![Government Social Research]

Government Social Research Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025:

Growing and embedding a diverse and inclusive GSR culture

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Foreword

Welcome to the Government Social Research (GSR) Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025. We are delighted to share our plan to strengthen the GSR profession through improving our diversity and inclusion (D&I), thereby improving GSR's evidence and advice to inform decision-making. This D&I strategy forms one strand of the GSR Strategy 2021-2025: Social research in and for government and has been developed as a stand-alone strategy to focus attention and demonstrate the profession's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

This Strategy represents a huge amount of analysis, ideas generation and discussion across the GSR profession; 21 members from 11 departments have worked intensively as part of a dedicated working group to develop it. The Strategy builds on ongoing work to improve D&I across the Analysis Function. It takes the Analysis Function D&I plans as the baseline from which to progress and focuses on specific issues for the GSR profession to address, identified through comparing GSR data with the wider Analysis Function, the Civil Service and the population as a whole.

In summary, we will build and embed D&I in GSR through four main strands, as described within this document:

- **Attracting a diverse profession**: Raising awareness of GSR and increasing applications, particularly from underrepresented groups
- **Inclusive and fair recruitment and selection**: Ensuring no overt or unconscious discrimination within selection processes, providing a fair and unbiased process for candidates
- **Embedding and retaining an inclusive culture**: Inclusive and supportive culture where all members have the opportunity to develop their career
- **Accurate monitoring of GSR data**: Accurate and timely data with which to monitor and prioritise D&I interventions within GSR
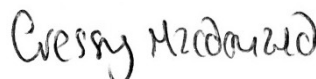
Action is required across all diversity characteristics to achieve a truly diverse and inclusive profession that represents the population of the UK. The culture needs to be inclusive to all, taking into account protected characteristics and other important characteristics such as neurodiversity. Based on the working group's analysis (see Annex), we will initially focus on two specific issues that need targeted and urgent attention: ethnic minority diversity and socio-economic diversity. We will review our focus annually to enable us to give appropriate attention to the needs of different groups as we progress.

Progress against our D&I goals will require work across all levels of GSR: our Strategy and Profession Boards; our departmental Heads of Profession; and individual members. Culture change requires concerted and sustained activity; this Strategy is simply the first step. We expect to see progress against diversity and inclusion in every GSR member's activities, in the culture they help create and for GSR leadership to maintain focus and drive progress. As part of regular reporting against the new GSR Strategy, the GSR governance boards will hold ourselves to account and report on progress annually. As our data improves, we will quickly identify and address areas and issues where further urgent attention is needed.

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Who we are and who we want to be

The Government Social Research (GSR) service is the professional body within government for Civil Servants working in social and behavioural research. We have over 1,800 members from across 50+ departments/organisations.

GSR members have diversity in professional backgrounds and disciplines providing expertise in a range of areas including applied quantitative and qualitative approaches, evaluation, behavioural science and the design of social and behavioural interventions. This brings a breadth of expertise, knowledge and evidence to inform and influence government decision-making at all levels. However, we also need to ensure we have diversity in our membership itself.

To achieve GSR's goal of putting people and society-centred research, advice and design at the heart of government decision-making, we need to be diverse and inclusive, bringing diversity of perspectives to our thinking and being inclusive of the population as a whole.

Diversity and inclusion includes taking into account protected characteristics as well as other important characteristics such as neurodiversity, and we support the Analysis Function and the Civil Service Strategies to improve this across all government analysis and research. Based on our analysis (Annex A) we will, during the first year of our strategy, focus on ethnic minority groups and those with lower socio-economic backgrounds; this will be reviewed annually to allow appropriate attention across the range of diversity characteristics. Our Strategy targets diversity and inclusion issues in three ways: through attracting diverse applicants to the profession; through ensuring inclusive and fair selection and recruitment; and through strengthening GSR's culture to make it fully inclusive and supportive.

To achieve the changes we wish to see, it is essential that we are able to monitor progress and identify issues and areas for action. We will improve our data across the range of diversity characteristics; the fourth strand of our Strategy.

GSR's commitment to being **diverse and inclusive** is one of the three priorities of the main GSR Strategy 2021-2025: Social research in and for government. To be **impactful and influential** with **expert and valued people** requires us to be **diverse and inclusive** – both in our profile and our skill set. Strengthening our community to increase collaboration and invite a diverse set of views, skills, experience and knowledge is important and we are excited to move towards our ambitions.

Our Vision

To be as diverse in our profile and perspectives as the society we serve, across all levels of the profession, through our culture and the careers we offer

Our Mission

To have a diverse membership and culture that is positive for all, where members are supported, developed, respected and appreciated for their unique characteristics and who feel proud to be part of the social research community. This will be achieved through attracting a diverse workforce, ensuring fair selection, and embedding and retaining an inclusive culture. It will be demonstrated and monitored through accurate data and metrics

Accurate monitoring of GSR data

Attracting a diverse profession

Inclusive & fair recruitment & selection

Embedding & retaining an inclusive culture

GSR D&I Priorities

Attracting a Diverse Profession

Goal: GSR has a diverse and inclusive population (in the first instance prioritising increasing ethnic minority and lower socio-economic representation, & reviewing focus annually)

By targeting and developing outreach activities, engaging with cross government networks and the wider research sector, and exploring alternative application routes into the profession

GSR is visible and attractive as a viable career option for school and university leavers, and those in professional practice. We will:

- Develop outreach activities by expanding the GSR Ambassadors scheme to reach schools, college and universities across all regions of the UK
- Increase the number of GSR Ambassadors
- Develop materials to support the GSR Ambassador Scheme and ensure they are fit for purpose
- Work with cross-government networks, the Analysis Function and individual analytical professions to collaborate on outreach activities
- Collaborate with external social research related organisations to improve the visibility of GSR as a career option and to partner on improving diversity and inclusion across the social and behavioural research sector

GSR explores alternative entry mechanisms to understand how other entry routes can be used to increase the attraction of the profession and provide greater opportunity to a broader range of potential applicants within our society. We will:

- Review the current entry requirements against the needs of the profession, taking into consideration the priority of the profession to create a community across government for all social and behavioural approaches and perspectives
- Identify alternative entry routes and assess these against the needs and priorities of the profession

Inclusive & Fair Recruitment & Selection

Goal: There is no discrimination within GSR's selection and assessment processes

By ensuring there is no overt or unconscious discrimination during recruitment processes, thereby reassuring potential candidates they are entering a fair and unbiased process, through improved guidance, training, materials, assessments and processes, resulting in a more diverse workforce

GSR identifies and overcomes possible sources of bias and discrimination by reviewing current selection and recruitment materials and processes to check for the presence of any unfairness, with the aim to ensure all assessments are fair and provide an equal opportunity for success irrespective of background. We will:

- Embed Analysis Function D&I practice in GSR selection and recruitment materials and processes
- Analyse available information on current recruitment guidance, materials, assessments and processes to identify any areas which could be improved (taking into account areas such as neurodiversity, adverse impact on particular groups etc)
- Develop and test revised assessments for use in all recruitment campaigns (Fast Stream, Mainstream, Badging, Fast Pass)

GSR selection guidance and processes are clear and transparent to ensure all GSR members are suitably supported and able to implement any changes to GSR assessments and assessment processes. We will:

- Develop effective training for assessors to raise awareness and to raise awareness of potential sources of bias and how they can be overcome and to learn about new guidance, materials, assessments and processes developed
- Develop clear GSR governance for all GSR selection and assessment processes and ensure it is accessible and understood

Embedding & Retaining an Inclusive Culture

Goal: There is an inclusive and supportive culture within GSR, where all members have the opportunity to develop their career

> By providing positive action and tailored support aligned to need, ensuring everyone can reach their full potential without any barriers.

GSR supports all members to play their part in creating and embedding an inclusive culture and achieving their potential. We will:

- Encourage members to be GSR ambassadors as part of outreach
- Encourage members to support other members on GSR D&I issues to include:
    - Helping run a recruitment campaign/training on D&I
    - Supporting someone from a minority background navigate GSR/develop their career
- Support members to challenge themselves and others on overt and unconscious discrimination
- Have a GSR D&I representative in departments to champion and help oversee progress on the GSR D&I work along with their department Head of Profession
- Communicate regularly on D&I related issues and different perspectives via the monthly GSR newsletter

GSR provides accessible opportunities and inclusivity by establishing comprehensive development opportunities and progression pathways across all stages of career and levels within the profession. We will:

- Engage with those from disadvantaged backgrounds to explore what GSR can do to provide equal opportunities
- Ensure the Expert & Valued GSR Strategy 2021-2025 Strand training and event opportunities and materials are accessible and inclusive
- Support the Impactful & Influential GSR Strategy 2021-2025 Strand to develop pathways to improve GSR SCS representation and diversity at all levels across the profession
- Audit all GSR boards, steering and working groups for diversity and ensure diversity is considered in all future groups
- Collaborate with the Analysis Function to provide cross-government opportunities for all

GSR knows what factors influence retention in order to more accurately develop the profession in line with members' needs, leading to positive retention of skills, knowledge and experience. We will:

- Conduct exploratory research to understand any specific barriers experienced by underrepresented groups within the profession
- Run an engagement survey for the profession to explore behaviours associated with retention
- Ensure consistency and collation of exit survey results to identify issues and develop strategies to address these

Accurate Monitoring of GSR Data

Goal: Accurate and timely data with which to monitor and prioritise D&I interventions within GSR

> By working with the Analysis Function to ensure relevant and appropriate data are collected and used to monitor career progress and any emerging issues across the protected characteristics and other diversity characteristics

GSR knows where existing GSR D&I data are and how to access them through collaboration and cooperation with the central support team, Analysis Function, and Civil Service data sources, contributing to improving data collection methods and use of existing sources. We will:

- Conduct an audit of current GSR D&I data sources available to reduce duplication
- Identify and advise on ways to improve and any further requirements or activities to capture an accurate picture
- Use networks to link up with other D&I groups to increase efficiency and encourage data sharing
- Gain access to and collating departmental data to allow improved monitoring

GSR has an effective and accurate process to monitor D&I related data allowing this information to be used by the GSR Strategy Board, in management information within the central support team, and to monitor progress against the strategic priorities. We will:

- Identify the requirements of and create a baseline D&I profile of the GSR profession
- Develop and implement a programme to monitor D&I data against the strategic priorities and profession requirements
- Develop indicators of success during the first year by drawing on expert advice to identify meaningful targets and measures of progress for future years and beyond

Accurate monitoring of GSR data

Delivering the strategy

Our Strategy indicates our ambition to take action and be held to account for diversity and inclusion within our profession.

It sets out how GSR will look in 2025, our vision, mission and priorities to achieve these. We outline how we will achieve this in our [Delivery Plan](#). This includes our top-level objectives, actions and timeframe.

We will deliver our priorities drawing on a number of resources. This includes:

- The D&I Implementation Working Groups made up of GSR members from across government
- The profession's central support team
- GSR Heads of Profession (HoP)
- Departmental GSR D&I groups
- Departmental GSR D&I representatives
- With oversight and accountability owned by the GSR Strategy Board

We will report on our progress annually as part of the annual GSR Strategy to encourage accountability and show our commitment to achieve our priorities.

Where we will be in 2025

GSR is a growing, energetic profession, essential to tackle the profound social and practical challenges over the next four years. This Strategy ensures we will be well prepared, continue to build on our strengths, and embed our diverse and inclusive culture:

- D&I reps and groups in every department will champion the GSR D&I priorities and embed a diverse culture
- Our ethnic minority and lower socio-economic representation will be comparable to the Civil Service
- Diversity will be represented across the range of protected characteristics and other important characteristics
- Potential applicants will be encouraged and motivated to apply for GSR roles
- All applicants to GSR roles will know they have had a fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities
- GSR members will be visible at SCS, with diverse characteristics represented.
- All GSR Boards and working groups will be diverse
- GSR will be diverse and members will want to stay in the profession due to its inclusive culture
- GSR will know at any point what its profile looks like
- GSR will have set out indicators of success, drawing on expert advice, to identify specific targets and meaningful measures of progress throughout the life of the strategy and beyond
- GSR will have developed key data to monitor its profile, assessment outcomes and retention related decisions, and is able to demonstrate meeting of identified targets

Annex – GSR Profession Diversity Statistics 2019

		GSR	Analytical professions	Wider Civil Service	UK
Gender	Female	65.5%[1]	44%[1]	53.9%	51%[2]
Ethnicity	Ethnic minority	9%	13.9%[1]	12.7%	12.6% working pop
Age	Younger	55% under 35	61% under 35[3]	14.4% under 30 35.8% under 40	-
	Older	4% 55 and over	3% 55 and over[2]	40.2% 50 and over 9.2% 60 and over	41.9% 45 and over 22.4% 60 and over[4]
Disability	Disabled	16%	16%	11.7%	13.4% working pop
Socio- economic diversity	Independent school	13%	13%	-	6.5%[5]
	Eligible for FSM	9%	9%	-	13.6%[6]
Sexual orientation	LGB	11%	9%	4.3%	2%
	Heterosexual	83%	85%	95.2%	93%
Caring responsibilities	Carers	43%	40%	25%[3]	12.5%[7]
Part time working	Part-time workers	19%	14%	23%[3]	26%[8]

[1] Annual Civil Service Employment Survey 2016
[2] ONS
[3] Annual Civil Service Employment Survey 2018
[4] England and Wales; UK Census 2011
[5] Independent Schools Council
[6] England Schools Census January 2018
[7] Carers UK
[8] Labour Force Survey 2019

GSR and Analytical Profession stats from Cross-Government Analytical Functions Diversity Survey 2019 unless stated otherwise.
Wider Civil Service and UK stats from the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Dashboard unless stated otherwise.
UK statistics refer to the general population unless stated otherwise.