

Actions to increase Black, Asian and minority staff at senior levels within the Home Office

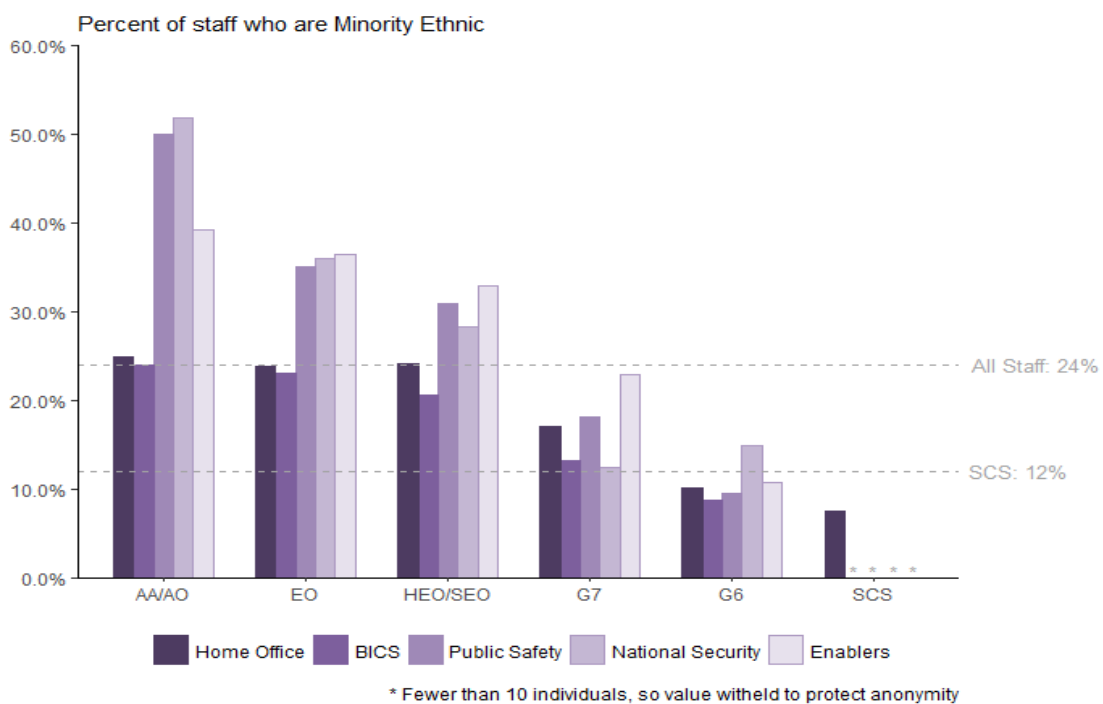
Background

The Home Office is committed to being representative of the communities that we serve and published its **Inclusive by Instinct Diversity and Inclusion strategy** in September 2018, setting out its ambitions on equality, diversity, and inclusion.

In response to Recommendation 28 of the **Windrush Lessons Learned Review**, we committed to actions; we would revise our Diversity and Inclusion strategy to ensure we better reflect our aspirations on race and inclusion; we would set out comprehensive action and delivery plans to address under-representation of Black, Asian and minority staff at senior levels; and we would publish workforce diversity data. This publication forms part of the Home Office’s response to Recommendation 28 of the Windrush Lessons Learned Review.

We published our **Workforce Diversity Statistics** in February 2021 which showed that whilst representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people in the Senior Civil Service (SCS) grade increased over the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 from 6% to 7% there is under-representation at both SCS level and in the pipeline to SCS for Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues. We will use workforce data to monitor the progress of improvements to diversity and race representation and will publish these statistics annually.

Percent of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic staff by grade and business area¹



Note 1. Business area titles were correct at the time of publication.

Across the organisation Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff comprise a greater proportion of the workforce in the junior grades than in more senior grades. At AA or AO, EO and HEO or SEO the rate is 24.8%, 23.8% and 24.1% respectively. This contrasts with more senior grades' representation of 17.0% for Grade 7, 10.1% for Grade 6 and 7.4% at SCS.

The Windrush Lessons Learned Review was clear that we have much more to do, particularly about addressing disparities around race. The activities shared in this document are focussed on increasing representation at the SCS level but should also create a more healthy and sustainable talent pipeline for future years.

Key actions

In 2018 the Department published the Inclusive by Instinct Strategy which set out a series of representation targets to be achieved by 2025. These targets included an increase to Senior Civil Service representation rates from 6% to 12% and an 'all staff' total representation rate of Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues to be at 24% by 2025. By 2020 this figure is 23% for all staff and 7% for SCS. Given the working age average is 14% and the Whitehall average is 12.7% for all staff and 6.3% for SCS we will continue to keep under review where we are being sufficiently ambitious and making fast enough progress. To help drive that progress, we have taken the following actions:

- In March 2021, in direct response to Recommendation 27 we established a **Strategic Race Board**, chaired by our Permanent Secretary, with membership including our staff network and **external experts**.
- Since March 2020 we have had a **Race Delivery Board** of senior level **Race Champions** to represent every directorate to lead local activity towards our goals.
- We are piloting the introduction of **diverse shortlists** into our SCS recruitment campaigns and making sure we encourage a broader pool of diverse applicants.
- We have a **Sponsorship scheme** between members of the Home Office Executive Committee and Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff to further support development, break down barriers and increase exposure to opportunities.
- In July 2020 we published an internal **Race Action Plan** and set up a dedicated delivery team in recognition of the focus we place on addressing inequalities for our Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff.

Changes that we want to see for our people

Evidence shows that despite significant activity across the Department in recent years we have not seen the changes that are needed to address inequalities or increase representation. We are committed to making **three significant changes**:

1. We are **accountable**. We design inclusion into all our processes, policies, and tools. We are open and transparent and will build accountability and assurance into our processes and governance to ensure we make progress.
2. We are **inclusive** through our actions. We will focus on creating a culture where all our people feel supported and valued. We will build an environment where

unacceptable behaviour is addressed, and our communities and customers are treated thoughtfully and respectfully with empathy.

3. We are **representative** of society: Our workforce reflects the racial and cultural diversity of the United Kingdom, recognising that difference experiences and backgrounds are important when trying to achieve the best outcomes for the public we serve.

Accountable

We will be evidence-led; measuring impact and outcomes to identify which actions deliver changes to improve diversity and increase inclusion. We will use a range of data sources, listening to how our staff and customer experience the Home Office to inform our decision-making, reviewing our progress regularly through our Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group (DISG) and Strategic Race Board to make sure our actions remain relevant.

By looking at our Department as a whole system and looking at the big issues we are working with we can look for changes that will have the most significant impact and get to the heart of the problems.

- We are focussing on increasing representation as a key part of our **Strategic Workforce Planning**, looking at the regional representation rates of our people and capabilities we need to deliver our outcomes, this will ensure that we make workforce decisions conscious of the potential impact on our Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues.
- To address known issues around disproportionate outcomes across under-represented groups we have re-designed important processes such as **Performance Management** to help embed our values, improve the lived experience, fairness, and timeliness of performance rewards. Performance will be managed through regular development focused conversations that review performance against goals. Performance-related reward will move to an in-year reward model.

Race Boards and Champions

- Our **Strategic Race Board** is chaired by the Permanent Secretary, who also holds the role of Civil Service Race Champion. This Strategic Race Board was established as a direct result of Recommendation 27 of the Windrush Lessons Learned Review and has membership from a panel of **external experts**, Non-Executive Directors and our Race Equality staff network chair, to provide challenge and scrutiny to our work on race and immigration.
- Chaired by the Home Office Race Champion, the **Race Delivery Board** has representation from all senior-level Race Champions. The Race Board monitor delivery against the internal **Race Action Plan** and hear from **THE NETWORK**, our staff Race network. The Race Action Plan is delivered through the Race Action Programme Team and HR.
- Our network of 10 **senior-level Race Champions** meets bi-monthly to share best practice and hear about the progress that is being made centrally against the

Race Action Plan and they in turn lead change at a local level. Accountable to the **Departmental Race Champion (a Director General)** these leaders hold a prominent position in bringing confident conversations about race into the workplace and escalating issues that exist to ensure we can respond.

- Committed to listening to our people, we have created a **Shadow Race Board** providing an opportunity for over 400 Home Office colleagues from all regions and directorates of the Home Office to feedback and influence activity through the Race Delivery Board and members are invited to observe each sitting.

Independent and External Partners

The Home Office made a commitment to the Business in the Community (BITC) **Race at Work Charter** in 2018. The Home Office has delivered against each of the 5 calls to action including the appointment of an Executive Sponsor for race and our efforts to capture ethnicity data and publicise our progress. Our partnership with BITC allows us to access learning materials, research and activities to better support conversations and actions relating to race.

Staff support network

We are fortunate to have a strong team of people working on race equality, including our award-winning staff support group, THE NETWORK who provide important independent challenge and scrutiny to represent the voice of its Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff members. THE NETWORK extends its membership to its Associates and Friends of the NETWORK.

The NETWORK continued to provide a key role in supporting Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff progression by:

- improving the working environment for all employees by involvement in the development and contribution to new and existing policies that affect Black Asian and minority ethnic colleagues and communities.
- to ensure equality of opportunity for Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff
- to foster better relations between management and staff.

Inclusive

Workshops and training

- In partnership with the organisation BITC we have developed a series of innovative **“Let’s Talk about Race”** workshops supporting colleagues to share experiences, ask questions and discuss race, stereotypes, micro behaviours, and language. Sessions are being delivered throughout the Department at all levels.
- In addition to our **Inclusion in the Civil Service** learning we have encouraged all staff to complete the **Race Awareness training**. A comprehensive review of our diversity and inclusion learning is underway and the products are being developed through engagement sessions with staff.

Engagement

- In January 2021, we finalised our new **Home Office Values; Respectful, Compassionate, Courageous, and Collaborative**. These values were developed and tested across the Department and with external stakeholders. The values shape how we will foster a diverse and inclusive culture; define how we

interact with our colleagues, the communities we serve and how we deliver for the public. Toolkits are available to support the values being used in everyday activity.

- Our internal **People Survey** collects continuous attitude data each year and the results are an important part of how we listen to our people and we take actions based on our findings to address concerns our staff have; we established the **Employee Experience Board** to capture a broader picture of how colleagues interact with each other, their workplaces and how we could support them better. Nominated senior leaders at our workplace locations known as **Campus leaders** play an important role in building staff communities, identifying local interventions or fixes that could help bring colleagues together and increase engagement.
- **Listening Circles** are used across a variety of subjects to create small, safe spaces for discussion which have provided valuable opportunities for colleagues in a space facilitated by senior leaders about issues they are experiencing, share the impact of societal activity or news programmes that they might resonate with; topics have included Windrush themes and more recently **Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination (BHD)**.

Representative

Recruitment

- We are continually evolving and maturing our recruitment practices to create a diverse workforce, using **inclusive job descriptions, anonymised recruitment** and **diverse shortlists** to eliminate potential bias in the recruitment process. The **language** used in vacancies managed by our central resourcing centre, prior to advertising, is checked to ensure we maximize the candidate pool who might apply and be as inclusive in our approach as possible.
- We are seeking to widen our search to include more diverse groups of talent by working with our staff networks to understand barriers to participation, good practice from the Civil Service Human Resources (CSHR) recruitment team and **specialist recruitment platforms**. We are working to demystify the selection process for all candidates and provide feedback to all shortlisted candidates.
- As part of supporting diversity within recruitment, we have 760 Black, Asian and minority ethnic **Independent Panel Members (IPMs)**. Our IPMs sit on recruitment panels for our talent pipeline middle management grades as well as for SCS competitions offering personal insight into the SCS recruitment process to support their own development and progression.

Talent Pipeline

- Each the year the Home Office actively supports over 20 participants on the **Summer Diversity Internship Programme (SDIP)** and 10 participants on the **Early Diversity Internship Programme (EDIP)** as we recognise the importance of these cross-government entry routes. Applications for both SDIP and EDIP open in September 2021, the schemes are open to university students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and students who identify as socially or economically disadvantaged or have a disability with aspirations of joining the Fast Stream with a view to becoming Senior Civil Servants in the future.

- In 2020, we launched an **enhanced Talent development offer for Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues** just below the SCS grade offering specific interventions to over 45 Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues at G6 level, and their line manager, to ensure the development offer is as effective as possible in supporting their progression towards SCS.
- **Future Leaders Scheme (FLS) and Senior Leaders Scheme (SLS)** are cross-government talent programmes aimed at high potential senior managers to help them accelerate their development to and within the SCS and to create a strong, diverse talent pipeline across the Civil Service. Both programmes have an additional element integrated to the core programme exclusively for minority ethnic participants, to ensure we are supporting those participants' development as proactively as possible.
- Since 2016, we have delivered an award-winning development scheme, **Access**, to support the development of underrepresented groups in middle management roles, including colleagues who identify as Black, Asian, and minority ethnic. This year we launched a pilot enhanced offer of executive group coaching for Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues, integrated into the core programme. Early feedback indicates that this was positively received.
- Launching in 2020, our **'Career Watch' Sponsorship Programme** is a suite of interventions in place across all our business areas to address underrepresentation, currently focussed on Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues and colleagues with a disability. These interventions will be used to address local representation gaps and we will use evidence as these interventions are established to build a picture of good practice.
- In addition to the **Sponsorship scheme** between all members of our Executive Committee and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff we have encouraged all SCS to build relationships with 2 members of this community to further support development, break down barriers and increase exposure to opportunities for this important talent pipeline to SCS.
- We also participated in a **Leadership Summit**, designed specifically for women to support them moving into executive roles; in 2019 we participated in a pilot Summit for Black, Asian and minority ethnic women, and in 2020 launched an equivalent pilot for women at middle management level.

Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating our progress will be critical to our success. Our revised D&I Strategy, to be launched this summer will outline our commitment to increasing diversity and improving inclusion at the Home Office for the period 2021-2025. We recognise that increasing Black, Asian, and minority ethnic representation in the Senior Civil Service will require targeted interventions across every aspect our organisation and that all actions should be transparent, sustainable and effective.

We will be evidence-led and evaluation will be undertaken against the **SMART objectives and KPI**, which will be published internally, and reported on to the Diversity & Inclusion Steering group and the Strategic Race Board, chaired by the Permanent Secretary. Evaluation will tell us how successful we have been in

increasing the representation and improving lived experience of Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues in the Senior Civil Service.

The Home Office will continue to work to ensure we have the right culture where all of our people can thrive and have their voices heard and by creating a more diverse promotion pipeline at all levels to support us in appropriately representing the communities we serve at SCS levels.