



Improving Social Mobility in the Civil Service:

Priority actions for improving the social mobility of the Civil Service workforce including improving data collection and insight, reviewing recruitment practices and talent schemes and understanding the barriers to progression within the workforce.

Priority actions: improving social mobility in the Civil Service

The Government is committed to improving social mobility within UK society¹. The Civil Service, as an employer of over 400,000 people, is committed to ensuring that talented, committed and hard-working people have the opportunity to rise to the top of our organisation. This should be regardless of their background, including socio economic status.

Whilst the Civil Service undoubtedly does better than many organisations on this, we know there is still much to do. Over the last five years, our energy has been focussed on encouraging the brightest and best from schools and universities across the country to consider joining and progressing within the Civil Service. An absence of a consistent measurement of social mobility makes it hard for any organisation to quantify the scale of the challenge. Like many others, our data is limited. What we do know is that 10% of both entrants to Senior Civil Service and Fast Track Apprenticeship Scheme are from lower-socio economic backgrounds and representation on our Fast Stream programmes is 3%.

Our work is clearly far from finished. The more we understand about the barriers to social mobility, the more effectively we can target our interventions. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Cabinet Office will jointly commission independent research into social mobility in the Civil Service. This will galvanise our planned activity, and, as with the Talent Action Plan, help us hone our future commitments.

Given the long-term drivers of social mobility, this will not be achieved overnight and nor will it be achieved through the Civil Service's employer policies alone. However, we do need to take action as a major employer that

wants to enable our best people to rise to the top, regardless of background. Our priority actions coalesce around three themes:

Getting our data in order

To further our understanding of how well we are attracting talented new recruits from the widest backgrounds into all levels of the Civil Service we will:

- annually publish socio-economic status of entrants to the Senior Civil Service, Fast Stream and Fast Track Apprenticeship scheme from 2015. This is in line with our commitment in the [Talent Action Plan](#) to use data to drive improvement and to ensure we are monitoring like-for-like against the private sector, schools and universities;
- review the collection and collation of data about our Fast Stream applicants and entrants to provide greater insight into applicants from lower socio economic backgrounds;
- collect socio-economic information on our internal talent schemes; Future Leaders' Scheme, Senior Leaders' Scheme and High Potential Development Scheme for Directors; and
- use the social mobility toolkit questionnaire² to gather this data, remaining aligned with best practice.

Publishing this information in a clear, accessible format will allow us to accurately track our performance and allow other employers to see how they compare. It is always easy to fall back on targets, but there is a danger that these conflict with the principle of recruiting on merit.

Redoubling our efforts on early attraction, promoting targeted recruitment activity for school leavers and university graduates.

We will:

- expand the existing programme of insight days for year 9 students from 100 to 500 in a wider range of locations during 2015;

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving->

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https://www.aat.org.uk/sites/default/files/assets/Social_Mobility_Toolkit.pdf

- explore increases in scale and reach of the Year 12 Work Experience Programme;
- implement a more strategic approach to school and university outreach work targeted to deprived communities on the schools aspect;
- develop plans to expand our apprenticeship schemes further, particularly into areas identified as capabilities gaps, such as commercial. This is in addition to our existing commitment to extend the Apprenticeship cohort to 400 in the 2015 intake;
- scope a degree level apprenticeship scheme.

mobility. It's important that we continue to improve educational standards and outcomes for disadvantaged students to ensure that the Civil Service can employ the best candidates from the widest possible pool of talent.

Ramp up activity to support existing civil servants from lower socio-economic backgrounds to reach their potential.

We will:

- continue to monitor our recruitment and promotion practices, particularly on talent schemes to ensure there is no unconscious or conscious bias in the system:
- commission an external review of our Fast Stream and Fast Track brand and recruitment process in 2015, to support our commitment in the Talent Action Plan to widen access to talent schemes for under-represented groups.

What success looks like

We will continue to work with organisations outside of government, including schools, further education colleges and universities, as well as businesses, professional bodies and a wide range of third sector and voluntary organisations. This will help to ensure that the Civil Service makes opportunities open to everyone and that we are at the forefront of best practice in improving social mobility.

We will also continue to work with our education system to provide more support for younger generations to ensure they have the opportunity to become our future leaders. The Government has introduced significant reforms to education, and is working across departments to make important changes and provide services that will help improve social