

# PSNsus Survey

## Summary



As the Public Services Network (PSN), a key element of the Government's ICT strategy, moves from vision to reality, new BT research reveals widespread optimism towards the programme – with many Public Servants considering it crucial to their organisation's efficiency drive.

The BT PSNsus study, which surveyed attitudes towards the Government's flagship 'network of networks' among Public Servants from a range of professional areas and sectors in January 2012, reveals those in the know are positive about the programme. They see it as an opportunity to drive cost savings through economies of scale and deliver greater interconnectivity with other public bodies over a reliable and fast network.

The research also reveals that there are many others in the public sector who are less clear about what PSN is and can enable, or even where their organisation stands in adopting it. This reinforces the recent recommendation from the Public Administration Select Committee backed by the Government, that more needs to be done to make sure knowledge about how modern information systems and technology can be used to improve public services is shared effectively across professional groups within the civil services and not restricted to the IT profession<sup>1</sup>.

### 1. A unique opportunity

PSN is seen as an opportunity to drive efficiency savings and greater interconnectivity:

- Against the backdrop of tightening budgets across the public sector, over two thirds (69 per cent) of Public Servants who consider themselves well-informed about PSN regard its adoption to be important or very important to their organisation's efficiency programme.
- The most important benefit that Public Servants require from PSN is providing a secure way to exchange data with other public bodies.
- Unsurprisingly this is followed closely by a reliable, fast network, and achieving cost savings through economies of scale.
- Security is also high on the agenda. Strengthening ICT systems against attack and data loss was cited as the fourth most important benefit in deciding how attractive PSN is to their organisation.
- Providing a foundation for better collaboration and new ways of working was considered important, but not as essential as the benefits above, indicating that respondents are less aware of this as a benefit, or underestimate it.

### 2. Overcoming obstacles

Despite obstacles which need to be overcome, the vast majority of public servants are optimistic about the benefits of PSN to their organisation:

- The most common obstacle to organisations adopting PSN is system inflexibility in responding to specific circumstances and requirements.
- This is followed closely by the requirement for capital investment and risk that national PSN contracts are awarded to inexperienced or poorly equipped providers/suppliers.
- 14 per cent of those familiar with PSN will not adopt it if they think that there may be a lack of widespread adoption by other public bodies, while 12 per cent of the same group would be deterred if there is a risk that their organisation's cyber security might be compromised.
- Assuming these obstacles can be overcome – four out of five (80 per cent) think that PSN connectivity and compatibility will be valuable at their organisation.

### 3. Varying levels of awareness

While there is widespread optimism towards PSN, there is also a considerable lack of awareness in some professional areas:

- Levels of awareness were highest among the IT/commercial group (IT, Finance, Procurement, Project and Programme Management). 40 per cent of this group have a good understanding of PSN and the benefits it enables.
- Unsurprisingly levels of awareness were considerably lower in the non-IT/commercial group (Policy, Operational Delivery, Communications), where 31 per cent had heard of PSN, but know little about it, and 57 per cent had never heard of PSN.

- Colleagues were listed as the most useful source of information about PSN, followed closely by Cabinet Office communications and other public sector websites.

### 4. Progress to adoption

Awareness of, and commitment to, PSN goes beyond Westminster:

- Among the IT/commercial group 45 per cent stated that PSN was either significant or very significant to their organisation's ICT and business strategy. This figure rises to 46 per cent for Central Government, 47 per cent for Local Government and drops to 25 per cent for Health and Defence respectively.
- 56 per cent of those from the IT/commercial group do not know where their organisation stands in the process of adopting PSN. When broken down into sectors this figure rises to 69 per cent for Central Government compared to 31 per cent for Local Government.
- Of those who do know, 12 per cent are carrying out initial scoping exercises, nine per cent have an implementation in place and seven per cent are carrying out detailed feasibility studies.
- When looking at the responses that demonstrate commitment to PSN (There is an implementation plan in place, Implementation underway, Adoption is complete) the findings suggest Local Government is further ahead of Central Government.

This research was undertaken by Dods for BT Global Services between December 2011 and January 2012. Over 1,300 Public Servants from a range of professional areas (IT, Finance, Policy, Procurement, Operational Delivery) and sectors (Central Government, Local Government, Health, Defence, Police) took part in the online survey.

BT is playing a leading role in making the Public Services Network a reality. We're committed to helping Central Government, Defence, Health, Police and Local Government customers prepare for PSN and the transformational benefits it will enable. This research gives us valuable insight into how our customers and stakeholders are feeling right now, so we'll be using it to help us evolve our approach and make sure we deliver precisely to their needs.

**To learn more about this research and find out how BT is helping organisations with the PSN challenge ahead, visit [www.bt.com/psn](http://www.bt.com/psn).**