

They work for you...

PUBLIC SERVANTS



PUBLIC SERVANTS
WORKING FOR YOU

#psworking4u

Prospect's
vision for
a modern
public service

Join our campaign: psworkingforyou.org.uk

Britain faces challenging times...



Whether it's negotiating and implementing Brexit, managing new environmental risks or navigating the technological revolution, we need world-class experts on our side.

Skilled and specialist public servants are vital to meeting these challenges and for our future security and prosperity. The quality and commitment of the people working in Britain's public services is one of our great national assets. But we face significant risks.

The public sector has lost half a million staff since 2010. A widening gap between public and private sector pay is making it harder to fill growing gaps in skills and expertise.

We also need to do more to develop the workforce, make the most of their insights and ideas, ensure all positions are truly open to talent, and protect the public service ethos.

Prospect supports and represents professionals, managers and specialists in the public and private sectors. They are highly qualified and skilled, in roles from animal health officers to air accident investigators; marine biologists to meteorologists; vehicle examiners to virologists.

Prospect is dedicated to supporting and championing the work they do to defend, protect and enhance the lives of UK citizens. We engage and work with the government wherever we can, but we also challenge them to change course or raise their game where necessary.

In that spirit we present our vision for public services that will meet the challenges of the 2020s and beyond, and our plan for building the workforce that can deliver it.

Mike Clancy

Mike Clancy, Prospect general secretary

PUBLIC SERVICES TODAY

Many of the things we take for granted in daily life depend on the expertise and diligence of public servants:

- the quality of the air we breathe
- the water we drink or wash in
- food we buy and eat
- safety of our transport and workplaces
- preservation of our natural environment and cultural heritage
- defence of our country from terrorist or military attack
- information on which government and businesses rely to plan for the future.

These are delivered by public servants in government departments and agencies,

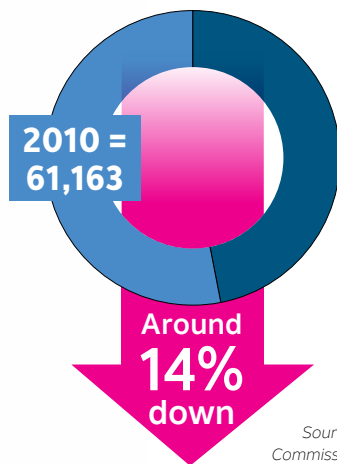
inspection, regulators, research establishments and frontline service providers around the country.

Their skills and specialisms are incredibly diverse. But they have all devoted their working lives to protecting, defending and enhancing the life of UK citizens.

Far from the stereotype of a pen-pusher or bureaucrat, today's public servants work at the cutting edge of global, social, environmental and technological developments.

They are committed to and guided by an enduring public service ethos, the values and standards of their chosen profession, and the principles of public service.

Since 2010 the number of scientists, researchers, engineers and technology professionals – has fallen by around 14 per cent



Source: UK Commission on Employment and Skills, 2016



Staff at the Vehicle Certification Agency are working to ensure the cars on our roads are safe and clean in the wake of recent emissions scandals



Working for you

Public servants are working to protect and improve our lives. For example:

- scientists at the public sector **Centre for Ecology and Hydrology** have published ground-breaking work on possible causes of the falling bee population which threatens the pollination of our crops and wildlife
- research at the **Defence Science & Technology Laboratory** has generated exports worth £75m, including portable diagnostic devices to detect viruses, trialled in Sierra Leone with people affected by Ebola
- Muslim chaplains are playing a vital role in turning the **Prison Service** chaplaincy into a multi-faith service – Prospect has been fighting to ensure they are not discriminated against
- staff at the **Vehicle Certification Agency** are working to ensure the cars on our roads are safe and clean in the wake of recent emissions scandals.

PREPARING FOR THE 2020s

In recent years the civil service and wider public sector have been seen as a cost that needs to be cut.

Its staff have often misrepresented and unfairly attacked.

But there is increasing recognition of the value of our public services and the need to invest in them.

In October 2016, private sector consultancy Deloitte suggested we are at a turning point, moving “from an era of challenge around one objective – eliminating the budget deficit – into an era of multiple and complex challenges” that will “see additional demands on the public sector”.

Prospect believes this means moving beyond the short-term focus on cost-cutting and looking ahead to the new challenges our country faces, ensuring we have the staff and skills we need to secure our prosperity and quality of life.

Britain faces big challenges and opportunities over the next decade and beyond. The expertise and commitment of our public servants will be critical on every front.

- **Navigating Brexit** – it will take expertise and experience from across our civil service and wider public sector to negotiate new relationships in Europe and beyond, and to take control of large areas of policy and regulation, from agriculture to aviation.
- **Harnessing technological innovation** – scientists and technicians in government laboratories, research councils and public sector research establishments

are vital to maintaining the strength of our science base and the productivity and competitiveness of our economy.

- **Keeping Britain strong and secure** – scientists, technicians, analysts and engineers at the Ministry of Defence, Defence Equipment and Support, and the Metropolitan Police give our armed forces and police the information and technological edge they need to meet new threats at home and abroad.
- **Protecting our environment** – from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology to the Vehicle Certification Agency, government researchers and inspectors are on the frontline of turning around worrying trends in air quality, soil quality, and biodiversity.
- **Building a low carbon future** – with one in six UK properties now at risk of flooding, staff at the Met Office and Environment Agency are developing new ways to model and mitigate the impact of increasingly frequent extreme weather events.
- **Infrastructure and industrial strategy** – engineers and planners in the Department for Transport and its agencies, and specialists at the Department for Business and Intellectual Property Office are essential to creating the conditions for British businesses to succeed.
- **Securing our energy supply** – researchers and inspectors at agencies from the British Geological Survey to the Office for Nuclear Regulation will help ensure the safety and sustainability of our energy sources in the decades ahead.

An illustration on a blue background showing four pairs of hands typing on grey keyboards. The hands are orange with black watches. A central white rounded rectangle contains text. The overall theme is data and technology.

DRIVING THE DATA REVOLUTION

public sector bodies like the **Met Office**, **Ordnance Survey**, **Office for National Statistics** and **Valuation Office Agency** are collecting, analysing and publishing the big datasets that have been called “the fuel of the twenty-first century”

- **Keeping us safe and healthy** – changes to our environment and way of life are creating new challenges. New pathogens and public health risks are monitored by government scientists and inspectors. New workplace or transport risks are tackled by inspectors and enforcement officers at agencies like the Health and Safety Executive and DVSA.
- **Devolving and decentralising power** – staff in the Scottish and Welsh Governments are delivering an evolving devolution settlement, while agencies like the Planning Inspectorate and Environment Agencies work with local communities to support sustainable development
- **Driving the data revolution** – public sector bodies like the Met Office, Ordnance Survey, Office for National Statistics and Valuation Office Agency are collecting, analysing and publishing the big datasets that have been described as “the fuel of the twenty-first century”
- **A stronger society** – with our prisons near breaking point there is an urgent and widely recognised need to refocus on rehabilitation and reduce reoffending. Psychologists, chaplains and other specialists in the prison service will be key to delivering this.
- **Preserving and promoting our history** – staff at museums, galleries and historic sites are essential to supporting our growing tourism sector as well as enriching our lives.

THE COST OF SPENDING CUTS

Prospect is incredibly proud of the work our members do every day to strengthen our country and improve its quality of life.

But years of crude cost-cutting have exacted a heavy toll on the UK's capacity to meet the challenges of the future:

- Key departments, agencies and public services have lost as many as one in four staff.
- Skills gaps have been made harder to fill because take home pay has fallen far behind comparable private sector roles, while training budgets have been cut.
- Short-term fixes such as reliance on consultants and temporary staff, or cost-driven restructuring and privatisation, have further weakened capacity for the long-term.
- The strains on the system are beginning to show, in employees' workload and stress levels, and the reliability, quality and coverage of services delivered.
- pay cap has left them struggling to recruit and retain the specialist skills they need
- there are signs that staff shortages at bodies like Natural England and the Planning Inspectorate are holding up decisions on important housing or infrastructure developments
- businesses and independent tax advisors have raised concerns about cuts at the Valuation Office Agency affecting its ability to manage business rate reforms
- road hauliers have said the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency needs more inspectors and enforcement officers to prevent unsafe rogue operators undercutting responsible firms.

This isn't just unfair on our public servants, it's damaging to our economy and society too. For example:

- the National Audit Office, Institute for Government and House of Commons Public Accounts Committee have warned that the civil service does not now have the skills or capacity it needs to manage Brexit alongside other important long term projects
- public agencies including the UK Atomic Energy Authority, Office for Rail and Road and Science and Technology Facilities Council have warned that the public sector



OUR AGENDA FOR PROSPERITY AND SUCCESS

This is Prospect's plan for building the public expertise and capacity that will be needed to meet the challenges of the 2020s and beyond

Future-facing review of skills and staffing levels

Key organisations have lost as many as one in four staff over the past five years, often taking scarce skills and experience with them. Rising workloads for remaining staff risk becoming unsustainable. Prospect is calling for:

- **a moratorium on job cuts and compulsory redundancies** in key departments, agencies and services
- **a thorough and comprehensive skills audit**, as called for by the cross-party UK Public Administration Committee, coordinated by the Cabinet Office to identify the resources and expertise the UK needs
- **the preparation and publication of strategic workforce plans**, as called for by the National Audit Office, to ensure we have the specialist, technical, professional and managerial skills we need to meet the challenges of the next decade and beyond.

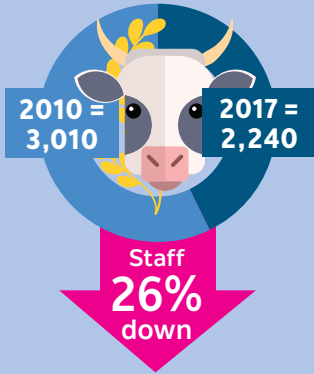
Pay strategy to retain talent and close skills gaps

Take-home salaries have fallen by as much as 20% in real terms since the 2010 recession, and even further behind those for comparable positions in the private sector. Prospect is working for:

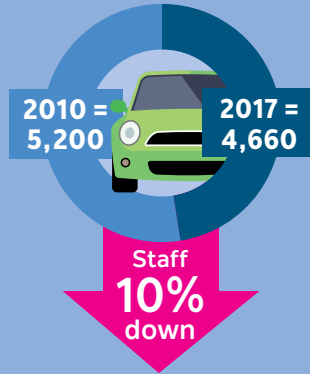
- **an independent and evidence-based review of pay rates** and recruitment pressures in key departments, agencies and services
- **replacement of the crude 1% pay cap** and arbitrary bans on progression with a coherent and sustainable plan to close pay gaps with the private sector and stop the brain drain of skilled professionals, managers and specialists from our public service
- **resources and flexibilities** for departments, agencies and public bodies to recruit, retain and develop the staff and skills they need to deliver.



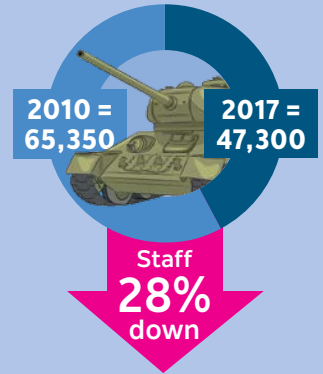
Many vital departments and agencies are now severely understaffed



**ANIMAL & PLANT
HEALTH AGENCY***



**DRIVER & VEHICLE
STANDARDS AGENCY***



**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
(inc Defence Equipment & Support)**

** and predecessors*

Plan to develop the workforce of the future

Prospect represents and works for people who want to build a career in public service. A brighter future for them means a better future for our country. Prospect wants to see:

- **a commitment to develop and realise the potential of every public service employee** so we can grow our own talent, expertise and leadership
- **improvements in the quality as well as quantity of public sector apprenticeships**, with guaranteed job prospects and better opportunities for women, minorities and disabled workers
- **a reversal of short-sighted cuts to training budgets** that have had a negative impact on employee satisfaction, reduced opportunities for career progression and eroded long-term capabilities.

Evidence-based approach to outsourcing and restructuring

Prospect's approach is pragmatic, not ideological: mergers, reorganisations, outsourcing and privatisations should be based on evidence not driven by perverse incentives or short-term false economies. We are working for:

- **an end to the perverse and costly reliance on external contractors, consultants and interim staff** (to get around centrally imposed restrictions on recruitment, headcount, and pay) long-term sustainability, not short-term cost cutting, is paramount
- **a tough public interest test for all mergers, reorganisations, and privatisation proposals** to ensure the public sector is always able to secure value-for-money when dealing with external suppliers and service-providers.

Representative workforce at every level

Rooting out discrimination and securing equal opportunities for every employee helps to build a stronger and more effective public service workforce that reflects the citizens it serves. Prospect is working for:

- **the immediate replacement of performance management systems** that can create discriminatory outcomes
- **a duty on all public service employers to report on gender pay gaps** by job and grade or pay band, to identify specific areas of indirect pay discrimination
- **clear targets, benchmarks and accountability for improving mobility** and making all grades more representative, supported by mentoring, training and career development.

New commitment to trade union and employee engagement

Prospect has a track record of helping organisations across the public and private sectors manage change fairly and harness the experience and energy of the staff best-placed to contribute ideas for improvement. We want:

- recognition that **fair treatment, employment security and worker voice**, backed by independent trade union representation, are the foundation of workforce innovation, productivity and service quality
- **identification and application of best practice lessons** from successful social partnership approaches seen in Scotland, Wales, and services like the NHS
- **reversal of restrictions on facility time** that make it harder for voluntary workplace representatives to support good working environments and resolve issues before they turn into disputes.

**PROSPECT – FIGHTING FOR
A MODERN PUBLIC SERVICE**

JOIN US

For more info, to get involved or to join online, visit

psworkingforyou.org.uk