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LOUISE SANDHER-JONES MP
Minister for Veterans and People

Our ref: PQW/24-26/2025/31083
Your ref: 99853

5 February 2026

Dear Neil,

In my response to your Parliamentary Question 99853 you were promised a written answer to the following question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of staff in each grade were rated in the top performance category in the last year.

Since 2019 the flexible Performance Management Framework has enabled departments to adopt a Performance Management approach to best suit their organisational and cultural needs. There is no common definition of 'top performance' across government, and there is no common definition of 'performance year'. Caution needs to be taken in comparing proportions between departments.

Statistics on the Civil Service workforce are available on gov.uk at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/civil-service-statistics#annual-statistics

The following tables show the number and proportion of individuals at each grade between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 across MOD Main and its Executive Agencies. In order to protect personal information governed by the Data Protection Act 2018, some of the information is supplemented with numbers fewer than 30 with an X.

I will place a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

Neil O'Brien MP
House of Commons
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MOD Main

| Grade | Number of Staff with top performance rating* | Percentage of Grade |
|---------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Administrative Assistant | 664 | 23% |
| Administrative Officer | 2,829 | 53% |
| Executive Officer | 2,780 | 50% |
| Grade 6 | 527 | 57% |
| Grade 7 | 1,157 | 47% |
| Higher Executive Officer | 3,180 | 48% |
| NHS Grades | [x] | 0% |
| Outside Banding Structure | [x] | 24% |
| Retained Grades | 181 | 5% |
| Senior Civil Service* | [x] | 5% |
| Senior Executive Officer | 2,464 | 47% |
| Skillzone 1 | 152 | 45% |
| Skillzone 2 | 502 | 48% |
| Skillzone 3 | 416 | 49% |
| Skillzone 4 | 84 | 40% |
| Veterans Agency | [x] | 36% |
| Grand Total | 14,973 | 41% |

*MOD Main's performance ratings are 'exceeded', 'met' and 'not met'. 'Top performance' has been defined as those who received an 'exceeded' rating against their performance goals in their end-of-year review.

Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S) Core Workforce Staff

| Grade | Number of Staff with top performance rating* | Percentage of Grade |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Professional I | 435 | 29% |
| Professional II | 815 | 24% |
| Sen Administrator/Specialist | [x] | 35% |
| Senior Leadership Group | 32 | 31% |
| Senior Professional | 180 | 35% |
| Senior Technical Specialist I | 507 | 17% |
| Senior Technical Specialist II | 112 | 12% |
| Technical Specialist I | [x] | 0% |
| Grand Total | 2,089 | 19% |

* DE&S performance ratings are Rating 1 – 'exceptional performance', Rating 2 – 'successful performance', Rating 3 – 'partially met', 'no rating' and 'too soon to rate'. Exceptional performance is defined as those who have demonstrated 'exceptional performance', having consistently exceeded in all their goals, including the leadership and profession goals, throughout the performance year and demonstrated role modelling behaviours aligned to the DE&S Values.

Submarine Delivery Agency (SDA) Core Workforce Staff

| Grade | Number of Staff with top performance rating* | Percentage of Grade |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Professional I | 66 | 15% |
| Professional II | 82 | 10% |
| Senior Leadership Group | [x] | 47% |
| Senior Professional | [x] | 16% |
| Senior Technical Specialist I | 35 | 6% |
| Senior Technical Specialist II | [x] | 9% |
| Technical Specialist I | [x] | 5% |
| Grand Total | 246 | 10% |

*For the 2024/25 performance year, the SDA simplified the performance rating process, moving from five ratings to three. 'Rating 1' represents an exceptional performer in meeting the following criteria:

- Consistently exceeds all job requirements and expectations.
- Demonstrates exceptional skills, initiative and high level of competence in all aspects of their role.
- Exceeds all their goals, contributing significantly to success of team, function, domain, SDA.
- The individual goes above and beyond in their responsibilities to support this success.
- Exhibits exceptional problem-solving skills and takes initiative to resolve issues.
- Work is characterised by innovation, leadership, and consistently high-quality results.
- Acts as role model for others and always demonstrates excellent behaviours which are consistent with, Civil Service values, SDA Code and DNE behavioural principles.
- Exceeds all performance goals, behaviours and standards.
- For senior grades achievement against OGSMs and strategic milestones needs to be evidenced.
- For junior grades achievement against team and / or personal targets needs to be evidenced.

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL)

| DSTL Level | Number of Staff with top performance rating* | Percentage of Grade |
|------------|--|---------------------|
| 1 | [x] | 50% |
| 2 | [x] | 6% |
| 3 | 35 | 15% |
| 4 | 243 | 24% |
| 5 | 259 | 21% |
| 6 | 372 | 24% |

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------|------------|
| 7 | 198 | 31% |
| 8 | 61 | 35% |
| 9 | [x] | 29% |
| Grand Total | 1,185 | 24% |

*DSTL performance ratings are 'high performer', 'performer' and 'under performer'. There is a 'new in role' category for individuals that have been in their role for less than 6 months.

In order to be rated as a 'high performer' an employee must:

- Consistently excels/exceeds expectations in their role or level, in line with the Dstl Career Level Framework;
- Exceeds their Goals and/or meeting their stretch Goals agreed at the higher level;
- Consistently demonstrates positive behaviours in line with NAD Group values, Civil Service code and Civil Service Success Profiles;
- Goes above and beyond and is highly valued by those who work with them;
- Consistently acts as an ambassador for DSTL.

The UK Hydrographic Office does not currently utilise formal performance markings.

The information requested is not held centrally for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.



LOUISE SANDHER-JONES MP

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