



Civil Service

Talent Action Plan 2016: Removing the Barriers to Success

Foreword: March 2016

This Government wants to see a Britain where nobody is defined by the circumstances of their birth. As part of that, it is committed to tearing down barriers to equal access in Britain's top institutions.

Eighteen months ago we published the [Talent Action Plan](#), setting out measures to remove the barriers preventing talented individuals succeeding. This update provides an assessment of progress to date and our priorities for the year ahead. We have made significant progress, laying down firm foundations to ensure that we become the most inclusive Civil Service in the world. But we know there is more to do.

To govern modern Britain, the Civil Service must be more like modern Britain. Tackling inequality of opportunity within the Civil Service is one of our strategic goals; it will enable us to make the best use of all our people and to ensure that the Civil Service is representative of modern Britain. As set out by the Prime Minister in his speech on life chances in January 2016, the Government's overall intent for society at large is clear. Equality of opportunity for all should be the norm. However, we know that an individual's background too often influences their future success.

This update sets out '*Our Social Mobility Plan*', responding to the challenges identified in the Bridge Group [report](#) published earlier this year. This report into socio-economic diversity in the Civil Service Fast Stream told us that the Fast Stream intake, though diverse in many ways, is deeply unrepresentative of society at large in terms of socio-economic background – which means there is a huge pool of talent we are not tapping into. This research has provided a springboard for an ambitious programme of work across the whole Civil Service. Our Social Mobility Plan signals our ambition for the Civil Service to act as a leader, not simply addressing our own challenges, but also, through collaboration with employers and organisations, encouraging others to take action to tackle inequality in their organisations.

Strong leadership is required if we want to modernise and transform the Civil Service. We remain committed to a transparent approach to our activities. We will continue to share our achievements, challenges and ambitions for greater diversity and inclusion. And we will continue to be judged by our achievements, rather than our aspirations.

Rt Hon Matthew Hancock
Minister for the Cabinet Office

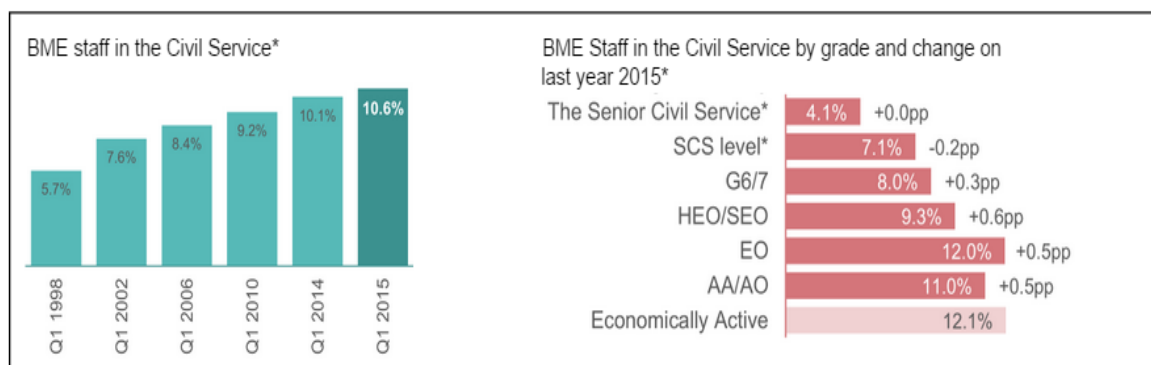
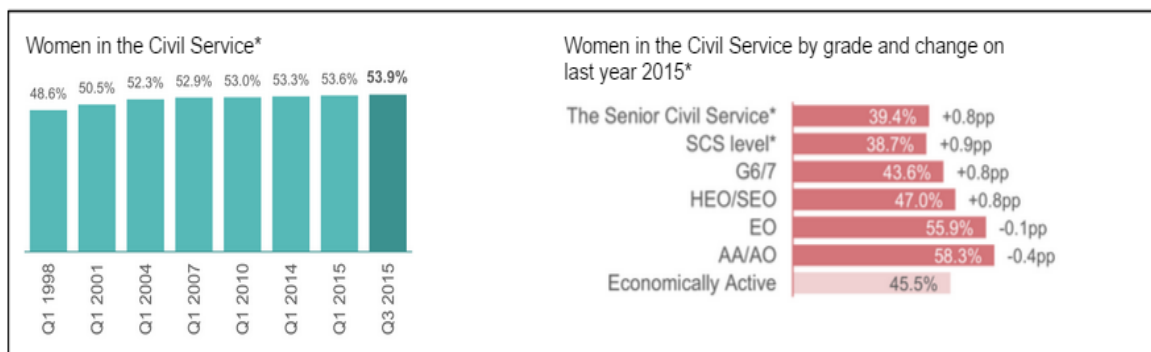
Sir Jeremy Heywood
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil
Service

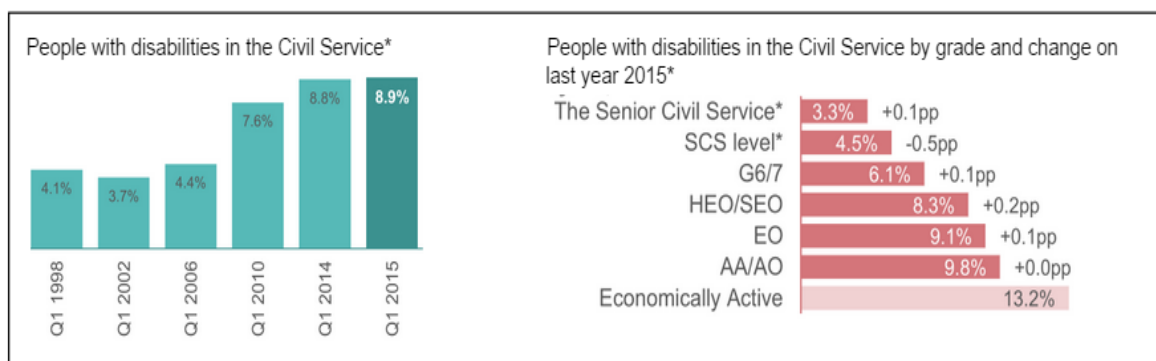
Chapter 1: Talent Action Plan – One Year On

When we published the Refreshed Talent Action Plan in March 2015, we committed to two key actions: to introduce an intensive two year programme to implement the Talent Action Plan, and to publish a candid assessment of progress within a year. We are now one year into the ‘Removing Barriers’ Programme, which is supporting departments and agencies to embed diversity and inclusion fully into their employment processes, laying the foundations to make the Civil Service a more inclusive and diverse organisation. This chapter contains an update on progress in the first year and outlines our priorities for the second.

Our aspiration for the Civil Service is an ambitious one - to be **the UK’s most inclusive employer**, representative of modern Britain and the public that we serve. No one should be defined by the circumstances or characteristics of their birth, or held back by poverty, ethnicity or culture. Tackling inequality isn’t just an ethical imperative - the evidence shows that organisations work better when they are diverse, not captured by groupthink or conventional wisdom.

The latest [Office for National Statistics data](#) show that **the Civil Service is the most diverse it has ever been**. The [Talent Action Plan published in March 2015](#) set out our ambition to ensure that this diversity is reflected throughout the organisation, including at the most senior levels.





Progress to Date

The [Talent Action Plan](#) committed to a set of actions grouped under three headings. This chapter takes each in turn and provides a candid assessment of progress. A detailed progress update is included in Annex A.

Clear Leadership and Open Culture

Embedding diversity and tackling inequality is firmly established as a Civil Service priority with governance arrangements in place to drive progress. The Head of the Civil Service chairs the Removing Barriers Implementation Board to oversee the programme of work across the Civil Service. This has been strengthened by the appointment of [four expert external advisors](#) who bring fresh insight and challenge. Departments all have Board level diversity champions and we have five Permanent Secretary Diversity Champions including an overall Diversity and Inclusion Champion, and individual champions leading on: Race, Gender, Social Mobility, Disability and LGB&Ti issues.

The Talent Action Plan called for leaders to ‘live our values and to lead’. We have strengthened accountability and ensured that creating an inclusive culture where all can succeed is an explicit expectation of all Civil Service leaders. The introduction of the [Leadership Statement](#), against which all senior leaders are now assessed, makes ‘championing difference’ an essential part of being a good leader in our organisation. All Permanent Secretaries now have published [diversity objectives](#) and are held accountable for progress against them. The Permanent Secretary Diversity Champion visits each department’s executive team annually to discuss progress, provide challenge and share best practice from other departments and sectors. The Head of the Civil Service will hold all Permanent Secretaries to account for delivering their diversity objectives in their end of year performance reviews.

Our Talent

The Talent Action Plan called on us to ‘improve talent management and help civil servants realise their potential whatever their race, gender, sexual orientation,

disability or background'. We have opened the award-winning Positive Action Pathway to LGB&Ti colleagues and have exceeded our target of providing over 1000 places. The evaluation of the first two completed cohorts (grades AA-EO) show promotion rates within three months of 25%. In April 2016 the first cohort of 'Accelerate' will launch - a new talent scheme for talented senior civil servants from BAME backgrounds and those with a disability or long-term health condition.

Almost 1000 people have come through the [Fast Track Apprenticeship Scheme](#) so far, with over 550 placements in 2015. This is part of a broader commitment to recruit 30,000 apprentices over the course of this Parliament. We have increased our multi-award winning [Summer Diversity Internship Programme](#) (SDIP) to 300 and Early Diversity Internship Programme (EDIP) to 100.

In March we launched a Mutual Mentoring programme for our most senior leaders to be mentored by those from underrepresented groups. Over 100 Director Generals and Permanent Secretaries have signed up and the scheme has attracted over 250 potential mentors from across the Civil Service.

In November 2015 the Civil Service [introduced 'name-blind' recruitment](#) for all roles below the Senior Civil Service and this is now rolled out across 75% of the Civil Service workforce. It will cover 100% by September 2016.

Capability

The Talent Action Plan stressed the importance of investing in training and development for our staff. The re-tendering of the [Civil Service Learning](#) offer has provided the opportunity to embed diversity and inclusion principles throughout the new learning offer. We have improved our diversity and inclusion learning offer for employees at all levels of the organisation and have provided bespoke support to employee networks by launching a new leadership learning pathway for Civil Service Network Chairs and providing a central funding pot that cross-government networks can bid into.

Since the Talent Action Plan was published in September 2014 over 110,000 civil servants have participated in e-learning or face-to-face training on unconscious bias, up from 56,000 prior to that date.

We have published updated guidance produced by a:gender on the [workplace and gender reassignment](#). This provides useful guidance for Civil Service managers and employees about transsexualism, gender reassignment and intersex issues. This guidance will be used as the basis for a new Civil Service policy, which will be published by July 2016.

Next Steps: Raising our ambition

The first year of the 'Removing Barriers' programme has laid firm foundations, but we know there is more to do. Diversity and Inclusion are on the agenda for every departmental senior leadership team, with departments working hard to implement all elements of the Talent Action Plan. To ensure progress is sustained, four priorities have been identified for the second year of the 'Removing Barriers' programme: increasing diversity of new appointments into the Senior Civil Service; increasing the diversity of the Civil Service talent pipelines; creating a more inclusive culture, including reducing bullying and harassment; and increasing social mobility.

Chapter 2 outlines our Social Mobility Plan and details an ambitious programme of work that will place the Civil Service as the lead UK employer on social mobility.

Recruitment and Selection

The Civil Service is a diverse organisation. However our data tells us that we need to recruit and promote more BAME and disabled individuals into the Senior Civil Service (SCS) to achieve our aims of being representative of modern Britain at all levels. To be the best we can be, we must draw our leaders from the widest possible talent pool, both within the Civil Service and externally, and remove any barriers faced by underrepresented groups.

Following a review of our recruitment practices we are introducing new approaches to recruitment and selection including: strength-based interviewing, consecutive interviews, batch recruitment and including colleagues of different grades in the selection process. We are developing our recruitment attraction strategy by trialling targeted recruitment through the use of niche websites and specialist media, increasing the use of inclusive language in our job descriptions and developing a stronger articulation of our employee offer.

Pilots are being conducted in departments including: the Home Office, DWP, HMRC, GCHQ, DfT and Cabinet Office. As we capture the lessons from these, future design will be refined and re-tested.

We will:

- Use the results of the pilots to produce evidence-based recommendations for how our recruitment processes can be developed to increase the diversity of the Civil Service and future pipeline of our senior leaders.
- Issue guidance to departments on best practice in achieving diverse selection panels.

Talent and Progression

Our talent pipelines at Grade 6 and 7 are not sufficiently diverse for us to be confident that they will lead to a more diverse SCS. This year we trialled self-nomination in our corporate talent schemes to improve the diversity profile of successful applicants but we want to continue to support departments to identify and bring on talented people from a range of backgrounds.

We will:

- Analyse data from the 2015 Talent Schemes Selection Process and make recommendations to reduce bias and drive changes to ensure that the process is fair and representative of talent across the Civil Service
- Continue to integrate our positive action schemes within our mainstream talent development offer and ensure there is a clear pathway for all talented staff, particularly those from underrepresented groups
- Deliver a critical review of the way in which the Civil Service defines and identifies 'talent', working towards more inclusive methods of identifying potential that have a clearer link to the strengths required to perform in the job.

Creating a more Inclusive Culture for all of our staff

[Our data](#) shows that staff from BAME backgrounds, those with a disability and those who identify as LGB are more likely to experience bullying and harassment. This is unacceptable. Certain groups also consistently show lower engagement scores (senior BAME staff, all staff with disabilities, carers).

To date we have conducted research into the experience of women; individuals from BAME backgrounds; who are disabled or who have a long term health condition; and those who identify as LGB&T. In addition, with a constantly changing demographic we commit to investigating any barriers faced by individuals on the basis of their age. We will identify and learn from those parts of the Civil Service that have already made progress in these areas.

More broadly, we will use a refresh of the Civil Service Workforce Strategy to develop better insight into the individual employee experience, using social mobility and inclusion as a lever for driving improvement.

We will:

- Produce a Toolkit for departments by summer 2016 for departments to use where high levels of bullying and harassment have been identified. This will build on the success some parts of the Civil Service are having in tackling this.

- Continue to work towards creating an inclusive culture in which all can thrive. This will be influenced by the work being carried out by participants on this year's Future Leaders Scheme. Their corporate challenge focuses on changing the culture of the Civil Service and is sponsored by the Civil Service Gender Champion.
- Set an ambitious target to halve the gap in engagement scores, and the gap in bullying and harassment scores, between our disabled and non-disabled colleagues, by 2020. This will seek to address issues identified in successive People Surveys, which consistently show a wide gap in both engagement and bullying and harassment scores (10 percentage points and 14 percentage points in 2015 respectively) between disabled and non-disabled employees.
- We will continue to improve workplace adjustments for disabled colleagues, building on the experience of the new Civil Service wide Workplace Adjustments Service.
- Improve the existing support on managing mental health within the Civil Service, with the Disability Champion identifying this as a key priority.
- Develop guidance for launch in July 2016 focussing on time off for gender reassignment.
- Commit to develop the Civil Service's position on the monitoring of gender identity within the Civil Service.
- Commission research to enable us to better understand and remove the barriers faced by individual employees on the basis of their age.

Chapter 2: Our Social Mobility Plan

Improving social mobility within the Civil Service is a strategic priority, essential to unlocking the potential of all staff in our workforce, and all future recruits, whether they are based in London or elsewhere in the UK; whether they work in policy, operations or any other area; whether they attended university or not; and whatever their family background. To achieve this, social mobility and inclusion must be central to our workforce strategy, shaping the whole employee experience, visibly promoted by the leadership of the Civil Service. We must change our culture to encourage, embrace and promote individual differences. We must ensure that opportunities for progression are open to all, not just the few, and in practice not just in theory. In doing this, we have an opportunity to provide exemplary leadership on social mobility, not only as an employer, but also to lead the way for other organisations.

The Social Mobility Compact was launched in 2011 asking employers to open their doors to people from all walks of life, regardless of their background. Since then, over 190 companies have signed up and the debate around the issues is growing, but we are still in the foothills. Although commitment from both public and private sector organisations is strong and we have seen some progress, our limited understanding of the problem due to a lack of data about the Socio-Economic Background (SEB) of organisations' workforces – including the lack of a standard SEB measurement for employers - prevents the national debate from progressing further.

In March 2015 we published [Priority Actions to Improve Social Mobility in the Civil Service](#), which included commissioning new independent research into the Fast Stream (the Civil Service's flagship graduate programme) to understand why applicants from lower SEBs are less likely to succeed if they apply to the Fast Stream when compared to other groups, and why they are less likely to apply. The Bridge Group, a charitable policy association promoting social mobility, were commissioned to conduct the research and [their report](#) was published on 2nd February 2016.

This plan responds to findings of [the Bridge Group report](#), setting out our priorities for the Fast Stream, our ambition for the wider Civil Service, and how the Civil Service will be at the heart of a cross-sector push to increase social mobility in the wider population.

Making the case for change

The evidence is stark across Britain's institutions, including the Civil Service. The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission's 2014 research report, [Elitist Britain](#), suggested that Britain is deeply elitist. Based on the Bridge Group's report, the situation looks set to continue unless we take action now. The report found that the Fast Stream intake – still the most prestigious route into the Civil Service – is “deeply unrepresentative” of the lower socio-economic groups in our society. Almost one in three people in Britain today are in a routine/manual occupation yet only 4.4% of those who received offers to the Fast Stream 2014 had a family background of routine/manual. In fact, Fast Stream appointees¹ are less socially diverse than the University of Oxford intake, where 7.2% are from lower SEBs². In every group of universities from which the Civil Service recruits, Fast Stream applicants are less likely to come from lower socio-economic groups.

A number of factors contribute to the lack of SEB diversity in the Fast Stream, including perceptions amongst many lower SEB candidates that the Fast Stream is both “attractive and intimidating”. The report highlighted that there is a view, often formed before entrance to university, of the Civil Service as bureaucratic and “white, male and Oxbridge”, which is impacting negatively on applications from lower SEB students to the Fast Stream. The lack of SEB diversity at the application stage is further compounded in the selection process; a higher proportion of candidates from higher SEB backgrounds progressed at every stage of the process. However, more sophisticated analysis undertaken revealed that being from a lower SEB did not actually affect overall success of appointment. What did matter was the ‘type of university attended’, which is a predictor of success at every stage of the Fast Stream recruitment process.

The Fast Stream has made considerable progress in increasing diversity across other protected characteristics such as ethnicity. In 2014, 14.2% of the Fast Stream intake were from BAME backgrounds, compared to 3.4% in 1998. However, significantly, the lack of socio-economic diversity exists despite the Fast Stream being ahead of many peer employers in its use of best practice recruitment processes. The challenge is to build on existing good practice but take much bolder steps, both within the Fast Stream and more widely across the Civil Service.

We are missing out on an enormous pool of talented individuals who could flourish in the Civil Service, given the opportunity. But this isn't just about fairness: all the evidence shows that organisations work better when they are diverse. By making sure the Civil Service is full of people from different backgrounds, with different

¹ data aggregated over five years from 2011-2015, taken from the Bridge Group report

² as defined by the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification which is set out [here](#)

experiences and attitudes who tackle problems in different ways, we will get better decisions, new approaches and more interesting solutions.

How we will deliver our ambition

Understanding social mobility in our workforce

True social mobility will only be achieved by looking across our whole workforce to identify how we can attract, retain and progress individuals based on merit and potential, not ‘polish’. To address this we must first understand the problem, and use data to make informed decisions through insightful analysis and ongoing monitoring. Measuring SEB is complex and there is no agreed measure currently in use – different organisations use different approaches. Working with other businesses and sectors to develop an agreed, standard measure is critical to understanding the problem.

To date we have used the [social mobility toolkit](#) questionnaire and NS-SEC to:

- survey and publish SEB information of [entrants to the Senior Civil Service](#) in 2013/14 and [applicants and appointees](#) to the Fast Stream from 2011 and the Summer Diversity Internship Programme from 2014, and collect SEB information on the Fast Track Apprenticeship scheme from 2015;
- collect selected SEB information on two of our internal talent schemes; Future Leaders’ Scheme and Senior Leaders’ Scheme (2015 cohorts); and
- survey a sample of all Civil Servants via the 2015 Civil Service People Survey.

This information, along with the findings of the Bridge Group report, has provided a useful basis from which to build a data strategy. You can only manage what you measure, so we will develop a new measure of socio-economic background, so the Civil Service and other major employers can measure this in a consistent way, as they do for other types of diversity. This measure will be developed in consultation with other employers, working with the Bridge Group and with strategic advice from the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. We will continue to be transparent in our approach and to share key findings.

Action	Deliverable
Engage with other organisations to develop proposed new measures of SEB for the Civil Service. This will include a series of regional roundtables with employers.	A proposed set of measures, piloted through a census of our Senior Civil Service.
Use the findings from the pilot to develop a	Following consultation with employers, publish

new agreed set of measures. Findings from the pilot will also inform our approach to understanding the SEB of the wider workforce.	an agreed set of measures for SEB that can be used by all employers.
Introduce a more comprehensive approach to measuring SEB for Fast Stream and Fast Track apprentice scheme applicants in 2016. Measures will include home postcode and school attended by applicants, both at age 14.	To provide a more detailed profile of the SEB of Fast Stream and Fast Track applicants. Data will be used to monitor subsequent progression through the scheme.
Monitor the SEB of all apprenticeship starts with data available from Autumn 2016.	Understanding SEB profile of our apprenticeship intake, to inform future recruitment rounds.
Monitor the SEB of applicants to all corporate talent programmes; the Future Leaders Scheme, Senior Leaders Scheme, and High Potential Development Scheme.	Understand the SEB of our talent pipeline, and the rates of successful applicants to these schemes, from which we can make decisions to improve processes.

Review of the employee experience

Our drive on social mobility aims to give every talented individual in our workforce the opportunity to progress. To achieve this, we must be bold. We cannot achieve real and rapid change through tactical, incremental steps.

Building on initiatives already underway through the Talent Action Plan, we will integrate social mobility and inclusion principles into every aspect of the Civil Service Workforce Strategy. This provides the best way to ensure that practical steps and improved outcomes are embedded in the workforce strategy initiatives. Alongside this comprehensive review of the workforce strategy, we will focus on two priority areas highlighted by the Bridge Group – how we define and identify talent and the Fast Stream selection process.

Talent in the Civil Service

One of the main criticisms of the way organisations define talent, highlighted by the Bridge Group, is that it is often aligned to characteristics that are more commonly exhibited by individuals from higher SEBs. This needs to change - we must recognise and reward ‘potential’, not ‘polish’.

Action	Deliverable
Undertake critical review of the way the Civil Service defines and identifies ‘talent’, consulting with other employers and academics to gather	Definition of ‘talent’ and methods of identifying potential that have a clearer link to the strengths required to perform in the job,

views to develop an inclusive definition of 'talent'.	which can be shared with other organisations.
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Fast Stream Selection process

We will implement **all** the Fast Stream recommendations from The Bridge Group report, through a two-year delivery programme that underlines the Civil Service's determination to act. This should deliver progress in the socio-economic diversity of our Fast Stream intake from 2017 onwards.

Action	Deliverable
Implement the Civil Service Commission approved plan to fast track interns to the Fast Stream assessment centre (the final stage of assessment before an offer of a place on the Fast Stream), subject to an appraisal of performance during the internship equivalent to the earlier testing stages in the main competition.	To create a more effective conduit for socio-economic diversity in the Fast Stream.
Re-designing the Fast Stream selection process to shorten it from 18-31 weeks to no more than 12 weeks.	To decrease the dropout rate of applicants - the research found this disproportionately affected lower SEB candidates.
Regionalising our assessment offer with plans to open an additional assessment centre site in Newcastle and multiple sites thereafter to 2020.	To combat the issues that a London-centric process has on deterring lower SEB candidates.
Building on our use of strength based selection methods and exploring use of contextualised recruitment.	To accurately assess candidates based on potential not 'polish'.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships present an opportunity to attract and promote talented individuals from lower SEBs, improving social mobility within our existing, and future, workforce. Our ambition for apprenticeships is high. Our ambition should be that the Cabinet Secretary of 2050 joined the service as an apprentice.

We have committed to an unprecedented increase in apprenticeships in the Civil Service and will achieve at least 30,000 new apprenticeship starts in this Parliament. Apprenticeships will provide a core career path for people from all backgrounds, transforming the workforce of the Civil Service. We are leading the way by developing new apprenticeship standards to achieve this. This is not just about new recruits; we view this as an opportunity to raise the quality and nature of

development and learning inside the Civil Service. We will offer our current workforce increased opportunities to re-train and learn new skills.

Our flagship apprenticeship talent scheme, the [Civil Service Fast Track](#), will align to talent pathways and provide at least 750 places each year. This presents a real alternative to the Fast Stream and will be actively targeted to individuals from lower SEBs. Through the skills and experience gained on the scheme, this offers a career path onto the Fast Stream for those without a degree, or into a range of professions.

Growth in apprenticeships will support our ambition to improve the regional spread of opportunities. The Fast Track scheme already covers over 40 locations across England, Scotland and Wales.

Action	Deliverable
Deliver over 30,000 apprenticeship starts in the Civil Service this Parliament, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New apprenticeships in leadership and management, and digital (summer 2016) • 750 Fast Track placements every year • Specialist roles within departments • Thousands of roles every year in exciting environments delivering front-line support We will specifically target apprenticeship opportunities at individuals from lower SEBs.	Quality training with transferrable skills to increase the skills base of the Civil Service, and offer thousands of opportunities to our current workforce and potential recruits.

Building aspiration and promoting the Civil Service as an inclusive employer

The Bridge Group research found that there were low levels of awareness of the Civil Service as an employer amongst lower SEB students, and that the Civil Service ‘brand’ may deter students because of preconceptions about the Civil Service and what it takes to be a ‘typical’ civil servant. To change perceptions, we believe that inspiring the next generation of Civil Servants must begin early – starting at school, where big choices and views are formed about future careers.

We will build on the existing commitment and passion demonstrated by civil servants by increasing our presence and involvement in schools and universities through a targeted approach to outreach and schools mentoring. We will actively promote the Civil Service as an attractive and inclusive employer, building on the ambition the Prime Minister laid out in his speech on [life chances](#) in January 2016.

Action	Deliverable
Increase schools mentoring for 14-16 year old	To raise aspirations, confidence and to

students from lower SEB to at least 200 schools during this Parliament.	educate about the role of the Civil Service and the opportunities on offer.
Promote schools outreach as part of Civil Servants' opportunity for 5 days a year volunteering. Activities are expected to include speaking to students about the Civil Service and the opportunities it provides or running a curriculum based activity with students.	To raise aspirations, educate about the role of the Civil Service and the career opportunities available, leading to increased numbers of applicants from lower SEB.
Increase use of internships and work experience to provide individuals from lower SEBs the opportunity to 'experience' the Civil Service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 placements a year in the diversity internship programme, targeting individuals from lower SEBs, minority ethnic backgrounds, and those with a disability. • Expand Year 12 work experience programme from 100 to 200 placements • Provide at least 500 insight days for year 9 students (expanded from 100 to 500 in 2015).
Continue to be a leading employer in the Movement to Work scheme, offering thousands of work placements every year.	Provide work experience to thousands of unemployed young people, giving them the skills and confidence to find a job.
Adopt more targeted outreach on university campuses through personal engagement, aligned with better targeting of universities and faculties with a high proportion of lower SEB students.	To increase levels of awareness of the Fast Stream amongst students from lower SEB, and through this increase the number of applicants from lower SEBs.
Re-define the Civil Service 'brand', using digital channels, through external and internal insights and research and making it better tailored to suit the audiences we are targeting.	For our 'brand' and employee offer to be more inclusive, increasing applications from diverse groups, including those from lower SEB.

The role of our leaders

We believe that the success of this plan is dependent on active and authentic leadership at all levels within the Civil Service, beginning with the Head of the Civil Service and our Permanent Secretary Champion for Social Mobility. Only by raising awareness of how social mobility is fundamental to achieving an effective Civil Service can we unlock the potential of our entire workforce.

Action	Deliverable
Promote visible leadership of social mobility at all levels throughout the Civil Service,	To raise awareness of the need for socio-economic diversity across the Civil Service, and through

through a programme of engagements across the country and by sharing personal stories online and promoting this plan.	doing so increase engagement with this agenda, providing a platform for staff to share their stories and inspire colleagues.
Launch and champion staff networks with social mobility at their heart.	To bring staff together, promote role models, and provide support for Civil Servants who feel or have felt at a disadvantage or excluded because of their background.
Ensure each Department has a plan and ambition for improving socio-economic diversity, with accountability at Permanent Secretary level through their objectives.	To drive improvement, and ownership, of social mobility within departments and create real and lasting change through solutions more tailored to the departmental context and environment.

The Civil Service as a leader

We recognise that we are still at the beginning of our journey to improve social mobility, and this plan outlines an ambitious approach to achieve this. We believe that by implementing the actions outlined in this plan, the Civil Service can become an exemplar employer on this issue. We know that this is not just an issue for the Civil Service. It is a problem across the UK, and we will commit to working with employers and leading organisations in social mobility, including the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, to ensure that we drive progress and deliver solutions. Following the publication of the report by the Bridge Group, the Minister for the Cabinet Office wrote to the 200 Social Mobility Business Compact members, urging them to consider its lessons for their own businesses. We will continue to work with Compact members, pooling expertise and sharing experience to deliver our shared ambition of improving social mobility across the UK.

Annex A: Talent Action Plan - Full Progress Update

Clear Leadership and Open Culture

Action	Update
Publish a single Leadership Statement (September 2014)	Complete. The Leadership Statement was published in February 2015 and captures the behaviours that Civil Service leaders are expected to embody. All but 3 departments will use the Civil Service 360 feedback tool based on the Leadership Statement for 2015/16 reporting year. The 3 remaining departments are planning to use the tool in the next reporting year. The Leadership Statement web and blog page has received over 420,000 views, making it the most popular internally viewed webpage on GOV.UK .
Nominate Board level Diversity Champions in Departments (September 2014)	Complete. All Departments have diversity champions at senior levels. The Civil Service Diversity Champion visits departmental executive teams annually to discuss progress, share good practice and offer challenge and insights from other departments and sectors.
Give Permanent Secretaries personal responsibility for driving change (September 2014)	Ongoing. For the first time, all Permanent Secretaries have published objectives for diversity and inclusion . Each objective reflects measurable diversity and inclusion priorities within their departments and will be used to inform end of year performance conversations.
Do more to encourage secondments (September 2014)	Ongoing. Excluding the High Potential Secondment Programme, there are more than two hundred secondments in place. These cover a broad range of staff, placed in the wider public and third sectors. Fast Stream secondments 2015/16 total 286 individuals on secondments to organisations in the wider public sector, private and third sectors.
Publish clear guidance to ensure flexible working is managed effectively (September 2014)	Complete. Guidance and toolkits were published by Civil Service Employee Policy in November 2014. A flexible working 'Gateway' was launched in February 2016. This single intuitive product removes duplication and makes it easier for managers to find and understand the information they need. The Civil Service Job Share Finder was launched in March 2015 and now has over

	1000 people registered on it.
Understand our culture and use data as a driver of reform (September 2014)	Ongoing. Research into experiences of Civil Servants who identify as LGB&T, disabled and from BAME backgrounds published in 2015, and informed the Talent Action Plan in March 2015 . Commitment to conduct further research into age. See Next Steps.
Encourage all Departments to be signatories of Social Mobility Compact (September 2014)	Complete. All major departments have signed up to the Compact . The Minister for Cabinet Office wrote out to all signatories informing them of the Bridge Group report .
Introduce an intensive two year programme to ensure the delivery of the Talent Action Plan (March 2015)	Complete. The flagship two year 'Removing Barriers' programme is set up and managed from the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion team.
Appoint Non Executive Directors with established track records on Diversity to act in a cross government capacity (March 2015)	Complete. In April 2015 we appointed four expert advisors to provide external advice and challenge: Stephen Frost, Lord Chris Holmes, Helena Morrissey CBE and Karen Blackett OBE.
Ask each Department to agree a business deal with their networks; increase opportunities for networking (March 2015)	Complete. Guidance was provided to departments on best practice to strengthen their networks and ensure members had a voice. A Cross Government Women's Network has been created to bring together women from across departments.
Collate and publish diversity data for the first time in a standard format (September 2015; March 2015)	Ongoing. Departmental data has been collected centrally and will be gathered every six months to monitor progress. Links to departmental annual diversity reports will be made available in one place on the gov.uk website for the first time by Summer 2016. There will be a data summary for each report to make the figures more transparent and easier to understand. Departments will also publish their performance management data, cut by protected characteristics.
Encourage increased reporting of personal diversity information (March 2015)	Ongoing. Departments and agencies encouraged employees to declare their personal information through communications campaigns and videos within departments.
Identify areas where bullying and harassment are high and take steps to address (March 2015)	In progress. See Next Steps section.

Our Talent

Action	Update
Review of recruitment practices (September 2014 and March 2015)	In progress. Single gender panels and shortlists are by exception only. New approaches to recruitment are being introduced. See Next Steps.
Expand Fast Track Apprenticeship Scheme (September 2014)	Ongoing. The scheme was doubled in 2015 to accommodate over 550 fast track apprentices. We will increase this to 750 a year, part of a commitment to recruit 30,000 apprentices by 2020.
Require members of the Leadership Group to mentor junior employees (September 2014)	Ongoing. All Leadership Group members are encouraged to mentor junior colleagues. We have launched a programme for 'mutual mentoring' between our Leadership Group and junior staff from underrepresented groups.
Identify and champion role models from diverse backgrounds (September 2014)	Ongoing. Guidance has been sent to departments on raising the visibility of diverse role models. This is being driven forward with a central role model strategy.
Improve support for women on maternity and adoption leave and returning to work from extended breaks (September 2014)	Ongoing. A new Planning the Parental Leave Journey Toolkit has already been produced and sent around all departments. In May 2016, the Civil Service parental leave 'Gateway' will be launched to help employees and managers to have quality conversations to ensure taking parental leave is a positive experience. It will also cover IVF, surrogacy, special guardianship orders and parental orders.
Encourage take up of shared parental leave (September 2014)	Ongoing. Introduced occupational shared parental leave pay to match the occupational maternity pay offer. Developed a model policy and comprehensive guidance now implemented by Civil Service departments. Rolled out a suite of engagement products to maximise uptake.
Ensure those on our central talent and leadership schemes complete unconscious bias training (September 2014)	Ongoing. Assessors for the schemes complete unconscious bias training. Diversity and Inclusion is embedded within the curriculum with these schemes and cohorts are tasked with relevant diversity and inclusion projects.
Review data on temporary promotions	Complete. These data were collated and used to inform the work on Talent outlined in the Next

(March 2015)	Steps section.
Increase inclusive leadership training (March 2015)	Ongoing. Senior Leadership Groups events included a diversity and inclusion focus. Face-to-face training for departmental leadership teams is available and uptake has been good. We have made inclusive leadership a focus for our corporate talent schemes.
Open up Positive Action Pathway to LGB&Ti applicants and increase to 1000 places (March 2015)	Complete. The Positive Action Pathway is open to those identifying as LGB&Ti (AA-G6/7 grades). Total of 991 participants to date. Before the end of the financial year this is set to exceed 1000.
Integrate talent schemes (March 2015)	Ongoing. See Next Steps section.
Introduce 'Accelerate' - a new talent scheme for senior staff from underrepresented groups (March 2015)	Ongoing. First 'Accelerate' cohort (SCS1 and 2) will begin in April 2016.
Re-brand employee Proposition (March 2015)	In progress. Produced a series of videos used at events and on gov.uk, demonstrating the Civil Service's commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.
Commission an external review of our Fast Stream and Fast Track and socio-economic diversity (March 2015)	Complete. The Bridge Group Report into socio-economic diversity in the Fast Stream was published in February 2015 and our response is published today.

Capability

Action	Update
Improve the learning offer: make diversity and inclusion part of formal induction process; promote access to coaching and mentoring; provide training for all new line managers (September 2014 and March 2015)	Ongoing. Developed a set of design principles in consultation with experts to ensure that diversity and inclusion is embedded throughout the Civil Service learning offer. The new management and leadership development offer challenges managers' understanding of unconscious bias and inclusion. Coaching and mentoring will be available under the new offer to build line management capability.
Promote good practice and sharing of information through external benchmarking and celebrating success (September 2014)	Complete: Taken part in external benchmarking (5 government organisations in the Stonewall top 100 and the Home Office a star performer). Won a number of diversity and inclusion awards (ENEI, the Business Disability Forum and RIDI). Kept a

	regular drumbeat of communications to the organisation through blogs and videos from our most Senior leaders.
Further analysis on the gender pay gap. (September 2014)	Ongoing. In light of the announcement by the Prime Minister and Equalities Minister, Nicky Morgan on 25 October about mandatory reporting of the gender pay gap across the public sector, we are working to ensure meaningful analysis and statistics on the gender pay gap in the Civil Service are available that mirror the requirements already in place for the private and voluntary sectors.
Introduce a centralised workplace adjustment service and move to a single disability passport for all departments (March 2015)	In progress. Launched the Civil Service Workplace Adjustment Service, providing a strong benchmark for workplace adjustment services in individual departments. The service provides full case support to five departments (DWP, DCLG, DCMS, GLD, and DfE) and provides a review route available to all departments. It has supported over 60 staff across 20 departments via the review route, and the Disability Passport is in place in over 30 government organisations. Next steps will be to increase uptake and ensure visibility of the quality and timeliness of departmental workplace adjustments services.
Introduce pilots on flexible job design (or 'job carving') for employees with a physical or other health condition, to maximise their skills and progress. (September 2014)	Ongoing. This work will be scoped in 2016 and absorbed into wider work on supporting disabled colleagues in the workplace.
Require departments to ensure there is a mental health first-aider (March 2015)	Ongoing. Launched new 'Mental Health Awareness' learning and guidance to support the implementation of mental health 'first aiders' or advocates in every business unit. Increased focus on health and well-being in the Civil Service with three key priorities: mental health, musculoskeletal disorders and a healthy lifestyle. New Civil Service Health and Well-being Champion will work with the Disability Champion to support departments to address these issues.
Increase support for employee networks (March 2015)	Complete. A central pot of funding is available. Capacity building sessions to upskill staff networks have been held and guidance is available on how to set up a network.
Review how effectively sickness leave/disability absence policies	Ongoing. Launched a 'Gateway' product to help managers understand their attendance

<p>are being implemented (March 2015)</p>	<p>management role and give new guidance on disability leave. Encouraging a more consistent approach to the setting of absence trigger points across the Civil Service.</p>
<p>Agree several areas of further research with the Civil Service transgender and intersex employee network a:gender (March 2015)</p>	<p>Ongoing. Developing guidance on time off for gender reassignment. Policy for the recording of Transgender data is being reviewed. See Next Steps section.</p>

Annex B: Talent Action Plan 2016 new commitments

Recruitment and selection

Action

Use the results of the pilots to produce evidence-based recommendations for how our recruitment processes can be developed to increase the diversity of the Civil Service and future pipeline of our senior leaders.

Issue guidance to departments on best practice in achieving diverse selection panels.

Talent

Action

Analyse data from the 2015 Talent Schemes Selection Process and make recommendations to reduce bias and drive changes to ensure that the process is fair and representative of talent across the Civil Service

Continue to integrate our positive action schemes within our mainstream talent development offer and ensure there is a clear pathway for all talented staff, particularly those from underrepresented groups

Deliver a critical review of the way in which the Civil Service defines and identifies 'talent', working towards more inclusive methods of identifying potential that have a clearer link to the strengths required to perform in the job.

Creating an inclusive culture

Action

Produce a Toolkit for departments by summer 2016 for departments to use where high levels of bullying and harassment have been identified. This will build on the success some parts of the Civil Service are having in tackling this.

Continue to work towards creating an inclusive culture in which all can thrive. This will be influenced by the work being carried out by participants on this year's Future Leaders Scheme. Their corporate challenge focuses on changing the culture of the Civil Service and is sponsored by the Civil Service Gender Champion.

We will continue to improve workplace adjustments for disabled colleagues, building on the experience of the new Civil Service wide Workplace Adjustments Service.

Set an ambitious target to halve the gap in engagement scores, and the gap in bullying and harassment scores, between our disabled and non-disabled colleagues, by 2020. This will seek to address issues identified in successive People Surveys, which consistently show a wide gap in both engagement and bullying and harassment scores (10 percentage points and 14 percentage points in 2015 respectively) between disabled and non-disabled employees.

Improve the existing support on managing mental health within the Civil Service, with the Disability Champion identifying this as a key priority.

Develop guidance for launch in July 2016 focussing on time off for gender reassignment.

Commit to develop the Civil Service's position on the monitoring of gender identity within the Civil Service.

Commission research to enable us to better understand and remove the barriers faced by individual employees on the basis of their age.

Social Mobility

Action

Understanding social mobility

Engage with other organisations to develop proposed new measures of SEB for the Civil Service. This will include a series of regional roundtables with employers.

Use the findings from the pilot to develop a new agreed set of measures. Findings from the pilot will also inform our approach to understanding the SEB of the wider workforce.

Introduce a more comprehensive approach to measuring SEB for Fast Stream and Fast Track apprentice scheme applicants in 2016. Measures will include home postcode and school attended by applicants, both at age 14.

Monitor the SEB of all apprenticeship starts with data available from Autumn 2016.

Monitor the SEB of applicants to all corporate talent programmes; the Future Leaders Scheme, Senior Leaders Scheme, and High Potential Development Scheme.

Talent

Undertake critical review of the way the Civil Service defines and identifies 'talent', consulting with other employers and academics to gather views to develop an inclusive definition of 'talent'

Fast Stream

Implement the Civil Service Commission approved plan to fast track interns to the Fast Stream assessment centre (the final stage of assessment before an offer of a place on the Fast Stream), subject to an appraisal of performance during the internship equivalent to the earlier testing stages in the main competition.

Re-designing the Fast Stream selection process to shorten it from 18-31 weeks to no more than 12 weeks.

Regionalising our assessment offer with an additional assessment centre site in Newcastle in 2016 and multiple sites thereafter.

Building on our use of strength based selection methods and exploring use of contextualised recruitment.

Apprenticeships

Deliver over 30,000 apprenticeship starts in the Civil Service this Parliament, including:

- New apprenticeships in leadership and management, and digital (summer 2016)
 - 750 Fast Track placements every year
 - Specialist roles within departments
 - Thousands of roles every year in exciting environments delivering front-line support
- We will specifically target apprenticeship opportunities at individuals from lower SEBs.

Building aspiration and promoting the Civil Service as an inclusive employer

Increase schools mentoring for 14-16 year old students from lower SEB to at least 200 schools during this Parliament.

Promote schools outreach as part of Civil Servants' opportunity for 5 days a year volunteering. Activities are expected to include speaking to students about the Civil Service and the opportunities it provides or running a curriculum based activity with students.

Increase use of internships and work experience to provide individuals from lower SEBs the opportunity to 'experience' the Civil Service.

Continue to be a leading employer in the Movement to Work scheme, offering thousands of work placements every year.

Adopt more targeted outreach on university campuses through personal engagement, aligned with better targeting of universities and faculties with a high proportion of lower SEB students.

Re-define the Civil Service 'brand', using digital channels, through external and internal insights and research and making it better tailored to suit the audiences we are targeting.

Role of our leaders

Promote visible leadership of social mobility at all levels throughout the Civil Service, through a programme of engagements across the country and by sharing personal stories online and promoting this plan.

Launch and champion staff networks with social mobility at their heart.

Ensure each Department has a plan and ambition for improving socio-economic diversity, with accountability at Permanent Secretary level through their objectives.

ⁱ This document sometimes uses LGB, LGB&T and LGB&Ti. Where we have used LGB it is because we refer to data from People Survey, for which we do not currently capture gender identity information. Where

we have referenced LGB&T it is because the research conducted in 2014 only looked at the experiences of LGB&T individuals, not LGB&Ti, hence why the i has been left off in some parts of the document.