



Civil Service



# Vision for a Sheffield Policy Campus

**A Civil Service Impact Plan for Sheffield  
and the South Yorkshire Region**

**June 2023**

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## Foreword

The Civil Service has always had a national footprint but for too long policy and decision-making roles have been overtly London centric. I am delighted to set out our exciting vision for change.

Our ambition is to build a critical mass beyond Whitehall, to drive better policy making and contribute to the levelling-up agenda. Through the Places for Growth programme we are relocating roles from London to bring new jobs and opportunities to all parts of the UK, including Sheffield. We are delivering on our commitment to relocate 22,000 roles, and half of our Senior Civil Servants, by 2030. More than this, we are driving a cultural shift to deliver a civil service that better reflects the country it serves.

Geographically dispersed policy making means a more diverse workforce, bringing with it diversity of thought, leading to better informed policy. Sheffield is already the largest centre of policy making outside of London, with around 1,000 policy makers and many major programmes having their leadership of national policies based in the city. This includes Apprenticeships, Private Pensions, Universal Credit and Employment Support, the Points Based Immigration System, and oversight of the school system.

Our vision is to develop Sheffield and the South Yorkshire region's role as one of the leading centres for policy making outside London, bringing benefits for Yorkshire and the Humber, and supporting other major cities in a network that will bring the whole country more directly into shaping major decisions.

We will establish a policy infrastructure with new entrance routes - the first regional fast stream, policy apprenticeships, and professional development - to create a substantial talent pipeline. The critical mass of senior policy roles will support careers, enabling progression to the most senior roles.

Through this we will multiply the positive impact the Civil Service has on the city and region. First and foremost this is a partnership, collectively endorsed by major institutions across the city and region.

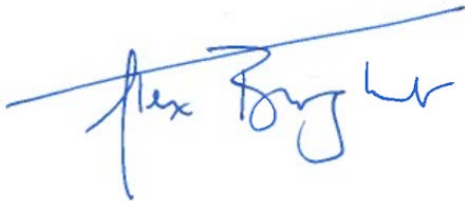
We are committed to working in collaboration with the South Yorkshire Combined Authority and the City Council to shape both city and regional growth. We are establishing new partnerships with the University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield and Barnsley Colleges to offer T Level placements, student internships, sandwich placements and research projects. We will work with these universities to shape research aligned to policy objectives. We will also promote interchange between local businesses and the Civil Service, enabling those who progress to senior roles to have a broader range of expertise.

We will expand the impact that the Civil Service has as an employer and increase its intake, particularly from under-represented Sheffield and South Yorkshire communities.

There will be a work experience offer to schools and colleges across the region to raise awareness and broaden access to policy making. We will also work with the Careers and Enterprise Company to promote the use of civil servants as ambassadors helping young people in making career choices.

The benefits will not be confined to the Sheffield and South Yorkshire region. Sheffield's policy making expansion will be aligned with and support the expansion of departments in Leeds. This first dedicated face to face policy profession development offer outside of London will support other centres, including the significant civil service presence in Manchester. Most importantly this will be a proof of vision – that policy making outside London is not confined to individual areas, or departments relocating small numbers of staff. It will show that we can achieve scale, and there is huge benefit in doing so.

We have a mission to level-up our country; to make opportunity more equal and to make the most of the talent that is spread across our nation. The vision set out in this document shows our demonstrable commitment to looking beyond London to all corners of the UK.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Alex Burghart". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

**Alex Burghart MP**  
**Parliamentary Secretary**

# Our Vision and Commitments

## Developing Sheffield as a Leading Policy Campus Outside of London

This document sets out how we will develop a major Civil Service policy campus in Sheffield, pioneering a new approach to transform Civil Service presence across the Sheffield and South Yorkshire region, linking into the wider Places for Growth strategy.

There is a compelling rationale for developing and expanding the policy campus in Sheffield:

Sheffield is already a leading location for policy making outside of London. It is part of the largest region for policy focused civil servants (Yorkshire and the Humber) and is a short distance from other significant hubs in Leeds and Manchester.

Creating a concentration of policy making in a place is critical. We need civil servants to establish careers with the full range of experience across departments, business and the broader public sector, and access to face to face professional development.

Developing a policy concentration in Sheffield and the South Yorkshire Region supports levelling-up. Business inward investment has typically focussed on London, partly because it is the centre of Government. That means it is important not just to grow Civil Service numbers outside of London, but to ensure a balanced growth of senior roles and advice to ministers.

In creating a policy campus, we must do so as part of the region. Too often Civil Service offices have existed in isolation from the communities in which they are located. Developing a cross-Government policy campus outside of London should enable civil servants to build a deeper understanding of how policy interacts to support growth at a regional level, with strong connections with the city and combined authority. It should also strengthen opportunities for long-term frontline insight – which is not just about one-off visits, but ongoing relationships with public sector delivery and businesses to inform better policy making.

Aligning policy with major operational delivery functions in the Home Office, DWP and the leadership of DfE's national delivery enables better join up between policy and delivery and the break-down of cultural barriers. While Sheffield stands out as the largest policy location in England outside of London, it is also a major Civil Service operational hub. Delivering this vision will therefore support the broader development of the Civil Service in Sheffield.

## Our Ambition

Our ambition is to build a critical mass of policy makers across government departments in one city, to drive better policy making and support development of the region in which the Civil Service departments are based. For this to be effective we need to create cross-government career paths with diverse entry routes, professional development at every level, support for progression to the most senior roles. We also need to build relationships across the city and region, enabling delivery insight to be integrated with policy making. This document sets out how we plan to create an infrastructure to support policy making in Sheffield, while also building the connection between policy, delivery, and regional insight.

Our plan includes:

- **Piloting one of the first regional fast streams.** This will enable talent to be retained to make policy in the region and for those on the regional fast stream to gain a full range of experience to progress their careers in the Sheffield and South Yorkshire region. This will build on the DWP-MOJ Yorkshire Development Scheme that is currently being piloted in Leeds.
- **Expanding policy apprenticeships.** This includes at level four, which is equivalent to a foundation level degree, broadening access to Civil Service careers for people from a range of backgrounds across the city and region.
- **Offering policy internships and research projects for university students in the region.** We will build on a pilot scheme run between DWP and the University of Sheffield to offer policy internships in placements in partnership with other Government departments and alongside T Level placements, to support progression from the region's major universities and colleges into Civil Service policy careers.
- **Creating a regional policy profession development offer.** This will be the first substantial face-to-face policy profession development activity to take place outside of London, to support progression into the leadership pipeline – including the Future Leader and Senior Leader schemes.
- **Working with Sheffield universities on policy research.** We want to increase collaboration between the Civil Service, academics, and businesses to support excellence in policy making.
- **Working with major government departments to support the development of location strategies** to promote the growth of senior Civil Service roles in Sheffield.
- **Promoting immersion schemes with frontline public-sector delivery, business and local government.** This will give civil servants a more rounded perspective of how national policy drives outcomes at a local and regional level, building relationships to strengthen policy and delivery insight.

## **Making the Civil Service a transformative force for city and regional development**

Delivery of this vision will pioneer how a major Civil Service presence can support a city and a region, and establish a model that other regions can replicate. Creating a large policy presence is not just about re-balancing, but also about enabling policy decision makers to have a strong understanding of the region and insight into the frontline.

There are already 7,000 civil servants in Sheffield with around 1,000 policy professionals, and 35,000 across South Yorkshire. We want civil servants to directly support the city and region that they live in, while diversifying access to the Civil Service itself.

We will:

**Deliver a substantial programme of work experience, with an offer to Sheffield and South Yorkshire region schools and colleges.** This is being pioneered through a programme of 'Days at DfE' with events taking place from April this year.

**Establish and maintain long-standing Civil Service volunteering partners.** We will work with business and the community, and develop our relationships with charity and other voluntary sector organisations to ensure we are a positive presence in the city.

**Support the rejuvenation of the city centre,** with the 'One Public Estate' plan.

**Act as a strategic city and regional employer, working with other major institutions and businesses, driving growth and development.** The Civil Service is already a major employer in Sheffield and South Yorkshire. We will take an active role as an employer to work strategically with the city council, city region, and the wider region to drive this growth.

The Civil Service will work with other city and regional organisations, including South Yorkshire Combined Authority, Sheffield City Council, the University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield College, Barnsley College, the Chambers of Commerce and a wide range of businesses and other partners, to:

**Support development of City Goals for Sheffield,** engaging with communities across the city.

**Shape the skills strategy for the region,** by joining the South Yorkshire Combined Authority Regional Skills Board.

**Work through the Sheffield Partnership Board** to continue to develop the city of Sheffield and promote economic growth through the City Goals process.

**Develop immersion schemes and interchange with businesses, local government and public services,** to support the region and strengthen Civil Service regional insights.

## Key theme 1 - Developing and expanding Sheffield as a leading hub for policy making in the Civil Service outside of London

Sheffield already has the largest concentration of civil service policy professionals outside of London, with c.1,000 civil servants who are part of the policy profession based in the city. Our ambition is to substantially increase this, whilst creating an infrastructure that supports policy development at every level – from diverse entry through to professional development, and a talent pipeline that supports the expansion of senior roles in the city. One of the challenges of expanding policy roles outside of London has been that to progress in the Civil Service it is advantageous to build a range of experience and strong networks. The Sheffield policy campus will have critical mass along with dedicated support that will enable that to happen here. It will also support neighbouring concentrations of the policy profession in Leeds and Manchester, as well as providing a model for how policy making can be done brilliantly outside of London.

The critical elements of this programme will include:

- A talent pipeline with diverse entry
- Professional development at every level
- Support for career development with mobility across organisations.
- Driving higher numbers of staff on development programmes.
- Clear commitment and plans from departments to develop senior roles in Sheffield.

We have already moved a significant number of Civil Service posts from London to Sheffield – over 500 in DfE alone, including more than fifty Senior Civil Servants.

Major areas where the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) is already based in Sheffield include:

- Apprenticeships (DfE)
- Private Sector Pensions (DWP)
- The Points-Based Immigration System (Home Office)
- Careers Policy (DfE)
- Family Help policy reform (DfE)
- PSHE and Life Skills and guidance on RSHE (DfE)
- Passports and Citizenship (Home Office)
- School inspection and accountability (DfE)
- School regional performance (DfE Regions Director General).
- The Standards and Testing Agency (Chief Executive)

Senior civil servants in Sheffield are also playing major roles in the expansion of Early Years provision, and the introduction of T Levels.



### Case Study: DfE Director General John Edwards talks about his career

*"I joined the DfE and the Civil Service in 2017, having worked for 11 years in Halifax, Ilkley and Sheffield schools, and 14 years in Wakefield, Kirklees and Manchester local government. I am proud to be a Director General in Sheffield. I live in Sheffield and my kids were born here, went to school, and grew into adults as proud Sheffields. That sense of belonging is important to me, and I would not have pursued my career in the Civil Service if I had not been able to do so from this great city.*

*I joined the DfE as a director - one of the 8 Regional Schools Commissioners. My patch was 'East Midlands and the Humber' including Sheffield, and the city of Hull where I grew up. After three years I moved to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as Director of Funding, overseeing the distribution of over £40bn to the education and skills sectors. A year later I became the interim CEO. In June 2022 I was appointed as the first Director General of the newly formed Regions Group, bringing together our improvement and intervention functions for schools, children's social care and special educational needs and disability, with staff based across 12 sites (yes, I have visited them all!). As a Director General it is important that I spend time in all our sites and visit provision across the country, but I achieve a good balance with time in Sheffield and London, with usually a day a week at home and a day a week visiting one of our regions. I regularly join meetings with Ministers virtually and have built close relationships within the DfE's Leadership Team and with directors in other groups through a mix of virtual and face-to-face engagement. Each member of the director team for Regions Group is based in their region. It is important for us that colleagues are keen to pursue their careers through to the most senior positions across the country, to reflect the places we serve."*

## The Talent Pipeline

We aim to create a talent pipeline at every level. This will start through creating more diverse entry points, then offering opportunities for accelerated development with a strong policy profession development, and clear ambitions for Civil Service departments to grow both their policy profession presence and senior roles in Sheffield.

## Promoting the Civil Service as a career

We want the broadest possible access to policy careers in Sheffield and the South Yorkshire region. That includes promoting Civil Service policy careers to school and university students, and creating strong talent pipeline and entrance routes. We want to retain the outstanding talent produced by universities and colleges in the region, and open up opportunities to a diverse range of communities in the city.

This will include:

- **Delivering a programme of 'Day at DfE' events to pupils and students from local schools and colleges.** This will give a flavour of what day-to-day working in

the Civil Service entails. We provide more information about this in the 'Key Themes 2' section of this document.

- **Taking an active role at University and College Careers Fairs.** These give students the opportunity to learn about different roles in the policy profession and wider Civil Service, and allow students to talk with Policy Profession colleagues directly to understand the types of policy careers available to them in the region.
- **Building on a recent pilot of a policy simulation event run by DWP and DfE at Sheffield University to expand these to a broader range of institutions.** Policy simulation events are half or full-day immersive events to give students experience of real-world policy decision making and insight into policy careers in the Civil Service. Students develop skills in negotiation, teamwork and presentation, and meet Civil Service professionals who will describe their different career pathways to build students' confidence in applying for internships, work experience opportunities and Civil Service roles. We will develop this programme from the initial pilot events into a more routine offering for a wider range of universities in the region.

As a large employer in the Sheffield area and with our plan to engage and retain talent in the region, we are committed to expanding placement opportunities for university students on relevant degree courses. These offer deeper and longer engagement with the Civil Service, giving students first-hand experience of various roles at a time when they are making life-long career decisions. The networking opportunities available to placement students give further support to those who choose to pursue a career in the Civil Service, to help them gain the skills and knowledge to be 'work-ready'.

We commit to formalising and expanding:

- **A cross-departmental internship scheme for Higher Education students.** This will take the form of summer policy internships, applied projects that are credit-bearing, vacation work experience opportunities such as the University of Sheffield Workplace Insights scheme, and sandwich course placement opportunities.
- **Research projects linked to government policy goals.** University students are encouraged to think deeply about policy options, and how to develop and implement good policy through this hands-on approach. Five research projects in DfE are being piloted for 2022-23, with work on a broader offer in train for the next academic year.
- **Paid 10-week summer internships in DfE and DWP.** These build on a scheme run by DWP with the University of Sheffield in 2018-19, and provide ideal opportunities for students



Placement students from the University of Sheffield, outside DfE Sheffield

interested in developing a career in the Civil Service. We are taking on around 20 interns this year, with plans to expand further in future.

- **Policy research placement projects.** In April 2023 six students joined DfE and eight joined DWP from the University of the Sheffield to begin their 70-hour policy research placement projects. Work is already underway to expand this offer in 2024.

We will also share knowledge with local partners, to build dual exchange channels. The policy profession is rich with relevant information from the area, helping our work to become more place-based. In return this allows our partners to better understand the development of policy and its delivery processes.

We will do this by:

- **Monthly cross-institutional seminar programmes.** These bring together policy makers, researchers, other experts, and students with mutual interests. We are in discussion with the University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield College about how we can launch a programme jointly with DWP and aim to launch in Summer 2023.
- **Staff immersion opportunities.** Currently these involve pilot tasters during ‘Love our Colleges Week’ at Sheffield College. We plan to expand to include other institutions in the longer term.

*Case study: Dom Kingaby (Civil Servant in DfE) on offering opportunities to first-year Education Studies students at Sheffield Hallam University*

*“I worked with students from Sheffield Hallam University on a project around ‘Access to Work Adjustments Passports’. This programme is offered to students who receive extra support whilst studying at university, and captures information about their condition and the adjustments they benefit from. The ‘Passport’ aims to avoid repetitive disclosures as they transition into the workplace.*

*The students carried out research to gather views on the prototype passport, which was piloted at three universities last year. The project helped simulate an important part of being a civil servant, identifying stakeholders, building relationships and working with them to drive improvement. It gave them the opportunity to practise communication skills as they presented their findings.*

*A number of risks/issues were identified by the students which could be addressed with changes in policy, including considerations around accessibility, creating digital versions of the passport, perceptions of excessive ‘red-tape’, GDPR considerations and the marketing campaign.*

*The students showed good engagement and the feedback provided was positive, highlighting the innovative ideas they presented. Students were able to learn about policy implementation and engage with many of the challenges we face as civil servants in our day to day roles!”*

Case study: Neddin Siddique (Civil Servant in DWP and Sheffield University alumni) reflects on his career and the impact the ongoing engagement by the Civil Service has on graduates and new entrants

*“I currently head up the Universal Credit analytical briefing role within Universal Credit Analysis Division in the Department for Work and Pensions.*

*However, I have had a wide-ranging career in the Civil Service which started in 1998! Having been brought up in Sheffield since I was 4 years old and then completing my combined degree at Sheffield University, I wasn't too keen on leaving the city I grew up in. So I applied for and got a temporary post in Sheffield in what was known as the Employment Agency and started work on a very hot Monday in July 1998 at what was Rockingham Court Jobcentre. The following years saw me through several promotion rounds working in Programme Development (on The Work Programme), Strategy (on Family formation and Flexible Working), Policy (on Family Policy), Finance (Risk Assurance) and now my current role.*

*Compared to now, there wasn't the same level of engagement offered. There weren't any talks or stands at the university explaining what was available in the Civil Service. It was through my network of contacts and the various posts I held that I sought out opportunities to expand my experience and knowledge helping with promotion.*

*I think the opportunities offered now to new starters and current colleagues across the main hubs, including Sheffield, help dispel negative thinking that to progress your career you must be in London. I have seen first-hand how this has helped students who graduated in other parts of the country and made a beeline for Sheffield as they know the same opportunities are available to them here as in London.*

*For me, I am enjoying my current role and the fantastic people I work with every day in my division, across the department and Civil Service.”*

## **Entrance Routes**

We will ensure that there are strong entrance routes into Civil Service policy roles in Sheffield which set new civil servants up for successful careers that can progress to the most senior positions. This will enable us to retain talent from the city and wider region, showing that people can acquire the full range of experience and career development without needing to move to London.

### Apprenticeships

**Commitment: We will expand Policy Apprenticeships in Sheffield and actively promote their uptake.**

Apprenticeship routes are a fantastic way into the Civil Service. They enable new civil servants to combine learning and professional development and attain a clear professional standard with a job. They support widening access to policy careers to a broader range of applicants, and are an excellent basis for progression to senior roles.

The Policy Profession's policy apprenticeship is being used across public services to open up and provide routes into policy work for non-graduates. DWP and DfE also offer Business Administration apprenticeships, which for many are a route into policy-making roles in these departments. In Sheffield our target is to widen access to the Civil Service for non-graduates, by building a strong infrastructure around apprenticeships in the city and encouraging local applicants through school and college careers fairs and visits.

#### Case Study: Sophie Appleby on the Policy Apprenticeship



*"I joined DfE in 2018 through the Fast Track apprenticeship scheme. This meant that I could be offered a placement anywhere in the Civil Service.*

*Whilst I was academically successful at school, I lacked a vision of what I would like to do as a career. I found university challenging and did not complete my degree. On reflection, had higher level apprenticeships been more available when I was younger, it would have been the perfect combination for me to complete my studies in a professional environment. My pre-Civil Service CV is varied, with stints in catering, retail management and call centre management amongst other roles!*

*I focused my job search on apprenticeships. I wanted to join an organisation that encouraged me to progress, rather than feeling trapped in a 'dead-end' job. I was thrilled to be offered a role on technical education policy at DfE – it felt like an ideal match for someone like me who has also taken an 'alternative' route into a traditional profession.*

*As I settled into my job I found that there were so many different apprenticeship opportunities within DfE which aligned with my goals.*

*The support I have received has been exceptional. I have been able to access invaluable additional support from a learning assistant – I am dyspraxic, which can affect my time management and organisational skills. I am now in the final stages of the course, looking to complete by summer – keeping my fingers crossed for a distinction grade!"*

#### Case Study: DfE's Apprentice of the Year Wazidul Hoque



*After A-Levels I joined the Civil Service in 2019 on a Level 4 Business Administration apprenticeship. Within four months, I successfully applied for promotion. A large part of my success was a result of evidence from my apprenticeship. I then moved to a new role on the National Tutoring Programme and started a Level 6 integrated project manager degree apprenticeship.*

*The knowledge and skills I have developed on topics such as risk management, project planning and cost management have furthered my appetite for learning, and also my career opportunities. I gained another promotion as a Portfolio Analyst, giving me the chance to be double-badged as an analyst and a project manager.*

*I am in a good position compared to my educational cohort, who are in their fourth year of study, or looking for graduate jobs. When I finish my apprenticeship, I will have a degree, five years' Civil Service experience and no student debt! Choosing an apprenticeship has been a great decision and I would recommend it to anyone.*

### Civil Service Fast Stream

**Commitment: We will pilot one of the first regional fast streams in Sheffield.**

The Fast Stream is the Civil Service's flagship leadership programme, which attracts around 60,000 applicants each year for around 1,000 exciting roles across government. It is a key component of the talent pipeline: Fast Streamers are expected to move from HEO to Grade 7 during the three years, with many Fast Streamers going on to Senior Civil Service roles in the years that follow.

With the launch of Fast Stream 2024, we commit to piloting a Regional Fast Stream for this year's cohort in Sheffield, along with two other locations. This means that fast streamers will gain the full range of experience within roles in Sheffield, rather than needing to move to other locations as part of their programme. The large concentration of policy roles in Sheffield across multiple departments provides the opportunity for fast streamers to gain the full range of experience. This will build on the DWP-MOJ Yorkshire Development Scheme that is currently being piloted in Leeds.

From 2023-24 we will build on this success through:

- Regional marketing and promotion of the Fast Stream using our university networks
- Linking up with the wider talent pipeline and higher-level talent schemes such as a regional Future Leaders scheme
- A commitment to growing high quality policy Fast Stream placements across Sheffield

This will allow local, talented graduates to access the Fast Stream here in Sheffield, bring diverse candidates into the Civil Service and support the talent pipeline for the future SCS in the region.

### Case study: Susie Wall talks about her experiences on the Fast Stream



*“I was born and brought up in Sheffield, and studied at York University and Sheffield Hallam before becoming a teacher for 10 years, working in colleges, universities and charities. After having my second child I needed more flexibility. A friend in DfE told me about the Fast Stream: a brilliant, high-profile programme, allowing new entrants to the Civil Service to experience a range of roles and progress quickly. I love a challenge and the opportunity to learn, so in 2022 I applied. I surprised myself by racing through the interviews and online tests and making the grade at the dreaded ‘assessment centre’: a tough day of leadership, written and group work exercises under pressure.*

*The next challenge came when filling in my role preferences. As a mother and main carer to two (soon to be three!) under-fives, and with strong roots in the city, I was not keen on the ‘geographically mobile’ aspect of the programme. I sent off my ‘relocation restriction’ outlining why I needed to stay in Sheffield, and thankfully it was accepted. This was a non-negotiable for me - with one child starting school the same day I started my new job and a husband working in the family business, I was not going to be able to up and move to Westminster. This expectation to move city, region or even country to take up a posting is challenging. If a Regional Fast Stream programme had existed when I applied, I would have jumped at the chance to stay local and contribute to the Civil Service in my region. I am proud to be from South Yorkshire, and plan to continue my career here: hopefully a future senior civil servant in Sheffield - let’s see!”*

### **A strong development offer, dedicated support for the policy profession**

An advantage of having a critical mass of policy civil servants in one location and a substantial senior presence across multiple departments is the opportunity to grow a policy community, enable civil servants to build a range of experience, and create a dedicated professional development offer to enable progression to the most senior grades. Some aspects of this development offer will be policy profession-specific, but it will also provide broader support to all civil servants in Sheffield, particularly for those aspiring to progress to senior leadership roles.

We aim to break down barriers between departments and local institutions, and share our policy skills and knowledge with stakeholders across the city. The Policy Profession Standards at level 2 and 3 will inform the design and content of the learning on offer.

There will be several components to the professional development offer:

- **Professional routes and standards**, including the fast stream and apprenticeships.

- **Seeking opportunities to deliver a professional development offer in the region.** The precise offer is not yet determined, but could include a further apprenticeship offer, and higher education modules. We will engage with HE providers locally to deliver this.
- **Active management of the Sheffield talent pipeline,** developing data on aspiring civil servants at each level, and active promotion of opportunities. The talent pipeline will be supported by developing progression cohorts at each level, supported by Action learning Sets, which provide mentoring and development support to accelerate progression.
- **Promotion of long-term development opportunities,** including the Future Leaders and Senior Leaders schemes, as well as policy professional qualifications, with support for candidates in applying.

### Action Learning Sets

An Action Learning Set is a group of 4-8 people (a 'set') who come together for two hours a month to help each other by listening, asking open, non-judgemental questions, and encouraging each other to reflect and make changes in their day-to-day work lives and careers. It is an established management tool used by executive coaches on the Fast Stream and in corporate settings, and can be transformational for the individuals involved. Since January 2023 over 70 DfE and DCMS employees in Sheffield have signed up to join an Action Learning Set, with groups running at every grade from EO to SCS. We will extend this programme across Civil Service departments in Sheffield.

### Professional development one-off sessions

In addition to Action Learning Sets we have launched a cross-governmental learning and development offer, with hybrid lunchtime sessions on policy topics available to all. The next step is to launch a full face-to-face Sheffield-based Policy Profession learning and development offer, open to partner institutions as well as civil servants.

### Professional qualifications

The Civil Service has been developing a framework of policy profession qualifications. This includes Apprenticeship standards and stand-alone Higher Education modules. We will take a twin approach of seeking to develop early testing of new qualifications and approaches in Sheffield working with the central policy profession team, whilst actively supporting and encouraging Sheffield civil servants to apply for existing offers delivered nationally.

### Career mobility

To support career development in the region we now promote greater mobility across organisations, including shared advertising of opportunities. Opportunities in our partner Higher Education and City Council organisations are regularly promoted in the Sheffield site newsletter, and opportunities in government departments are shared in turn.



Working with the Policy Profession we will further build a regional policy network with groups in Sheffield, and involve a broader network across Yorkshire and the Humber, linking to the new policy network that has been set up in Leeds.

#### Aligning policy making and research

A major opportunity for Sheffield as a policy campus is to create alignment between policy making and the research expertise at the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University, and the broader Yorkshire Universities network.

Local research collaborations that can inform current policy challenges will be identified through regular institutional engagement and informal communities of expertise, alongside a programme of cross-institutional seminars (see earlier section) which will bring together Sheffield academics and policymakers on topics of common interest. More broadly, Government Departments in the region will engage with structures such as the Yorkshire Policy Engagement and Research Network which connects academic research with local needs to identify solutions to some of the major opportunities and challenges facing the region. It is insights from local connections such as these that help us to understand front-line challenges and are crucial to making robust national policy.

#### Creating one policy community across Sheffield

A critical component of the policy campus will be to create a single policy community in Sheffield. This is a shared ambition across Government departments and major Sheffield organisations including the City Council, Combined Authority, the University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University, and Sheffield and Barnsley Colleges, and the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce. All organisations involved see the benefits of collaboration, promoting joint working across structures, and supporting career mobility. One aspect of career development support will be immersion programmes, both in partner organisations and in promoting engagement with business, including exploring scope for business immersion programmes to give civil servants more rounded experience.

In 2022 DfE led a Sheffield festival which drew in other departments and major city institutions. Over thirty major events were held with around 2,500 staff attendances, and major organisations across the city. This played a significant role in building relationships to create our policy campus vision and support delivery of that vision.

This year DWP co-ordinated a similar event from 15-29 May 2023 with the objective of celebrating and building the Policy Group community in Leeds and Sheffield, focused on building policy and analytical expertise, strengthening relationships with other Government departments and city and regional partners, and building the policy community.

While Sheffield stands out as a policy hub, it is critical that these events reach out across the Civil Service in Sheffield and bring together policy with operational delivery.

## **Places for Growth – growing Sheffield’s policy and senior presence**

There is a very strong track record of recent growth in Civil Service numbers in Sheffield, particularly in policy and senior roles. DfE has increased its staff presence from 850 staff in 2018 to 1550 in 2023, with most roles either being policy or significantly aligned with policy. DWP has significantly increased its policy presence, and now has two policy directors based in Sheffield. The Home Office routinely advertises the large majority of policy roles in Sheffield, and now has a significant policy SCS presence.

New departments are also expanding in Sheffield. DLUHC has policy staff based in St Paul’s Place and has committed to advertising policy roles in the city, with support from other departments. DCMS and DSIT similarly have a policy presence, and its staff have actively engaged in the development offer.

Our ambition is that this expansion should continue and accelerate, whilst ensuring that the Civil Service and the region extract the maximum benefit from the growth.

### **Developing Sheffield’s Civil Service estate to create one policy community:**

Sheffield has a substantial Civil Service estate with 12 locations and 50,000 square metres of accommodation across the city. However, it is geographically dispersed which is not ideal from the perspective of building a policy or Civil Service community. Some buildings require renovation or are no longer fit for purpose.

Sheffield has been selected as a One Public Estate Pilot. This means that the Office of Government Property will work with other major city organisations to develop a single property strategy. One aspect of that strategy will be to seek to bring together departments in the city to support a single cross-government community. That will support creating a single culture and facilitate joint working on shared priorities.

As part of the One Public Estate pilot, we will test options to physically align major functions in Sheffield.

## **Key theme 2 - Strengthening the substantial positive impact of the Civil Service on the city and region.**

The Civil Service is one of the largest employers in Sheffield, having a major positive impact on the city and regional economy. There are around 7,000 civil servants in Sheffield with around 35,000 in the wider Yorkshire and the Humber area.

Developing a strong direct impact on our city and region is not just about being a good major employer. Building direct relationships between the Civil Service, the city and delivery of broader public services also helps to provide insight into policy making, and a more rounded understanding of how government interactions impact at a regional level. Establishing ongoing relationships with frontline and voluntary organisations enables more open dialogue to support better policy making. Our work will also help to support the long-term pipeline into Civil Service careers discussed in the first theme.

As we look to strengthen and embed our positive impact on the city region, we are committed to encouraging children and young people from local communities into our Sheffield sites, while getting our staff out into local communities; and to do this through collaborative and long-term partnerships.

### **‘A day at DfE’ for Schools and Colleges**

We are establishing a series of one-day events called ‘A Day at DfE’ where students come to our local office and take part in a variety of interactive activities.

Each event will be individually tailored to meet different needs, but activities might include:

- An interactive mock policy exercise
- Insights into working with ministers, including a role-play session
- A treasure hunt that gets students moving around the office
- Speed-networking sessions to increase knowledge of entry routes, different roles and people working in the Civil Service

‘A Day at DfE’ gives students from Year 10 and upwards from a variety of backgrounds, including from special schools, a taste of what working in DfE and the wider Civil Service is all about. The events aim to demonstrate to a new and local audience the benefits of being part of the Civil Service, getting them excited and interested in a potential future with us. The events include awareness raising for students of the different routes into the Civil Service, encouraging them to think about a career in the Civil Service in Sheffield. The ‘work experience and student placement’ section in Key Theme 1 provides more information on how we are planning to attract and recruit talent in Sheffield and the wider South Yorkshire region.

Regular ‘Day at DfE’ programmes will help us become a more inclusive employer and enable us to unlock latent local potential by being closer to the communities we serve.

Following a recent visit from 17 A Level Government and Politics students from Barnsley College, we received excellent student feedback. The majority of students said they found the day ‘very interesting’ and were more interested in a career in the Civil Service, and all went away with a better understanding of the Civil Service.

### What’s happening and getting involved

We currently have five events running throughout Spring/Summer 2023:

When	Who’s visiting	Type of Provider
<b>25 April 2023</b>	Holgate Meadows School	Special school for 6-16 year olds with social, emotional and mental health needs
<b>17 May 2023</b>	Barnsley College	FE college for 16-19 year olds
<b>19 June 2023</b>	Seven Hills School	Special school for 11-19 year olds with a variety of learning difficulties and disabilities.
<b>21 June 2023</b>	Fir Vale School	Comprehensive secondary school for ages 11-16
<b>4 July 2023</b>	Kenwood Academy	Special school for neurodiverse 11-19 year olds

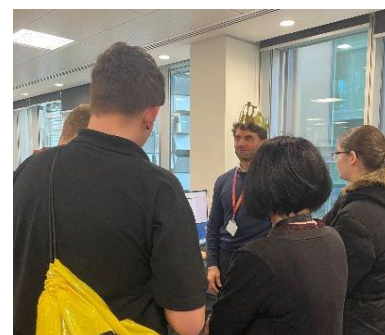
***If you are a school or college and would like to take part in one of these or future events, or if you are civil servant in Sheffield interested in co-ordinating and running events like these in the future please email:***

***[CS.IMPACTPLAN@education.gov.uk](mailto:CS.IMPACTPLAN@education.gov.uk)***

### Case Study: Day at DfE with Holgate Meadows school

In April 2023 students and teachers from Holgate Meadows school attended our first ‘Day at DfE’ event of the year at St Paul’s Place in Sheffield, a day to introduce school pupils to the Civil Service.

Seven GCSE citizenship students took part in a treasure hunt in the office, hunting down crowns from staff on different floors of the building and quizzing them about their roles.





They grilled our senior managers and apprentices in a speed networking session....

...and presented their policy solutions to extend Maths to 18 years to our very own Secretary of State for the day, role-played by one of our excellent staff volunteers.



One of the pupils said about the day: “The trip was **fun and engaging** and the experience was **interesting and educational.**”

### ***Vision for the future***

We intend to broaden these events across Government departments, to run events which are more focused on the whole Civil Service rather than just DfE. We are also considering how we can build on taster days to offer more long-term work experience placements for students.

## **Volunteering Partnerships**

### ***What’s happening and getting involved***

The Civil Service is already invested in encouraging its staff to take up volunteering opportunities. We want to see staff in our Sheffield sites taking full advantage of these opportunities, scaling up our activity where possible.

Civil Service employees are currently entitled to a minimum of three days paid special leave for non-statutory volunteering in any twelve month rolling period.

Examples of non-statutory volunteering include:

- volunteering as a trustee of a charity
- volunteering as a young person’s mentor
- volunteering at a community centre

We want to see more volunteering with greater local and regional impact.

Drawing on discussions that took place at DfE's Sheffield Site Festival in May 2022, we want to build sustainable volunteering partnerships with local charities, businesses, and education institutions in key sectors, who we will champion across the Sheffield site.

We are currently in the process of identifying five key volunteering partners who sit in three key themes of activity:

- People and learners
- Wildlife and conservation
- Health

We are also working with Sheffield staff to understand existing volunteering patterns, including identifying any blockers that stop staff taking up volunteering opportunities.

### **Case study: British Science Week at High Hazels Academy, Sheffield**

*“When a school asked for some volunteers to help them celebrate British Science Week, I jumped at the chance. I’m a former geography teacher and saw an opportunity to test some curriculum activities based on my policy area, the National Education Nature Park.*

*High Hazels Academy is a primary school within the United Learning multi academy trust (MAT) in Sheffield. It’s in a diverse and deprived area of the city which has been affected by de-industrialisation, yet the school has a history of achieving above average progress for its students.*

*With my previous teaching experience, I devised engaging activities to inspire the classes I met. I focussed on the use of quantitative and qualitative data in scientific investigations with three classes of lively year 4 pupils. After explaining the aim of the enquiry, I sent the children to different classrooms to ask other pupils a short series of survey questions. Their class teacher and I then took them outside to assess their feelings about their school grounds. The children loved being given the responsibility of collecting accurate data from other children and were even more keen to tell me what they loved about their school grounds. More importantly, for my policy area, they were keen to discuss how nature could improve their playground and experience of playing outside. I relished the joy of seeing children’s faces light up as they recalled previous learning, discovered something new and tried out different activities with a science theme.*

*After lunch the Vice Principal of the school squeezed in a chat with me, and I was able to gain some helpful first-hand knowledge of how my policy area might ‘land’ with school staff which I was able to share with the rest of the team. This all helped to create a more rounded picture of what we needed to do to ensure successful delivery of the National Education Nature Park when national roll-out begins in September 2023. The school*

*have already invited us back and it'll be great to follow a local school as my policy area rolls out, embeds and develops over time.*

**Juanita Shepherd FRGS**, Policy Lead - National Education Nature Park and Climate Action Award Team, Sustainability & Climate Change Unit, Strategic Policy Directorate

### **Vision for the future**

Our work is currently focused on promoting Civil Service volunteering using the existing staff offer and understanding current staff uptake. However, our long-term ambition is to generate volunteering opportunities at a department, team, and individual level.

We are committed to making the volunteering offer suit everyone and embed a culture where Civil Service staff regularly volunteer. We want to make volunteering easy and we want to see clear relationship management in place that delivers long-term community link-up.

## Key theme 3 - Acting strategically as a major city and regional employer to support regional growth

The Civil Service is one of many highly engaged regional employers supporting growth within Sheffield and the wider South Yorkshire region. We aim to continue to support and expand economic growth within the region, acting as a leader and playing a substantial role in establishing a strong shared vision with the Combined Authority, City Council, major city institutions and businesses across the region.

We want the Civil Service to be recognised as a key employer in the Sheffield and South Yorkshire region, and representative of the communities it serves in the city and surrounding areas. This drives city development and engagement with a range of employers across both public and private sectors, voluntary and community sector organisations, and its citizens.

Civil servants across the region are already actively involved in helping to co-create, support and steward programmes, projects and initiatives across the Sheffield city and region.

These include:

- As a member of the **City Partnership Board**, working with Sheffield city organisations to support the growth of the city. Chaired by Lord David Blunkett, the City Partnership is committed to effective collaboration, aiming to ensure that the key organisations and leaders in Sheffield are working together to build effective and inclusive solutions to the challenges facing the city, share responsibility, and ensure that Sheffield is fully grasping all opportunities. The City Partnership fosters a culture of optimism and trust, building on what is already happening and achievements within Sheffield and the talent of local people and organisations.
- As part of the **Regional Skills Advisory Board for South Yorkshire** which feeds into the South Yorkshire Skills Advisory Network - an employer-led local partnership which aims to strengthen the link between public and private sector employers, local authorities, colleges and universities and to consolidate and improve knowledge on skills and labour market needs.
- As a **leadership group**, meeting bi-monthly to bring together Civil Service leaders with other major city institutions, and supporting development of this vision.
- As one of the stewards helping to define **Sheffield's City Goals and objectives** for the next decade.

### Sheffield City Goals

As the city emerged from the pandemic, the city's leaders were clear that Sheffield needed a new ambitious economic plan - a plan which would deliver more inclusive and sustainable economic growth and reflected the priorities and values for the city's future.



In Summer 2022, the Sheffield City Partnership asked some of its members to work in a voluntary capacity to bring together a working group to include a diverse and ‘community focussed’ set of representatives from organisations including Sheffield Social Enterprise Network, Voluntary Action Sheffield, the Green Estate and the Race Equality Commission.

The core purpose of this working group has been to consider how to kick-start a city-wide conversation designed to build a set of City Goals that shape the future of Sheffield.

These City Goals will serve as Sheffield’s ‘North Stars’ that describe the kind of city we want to be and the outcomes we want to achieve.

<b>Sheffield.</b>	Sheffield is a resilient and determined city. A great city.
<b>Our City</b>	Our city can be a place where everyone lives well and takes care of each other. But it takes each and every one of us to make that happen.
<b>Step up</b>	In coming together as friends, neighbours, strangers and communities, we can step up to the challenges ahead.
<b>Our City Goals</b>	To fulfil that promise, we need to be acting together and driving change towards the same goals. Our City Goals.
<b>Legacy</b>	This is an invitation for you to help set Our City Goals by shaping what our city stands for, what we want our city to be now and in the future and what we want to do together to build our legacy.
<b>Dream Big</b>	These goals will drive our response to the changing and challenging world we live in. They will guide us all to dream big and to build a Sheffield in shape for current and future generations.

The working group identified three critical considerations for successful delivery of the City Goals:

- 1) *We must confront the challenges facing our city, and what the future holds, by moving forward together. As the cost-of-living hits hard, the weather changes and as the future becomes more uncertain, the need for Sheffield to have some clear City Goals becomes more urgent.*
- 2) *This is not another consultation that leads nowhere. We hope friends, families, colleagues, strangers and communities will come together to answer some important questions about the future we all want for our city that will trigger lasting change in how this city works.*
- 3) *Everyone must have a voice and be heard in shaping Sheffield’s future.*

This working group will ensure that Sheffield has a clearly defined set of agreed City Goals.

This is about inviting everyone who cares about Sheffield to join this conversation and shape a shared future for our city. It's about our city's institutions working harder to hear genuine community views and take action, and to ensure Sheffield is a better place for everyone.

The organisations committed to making change happen in the city include:



They are working on behalf of the city to enable an open, inclusive and collaborative process.



Sheffield City Goals are being developed through an open process of engagements allowing the people of Sheffield to come together through:

1. An online digital survey open to all.
2. Workshops with key stakeholders.
3. Workshops with communities often underrepresented in city-wide conversations.

*Case study: Theresa Parnell, a Civil Servant in DWP, reflects on her previous career and how she chose to work in Sheffield as it becomes a regional employer in the North.*

*"I have predominantly worked in the private sector and for over 20 years worked for providers supporting individuals into work who have a health issue or disability. I was lucky enough to work in a sector that has been able to make a positive impact on vulnerable people's lives. People still come and talk to me now and tell me how they are getting on and what they are doing. I found that role challenging and rewarding.*

*Now I am working on policy development of Access to Work in the Department for Work and Pensions, so I feel that I have come the full circle!*

*I entered the Civil Service through a brigaded recruitment exercise in 2019 and joined in January 2020 just before COVID-19. I live near Mansfield and so chose Sheffield as the most convenient location for me. I have not been to university, and my skills and knowledge come with experience through the roles I have previously undertaken. It has been great for me that I have the opportunity to apply those skills in the Civil Service in Nottingham and Sheffield."*

## Next steps

Sheffield already has the largest concentration of Civil Service policy professionals outside of London and we want to see this number increase significantly.

Our strategy will see Sheffield become a major Civil Service Policy Campus, focussed on:

- **A strong talent pipeline** with diverse entry, excellent policy development offers, mobility between departments and other institutions, and a coherent plan to move Senior Civil Service posts to the city.
- **The Civil Service acting as a leading regional employer**, actively contributing to developing the city strategy and the regional local skills improvement plan, and collaborating with partners to drive economic growth in the region.
- **Partnership working**, creating strong partnerships between policy makers and the front line of the public sector in the region, alongside research and analysis partnerships with the Sheffield universities, colleges and businesses in the Sheffield and South Yorkshire region.

## Get involved

If you are interested in getting involved with any of the activities listed in this document then please contact our mailbox at: [cs.impactplan@education.gov.uk](mailto:cs.impactplan@education.gov.uk).

We would like to thank every organisation that has worked with us to create and develop this vision, including the Combined Authority, Sheffield City Council, and the education business institutions from across the region. We look forward to working with them and many other local organisations joining with us to deliver our plan to achieve the greatest impact.



Civil Service



University of Sheffield

Sheffield Hallam University



The Prince's Responsible Business Network

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