



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Diversity and Equality Report 2016-17

in response to the Equality Act 2010

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Foreword by Simon McDonald, Permanent Under Secretary

For the FCO to be the best it can be, it needs the skills of a truly diverse force. It must make the most of its talent and ensure that every member of staff achieves his or her full potential.

Diversity and Inclusion is about valuing our people at all levels. This is a personal priority for me and my Board. This report highlights our direction, the progress we are making and where we need to do more. I am proud of our achievements this year:

- > In 2016, we had 50 female Heads of Post; we now have 59 (29%)
- > We improved reporting rates to over 75% for all the under-represented groups (including in the SMS) through our diversity data disclosure campaign.

- > We achieved Level Three on the new DWP “Disability Confident Employer” Scheme and received silver accreditation with the Business Disability Forum, making us the top-ranked government department.
- > We secured a Fast Stream ‘Fast Pass’ for our graduate interns, which allows them to bypass the first stage of the Fast Stream process. As our intern cohorts are more diverse than our current Fast Stream intake, this helps maximise the potential diversity of Fast Stream cohort. Thirteen interns received conditional offers to join the Diplomatic Service Fast Stream.
- > We were one of the first departments to have a social mobility staff network, which is the second largest in Whitehall with over 80 members.
- > In 2016, we were shortlisted for three Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Awards (half of all the available awards); and the co-Chair of FLAGG (Foreign Office Lesbian and Gay Group) was shortlisted for Diversity Champion of the Year in the prestigious European Diversity Awards.

I am committed to ensuring that everyone, including myself, plays a role in embedding Diversity and Inclusion in every part of the FCO’s work. This is essential if we are to deliver the best foreign policy and diplomacy in a diverse and changing world.



Introduction

This report is part of the FCO's response to the Equality Act. It is intended to offer data on the equality impact of the FCO's employment practices and activities.

The *Equality Act 2010* creates a public sector equality duty to:

- > Consider how different people will be affected by our activities
- > Deliver services which, while efficient and effective, are accessible to all and meet diverse needs
- > Have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people (both employees and others) who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected characteristics covered by the equality duty are:

- > age
- > disability
- > gender reassignment
- > marriage and civil partnership
- > pregnancy and maternity
- > race (embracing ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality)
- > religion or belief
- > sex
- > sexual orientation

Note: The FCO has not incurred the expense of collecting data specifically for the purpose of this publication other than staff resource. These are online publications and therefore no additional printing costs have been incurred.

The majority of data presented represents a snapshot of the FCO as at 31 March 2017. Where data represents a different time period it is highlighted.



Section 1—The FCO’s employee

The FCO has two different categories of employees. The UK Diplomatic Service and other Home Civil Servants working for the FCO are known collectively as *UK-Based staff*. These staff undertake a range of jobs during their careers both in the UK and at diplomatic posts abroad. The second category of FCO employees are hired to perform specific functions at individual posts abroad and are known as *Local Staff*. It is unusual for these employees to transfer between diplomatic missions or to work in the UK. The majority of FCO employees are Local Staff.

The diversity data in this report does not include FCO Services or Wilton Park, Executive Agencies of the FCO, or staff working for the UK Visas and Immigration.

Both UK-Based and Local Staff are graded into a hierarchy as follows:

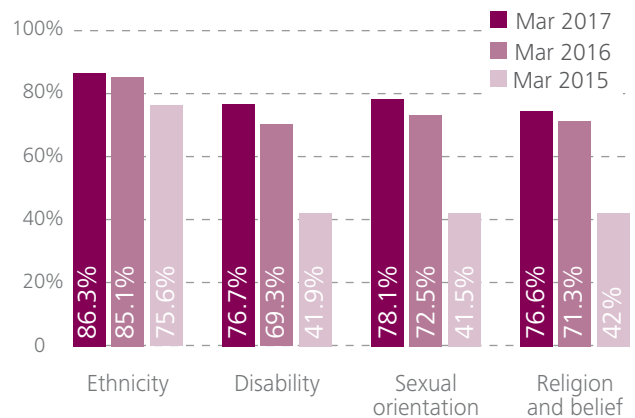
Generic UK Civil Service Grade	Foreign Office Grade	
	UK-Based Staff	Local staff
Senior Civil Service (SCS)	Senior Management Structure (SMS)	SMS(L)
Grade 6	D7	D7(L)
Grade 7	D6	D6(L)
Senior Executive Officer	C5	C5(L)
Higher Executive Officer	C4	C4(L)
Executive Officer	B3	B3(L)
Administrative Officer	A2	A2(L)
Administrative Assistant	A1	A1(L)
Non-Professional function	N/A	S1-S3

on the database that they do not wish to declare.

Local Staff are able to record their ethnicity, disability status, flexible working patterns and caring responsibilities but we do not require them to do so. This is due to sensitivities linked to the recording of some characteristics in a number of countries. Recording rates amongst Local Staff are therefore far too low to enable us to report on the representation of different groups. As a result, data on gender is included in this report, but not data on other diversity characteristics. However, the diversity of our Local Staff, who come from countries and communities around the world, is something we celebrate.

The recording rates amongst UK-Based staff, including those who have stated that they do not wish to declare are as follows:

FCO UK staff diversity reporting rate



Recorded data

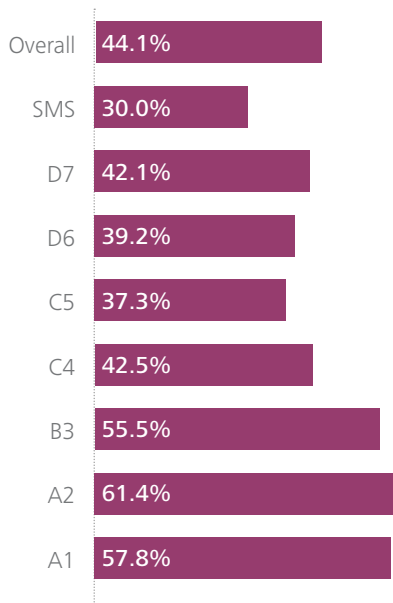
The FCO collects and holds human resources data on a centralised Management Information (MI) system. The gender and age of all staff is automatically recorded on this database, as is maternity leave when taken. UK-Based staff are asked to add information about their ethnicity, disability status, flexible working patterns, sexual orientation, religion or belief and caring responsibilities. Supplying this data is voluntary. Although the FCO encourages staff to supply it, this is not mandatory and reporting rates vary by characteristic. To protect the privacy of staff who do not wish to record any of this personal information, it is possible for individuals to record

Profile of the workforce

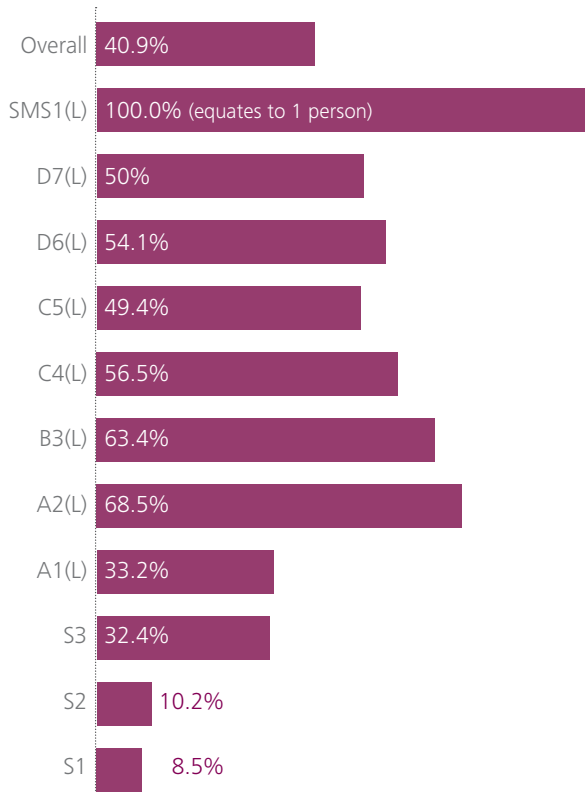
Gender profile of the workforce

The FCO employs almost 12,500 people, a third of whom are UK-Based and two thirds Local staff.

Proportion of female UK-Based staff by grade

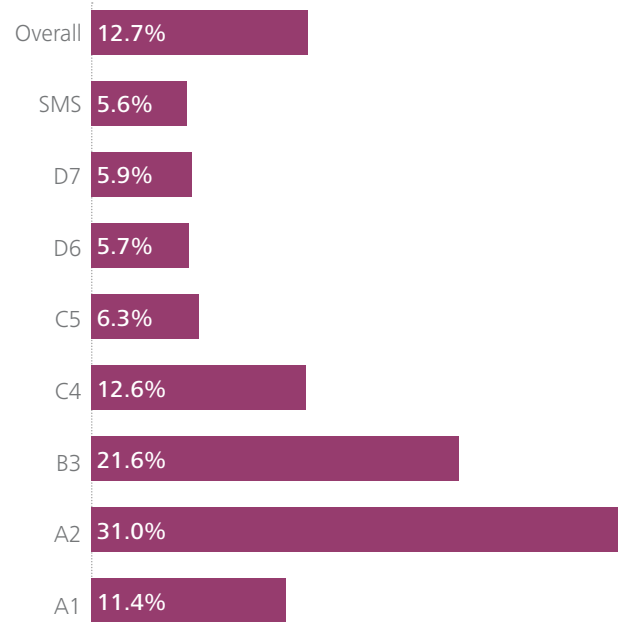


Proportion of female Local staff by grade



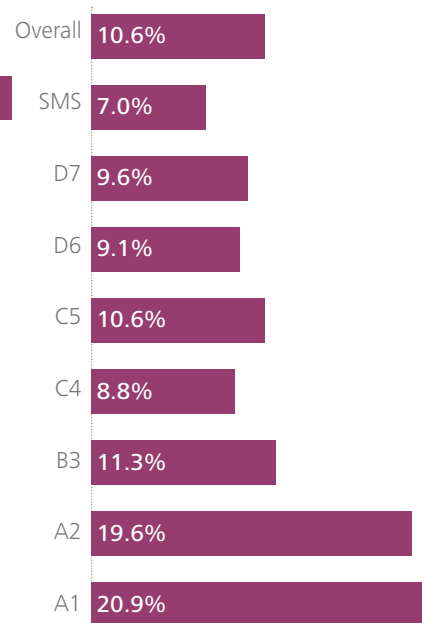
Ethnic profile of the workforce

Proportion of BAME UK-Based staff by grade



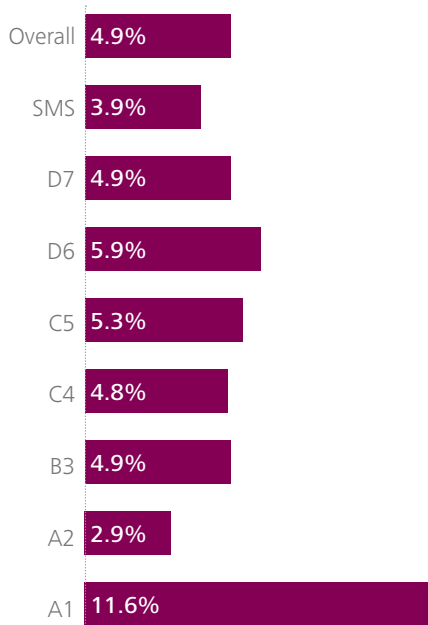
Disability profile of the workforce

Proportion of disabled UK-Based staff by grade



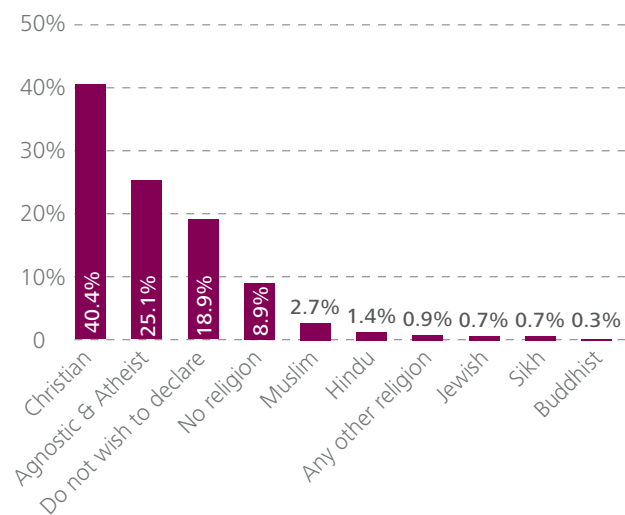
Sexual orientation profile of the workforce

Proportion of LGBT UK-Based staff by grade



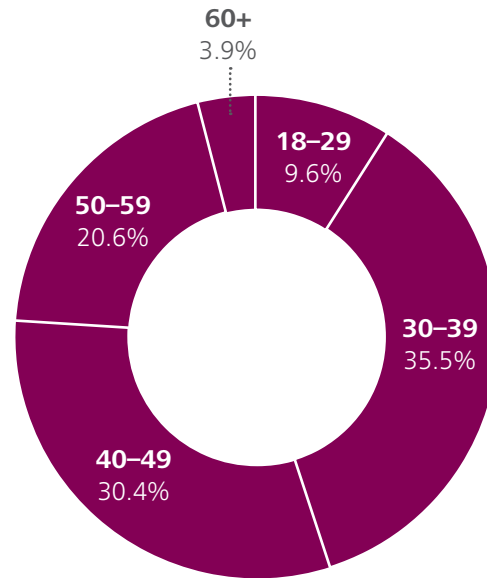
Religion and belief profile of the workforce

Proportion of UK-Based staff by Religion and Belief

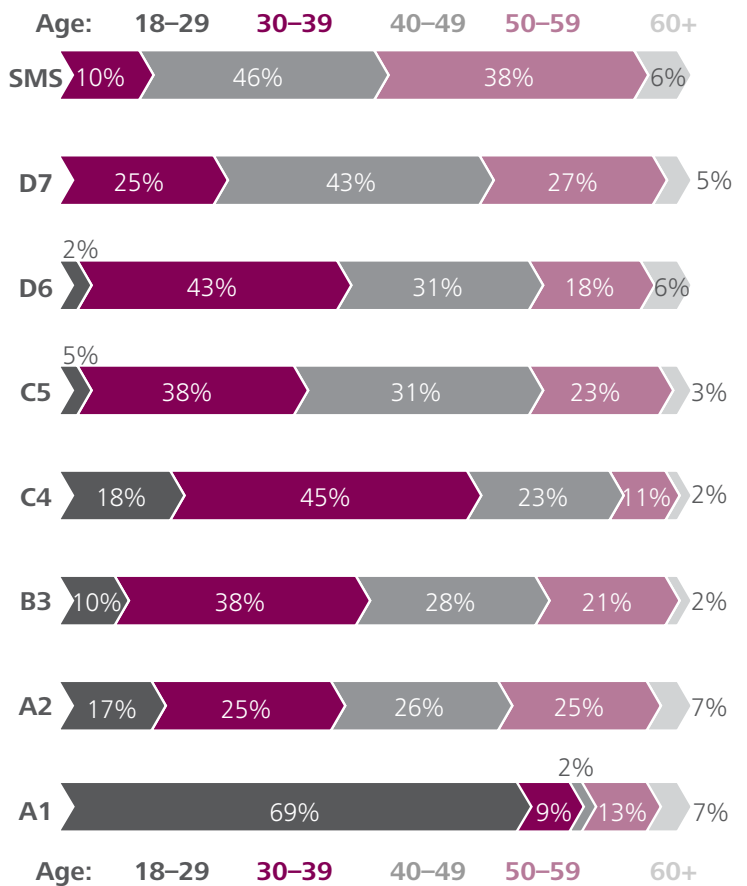


Age profile of the workforce

UK-Based staff profile by age

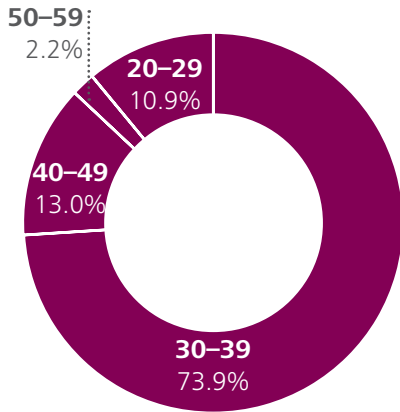


UK-Based staff profile by age and grade

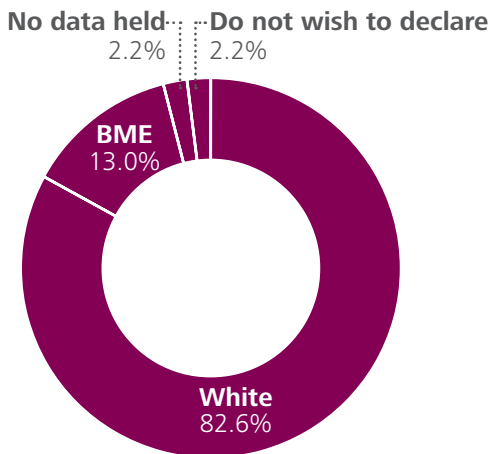


Maternity Leave profile

Maternity/Adoption leave profile by age



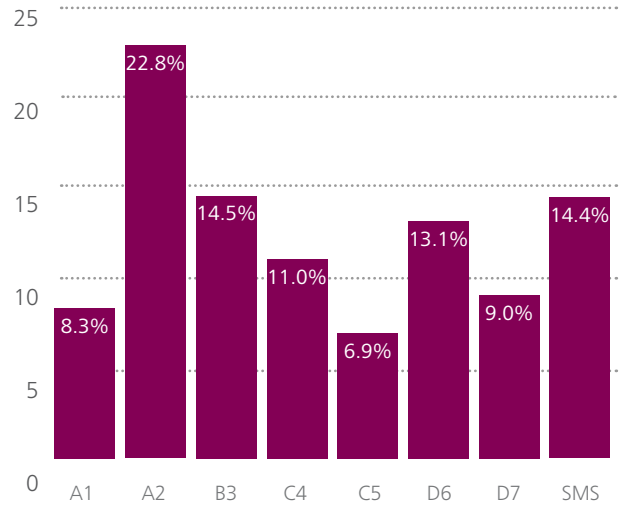
Maternity/Adoption leave profile by ethnicity



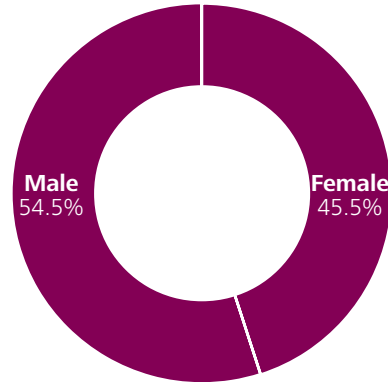
Staff Retention

The figures below show the grade, gender, ethnicity, disability and age percentage breakdown of staff that left the organisation due to retirement, resignation, termination of employment, or through career breaks, permanent transfers to other departments or due to death in service. 145 people left the FCO between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017.

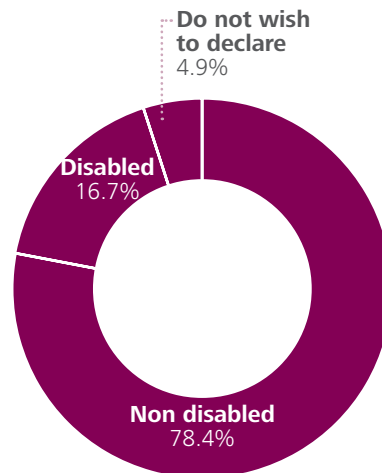
UK-Based staff leavers by grade



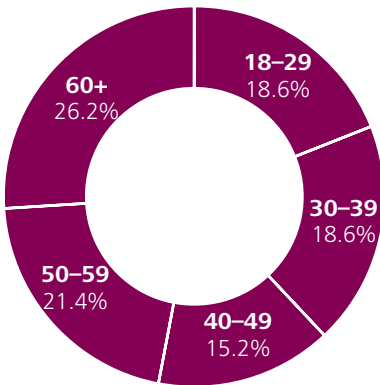
UK staff leavers by gender



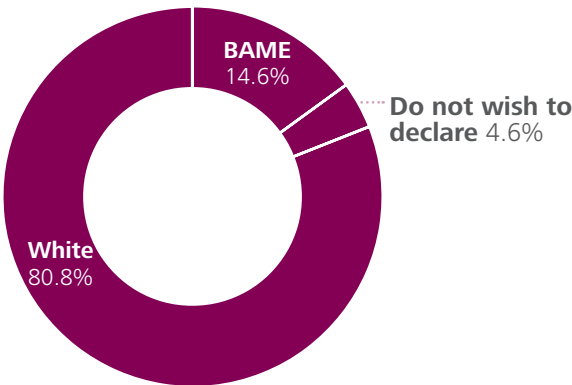
UK-Based staff leavers by disability (based on a 70.3% reporting rate of those leaving)



UK staff leavers by age



UK staff leavers by ethnicity (based on 90% reporting rate of those leaving)



Recruitment

The FCO seeks to recruit talented British nationals from all backgrounds and from across the UK. We want to ensure that we are the best Diplomatic Service we can be and to represent more effectively the country we serve. In line with the Civil Service recruitment freeze, we currently only recruit to the Diplomatic Fast Stream and other business critical roles. We are following and implementing the Civil Service Recruitment Principles of fair and open competition. For the recruitment of Local Staff, in our overseas Missions, we aim to appoint the best candidate, subject to local restrictions and employment law, and recruitment campaigns are open to all.

Progress in 2016–17

Fast Stream and other specialist recruitment

- > 48 Fast Stream Band C entrants and 34 specialists (including one Fast Track Commercial Apprentice) recruited at various grades in 2016-17.
- > 52% of Fast Stream entrants were female, 14% reported a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background, and 7% reported a disability. Of the 2015 intake, 42% were female, 35% were BAME, and 10% disabled.
- > Our annual university roadshow seeks to enhance the diversity of our Fast Stream recruitment. In 2016, we successfully ran events in 10 universities across the English regions and Devolved Administrations, which were complemented by our #beforeignoffice social media campaign. We specifically targeted universities with a high proportion of students from BAME and low socio-economic backgrounds.

Band A (Administrative Officer) and B (Executive Officer) recruitment

- > Exceptionally recruited 40 Band A staff to work at the Corporate Services Centre in Milton Keynes. Another 5 will start in early 2017-18.
- > Recruited 20 Business Administration A1 Apprentices to work at the Corporate Services Centre in Milton Keynes.
- > Of the new recruits, 60% were women, 12% declared as BAME and 12% reported a disability.
- > The apprenticeship campaign was advertised through the Milton Keynes College website and the National Apprentice website as well as the FCO website.
- > For 2017-18, we will recruit customer service practitioner apprentices and professional apprentices as part of building capability across the Department and contributing to the Government’s goal of three million apprenticeships by 2020.

Interns

- > Our work experience scheme (July 2016) encourages people of all backgrounds to consider the FCO as an employer. 59 interns were employed. 38 graduate interns worked for 7-12 months with a further 21 working for 1-9 weeks on centrally run schemes.
- > Most of our internship schemes are managed centrally by Civil Service Resourcing and are directed towards individuals from under-represented groups. Our own Graduate Internship is open to graduates from all backgrounds.
- > Of the graduate interns, 57% were female, 21% reported as BAME, and 11% reported a disability.

Experience of working in the FCO as a Summer Intern

“I started my graduate internship a week after leaving university with no idea what diplomacy was or what the FCO really did. After nine fascinating months working in the East and West Africa teams, I have learned more about international relations and foreign policy than I could ever have anticipated. I have experienced life at post in Eritrea, worked on the Foreign Secretary’s visit to East Africa, briefed MPs on Cape Verde and I’m now coordinating inward VIP visits for the London Somalia Conference. The opportunities this internship has given me are unlike any other job and I feel especially privileged to work with so many supportive and motivating colleagues. For anyone interested in an international career and working on issues that really matter to the UK and the world, I would strongly encourage you to apply.”

—Catherine Struthers, University of Edinburgh: Social Anthropology

which apply equally to all staff. The table below illustrates that the comparison by delegated grade shows pay gaps of between 0% and 1.8%. The overall average (mean) pay gap across the FCO is 12.7%. This is mainly the result of the composition of the FCO workforce, with more male staff in more senior grades whose salaries are therefore higher. Primarily as a result of the public sector pay cap, all those who have joined the FCO or become senior managers in the last seven years (which includes an increasing proportion of women) have remained at the bottom of the pay scale for their grade. The overall mean gender pay gap in the Civil Service is 13.6%.

FCO Average Base Pay for UK-based staff by gender

Grade	Average Female Pay	Average Male Pay	% Average Pay gap
SMS 3&4	£123,477	£132,072	-6.5%
SMS 2	£88,673	£90,698	-2.2%
SMS 1	£68,650	£68,385	+0.4%
D7	£58,476	£59,412	-1.6%
D6	£48,621	£49,190	-1.2%
C5	£35,765	£36,484	-2.0%
C4	£29,591	£29,739	-0.5%
B3	£25,114	£25,183	-0.3%
A2	£21,175	£21,073	+0.5%
A1	£18,779	£18,779	0%

Equality of Pay

FCO pay, for both UK and local staff, is determined by a range of factors including grade, performance and length of time in employment. As part of the FCO’s commitment to putting equal pay into practice, regular monitoring of the impact of pay practices is carried out, including Annual Equal Pay Audits and reviews.

FCO employees are paid according to standard scales

FCO Average Base Pay for UK-based staff by Ethnicity

The table below is using the data based on those who have reported their ethnicity. The comparison by delegated grade shows pay gaps of between 0% and 3.4%. The average salary pay gap is 23.6%. The workforce comparison data shows that this is because of the smaller proportion of disclosed BAME staff at more senior grades. At the time the pay cap was introduced, the FCO was significantly less diverse than it is now. As a result of the public sector pay cap, all those who have joined the FCO or become senior managers in the last seven years (which includes an increasing proportion of BAME staff) have remained at the bottom of the pay scale for their grade. Small improvements have been due to a more diverse group of staff securing promotion, raising the average at that level.

Grade	Average Minority Ethnic Pay	Average White Pay	% Average Pay gap
SMS 3&4	£115,202	£130,848	-12.0%
SMS 2	£93,426	£90,202	+3.6%
SMS 1	£69,663	£68,410	+1.8%
D7	£58,009	£59,011	-1.7%
D6	£49,088	£48,923	+0.4%
C5	£34,962	£36,202	-3.4%
C4	£29,504	£29,674	-0.6%
B3	£24,837	£25,238	-1.6%
A2	£21,237	£21,064	+0.8%
A1	£18,779	£18,779	0%

FCO 2016 Staff Engagement Survey

Alongside the Civil Service, all FCO staff can take part in a Staff Engagement Survey (SES) in October each year. The 2016 SES had a 84% response rate.

The FCO's overall engagement score (based on five questions which show how positive, attached and motivated staff feel) increased 2% to 71%; 11 points higher than the Civil Service average. The FCO's inclusion score and fair treatment score rose 1% to 79%; 4 points above the Civil Service average.

As part of the survey, staff are also asked if they have been subjected to bullying/harassment or discrimination (BHD), at work, in the previous year. Reports of bullying and harassment across increased disappointingly from 12% to 13% since last year. The discrimination figure also increased from 14% to 15%. Civil Services averages have also risen by 1%, to 12% for discrimination and 11% for bullying and harassment.

The underrepresented groups are more likely to report BHD than the majority groups, in particular staff with a disability or LGBT (for bullying or harassment). Staff over the age of 55 are significantly less likely to report experiencing BHD.

The results shown below are broken down by age, gender, disability status, sexual orientation and ethnicity. However, some staff did not supply this demographic data, which means that the disaggregate data can appear in some cases to be incompatible with the overall results.

	Discriminated against			Bullied or Harassed		
	2016	2015	2014	2016	2015	2014
Overall	15%	14%	13%	13%	12%	12%
Gender						
Male	13%	11%	12%	11%	9%	10%
Female	15%	14%	13%	12%	12%	12%
Disability						
No	13%	13%	12%	12%	11%	11%
Yes	25%	21%	27%	18%	18%	23%
Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic						
Non BAME	12%	11%	11%	11%	9%	11%
BAME	15%	14%	14%	13%	12%	11%
Sexual Orientation						
Straight	13%	12%	12%	12%	11%	11%
LGBT	16%	17%	13%	17%	14%	14%
Age						
20-24	11%	11%	13%	12%	13%	12%
25-29	15%	13%	12%	14%	12%	11%
30-34	16%	13%	14%	13%	12%	12%
35-39	15%	13%	13%	12%	11%	10%
40-44	12%	12%	12%	12%	9%	10%
45-49	15%	11%	11%	11%	9%	10%
50-54	12%	12%	11%	11%	10%	12%
55-59	9%	9%	9%	10%	8%	7%
60-64	8%	7%	10%	6%	4%	10%
65+	8%	2%	6%	8%	8%	8%

The scores on BHD continue to be above the Civil Service average. We take complaints of BHD seriously and have internal guidance and BHD “points of contact” in place to respond to staff concerns. We are committed to proactively supporting staff by providing clear information about the situation in- country and through our 24-hour Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). In 2016, the FCO Management Board appointed a Board Champion to reduce BHD and lead work on creating a more inclusive culture within the organisation.

FCO Diversity Policy and Engagement

The FCO continues to increase the diversity of our workforce in the UK and of our representation overseas. This includes visible diversity but also promoting diversity of thought, skills and background.

We have targets for the diversity of our Senior Management Structure (SMS) to be achieved by October 2019. Performance against these targets can be seen below:

Target	2019 target (% SMS)	31 March 2016	31 March 2017
Female	39%	30.1%	30%
BME	7%	4.1% (based on 92.6% SMS recording rate)	5.6% (based on 94.4% SMS recording rate)
Disabled	7%	9.9% (based on 63.6% SMS recording rate)	7.0% (based on 72.6% SMS recording rate)
LGBT	6%	5.3% (based on 72.1% recording rate)	3.9% (based on 75.1% recording rate)

In February 2017 the FCO Board agreed three Diversity and Inclusion priorities in a new Diversity and Inclusion 2020 Strategy. We are making a good progress against all:

- > **A diverse talent pipeline.** Levelling the playing field by providing further support for talent from under-represented groups.

For the first time we have mapped our entire talent pipeline—identifying the proportions of colleagues in the under-represented groups at each grade, those moving between grades, and those entering and leaving the FCO – to better target interventions at bottlenecks and critical points, such as those returning from periods of extended leave or on promotion to the SMS. Our University Roadshow and digital campaign #beforeignoffice have reached out to potential applicants from a wider talent pool.

- > **Tackling Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination (BHD):** The 2016 Staff Survey results show a 1% increase in bullying and harassment (to 13%) and discrimination (to 15%). The FCO has appointed a member of its board to champion the reduction in BHD and we are working together to create a more inclusive culture within the organisation. Some of the initiatives include a new package to support the Departments and Posts most affected by BHD, and a ‘Myth Busting’ handout to help challenging perceptions about BHD in the FCO.
- > **Creating an Inclusive Culture:** Over 95% of SMS staff have completed face-to face unconscious bias training date; and in the 2016 Staff Engagement Survey, our leadership scores were 16% above the Civil Service average. We have developed bespoke Learning & Development schemes to support FCO talent and taken advantage of Civil Service talent schemes and leadership offers from external organisations like Stonewall and the Mentoring Foundation to support talented colleagues to become inclusive leaders and role models.

Our Diversity and Inclusion 20:20 strategy sets out why diversity matters and how we plan to reach our ambition of an inclusive Foreign Office where all staff are valued and contribute to the best of their abilities. We believe that we will be a stronger organisation when our workforce better reflects the diversity of the country we represent.

Disability Policy and Support in the FCO

In October 2016, the FCO were awarded Silver accreditation by the BDF following completion of their disability benchmark. This placed the FCO as the best ranked Ministerial department on the BDF Roll of Honour. The FCO were awarded Disability Confident Employer status in November 2016 under the DWPs' newly launched Disability Confident Scheme and Disability Confident Leader status in March 2017.

Disability support for UK based staff is provided by the Disability Policy & Support Team (DPST). When required the DPST seek advice from the Civil Service Workplace Adjustment Service (CSWAS) and use the services of OH Assist, the contracted disability provider at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for the provision of expert disability advice and assessments.

Terms and conditions for Local Staff working at FCO Posts abroad are governed by local law but advice and support on disability policy issues is also available to Post.

Disabilities disclosed by UK-based staff cover a broad range of conditions, including neuro-diverse conditions (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia & Asperger's), mobility issues and hearing or visual impairments. The provision of workplace adjustments for disabled staff can include an expert disability assessment; the supply of specialised office equipment and/or provision of IT software and hardware and appropriate training. More general awareness training and support is also available to disabled staff, their managers and (where appropriate) team colleagues. Staff who are profoundly deaf or with a significant hearing impairment can additionally request the support of qualified British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters & Lip speakers.

The FCO is also a member of the Business Disability Forum (BDF), a not-for-profit member organisation that makes it easier and more rewarding to do business with

and employ disabled people in the UK. In 2016, the FCO again hosted the BDF roundtable meetings, designed to get disability support teams from across Whitehall departments together, to hear about the latest developments on disability issues and to network and share best practice.

FCO Staff Associations

The FCO's Diversity and Inclusion Team and senior management work closely with staff networks and the Diplomatic Service Families Association (DSFA) to understand and address issues faced by staff. As part of this collaboration we support a group of SMS Champions who provide staff networks with coaching, strategic direction and senior leadership. At Board Level we have a Diversity and Inclusion Champion and a Champion for tackling BHD.

Our staff networks are:

BAME Network: represents the views of ethnic minority staff at the FCO. They focus their work on (a) "celebrating" racial diversity in the FCO through their Role Model speaker events and blogs; (b) "supporting" BAME staff in the FCO with first response services, mentoring and learning sets; (c) "engaging" the Board, HR and other staff associations so FCO policies are sensitive to the needs of its diverse staff body. This year they rolled out a schools outreach programme, which will help ensure the FCO continues to represent the changing face of Britain in the years ahead. Their membership, which has increased by over 50% in the last year, is open to all staff and they are passionate about raising awareness and generating dialogue around issues of race and ethnicity in the office.

Enable (Disability Association): has changed the profile of people with disabilities in the FCO, helping to raise diversity recording rates. It's given greater visibility on disability issues across the whole organisation. Activity includes chairing the Civil Service Disability Network, hosting Civil Service wide events, actively participating in the launch of the Role Model Strategy, (facilitated by the Business Disability Forum and CS Disability and Inclusion Team). Enable has a global community site with 350 members and regularly blogs internally and externally. Increasing awareness of disabilities has helped in changing culture which has contributed to the FCO achieving the Department for Work and Pensions Disability Confident Leader accreditation.

FCO/DSFA (Diplomatic Service Families Association) Carers' Network: raising awareness in the FCO of the issues faced by those with caring responsibilities, providing advice on how to manage a work/care balance situation including when overseas e.g. with elderly parents at home. A Carer's Charter setting out the FCO's commitment as an employer to supporting

carers in the workplace was introduced in 2016.

FCO Women: has seen a 25% increase in membership year on year. It has run twenty master classes enabling colleagues from all grades to learn from each other. It has run over nine learning events with a wide range of internal and external speakers from Government, business and the third sector. As part of this, it hosted TEDxWhitehall Women, a global learning event. FCO Women has developed its mentoring offer, including through a speed mentoring event hosted by Baroness Anelay, and stepped up communications with the network, using channels such as an internal newsletter and blogs. It continues to build links across Whitehall and with other staff associations—this year it celebrated International Women’s Day in partnership with DFID and DIT. FCO Women proactively participates in HRD policy making, ensuring that the views of its membership are represented where necessary. The Chair of FCO Women was appointed by the FCO as the first Special Envoy for Gender Equality, leading policy making on international gender parity.

FLAGG (Foreign Office Lesbian and Gay Group): was shortlisted for the Employee Network Excellence Award at the Civil Service Diversity Awards; engaged in internal and external communication through blogs and Twitter (@FCOflagg); promoted LGBT issues through events (eg IDAHO Event); developed straight ally colleagues through an in-house Stonewall training course; and developed LGBT role models through Stonewall’s leadership course.

Flexible Working Network: provides advice and support on the wide range of flexible working options to ensure that individuals, teams and the organisation as a whole can benefit from the FCO’s positive approach to different ways of working. It’s committee is made up of champions for the different types of flexible working, each with personal experience. It works with HR to consider and develop global policy on flexible working.

Foreground (social mobility network): The newest FCO Staff Association Foreground launched in September 2016 and is open to all FCO employees to champion diversity of background. Foreground’s workforce strategy is under 4 working groups. This reach out to those from low socioeconomic status (SES); champion diversity of background within the FCO; support members who may have faced or be facing barriers to social mobility and engage with policy to challenge where policies might be barriers to those from low SES. They are a growing network and membership is open to all who are passionate about improving social

mobility. They are represented on a cross government network to improve this across the civil service.

Parents’ Support Network: brought the Mothers’ Support Network and Single Parents’ Network under one umbrella to: (a) support and provide practical advice to FCO working parents (including fathers); (b) share experiences of common issues impacting work/life balance; and (c) advocate change to HR on family-friendly policies including flexible working, Shared Parental Leave and childcare. The PSN has over 200 members. They formed a new PSN Committee and on-line Community site for parents to share information and parenting strategy tips. They held their first event in March at which Jo Swinson, former Minister for Women, gave an informal speech about being a working parent and share information and exchange ideas with partners across the Civil Service.

Religion and Belief Group: manages the FCO’s Multi-Faith Prayer Room and undertakes a programme of events to raise awareness of the way in which religion impacts the life of staff, and influences the way in which many people see the world.

Wellbeing Network: The Wellbeing Network offers support, guidance and advice on any issues which affect FCO staff wellbeing. The Network regularly run events to promote good mental health in the workplace and these link to wider campaigns such as Mental Health Awareness Week, National Work Life Balance Week and Time to Talk Day. The Network also acts as a point of contact and source of information, advising colleagues in the UK and overseas of the various paths available to them for professional support within and outside the organisation. The Network also manage and promote the staff wellbeing rooms located in FCO buildings in the UK and overseas.

Section 2—Regard for Equality within the FCO’s Activities

Foreign Policy

The promotion of human rights, including equalities issues, is at the heart of British foreign policy. This means all FCO Posts have a responsibility to monitor and raise human rights in their host countries. Government Ministers and FCO diplomats raise our concerns with host governments and where possible take action on individual cases and lobby for changes in discriminatory practices and laws. The FCO publishes an Annual Human Rights Report which covers our global work on human rights issues over the preceding year.

Women’s Rights

FCO continues to use its global network to promote and protect women’s rights. We have a particular focus on the elimination of violence against women and girls, including the harmful practices of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Child and Early Forced Marriage (CEFM); discriminatory laws and practices; and the promotion of gender equality, including the political and economic empowerment of all women.

As a demonstration of our commitment the FCO’s first-ever Special Envoy for Gender Equality was appointed in February 2017. Joanna Roper will lead the FCO’s efforts to deliver on the Foreign Secretary’s commitment to a foreign policy that consciously and consistently delivers for women and girls.

The FCO’s Week of Women was held in November 2016 in association with the Women of the Future Programme and Wilton Park and was aimed at supporting, connecting and inspiring the next generation of female leaders. The events brought together over 300 women from across 28 countries around the world.

Throughout 2016, we continued to work on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. In September, London hosted the annual UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial with delegates from 80 countries. From November 2016 all UK troops deployed on overseas missions receive WPS

training, which will also be offered in overseas bilateral training packages. We have supported Iraq and Afghanistan in the implementation of their National Action Plans and promoted women’s participation in the peace/post-conflict processes in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan and Somalia.

Despite the progress achieved at the UN level and elsewhere within 2016, significant challenges remain, including the many different forms of violence against women, securing sexual health and reproductive rights and equal access to education and achieving gender equality in the workplace and in political and public life. We will continue to address these through diplomatic efforts and targeted programme activity. In 2016, the Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy allocated over £1.5 million of funding to 16 women’s rights projects, and over £3 million was allocated for a further 19 projects from the Rules Based International System. These included projects focussed on encouraging political leadership, legislative reforms and regional cooperation in order to produce a safer environment for women.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Rights

The authorities of many countries actively persecute LGBT people, with 75 countries continuing to criminalise consensual same-sex relations. Even in countries where consensual same sex relations are legal, many people still face violence and discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, often a result of state-sanctioned discrimination, stigma and hate crime, a lack of adequate legal protection and poor enforcement of existing protections.

The FCO is committed to protecting and promoting the rights of LGBT people and to supporting the legal, cultural and social change required to make equality a reality for LGBT people the world over. That’s why we strongly supported the establishment by the UN Human Rights Council of the first-ever UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender



Identity, and defended his mandate when it came under attack at the UN General Assembly. We remain committed to supporting Mr Vitit Muntarbhorn in his important work. We are also proud to be a member of the newly-formed Equal Rights Coalition, a group of countries committed to working together to promote LGBT equality globally. We also support the work of the UN Free and Equal Campaign stressing the importance of opportunities to discuss, debate and celebrate LGBT equality at the international level.

We use our Embassies and High Commissions to monitor and raise human rights concerns and to promote the full and equal enjoyment of human rights. In June, FCO staff in Moscow, Ekaterinburg and St Petersburg facilitated a number of media interviews during Sir Ian McKellen’s visit to Russia as a ‘Shakespeare in Film’ Ambassador. He was able to share his personal story and set out his strong support for LGBT equality.

We continue to urge all countries to decriminalise consensual same sex relations and put in place legislation that provides for protection from discrimination for LGBT people - including in the workplace and in the provision of goods and services. Pride celebrations provide an opportunity for a large number of Posts to signal our strong solidarity with LGBT communities worldwide. In 26 countries we offer a consular marriage service to same-sex couples which, as well as helping those concerned, has helped to draw attention to the lack of local legislation for same-sex marriages and prompted wider debate on LGBT issues.

As well as diplomatic lobbying, we encourage UK missions overseas to seek out appropriate opportunities to promote human rights and prevent discrimination. Between 2016 and 2018 the FCO’s Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy will provide over £1.5 million funding to projects

promoting and protecting the rights of LGBT&T people in projects spanning more than fifteen countries.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The UK works internationally to counter the discrimination, marginalisation and violence which can disproportionately impact people with disabilities and put them at risk of exploitation.

In 2016 we worked actively at the multilateral level, for example by engaging on disability focused resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council, and enabling the participation of activists from UK civil society at the OSCE Human Dimension Committee meeting where they took part in an event on engaging persons with disability in political and public life.

The issue of the rights of persons with disabilities has strong Ministerial support. The UK's delegation to the 9th Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in June, was led at Ministerial level and looked at the UN Sustainable Development Goals' aim of "Leaving no one behind". In November 2016 the FCO hosted a Ministerial panel event on this theme, with the

involvement of Sudanese disability activist Rahma Elsidig talking about the intersection between gender discrimination and disability rights.

We supported the Rehabilitation International World Congress on Disability and Inclusion, held in Edinburgh on 25-27 October, which attracted speakers and delegates from over 50 countries and focussed on promoting social inclusion and accessibility for people with disabilities.

In our bilateral work we continued to call for states to sign and ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), using mechanisms such as the Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council.

Freedom of Religion or Belief

The UK remained firmly committed to promoting freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) around the world.

In 2016, we continued with our strategy of looking at FoRB as a standard against which to hold countries to account in a positive way, as a freedom which, if protected, helps to create societies that are more





resilient against violent extremism. With this in mind, in October 2016 we held a groundbreaking conference, bringing together experts in FoRB with those working on countering violent extremism to consider how protecting FoRB can help to combat violent extremism by building inclusive societies.

At the UN, we continued to play an active role in negotiations to maintain consensus on the adoption and implementation of both the EU's "Freedom of Religion or Belief" resolution and the OIC's "Combating Religious Intolerance" resolution.

We also continued to raise cases of persecution in individual countries. For example, in September, the Foreign Secretary launched the global "Bringing Daesh to Justice" campaign to support justice efforts, and to recognise and address the harm suffered by victims of Daesh crimes in Syria and Iraq. And in Burma, we continued to work with the new civilian government to support and encourage them in tackling incidents of violence against Muslims and Christians, particularly the Rohingya community in Rakhine State.

We also supported various projects through our Magna Carta Fund, such as support for a network of human rights defenders in South Asia, and a project to support secondary school teachers in the Middle East and North Africa region to teach about FoRB. And we continued to run religious literacy training to help staff

understand the key role that religion plays in shaping the worldview of the majority of the world's population.

Finally, we were in close touch with civil society organisations and faith groups and were keen to continue to work closely with them to promote and protect the right to freedom of religion or belief for all individuals worldwide.

Racism

The total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance remained a priority for the UK during 2016. We work on this under the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination which underpins international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate racism. During 2016 we sought to ensure the international community focused on strengthening national, regional and international legal frameworks in accordance with the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination, and to ensure their full and effective implementation.

Our priority in international discussions is to focus on the real and pressing problems faced by racial minorities in all parts of the world. In 2016, along with our EU partners, we sought to ensure that the

Consular case types by demographic, 2016

Age	Arrest/ Detention	Welfare	Death	Hospitalisation	Victim of crime	ETDs issued
Males						
0-15	25	31	29	57	19	1,340
16-30	1,430	471	124	379	191	4,981
31-50	1,940	728	372	458	186	5,306
50+	854	858	2,248	1,131	145	4,382
Unknown	368	244	147	164	58	-
Females						
0-15	7	26	23	39	26	1,183
16-30	258	411	60	237	301	3,345
31-50	259	500	107	216	171	2,768
50+	95	336	663	601	123	2,944
Unknown	69	205	41	92	70	-
Gender undisclosed						
0-15	3	10	1	7	2	-
16-30	100	64	7	45	44	-
31-50	123	78	25	38	23	-
50+	37	73	170	127	15	-
Unknown	34	50	16	44	28	-
Total	5,602	4,085	4,033	3,635	1,402	-

UN addressed racism through its various processes and mechanism. We will continue to remain vigilant to any manifestations of racism, and work actively with international partners to ensure that the aims of equality and non-discrimination are advanced through the multilateral system and bilaterally.

Consular service

The FCO Consular Service offers assistance to British nationals in difficulty abroad.

The customer charter of the Consular Service commits to: “Be professional, non-judgemental, polite and helpful to you whatever your gender, race, age, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, religion or belief.”

Our travel advice and information for travellers is available online, and is aimed at helping all British nationals travel safely. It includes tailored advice for disabled travellers; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender travellers; and those with mental health needs. We take advantage of opportunities such as the Pride parade in London, and World Mental Health Day to highlight the advice available.

Over the last year, Consular staff in our Consular contact centres handled over 290,000 telephone enquiries and over 23,000 consular cases in our Consular Posts. The FCO collects data on the age and gender of those whom it provides services (but not ethnicity or other protected characteristics). The table above shows the top 5 highest volume case types and number of Emergency Travel Documents issued in 2016, by demographic.

Consular staff are trained to provide high quality assistance to British nationals overseas, tailored to the need of the individual. This includes dedicated training and support for consular staff worldwide to support customers with mental health needs.

Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Travellers

We introduced consular same sex marriage services in June 2014 and provide these services in 28 countries. In 2016 we performed more than 190 consular same sex marriages and 27 conversions of civil partnership into marriage. The British Government can consider approaching the local authorities if LGBT prisoners are not treated in line with internationally accepted human rights standards. This may include lobbying

against discrimination on the grounds of gender or sexuality, requesting appropriate medical treatment and raising concerns about the safety of any prisoner.

Forced Marriage Unit

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is a joint Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office Unit that provides assistance in cases of forced marriage in the UK and consular cases involving British nationals overseas, including dual nationals. Forced marriage is a crime (it became a criminal offence on the 14th June 2014); and is a serious abuse of human rights and a form of domestic abuse. Where children are involved, it is child abuse. Staff are also trained in the specific issues relating to victims who are LGBT or who have a disability and provide tailored assistance in these cases.

The FMU also runs an extensive outreach programme, which raises awareness of forced marriage and related issues among potential victims and statutory agencies including police, social services and health professionals. Statistics from the FMU suggest young people aged between 16 and 25 are most at risk of being forced into marriage.

In 2016, the FMU gave advice or support related to a possible forced marriage in 1,428 cases:

Where the age was known, 15% of cases involved victims below 16 years, 11% involved victims aged 16-17, 20% involved victims aged 18-21, 15% involved victims aged 22-25, 10% involved victims aged 26-30, 6% involved victims aged 31-40, and 2% involved victims aged 41 or over. 20% involved an adult whose age was not known

- > 80% of cases involved female victims and 20% involved male victims.
- > The FMU has handled cases involving a total of over 90 different countries. In 2016 this included: Pakistan (43%), Bangladesh (8%), India (6%), Somalia (3%), Afghanistan (3%), and Saudi Arabia (1%). The origin was unknown in 9% of cases.
- > 11% of the cases handled by the FMU were domestic and had no overseas element.
- > Within the UK the regional distribution was: London 21%, West Midlands 14%, North West 13%, South East 10%, Yorkshire and the Humber 9%, East 5%, East Midlands 5%, South West 3%, Scotland 2%, Wales 1%, North East 1%. The region was unknown in 16% of cases.

- > 10% of cases involved victims with disabilities.
- > 2% of cases involved victims who identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT).

Digital transformation of consular services making them more accessible

Since 2014, the FCO has worked hard on the services it offers the public, transforming them from paper forms to digital services which we have made as accessible as possible. In 2016, we launched global online applications for Emergency Travel Documents and Legalisation & Documentary Services. We test the words we use to make sure they are easy to understand. We test the forms with people with different levels of computer skills and disabilities: with the FCO's disability community Enable, and in specialist testing centres around the country. Finally, our contact centre staff are always at the end of a telephone to assist people filling in the digital forms, either by helping them with specific issues or, in some cases, asking people the questions on the form and filling it on their behalf. The services are significantly simpler and quicker to use than the old paper forms, making consular services easier to access for everyone.





Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

King Charles Street

London

SW1A 2AH

[gov.uk/fco](https://www.gov.uk/fco)