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56% of public servants working in an IT or commercial function do not know where their organisation stands in the process of adopting a public services network (PSN). The PSN is core to the government's ICT Strategy with the Cabinet Office estimating it could save up to Â£130m a year in central government by 2014.

In three years' time the government wants 80 per cent of its PC based staff to be using the network, that's around 4 million users.

The survey which found these results was by BT and entitled the 'PSNsus Survey'. It asked 1,300 public servants from a range of professional areas and sectors in January this year to get an idea of whether the public sector is moving towards the government's goal of creating a shared information and communications infrastructure.

There does, however appear to be more awareness of PSNs in local government, with the figure rising to 69% for Central Government respondents being unaware, which compares to only 31 % for local government.

“In my experience there is a huge amount of innovation happening in local government when compared with central government,” said Neil Rogers, president of global government at BT Global Services.

The PSN will create a network of networks by joining up organisations, departments, authorities and agencies that deliver public services at local, regional and national levels. The public sector will be sold PSN services by a number of providers, who will then connect to Direct Network Service Providers (DNSPs) via the Government Conveyance Network (GCN).

The GCN is the backbone to the PSN and acts as the gateway between the networks of different service providers. BT, Virgin Media, Cable & Wireless and Global Crossing have all agreed to “mesh” together their networks to create a single network for the PSN.

It's not all bad; the survey did find that 44% of IT savvy public servants knew what stage their organisation was at in adopting a PSN. However, only 12% were carrying out initial scoping exercises, and 9% have implementation in place. These numbers are low but Rogers believes that they should not be cause for concern. As the scale of the project means that it will take time to create the government's vision for a fully connected PSN.

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