

How people work in the civil service

Profile 6 of 6: ‘Always on’



“Your role is to keep the wheels turning. If anything is on your desk or it’s in your inbox and you haven’t done something with it, it’s dead.”

‘Always on’ staff act as a channel for information: they get answers to questions to enable decisions to be made. They need to be highly responsive.

They collaborate and communicate with a wide range of people across government and outside government. They need to collect information from various sources for review and editing under tight time-scales.

Common roles in this profile are private secretaries, emergency response teams and diary managers for senior officials.

They need to:

Be contactable at all times, so if something important happens they can be notified.

Connect to systems when away from the office, so they can respond appropriately based on the latest information.

Locate people across government and find their contact details.

Arrange meetings quickly and easily.

Attributes

Cross-government interaction

■■■ Often

Work in different locations

■■■ Often

Urgent requests from others

■■■ Often

Working hours

■■■ Non-standard

Software needs

■■■ Bespoke, internal