

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Employee Engagement Survey 2006

Narrative report

Submitted to

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1. Executive Summary

Response Rate

The 2006 Employee Engagement Census survey for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office achieved an overall response rate of 42%. UK based response rate was 64% and Locally engaged achieved 30%, both areas improving on the 2004 response rate.

Key strengths:

- Overall improvements in positive scores since 2004
- Employee engagement – pride in FCO, overall satisfaction and happy to go the “extra mile”
- Clarity over how job fits in within organisation’s objectives
- Sense of doing something worthwhile and making use of skills and abilities
- General perceptions of security at work

Key areas for improvement:

- Perceptions of senior management and leadership
- Effective change management and communication
- Reward and recognition

2. Introduction

This report presents the detailed findings from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2006 Employee Engagement Census survey.

As in 2004, the survey was conducted across the whole organisation, including UK based staff, locally engaged staff and FCO Services. Contract staff and those currently on secondment/loan to the FCO from another Government department/organisation were also invited to complete the survey.

Although many of the questions asked in the previous staff survey were retained for tracking purposes, the focus on the survey this year was to measure employee engagement. This is a measure which looks beyond job satisfaction to gauge the extent to which employees are willing and able to invest their personal effort in the success of the organisation. New questions were added, and some existing questions reworded to reflect the measurement more accurately. Questions deemed redundant were omitted from this year's survey. The final survey contained a total of 76 attitudinal questions, 1 open comments question and 15 demographic questions.

The survey was set up online, on a website hosted by ORC International. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office sent an email to all staff, containing a link to this site and requesting their participation in the survey. For staff without easy access to a computer a paper version of the survey was made available. To accommodate the needs of some locally engaged staff who may not have felt confident completing the survey in English, translations of the survey were made available in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Spanish and Russian.

The survey ran between 23rd January and 10th February 2006. At the end of the survey period all paper returns were data entered and combined with the online responses for analysis.

3. Understanding the report

For brevity, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office shall be referred to as FCO throughout this report.

3.1 Attitudinal questions

Most attitudinal questions within the questionnaire were positively phrased and rated on a five-point scale. Therefore, in the main when reporting the results, the positive scores have been grouped together and the negative scores have been grouped. This enables us to report results as percentage positive, percentage neutral and percentage negative.

Please note due to rounding, question scores may not always total 100%

3.2 Demographics

This report will discuss FCO results overall and refer, where relevant, to trends from demographic groups.

Please note:

- Data based on a small number of responses should be treated with caution as each individual response has a large impact on group score. For this reason caution should be used with data where there are less than 30 respondents
- Data based on less than 10 respondents is not reported, both for reasons of statistical reliability and anonymity of respondents

3.3 Benchmarking

The FCO survey results have been compared to the ORC International Central Government benchmark group. This group contains data from around 50 organisations including the Cabinet Office, the Home Office, DTI and DWP.

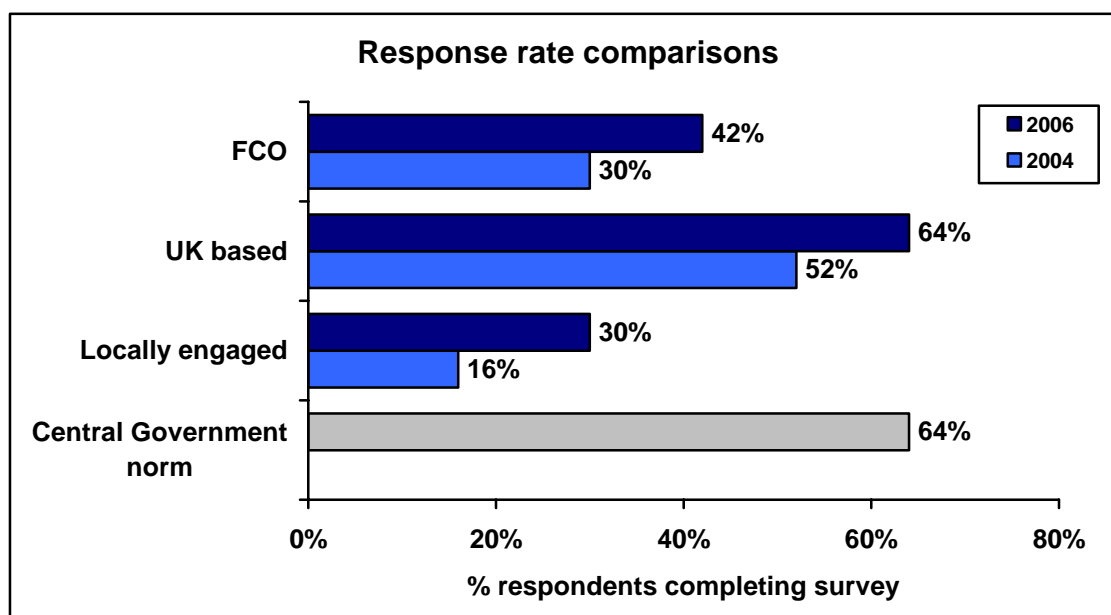
Full benchmark data has been included in the Benchmark Report accompanying this document however benchmark comparisons have been included in the charts throughout the report.

4. Summary of Results

4.1 Response rates

The survey was sent to 14,672 members of staff, of which 5,053 were classified UK based and 9,619 locally engaged. The final response to the survey totalled 6,091 which represents a response rate of 42%. After the closing date, 141 surveys were received. Although they were not included in the final count, this takes the FCO total to 6,232 (42%).

Breaking the response down further, 3,228 UK based staff and 2,860 locally engaged staff responded equating to response rates of 64% and 30% respectively. As the chart below demonstrates, response rates have increased since 2004 and the UK based response is in line with the Central Government benchmark.



4.2 High and low scoring areas

Looking at results across the entire survey and taking attitudinal scores, benchmark comparisons, year-on-year trends and comments into account, the following strengths and areas of improvement have been identified.

4.2.1 Strengths

- The job
- Security

- Engagement

4.2.2 Areas for improvement

- Leadership
- Change management
- Training and development

4.3 Summary of comparisons to 2004 data

There are 28 questions which have remained consistent with the 2004 survey. Of these, the FCO scored:

- 5+ points above 2004 for 13 questions
- 5+ points below 2004 for 1 question
- Within +/- 5 points of 2004 for 14 questions

4.4 Summary benchmark comparisons

There are 27 questions against which FCO can be compared to the Central Government benchmark data. Of these, the FCO scored:

- 5+ points above average for 5 questions
- 5+ points below average for 3 questions
- Within +/- 5 points of the benchmark norm for 19 questions

Please note that where no comparison figures are provided (-), there is no comparison data. Where zero is indicated, there is no percentage difference between the FCO results and the benchmark data.

5. Results

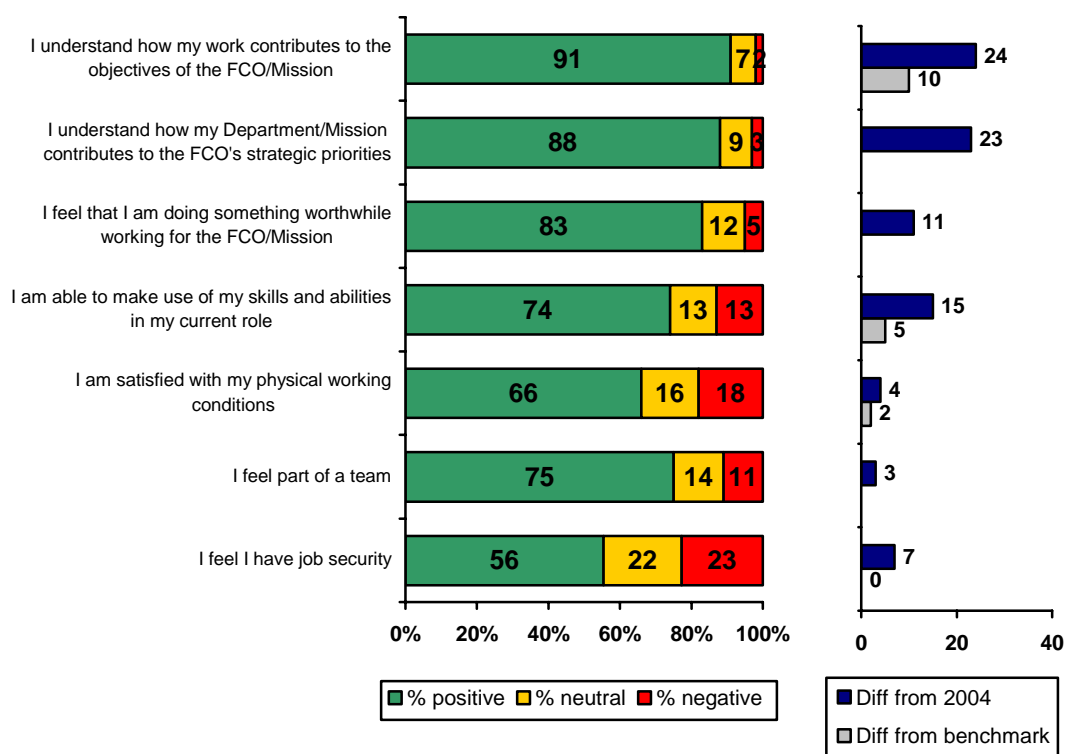
Section 5 of the report will discuss in detail the findings from the 2006 survey.

Questions have been grouped into 11 sections and each section will be discussed in turn, chronologically as it appeared in the survey.

Results will be discussed for FCO overall with comparisons drawn between UK based and locally engaged staff, and where the sample is large enough to do so robustly, by demographic group. Where applicable, comparisons will be made to benchmark norms.

5.1 Your Job

Chart 1: Your job and comparisons to benchmark and trend data



Staff have a high level of clarity over how their job (91% positive) and their part of the organisation (88% positive) contribute to FCO objectives and strategic priorities. The former has considerably improved since 2004 and is above the Central Government benchmark. The low scoring seems to be coming from some of the more junior staff, especially those in band A2.

At a personal level, 83% of staff feel they are doing something worthwhile and 74% use their skills and abilities. Following statistical analysis it has been found that both of these areas have a strong impact on FCO employee engagement. Therefore, ensuring that staff continue to feel their job is of worth, and perhaps slightly increasing the proportion of staff who feel they are using their strengths to the full, will help to increase engagement.

Once again it is the lower UK based bands (A1, A2 and B3) which rate these questions least positively. However there is also an indication that Home Civil Service staff find it more difficult to use their skills and get a sense of worth from their job. For both questions positive scores were approximately 10 percentage points lower than average.

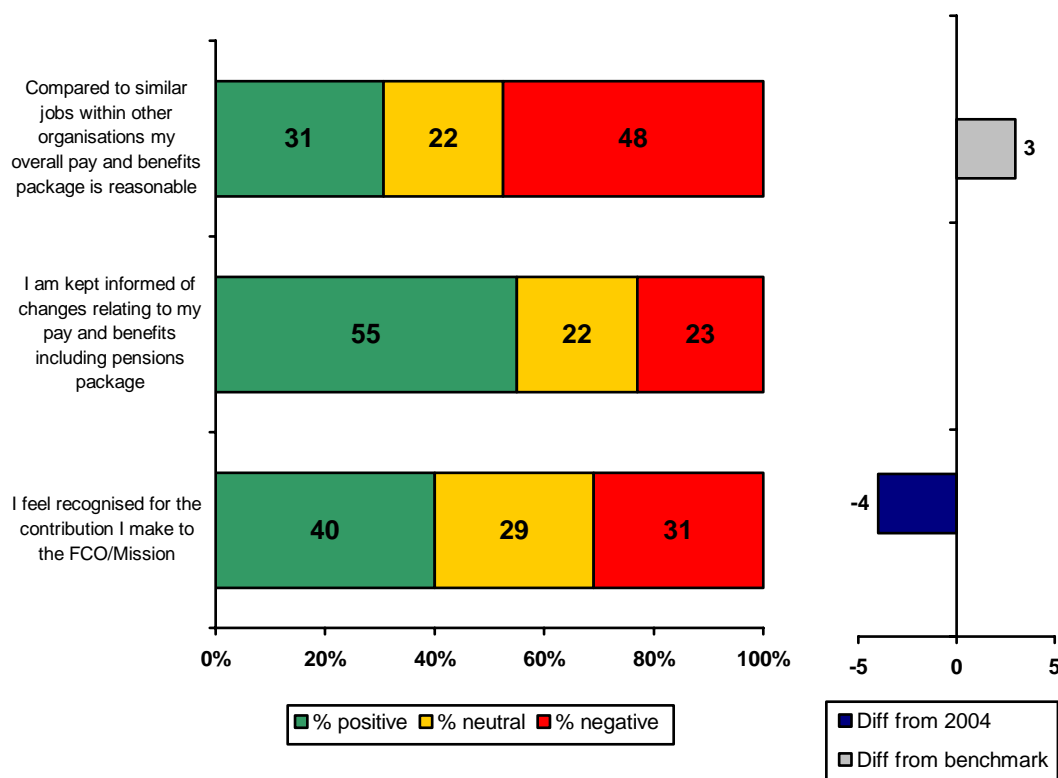
Physical working conditions are not satisfactory for all; 18% are not satisfied with their physical environment. This dissatisfaction is more prominent within the UK based staff (59% positive compared to 74% for LE staff), perhaps this is because UK based staff have higher expectations than their locally engaged counterparts. Dissatisfaction also seems to be most prominent within the Finance (40% negative), Information Technology Strategy Unit (44% negative) and Language Training Directorates (41% negative).

Three quarters of staff feel part of a team which is in line with the last survey. This is an encouraging finding considering that feeling part of a team has a strong impact on overall engagement. Therefore it would be important to ensure that the scoring to this question remains high.

Most staff feel they are secure in their job, and this is an improvement from 2004, and in line with the Central Government norm. However, this said, a notable proportion are either unsure or feel they do not have job security. Slightly more LE staff disagreed or rated this question negatively, supporting anecdotal findings from the qualitative research regarding their attitudes towards security. In fact security appeared so much of a concern that those consulted during the qualitative phase felt that locally engaged staff may not wish to complete the survey for fear of losing their job if they said the 'wrong thing'. FCO Services staff are more negative in their perception of job security (34% disagreed with the statement), probably as a result of the changes taking place in that part of the organisation recently.

3.2 Reward & Recognition

Chart 2: Reward and recognition and comparisons to benchmark and trend data



Pay is a notoriously poorly scored topic for many organisations and FCO are no exception. Only 31% of staff feel their pay and benefits are reasonable compared to other organisations, but looking at the benchmark comparison, this is actually about average for Central Government.

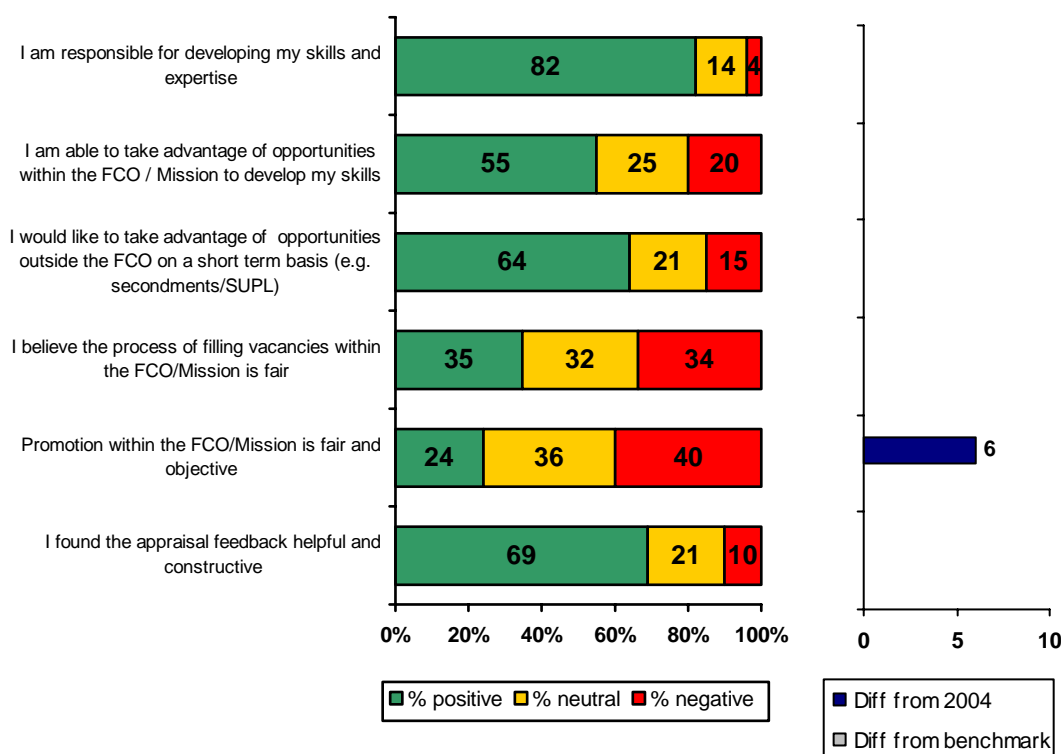
Providing some reassurance is the fact that over half of staff within the FCO overall feel that they are kept informed about changes relating to their pay and benefits. Although there is still room for improvement here, considering there is widespread uncertainty regarding this topic the current levels of satisfaction are probably fair to expect.

Feelings of recognition are also low (32% of staff do not feel they get recognised for the contribution they make) and this has slightly declined since 2004. Whereas relatively little can be done about pay rates, making staff feel recognised is an area where improvements could be made, for example by introducing benefits and recognition schemes. It appears that Home Civil Service staff, and those in bands A2 to C5 see this as a particular issue, interestingly the same groups that did not perceive their jobs to be so worthwhile or that they used their strengths. If there is a connection here, the direction of causality is difficult to attribute but looking at ways in which staff in the

lower bands and the Home Civil Service could feel more recognised may help to raise performance in these other areas.

3.3 Career Development

Chart 4: Career development and comparisons to benchmark and trend data



82% of staff accept they are responsible for developing their skills and expertise, however only just over half feel in a position to take advantage of opportunities to do so. This latter finding is supported by feedback during the qualitative phase. Career progression was mentioned as one of the areas staff are particularly unhappy with, especially staff based in the UK. Looking at the survey results though, there is little difference between how UK based staff and locally engaged staff perceive their development opportunities, suggesting it may be a more widespread issue.

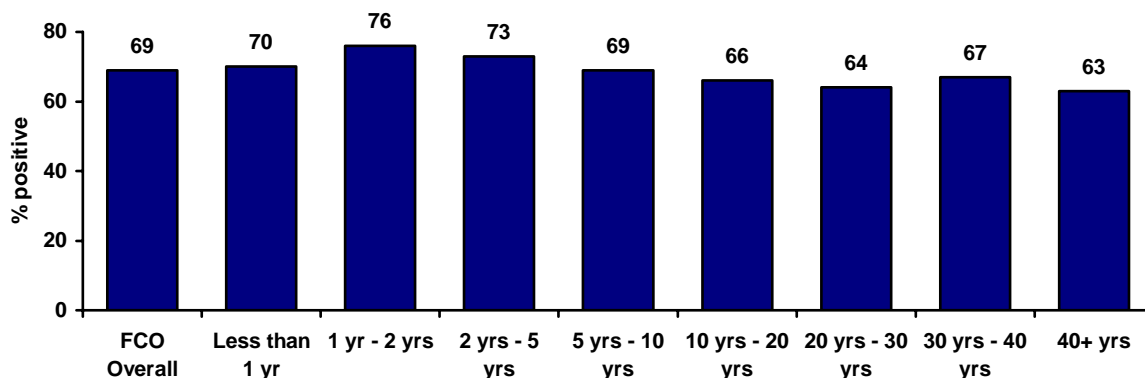
Secondments and other opportunities for short term work placements outside the FCO would be welcomed by almost two thirds of UK based staff and would perhaps present an opportunity for them to develop their skills in a way they are not currently able to achieve. There is slightly greater interest in secondments from staff with between 2 and 10 years of service, the typical time that people get 'itchy feet' and start looking for a new challenge.

There is a strong feeling that processes for promotion and of filling vacancies could be improved. Despite a large neutral score indicating that many staff are probably unsure of the process, there is still a substantial negative response which needs to be managed.

Considering both of these questions are linked to employee engagement, the former the more so, it would be important to investigate how satisfaction in this area could be improved. Communicating to staff how vacancies are filled and making job specifications and requirements available to staff may help to make the process more open and demonstrate to current employees what is required in order for them to progress into new roles.

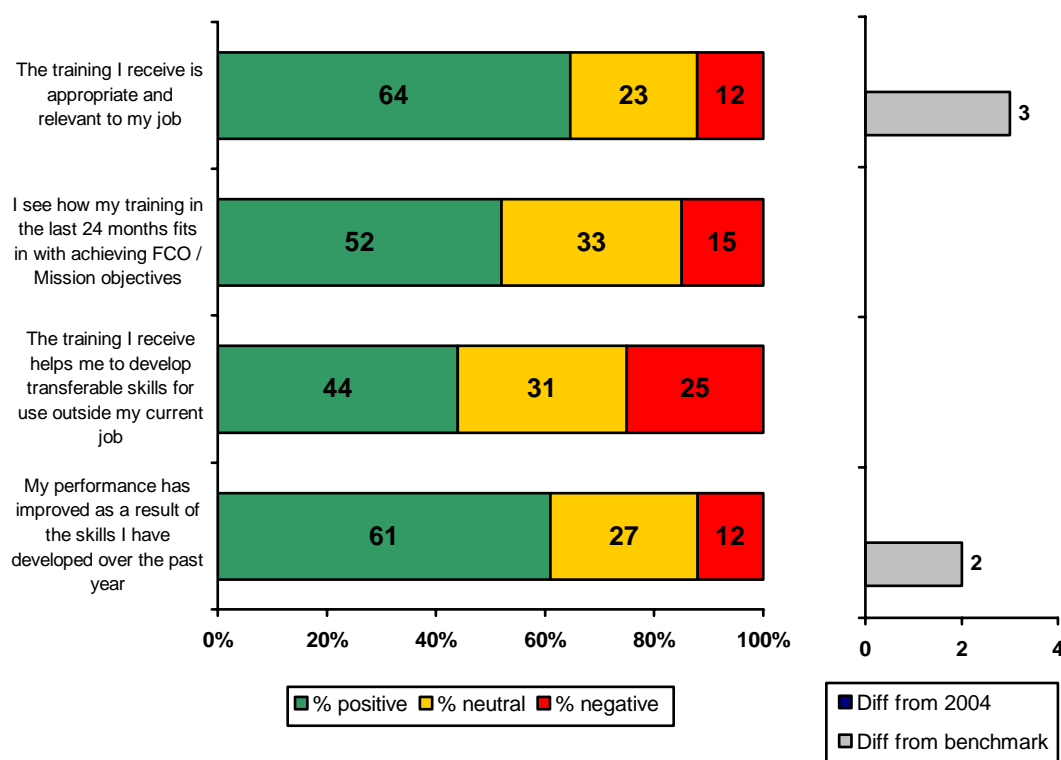
Appraisals are being conducted for almost three quarter of staff, both those UK based and locally engaged. Some of the 28% of staff making up the negative response may well have been new starters who have not been employed long enough to receive an appraisal. Most found their appraisal constructive, although the longest serving employees were least positive in their view.

Chart 5: I found the appraisal feedback helpful and constructive



3.4 Training

Chart 6: Training and comparisons to benchmark and trend data



In the main, staff are satisfied that they receive training that is appropriate and relevant to their job and in this respect, score in line with the Central Government norm.

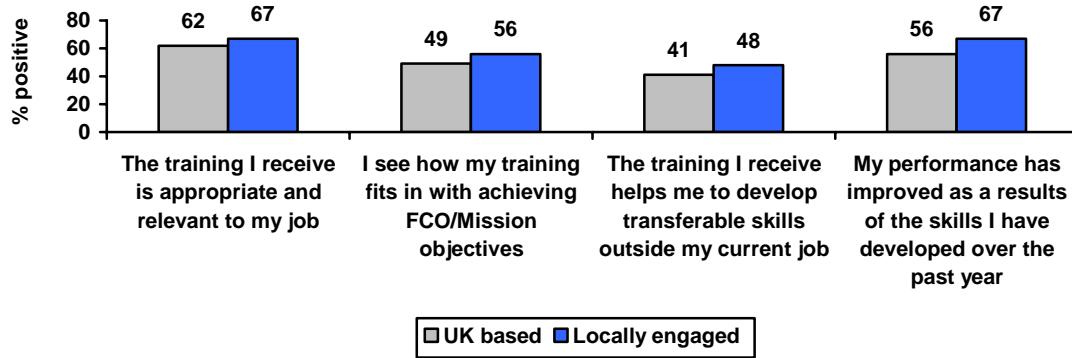
Considering that staff have a strong understanding of how individual job roles fit within the context of FCO's objectives, training that staff receive does not seem to be linked to this as well as it might. 52% of staff see how their training fits with achieving FCO objectives and one third appear unclear.

61% of staff feel that training they have received in the last year has improved their skills and therefore their performance, in line with the Central Government benchmark. As this is slightly greater than the proportion of staff that felt able to take advantage of opportunities to develop skills, it is perhaps a case that staff are getting training, but not in the areas that they feel are of greatest benefit to them long term.

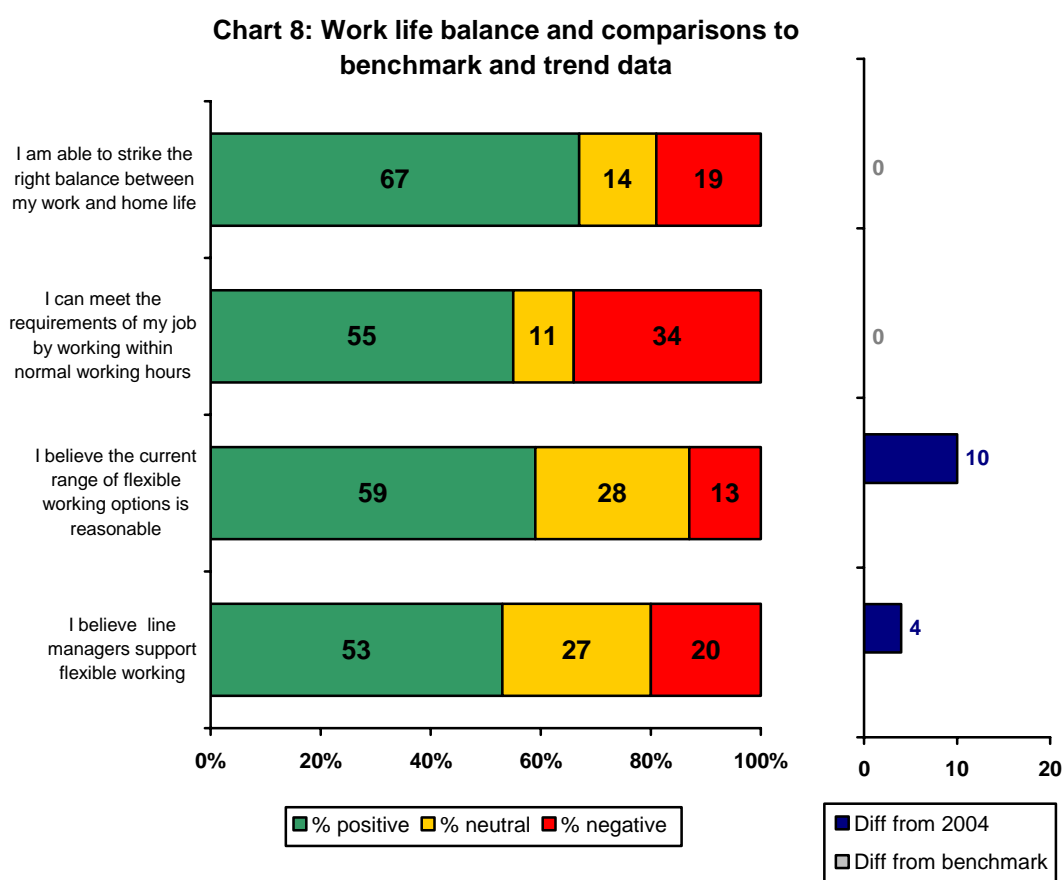
It is interesting to note that LE staff are actually slightly more positive about the training opportunities than their UK based colleagues. However this is in contrast to one of the

qualitative findings: training was another issue raised as requiring attention, particularly in terms of how well training helps locally engaged staff to develop transferable skills.

Chart 7: Training by UK based and LE staff



3.5 Work Life Balance



The majority of staff (67%) feel able to strike a balance between their work and home lives however just over a third (34%) are not able to meet the requirements of their job within normal hours. Perhaps to be expected is the noticeable trend towards LE staff being more likely to rate these questions positively: 81% feel able to strike a work-life balance compared to 55% of UK based staff and 71% are able to complete their work within normal hours; only 41% of UK based staff feel able to do so.

Length of service and band also appear to be predictors of work-life balance: the longer serving staff, and those in higher (UK based) bands rated both questions less positively.

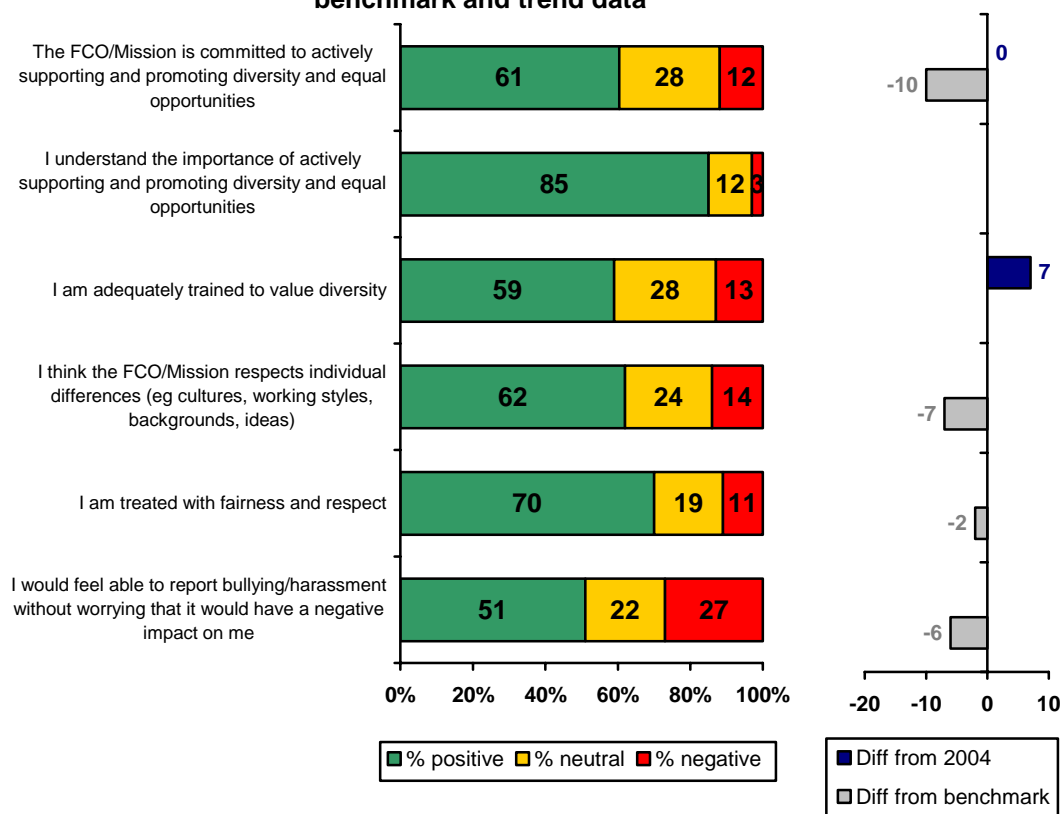
For all staff there appears to be some uncertainty as to the current range of flexible working options since 28% do not agree or disagree with the question. Does the communication of what is available therefore need to be clearer?

There appears to be greater clarity of, and support for, flexible working options within certain Directorates: Directorate for Strategy and Information, Finance Directorate, Global Issues Directorate, Human Resources Directorate and Information and

Technology Strategy Unit. Although these units do not seem to be able to take advantage of these options in order to strike a better work-life balance than their colleagues in other Directorates.

3.6 Equality and Diversity

Chart 9: Equality and diversity and comparisons to benchmark and trend data



This section contains all three questions scoring more than 5 percentage points below the Central Government benchmark. Although the importance of equal opportunities seems clear to the majority of staff, there is less clarity over how committed FCO is to promoting the fact and of training staff in this way.

The relatively low scoring with regards to how staff perceive FCO's commitment to supporting and promoting diversity and equal opportunities and training staff to value diversity, is largely due to high neutral scores. Whereas this is less of a concern than active dissatisfaction, it does suggest uncertainty and therefore highlights a potential need to improve awareness of what the organisation does to ensure equality and diversity and make sure that these policies are carried out. It is also worth noting that it is the locally engaged staff that are least clear over these issues; there being at least a 10 percentage point difference compared to UK based staff in the neutral scores for each question.

Despite this 70% of staff feel they are treated with fairness and respect; both LE and UK based staff score similarly.

From a total of 5,632 staff who responded to the question, 71% reported not experiencing bullying or harassment in the past year on the basis of any of the areas listed (see chart 10 below). However a greater proportion reported experiencing discrimination in the past year, as chart 11 illustrates.

Chart 10: In the last year, whilst working for FCO, have you experienced bullying or harassment by managers or colleagues on the basis of:

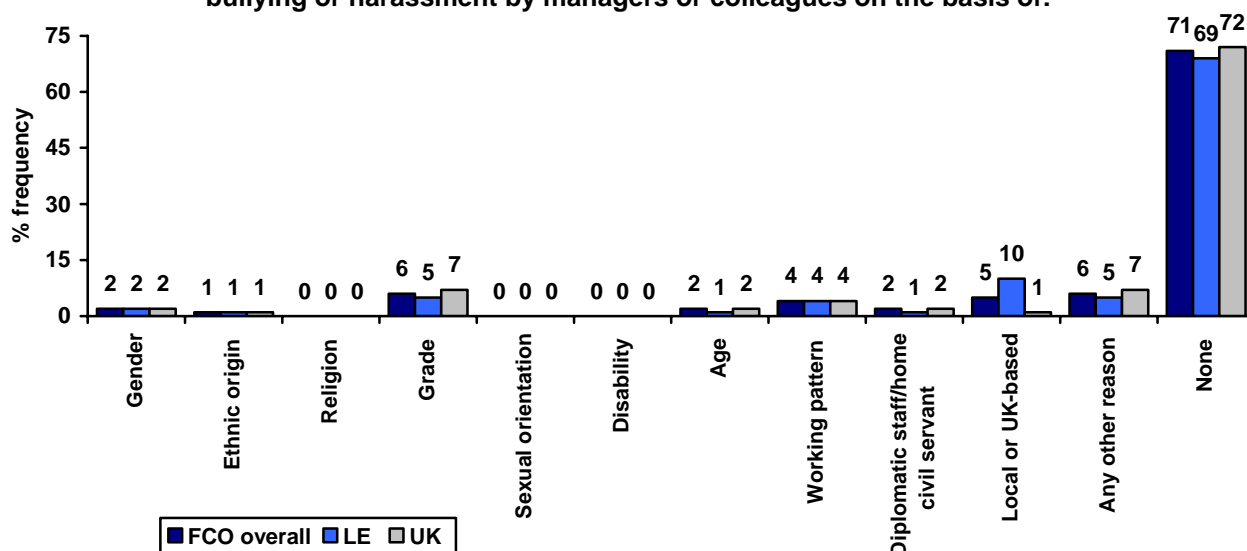
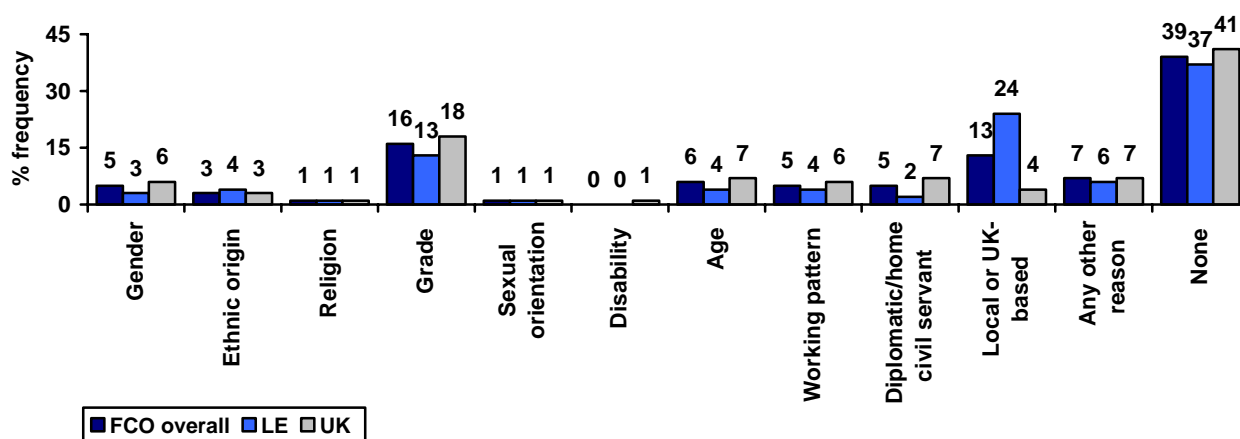


Chart 11: In the last year, whilst working for FCO, have you experienced discrimination by managers or colleagues on the basis of:



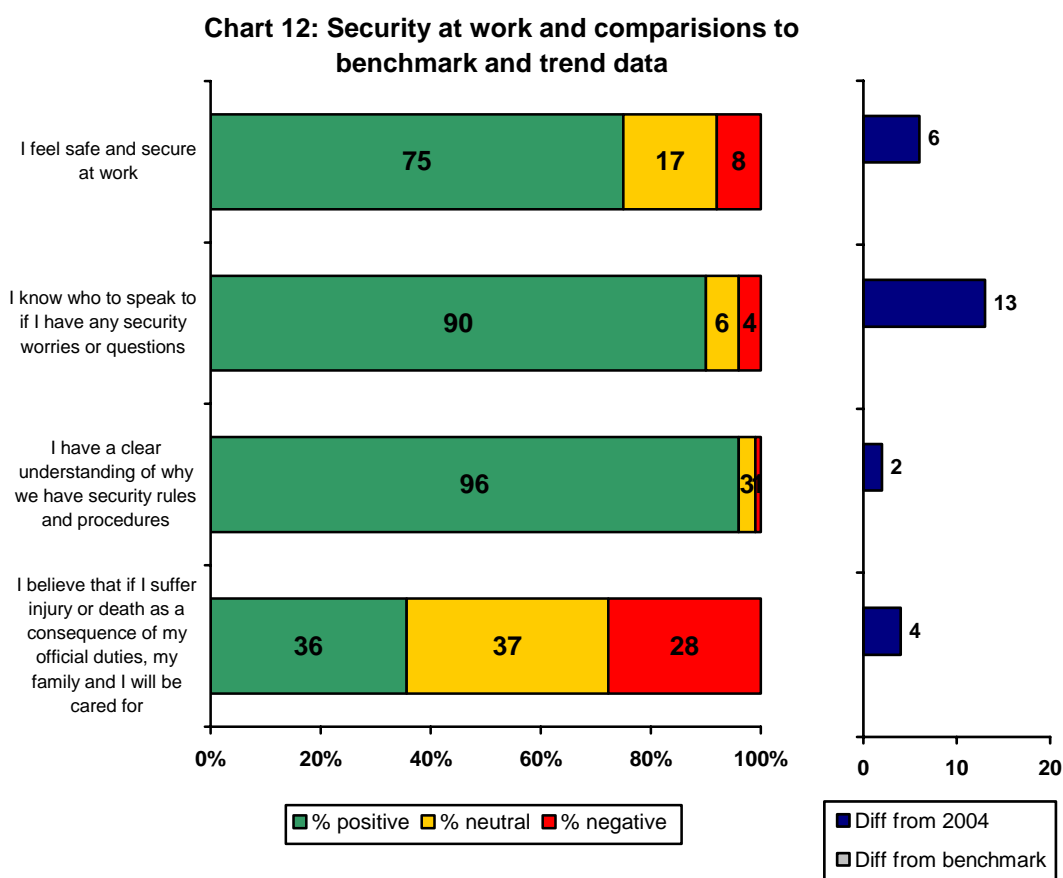
For LE staff the main basis on which discrimination and/or bullying occurs is their locally engaged status. For UK based staff, grade seems to be a greater predictor.

Although a minority of staff have experienced bullying or harassment, few (57%) brought the fact to the attention of a senior colleague or manager. Furthermore, where the case was reported only 32% felt the way in which it was handled was satisfactory. A similar trend appears for those experiencing discrimination: 44% raised the issue with a colleague or manager but only 30% of those who did so were satisfied.

The Employee Assistance Programme does not seem to be utilised for concerns such as bullying and discrimination, only 3% of staff sought advice from the programme to discuss their experience. Those using the programme to report bullying/harassment were slightly more satisfied (44%) with the way in which their query was handled than those who reported discrimination (31%).

Perhaps by way of explaining the reason for the low incidence of reporting discrimination/bullying is the fact that 27% of staff fear negative repercussions. Although it runs contrary to what we may expect considering some of the feedback from the qualitative research, locally engaged staff are slightly less concerned about this than their UK based counterparts.

3.7 Security at Work



Considering the nature of the job and the potential danger to which some staff at least may be exposed, it is reassuring to see that 75% of staff feel safe and secure; again with little differences between LE and UK based staff or those working within the UK and overseas.

There are also few notable differences between Directorates. However if we drill down within the Iraq Directorate, one of the more volatile regions, 52% the overseas staff feel safe and secure compared to 87% of their UK based colleagues.

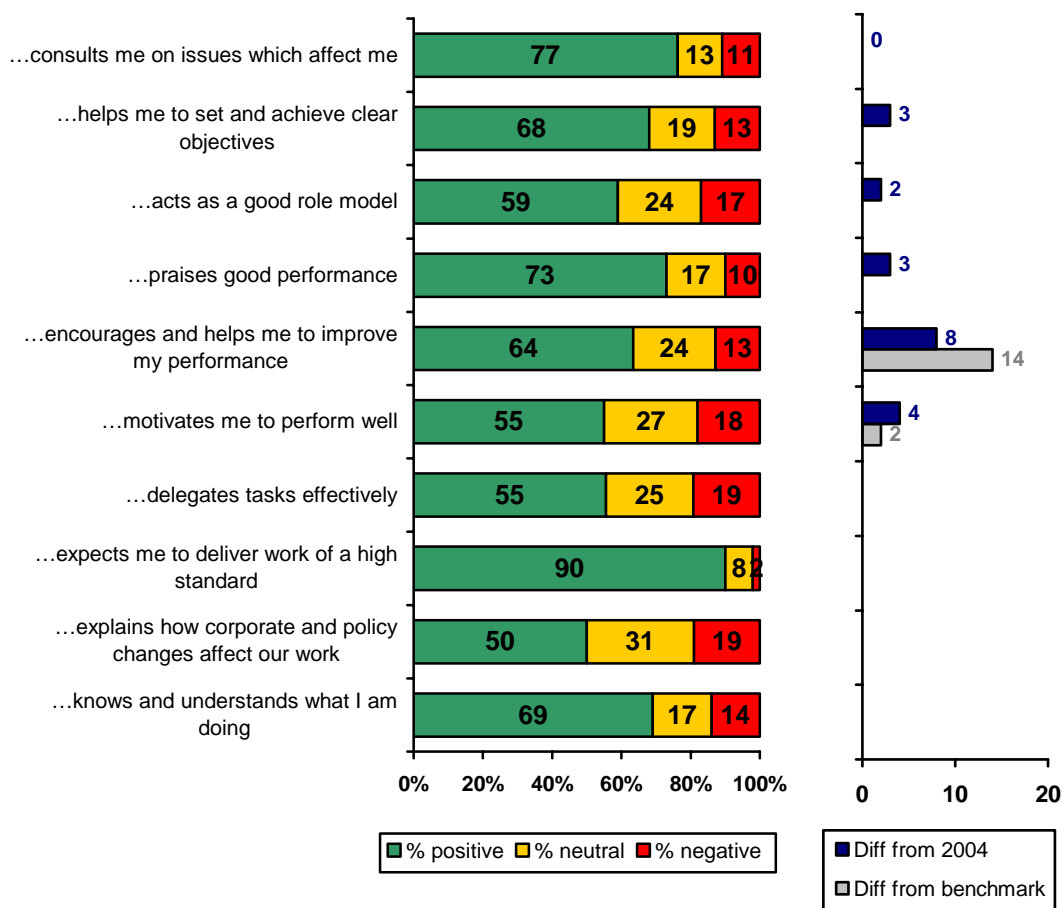
Despite a relatively high proportion of staff rating this question positively, it may be worth giving some attention to how feelings of safety and security could be more widely ensured. Statistical analysis shows that questions related to security are strongly correlated with engagement, and feeling safe and secure at work, most so.

The need for security rules and procedures is clear to almost all staff and a similarly high proportion knows who to speak to if they have security concerns (an increase of 13 percentage points since 2004). However only 36% of staff believe that the FCO would

support their family if something were to happen to them at work. It seems likely that uncertainty rather than disbelief is the driver of this low score; 37% of staff rated this question neutrally. Which, considering that security is linked to engagement suggests that FCO may need to do more to promote how it would support staff if such a situation arose.

3.8 Line Managers

Chart 13: Line managers and comparisons to benchmark and trend data

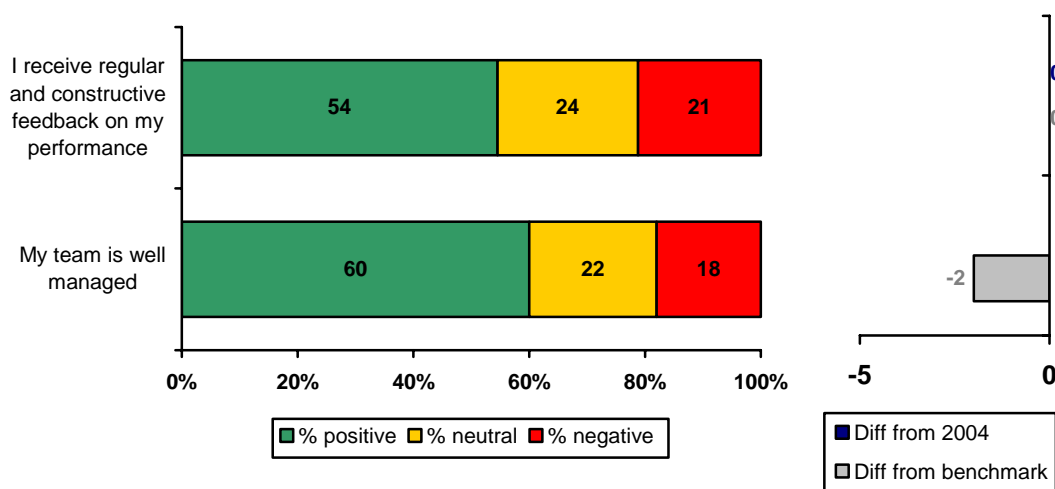


There is mixed feedback on managers; with the majority of staff appearing content, LE staff marginally more so.

90% of staff feel managers expect them to deliver work of a high standard which is encouraging, but the high levels of agreement could also be disguising pressure placed on staff as a result.

There is also fairly high disagreement with and a considerable neutral response to the question of whether managers explain how corporate and policy changes affect staff's work. Is this a result of poor managerial communication or a consequence of managers not being suitably informed themselves?

Chart 14: Line managers contd. and comparisons to benchmark and trend data

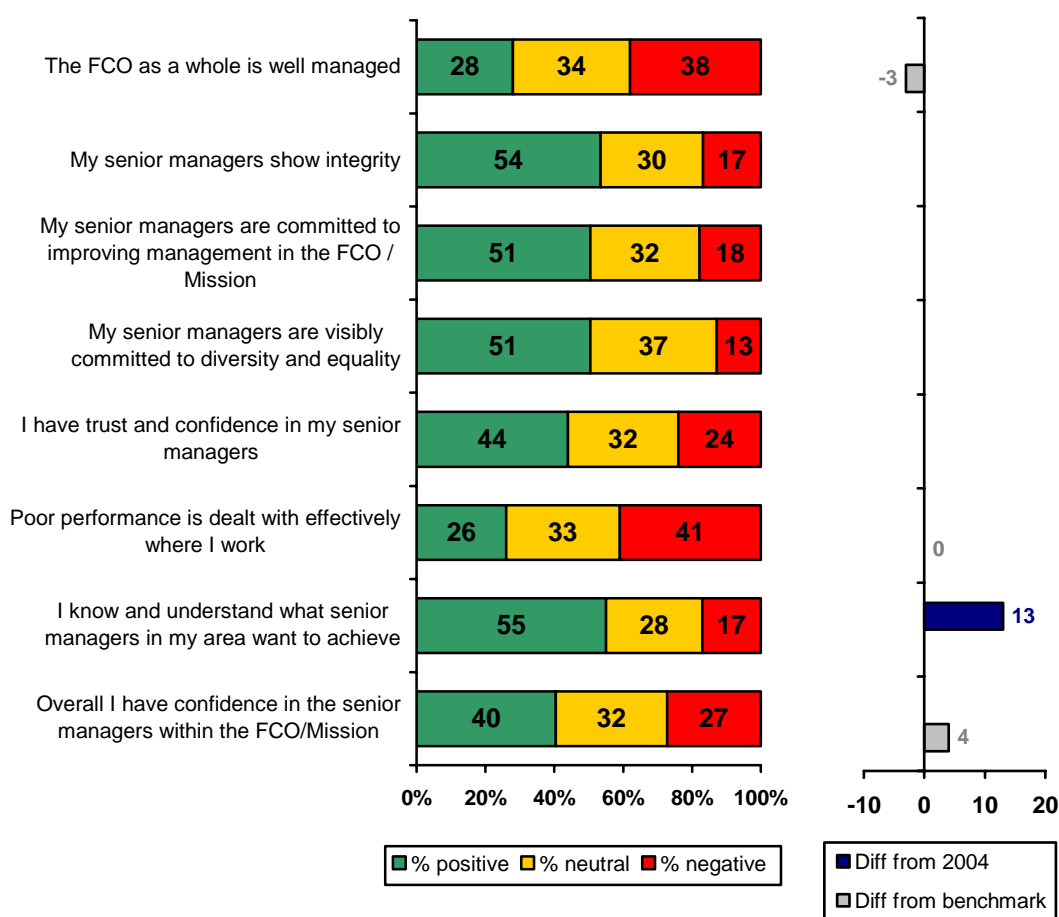


There is low confidence that managers provide feedback on their performance regularly and constructively; 21% disagree. And, although managers seem to be praising good performance (73% positive), there is less agreement that they are helping staff to improve performance.

Although scoring in this area has become more positive since 2004, and is 14 percentage points above the Central Government norm, considering the high expectations placed on staff to perform well, there seem to be an element of conflict here and a focus on improving performance management further may be required. Although as we saw earlier, appraisals are taking place and are in the main perceived to be useful, there is perhaps an opportunity to use the appraisal more as a tool to tackle performance.

3.9 Leadership

Chart 15: Leadership and comparisons to benchmark and trend data



Senior management is another area that tends to score poorly in organisations, and in Central Government more so than most.

High neutral scores tend to explain much of the low scoring; many staff feel unable to comment on how senior management perform considering they are far removed from their part of the organisation. This is not to negate the need for change in this area and as the senior management can bare the brunt of dissatisfaction and frustration within an organisation it is important to address as many issues as possible. In fact, statistical analysis has found leadership to be a key driver of engagement within the FCO, particularly in terms of the way in which staff perceive their organisation is managed overall and the extent to which they have trust in their senior managers.

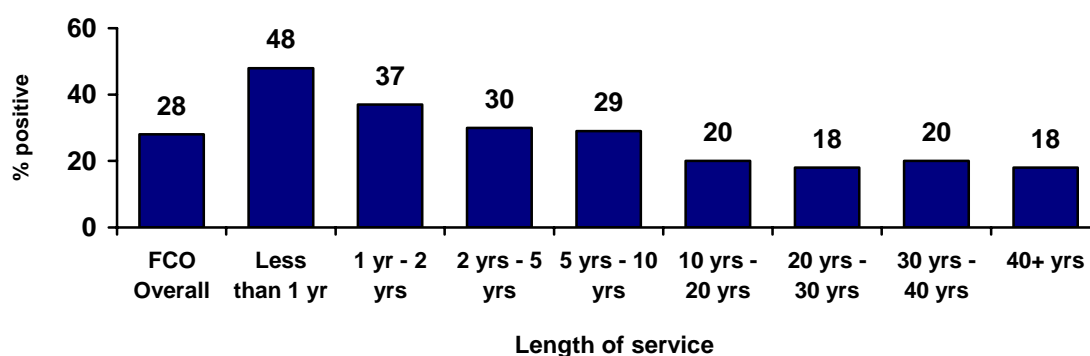
With this in mind, it is concerning that the most pressing issue appears to be overall management of the FCO and the management of poor performance. More than a third of staff rated each of these questions negatively. The latter perhaps emphasises the point made earlier that managers may need to focus on helping staff to improve their

performance, and that the use of appraisals in the performance management process would facilitate this.

Interestingly, more UK based staff were dissatisfied with leadership and this was not caused by locally engaged staff rating questions neutrally. Furthermore, the Directorates scoring the section most positively overall were some of those serving the most far flung regions: Russia, South Caucasus and Central Asia Directorate (55%), South Asia and Afghanistan Directorate (55%), Middle East and North Africa Directorate (51%) and Asia-Pacific Directorate (50%). These compare to the FCO overall score of 44% positive. Directorates scoring the section most poorly overall were: Language Training (24%), Finance Directorate (30%) and FCO Services (31%).

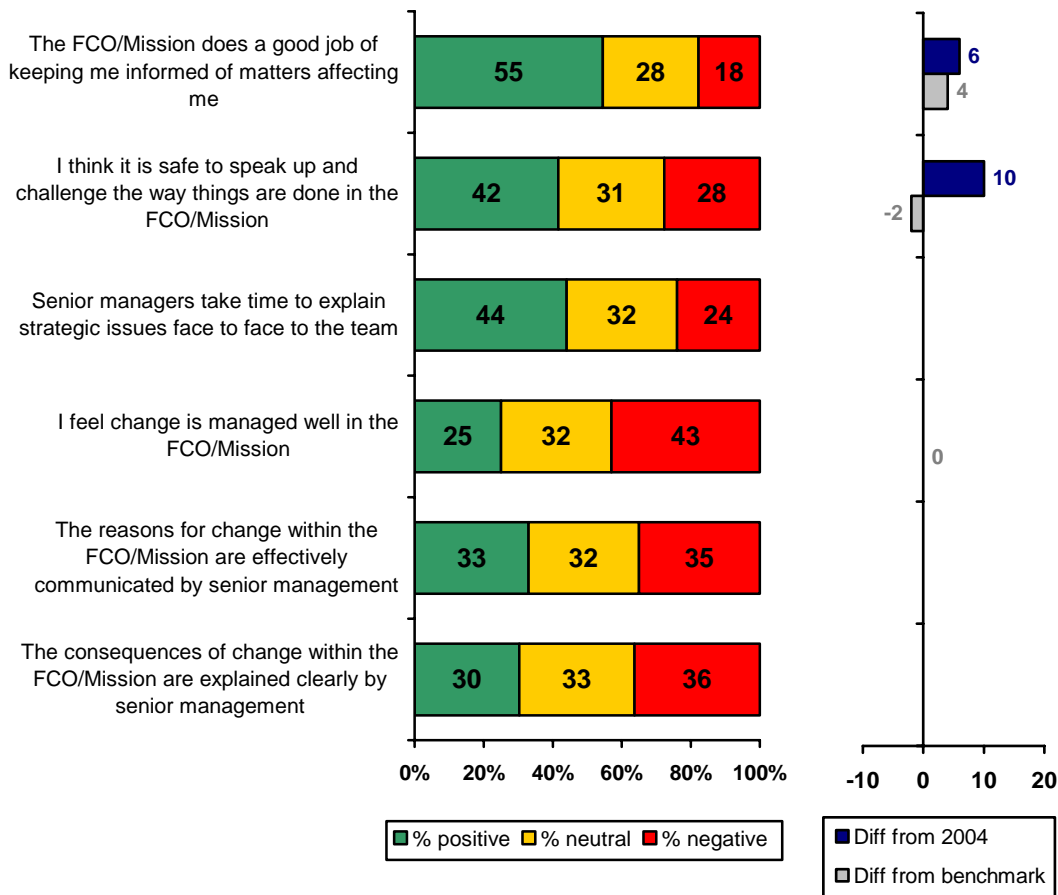
Length of service is once again a good predictor of satisfaction in this area, as the chart below illustrates.

Chart 16: The FCO as a whole is well managed



3.10 Change and Communication

Chart 17: Change and communication and comparisons to benchmark and trend data



As with many organisations, the FCO is going through change and therefore there is bound to be an element of unrest among staff. Change, and the way it is managed and communicated is a real problem within the organisation. It was raised within the qualitative phase as causing frustration and has come out as the 5th most commented on topic within the Comments report.

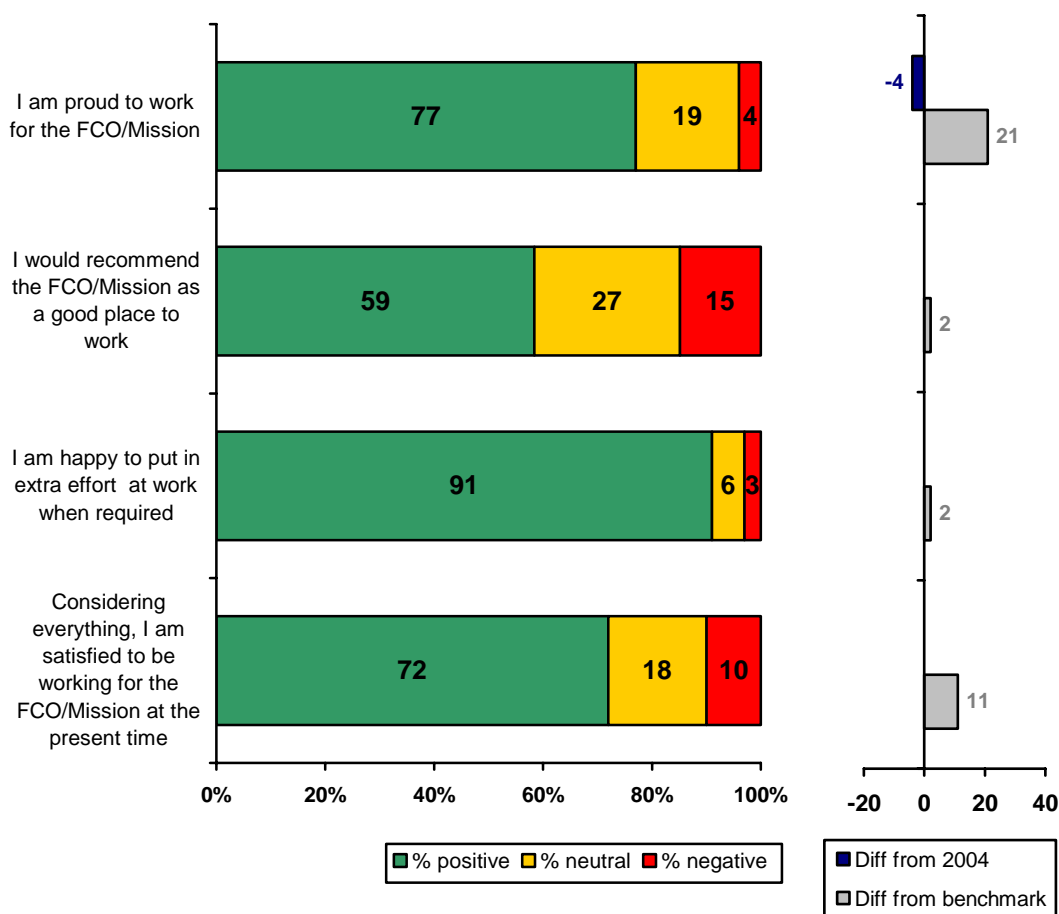
Only one quarter of staff feel that the FCO manages change well and a considerable 43% do not. The results are even more discouraging for UK based staff. Here 59% of staff do not feel change is managed well.

Much of how the management of change is perceived is down to how it is communicated internally, and looking at some of the other questions in this section we can see that the reasons for change, and the consequences of it, need to be made clearer to staff. Staff seem concerned about the amount of change that takes place in quick succession, and in this environment, communication is even more important.

Two of the areas which have specifically been commented upon with regards to how change has been handled are Prism and the reduction of resource within HR. One of the key concerns seems to be the workload that has fallen upon staff as a result.

3.11 Overall Perceptions

Chart 18: Overall perceptions and comparisons to benchmark and trend data



This section measures employee engagement: the extent to which an employee is willing and able to invest their personal effort in the success of the organisation. Looking at the questions in this section, we see a largely positive picture.

77% of staff are proud to work for the FCO, a massive 21 percentage points more than the Central Government norm. And 72% are satisfied to be working there at the present time, again a commendable 11 percentage points above the Central Government norm.

However one of the most encouraging findings in the whole survey is that 91% of staff are prepared to go the 'extra mile' at work and put in extra effort when required. This sentiment is even stronger for LE staff; 93% agreed with the statement. This score is in line with benchmark but due to insufficient organisations within Central Government asking the question the comparison is to the entire Perspectives database and therefore includes private sector organisations, which is perhaps even more heartening finding.

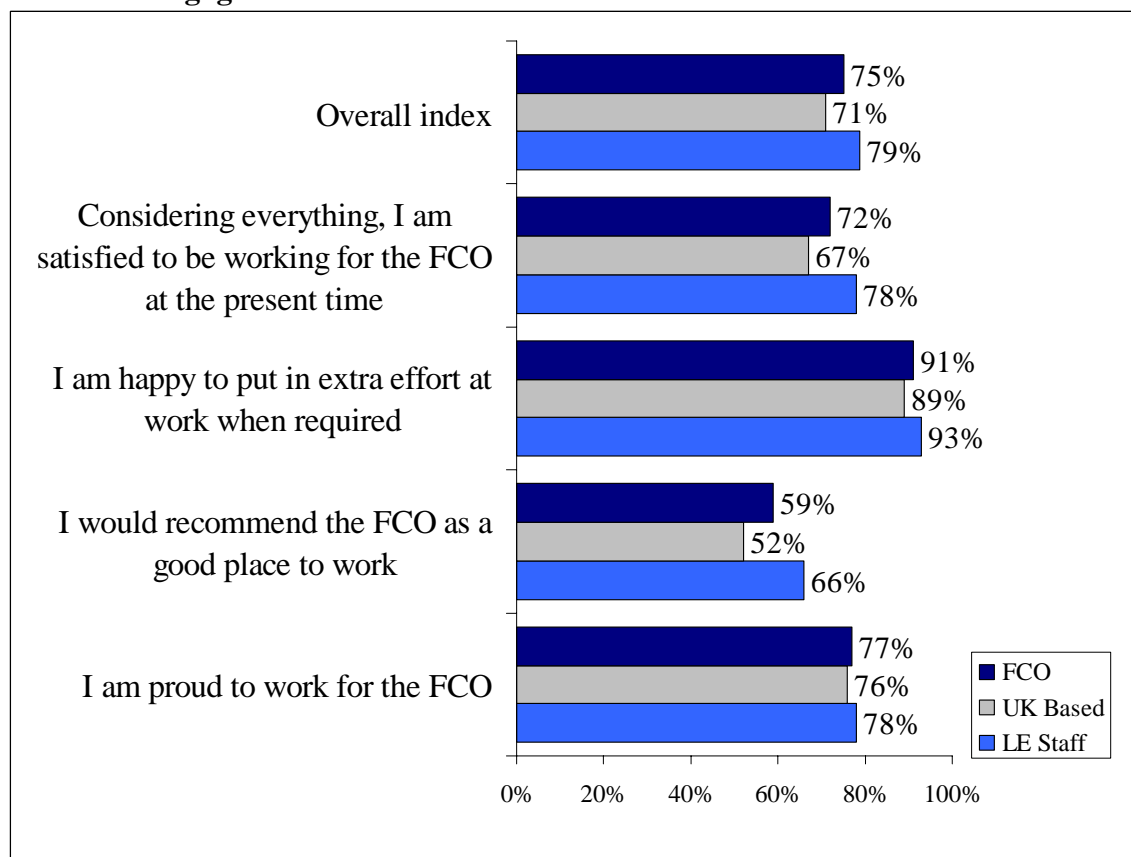
Less encouraging is the percentage of staff who would recommend the FCO as a place to work; 59% of staff overall rated this positively, slightly more LE staff (66%). It is interesting to see a relatively high neutral score here. Perhaps there is a feeling that the nature of the work involved is not something that everyone would feel comfortable with, and therefore staff are not all quick to act as advocates. Or perhaps staff are content to work for FCO but at present there are too many things wrong for them to actively promote the organisation.

3.11.1 Engagement Index and Key Driver Analysis

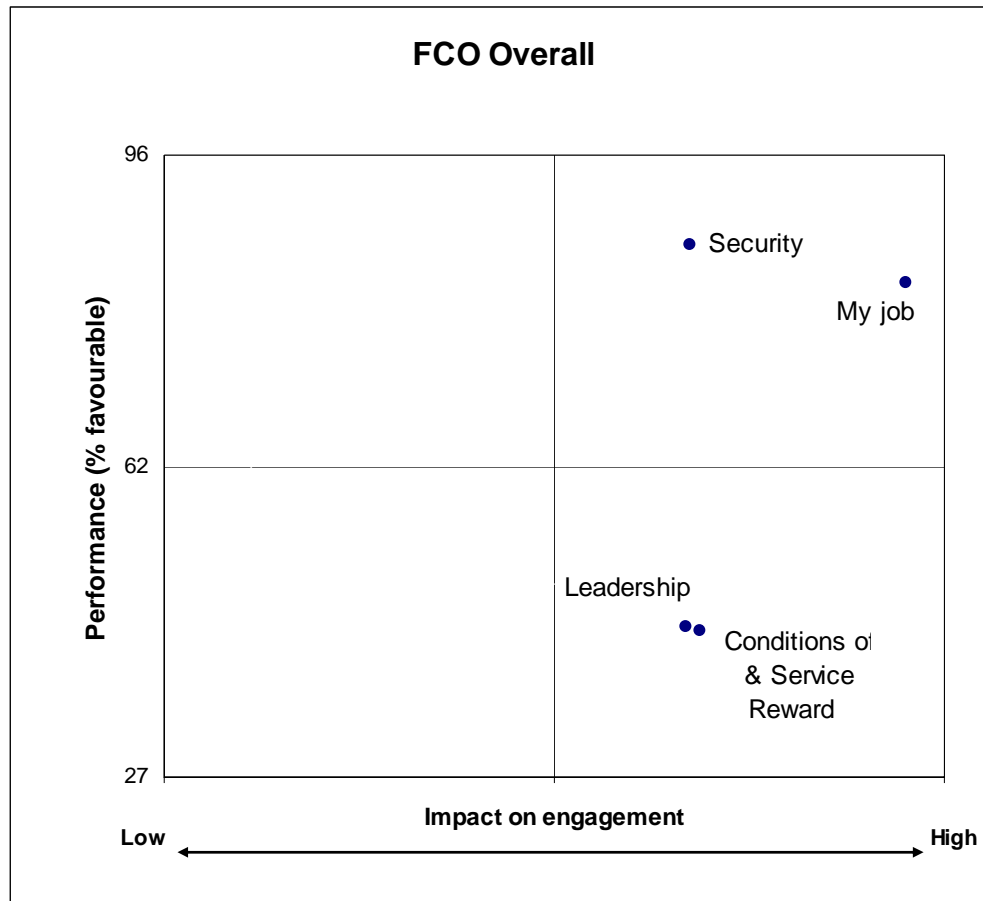
The positive response to all questions in this section can be aggregated to provide an engagement index which can be used to compare engagement within different parts of the organisation and to track trends over time.

The chart below compares FCO, LE and UK staff on each constituent question and the overall index. This shows that engagement overall is relatively strong at 75%, and that LE staff are slightly more engaged (79%) than their UK based counterparts (71%).

Chart 19: Engagement index



A key driver analysis was conducted to look at which questions within the survey had the greatest impact on the index for FCO overall – essentially what things within FCO are driving engagement. As the diagram below illustrates, the four areas having greatest impact on engagement were related to the job, security, conditions of service and reward and leadership.



If we look in more detail at the questions within these broad groupings and this impact they have on engagement, we can start to prioritise where action should be targeted.

- The job:
 - I feel that I am doing something worthwhile working for the FCO/Mission
 - I feel part of a team
 - I am able to make use of my skills and abilities in my current role
 - I understand how my Department/Mission contributes to the FCO's strategic priorities

- Conditions of service and reward:
 - I feel recognised for the contribution I make to the FCO/Mission
 - I am satisfied with my physical working conditions
 - I feel I have job security
 - Promotion within the FCO/Mission is fair and objective
- Security:
 - I feel safe and secure at work
 - I understand the importance of actively supporting diversity and equal opportunities
 - I have a clear idea of why we have security rules and procedures
 - I know who to speak to if I have security concerns or worries
- Leadership:
 - The FCO as a whole is well managed
 - I have trust and confidence in my senior managers
 - My senior managers show integrity
 - I know and understand what senior managers in my area want to achieve

6. Summary of findings

6.1 Strengths

There has been a good improvement in the response rate since 2004, for both UK based and locally engaged staff. The percentage of response from UK based staff is now on par with the Central Government norm of 64%.

There has been an overall improvement in positive scores since 2004. Only on 1 question did the overall percentage positive score drop more than 5 percentage points below that which was achieved in 2004, and on 13 questions the FCO scored more than 5 percentage points above their previous score.

Comparisons to the Central Government norm are also encouraging, with the FCO being within plus or minus 5 points of 19 benchmark questions, and only falling below the benchmark by more than 5 percentage points on 3 questions.

If we look more specifically at how sections within the questionnaire were scored, the following come out as being most positive:

Overall Engagement

The overall engagement index of 75% is a good score for the FCO's first employee engagement survey, and a strong benchmark against which to compare subsequent surveys. Most of the constituent questions scored very positively, particularly the extent to which staff are happy to 'go the extra mile' at work. Pride in the FCO and overall satisfaction are high and both are considerably higher than we might expect looking at Central Government norms.

The Job

We can see that perceptions of the job overall are generally very positive and staff have high levels of clarity over how what they do fits within the organisation's objectives. At a more personal level, staff are gaining satisfaction from their job in terms of feeling they are doing something worthwhile and something that uses their skills and abilities. Most encouraging is the strong correlation between job related responses and employee engagement and this is something that the FCO should take pride over. However, it cannot be taken for granted, and ensuring that staff continue to feel positive about these aspects of their job is essential. It would also be important to try to continue to improve the extent to which staff feel part of a team, as this is one of the key drivers of engagement and one which is lagging slightly below the others.

Security

Another area singled out as being a particular strength is how staff perceive their security at work. This is a topic unique to the FCO so there are no benchmarks against which we can compare scores, but looking at improvements since 2004 there has obviously been some work in this area to raise staff's level of confidence. This is another area which is tied to engagement, and another which is having a positive impact. However, despite 75% of staff feeling safe and secure at work, there is a quarter of staff who either do not, or are unsure. In order to maintain, or raise engagement further, it would be important to make more staff feel secure, whether it is a case of promoting what is being done, or introducing a policy to improve safety and security in certain parts of the organisation.

6.2 Areas for improvement

The areas for improvement within FCO tend to relate to specific parts of the organisation, and most are ones which were raised spontaneously in the preceding qualitative research. The key driver analysis is particularly useful when looking at areas to prioritise for action as we can focus in on those likely to have the greatest impact on engagement. Several of these areas seem to interlink and therefore areas for improvement are discussed below within two main topic areas.

Leadership, communication and change

Although line management is generally not an issue, senior management and overall leadership is perceived particularly negatively within the FCO. This is not an uncommon finding, particularly within Central Government, where the majority of staff can feel far removed from the management team and therefore either find it hard to comment on their work, or use them as a focus for work-related frustration. This is not an excuse to ignore the issue however as leadership showed up on the key driver analysis as having a high, negative impact on engagement. Therefore it would be essential that some form of action be taken to raise perceptions of how the organisation is being managed.

Some of the issues contributing to the low scoring in this section are communication and change. The FCO is undergoing change and feedback from staff shows that the change is constant and fast moving. This can lead to staff feeling unsettled and frustrated and therefore the way in which change is communicated and managed is vital. Explaining to staff the reasons for change and what the likely consequences will be can help to remove much of the confusion and concern. Even when outcomes are unknown, as in the current situation regarding pensions, keeping staff updated and being there to answer questions, helps to reassure that their needs are not being ignored. The way in which this information is communicated is also important and may need to be adapted for different parts of the organisation. For example having information relayed via email

may be too impersonal and therefore team meetings could better forums for delivering sensitive or complex information.

Reward and recognition

Another area found to be having a negative impact on engagement is the way in which staff perceive their conditions of service and reward. Although perceptions of pay score poorly, for some parts of the organisation much more than others, it is actually more subtle forms of reward that seem to be having the greatest statistical impact. Less than half of staff feel recognised for the contribution they make to the FCO which, considering the level of pride and worth they place on their job, is a particularly pertinent finding.

Recognition can come in a variety of forms, and it is unclear from this survey alone exactly what would benefit staff within the FCO. However, looking at some of the other questions within this grouping we see that perceptions of promotion are also having a particularly negative impact on engagement. Therefore it may be the lack of opportunity to progress within the organisation that staff are craving. Training also scored poorly and could be related to this point. The training currently available appears to be quite specific and not sufficient to build transferable skills that can develop staff and their abilities beyond that of their current role. We saw earlier that the appraisal system is being used but there is perhaps scope for it to be used to look at staff's needs more closely and investigate how their developmental needs can be better met.