

Careers in the private and public sectors

UK WEN Exploring Economics event, 22 April 2024

Hannah Slaughter, Senior Economist, Resolution Foundation

My career (so far)

- **Studies:** Undergraduate degree in Economics with Study in Continental Europe at the University of Bristol
- **Internship:** Government Economic Service summer placement
- **Civil service:**
 - Office for National Statistics: direct entry, then the Fast Stream
 - Cabinet Office
 - Department for Business: promoted to Economic Adviser
- **Think tank:** started at the Resolution Foundation in 2019 as an Economist; promoted to Senior Economist in 2022

Working in the public sector

A huge amount of variety! A typical day in each of my jobs might have included...

ONS	Cabinet Office	Department for Business
Analysing big ONS datasets like the Labour Force Survey	Writing a briefing on health statistics for No.10	Attending meetings with teams across Government working on similar policy areas to coordinate analysis
Doing bespoke analysis for a range of government departments	Interviewing staff in public services and businesses to understand the policy challenges they face 'on the ground'	Collaborating with the policy team to provide advice for ministers
Attending seminars / teach-ins with other ONS economists	Monitoring trends in employment	Analysis to inform trade negotiations

What is a 'think tank'?!

- A think tank is an organisation that does research and analysis on policy issues, and/or makes policy recommendations
- The Resolution Foundation is an independent think tank (i.e. we're not political), a charity, and our aim is to improve living standards for those on low-to-middle incomes
- We work across a lot of different policy areas, from taxes and benefits, to housing and wealth, to trade and net zero
 - I work on our labour market research

A day in the life

- Data analysis (and making lots of charts!)
- Running focus groups
- Writing reports
- Responding to data releases or policy announcements
- Attending meetings/roundtables or speaking on panels
- Speaking to journalists and the media

Similarities and differences between public and private sectors

- Both have involved lots of interesting and policy-relevant work, great people and a clear purpose
- Impact looks different
- Civil service is a far bigger organisation – easy to move around and gain a wide range of experience, especially early in your career
- Think tank is more 'outward facing' – more opportunities to build a profile – and a smaller organisation means a broader range of responsibilities within the same job

Reflections on being a woman in economics

- We all know economics is very male-dominated
 - This does vary across different parts of the field – and is getting better
 - But sometimes still means being the only woman in the room
- Women bring lots of value to economics, in part *because* we are under-represented
 - The more diverse our teams are, the better our ideas will be
 - For policy makers in particular, it's essential to be as representative as possible of the country as a whole
- Having female managers/mentors/role models has been particularly helpful

My advice...

- Being an economist spans a huge variety of jobs! Find one that matches your interests and skills
- Recognise the unique value each of us brings to the table
- Find mentors – especially (but not only) female ones
- And wider networks can be hugely valuable

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