.</p>	
Leading and directing	Takes an active and prominent role in providing direction to staff and contractors; champions high standards; gains the trust, commitment and co-operation of others.					<p>Motivates and coaches the team to give of their best; supports the team in overcoming obstacles and helps them to learn from this.</p> <p>Co-ordinates and monitors team performance; takes action to minimise barriers to success.</p> <p>Clarifies and communicates targets and objectives with staff.</p> <p>Delegates appropriately to staff; encourages them to take on new and challenging work that stretches and develops them.</p> <p>Evaluates performance and takes prompt action to address performance shortfalls or inappropriate behaviour.</p> <p>Adapts leadership approach to suit the individual, the situation or the culture.</p> <p>Gets to know the individual and their aspirations; uses this to anticipate and pick-up on staff concerns.</p> <p>Takes the lead on a number of 'technical' matters within the wider GSR/analytical community, for example this could be methodological or an evidence base.</p> <p>Praises achievements and celebrates success within the team.</p> <p>Actively empowers staff to take responsibility for their work, supporting them to take risks where appropriate.</p> <p>Co-ordinates, monitors and manages the performance of research contractors, and takes necessary action.</p> <p>Is a role model for standards of behaviour that promote diversity.</p>	<p>Does not encourage team members to take on stretching tasks and/or fails to help staff identify their learning needs.</p> <p>Has a single leadership style that is applied in all settings.</p> <p>Does not encourage risk-taking amongst staff and is not supportive when problems occur.</p> <p>Is directive in style and does not empower staff to make their own decisions.</p> <p>Fails to demonstrate fairness and even-handedness when dealing with staff issues.</p>	

Senior Principal Research Officer		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap			
Policy & Delivery Focus	Understands and directs effort to meet the customer's needs. Works in partnership with other analysts, policy colleagues and wider customers to provide a relevant and high-quality contribution that adds value to government policy decision-making.					<p>Proactively directs services to meet customers' immediate, long-term and developing needs.</p> <p>Regularly reviews programmes of work with research and policy colleagues to ensure that they are closely aligned with customers' strategic objectives.</p> <p>Actively manages the customer relationship; challenging self and staff to grow the customer base and enhance the impact of the work for the customer; forges links with other parts of the civil service to enhance services to the customer.</p> <p>Develops policies and encourages the team to formally measure, track and act on customer satisfaction indices.</p> <p>Shapes and manages customer expectations, for example keeps in touch with the changing priorities of the civil service so can influence early debate of the issues.</p> <p>Sensitive to the customer's wider political and organisational priorities.</p> <p>Actively decides what work to take on; assesses the value and importance of a request and the associated opportunities and risks.</p> <p>Identifies opportunities to improve delivery through partnership.</p> <p>Communicates key customer concerns, including political issues, to junior staff.</p> <p>Keeps self and department well placed to respond to strategic changes in the division/department and the wider civil service.</p> <p>Tells the customer what they may not want to hear and assists them in managing bad news.</p>	<p>Loses sight of the 'big picture'.</p> <p>Fights own corner, ignoring wider interests.</p> <p>Works only from own perspective or assumptions about the world.</p> <p>Does not consider the impact on the wider policy agenda.</p> <p>Fails to make links between the needs of different customers.</p>	
Delivering Results	Plans work activities, reviewing and prioritising as necessary, to achieve high standards and meet deadlines; is proactive and uses initiative when problems arise or progress is slow. Shows resilience under pressure and does not let setbacks affect performance.					<p>Reviews progress across the research team; takes action when required to ensure delivery.</p> <p>Drives research programmes along; ensures key objectives are met; ensures budgets are sufficient; originates action and actively influences events.</p> <p>Accurately assesses the importance, resource/budget implications and risks associated with a research programme.</p> <p>Determines the likely blocks to progression in a programme and is able to generate solutions.</p> <p>Defines the need for high-quality research, for example to support policy formulation.</p> <p>Develops research strategy that is directly relevant to the policy needs of the department/division; links this with budget planning.</p> <p>Takes account of the different analytical functions in developing research plans; good cross-functional awareness.</p> <p>Able to stand ground in the face of opposition; resilient and persevering; continues to strive towards a goal in the face of setbacks.</p> <p>Independent and self-reliant; conveys a realistic confidence in own ability to select the appropriate course of action and in the likely success of own initiative.</p>	<p>Intellectual debate at the expense of action.</p> <p>Commits to delivery regardless of the impact on the team or self.</p> <p>Does not manage risks.</p> <p>Fails to integrate strategy with action.</p> <p>Concentrates on operational rather than strategic matters.</p> <p>Fails to manage delivery objectives with others.</p> <p>Takes a confrontational position with other departments.</p> <p>Miscalculates the impact on the research budget of decisions taken; fails to set-up a contingency fund for overspends.</p> <p>Blames the team when things go wrong.</p>	
Learning and Improving	Acknowledges own development needs and seeks new skills, knowledge and opportunities for learning; learns from others; adapts quickly and effectively to new people, situations and task demands; operates effectively in a range of roles and contexts, including times and situations of uncertainty.					<p>Encourages a learning and improving culture among the Social Researchers, and an environment where knowledge is shared and expanded upon, for example through seminars.</p> <p>Increases divisional/departmental effectiveness by building own 'capability' and that of the team.</p> <p>Encourages staff to consider new and innovative methods in social research and evaluation.</p> <p>Promotes the benefits of working in new ways and helps staff to adapt.</p> <p>Actively seeks out feedback on own team/departmental outputs, as well as self; monitors the standards of service provided.</p> <p>Continues to develop as a leader who is able to offer a wider vision for the division and will motivate staff.</p> <p>Invests time to keep in touch with the changing priorities of the civil service and makes staff aware of the implications of those changes.</p> <p>Identifies, shares and applies good practice; seeks to learn from others' diverse experiences.</p> <p>Switches attention quickly and effectively when necessary in response to task demands, situations and changes in priorities and personalities.</p> <p>Copes readily with the unexpected, for example applies existing knowledge and experience to new situations.</p> <p>Adapts own approach to different departmental and organisational cultures and norms.</p>	<p>Focuses on developing the capability of self only.</p> <p>Talks about change but does not implement it; does not 'walk the talk'.</p> <p>Satisfied with the quality of service offered; does not seek to continuously improve; fails to promote formal mechanisms to facilitate continuous improvement.</p> <p>Prefers to stick to a narrow range of roles and avoids new environments, situations or experiences; fails to value the diverse experience of own team.</p>	

Senior Principal Research Officer		Your current assessment		Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable			
Critical analysis and decision making	Critically evaluates data and information with accuracy and perception, and is able to synthesise and use data from a variety of different methods appropriately. Makes sound, evidence-based decisions (and/or helps others to do so); assesses risk and defends decisions and action; responds effectively to unforeseen situations.				<p>Gives appropriate consideration to facts and alternatives when taking decisions and solving problems.</p> <p>Makes timely and objective decisions based on the best available evidence and sound analysis.</p> <p>Gathers relevant information for the purposes of problem solving and decision making; isolates key facts from trivia.</p> <p>Actively explores different perspectives when evaluating data; consults widely to inform this process.</p> <p>Takes considered risks, and assesses and manages the risk.</p> <p>Responds decisively to unforeseen situations.</p> <p>Assimilates complex information quickly and accurately.</p> <p>Makes accurate use of logic and draws sound inferences from the available information and helps others to do the same.</p> <p>Determines appropriate outputs for the department and establishes benchmarks as appropriate.</p> <p>Communicates decisions clearly and explains the reasoning.</p> <p>Defends own and department's decisions with reference to fact and logical reasoning.</p>	<p>Decisions made on the basis of personal bias.</p> <p>Is indecisive; procrastinates over decisions, overlooks problems and allows them to escalate.</p> <p>Fails to take account of risks and implications of solutions, decisions and action.</p> <p>Decisions are based on opinion, rumour and hearsay, rather than fact.</p> <p>Fails to listen when others raise problems.</p> <p>Solutions and decisions do not take account of the overall departmental objectives and key outcomes.</p>
Constructive thinking	Thinks imaginatively whilst keeping the goal in mind; understands the bigger picture and can make the link between issues; shows an open mind with the intellectual rigour to generate original ideas and develop practical solutions from them; able to facilitate, encourage and build upon the ideas of others.				<p>Actively encourages the use of innovative research methods and analytical techniques among team members to deliver results to complex questions.</p> <p>Creates an environment where people can feel safe to generate ideas or explore new approaches.</p> <p>Explores ways to improve processes and services; thinks innovatively and critically about delivering policy and services.</p> <p>Generates workable solutions to complex problems while taking into account the full range of stakeholder perspective and risks.</p> <p>Finds solutions to unforeseen problems.</p> <p>Defines and redefines the problem; considers alternative options; looks beyond the immediate problem to spot trends and links.</p> <p>Integrates information from a wide range of sources; sees interrelationships.</p>	<p>Accepts the practical constraints uncritically and works within them.</p> <p>Gives too much weight to one aspect in a complex situation.</p> <p>Proposed solutions lack clarity.</p> <p>Fails to make connections between ideas and solutions.</p> <p>Focuses solely on the detail.</p> <p>Fails to support or encourage own staff to think outside the box.</p> <p>Rewards staff who habitually 'play it safe'.</p> <p>Does not acknowledge others' good ideas or innovations.</p>
Professional expertise	Demonstrates the detailed knowledge and experience necessary for the job of Government Social Researcher; expressing the core technical capability, knowledge and awareness.				<p>As for Principal Research Officer, plus the following:</p> <p>Strong track record in designing and managing a portfolio of high-profile and complex projects, and providing detailed research-based advice and briefings.</p> <p>Provides an overview of research methods for a wide portfolio of projects, and provides a supervisory/ sounding board for team leaders where appropriate.</p> <p>Makes use of an established track record in research formulation at the overall programme level.</p> <p>Works with other analysts and stakeholders to negotiate priorities within the overall work programme.</p> <p>Grasps the 'big picture' and works within the budgetary requirements at the overall programme level.</p> <p>Oversees complex high-profile and cross-cutting briefing work.</p> <p>As Principal Research Officer but with an additional ability to provide an overview management role on a wide portfolio of work, across a number of teams.</p> <p>Develops a research strategy; defends and defines the research programme, including budget increases.</p> <p>Understands the different contributions of analytical disciplines and frames research to make use of this.</p> <p>As Principal Research Officer, but with an overview knowledge to apply to a wider portfolio of work.</p> <p>Develops the research ethics framework for GSR and ensure appropriate support for departments.</p> <p>Effectively challenges and shapes research practices where appropriate.</p>	<p>Insufficient breadth and depth of experience to draw upon in high-profile briefing work.</p> <p>Tells junior staff what methodological approach to use rather than helping them to think for themselves.</p> <p>Oversimplifies the issues in cross-cutting briefing work; insufficient regard to risks, threats and opportunities.</p> <p>Focuses too much on detail; fails to bring a strategic perspective.</p> <p>Fails to appreciate the capabilities of different analytical disciplines; treats them all the same.</p> <p>Fails to negotiate priorities with other analysts and stakeholders.</p> <p>Fails to encourage co-operation and communication between other Social Researchers, both within the civil service and externally.</p> <p>Ethical frameworks are not kept up to date.</p>

Senior Principal Research Officer		Your current assessment		Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable			
Developing constructive relationships	Uses interpersonal and other communication skills to build rapport with others; shows an awareness of the effects of own behaviour on others, and understands their situations and concerns; values diversity and shows flexibility of style.				<p>Establishes and maintains constructive relationships with people at all levels, especially where there are difficulties or differences of opinion, for example can establish working relationships with antagonistic individuals.</p> <p>Does not allow stress or difficult situations to undermine relationships; identifies when others are under pressure and is able to work constructively and flexibly with them.</p> <p>Maintains relationships with the ‘top of the office’, i.e. Ministers and special advisers.</p> <p>Actively builds, shapes and contributes to the wider GSR network; establishes a network of contacts with others who value social research; actively explores and identifies where shared interests with others may lie.</p> <p>Is proactive in developing the public role, for example serving on steering committees and furthering relationships with research councils.</p> <p>Promotes consensus and agreement through the diplomatic handling of potential disagreements.</p> <p>Able to accurately appraise the real concerns and agendas of others.</p> <p>Shares information readily to support relationship building.</p> <p>Identifies, initiates and builds strategic alliances with a wide range of others; forges instrumental relationships with key strategic stakeholders.</p> <p>Works collaboratively with others in achieving shared strategic goals.</p> <p>Develops relationships on the basis of trustworthiness, integrity and reliability.</p>	<p>Does not engage effectively with peers, subordinates and/or superiors.</p> <p>Overlooks the need to develop the ‘public face’ of social research.</p> <p>Does not take steps to manage upwards and engage more senior colleagues.</p> <p>Tactless and insensitive when handling disagreements; does not push for consensus and collaboration.</p> <p>Withholds information.</p> <p>Relationships are neglected when under pressure.</p>
Communicating with impact	Communicates written and oral information clearly, concisely and persuasively; communicates own viewpoint succinctly and defends it appropriately; facilitates discussions effectively to achieve clear outcomes.				<p>Communicates written and oral information clearly, fluently, concisely, and in a compelling fashion, for example provides timely communication on policy priorities, roles and responsibilities to promote effective business planning, ensuring that collective evidence needs are met.</p> <p>Is able to hold an audience’s attention in groups or one to one.</p> <p>Demonstrates skill in negotiating and influencing in a diverse range of situations, for example influencing the attitudes and opinions of others as well as gaining agreement for proposals, plans and ideas.</p> <p>Facilitates discussions and advocates the use of social research evidence at a strategic level to internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>Seeks and makes appropriate use of opportunities to promote the value of social research.</p> <p>Actively promotes internal and external knowledge transfer through promulgating key findings on the evidence base.</p> <p>Makes an immediate positive impression on others; has presence; comes across with force and credibility, for example when dealing with the media.</p> <p>Prepared to defend and promote the value of social research, even in a high-profile situation, for example when making a successful case to superiors for more resources or support.</p>	<p>Is not active in influencing the opinions and views of others by highlighting the benefits to them of social research.</p> <p>Communication is focused within a static network; does not extend the sphere of influence by broadening own network of contacts.</p> <p>Fails to make an impression on wider stakeholders; fails to advocate the use of social research at the strategic level to stakeholders.</p>
Leading and directing	Takes an active and prominent role in providing direction to staff and contractors; champions high standards; gains the trust, commitment and co-operation of others.				<p>Motivates and coaches others to achieve the best for themselves and their team.</p> <p>Inspires enthusiasm, commitment and creativity.</p> <p>Adapts own leadership approach to suit the individual, the situation or the culture.</p> <p>Is active in collaborating and managing upwards in the organisation.</p> <p>Acts to raise the profile of social research outside the team and department.</p> <p>Agrees clear responsibilities and objectives to achieve results; takes action to review progress.</p> <p>Evaluates performance and takes prompt action to tackle poor performance or inappropriate behaviour.</p> <p>Allows and encourages individuals to take responsibility; knows when to step in and when not to do so.</p> <p>Communicates key changes in policy or political background to team members.</p> <p>Identifies and brings on talent, including amongst under-represented groups.</p> <p>Engages with research contractors to ensure that working practices and relationships facilitate the delivery of high-quality work.</p> <p>Maximises and co-ordinates the use of available resources; seeks additional resources where necessary.</p> <p>Champions policies and actions that promote diversity.</p>	<p>Staff decisions do not reflect fairness and even-handedness.</p> <p>Style has a dampening and discouraging effect on the team; the team members fear, rather than learn from, problems or errors.</p> <p>Is inflexible in terms of leadership style and does not adapt to the needs of each individual.</p> <p>Is defensive on receiving feedback.</p> <p>Fails to note specific aspects of performance (whether positive or negative) and to give appropriate feedback.</p> <p>Does not empower staff to take responsibility.</p>

Chief Research Officer		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap			
Policy & Delivery Focus	Understands and directs effort to meet the customer's needs. Works in partnership with other analysts, policy colleagues and wider customers to provide a relevant and high-quality contribution that adds value to government policy decision-making.					<p>Works with partners to identify customers and to actively broaden the customer base; encourages other Social Researchers and analysts to do the same.</p> <p>Influences the customer's research priorities; shapes customer's internal dialogue and research agenda through asking them the right questions.</p> <p>Understands the implications of the latest research evidence for own policy area; shares this information with key stakeholders and customers.</p> <p>Anticipates customers' priorities; systematically ensures that the unit's research capability and evidence base is relevant to the short-term and strategic priorities of key customers.</p> <p>Consults with customers and partners rather than imposing solutions; involves stakeholders in deciding what has to be done and what can be done better.</p> <p>Works with customers, partners and wider stakeholders to achieve the best practical outcomes.</p> <p>Acutely aware of the potential political implications for customers of the research and develops contingency plans on how to manage this.</p> <p>Shares wider departmental and Whitehall considerations with staff to help them give politically aware advice.</p> <p>Works in partnership with customers to develop policy/delivery action plans in light of research findings.</p> <p>Helps the customer manage the unexpected.</p>	<p>Fails to consider the strategic needs of the customer; focuses just on the customer's immediate needs.</p> <p>Neglects to track the customer's changing priorities.</p> <p>Seeks to impose solutions.</p> <p>Lets things happen around them; fails to intervene or to shape the debate.</p> <p>Neglects other potential customers; fails to widen the customer pool.</p> <p>Does not put customers first.</p>	
Delivering Results	Plans work activities, reviewing and prioritising as necessary, to achieve high standards and meet deadlines; is proactive and uses initiative when problems arise or progress is slow. Shows resilience under pressure and does not let setbacks affect performance.					<p>Sets short- and long-term objectives for the unit; develops practical goals from wider strategic objectives; assists team leaders to do the same.</p> <p>Focuses the team on the priority customer outputs and delivers these.</p> <p>Accurately assesses the importance of a customer requirement and helps the team to do the same.</p> <p>Anticipates changing priorities and manages this through strategic contingency planning.</p> <p>Plans overall budgets with junior grades and secures these for the unit; reviews progress across the teams; is rigorous in monitoring and reviewing progress and performance across the unit; organises the work to deliver on time, to budget and to agreed quality standards, for example makes use of corporate financial reports to inform management decisions.</p> <p>Makes use of different analytical disciplines and diverse talents to deliver results.</p> <p>Defines and promotes consistent standards of research and analysis, for example sets the scientific and ethical standards for social research and ensures that these are consistent with Whitehall/industry standards.</p> <p>Implements decisions with energy and commitment.</p> <p>Acts as a 'critical friend' for the unit; stretches staff to meet objectives through asking them challenging questions.</p> <p>Challenges and is prepared to be challenged; is resilient and determined; is not deflected by obstacles or problems.</p> <p>Identifies what needs to be tackled at an early stage and acts pre-emptively, even when this is inconvenient.</p>	<p>Assumes people know what is required of them without being told.</p> <p>Focuses on the process rather than on getting results.</p> <p>Waits until problems become worse before acting.</p> <p>Loses energy in the face of setbacks.</p> <p>Fails to review delivery across the unit; focuses on one or two areas.</p> <p>Fails to translate a vision into a clear action plan.</p> <p>Fails to harness the strengths of different analytical disciplines in reaching delivery targets.</p>	
Learning and Improving	Acknowledges own development needs and seeks new skills, knowledge and opportunities for learning; learns from others; adapts quickly and effectively to new people, situations and task demands; operates effectively in a range of roles and contexts, including times and situations of uncertainty.					<p>Sets and promotes a learning and improving culture in the unit for all staff; ensures access and opportunities are equal across the unit, for example considers training across analytical disciplines.</p> <p>Systematically identifies the strengths of staff, the team and self; links this with the strategic needs of the department, for example by encouraging formal and informal peer review.</p> <p>Systematically applies learning from own and others' experience to develop forward action plans.</p> <p>Aligns own and the unit's development needs with the strategic needs of the department and GSR.</p> <p>Develops and embeds quality systems in all professional groups within the unit, for example works with the Head of Profession to embed systems for professional management and the development of staff.</p> <p>Keeps abreast of key developments within the department as well as in the wider internal and external research community.</p> <p>Initiates and leads change to make things happen; instrumental in promoting the benefits of working in new ways.</p> <p>Adapts quickly and flexibly to imposed change, whether unexpected or unwanted; helps the unit to do the same.</p> <p>Seeks new or different ideas and opportunities to learn; seeks to continuously improve own and the unit's performance.</p> <p>Exposes staff to the wider professional community of Social Researchers and other analytical disciplines in order to facilitate learning.</p>	<p>Ad hoc approach to professional development of self and the team.</p> <p>Unwillingness to absorb new ideas to embrace change.</p> <p>Unwilling to be exposed to risk or uncertainty.</p> <p>Takes contrary views as a personal criticism.</p>	

Chief Research Officer		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap			
Critical analysis and decision making	Critically evaluates data and information with accuracy and perception, and is able to synthesise and use data from a variety of different methods appropriately. Makes sound, evidence-based decisions (and/or helps others to do so); assesses risk and defends decisions and action; responds effectively to unforeseen situations.					<p>Integrates information from a range of sources and analytical disciplines to give balanced, politically aware advice that proactively informs policy and practice.</p> <p>Critically evaluates the methodological rigour and value of a wide range of research, and gives advice that reflects this assessment.</p> <p>Decides whether a social research programme is fit for purpose.</p> <p>Quality assures the social research output conducted by the unit; proactively links output to the strategic needs of the department.</p> <p>Appraises an urgent situation accurately and quickly; takes into account the risk of acting and not acting; judges well whether to escalate an issue upwards.</p> <p>Provides technical support to Social Researchers when they come under pressure; helps them to assess and manage risk.</p> <p>Homes in on key issues and principles; assimilates and weighs up complex, conflicting or ambiguous information.</p> <p>Seeks out and takes on board different perspectives and alternative explanations; uses this assessment to inform decision making.</p> <p>Makes decisions despite imperfect evidence and manages the associated risk.</p>	<p>Fails to manage or anticipate risk when making decisions under pressure.</p> <p>Ad hoc approach to quality control; fails to embed a robust quality control system for the unit's research output.</p> <p>Fails to provide technical advice and support to junior staff.</p> <p>Decisions fail to take into account the political sensitivities of partners and stakeholders.</p> <p>Fails to integrate research information from different analytical sources.</p>	
Constructive thinking	Thinks imaginatively whilst keeping the goal in mind; understands the bigger picture and can make the link between issues; shows an open mind, with the intellectual rigour to generate original ideas and develop practical solutions from them; able to facilitate, encourage and build upon the ideas of others.					<p>Challenges team leaders to consider new and innovative approaches to deliver results to complex questions.</p> <p>Rewards teams who approach issues in new ways, for example, delivering policy.</p> <p>Considers more than one way in which the strategic needs of the department can be met, for example identifies and implements innovative ways to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources and assets.</p> <p>Makes use of a variety of diverse information sources to challenge and stimulate own thinking and to generate solutions, for example makes use of academics or talents within the department.</p> <p>Systematically constructs and balances teams to maximise synergy and creative stimulation.</p> <p>Stimulates discussion with team leaders and consults widely to ensure that the basis of important decisions are sound.</p> <p>Recognises good ideas and sets up management processes to capture and use them.</p> <p>Facilitates and links the ideas and contributions from a range of analytical disciplines to generate robust solutions.</p> <p>Integrates new thinking with the immediate and strategic needs of the department.</p>	<p>Encourages fresh approaches to problem solving but fails to build in 'checks and balances' as part of a risk management process.</p> <p>Loses sight of the 'big picture'.</p> <p>Takes an overly cautious approach.</p> <p>Sticks to what has worked in the past.</p> <p>Works only from own perspective or assumptions about the world.</p>	
Professional expertise	Demonstrates the detailed knowledge and experience necessary for the job of Government Social Researcher; expressing the core technical capability, knowledge and awareness.					<p>Demonstrates a successful academic record, including an honours or masters degree in a subject with a substantial research element, and has at least 10 years' relevant work experience.</p> <p>Draws upon an established track record in research formulation at the overall programme level and providing social research based advice/briefings, and combining this with significant management experience of Social Researchers.</p> <p>Shapes the department's research strategy and priorities, for example initiates discussion on the critical information needs of the department.</p> <p>Reviews the relevance of the existing evidence base across the programme area; anticipates future research needs and ensures that evidence gaps are plugged.</p> <p>Collaborates with other senior analysts and policy colleagues to develop a coherent and integrated research vision that reflects the contribution of each discipline, creates synergy and demonstrates excellent cross-functional awareness.</p> <p>Champions and fights for excellence in social research practices and application throughout the social research team, the department and wider civil service.</p> <p>Helps customers and other analysts to make important policy decisions through the provision of timely and sound social research advice/recommendations; ensures that the key themes and findings from complex social research programmes have been isolated and linked to important customer, policy and delivery concerns.</p> <p>Educates customers, shapes their expectations and influences the research requests they make; creates an 'intelligent customer'; identifies and meets the strategic information needs of customers and partners, for example links the customer's political and delivery priorities with social research findings; implements a strategy for building the customer base further.</p> <p>Actively promotes a work culture that encourages the use of innovative research methods and analytical techniques; challenges staff to consider new methods in social research and evaluation, and how they can be applied to the policy delivery context.</p> <p>Keeps abreast of critical methodological developments within social research and identifies the value to the department, and across Whitehall, of new research techniques and approaches.</p> <p>Develops effective risk management policies; takes timely preventative action where appropriate.</p> <p>Is an authoritative voice on social research matters in both the civil service and outside institutions; is instrumental in raising the profile of social research within the department; proactively develops the 'public role' of government social research, for example serves on steering committees and furthers relationships with research councils; publishes in journals; encourages junior staff to do likewise.</p> <p>Responds decisively and ethically to unforeseen but politically sensitive situations.</p> <p>Builds and maintains influential relationships with the 'top of the office', i.e. Ministers, special advisers and senior members of own department; promotes and sells the value and unique contribution of social research to a diverse audience.</p> <p>Communicates complex research findings accurately and in an engaging manner to senior people and influential audiences in a variety of situations, often with very little notice, for example briefing a media audience with a short attention span; understands the impression that one creates in others and adjusts own style and content accordingly whilst being true to the research.</p> <p>Mediates effectively when there is a professional dispute, for example on issues of methodology or the use of social research evidence in a particular context; able to judge whether disputes are of critical importance and knows when to step in and when not to.</p> <p>Motivates staff by instilling professional integrity and high professional standards; encourages breadth and depth of research skills and knowledge, and encourages their application to the effective delivery of policy.</p> <p>Provides active support and balanced advice to other Social Researchers and staff on a variety of technical, policy and research management issues, both on a one-to-one basis but also through (inter)departmental groups and seminars.</p> <p>Actively contributes to making effective links with professional staff in other departments/agencies in areas of cross-cutting policy and delivery.</p>	None	

Chief Research Officer		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap			
Developing constructive relationships	Uses interpersonal and other communication skills to build rapport with others; shows an awareness of the effects of own behaviour on others, and understands their situations and concerns; values diversity and shows flexibility of style.					<p>Systematically identifies who to network with inside and outside the department, builds instrumental relationships and exploits these networks when required.</p> <p>Develops effective working links with senior stakeholders and policy staff within the department to achieve shared strategic goals.</p> <p>Works collaboratively with professional staff in other departments and agencies in areas of cross-cutting policy and delivery.</p> <p>Anticipates political and strategic changes and reflects this in the identification and building of instrumental relationships.</p> <p>Reduces tension in others when faced with high-pressure critical situations; helps others to remain calm and focused.</p> <p>Maintains positive relations with the media, for example develops and manages press office relations.</p> <p>Reassures stakeholders and staff in urgent situations that the best is being done.</p> <p>Shares information and promotes the discussion of evidence and its implications across the department and with stakeholders.</p> <p>Sufficiently self-aware of own personal biases to ensure a more objective approach when dealing with new personalities.</p>	<p>Aloof and arrogant.</p> <p>Cannot see things from other people's perspective.</p> <p>Assumes at the outset that different perspectives need not be taken on board.</p> <p>Fails to consider the needs of a diverse community.</p> <p>Does not listen.</p> <p>Is uncomfortable working with people from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Blames others when things go wrong.</p> <p>Works only with the most competent people.</p> <p>Says one thing and does another.</p> <p>Holds onto information that should be shared with the team or wider stakeholders.</p> <p>Takes the limelight from others.</p>	
Communicating with impact	Communicates written and oral information clearly, concisely and persuasively; communicates own viewpoint succinctly and defends it appropriately; facilitates discussions effectively to achieve clear outcomes.					<p>Provides clear, succinct and accurate oral and written presentation of research/analysis results and links this content to policy/political considerations and wider departmental strategy.</p> <p>Persuades customers and stakeholders to use social research in their key policy areas; ensures that the implications of important research becomes customer knowledge.</p> <p>Proposes and defends a position, taking into account political and organisational sensitivities, even in challenging situations, for example stands up to Ministers on matters of research publication.</p> <p>Negotiates in pressured situations, for example challenges the budgetary constraints of social research at the departmental level.</p> <p>Asks the difficult and uncomfortable questions constructively; raises and discusses what others may not want to hear.</p> <p>Tailors the right message to the right audience in the right way, for example works in partnership with communications and marketing experts to achieve the goal.</p> <p>Advice and recommendations are given in a measured but unambiguous way, with sufficient detail for clear action.</p> <p>Sets out the policy and political consequences of research results so these wider implications are readily understood.</p> <p>Presents a compelling case for the value of social research to a wider audience; aligns policy and delivery with clear communications objectives and measurement criteria.</p>	<p>Fails to identify key stakeholders.</p> <p>Waits for networking opportunities to present themselves.</p> <p>Fights own corner, ignoring wider interests.</p> <p>Aggressive not assertive.</p> <p>Advice and judgement ignores political considerations.</p> <p>Avoids giving bad news.</p> <p>Communication is focused on short-term gains and neglects the long term.</p> <p>The content of the message is not tailored to the needs of the audience.</p> <p>Communications lack cohesion; research findings are not integrated to deliver a clear message.</p>	
Leading and directing	Takes an active and prominent role in providing direction to staff and contractors; champions high standards; gains the trust, commitment and co-operation of others.					<p>Develops the capability of key staff to oversee complex high-profile and cross-cutting briefing work.</p> <p>Communicates a compelling view of the future and ensures that this is understood and shared by the staff.</p> <p>Sets out the vision/future direction and promotes the unit's role and work to key stakeholders in the external analytical community.</p> <p>Systematically reviews the progress of teams and key individuals towards reaching goals.</p> <p>Coaches individuals and teams to give their best; identifies and brings on talent, especially among under-represented groups; establishes standards of behaviour which promote diversity.</p> <p>Praises achievements and celebrates successes of individuals and teams; tackles poor performance or inappropriate behaviour in good time.</p> <p>Keeps staff informed of wider policy/operational and political developments in the department and across Whitehall.</p> <p>Adapts own leadership style to suit different people, organisational cultures and political circumstances, including during periods of change.</p> <p>Takes personal responsibility for making progress in equality and diversity.</p> <p>Promotes the value of social research to the department, the wider civil service and the outside world, for example ensuring a presence at conferences and in journals.</p> <p>Takes the lead in emergencies; intervenes in good time to avoid full-blown crises occurring.</p>	<p>Takes sole credit for achieving results.</p> <p>Looks to others to provide direction.</p> <p>Allows a culture that is intolerant of diversity.</p> <p>Writes rather than speaks.</p> <p>Fails to set out a clear vision for the unit.</p> <p>Has a fixed management style.</p> <p>Does not delegate challenging or interesting work.</p> <p>Fails to support staff during times of urgency.</p> <p>Takes an unsystematic approach to setting and monitoring standards.</p>	

Professional Skills for Government Skills Framework for Grade 7/6 or equivalent		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Underpinning knowledge and understanding (Grade 6/7 or equivalent)
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap		
Principal Research Officer/Senior Principal Research Officer	Leadership					<p>I can demonstrate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I am a visible leader who inspires trust; ✓ I focus on strategic outcomes; ✓ I take personal responsibility for delivering results effectively and swiftly; ✓ I work across traditional boundaries; ✓ I match resources to business priorities; ✓ I am honest, courageous and realistic with staff and Ministers; and ✓ I constantly learn. 	
	People Management					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Understands and communicates the organisation's priorities, and ensures people's objectives are aligned with them. ✓ Coaches and develops individuals, and manages own development. ✓ Employs a range of appropriate techniques to promote equality of opportunity and diversity. ✓ Recognises and rewards good performance, and tackles poor performance. ✓ Knows how and when to engage with HR experts in tackling people issues. 	
	Financial Management					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Can describe the organisation's business model and can identify own contribution to its financial objectives. ✓ Ensures personal delivery against plan, and forecasts accurately. Sets and influences stretching targets for improving the value achieved from resource inputs (people, budget and assets). ✓ Works confidently with financial data when making decisions. Interprets trends, issues and risks in routine and, where appropriate, investment appraisals. ✓ Leads by example when incurring expenditure and managing business relationships and risks. Promotes and enforces appropriate business rules. ✓ Engages with finance experts, and knows when to provide them with routine or exceptional information. 	
	Project and programme management					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Understands and uses project and programme management techniques, including risk management. ✓ Understands and contributes to the definition and delivery of programme benefits and business case development. ✓ Plans and delivers strong relationships with stakeholders, ensuring that the organisation is a respected customer and provider. ✓ Understands the purpose and use of Peer and Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Gateway Reviews. ✓ Engages with project and programme management experts and, in acquisition projects, procurement/commercial experts. 	
	Analysis and use of evidence					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identifies and uses various sources of evidence (and feedback) to support outputs. ✓ Understands the validity, relevance and limitations of different sources of evidence. ✓ Uses evidence to evaluate policies, projects and programmes. ✓ Understands and can interpret the most commonly used methods for summarising data. ✓ Engages with relevant experts to gather and evaluate evidence. 	

Professional Skills for Government Skills Framework for SCS Payband 1		Your current assessment				Your reason for your assessment	Underpinning knowledge and understanding (SCS Payband 1)
		A strength	Capable	Minor capability gap	Major capability gap		
Chief Research Officer	Leadership						<p>I can demonstrate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I am a visible leader who inspires trust; ✓ I focus on strategic outcomes; ✓ I take personal responsibility for delivering results effectively and swiftly; ✓ I work across traditional boundaries; ✓ I match resources to business priorities;
	People management						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develops team capability in line with the business plan and the organisational vision. ✓ Coaches and develops individuals and teams for high performance. ✓ Champions equality and diversity, and promotes best practice. ✓ Manages change effectively, identifying resistance, building engagement and involvement, and rewarding innovation. ✓ Works in partnership with HR experts to achieve the organisation's goals.
	Financial management						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Influences the organisation's business model and is adept at communicating it to internal and external audiences. ✓ Plans, agrees and monitors the delivery of stretching targets. Identifies and implements innovative ways to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resource and assets. ✓ Interprets a wide range of financial information (including corporate financial reports) to make management decisions. Competent when approving investment appraisals. ✓ Provides assurance to the Board on the achievement of the highest standards of internal controls and public sector governance. ✓ Works in partnership with finance experts to achieve the organisation's goals.
	Project and programme management						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Takes responsibility for the definition and successful delivery of programme benefits through cost-effective measurement processes. Can oversee the development and delivery of a viable business case. ✓ Anticipates, manages and monitors programme/project risks, including by using market knowledge and networks. ✓ Ensures effective communications with stakeholders. ✓ Ensures that OGC Gateway Reviews are commissioned and contributed to. ✓ Works in partnership with project and programme management experts to achieve the organisation's goals.
	Analysis and use of evidence						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Predicts and secures the appropriate evidence as a basis for decisions, including the testing for deliverability and preparing for evaluation. ✓ Links evidence with specific outputs to challenge decision making, and identifies ways to improve its quality and use. ✓ Champions the use of a variety of tools in collecting and analysing evidence, balancing the needs and concerns of users and suppliers. ✓ Ensures that the deployment of evidence is consistent with wider government requirements. ✓ Works in partnership with a wide range of analytical experts to achieve the organisation's goals.
	Strategic thinking						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Understands and can explain the department's strategy and priorities. ✓ Understands government priorities, the wider policy environment and institutional constraints. Translates the overall strategic direction of the department and government as a whole into the effective delivery of own work area. ✓ Identifies, understands and takes account of key strategic drivers affecting the delivery system, including the potential impact of ICT. ✓ Understands and deploys a range of strategic analysis tools. ✓ Works in partnership with internal and external strategy experts to achieve the organisation's goals.
	Communications and marketing						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Uses communications and marketing to put the citizen at the heart of policy development and operations. ✓ Understands and uses cross-departmental customer segmentation, identifies the needs of the consumer/citizen and understands the range of communication channels. ✓ Aligns policy and delivery with clear communications objectives and measurement criteria. ✓ Understands the wider Ministerial and communications agenda across department and government. ✓ Works in partnership with communications and marketing experts to achieve the organisation's goals.

5

Development planning and the '100 hours'

Development planning

5.1 Following on from your self-assessment, you will probably need to focus and prioritise your development. Think about what is key to your performance in your current role. What are your key strengths that you want to reinforce? What are your key development areas that you want to address? What do you want to tackle now and what can you develop over time?

5.2 The immediate action for many people is to enrol on a course, and there are courses available, from GSRU, the National School of Government (NSG) and other providers. However, a course may not always be the best option for you for several reasons – your learning style/preference, time/money and the outcome you want to achieve – so it is worth considering other options as well as a course. Other options might include:

- just doing it – on-the-job experience, stretch your job, try new tasks;
- coaching – providing or receiving;
- mentoring – providing or receiving;
- working on projects, for example cross-team, new areas in the business;
- participating in meetings – problem solving;
- helping other people learn, for example sharing your experience/learning;
- orientation sessions, for example talking to managers about their business and issues;
- studying people who do it successfully – what do they do that is repeatable?
- job shadowing;
- seminars, events and conferences;
- attachments and secondments;
- reading (books, magazines, the internet); and
- reflection.

5.3 Your manager/Head of Profession and/or colleagues will be able to help you work out what is best for you. All Line Managers of GSR members are expected to recognise Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as a professional requirement of a Social Researcher in Government. If your Line Manager is not a Social Researcher, you should seek an appropriate Social Researcher for advice and guidance – your Head of Profession will assist in this.

5.4 The table on [page 49](#) offers some suggestions on development that you might consider at each grade – both broadly and to address each of the four skills areas more specifically. The case studies in

[Section 8](#) articulate the scale and the type of posts and careers which Social Researchers have had, focusing on the development undertaken, and should provide food for thought. We are keen to build on this, so if you do something that works for you, please let us know.

5.5 Feed your decisions into your Development Plan, remembering to set clear objectives and to evaluate afterwards whether your development has met your objectives. You still need to apply the learning before you know you can do it. All GSR members are expected to take responsibility for structuring their own learning and development (with the advice of another GSR researcher).

What does 100 hours' CPD look like?

5.6 The table below illustrates what 100 hours' CPD might look like in terms of training and development activities for researchers at different grades. The table is not intended to be definitive, but rather to demonstrate the range of development activities which can contribute to CPD; and that the 100 hours requirement is not unduly onerous for individual researchers or departments. There is no single model; every researcher has to reflect on the gaps in their competencies and what activities and associated learning might add to their skills. It is likely that the type and intensity of development undertaken will vary over time, and that the same activity can lead to very different learning, depending on the researcher's capacity to learn at the time. What is critical is that the researcher learns from each development activity and can evidence their achievements and records them for CPD purposes. In reading the table, the following points should be noted:

- (1) Research Officer work shadowing might involve a half-day with a Principal Research Officer attending a meeting with policy colleagues and external stakeholders. Learning points might be about dealing with an aggressive pressure group representative, taking a note of action points and comparing them with the Principal Research Officer afterwards.

Principal Research Officer work shadowing might involve a day with your press officer learning about handling pressure from the media, liaising with the Minister's diary secretary on a broadcast and handling a press briefing.

- (2) A policy placement might be for six weeks, of which 20 hours provides evidence of CPD, for example analysis of stakeholder consultation, briefing the Minister on results and working with a Bill team.
- (3) Learning formally from networking might be attending a think tank or Social Research Association event and following up contacts, constructing and maintaining a database for contacts, keeping in touch with former colleagues who introduce you to their new colleagues who can give you fresh insights, and attending a professor's inaugural lecture.

- (4) Leadership skills might be developed by taking on a special project which requires getting together a multi-disciplinary team and producing recommendations on, for example, new performance indicators. Another possibility is attending a formal course to provide the tools for developing leadership and management skills, or undertaking a 360° degree feedback exercise to inform your development.
- (5) Volunteer activities may contribute to CPD. The Research Officer example in the table might be acting as social convenor for research events out of working hours. The Principal Research Officer example might be as a school governor where the Principal Research Officer chairs governors' meetings, represents the group at meetings with the head teacher, and oversees the budget for additional materials supported by fund-raising activities.
- (6) Reflection may provide useful evidence, for example a new Research Officer thinking about whether government research is right for them, and whether they should apply for the Fast Stream, or a Senior Principal Research Officer considering whether, and when, to apply for the Senior Civil Service. Regular review of your CV is important at all stages, as is comparing the range and level of your competencies with those required for a range of civil service and external posts. Reflection might also include collating learning from handling a complex methodological issue and a contract going wrong.
- (7) There are many learning opportunities in your daily work, for example delivering a seminar, working with a policy colleague on a joint Ministerial submission, conducting a rapid evidence assessment on a new top priority issue, commenting on Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) applications, and writing an article for a newsletter.
- (8) It is likely that the amount of individual researcher's CPD will vary at different stages of their career.

What 100 hours' CPD could look like

	RO 1st or 2nd year in government, straight from university	SRO PHD and 3 years' government experience	SRO 7 years in government	PRO 7–10 years post-first degree experience in private sector and government	PRO 5 years' academic experience and 10 years in government part time	SPRO 10 years post, recently promoted	SCS 30 years in government research and policy posts
Induction	4					5	
New Recruits Conference research	7						
GSR conference		20		20			20
Learning Set						20	
Major conference (policy/methods)			8	20			15
Giving evidence to a committee						15	
Qualitative methods course		20					
Longitudinal survey workshop, ESRC					8		
Statistical analysis course	40						
Financial management course				16			
People management course		20					
Work shadowing (1)	7			8			
Policy placement (2)				20			
Networking (3)	6	8				6	
Division away day(policy/research/analysts)	8		7				
Member GSR training committee				8			
Organising a conference for policy			20				
Attending an assessment centre							15
Leadership (4)			20			20	10
Attending university seminar series					10		
Coaching/mentoring others/buddying					10		20
Being coached	12					20	
Volunteering (5)			12		30		
Gateway review training							8
Reflection (6)	8					4	
Learning opportunities on the job (7)		20	20		10	20	
Reading	24	12	13	8	12	10	12
TOTAL (8)	116	100	100	100	80	120	100

GSR Development Plan

Name:			
Membership number:			
Covering the period from:		To:	

What do I want/need to learn?	What will I do to achieve this?	What resources or support will I need?	What will be my success criteria?	Target dates for review and completion

Competency	Suggested Development Activities		
	RO/SRO	PRO/SPRO	SCS
<p>1. Policy and delivery focus</p> <p>Understands and directs effort to meet the customer’s needs. Works in partnership with other analysts, policy colleagues and wider customers to provide a relevant and high-quality contribution that adds value to government policy decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSRU – Research for Government (MSc module). • GSRU/ESRC – seminar series, GSRU courses and seminars • Work shadow a policy professional. • Short-term placement (4–6 weeks) in policy, press office, private office. • An attachment to a contractor’s organisation. • National School of Government (NSG) – Understanding your Customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondment/posting to a policy job or into another career grouping. • Secondment to an external research organisation or contractor. • NSG – Stakeholder Management Workshop (1 day). • Work closely with a customer on policy review etc. • Secondment to a think-tank or professional institute (SRA, The Academy), or academia or ESRC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSG – Stakeholder Management Workshop (1 day). • Generate 360 degree feedback from customers/stakeholders.
<p>2. Delivering results</p> <p>Plans work activities, reviewing and prioritising as necessary, to achieve high standards and meet deadlines; is proactive and uses initiative when problems arise or progress is slow. Shows resilience under pressure and does not let setbacks affect performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSRU - Commissioning & managing social research (MSc module) • NSG – Time Management 2 (1 day). • Shadow an experienced Social Researcher in a challenging role. • Generate an awareness of project management skills and best practice. • Take responsibility for a small, challenging task – or support PRO on a more substantial one. • Involvement in organising away days, conferences, departmental seminars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSG (PSG) – Financial Management (2 days). • NSG (PSG) – Programme and Project Management (2 days). • NSG – Project Management Essentials (2 days). • Lead on a challenging high-profile project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSG (PSG) – Financial Management (2 days). • NSG (PSG) – Programme and Project Management (2 days). • Lead on a major cross-departmental project with a range of players and stakeholders.
<p>3. Learning and improving</p> <p>Acknowledges own development needs and seeks new skills, knowledge and opportunities for learning; learns from others; adapts quickly and effectively to new people, situations and task demands; operates effectively in a range of roles and contexts, including times and situations of uncertainty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend GSR New Recruits Conference. • Arrange to be mentored by an experienced Social Researcher, perhaps in another department. • Generate an awareness of preferred learning and working styles. • Volunteer for a cross-functional project. • Review key tasks/meetings/projects with Line Manager. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get involved in networks that share information and best practice across government, e.g. GSR committees, GSR assessor panel, departmental boards. • Get involved in professional networks, such as the Evaluation Society, the SRA, charitable foundations which support research, ESRC boards and committees. • Arrange 360 degree feedback. • Become a mentor. • NSG – Personal Development for Middle Managers (5 days). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange personal coaching. • NSG – Personal Power Emotional Intelligence/Influencing Skills (3 days). • Attend a development centre.
<p>4. Critical analysis and decision making</p> <p>Critically evaluates data and information with accuracy and perception, and is able to synthesise and use data from a variety of different methods appropriately. Makes sound, evidence-based decisions (and/or helps others do so); assesses risk and defends decisions and actions; responds effectively to unforeseen situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSRU – Research Synthesis for Policy and Practice (MSc module). • GSRU – Statistical Analysis (MSc module). • GSRU – Economic and Econometric Analysis (MSc module). • GSRU/ESRC – seminar series, GSRU courses and seminars • GSRU – other courses 		
<p>5. Constructive thinking</p> <p>Thinks imaginatively whilst keeping the goal in mind; understands the ‘bigger picture’ and can make the link between issues; shows an open mind and has the intellectual rigour to generate original ideas and develop practical solutions from them; is able to facilitate, encourage and build upon the ideas of others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSG – Creative Thinking (2 days). • GSRU/ESRC – seminar series, GSRU courses and seminars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSG – Crisis: Managing the unexpected (2 days). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSG (Professional Skills for Government) – Strategic Thinking (3 days).

Competency	Suggested Development Activities		
	RO/SRO	PRO/SPRO	SCS
<p>6. Professional expertise</p> <p>Demonstrates the detailed knowledge and experience necessary for the job of a Government Social Researcher; expressing the core technical capability, knowledge and awareness in terms of behaviours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSRU – Statistical Analysis (MSc module). • GSRU – Sampling Data and Data Collection (MSc module). • GSRU – Experimental and Quasi-experimental Design (MSc module). • GSRU – Longitudinal Research and Analysis (MSc module). • GSRU – Economic and Econometric Analysis (MSc module). • GSRU – Qualitative Research and Analysis (MSc module). • GSRU/ESRC – seminar series, GSRU courses and seminars • GSRU – other courses • GSRU – Ethics (MSc module) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending conferences/seminars by GSRU or beyond. • Member of external research advisory committees. • Involvement in external research activity, e.g. SRA, MRS, ESRC, Rowntree, etc. • Refereeing research proposals. • Active member of GSR. • Performing the role of ethical sponsor within your department. • Member of internal or external ethics committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active member of Head of Profession’s group.
<p>7. Developing constructive relationships</p> <p>Uses interpersonal and other communication skills to build rapport with others; shows awareness of the effects of own behaviour on others and understands their situations and concerns; values diversity and shows flexibility of style.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop effective relationship with Line manager/customer/ contractors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange coaching. • NSG (PSG) – <i>People Management</i> (1 day). • Investment in complex projects with a range of stakeholders. • NSG – Negotiating Skills (2 days). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSG – <i>Creating Personal Impact</i> (1 day). • Arrange coaching. • NSG (PSG) – <i>People Management</i> (1 day). • Actively develop personal profile by leading on departmental or inter-departmental issue.
<p>8. Communicating with impact</p> <p>Communicates written and oral information clearly, concisely and persuasively; communicates own viewpoint succinctly and defends it appropriately; facilitates discussions effectively to achieve clear outcomes.</p>	<p>SRA run courses and so do MRS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain English Campaign. • MRS – <i>Effective Influencing Skills</i> • COI Bookhouse – copy-editing, proof-reading and tidying up texts for publication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSG – Influencing and persuasion skills (2 days). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSG (PSG) – <i>Communications and Marketing</i> (2 days). • Arrange coaching from communications directorate on basic principles of communication.
<p>9. Leading and directing</p> <p>Takes an active and prominent role in providing direction to staff and contractors; champions high standards; gains the trust, commitment and co-operation of others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise delegating. • Try deputising for manager. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSG (PSG) – <i>People Management</i> (1 day). • Generate an awareness of how to give feedback. • NSG leadership courses. • Roffey Park – <i>Personal Effectiveness and Power</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSG (PSG) – <i>People Management</i> (1 day). • Arrange 360 degree feedback. • Generate awareness of how to give feedback. • NSG – <i>Understanding Appreciative Inquiry</i> (2.5 days). • SCS management courses.

6

Development Record

6.1 Your record of development is a full record of the action and activities you have undertaken, together with their respective outcomes. You will find it extremely valuable in supporting and advancing your career. To help you with this process, we have suggested a template overleaf. It should help to stimulate your thinking about the knowledge and skills you have acquired to date, and how you have acquired them.

'As important as record keeping is, it is only a means to an end. It is the process of reflecting, reviewing, planning and learning that matters, not the particular format or method you adopt.'

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

6.2 A properly maintained record of development becomes a valuable and objective measure of your professional competence, and can be very useful when preparing for appraisals or tailoring your CV for a specific promotion or career move.

GSR Development Record

Name:			
Membership number:			
Covering the period from:		To:	

No. of hours	What did you do?	Why?	What did you learn from this?	How have/will you use this? Any further action?

7

Frequently asked questions – GSR Competency Framework

7.1 How are the GSR competencies structured?

Each of the nine competencies has a ‘high level’ description, for example the competency **Communicating with impact** is defined as follows:

Communicates written and oral information clearly, concisely and persuasively; communicates own viewpoint succinctly and defends it appropriately; facilitates discussions effectively to achieve clear outcomes.

Each competency is then made up of a cluster of relevant behaviours, known as **indicators** (see [Section 4](#)), for example ‘Listens actively to others in order to understand the idea or viewpoint being expressed’.

Each competency and indicator is self-explanatory and describes behaviour that can be measured to ensure that there is no ambiguity about whether someone has met the standard. That is, every indicator needs to describe something that can be seen by another person and the performance standards should be embedded within it.

7.2 What do we use the Competency Framework for?

The Competency Framework is a tool that should be used by all Government Social Researchers and their Line Managers for appraisal and development purposes; and by those with have a responsibility for strategic and human resources management. For example:

- Recruitment – the GSR competencies can be used to guide the choice of selection methods/ criteria in recruitment, by specifying the type of behaviour and evidence that the assessor is looking for.
- Promotion – as well as setting out the critical behaviours for each grade, the GSR competencies also show how each grade differs from the next, for example Research Officer from Senior Research Officer. This makes them useful for helping the individual to determine whether they are ready for promotion or not.
- Training and development – the GSR competencies should be used by Social Researchers and their managers to identify training and development needs. Eventually, the competencies could be used to form the basis of a GSR development centre or a list of development tools.
- Performance assessment tool – the GSR competencies aim to be a useful tool for those who are line managing Social Researchers, as they provide the GSR benchmark of performance.

7.3 What is the purpose of having indicators for Chief Research Officer (CRO) when the Senior Civil Service have their own Competency Framework?

There are two purposes. First, having CRO included in the GSR framework provides Senior Civil Service (SCS) Social Researchers with an easily accessible framework that relates directly to the sort of work they do. Secondly, through using the same language and format, it allows more junior Social Researchers to have a clear line of sight all the way from Research Officer to the SCS.

7.4 I am in the SCS, do I use this Competency Framework or the SCS one?

You can essentially use either, although if you are in GSR we would recommend this one. The CRO indicators have been developed with the SCS framework in mind, although the indicators are expressed in a way that relates directly to the work of CROs in a social research role.

7.5 What evidence is this framework based on?

(i) This Competency Framework has been developed from a formal job analysis¹ of GSR roles carried out by external consultants (occupational psychologists) in December 2004 and January 2005. The purpose of the job analysis was to ensure that the Competency Framework was firmly grounded in the reality of social research jobs across the departments. The output of the job analysis was a findings report, dated 19 January 2005, which is available from the GSRU or at www.gsr.gov.uk. In total, 27 GSR job holders were interviewed across all four grades and across 10 departments.

(ii) In developing the Competency Framework, there was also input from the GSR Departmental Heads of Profession 2004 away day, the GSR skills audit, interviews with Heads of Profession and a review of frameworks used in six departments.

7.6 Are there any non-obvious things I need to bear in mind when using the framework?

We have aimed to keep the indicators to a manageable number (up to about 12). However, it is fair to say that the indicators simply suggest where the evidence for a competency could come from. When using a competency it is important to return to the 'high level' description when evaluating overall performance against it.

The competencies are cumulative so that, as individuals move up the grades, they will be expected to demonstrate the criteria at their own level and below that. In fact, the indicators will reflect this progression in complexity.

The negative indicators are given as a guideline, but it is fair to say that they are not exhaustive. The most likely scenario is for individuals to 'fail to show sufficient positive evidence' on a competency, as opposed to those who show negative evidence or a mixture of both. Negative indicators can be more destructive of performance, and individuals demonstrating them will require direct, but sensitive, feedback.

7.7 How should Line Managers of Social Researchers who are not themselves Social Researchers use the framework?

Non-specialist Line Managers should have no problem in assessing the generic competencies, for example communicating with impact and building constructive relationships. However, they may feel less equipped to assess the professional expertise competency. Whilst they could comment on the effectiveness of a

¹Job analysis is a systematic and objective process for collating and analysing information about jobs.

specialist's use of their knowledge and skills, for example how they are able to inform their colleagues' thinking through the effective application of their specialist expertise, beyond this – and particularly when reviewing longer-term development needs – a specialist manager should be involved.

7.8 At what stage should Social Researchers be expected to demonstrate the Competency Framework standards? *That is to say, when first appointed or after being establishment in a post? How does this impact on their use?*

In general, the indicators in each competency reflect 'top end' performance. That is, what you would expect from an experienced and capable individual of that grade, and not what you would expect of someone new to the grade.

It would be unrealistic, for example, to expect applicants for Research Officer posts to meet the standard in all respects prior to entry to the service. Thus, it might be reasonable to expect all Research Officer applicants to understand something about sampling theory, but it would not be reasonable to expect them to be familiar with the evidence base underlying a particular policy area.

In a selection context, it will be down to the assessor to determine whether a failure is trainable in a reasonable time. It will be a matter of managerial judgement as to how easily these behaviours can be managed and developed in the workplace. When using the framework in a development context, a key aim will be to ensure that any negative indicators are avoided.

7.9 How will the competencies be measured?

If the competencies are being used to assess development needs or to appraise performance, then they should be measured through a conversation between the individual and the Line Manager. The individual would usually carry out a self-assessment beforehand which would form the basis of the discussion. To ensure that there is no ambiguity about whether someone has met the standard, each competency and indicator is self-explanatory and describes behaviour that can be measured. Guidance is available in the GSR Recruitment Protocol about measuring the competencies as part of a promotion or recruitment exercise.

7.10 Will the framework soon become out of date?

The framework was 'future proofed' to some degree by taking account of Professional Skills for Government (PSG), as well as the long-term vision of GSR, and the likely changes to the environment in which GSR will need to operate. To factor this information into the process, Sue Duncan (Chief Government Social Researcher) took part in, what is called in job analysis circles, a 'visionary interview'.

7.11 How do I make suggestions to improve the framework or the guidance?

We would be pleased to receive constructive comments. Competency Frameworks are 'living' documents that evolve as the job changes. Although we would not expect the main competency headings to change radically in the short term, specific indicators can have a shorter shelf-life. To ensure that we do not lose good development points, we have set up a process of annual review. Users of the framework can contact Rebecca Laffineur at rebecca.laffineur@hm-treasury.x.gsi.gov.uk to make recommendations.

7.12 What if I have further questions about how to use the framework?

You should speak to your Line Manager in the first instance. Help and guidance will also be available from your Head of Profession and from GSRU, contact rebecca.laffineur@hm-treasury.x.gsi.gov.uk.

8

Case Studies

TESSA

Tessa joined GSR as a Senior Research Officer (SRO), has developed the skills to work as a Senior Principal Research Officer (SPRO) and is looking to broaden her experience – into operational delivery – in order to compete for posts in the Senior Civil Service (SCS). Tessa has developed the skills, knowledge and experience to meet the GSR Chief Research Officer (CRO) competency requirements and all but the broader experience requirement for joining the SCS under Professional Skills for Government (PSG).

Tessa entered GSR as an SRO aged 24. Prior to this she gained a BA (Hons) in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge, which gave her a basic understanding of social science theory and method, and the practical application of qualitative methods.

Following her studies, she spent two-and-a-half years at the National Centre for Social Research, where she gained experience of:

- survey research design;
- data processing and analysis;
- qualitative research skills (conducting focus groups and in-depth interviews); and
- qualitative analysis.

She also developed her communications skills (report writing and presentations) and business skills (writing tenders, costing projects, client relations).

Her roles in GSR

SRO – Department of Environment

- **Programme and project management**, and **financial management** (lots of commissioning research, including management of budget).
- **Professional expertise** (in particular MSc improved statistical analytical skills).
- **Broader experience** (bedded out into policy team, so wider experience of policy process).
- **Analysis and use of evidence** (developing research projects, advising policy colleagues on the use of findings in developing policy).

SRO – Home Office

- **Broader experience** as she was included in the Drugs Prevention Initiatives Senior Management Team.
- She also had the opportunity to undertake hands-on research.

G7 – DSS

- **People management** added to skills.
- **Analysis and use of evidence** moved on to a higher level, with more complex research and evaluation designs.
- **Communication and marketing skills** vital, with a greater need to promote and defend the use of evidence, including with Ministers.
- Greater level of **financial management**.
- Tessa took one year's maternity leave when she completed this assignment.

G7 – Home Office

- Early **leadership** skills required in leading cross-departmental team.

G6 Programme Director – Home Office

- **Leadership, financial management** and **strategic thinking skills** were key – she was responsible for a team of 35 staff and a £6 million research budget. She needed to provide strong leadership in changing the direction of the programme to ensure it was more customer friendly, delivered the same quality research with a reduced staff component, and developed a more rigorous financial management system.
- **Professional expertise** mainly in respect of quality control. Tessa undertook specific training and participated in several key development activities, as well as regularly attending conferences and keeping up to date with her professional reading:
 - **MSc Social Research Methods and Statistics** (part time, funded by the Department of the Environment, then the Home Office) at City University.
 - Civil Service College courses on **Managing Social Research, Communication Skills (Fast Stream programme), Management Development for Women, Parts 1 and 2**, and **Communication Skills for Specialists**.
 - Roffey Park Course on **Management for Specialists**.
 - Currently as a Grade 6 she is receiving one-to-one **professional coaching**.
 - When bedded out in a policy team, she undertook several days **work shadowing** in the Minister's private office and with the press desk.
 - As an experienced SRO, she recognised that she needed to improve her negotiating and influencing skills. She **reviewed** what she had learned from procurement negotiations and her interactions with senior management, and she developed an action plan whereby she tested different approaches in discussions and increased the range of her handling strategies.

ROBERT

Robert graduated with a First in Psychology and later graduated from the London School of Economic with an MSc in Social Research Methods and Social Policy. This course was completed part-time and funded by the Home Office. Robert progressed quickly (Statistical Officer; RO; SRO; PRO), gaining a wide range of skills and experience along the way.

As he entered the field for promotion to PRO, Robert attended a development centre from which he received feedback on his management style and communications skills. He identified ways in which he could extend his range of skills in these areas, for example giving seminars to non-specialists, organising an away day for all divisional analysts on business planning and risk, and becoming a member of the GSR Communications Committee. He was successful at the next Board. He has been a PRO for four years and is currently considering whether to seek a secondment to a financial institution or another policy assignment to the Treasury or the Department of Trade and Industry.

- **Leadership** – led a multi-disciplinary team, and co-ordinated a £6m research programme.
- **Analysis and use of evidence** – fed the results of research and analysis into policy at all stages of his career. As Head of Research for a large unit, he was part of a small policy team and fed evidence directly into the decision-making process.
- **Financial management** – managed a £6 million research programme and has delegated financial responsibility. Developed business plans for financing programmes.
- **People management** – managed a multi-disciplinary team and managed a large number of research contractors.
- **Programme and project management**
- **Professional expertise** – hands-on analysis, i.e. developing actuarial models, designing research projects, and advising/directing other analysts.
- **Communication and marketing** – at PRO level, had a number of meetings with senior officials and Ministers to communicate research findings. Presented a government policy to key stakeholders and presentations at professional conference. Developed a marketing campaign for a new academic programme.
- **Strategic thinking** – designed a research programme that needed to answer key policy questions over a three-year period.
- **Broader experience** – worked in a policy unit for three years.

HAZEL

Hazel joined GSR as an RO and has progressed so far to PRO. She already meets the GSR SPRO competency requirements, but is looking to develop her leadership, financial management and strategic thinking skills.

Hazel joined government as a RO for the Department of the Environment aged 25. Previously she graduated from Leeds University with a 2:1 in History, followed by four years working as a research student in Liverpool, where she received training in research methods and was responsible for undertaking (qualitative) research.

Hazel spent two years as an RO developing **professional expertise** (particularly in quantitative methods). She was responsible for a small number of ad hoc in-house projects, including various staff and customer satisfaction surveys (i.e. designing questionnaires, analysing results and writing reports). She also started to develop skills in **research procurement** and **research management** through the management of a small number of research projects, with line management support.

During her two years as an SRO she managed a relatively large portfolio of research projects spanning a number of different policy areas. Projects of different sizes and complexities enabled her to hone her research management and procurement skills (including **financial management** skills). It also enabled her to develop her **professional expertise** skills as the projects involved a wide range of different methods. She further developed her **analytical skills** and gained experience of developing research-based briefings for policy colleagues and Ministers. She was also responsible for project managing a casual RO, her first experience of **people management**.

Hazel also undertook a secondment to the Cabinet Office where she was a member of a small team responsible for analysing the results from a survey of Senior Civil Servants, and she was the co-author of a report on better policy-making. The experience helped her to hone her **communication** and presentation skills.

Her role as a PRO has provided her with opportunities to further develop a range of skills, in particular:

- **people management** skills (through managing two SROs), influencing and persuading skills (e.g. through promoting the role of social research in the Department);
- **professional expertise** skills (e.g. through keeping up to speed with new methodological developments and considering how they might be applied to the department);
- **analysis and use of evidence** (e.g. producing research-based briefings, and contributing to policy statements); and
- **strategic thinking** – assessing the department's overall analytical priorities for social research.

Hazel has received a range of training and development during her GSR career. This has involved a combination of formal training courses as well as on the job learning, and less formal training, such as internal seminars.

- RO – a range of introductory courses, including *An Introduction to Social Research* and *Managing Social Research* run by the Civil Service College. Such courses are useful for making new recruits aware of the GSR network.
- RO and SRO – a range of course to develop **professional expertise**, for example courses on **quantitative research methods, sampling and data analysis**; training in **research procurement and management**, with extensive **on the job experience**.

- PRO – training in people management, influencing and persuading skills, and a useful **Civil Service College course** on *Economics for Policy-Makers* (**useful for working with economists more effectively**). Less formal training and development are equally valuable, for example our internal GSR seminars (held monthly) are useful for discussing and keeping up to speed with professional issues, such as research ethics, new methods, etc. The majority of learning is, however, as a result of being located at the centre of the UK government, obtaining strategic insights into the policy process at a high level, and working with very able colleagues from a range of backgrounds.

LEO

Leo joined GSR as an RO and has so far progressed to SPRO. He is looking to further develop his leadership skills and to broaden his experience outside GSR.

Leo joined the Department for Education and Employment as a Research Officer aged 22. Previously he graduated from Manchester University with a 2:1 in Sociology and Industrial Relations (which included a research component) and a Masters in Applied Social Research.

He spent two-and-a-half years as an RO, followed by six years as an SRO (including a one-year career break to travel), and he is currently a PRO on temporary promotion to SPRO. His progression has provided him with a range of skills and experience.

Early RO posts concentrated on developing a firm grounding in **professional expertise**: direct experience in qualitative research methods, direct interviewing/reporting and analysis, working directly with academics and policy colleagues, and the production of publications based on research.

Promotion to SRO was linked to a different role, which required a different skills set, mainly in relation to quantitative research methods. Leo worked on an in-house postal survey, and undertook training to refresh his quantitative analysis skills, particularly in relation to SPSS and data entry.

Leo also started to **manage research projects**, and most of his development was through joint working with his Line Manager, who helped him to develop research specifications, chair tender panels, etc. He also gained **briefing experience** and the processes for handling Parliamentary Questions, etc.

Other SRO posts brought responsibility for a portfolio of research projects and a thorough grounding in a range of **different policy areas**, and the ability to manage competing priorities was essential. **Financial management** was also an increasing part of the job.

Promotion to G7 brought with it staff management responsibilities, requiring the development of **people management skills**, both through formal training/mentoring and on-the-job experience. Leo also took on the formal responsibility for delivering training on a major government survey, which was an effective way of gaining experience in presenting and **communication skills**. These were further developed when he had to devise a dissemination strategy for the survey results and analysis, including a press briefing, seminars to academics and policy interests.

Leo also had day-to-day contact with demanding policy colleagues, requiring skills and experience in **negotiation and assertiveness**.

His temporary responsibility to G6 has been an opportunity to develop a stronger **management** role, and to focus on **strategic team leadership** rather than direct one-to-one staff management. He was also involved in more ad hoc and strategic briefing, and represented the department at inter-departmental

meetings on research programme formulation, etc. He has been invited to join an ESRC Advisory Group which will extend his networks, provide opportunities for learning about Research Council activities and representing the department in a different environment.

Leo has undertaken a variety of learning and development activities so far.

- Early stages – focussed on developing research skills through both in-house work and formal training (e.g. SPSS/qualitative research methods at NCSR/case study methods at Lancaster University). He also received good grounding in the role of the civil service/GSR/project management via **GSR courses**.
- SRO – different departmental training on policy areas, courses on procurement and **time management**. A training course on **effective management** was particularly useful.
- G7 – focused on **presentation skills and negotiation and influencing, and following through development opportunities on the job**.
- G6 – mainly on the job, but attended courses in **leadership**.

SARAH

Sarah joined GSR as an RO, and has progressed so far to PRO. She already meets the GSR SPRO competency requirements but she is looking to develop her leadership, communication and strategic thinking skills, as well as broadening her policy experience before applying to join the SCS.

Sarah joined GSR as an RO aged 27. Previously she graduated with a First degree and a PhD in psychology, which equipped her with skills in controlled experimentation as well as statistical skills. Her PhD was a CASE (Co-operative Awards in Science and Engineering) studentship, which developed her **communication and people management skills**.

Sarah's GSR posts have been almost exclusively in the policy area of criminal justice, where as an RO she developed her competencies in **analysis and use of evidence, project management, and learning and improving**. As an SRO she developed her **professional expertise, policy delivery and communication skills**. As a PRO the focus has been on her **people, project and financial management skills**, with a particular emphasis on **leadership**.

Her key development activities at the different grades have been as follows:

- As a new RO, Sarah received intensive **induction** to introduce her to departmental systems, and she joined an 'all new starts' **network** which has continued to offer support as its members have progressed their careers.

- During her time as an SRO, Sarah was involved in a highly sensitive issue where it was important to secure input from a number of senior academics and policy stakeholders. She **organised a major conference**, secured co-operation from a diverse range of internal and external interests, briefed the Minister and drafted his speech, and wrote a conference report for dissemination through a new website.
- As a PRO, Sarah has **volunteered to chair** a professional association's committee which is giving her a range of opportunities to develop her leadership skills. She is also **mentoring** two work experience students within the department.

SCENARIOS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

The following examples may be useful for researchers to reflect on by themselves or in a group discussion.

Scenario one

Juliet has worked in two other government departments as an RO and SRO before coming to the Department of Transport as a PRO, and she has a wide understanding of a range of research methods, both quantitative and qualitative. Juliet has attended a number of training courses over her professional life and has no particular need to attend any more training courses. She is able to fulfil the competencies of **critical analysis and decision making** and **professional expertise** quite easily. Juliet works hard and maintains highly professional standards in relation to research contractors, the other research personnel that work in her team and her policy colleagues. Over the course of her working life, she has worked hard at **developing constructive relationships** with academics and government colleagues. She has considerable experience in data analysis and research procurement, and in managing others (**leading and directing**). Juliet does not want to diversity her professional experience into non-research areas and she has decided that she does not want to progress into the SCS. However, Juliet is concerned that she does not want to be doing the same work for the next 20 years and would like to remain challenged and motivated. What options does Juliet have open to her? What are the best ways for her to continue to contribute?

Scenario two

Susan joins the Scottish Executive straight from university with a BSc in Social Policy. When she begins work at the Executive she can demonstrate some ability in some of the GSR competencies, for example **constructive thinking**, through her academic work in her degree course, and **communicating with impact**, through presentations she has made. Susan is offered the chance to do an MSc in Research Methods and begins her new degree course on a part-time bases a few months after starting work. The Masters course will give her the necessary training to develop **professional expertise** and will help her with **critical analysis and decision making**. She is promoted to SRO in the second year of her Masters course and she continues in her role as a researcher in an Analytical Services Division, developing her **policy and delivery focus skills**. Three years later she sees an interesting opportunity to work outside government in a senior position for a think tank, where she would have line management responsibility. She has not had this experience before and this is one of the areas she would like to build on for the

leading and directing competency. She is unsure whether to take up this opportunity as she is likely to miss out on a good chance to be promoted at the Scottish Executive. Susan is not sure whether or not she wants to progress any further than PRO and would like some advice on how to decide what would be best for her, and to keep her options open.

Susan has decided to take her secondment and is promoted to PRO one year after returning. Although some of those who started at the same time as her have already been promoted, Susan feels the secondment to the think tank was very worthwhile. She becomes interested in taking up a policy role outside the social research profession. What are the pros and cons of this move for Susan? She is still worried about closing down her options. Would it be feasible for Susan to return to the research profession later in her career?

Scenario three

James is an SRO and has been working in the Department for Work and Pensions since he was an RO. He has been working in the same broad policy area for five years and remains committed and enthusiastic. He can be considered a subject specialist in this area, having detailed knowledge of legislation and policy developments. A managed move process for researchers is underway and he is eligible to move posts. However, James is not interested in the choices available to him at this time. Although he has worked in the same policy area for five years, he has had two different roles. The roles he has had have meant that he has developed a strong policy and delivery focus through his detailed knowledge of the policy area. In his current role, he has also had 18 months of line management experience, improving his abilities to lead and direct. Whilst he has performed well in both his roles and in his ability to provide critical analysis and decision making, the scope for widening his skills in this area will continue to be limited as there are no opportunities to develop his quantitative skills in this job. He has completed the first year of the MSc in Policy Analysis and Evaluation run through GSRU, and he has been building his qualitative skills and increasing his professional expertise. Two of the jobs available for James to move to would give him the chance to build upon his quantitative analysis skills, demonstrating his commitment to learning and improving, but he feels the policy areas in which they are situated are not as dynamic as his current area. He is worried about losing his specialist knowledge and about being asked to undertake a new kind of work that would be challenging for him. What should James do? What are the drawbacks to remaining in his current role? What are the advantages to moving jobs?

Government Social Research skills

8.1 The GSR Competency Framework intentionally focuses on **behaviours and knowledge**. However, both are underpinned by a range of **professional social research skills**.

8.2 The following list is not exhaustive, but it is intended to assist individuals and Line Managers when defining a role or considering personal development.

Qualitative research and analytical skills

The ability to design, manage and – where appropriate – carry out qualitative research projects, which could involve some of the following:

- topic guide design;
- selecting and contacting respondents;
- in-depth interviewing;
- developing an analysis scheme – manual analysis;
- awareness and the use of computer packages for qualitative data;
- reporting qualitative findings in a policy-relevant, clear and user-friendly way (see below); and
- broad awareness of other in-depth qualitative techniques (observation) and awareness of how these could be appropriate for particular research projects.

Statistical and survey analytical skills

The ability to design, manage and - where appropriate – carry out quantitative research projects, which could involve some of the following:

- broad awareness of sampling theory and developing cost-effective and robust sampling strategies;
- developing appropriate contact procedures;
- questionnaire development – structured and semi-structured;
- awareness of key government surveys and harmonised questions;
- interviewing using a structured/semi-structured questionnaire;
- analysis using basic descriptive statistics;
- inferential statistics and hypothesis testing;
- exploring associations between variables – bivariate and multi-variate analysis;
- longitudinal design, analysis and reporting;
- familiarity with, and usage of, key analysis packages – SPSS, Excel, Access; and
- reporting quantitative data analysis in a policy-relevant, clear and user-friendly way (see below).

Multi-method skills

The ability to design, manage and - where appropriate – carry out quantitative research projects, which could involve some of the following:

- broad awareness of sampling theory and developing cost-effective and robust sampling strategies;
- developing appropriate contact procedures;
- questionnaire development – structured and semi-structured;
- awareness of key government surveys and harmonised questions;
- interviewing using a structured/semi-structured questionnaire;
- analysis using basic descriptive statistics;
- inferential statistics and hypothesis testing;
- exploring associations between variables – bivariate and multi-variate analysis;
- longitudinal design, analysis and reporting;
- familiarity with, and usage of, key analysis packages – SPSS, Excel, Access; and
- reporting quantitative data analysis in a policy-relevant, clear and user-friendly way (see below).

Systematic review and meta-analysis skills

An awareness and ability to carry out in-house work and review work (including literature reviews), and also the ability to design and manage projects which are largely reliant on existing data and the synthesis of existing research.

Process/implementation of research and evaluation

The ability to design and manage – or carry out – in-house projects which explore issues around policy development (at national and local level) and implementation. The ability to provide timely feedback and good practice lessons for future policy development and implementation.

Studies typically explore why, with whom and under what conditions a policy or programme can be successfully implemented and delivered – and they are likely to involve experimental design and qualitative methods.

Impact/outcomes of research and evaluation

The ability to design and manage (or contribute to) projects which assess the impact, outcomes and value for money of programmes.

This should be based on a broad awareness of, and grounding in, the range of evaluation methods which are used across government.

Awareness of other disciplines and the ability to work effectively with other specialists

The ability to work with other analytical colleagues, such as economists and statisticians, bringing in their expertise when appropriate. For example:

- economic evaluation skills – a general awareness of key economic concepts and how they need to be applied in the context of research, which assesses the impact/outcomes and value for money of the main programmes; and
- awareness of key statistics and relevance to research projects –

an awareness of departmental and other government department statistics which are collected on a regular basis, usually by colleagues in a statistical division (for example housing data from local authorities). An ability to integrate this data into research projects where appropriate, and forge effective links with statistical colleagues.

Experimental and quasi-experimental skills

The ability to develop and/or manage appropriate research and evaluation projects which can establish the likely impact of policies based on experimental and quasi-experimental designs, typically where one group or area is subject to a policy intervention and matched to a control group who are not part of the policy intervention, for example:

- randomised control trials;
- regression discontinuity designs;
- single group pre- and post-test designs; and
- matched comparison designs.

Report writing and dissemination

The ability to translate research findings (both qualitative and quantitative) into a policy-relevant and user-friendly report.

The ability to supervise a contractor who is responsible for producing a final report, ensuring that the report is robust and based on sound quantitative or qualitative analysis.

The ability to synthesise research findings into evidence-based policy briefing documents.

The ability to communicate key findings in a formal setting, and the ability to develop slides, etc., using presentation packages such as PowerPoint.

Research ethics

A general awareness of, and ability to apply codes of conduct around, research projects. This will apply to overarching principles (e.g. confidentiality) as well as to any ethics which may apply to particular areas (e.g. health research).

The ability to translate best practice guidance into viable solutions, with the appropriate liaison with ethics committees, etc.

Research procurement

An understanding of procurement issues, and the ability to translate broad information needs into a clear research specification.

The ability to assess the merits of tenders and to handle post-tender negotiations to ensure that the proposed package meets the information needs in a cost-effective and timely way.

Project management skills are vital, both the technical aspects (e.g. how to structure a plan) and also the softer side (e.g. how to engage constructively with a contractor when you are not happy with the output).

Knowledge management and socio-informatics skills

An awareness of, and the skills for, the most appropriate ways of holding and storing research data and analysis.

An awareness of, and the skills related to, geographically-referenced demographic, economic and environmental databases.

A general awareness of recent advances in GIS applications for the social sciences.

Risk assessment and management

For both in-house and commissioned work, an ability to anticipate risks, in terms of quality, timing and cost.

The ability to develop effective risk-management strategies to avoid these risks, and to take timely preventative action where appropriate.

A general awareness of any departmental guidance which exists in relation to risk management and the ability to apply this in the research context.

Sources

The Government Economic Service (GES) Learning and Development Framework - October 2005

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

The HR Professional Standards Workbook – September 2005

www.gsr.gov.uk

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