DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY 2016/17
Foreword

Diversity and inclusion have long been a consideration for many communications teams. Now for the first time we are truly exploring how we can join up and drive an inclusive culture across our profession.

Improving diversity and inclusion is a commitment from Directors of Communications.

It is an objective for GCS to be a communication profession representative of modern Britain and actively supporting talented individuals to succeed. Finally, it is a priority for the Civil Service as a whole.

This is important for two key reasons. We believe we’re missing out on key talent and as a result we are not always representing the diversity of the audiences we serve. If we can tackle this in the Government Communication Service level, we can have a huge impact both for our own people and the public we serve.

This paper outlines our full commitments to diversity and inclusion in 2016/17 and what it means to us.

As diversity sponsors, we commit to holding our leaders to account. We believe we can make a difference by;

- Improving the future diversity of our profession by growing the number of apprentices, improving recruitment practices and addressing diversity within our talent pipelines.
- Offering home-grown, diverse senior talent greater support to reach our top leadership positions.
- Building a culture of inclusion incorporating flexible working, nurturing personal leadership styles and learning from initiatives such as reverse mentoring.

We look forward to continuing the conversation and developing our approach with you. We will only succeed if things change. It’s our job to challenge and help drive this change across government and the communications profession.

Selvin Brown,
Director of Engagement and Policy, Health and Safety Executive

Léonie Austin,
Director of Communication, NHS Blood and Transplant

James Helm,
Director of Communication, DFID
Our diversity and inclusion policy and practices

Our vision is that the Government Communication Service becomes a leading employer and champion for reflecting modern Britain in all its diversity not only in the Civil Service and the wider public sector but also across the professions such as PR and marketing. The business case is simple; organisations with high levels of diversity and inclusion show an 80 per cent improvement in business performance.

We are proudly committed to diversity and a culture of inclusion. We are seeking to build not only a diverse workforce, but also inclusive workplaces. It is important that we have an environment where people feel valued and known, where individuals can bring their whole selves to work.

By the end of this parliament (May 2020), we will:

1. Improve senior civil service level diversity and in particular representation of women at Director of Communications level.

2. Improve representation of BAME and disability for employees at all grades in line with the UK census (14% BAME, 9.4% disability), focussing on our talent pipelines to senior civil service grades; and

3. Attract and retain GCS early talent from poorer socio-economic backgrounds.

Our plan is aligned to the latest Talent Action Plan which was refreshed in March 2016. We will continue to evolve as the strategy develops.
Improving our diversity

Our diversity strategy looks at how we use all recruitment and talent management to drive better representation and accelerate our top talent to the most senior leadership positions. We expect our leaders to reflect the diversity of the audiences and communities we serve.

We will use our annual People Survey as an on-going benchmark for the profession and our Senior Talent Forum to monitor gender and ethnicity at our most senior leadership levels.

We will analyse how diverse our pipelines are for each of our talent programmes (such as Inspire) and put plans in place to support diverse talent. This will include mentoring, leadership training and coaching.

The Senior Talent Forum will keep a check and balance on diversity and ensure that selection boards and short lists are diverse. We will spot-check and review applications and appointments for senior civil service roles.

On our recruitment we will commit to:

1.1 Building a career offer, which is appealing and accessible to people from all backgrounds. This means that we will highlight longer term career development opportunities, promote the careers of diverse colleagues via case studies from our role models and clearly set out the benefits of working for both the GCS and the government;

1.2 Advertising all campaign recruitment across diverse networks such as Stonewall and Working Mums and use our own diversity networks to promote vacancies
1.3 Using name-blind recruitment for our recruitment campaigns

1.4 Adopting the new Fast Stream processes in line with recommendations from the Bridge Report on social mobility

1.5 Being early adopters where possible for new recruitment techniques which limit unconscious bias and make our processes more inclusive

1.6 Improving our talent pipeline and access to government communications through a specialist GCS apprenticeship, using an innovative outreach strategy including events such as open afternoons to target groups prior to application; and

1.7 Using internships to encourage students from more diverse backgrounds to gain experience in government communications.

1.8 Challenging misconceptions of what is needed to be a successful Director of Communications so that senior leadership roles are appealing to talent across the profession, particularly women

1.9 Building better transparency around the work and leadership style of Directors of Communications, using a ‘shadow board’ at Directors meetings to build capability and dispel myths.

1.10 Building on existing executive interview support by establishing mock interview panels for senior level roles.

1.11 Ensuring we are using succession plans and development conversations to best effect, identifying stretching ‘stepping stone’ senior roles.

1.12 Offering additional support for near-miss candidates including mentoring and coaching.

We recognise that we need to lead change from the top. We will put an additional focus on our senior grade recruitment processes and pipeline to ensure that we are supporting our internal talent to progress to our most senior leadership positions. We will commit to:

1.9 Building better transparency around the work and leadership style of Directors of Communications, using a ‘shadow board’ at Directors meetings to build capability and dispel myths.

1.10 Building on existing executive interview support by establishing mock interview panels for senior level roles.

1.11 Ensuring we are using succession plans and development conversations to best effect, identifying stretching ‘stepping stone’ senior roles.

1.12 Offering additional support for near-miss candidates including mentoring and coaching.
Building a culture of inclusion

We want to build an inclusive environment where all colleagues are encouraged to develop and grow in confidence, removing barriers to success.

When it comes to our top talent programmes, we will review selection processes using best practice to produce a more inclusive list of nominations. Where possible, we want to understand through exit interviews the reasons why people leave government to ensure we address any potential barriers to inclusion.

We believe we can make a difference to inclusion by focussing on leadership:

1.1 We will use leadership events as an opportunity to promote diversity and inclusion and design a programme of master classes to build capability and understanding.

1.2 Our Directors of Communication will lead innovative engagement sessions for their departments and ALBs, dedicating time to raising awareness and building capability to embed diversity and inclusion in the longer term.

1.3 We will use reverse mentoring and co-mentoring to help leaders better understand views, perspectives and experiences of those from different backgrounds.

1.4 Working with volunteers, we will set up an inclusion network for the profession, to provide support on barriers to progression and to share best practice, and;

1.5 Wherever possible we will support flexible working and nurture personal leadership style.

It is widely recognised that strong role models and champions make a key difference in driving cultural change.
for inclusion. As a result, we will use diversity role models and sponsors to demonstrate the value of diversity and hold organisations to account.

Our three diversity champions for the profession – Selvin Brown (Director of Engagement and Policy HSE), Léonie Austen (Director of Communication, NHSBT) and James Helm (Director of Communication, DFID) – play an important role in holding the profession to account and understanding progress against our policy and objectives. We will also engage Karen Blackett, diversity champion for the Civil Service to understand how external best practice for the sector can be applied.

As a starting point, our internal diversity champions will review diversity objectives for Directors of Communications from 2016/17 and shape the next phase of our plans. Diversity objectives will have an individual element but will also have a consistent profession focus.
Understanding our audiences

The UK is set to overtake the USA as the most diverse society in the western world over the next 35 years. While we’ve made progress in understanding and communicating to our audiences, there is more to do. The way we speak, act and deliver our communications must reflect the diversity of the audiences we serve.

We will build understanding and capability of how we use language internally and with our end audience. Best practice guidance, training and insight will be shared collectively across the profession to ensure that we are communicating in the right way. Our departmental events provide a great starting point to share this.

Added to this, outreach activity is vital in helping us better understand our audiences. We will use the opportunities of internships and apprenticeships to run open events and target recruitment materials. This will raise awareness with different audiences about the work which government does and to help us communicate better with younger, more diverse target groups.

Overall our ambition is simple – there is more for us to do make the Government Communication Service not only more diverse but also more inclusive. Leading from the top, our Directors will be setting personal objectives, but diversity and inclusion is something we can all work to improve – from understanding personal style to being aware of our own unconscious bias.

Through leadership, understanding and engagement on these areas, we believe we can lead the way on diversity and inclusion, not only for our profession within government but also for our profession across the wider public, third and private sectors.
Summary of Office for National Statistics (ONS) Civil Service Statistics 2015

The table below shows the diversity declarations for all Civil Servants in 2015, including a breakdown of those who declared their profession as communications and marketing (3,990 professionals)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil Service Statistics 2015</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications and marketing profession</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Service</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: ONS - 31 March 2015 Civil Service Statistics
We pledge to make our Communication Directorate a great place to work where colleagues feel safe to share their views and concerns, are trusted, supported, valued and respected, where their skills are recognised and they are empowered to make decisions.

Create an open, non-judgemental working environment where concerns of bullying or discrimination can be safely raised and dealt with by:

- all managers taking seriously allegations of inappropriate language, situations or practices
- giving staff involved in the equality and diversity action time to undertake relevant activities

Ensure our recruitment processes are fair and free of unconscious bias by:

- ensuring an appropriate gender, age and race mix on our recruitment panels wherever possible
- making available interview and selection training for new panel

Establish a culture of inclusivity by:

- giving equal consideration to all applications for flexible working, accommodating needs wherever possible
- taking into account and acknowledging the contribution of people with different working patterns

Ensure all staff have equal opportunities to learning, training and professional development by:

- requiring managers to hold regular career conversations with staff
- managers and staff together developing robust and realistic performance development plans (PDPs) that are monitored and evaluated throughout the year