

# Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Wave Two Summary Report

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of findings from wave two of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) survey 2007.
- 1.2 A total of 1,554 respondents responded to the survey, representing a response rate of 41%, inline with the response rate for the 2006 census survey.
- 1.3 Whilst the question content of this second wave remains unchanged since the initial wave survey, there were some changes made since the census survey carried out in 2006. These changes were made to address specific issues that the FCO have been concentrating on.
- 1.4 During the census survey and subsequent waves, there has been some variation in what staff were asked to think about when answering questions. Originally they were asked to think about the FCO/Mission, however to clarify matters, locally engaged staff were asked to think about their Post whilst the other UK based staff were asked to focus on the FCO. These changes may have had an impact upon how questions were answered and as such, this should be kept in mind when making any comparisons between the census and the waves surveys.
- 1.5 Below is a results summary of the highlights and lowlights of the overall organisation.

Highlights	Lowlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overall Perceptions</b> This section contains questions which tend to indicate employee engagement and the results are encouraging. Staff are happy to put in the extra effort at work when required, they are proud to work for the FCO/Post and furthermore three quarters of respondents are satisfied to be working for the FCO/Post when considering everything.</li> <li>• <b>Your job</b> Most staff feel they are doing something worthwhile working for the FCO/Post and are aware of the FCO's Strategic International Priorities. In addition, a large proportion feels part of a team and that they are able to make use of their skills and abilities.</li> <li>• <b>Equality and Diversity</b> The majority of 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> A particular area of dissatisfaction within this section lies with promotion, with a number of staff actively disagreeing that it is fair and objective. Possibly driving this result is that few believe that their performance is recognised through the FCO package.</li> <li>• <b>Systems and processes</b> Only a third of staff have a clear understanding of the reasons behind changes within HR whilst many actively disagree with this point. It is important to note the high neutral response, this may imply that some staff are unsure of what changes have taken place.</li> <li>• <b>Security</b> Whilst many feel safe and secure at work, few respondents believe that the FCO/Post makes it clear what will happen to their family and themselves should they suffer injury or death as a consequence of their official duties.</li> </ul>

**2 Your Job**

	2006 Census % positive	Wave 1 % positive	Wave 2 % positive
I feel I am doing something worthwhile working for the FCO/Post	83	87	88
I feel part of a team	75	81	84
I am able to make use of my skills and abilities in my current role	74	75	76
I am aware of the FCO's Strategic International Priorities	-	75	75
I understand how my Directorate /Post contributes to the FCO's Strategic International Priorities	88	72	74
I feel our achievements are recognised within the FCO/Post	-	49	52
I am satisfied with my physical working conditions	66	68	69
I feel I have job security	56	55	51

- 2.1 The chart above illustrates the general trends that have occurred within the FCO since the original census survey. The most substantial change is found with those who agree that they understand how their Directorate/Post contributes to the FCO's Strategic International Priorities, whilst the result in wave 2 is in line with that of the first wave, there has been a decrease of 14 percentage points since the census survey. Whilst the change is not as extensive, it is encouraging that since the census survey there has been an increase of 9 percentage points in those who feel part of a team.
- 2.2 Looking at points which have shown more of a slight increase over time, an impressive 88% of respondents feel they are doing something worthwhile working for the FCO/Post, furthermore 76% agree that they are able to make use of their skills and abilities in their current role (this is 8 percentage points above the Central Government benchmark norm).
- 2.3 Whilst there has only been a slight increment in satisfaction with physical working conditions between the different surveys, standing at 69% it is currently 5 percentage points above the Central Government benchmark norm.
- 2.4 Job security remains quite low at the FCO, almost a quarter of respondents do not feel secure in their job. Whilst this is in line with the Central Government benchmark norm, there has been a decrease of 5 percentage points since the census survey and although may be attributed to factors outside of the FCO's control, it should be an area to monitor.
- 2.5 There has only been a minimal increase in the number of respondents who feel that their achievements are recognised and it remains fairly low. Similar to the last wave survey, contract respondents are the least satisfied that their achievements are recognised, only

31% positive and UK respondents are less satisfied about recognition, 41% positive, than overseas respondents, 57%.

**3 Performance and Reward**

	<b>Census % positive</b>	<b>Wave 1 % positive</b>	<b>Wave 2 % positive</b>
I feel recognised for the contribution I make to the FCO/Post	40	49	52
I receive feedback on what I do well	-	63	63
I receive feedback on what I should be doing differently and better	-	57	59
My performance is recognised through the FCO pay package	-	25	24
Promotion within the FCO/Post is fair and objective	24	21	22
I know where to get information to help me develop my career in the FCO/Post	-	52	56
My line manager helps me consider my future development needs	-	53	56

- 3.1 The majority of the questions in this section were not asked in the original census survey and trend comparisons can largely only be made between the two waves. Whilst much of the results for wave 2 indicate that performance in this area is inline with the previous surveys, there has been a marked improvement (by 12 percentage points) in the number of respondents who agree that they feel recognised for the contribution they make to the FCO/Post.
- 3.2 Despite the increase in those who feel recognised for the contribution they make to the FCO/Post, the positive response still remains low at just 52% with a stark difference between UK and Overseas based respondents (the positive scores being 43% and 56% respectively).
- 3.3 Matching the findings of wave 1, 63% of respondents receive feedback on what they do well and 59% receive feedback on what they should be doing differently and better.
- 3.4 The question of whether performance is recognised through the FCO pay package was only asked of UK base respondents and received a positive score of just 24%, meanwhile 43% actively disagreed with this point. The lowest positive response was given by respondents on secondment/loan to the FCO and contract staff (13% and 5% respectively).

3.5 Considering promotion and career development, worryingly only 22% of respondents agree that promotion within the FCO/Post is fair and objective, as with the previous wave, this is the lowest scoring question in the survey. It should be noted however that this question received a high neutral score; this could indicate that respondents are unsure of promotional procedures. Only 56% of all respondents agree their manager helps them to consider their future development needs and 56% of UK based staff know where to get information to help them develop their career in the FCO/Post.

**4 Equality and Diversity**

	<b>Census % positive</b>	<b>Wave 1 % positive</b>	<b>Wave 2 % positive</b>
The FCO/Post is committed to actively supporting and promoting diversity and equal opportunities	61	60	63
I understand the importance of actively supporting and promoting diversity and equal opportunities	85	87	85
I am adequately trained to value diversity	59	61	63

4.1 The chart above shows that there has been minimal change since the original census in this section and results are in line with the earlier surveys.

4.2 Nonetheless, the level of understanding of the importance of actively supporting and promoting diversity and equal opportunities has been maintained and the positive response for this stands at 85%.

4.3 Less positive is that just 63% of respondents believe that the FCO/Post is committed to actively supporting and promoting diversity and equal opportunities, 9 percentage points below the Central Government benchmark. Looking at different demographic groups, Black, Muslim and Asian respondents are the least positive groups (just 36%, 42% and 52% responded positively respectively).

4.4 63% of respondents feel they are adequately trained to value diversity, this could be in part a driver behind the above score regarding the FCO/Post supporting and promoting diversity and equal opportunities.

**5 Security at Work**

	<b>Census % positive</b>	<b>Wave 1 % positive</b>	<b>Wave 2 % positive</b>
I feel safe and secure at work	75	75	77

I have a clear understanding of why we have security rules and procedures	96	97	96
The FCO/Post makes it clear to me what will happen to my family and me if I suffer injury or death as a consequence of my official duties	-	26	27

- 5.1 In line with the 2006 census survey, 77% of respondents feel safe and secure at work; though UK based respondents are more positive than overseas respondents (81% compared to 75% respectively).
- 5.2 The need for security rules and procedures is clear to almost all respondents (96%); this equally is in line with the previous surveys.
- 5.3 A less positive result is that only 27% of respondents agree that the FCO/Post makes it clear what will happen to their family and themselves if they suffer injury or death as a consequence of their official duties and 43% actively disagreed with this. Contract staff and staff on secondment were the least positive respondents about this, only 7% and 15% agreed respectively.

**6 Leadership**

	<b>Census % positive</b>	<b>Wave 1 % positive</b>	<b>Wave 2 % positive</b>
My team is well managed	60	66	67
The FCO/Post as a whole is well managed	28	39	41
I have trust and confidence in my senior managers	44	48	50
I know and understand what senior managers in my area want to achieve	55	54	57

- 6.1 The chart above shows that this area has shown general improvement since the 2006 census, in particular 41% of respondents now agree that the FCO/Post as a whole is well managed (13 percentage points above that of the 2006 census and to put this into a wider context, 12 percentage points above the Central Government benchmark norm).
- 6.2 Furthermore, 67% of respondents agree that their team is well managed compared to 60% of the census survey, and again this scores above than the Central Government benchmark norm (by 8 percentage points).
- 6.3 Looking closer at senior management in particular, there has been an increase in the level of trust and confidence respondents have for their senior managers (50% of

respondents agree they do). Interestingly there is a marked difference between the more recent recruits and long standing employees; whilst those who have served less than a year and those who have served between 1 and 2 years are more trusting towards senior management (69% and 63% respectively), however those respondents who have served over 40 years are the least positive (just 22% agree).

6.4 As to respondents' understanding of what senior managers in their area want to achieve, this remains in line with the previous surveys; 57% of respondents agreed they knew and understood this.

**7 Systems and Processes**

	<b>Census % positive</b>	<b>Wave 1 % positive</b>	<b>Wave 2 % positive</b>
I have a clear understanding of the reasons behind changes within HR	-	30	33
If I have an HR related query I try to find the answer on FCONet before contacting HR Direct	-	82	82
If I have an HR related query I am generally able to find the answer on FCONet or by consulting HR Direct	-	46	54
Where I work, we have the flexibility to use our resources to complete our work effectively (e.g. staff, money, equipment, technology)	-	46	48

7.1 None of the questions in this section were asked in the original census survey, as such only trend comparison can be made against the previous wave and there is only one result which shows any real change, this refers to respondents being able to find answers to a HR related query.

7.2 As with the previous survey, if respondents have an HR related query the majority of them, 82%, try to find the answer on FCONet before contacting HR Direct. There has been an improvement in the number of respondents who have been able to find answers this way (an increase of 8 percentage points to 54%). As with the previous wave, this question received a fairly high neutral response of 27%, this suggests that such respondents may not have had such a query, but a fifth (19%) have been unable to get an answer through either method.

7.3 Just a third of respondents agree they have a clear understanding of the reasons behind changes within HR, whilst 39% actively disagree. Only 22% of staff on secondment have a clear understanding of it.

7.4 Just 48% of respondents agree that where they work they have the flexibility to use resources to complete their work effectively, whilst a quarter actively disagree. This varies little between workers, apart from those who are part of the diplomatic service, of which just 38% agree with this.

**8 Communication and Change**

	<b>Census % positive</b>	<b>Wave 1 % positive</b>	<b>Wave 2 % positive</b>
I communicate to my staff what the FCO's Strategic International Priorities are all about	-	55	60
I understand the reasons for change within the FCO/Post	-	60	64
Where changes are introduced in the FCO/Post, they are clearly explained to me	-	38	43

8.1 There appears to have only been a minimal improvement in respondents' opinions towards communication and change.

8.2 Whilst only 60% of line managers agree that they communicate to their staff what the FCO's Strategic International Priorities are all about, it is worth remembering that 75% of respondents are aware of these (see section 2.1) implying that information is sourced from elsewhere. However the effectiveness of the different forms of communication should be monitored as there has been a decline since the 2006 census in the number of respondents who understand how their directorate contributes to these priorities.

8.3 There appears to be a discrepancy between the latter findings in this section. Although most respondents, 64% understand the reasons for change within the FCO/Post, just 43% of respondents agree that when such changes are introduced in the FCO/Post they are clearly explained to them.

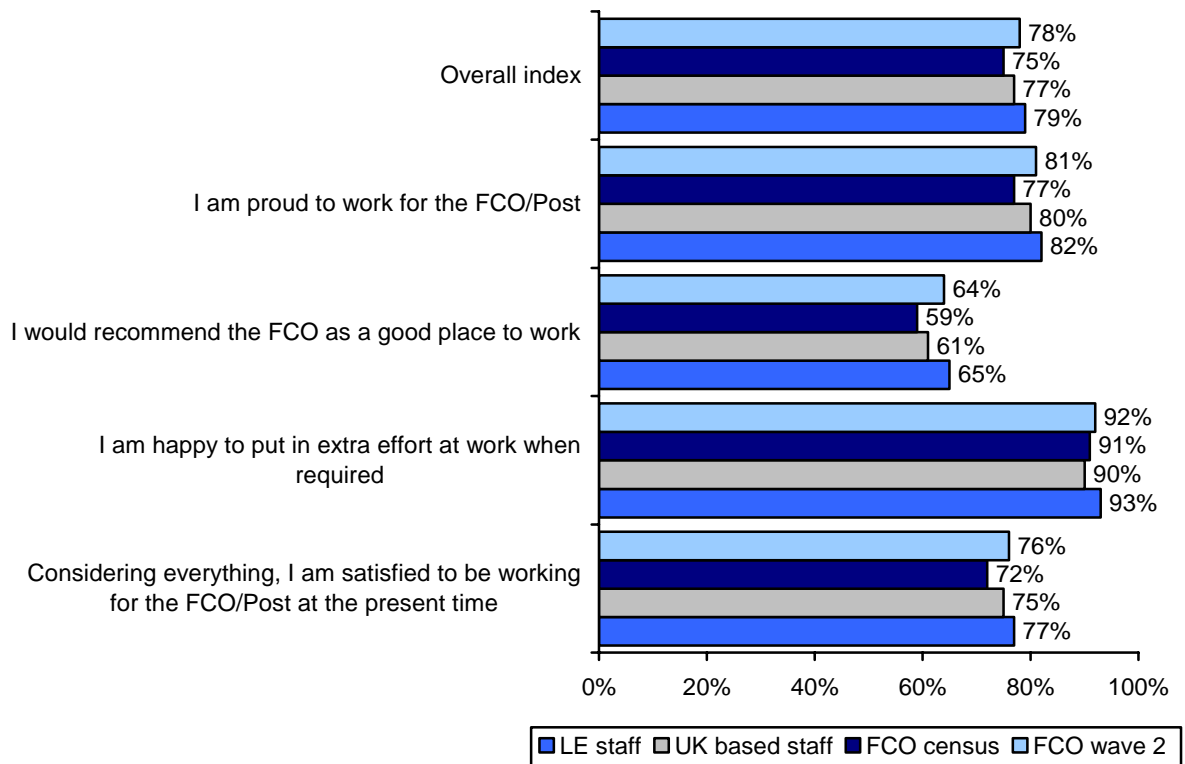
**9 Overall Perception**

	<b>Census % positive</b>	<b>Wave 1 % positive</b>	<b>Wave 2 % positive</b>
I am proud to work for the FCO/Post	77	80	81
I would recommend the FCO/ Post as a good place to work	59	65	64
I am happy to put in extra effort at work when required	91	93	92
Considering everything, I am satisfied to be working for the FCO/Post at the present time	72	75	76

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. 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 wave two respondents, FCO census respondents, LE and UK respondents on each constituent question and the overall index.

9.2 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 and the previous wave survey.

**% Favourable score by engagement question**



9.3 The trend data shows that the changes that have taken place are minimal with most results remaining largely in line with the previous surveys which, whilst encouraging, should be considered with caution. Nonetheless there are some impressive results in this section.

9.4 Four in five respondents (81%) are proud to work for the FCO which stands 21 percentage points above the Central Government benchmark norm.

- 9.5 As with the previous wave survey, three-quarters of respondents (76%) are satisfied to be working for the FCO/Post at the present time and, to put this in to context, this is 11 percentage points above the Central Government benchmark. Looking at the responses of the different demographic groups, a higher proportion of those who have been working for the FCO for less than a year are satisfied than those who have been serving for over 40 years (85% compared to 60% respectively).
- 9.6 One of the most positive results within this wave survey is that 92% of respondents are prepared to go the 'extra mile' at work and put in extra effort when required and there is minimal demographic variation to this finding.
- 9.7 The percentage of respondents who would recommend the FCO as a place to work has increased by 5 percentage points since the 2006 census survey to 64%. Whilst this result is lower than the other questions that the overall score for employee engagement is derived from, it stands 8 percentage points above the Central Government benchmark norm.