
John Pullinger CB CStat | National StatisticianSir Bernard Jenkin MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

27 February 2019

Dear Bernard,

I am writing in response to the Committee's request for further information on the seniority of statistical Heads of Profession in departments, with reference to question 4 of the terms of reference for the *Governance of Statistics* inquiry, which asks how the roles of Heads of Profession and Government Statistical Service (GSS) statisticians could be strengthened.

The scale and complexity of statistical functions within different departments vary, and accordingly so do the responsibilities of each Head of Profession. Not all departments are responsible for frequent publications of key indicators, or large-scale data collections, so it would not be appropriate to apply a one-size-fits-all approach. Nevertheless, every Head of Profession fulfils a critical role in the statistical system and there are common responsibilities that each Head of Profession is required to fulfil for their department. The GSS have a published statement of the role and responsibilities of the Head of Profession,¹ updated in February last year.

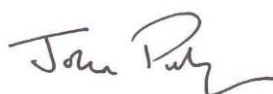
The GSS provides guidance to departments on the appointment of Heads of Profession, which sets an expectation that Heads of Profession meet the highest level of the GSS criteria for statistical ability as a minimum and in addition would usually be expected to fulfil the generic civil service competencies to a SCS level.

To assist the Committee with their inquiry, we have collated the grades of Heads of Profession² in the 18 major Whitehall departments, and the devolved administrations. However, as they are employed by their departments, this is not data we normally hold, and we are unable to provide any historical data for comparison.

Heads of Profession in the 18 major Whitehall departments and the devolved administrations	
SCS 2	2
SCS 1	13
Below SCS	6

I hope that this information is helpful to the Committee in its inquiry, and I look forward to contributing further to the Committee's inquiry in due course.

Yours,

**John Pullinger**

¹ [GSS \(February 2018\) Heads of Profession Roles and Responsibilities](#)

² Note that the responsibilities of the Head of Profession are sometimes shared across some combination of a Chief Statistician and a Head of Profession, in which case the grade of the senior statistician has been recorded.