



Identifying and Removing Barriers to Talented BAME Staff Progression in the Civil Service

Qualitative Research Findings

December 2014

FOREWORD

Many talented BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) staff are motivated to join the Civil Service because they fundamentally believe in ‘doing good’.

There is no doubt senior leaders are committed to understanding the blockages that prevent talented staff, of all backgrounds, meeting their personal aspirations within the organisation and effectively delivering policies and public services. The commissioning of this research by the Civil Service demonstrates a desire to confront the challenges that currently exist to harnessing the talents of its BAME staff.

However, we have been here before. This is not a new issue. The Civil Service has, in various places, at various times and at various levels, looked at these issues before. BAME staff have been asked many times and in many ways about their experiences and the staff we talked to are beginning to feel worn down. They question whether there is, in fact, a real appetite for change.

Policy intentions are clear but their implementation is often inconsistent, uncoordinated and lacking real drive. There is much that is good at a ‘micro’ level. Best practice can be seen within individual departments and many informal and formal processes are helping talented BAME staff develop the skills to progress.

This being said, without a more strategic, focussed approach, driven from the top, talented BAME staff who feel they do not have equal access to opportunities within the Civil Service will look elsewhere.

It is time to acknowledge that many BAME staff do not feel they are operating in a ‘level playing field’. Diversity, in its broadest sense, needs to be on the agenda at every level in order to demonstrate real and committed action towards the Civil Service’s vision of an open, fair and inclusive organisation.

We were asked to consider our insights within three broad themes: Culture, Leadership and Accountability, and Talent Processes and Career Development. These themes are, in reality, interrelated and overlapping: for example one cannot consider leadership and accountability without the context of the prevailing culture. We have attempted to be systematic in feeding back staff perceptions of ‘their reality’, but the different elements need to be considered together in addressing how the Civil Service moves forward.

We are grateful to all the BAME staff who gave us their time and shared their experiences, all those who helped us with the logistics of delivering this work in time and the Civil Service leaders and management who provided much food for thought.

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2. A Snapshot: Key Findings & Recommendations

This report details the findings from qualitative research on the blockages experienced by talented BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) staff in the Civil Service. It provides insights into their experiences of working for the Civil Service and the barriers they face around the themes of culture, leadership and accountability, and talent processes and development.

The report makes references to other surveys; the 2014 Civil Service People Survey and the Hay Group 'Removing Barriers to Success' survey (November 2014).

Main Findings

Current cultural and leadership climates are the main barriers to the progression of talented BAME staff within the Civil Service.

BAME staff across all levels of responsibility do not feel they work for an organisation that is open, fair and inclusive. Lack of BAME role models at senior civil service (SCS) level is demoralising for those who are committed to a career in the Civil Service and want to progress. They see a leadership that is not diverse and perceptions of an 'old boys club' persist. Many feel it is still the case that progression is based on whether 'your face fits' and this does not equate to an organisation that is committed to and values diversity.

The lack of an explicit, clearly and consistently communicated diversity and inclusion strategy compounds the view that the Civil Service is not committed to ethnic diversity.

Unconscious bias and discrimination persists which can block the progress of talented BAME staff and means there is not always equal access to promotions, projects, senior leaders and secondments. All of this limits the aspirations and success of BAME staff.

The Performance Management Review is particularly criticised and is seen to disadvantage BAME staff, who are more likely to be scored 'not met' in their reviews with often little objective feedback as to why.

Line managers play a crucial role in supporting and developing talented staff. Whilst some BAME staff interviewed say they have been well supported, others do not feel their line managers are focussed on their development, limiting their access to training and development opportunities. Unconscious bias is blamed for this.

The current talent processes, those targeting BAME staff as well as mainstream schemes, work well as far as they go. However the reach and scope of these schemes is not sufficiently ambitious and access to them is not always fair or consistent. The lack of a structured career development process for those who complete these schemes can limit their effectiveness in developing and progressing talented staff.

Summary of Recommendations

We make ten detailed recommendations grouped under the following broad headings:

Culture

1. Develop a specific Diversity and Inclusion Strategy as part of a refreshed and updated Talent Action Plan, which is clearly communicated throughout the Civil Service.
2. Build a 'critical mass' of talented BAME role models at senior level. This could be achieved by encouraging the existing pool of BAME SCS staff to be identified as role models, appointing people from outside the Civil Service at this level or by appointing BAME Non Executive Directors.
3. Build the work of Staff Network representatives into their appraisals as recognition of their work.

Leadership and Accountability

4. Embed the delivery of diversity outcomes at senior level. These should be consistently communicated and delivered throughout the Civil Service with clarity of who is responsible for driving this agenda:
 - a. There should be transparency about who is leading on diversity, the Cabinet Secretary, Minister for the Cabinet Office, or both. The Talent Action Plan identifies the Cabinet Secretary as the overall lead for diversity and this should be reflected in and measured against his performance objectives
 - b. The Cabinet Secretary should push the diversity strategy through the Top 600 Civil Service leaders with specific objectives for delivering diversity outcomes
 - c. One department should be identified to lead the delivery of diversity outcomes so that there is a coordinated approach.
5. Broaden the responsibility for diversity. Permanent Secretaries should have responsibility for delivering measureable diversity outcomes, built into their performance objectives. Functional leads in all key areas should also be responsible and accountable for delivering diversity outcomes.
6. Line managers should have diversity objectives built into their job descriptions and their competencies developed as inclusive leaders.
7. Drive behaviour change by addressing unconscious bias from the top down with experiential, face to face training for the Top 200.

Talent Processes and Career Development

8. Expand the scope and reach of the existing BAME specific talent processes to increase the talent pipeline and review current outreach work to improve access into the Civil Service from under-represented groups.
9. Develop a better and more structured career planning process for BAME staff after completing a talent programme to ensure they remain motivated about their career development opportunities at the Civil Service.
10. Consider setting aspirational goals (not quotas or targets) to align recruitment, talent identification and development processes towards this aspiration. This will require transparent and more effective use of data against which to measure success.

2. Background: Who we spoke to and how

2.1 Research design & sample structure

A qualitative research approach was designed to provide insight into talented BAME staff experiences of working for the Civil Service. The ‘evidence’ is the views and perceptions of the staff interviewed – the sample size, in qualitative terms, is robust.

“Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world.”

(Merriam, 2009)

Sample details	Process	Numbers
BAME wishing to participate		418
BAME staff who took part in the research	Face to face interviews Small focus groups Telephone interviews Emailed responses Total staff interviewed (of these, 25% with staff outside London) Breakdown by grade: 16 x SCS 80 x Grade 6 & 7 64 x SEO/HEO 31 x EO/AO	68 69 39 15 TOTAL 191
‘Stakeholders’	Civil Service Race Champion Minister for Cabinet Office Civil Service Diversity Champion Director of META Fast Stream Chief Psychologist Talent Lead for Fast Stream Head of Civil Service HR Director, Civil Service Diversity & Inclusion 2 focus groups with Staff Networks Trade Unions 4 Diversity Champions Director, BITC 2 HR Directors 2 Diversity & Inclusion Leads	

2.2 Research Objectives

The research objectives we were commissioned to work to are:

Overall:

The aim of the research was to understand the reasons why BAME¹ individuals are under-represented in senior civil service (SCS).

Specific objectives identified:

- To identify staff experiences of working for the Civil Service
- What drives these experiences
- Identify their career aspirations within the Civil Service
- Understand the barriers BAME staff face in their career progression
 - Categorise these barriers within three broad themes; Culture, Talent Processes & Career Development, Leadership & Accountability
- Provide evidence and analysis of these barriers and any other issues raised by BAME staff
- To evaluate the effectiveness of current interventions in removing blockages to progression
 - Awareness of these interventions and other policies to promote talented individuals
 - How well these are working across and within Government Departments
 - Are some working better than others, where and why
 - How relevant and appropriate these interventions are for BAME staff
 - Whether there are specific interventions that might be required to remove blockages for BAME staff
- To develop a clear action plan of what is needed to support the development of talented BAME staff to senior levels.

As a Note:

Qualitative research has provided insights into the experiences, views and opinions of the 200+ staff and stakeholders we interviewed. Whilst this is a significant sample size in research terms, the insights may not necessarily reflect those of Civil Service BAME staff as a whole.

¹ BAME – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

3. The Context

3.1 The hard evidence: where the Civil Service is now and where was it before?

There is no doubt the Civil Service has seen an improvement in the overall numbers of employees from a BAME background; from 9.2% in 2010 to 10.1% in 2014 (based on those who declared their ethnic background).² However, the Civil Service Talent Action Plan recognises the picture is not a consistent one; BAME staff are still disproportionately represented in lower staff grades.

	2013	2014
SCS ³	3.9%	4.0%
Grade 6/7	7.3%	7.7%
HEO/SEO	8.3%	8.8%
EO	11.1%	11.6%
AA/AO	9.7%	10.4%

(Source: Grades AA/AO – Grades 6/7⁴)

To make reading even less positive, The Civil Service World Minority Report looked at figures given to Parliament by Labour’s shadow equalities minister, Sharon Hodgson, which suggests that, overall, BAME staff are winning a smaller number of promotions at Senior Civil Service (SCS) level now than was the case in 2010 and the overall proportion of promotions going to BAME staff has fallen.⁵

Many BAME staff in the qualitative interviews and focus groups felt the Civil Service had led the way on diversity, equality and inclusion issues in the past particularly in response to the Macpherson Report in 1999. This is not how the Civil Service is generally viewed now by the staff we interviewed.

The Talent Action Plan has been welcomed but there is a question as to why this focussed on gender diversity rather than diversity in its broader sense. This has had the unfortunate result of increasing the view among BAME staff that ethnic diversity has not been a priority for the Civil Service in recent years.

The Civil Service People Survey, conducted annually in October, is a useful ‘dip stick’ into the attitudes and work experiences of staff across the organisation.

Looking at the latest 2014 People Survey data, overall BAME staff responses do not look significantly different from those of their White cohort. However, looking at this data by grades shows a more variable picture:

² Civil Service Statistics (ONS)

³ SCS Database

⁴ Civil Service Statistics (ONS)

⁵ <http://www.civilserviceworld.com/articles/special-report/minority-report>

- On the question of how well the organisation as a whole is felt to be managed, 61% of BAME SCS are positive compared with 70% of White SCS
- On the question of how involved SCS staff feel in the decisions that affect their work, 76% of BAME SCS are positive compared with 89% of White SCS
- While 70% of BAME SCS feel senior management are sufficiently visible, this is 10 percentage points less than White SCS staff
- On how confident SCS staff feel in the decisions made by senior managers, 59% of BAME SCS are positive compared with 76% of White SCS
- On how confident SCS staff are that if they raise a concern under the Civil Service Code, it would be investigated properly, 72% of BAME SCS staff are confident compared with 89% of White SCS
- 67% of BAME staff at Grades 6 and 7 feel the organisation respects individual differences compared with 78% of White staff at these grades.

3.2 The case for a more ethnically diverse Civil Service

No one can dispute the case for a more ethnically diverse Civil Service. As a public body, the legislation is clear and present in all that the Civil Service does and how it operates. The moral case is also clear; diversity, equality and inclusion are accepted desirable social outcomes for all organisations especially one that serves and is funded by the public. There is, however, also a strong practical one. Here are some headline statistics to focus the mind. The 2011 Census shows:

- BAME communities make up 14.1% of England and Wales total population⁶ (up from 7.9% in 2001)
- Predictions are that they could account for between 20% - 30% of Britain's population by 2050⁷
- The 2011 Census data shows that in London only 44.9% of people are White British; Newham has the most diverse ethnic community, accounting for 70% of the Borough's population.

The Civil Service is working hard towards a goal where its staff reflect the society it serves, important for ensuring policies and services are geared to meet the needs of all communities. Where operational departments deliver policy to the public, BAME staff profiles should reflect local communities.

There is, however, a long way to go before BAME representation at all levels of the organisation better reflects society 'out there'.

⁶ 2011 Census Data

⁷ Portrait of Modern Britain, Policy Exchange, May 2014

3.3 The picture ‘out there’: how well are other organisations doing when it comes to ethnic diversity?

The benefits of diversity in its broadest sense (gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age and perspectives) and of more inclusive corporate cultures have been recognised by major companies and brands across all sectors for over 20 years. This is not just from a legal or social responsibility point of view, or from a moral perspective, but there is a compelling business case:

- Outward facing: a diverse workforce reflecting a diverse customer base can deliver better services because it is more likely to understand their needs and build stronger relationships
- Staff who feel included and respected for their difference are likely to be more productive. (The Journal of Diversity looks at literature and research which suggests there is a link between workplace diversity and organisational performance. It argues that American companies are embracing diversity because it is a powerful motivational tool that can attract and retain talent, improving corporate performance. ⁸).

The picture for good practice in promoting ethnic diversity is improving, although gender equality at senior and board level management is moving ahead in faster strides.

Lloyds Bank

The bank has made Diversity and Inclusion one of its core brand values. Its business case is that an organisation which reflects the diversity of its customers can deliver better quality customer service because it “can better understand their needs and build deeper relationships.” The responsibility for increasing staff diversity lies with Executive level sponsors who approve all ethnic diversity activities. A Career Development Programme is in place to support and develop these staff into senior management roles.

Xerox

Xerox CEO, Ursula Burns, is the first African American woman CEO to head a Fortune 500 company. Looking at the company’s history, its focus on ethnic diversity began in the 1990’s when the company first started recruiting and mentoring African Americans. The CEO believes this helped Xerox face competition to its core business from digital imaging. The company adapted to become one of client services rather than copying machines. She says, “One of the things that Xerox found out early is generally, if it’s good for society, it’s generally good for business.”

While the above examples show organisations that have specifically focussed on ethnic diversity, these remain exceptions. BAME representation in senior positions in FTSE

⁸http://www.academia.edu/3589155/Workforce_Diversity_And_Organizational_Communication_Analysis_Of_Human_Capital_Performance_And_Productivity

100 organisations still does not reflect the proportion of BAME communities in society. Trevor Phillips, Chair of Green Park Diversity Analytics, has argued that “in the past decade there has been a growing consensus that our business elite is simply too narrow in its outlook, too prone to a herd mentality and just not switched on enough to the 21st century world.”⁹

A report by Green Park Interim & Executive Search: ‘The Green Park Leadership 10,000’ analysed the diversity of the 10,000 most senior staff in FTSE 100 companies by gender, ethnicity and cultural background. This showed that:

- The top leaders of the FTSE are almost exclusively white and male. The picture at the next layer is a little better
- Two of every three FTSE 100 companies have no BAME¹⁰ representation at Chairman, Chief Executive or Chief Financial Officer level.

The Green Park report defines ‘top 20’ leaders as board and main executive directors, operating or managing board members. Its ‘top 100’ positions are defined as senior management reporting to CEO and board level directors. At these levels, FTSE 100 companies are doing a little better than the Civil Service. 5.1% of FTSE top 20 leaders and 6.2% of FTSE top 100 leaders are from an ethnic minority background.

‘The Green Park Leadership 10,000’ report also suggests that **some sectors are doing well in promoting BAME staff into senior management positions. Natural Resources, Industrial and Health sectors have the highest BAME representation in their Leadership Top 20.**

FTSE 100, Top 20 Leaders

Sector	Representation
Natural Resources	10.4%
Industrials	9.5%
Health	8%
Banking and Finance	6.5%
Consumer Goods	6.2%

Telecommunications, Banking and Finance sectors also have good BAME representation at the Top 100 senior management positions.

FTSE 100, Top 100 Senior Managers

Sector	Representation
Telecom	9.5%
Banking and Finance	9.0%

⁹ <http://www.green-park.co.uk/press-release-britains-competitiveness-risk-deep-diversity-deficit-says-new-study>

¹⁰ Defined by culture/ ethnic background: Black, Muslim, Hindu/ Sikh or Chinese/Other Asian in the report

Technology	8.6%
Health	8.2%
Consumer Goods	7.1%

Britain's top companies may have a long way to go to achieve better ethnic diversity at top level management that matches Britain's diverse community. However, many are now 'walking the walk' as well as 'talking the talk'. In total, BAME staff make up 8.3 per cent of senior business roles in FTSE 100 companies compared with just 4.0% per cent of the SCS.

The Civil Service is falling short in developing and progressing its talented BAME staff into senior management. Irrespective of what is happening 'out there' in industry, the Civil Service can and should be an exemplar; an employer that provides fair and equal access to progression for all staff.

["You are a public service, you serve the public and you need to set the way."](#)

(SCS)

"Despite the introduction of public sector duties over the last few years, (including one on race), we still seem to be lacking progress on such a key issue. The public sector should be an exemplar to other sectors. Haven't we learnt lessons of the past? It's quite unimaginable that I am even discussing this in 2014 when the census results show that we are more diverse than ever!"

(Grade 7)

4. Key Findings

4.1 Culture

BAME staff across responsibilities do not believe the Civil Service lives up to its vision of an open, inclusive and fair culture

What 'culture' do BAME staff feel they work in?

We reviewed the Civil Service People Survey 2014 results and looked particularly at the data on staff responses to the statement on Inclusiveness and Fairness. (This data has been included in the Appendix). Scores from White staff and BAME staff do not vary in any significant way. Therefore, this does not offer any real insight into the specific barriers experienced by BAME staff. However, anecdotal feedback from our discussions with staff, staff networks and trade unions, and those who took part in the 'Removing Barriers to Success' survey carried out by the Hay Group provide greater insight into barriers to progression in the Civil Service for BAME staff.

Our research and the Hay Group survey suggest BAME staff generally do not feel the Civil Service is committed to diversity. Only 41% of BAME respondents from the Hay Group survey agreed Civil Service leaders were committed to diversity.

A key factor is the lack of sufficient BAME representation at senior management level. This is a powerful 'barometer' of how well the organisation's 'talk' matches reality. The consistent view among the staff we interviewed was the importance of 'looking above them' for BAME role models in sufficient numbers to gauge the potential for career progression. What most still see is a certain 'type' of senior civil servant: white, middle class and 'Oxbridge'. Perceptions may not match reality but this is nevertheless important.

“There is a lack of role models in my area of work. Senior Management at Grade 7 and above is all white which is telling given how diverse my department as a whole is.”

“At SCS, there is an emphasis on promoting women but there is not the same level of focus on BAME staff. BAME SCS staff get frustrated and end up leaving because they can't see a way past the glass ceiling.”

“Good role models help to demystify, show you what's possible, makes it feel real and achievable. And the best way to silence the cynics!”

“Our team displays the organisation’s structure in reception and has images of staff above Grade 6 level. It’s disappointing to walk past this display each morning and not have one BAME member of staff within this structure.”

It is worrying still to note that only 31 of SCS are from the Black community, representing just 0.9% of the total SCS of those with known ethnicity¹¹. This is disappointing given that the Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British make up 3.3% of the population of England and Wales.¹²

Although no one believes there is institutional racism, unconscious bias (and conscious in some instances) is still seen as prevalent and reflects the experience of many BAME staff. Discriminatory behaviours and remarks from some line managers and peers are the experiences of many BAME staff. They do not always feel able to challenge such behaviours for fear of being labelled troublemakers or ‘over sensitive’. 47% of BAME respondents who took part in the ‘Removing Barriers to Success’ survey said they had personally experienced discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation at work in the last 12 months. 14% of BAME staff reported discrimination at work in the 2014 Civil Service People Survey.

The upshot of this is that staff feel they cannot always be themselves, having to ‘play down’ their cultural and ethnic characteristics. This is particularly reported from staff at HEO, SEO and Grade 7.

“I heard a manager say to a Muslim member of staff, ‘here comes Osama Bin Laden’. I felt really guilty that I didn’t speak up. Even as an Irish man, I get jokes, that frankly, in today’s day and age, is shocking.”

“It can feel like an Old Boys Network sometimes. I [as an African woman] don’t feel like I have the confidence to be myself – even down to how I dress. I’m always receiving derogatory comments about my African prints (dress).”

“As an African Caribbean man, I have to be very careful. If I am loud, I get viewed as aggressive and if I’m quiet then I am seen as too laid back. You become mindful of how you might be perceived by others.”

To all extents and purposes, while the unconscious bias training is welcomed as a way forward, many believe this is a ‘tick box’ exercise and will have little impact in changing discriminatory behaviours.

Civil Service culture is also described as one where ‘who you know’ is often more important than ‘what you know’. BAME staff interviewed consistently reported that informal networks are important in how ‘talent’ is identified, nurtured and supported. This goes against the grain of an open and transparent organisation but BAME staff

¹¹ Civil Service Database

¹² 2011 Census data

accept this is 'how things are'. However, this can impact on 'how one gets on'; it means they may not have access to high profile projects, be 'in the sight line' of influential senior leaders, be part of a managed promotion or have information on forthcoming vacancies.

"It's all about who you know rather than what you know. You can get ghettoised if you are not the manager's favourite and it is harder to get good secondments."

"Those who get ahead have a certain style – a way of being able to bullshit their way out of stuff; a persuasive gift of the gab. Therefore, senior management trust them. They [senior managers] don't trust BAMEs. They are seen as 'charismatic', while we [BAMEs] are seen as 'uppity'."

"In the city, many promotions are decided at the bar, not in the workplace. You have to be part of that club here too. Peers want to keep the status quo. They will recruit in their 'like' to keep the organisation, as they know it, going."

How do BAME staff feel about themselves?

Many of the BAME staff we interviewed at SCS level felt their ethnic backgrounds had not significantly impacted on their development and progression. However, they acknowledge this was largely because 'their face did fit' the mould in other ways. Middle class parenting and education from Oxbridge, or at the very least, Russell Group universities, had made their progress easier and smoother, largely because they were able to 'play the game'. They did acknowledge that experiences of BAME staff at lower grades can be very different.

"SCS is looking like for like. If you are a BAME and working class, you are in trouble."

"At its core, Civil Service leadership culture is Oxbridge and middle class in its feel. I am Asian but not very traditional. I am happy to go and network in the pub, I have parents who are professionals and I have a degree from an Oxbridge university. This all helps but I can't help but notice that in a meeting with senior managers, I am the only non white face."

Of the staff we interviewed at grades 6 and 7, a broader cohort in terms of social and economic backgrounds is evident. However, many still share the above view, where one needs to 'don' a particular style or behaviour to progress.

"Even though I have been on one of the development schemes, it is still about how visible you are to the key players and how you can learn to navigate the system. As a BAME, I still struggle as this is not culturally a familiar way of

working. As an Asian woman, I was brought up not to boast, that was not the 'done' thing, but that is what you need to do to get on."

"As a Muslim woman, I don't really want to go to the pub but informal networking over a pint does seem to get you ahead."

Our conversations with BAME staff at Grade 7 and below reveal realism about cultural, social and class factors that may hold them back. A lack of confidence in, and familiarity with, navigating a culture that does not feel diverse was mentioned on many occasions. Some representatives of staff networks also highlighted this as an 'internal' barrier to progression. Many staff networks are working informally to help BAME staff develop skills e.g. informal mentoring and coaching, interview and networking skills and confidence building.

"As a Black woman at Grade 7, I walk into the room and it is assumed I am more junior than I am or that I am there to get the coffee! I have to really make my presence felt."

"The word aggressive is used so often about BAMEs, but its meaning is different for everyone. We might just be loud, or speak fast, but that's not aggression. We need to find a way to communicate properly."

Although there has been a concerted effort to improve ethnicity declaration rates by senior department management and staff networks, this is still of concern. This may reflect an ongoing lack of faith in how open the Civil Service is; why this data is collected and how it is used.

4.2 Leadership and Accountability

There is a lack of clarity about who is leading and delivering the diversity agenda

Who is really driving the diversity agenda?

Currently there is little clarity about who is ultimately responsible for driving the diversity agenda through the Civil Service and who is responsible for delivering diversity and inclusion outcomes.

The commitment and endeavours of the Cabinet Secretary and Minister for the Cabinet Office regarding diversity issues goes without saying. However, the lack of one 'spearhead', muddies the water and dilutes the sense of real focus, ownership and

leadership. Organisations which are truly committed to creating a diverse workforce will have clear, visible leadership who drive diversity strategy from the top.

“The ministerial strategy and plan, if there is one, is not reflected in the departmental and individual development plans. There is no connection between strategy and how it is implemented.”

“We need ownership at the top, cascaded down strategy, someone monitoring and asking whether the strategy is being delivered and managers trained and held accountable.”

“Is there real commitment? How long have we been talking about this? BAME senior people just get frustrated and end up leaving.”

Developing diversity at senior management level is all about risk. There is little sense that senior leaders are prepared to take that risk and avoid the ‘safe option’ by opening opportunities to people who ‘do not look and sound the same’.

The lack of a coordinated push on diversity is also evident in the disparate way in which diversity and inclusion is structured in various places and at various levels throughout the organisation (Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion team hosted by DWP, Cabinet Office, Departmental HR and Diversity & Inclusion Leads).

The Civil Service is a ‘federal’ organisation. Nevertheless, the lack of a clear structure on diversity and inclusion issues within the Civil Service compounds perceptions that diversity, in its broadest sense, is not well thought through and is piecemeal in approach.

The lack of consistency in how diversity data is collected, managed and monitored within departments, and what is held and monitored centrally, means no one is effectively checking on delivery of diversity outcomes. The ‘scrabbling’ for data by various Civil Service departments when we have requested ethnic minority staff statistics for this research reinforces this point.

One additional result of this ‘piecemeal’ approach is that existing good practice within departments is not effectively shared and learning is potentially lost. Another is that staff networks are often left to do the job of driving the diversity agenda ‘from the bottom up’. This is clearly not how effective, open and inclusive organisations should work.

How well do line managers support the development of BAME staff at all levels?

Experiences and expectations of line managers among BAME staff vary considerably. We have developed a ‘broad brush’ segmentation of the staff who took part in our research as a way of distilling their responses. (There may be value in looking at this more specifically and in more detail as part of talent management at the Civil Service).

Segmentation of research samples is a common market research tool. Workforce segmentation as part of talent management is becoming more popular in business as it can help identify what engages talent pools at different responsibility levels.¹³ The segmentation below is based on our observations, discussions with staff interviewed as part of our research and through discussions with Staff Networks. This does not reflect the total BAME staff population at the Civil Service. However, it does provide a ‘flavour’ of the types of staff we encountered.

Descriptors	Motivations for working for the Civil Service	Experiences	Barriers
<p>‘Talented, confident, go getters’</p> <p>Choose a career in the Civil Service, often because of an interest in a specialist area e.g. FCO</p> <p>Home grown and SCS level entry. Very career focused, highly educated often from Oxbridge (and Russell Group at the very least). Often from higher SEG¹⁴ backgrounds. Those ‘parachuted in’ can bring vast industry and business experience.</p>	<p><u>Organisational:</u> Believe in the career ladder at the Civil Service; believe there is a place for them.</p> <p><u>Personal:</u> Social justice. ‘Making a difference’.</p> <p>Aspire to become leaders of the future.</p>	<p><u>Anecdotal feedback:</u> Positively: Generally, they don’t see their ethnic background as an issue in their career progression but will acknowledge this may be because their economic, social and educational backgrounds mean ‘their face fits’. “I am Asian, but I am happy to go to the pub and network. I have a crisp accent which I am sure, helps too.” Negatively: They do acknowledge there is, no doubt, low BAME representation at SCS level - ‘there is something wrong in the system’</p>	<p>Glass ceiling: Perception that if you ‘make it’ to SCS, career progression stalls at this point. Then, unconscious bias, ‘old boys’ network’, a culture where the top does not feel inclusive, creeps in as well as an unwillingness for senior managers to take the final ‘risk’ when it comes to promoting equally talented White vs. BAME candidates. A perception that valuable experience gained by those coming in from industry is too often discounted rather than valued by senior managers.</p>
<p>‘Aspirational, career focussed’</p> <p>Civil Service often a career choice.</p> <p>Or, once here, committed to the organisation.</p> <p>Reject more</p>	<p><u>Organisational:</u> Career opportunities in generalist and specialist areas.</p> <p>Opportunities for variety of roles.</p> <p><u>Personal:</u></p>	<p><u>Anecdotal feedback:</u> Positively: Enjoy the variety of roles, projects, people they work with.</p> <p>For some, can find their roles interesting,</p>	<p>Lack of access to ‘sexy’ or high profile projects → reduces visibility to senior management, ministers.</p> <p>Lack of access to temporary promotions and</p>

¹³ <http://www.hreonline.com/HRE/view/story.jhtml?id=534355414>

¹⁴ SEG – Social Economic Groups

<p>financially advantageous careers in industry because they want to be here.</p> <p>Increasingly from a range of economic and BAME backgrounds (but still low representation for some ethnic communities).</p> <p>May lack the skills white counterparts take for granted.</p>	<p>Social justice.</p> <p>‘Doing good’.</p> <p>‘Making a difference’.</p>	<p>challenging.</p> <p>More negative:</p> <p>Frustration for some, career can feel it has stalled: their perception being ‘for no reason of their own’.</p> <p>Can get stuck in a role, specialist area.</p> <p>Find the lack of feedback about progress, and lack of information about opportunities, highly frustrating and feel it is due to ‘race’.</p>	<p>managed promotions.</p> <p>This can impact on their career aspirations and goals.</p> <p>Hard to get top marking on 9-box grid, often not sufficient feedback on why, and no real development directions provided.</p>
<p>‘Undervalued, stuck in a rut’</p> <p>Long standing employees.</p> <p>Believe they do/ are committed to doing a good job.</p> <p>Often in admin roles in local offices.</p>	<p><u>Organisational:</u></p> <p>Job security/ pensions (relative, given austerity/cuts)</p> <p>Good work-life balance.</p> <p>Perceived progression opportunities.</p> <p><u>Personal:</u></p> <p>Some degree of aspiration.</p> <p>Value personal relationships with colleagues.</p> <p>Enjoy working as part of a team.</p>	<p><u>Anecdotal feedback:</u></p> <p>Experiences can be positive and negative.</p> <p>Committed to their team, involved in and value support of Staff Networks.</p> <p>BUT, can feel thwarted in their aspirations, ∴ feel dissatisfied and unappreciated.</p>	<p><u>Anecdotal feedback from staff/ staff networks:</u></p> <p>Expectations and aspirations not being met.</p> <p>Skill sets may not match aspirations.</p> <p>Perceived attitudes of line managers key barrier to job satisfaction.</p> <p>Unawareness of own limitations and development needs due to lack of honest conversations with line management.</p>
<p>‘Loyal, long standing’</p> <p>Often working in operational areas, local offices, and admin roles.</p> <p>Feel proud of working for the Civil Service.</p>	<p><u>Organisational:</u></p> <p>Job security/ pensions (relative, given austerity/cuts)</p> <p>Good work-life balance.</p> <p>Convenient – close to home.</p> <p><u>Personal:</u></p> <p>Value personal</p>	<p><u>Anecdotal feedback:</u></p> <p>Experiences can be both positive and negative.</p> <p>Operational pressures and management driven by targets can reduce job satisfaction.</p> <p>More likely to experience</p>	<p><u>Anecdotal feedback from staff/ staff networks:</u></p> <p>Attitudes and behaviours of line managers.</p> <p>“You can’t apply for promotion; your accent is too heavy.”</p> <p>“The manager won’t give me time off for</p>

	relationships with colleagues. Enjoy working as part of a team. Not necessarily aspirational but want to do a good job.	unconscious bias, discrimination and unequal access to job related training.	training because he can't release me but my white colleagues get this time off."
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The Performance Management Review is a key bone of contention

The 3-box grid Performance Management Review is, in theory, fair and just, but how this is used has been consistently criticised by the staff we interviewed, staff networks and the unions. The 20-70-10 guided distribution range and how it is implemented by some line managers is perceived by staff as a major block to their development. At best, managers have to score talented staff (irrespective of their ethnicity) below their capability and potential. At worst, it is seen as a discriminatory tool for favouritism where managers are felt to be unconsciously (in some cases consciously) biased. This feeds the broad sense that the talent 'pipeline' is fed by 'people who think and sound the same'.

Staff we interviewed reported that BAME staff are more likely to be given a 'met or not met' rating than 'exceeded' compared with White staff. The 'reasons' for markings are often subjective - *'you were aggressive in a meeting 5 months ago'* - and not effectively followed up with constructive objectives for improvement and development. The tables below show the PMR data for three departments. Their reliability is in question in some cases given the high numbers of staff who have chosen not to declare their ethnic background. Nevertheless, it does support the above view. The Home Office commissioned Dr K. Y. Wilson to carry out research into the performance appraisal system and her report 'Understanding the Language of Performance Appraisal' also highlights the disproportionate number of BAME staff who score 'not met'.

Department 1:

Ethnicity	Exceeded (%)	Achieved (%)	Must Improve (%)
White	20.5	71.8	7.7
BAME	14.1	73.9	12.0
Chose not to declare	18.8	72.6	8.6
Not known	15.7	74.2	10.1

Department 2:

Ethnicity	Exceeded (%)	Achieved (%)	Partially Met (%)
White	37.1	59.8	3.0
BAME	26.7	70.3	3.0

All	36.7	60.4	3.0
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Department 3:

Ethnicity	Exceeded (%)	Achieved (%)	Partially Met (%)
White	21.5	70.5	8.0
BAME	14.9	72.5	12.6
Prefer not to say	18.7	70.8	10.5
Not surveyed	12.5	72.5	15.0

Validation panels do not provide reassurance that the procedures are fair – there is a question around how independent panel members are selected. There is also some anecdotal feedback that BAME staff are also more likely to receive Personal Improvement Plans.

“Senior management need to officially recognise that BAMEs are disproportionately put into the bottom 10%. This is the only way to stop this constant ‘whispering in corridors’ [atmosphere].”

“At the end of year assessments, managers are under pressure not to give top marks, and then it becomes a lottery. It is subjective, not objective. It depends if your line manager will fight your corner, otherwise, it comes down to ‘if your face fits’ again.”

“I was told I had met all my objectives and that I had done my job brilliantly. Then I get a ‘just met’ score and my manager has to come up with the stupidest reason that I was grumpy one morning a few months ago.”

“This person can do his job easily and has met all his objectives. But the reason his manager gave was ‘I am putting you in box mark 3 because you haven’t stretched yourself’. Bearing in mind that box mark 3 is when you haven’t met your objectives and you are under performing. His line manager admitted he could do his job so well that nobody else could do it better. But his criticism was that he made it look too easy. But you as his manager set his objectives. As a black person you could be more at risk in this process because you are being judged by white people who don’t understand you.”

Race and Diversity Champions are not as effective as they could be

Some are doing good work, working with staff networks to improve diversity outcomes, declaration rates, and acting as effective ‘influencers’ between BAME staff, HR and departmental boards.

Some are working actively to help BAME staff who want to develop and progress, and to understand the skill sets SCS need such as strategic thinking. However, this is not consistent and not all are proactive in working with staff networks on diversity issues. This raises questions about how they are selected, what their objectives are and what power they have to affect change.

“Diversity champions? I don’t believe in them. I saw one at a meeting and was disgusted by the way he was bullying his staff.”

“Our champion is fantastic. He organises role play sessions on how to debate, how to put forward a strong argument, being confident. These are all the things you need to demonstrate if you really want to progress to SCS level, especially in policy.”

“BAME staff at junior levels lack self confidence. I talk to them about the policy world. They are not always comfortable or familiar with thinking in a strategic way.”Talent Processes & Career Development

4.3 Talent processes work well but do not go far enough and lack of equal access to career development opportunities is a barrier

Overall, feedback from staff interviewed suggests current talent processes work well in so far as they go. Those who have participated in them have found them useful in helping them develop skills and confidence to potentially move forward, and there has been some success in BAME staff progressing into higher grades. However, the reach and scope of these schemes are not sufficiently ambitious and access to them is not always fair or consistent.

Talent Schemes are developing the skills of talented BAME staff

META (Minority Ethnic Talent Association)

The eighteen month META – Growing Talent programme includes 12 BAME staff in any cohort. Among the staff we interviewed, the programme was seen as a valuable developmental tool for those who had participated in the programme. They reported benefiting from the high level mentoring received from senior management and access to Civil Service leaders, which helped them understand and develop appropriate leadership skills. Civil Service Diversity Champion and Race Champion support has been a valuable ‘endorsement’.

“It is about high level access to Ministers and the mentoring helps you understand what skill sets you need to progress. It comes down to making you more visible to the key players who can help you.”

Positive Action Pathway

The Positive Action Pathway scheme is relatively new, launched in May 2014 with a cohort of 55 staff at AA/AO/EO grades. The scheme appears to be a positive step towards ‘levelling the playing field’. 61% of the first AA/AO cohort and 57.4% of the EO cohort were from BAME backgrounds. 24% of participants secured a promotion to the next grade, of which 14.5% were from a BAME background.

There is low awareness of the Positive Action Pathway scheme and early evaluation has suggested low line manager buy in. Few line managers returned assessments on staff competency improvements as a result of the programme. Anecdotally, some staff who had applied but had not been accepted onto the programme said feedback would have been helpful to understand their further development needs.

We understand that learnings for this pilot scheme have been reflected in the arrangements for the next cohort and line managers will be invited to the opening and closing ceremonies, and to workshops to build their ‘buy in’.

Other BAME Targeted Initiatives

It is encouraging to note the efforts made by the Civil Service Diversity & Inclusion Team to broaden access to the Civil Service from under-represented groups. Early engagement through the expanded Fast Track Apprentice Scheme shows that 16% of apprentices are from BAME backgrounds.

The Whitehall Youth Internship Programme and the Summer Diversity Internship Programme are also positive steps forward in broadening diversity within the Civil Service. Both programmes involve outreach work to improve access by underrepresented groups. It is also encouraging to see that the numbers on the Summer Diversity Internship have steadily increased from 74 places in 2011 to 174 in 2014.

There are other examples of good practice with individual departments attempting to address shortfalls in BAME representation in management roles. HMRC’s Embrace Career Management Programme was in response to under-representation of BAME staff at first line management. Its success is evident in that 50% of participants were promoted within 3 years and the initiative has been recognised through the Race for Opportunity Developing Talent Award.

Non BAME Specific Schemes

Fast Stream Scheme

The data on Fast Streamers on all strands is encouraging with an upward trend of people from BAME backgrounds. In 2013, 17.6% of applicants were from a BAME background, up from 16.5% in 2012. Of the total number of BAME people who applied, 3.6% were successful in getting onto the scheme compared with 5.0% of White applicants who were successful.

There has been a concerted effort by the Fast Stream team to increase diversity in terms of ethnicity and economic background. Examples include outreach work with non-Oxbridge and Russell Group universities and targeted action to reach underrepresented groups such as Black students through university African Caribbean societies. However, more may need to be done to specifically address the small numbers of applicants and success rates from this community.

Crossing Thresholds

The CSL Learning career mentoring programme for women has been a success story. Post programme evaluation¹⁵ of one cohort found that 75% of participants had had “substantive promotion to the next grade, temporary promotion to the next grade or level transfer to a more suitable job”. BAME women we interviewed also valued the programme.

“The Crossing Thresholds program [for women] was the best thing I’ve ever done in the Civil Service. It really made me think about myself and how I come across [to others]. I didn’t have to jump through hoops just to get on the course.”

Future Leaders Scheme

Of the staff we interviewed the number who had been on the Future Leaders Scheme is too small to report any meaningful feedback. However, the Diversity data for 2013/2014, shows that of those nominated onto the scheme, 6.0% declared a BAME background and 6.2% of those interviewed were from a BAME background. However there is no data on the numbers who were successful as these were too small to report.

Civil Service High Potential Scheme

¹⁵ http://www.thresholds.co.uk/files/2914/0779/4130/XDCT_collated_to_CT15_one-year-on_report.pdf

Of the staff interviewed, none had been on the Civil Service High Potential scheme. There is no data on the numbers of BAME staff on this scheme; therefore it is difficult to evaluate the scheme.

If the talent schemes are working, why are there still so few BAME people at SCS?

Overall, the current talent schemes are important tools in developing the skills talented BAME staff need to progress. However, they do not yet go far enough and access to them is not always fair and consistent.

There are a number of reasons why these programmes have limited impact:

- The cohorts are very small in number, for instance, there are only 12 places for Grade 6 and 7 staff across all departments on the META programme
- Not all BAME staff are aware of the schemes that specifically target them which raises the question of how well they are promoted and publicised – some are more in the ‘know’ than others through their line managers
- Most important of all, whilst participants see benefits in terms of their personal and skill development, there is no systematic career planning once they leave the ‘flagship’ programmes (META and Fast Stream) and promotion rates remain relatively low. For example, of the 2012 – 2013 fast stream cohort, only 7.4% of those who were promoted were from a BAME background¹⁶, not sufficient to build an effective pipeline of talent for the future.

“META is not publicised well enough. They rely too much on the intranet [to promote it]. No one reads the intranet. And they don’t put it on the front page so you have to search for it, if you happen to be in the know. Managers don’t always tell you about these schemes.”

“Very few people know about META. I was told it was ‘encouraged to grow slowly’ – so they [senior management] are obviously not serious about it.”

The ‘Embrace’ development project and others like it are nothing more than just a few drops in the pond. It’s so limited in scope and is almost impossible to get on.”

Access to other career development opportunities can be limited

Line managers are critical to the development of staff. They can be ‘enablers’ in helping staff realise their potential. However, the commitment of line managers to identifying and developing talented staff varies considerably. There have been many examples of

¹⁶ Fast Stream Database, Cabinet Office

supportive managers who have been proactive sponsors for all talented staff, without bias.

“My line manager has been fantastic. He saw something in me that even I didn’t see and he really pushed me to develop and apply for jobs at the next grade. Without that I would not have made it to Grade 7.”

“I have a very good line manager who told me about development opportunities and encouraged me to apply to both META and Future Leaders scheme.”

However, unsupportive line managers are consistently referenced as a particular block to the progress of talented BAME staff. There is criticism in these instances of unfairness and favouritism on the part of some managers. BAME staff, particularly at HEO/SEO level, are frustrated by the lack of access to development opportunities because of this.

Some staff interviewed, especially those working in front line operations, said they had been refused their training and development days whilst they felt their white counterparts had received their requests.

“If your own personal development is seen by your manager to conflict with service targets – for example, your work in a contact centre - then you have a problem. Your manager won’t support you [with personal development]”

“It’s when you are excluded from information regarding career progression opportunities, ignoring requests for development and training opportunities but this being granted to your white counterparts.”

“Senior managers need to make more of these [BAME] schemes. Instead, they are just keeping them on the down-lo.”

Are recruitment and internal promotion processes barriers to talented BAME staff progression?

There is some concern about how open, fair and transparent recruitment, assessment and moderation panels are in reality. Whilst the policies are appropriate, there is some question about how well they work in practice. Staff say that internal vacancies are often advertised late, compounding the perception that the advertising manager already has an applicant in mind. This is seen as another example of unfairness and lack of equal access, as well as bias. This is particularly at grades HEO to Grade 7. This is also a criticism levied at how managed promotions, special projects and secondments are distributed.

“The assessment centre was fine – because it’s just a test. But the interview panel was racist. I could see as I walked in that it was hostile – they kept interrupting me.”

“The people at the top making the decisions and are responsible for implementation, all think the same. They keep recruiting the same type of people so there is no diversity and therefore there is no real change because you get people doing the same things and thinking in the same way.”

“I was told I did not get the Grade 6 role I applied for and that it was very close. I had to chase for feedback and my line manager was very evasive. He couldn’t tell me what I needed to do better. The fact that I was ‘talented’ because I was on the META and Future Leaders Scheme seemed not to matter. So what was the point in doing them? The role went to a white, young woman.”

“You don’t hear about a promotion until the day it closes, so that tells me they already know who they want for that post. I wish they would just be honest.”

“You go for an interview but you wonder how independent the assessment is when you see that the manager has brought in his friend from another department so you see the same types of people being promoted.”

“When expressions of interest about jobs are passed on to Deputy Directors, they pass this to their staff. They just pick certain people that they want to assist rather than making it an open call. I have even seen an instance whereby the Deputy Director will just delete the email without passing it on - what does that say to the team members that they manage?”

5. Recommendations

Culture Change

3. Develop a specific Diversity and Inclusion Strategy as part of a refreshed and updated Talent Action Plan

Most organisations in the public and private sectors have an explicit, externally and internally communicated Diversity & Inclusion Strategy which demonstrates a ‘head on’ commitment to developing inclusive workforces across all protected groups.

Talent Management is a performance driven HR process which is ‘looking upwards’, key to delivering the Civil Service Reform Plan in order to improve the capabilities of all its management. Diversity is about an organisation’s values and what drives changes in culture. The Civil Service needs focus on both. Without this, the focus on Talent Management rather than culture change could create a sense of elitism and may not address perceptions of discrimination and bias that currently block the identification and development of talented BAME staff.

The Civil Service needs to implement a diversity strategy; its objectives and performance measures should be clearly communicated through high profile communications and awareness campaigns. A centralised ‘Diversity area’ on the intranet could be established and used as a tool to inform and up-date staff on all diversity related issues. All staff should be made aware of this (at induction stage) and a culture should be established by line managers which encourages ‘regular intranet time’.

4. Build a ‘critical mass’ of talented BAME role models at senior levels

A ‘*Role Models – Inspiring LGBT People in the Civil Service*’ guide already exists. A majority of BAME staff interviewed highlighted visibility of role models as a key factor in impacting the extent to which they feel Civil Service leadership is developing BAME talent. Whilst not all BAME SCS level staff may wish to be identified as role models, others we spoke to were keen to come forward as mentors or to run ‘meet and greet’ events. Diversity champions and HR departments should identify, encourage and seek support from BAME senior management with a centrally located ‘*Role Models – Inspiring BAME People in the Civil Service*’. This could then be rolled out to include BAME staff at Grade 6 and 7, willing to act as role models for staff at lower grades. This is a ‘quick win’ with potential to create positive ‘noise’ about the Civil Service as a good diversity employer.

Bolstering the current low representation at SCS level could be achieved in the short term in a number of ways. Consideration should be given to seeking the appointment of successful BAME individuals from outside the Civil Service directly into SCS, or at the very least ensure there are diverse external candidate lists (with an explanation of why, if this is not the case).

It is interesting to note that a review of current Civil Service Non Executive Directors¹⁷ reveals very low representation of those from a BAME background. Bringing in successful BAME people from industry at this level could improve ethnic diversity as well as diversity of experiences and skills. However, the focus should remain on developing BAME talent from within the Civil Service in the longer term through its talent schemes.

5. Recognise and support Race & Diversity staff networks

The Civil Service Race Forum collectively as well as individual staff networks are doing much drive to the diversity agenda 'from the bottom up'. They are informally helping talented BAME staff not on development schemes to build confidence and the skills to progress.

Civil Service leaders should acknowledge this work by providing Staff Network Leaders time and resources, and ensure this work is recognised as part of their appraisal and review for those who are currently providing their time on a voluntary basis.

¹⁷ Non Executive Directors: A Quiet Revolution Transforming Whitehall, Insight Public Affairs, May 2013

Leadership, Management and Accountability

6. Embed the delivery of diversity outcomes at senior level. These should be consistently communicated and delivered throughout the Civil Service with clarity about who is driving the diversity agenda

Currently it is not clear who is driving the diversity agenda in the Civil Service (Cabinet Secretary, Minister for the Cabinet Office or both). The Talent Action Plan identifies the Cabinet Secretary as the overall lead for diversity and this should be reflected in his performance objectives and measured against these.

The Cabinet Secretary needs to visibly push out the diversity strategy through the Top 600 Civil Service leaders with specific, explicitly stated objectives on diversity outcomes. This will demonstrate that diversity in its broadest form is a corporate priority.

Lloyds Bank are investing in diversity including ethnic diversity because they believe this will improve the quality of their customer service, build long term relationships with customers and improve ethnic staff performance. The bank's Group Executives sponsor its diversity programme, taking the lead on all initiatives including ethnic diversity. Executive sponsorship for ethnic diversity is by a steering group, chaired by an executive sponsor who approves all ethnic diversity activities

Whilst there is a structure in place in principle, at present it 'sits' in various departments (DWP, Cabinet Office and within department functions [HR, Diversity & Inclusion]). Responsibility in most successful companies lies with the Chief Executive and executive committees, cascaded down through champions and HR functions.

One department (Cabinet Office?) could be identified to lead the delivery of diversity outcomes so that there is a coordinated approach to setting the agenda and monitoring progress.

7. Cascade down and broaden management responsibility for diversity

In order to ensure that diversity remains a core priority for senior leaders, permanent secretaries should also have responsibility for delivering measureable diversity outcomes. This should be part of their performance objectives and linked to their remuneration. Evaluating performance against these objectives could be achieved by 360 degree feedback, including from the Civil Service Race Forum and Staff Networks. This would also serve to strengthen their role internally and signal a tangible commitment to change by senior leaders.

There are examples in industry where responsibility for diversity has been filtered down to functional and operational levels.

The CEO at Barclaycard is the overall lead for diversity and inclusion across the group. Barclaycard have threaded diversity throughout the group as a key business issue. Diversity champions are responsible for a particular business activity, for example, the Head of Talent is the diversity champion. In retail banking, the Director of Customer Experience is the diversity champion

“Our Executive Committee (ExCom) is made up of our most senior leaders and each member is sponsoring a specific area of our diversity and inclusion strategy. The People Executive Review Meeting (PERM) is a sub-committee of ExCom and oversees our approach to diversity and inclusion. The Director of Diversity and Inclusion is accountable to this group for the progress of the diversity and inclusion programme.

The Human Resources Leadership Team is made up of Heads of HR and Centres of Expertise, who have responsibility for the delivery and alignment of all of our HR programmes, including diversity and inclusion.” (Network Rail’s Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2014-2019)

This could be emulated by the Civil Service, making functional leads in all of the key areas of the organisation (policy, specialist functions etc.) responsible and accountable for delivering diversity objectives within their areas, again with measureable outcomes.

8. Build diversity objectives into job descriptions of staff with line management responsibilities

Line managers play a crucial role in identifying (through PMR and the box grid), developing and promoting BAME talent. However, this is being delivered inconsistently at best, and ineffectively at worst.

In the short term, building delivery of diversity outcomes into line managers’ objectives and performance appraisals may help address perceptions of unconscious and conscious bias among BAME staff. In the longer term, consideration needs to be given to the types of managers the Civil Service wants delivering diversity outcomes at middle management level. This may be about challenging what an effective manager looks and acts like. For example, the Factor 8 Different Leaders Assessment Tool (<http://www.factor8assessment.com/>) looks at how managers can develop competencies as inclusive leaders.

9. Challenge and address unconscious bias and discrimination to change culture

Addressing unconscious bias needs to start at the top. The current e-learning unconscious bias training is a very good start but will not help to significantly challenge and change behaviour in the short term, where it matters the most; at senior leadership level. Face to face, experiential and refreshed unconscious bias training for the Top 200 is needed to address the perception that leaders recruit people ‘that look and sound like them’.

A major criticism reported by BAME staff was the lack of short term initiatives which could help to ‘bridge the divide’ between senior leaders. SCS and above were often seen as inaccessible and untouchable – a different breed. There are some tactical steps that senior leaders (Top 200) could make to increase their visibility to talented BAME staff e.g. reverse mentoring as a way of improving diversity awareness, master classes to increase BAME staff understanding of the role of senior leaders (e.g. how strategic thinking is key to preparing Ministerial briefs) and ‘brown bag lunch’ days where senior leaders meet and greet BAME staff at SCS, Grade 6 and 7.

Talent Processes and Career Development

10. Expand the scope and reach of the existing BAME specific talent processes

The talent processes currently in place are working well in developing skills and confidence in BAME staff at all levels. However, they are very small in number (e.g. 12 on the META programme in any one cohort). At the very least, doubling the META cohort would help expand the potential talent pool.

One criticism identified was the lack of marketing of these programmes within departments and by line managers. It should be the responsibility of the central diversity sponsor as well as departmental HR to advertise these on a regular basis on the intranet and to encourage line managers to raise these programmes as part of their review and development conversations. All staff should be encouraged to regularly look at the intranet for updates and information.

The Fast Stream team and Civil Service Diversity & Inclusion Team are working hard to improve representation of under-represented young people from BAME backgrounds. However, more needs to be done to understand why the Civil Service is not seen as an attractive career prospect by them. Specific work amongst these groups to understand career aspirations, which organisations are considered more attractive and what specific levers the Civil Service could focus on to drive greater applications from these groups should be considered.

11. Develop a better career planning process for BAME staff post-development schemes

At present, once staff complete a talent process, there is no consistent and planned career development plan in place. Many feel they are on their own.

An HR Team, backed by relevant line managers, could be responsible for reviewing and guiding talented staff who have been through one of these schemes, pointing them in an appropriate direction. A career progression pack could be developed by HR to be completed by staff who have worked with the person throughout the scheme. This could be developed together with the individual in question, outlining their learning and new found aspirations, and with support from a manager such as an SCS mentor, to give an overview of the opportunities available to them having completed the scheme. The names of people successfully completing schemes and looking for further progression could be kept centrally.

12. Consider setting 'aspirational' goals, with more transparent and effective use of data to set actions towards these

The government has deliberately moved away from setting rigid targets. However, setting aspirational goals (not quotas) would align recruitment, talent identification and development processes towards this.

In October 2014, KPMG released a detailed diversity profile of its 11,500 staff.¹⁸ The organisation has set targets across four protected groups: gender, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation over the next three years as a benchmark to improve its staff diversity profile.

Simon Collins, Chairman of KPMG, commented:

“The diversity profile of the workforce across the professional services industry does not reflect society or our client base. We need to change and I believe a crucial part of achieving a meaningful shift is providing more transparency of the makeup of our current staff against where we would like to be. It’s uncomfortable but we need to step up and be open and honest about the challenges we face. Greater transparency means we can be scrutinised against the targets we set ourselves. It means we can test the success of our inclusivity programmes and demonstrate that we are serious about this issue.”

KPMG asked their staff to complete a diversity profile which included race, gender, disability, sexual orientation and education levels; 93% of their staff completed the profile on a voluntary basis.

Steve Frost, Head of Diversity and Inclusions at KPMG said:

“Staff profiling enables us to take a focussed approach to our recruitment, training and diversity and inclusion strategy. We have seen success this year in raising the number of women promoted to partner by adapting our partner process to support women coming through the ranks. We are now making similar changes to remove any barriers that might exist in the targeted areas our data has revealed are problematic.”

KPMG wants to increase the number of BAME directors from 9% to 14% over the next four years¹⁹.

While the Civil Service may not wish to set specific goals, greater clarity about where it wants to head regarding the diversity profile of its staff could help demonstrate that it is working towards redressing current imbalances. In order to do this, it needs transparent data for where it is now. Diversity declaration rates, while improving, show there is still some way to go to in encouraging all staff to declare their ethnic backgrounds. This is particularly an issue regarding Performance Management Review

18 <http://www.kpmg.com/uk/en/issuesandinsights/articlespublications/newsreleases/pages/kpmg-announces-detailed-diversity-targets-and-greater-transparency-on-the-profile-of-its-staff.aspx>

19 <http://economia.icaew.com/news/october-2014/kpmg-reveals-diversity-data#sthash.1br6wEDt.dpuf>

data. As a matter of urgency, the Cabinet Secretary should request a review of this with respect to data and should advise on how this will be addressed. Departmental HR and Permanent Secretaries should then 'deliver or be made an example of'.

A 'central collection and collation' point (Cabinet Office?) for data would make the process more transparent. Data published could include ethnic profiles across grades, numbers of BAME staff recruited, turnover of BAME staff and at what grades, promotion rates and how long BAME staff 'sit' in their current grades before promotion. These would then flag gaps and help the direction of talent and development processes. Using data to show that the Civil Service is being open and serious about moving the diversity agenda forward may instil confidence among BAME staff that there is the will to change the status quo.