

# Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Wave One Summary Report

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of findings from wave one of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) survey 2006/7.
- 1.2 A total of 1,775 respondents responded to the survey, representing a response rate of 45%. Although still below the Central Government norm of 64%, encouragingly response is greater than that received in the census survey, an unusual finding in dip-check surveys.
- 1.3 The questions asked in wave one included some of the same questions asked in the census survey but new questions were added to address specific issues.
- 1.4 In the census survey staff were asked to think about the FCO/Mission when answering the questions; for the wave survey to make this clearer locally engaged (LE) staff were asked to think about their Post whereas all other staff (UK based) were asked to focus on FCO. This change may have had some impact on how questions were answered and should be kept in mind when interpreting the results.
- 1.5 Results summary: highest and lowest scoring areas:

Highlights	Lowlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overall Perceptions</b> Respondents are proud to be working for the FCO/Post and ready to put in extra effort. A large proportion are satisfied to be working for the FCO/Post, considering everything.</li> <li>• <b>Your job</b> The majority of respondents feel they are doing something worthwhile working for the FCO/Post. An encouraging proportion feel they are part of a team. Respondents also report being able to make use of their skills and abilities and are aware of the FCO's Strategic International Policies.</li> <li>• <b>Security</b> Most respondents, regardless of whether they are UK based or locally engaged, feel safe and secure at work and understand the need for security procedures.</li> <li>• <b>Equality and Diversity</b> Respondents understand the importance of actively supporting and promoting diversity and equal opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Performance and Reward</b> There is dissatisfaction with the promotions procedures, which are largely seen as unfair and non-objective. There is also a lack of recognition for the contribution that staff make, in regards to both their pay and general appreciation.</li> <li>• <b>Communication and Change</b> The communication of change is perceived poorly, particularly by UK based respondents. Improved communication relating to why change is required, and what will happen as a result would help to reduce these concerns.</li> <li>• <b>Systems and processes</b> Few staff have a clear understanding of the reasons behind changes within HR. This may be due to a lack of communication and difficulty in getting answers to questions.</li> <li>• <b>Security</b> As few respondents know what will happen to their family and themselves if they suffer injury or death, this should be addressed.</li> </ul>

## 2 Your Job

- 2.1 Encouragingly, 87% of respondents feel they are doing something worthwhile working for the FCO/Post, an increase of four percentage points since the 2006 census survey (83% positive). LE respondents feel most strongly that they are doing something worthwhile (92% positive).
- 2.2 There is high satisfaction towards feeling part of a team at the FCO, 81% positive.
- 2.3 Another positive result, 75% of respondents feel able to make use of their skills and abilities in their current role, which is in line with the 2006 census result, and eight percentage points above the Central Government benchmark norm.
- 2.4 In regards to the FCO's Strategic International Priorities, three-quarters of respondents are aware of them and 72% understand how their Directorate/Post contributes to them. The latter result is, interestingly, less than the census result of 88% positive, by 16 percentage points, so this could be a trend to monitor in future waves.
- 2.5 Satisfaction with physical working conditions has improved minimally since the 2006 census survey, 68% positive. This is, however, above the Central Government benchmark by five percentage points.
- 2.6 Job security is quite low at the FCO, with a fifth of respondents feeling they do not feel secure in their job, more or less in line with the census and benchmark scores.
- 2.7 Less than half of respondents feel that their achievements are recognised (49% positive), which is supported by the similarly low results from recognition based questions in the next section. Contract respondents are the least satisfied that their achievements are recognised, only 31% positive. UK respondents are less satisfied about recognition, 40% positive, than overseas respondents, 52%.

## 3 Performance and Reward

- 3.1 A fair proportion of respondents receive feedback on what they do well, 63% positive. A smaller proportion, 57%, receive feedback on what they should be doing differently and better.
- 3.2 Satisfaction with recognition shown in FCO is low, 49% of respondents feel recognised for their contribution to the FCO/Post and 25% feel their performance is recognised through the FCO pay package (UK based respondents only). The latter question received a large negative response 45%, reflecting the poor response to the pay related questions in the 2006 census survey.

- 3.3 Concerning respondent's careers at the FCO, only 53% agree their manager helps them to consider their future development needs and 52% of UK-based staff know where to get information to help develop their career in the FCO/Post.
- 3.4 However, far more of concern, only 21% of respondents believe that promotion within the FCO/Post is fair and objective, compared to 37% that do not. The positive result for this question has decreased slightly since the census survey, and is the lowest scoring question in the survey.

## 4 Equality and Diversity

- 4.1 The importance of actively supporting and promoting diversity and equal opportunities is still clear to the majority (87%) of respondents.
- 4.2 However, perceived attitudes of the FCO/Post towards equal opportunities are less positive, 60% of respondents believe that the FCO/Post is committed to actively supporting and promoting diversity and equal opportunities, which is 12 percentage points below the Central Government benchmark. Respondents working overseas are less positive, 55%, than UK based respondents, 69% positive. Only 51% of LE respondents feel the FCO/Post is committed to actively supporting and promoting equality and diversity.
- 4.3 Training respondents to value diversity could be improved, 61% feel they are adequately trained by FCO in this respect. Contract respondents are least satisfied with this training, 40% positive.

## 5 Security at Work

- 5.1 Consistent with the 2006 census survey, it is reassuring to see that 75% of respondents feel safe and secure at work; with little differences between LE, overseas and UK based respondents.
- 5.2 The need for security rules and procedures is clear to almost all respondents (97%).
- 5.3 However only 26% agree that the FCO/Post makes it clear to them what will happen to their family and themselves if they suffer injury or death as a consequence of their official duties. Almost half of respondents answered this question negatively, suggesting that this is an area that needs to be addressed by the FCO.

## 6 Leadership

- 6.1 Overall management of the FCO was found to be a pressing issue on the 2006 census survey. This appears to have been addressed to some extent, as 39% of respondents now feel that the FCO/Post is as a whole well managed, reducing the negative response by 10 points. The positive score now sits 11 percentage points above the Central Government benchmark.
- 6.2 Another improvement in scores; 66% of respondents agree that their team is well managed, compared to 60% of the census survey. This is six percentage points above the central government benchmark.
- 6.3 Senior management is an area that tends to score poorly in organisations and Central Government more so than most. 48% of respondents have trust and confidence in their senior managers, a small increase since the 2006 census survey, 44%. Only 37% of UK respondents responded positively to this question, compared to 53% of overseas respondents and 62% of LE respondents. Interestingly, line managers have notably less trust and confidence in the senior managers, 41%, than other respondents, 54%
- 6.4 54% of respondents know and understand what senior managers in their area want to achieve, in line with the census survey result.

## 7 Systems and Processes

- 7.1 If respondents have an HR related query a large proportion, 82%, try to find the answer on FCONet before contacting HR Direct. However only 46% are generally able to find the answer in this way (asked to UK respondents only). This question does have a fairly large neutral response, 28%, suggesting that some respondents have not had HR related queries, however a quarter of respondents appear to have not been able to get an answer from either method.
- 7.2 A large proportion of respondents do not have a clear understanding of the reasons behind changes within HR (43%), with less than a third of respondents feeling they do (30%).
- 7.3 Flexibility to use resources to complete work effectively is perceived to be satisfactory by less than half of the respondents, only 46% positive. This question has a negative response of 25%.

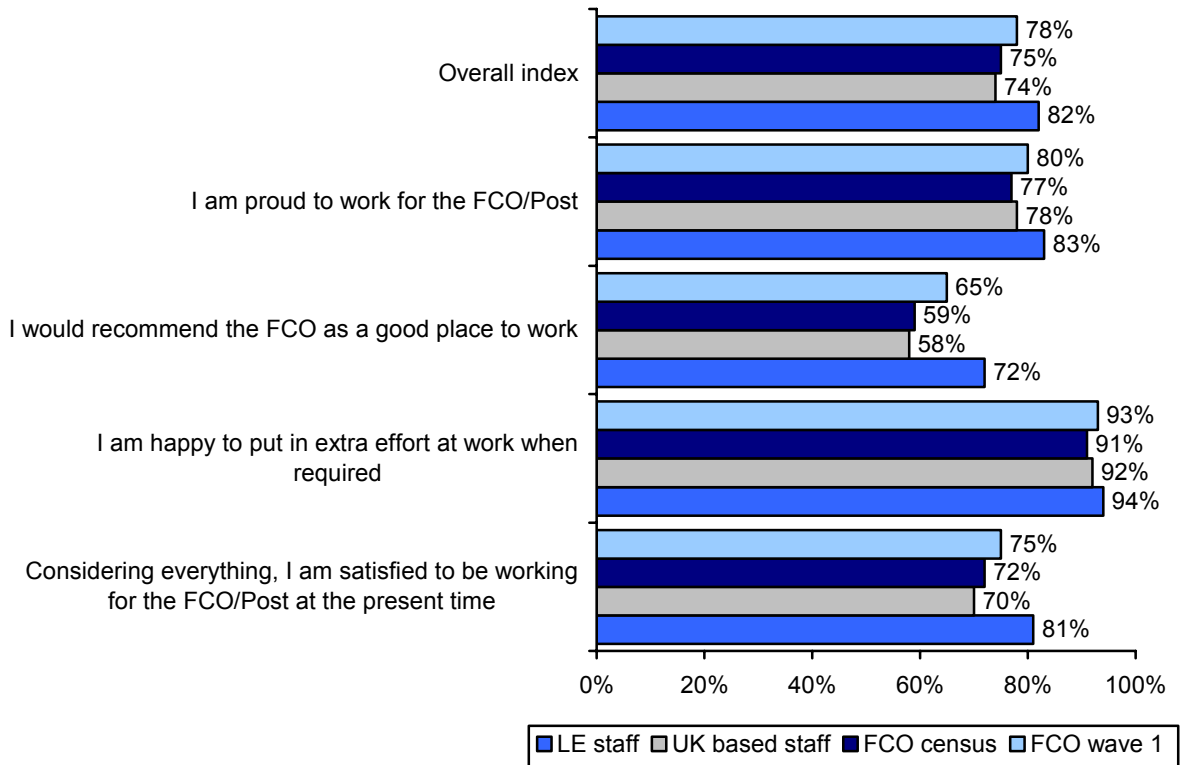
## 8 Communication and Change

- 8.1 In the census report it was explained that as with many organisations, the FCO is going through change and therefore there is bound to be an element of unrest amongst respondents. This led to only one quarter of respondents agreeing that the FCO manages change well and a considerable 44% that did not. One reason behind this feeling could be that only 38% of respondents agree that when changes are introduced they are clearly explained. Only 32% of UK based respondents and 24% of contract respondents agree.
- 8.2 When managers were asked if they communicate to their respondents what the FCO's Strategic International Priorities are all about, 55% agreed that they do. Despite this relatively low score, it is worth bearing mind that 75% of staff are aware of the Strategic International Priorities and 72% understand how their Directorate/Post contributes towards them, suggesting a proportion of staff must be successfully finding this information elsewhere.
- 8.3 Even though communication about change does not seem strong within the FCO/Post, 60% of respondents still feel that they understand the reasons for change within the FCO/Post.

## 9 Overall Perception

- 9.1 The final section in the survey measures employee engagement: the extent to which an employee is willing and able to invest their personal effort in the success of the organisation.
- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 The chart below compares FCO wave one respondents, FCO census respondents, LE and UK respondents on each constituent question and the overall index.
- 9.4 The chart shows that engagement overall is strong and results have increased slightly for each constituent question since the census survey. LE respondents are slightly more engaged than their UK based counterparts, as found in the census survey.

**% Favourable score by engagement question**



- 9.5 Looking at the individual questions in this section, there are some very encouraging results. 80% of respondents are proud to work for the FCO which is an impressive 22 percentage points above the Central Government benchmark.
- 9.6 Three-quarters of respondents are satisfied to be working for the FCO/Post at the present time, which is 12 percentage points above the Central Government benchmark. A higher proportion of LE respondents are satisfied to be working for the FCO/Post, 81%, than UK based respondents, 70%.
- 9.7 One of the most encouraging findings of the survey is that 93% of respondents are prepared to go the 'extra mile' at work and put in extra effort when required. Only 2% of respondents would not.
- 9.8 The percentage of respondents who would recommend the FCO as a place to work has increased since the census survey to 65%, an increase of six percentage points. This is not as high a proportion of respondents as for the other constituent questions, however, it is eight percentage points above the Central Government benchmark for this question. A lower percentage of respondents that are members of the diplomatic service, 55%, would recommend the FCO as a place to work compared to the FCO overall.