



Government
Communication
Service

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2017/18

A diverse and confident Government Communication Service, which is representative of modern Britain where talent thrives.



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1. Introduction

On behalf of the Government Communication Service (GCS) I am proud to present this 2017/18 strategy for diversity and inclusion.

This year's strategy builds on the commitments published last year to drive a diverse, inclusive and vibrant communication profession for communicators in every government department and agency.

Improving diversity and inclusion is a commitment I am also making, as Minister for the Constitution for the Cabinet Office and for the Civil Service as a whole.

The vision of the GCS is to be a communication profession that is representative of modern Britain and that actively supports talented individuals to succeed regardless of race, ability, gender or background. Diversity and inclusive policies and practices are also central to how we communicate government policy externally to the people we serve to make the UK a fairer and more equal place to live. As the Prime Minister recently set out - in her speech to

the Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices - we are striving to be a one nation government that works for all, not just for the privileged few where we put faith in talent and hard work and where the high standards of our best employers are the standards by which all our working practices are judged.

As chair of the GCS Ministerial Board I will be regularly monitoring the profession's performance against this strategy. I am grateful to the work in the last year of the GCS Diversity Champions who are also key to holding the profession to account and ensuring we remain open and honest with ourselves and with others about the obstacles that get in the way of that.

This strategy is the start of our commitment to building that culture and we hope you will all give the GCS your full and active support.

Chris Skidmore
Minister for the Constitution
Cabinet Office



2. Foreword

by the GCS Diversity Champions

Diversity and inclusive practices are central to our mission - communicating government policy facilitated by two-way dialogue with the people we serve.

This 2017/18 strategy commits the Government Communication Service to recruit, promote, train and support a diverse and inclusive profession and outlines what that means to us in practice. It also reports on the excellent progress made together over the last year.

Recruiting and promoting talent from all sections of society is the profession's on-going commitment.

Diversity is more than just an organisational goal; it is a personal commitment from all members of our profession and from our professional governing bodies to make the GCS a diverse and inclusive place to work where our people have access to varied careers, are supported and invested in and where different views are respected.

We look forward to continuing the conversation and developing our approach with you.

GCS Diversity Champions



Léonie Austin, Director of Marketing and Communications, NHS Blood and Transplant



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



Sam Lister, Director of Communications, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

3. The importance of diversity & inclusion in the GCS

The Government Communication Service (GCS) is proudly committed to diversity and a culture of inclusion which represents the society we serve.

We are seeking to build a diverse workforce and develop inclusive workplaces. It is important that we have an environment where people feel valued and known and where individuals can bring their whole selves to work.

Since we launched our first strategy in 2016, we have focussed our efforts on:

- Understanding and addressing profession specific barriers to diversity and inclusion.
- Attracting and retaining people from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.
- Improving diversity in the senior Civil Service including representation of women at all grades and extending career opportunities to our people across all regions of the UK, and supporting flexible working.

“ We need to reflect modern Britain in all its diversity, not only in the Civil Service and the wider public sector but also across the professions. **”**

John Manzoni, Chief Executive of the Civil Service.

Why diversity and inclusion matters to the GCS

Diversity affects all that we do, from our workforce to the delivery of world class communications for all our public services and the Civil Service.

Performance

Creating an inclusive environment helps colleagues bring their best to the work they do. Ethnically diverse companies are 35% more likely to be in the top-performing quartile (McKinsey, 2015, ‘Diversity Matters’).

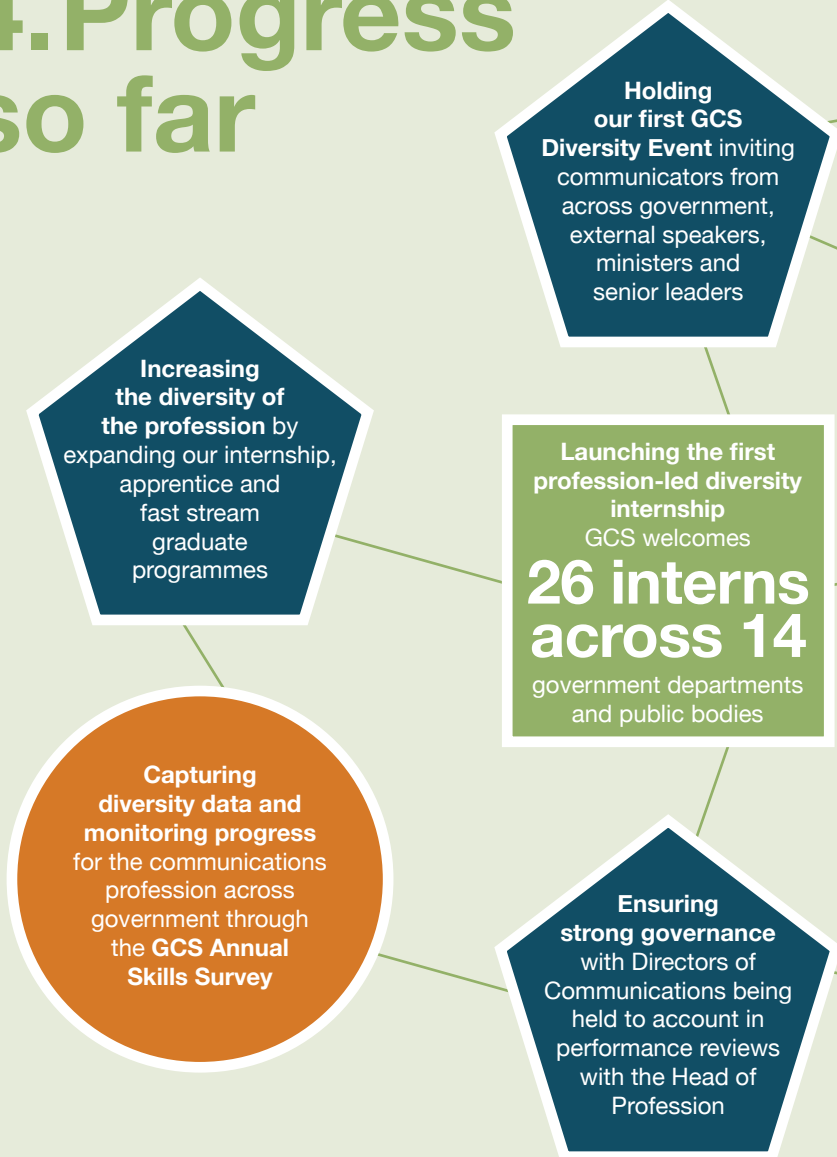
Attracting and retaining brilliant communicators

We value the diversity of expertise and experience we recruit and grow within the profession.

Engaged citizens

Ensuring that our work reflects and represents the views and expectations of people across the UK regions and nations. A more diverse and more inclusive Civil Service better represents the full spread of public opinion by bringing different points of view to the centre of the decision-making process.

4. Progress so far



Our centralised recruitment campaigns for entry level talent attracted approx.

9000 applications

leading to
20%

of BAME applicants who secured posts across government and agencies

Initiating the GCS Shadow Board to build better transparency around the work and leadership style of Directors of Communications

Reporting on diversity through a quarterly GCS Ministerial Board

Building on the success of our first apprenticeship programme, to increase the intake from

20 to 29 apprentices

with a focus on diversity and social mobility

Interview training and mock interview panels for senior level roles and **coaching and SCS networking opportunities** particularly for women seeking promotion

Increasing representation on the **GCS Early Talent Programme** with

20%

of participants from ALBs

15.5%

from outside London

5. The GCS diversity & inclusion priorities for 2017/18

Our vision is that the GCS becomes a leading employer and champion for reflecting modern Britain in all its diversity in public services and the Civil Service and across the marketing, PR and communications sector.

This GCS diversity and inclusion strategy supports the wider Civil Service ambitions for a more diverse Civil Service and focuses on recruitment, talent and leadership.

Our key objectives by the end of 2020

- To improve senior civil service diversity to ensure that our Senior Civil Servants (SCS) are representative of the society we serve.
- To improve BAME and women representation at all grades.
- To attract and retain GCS early talent from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

We will do this by:

- **Fostering a culture of inclusion** - incorporating flexible working, nurturing personal leadership styles and learning from others through shared networks across all regions of the UK.
- **Growing our diverse talent** - addressing diversity and inclusion in our talent pipelines by offering a wider range of development.
- **Building home-grown**, diverse senior talent through greater support to reach our top leadership positions, in particular representation of women at Director of Communications level.
- **Recruiting inclusively** - improving the future diversity of our profession by growing the number of apprentices and improving our recruitment practices.

“ This is about sustaining activities that make a difference through building on what we’ve achieved so far; embedding it, growing it and making a difference. ”

Michelle Cupples,
Deputy Director, GCS



6. Leadership objectives

As part of the Directors of Communications' overarching objectives for professional improvement in 2017/18 we commit to continuously improve and unite the profession by developing and promoting diversity across departments and arm's length bodies.

The GCS senior leadership team pledge to make communications directorates 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.

To create an open, respectful 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 diversity and equality activities the time and resources to undertake them.
- Taking action to improve People Survey inclusion and fair treatment scores.

To 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.



“ As a leadership team, we have made a commitment to improve our approach to inclusion by championing difference – celebrating our role models, understanding – and acting on – what our colleagues tell us. ”

Alex Aiken, Executive Director of Government Communications



To 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.
- Taking action to improve the GCS Skills Survey scores for under represented groups.

To 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.
- Working more closely with GCS colleagues across our ALBs and organising our training, operations, events and activities across the UK.

The diversity champions for the profession continue to play an important role in holding the profession to account and understanding progress against our policy and objectives.

In addition to the diversity and inclusion leadership objectives, diversity champions will take an active role through:

- Ownership and support for the diversity and inclusion plan, role modelling engagement within teams.
- Holding the profession to account and reporting back quarterly on progress against our policy and objectives.
- Contributing to and challenge for the development and implementation of this plan.
- Seeking opportunities to actively champion and promote all aspects of diversity and inclusion.
- Sponsoring diversity and inclusion initiatives led by the GCS Development Advisors Network.
- Being a diversity and inclusion ambassador for the GCS internally and externally by providing visible support.

7. Growing our diverse talent

Through recruitment, talent management and leadership practices we are driving better representation and accelerating our top talent to the most senior leadership positions.

Our Senior Talent Forum, comprising Directors of Communications, monitor fair and equal moderation of talent across gender and ethnicity and flexible working for appointments to our most senior leadership posts. It ensures selection boards and short lists are diverse. We also spot-check appointments for senior civil service roles for balance and fairness. We continue to focus on ensuring our talent programmes attract diverse candidates. We support candidates through mentoring, leadership training and coaching.

Recruiting inclusively



The Government Communication Service is passionate about recruiting strong communicators into the profession.

Alongside our apprenticeship, Fast Stream and diversity internship routes, the GCS also runs centralised cross-government recruitment campaigns to ensure profession wide consistency and fairness in our recruitment practices. We use name-blind recruitment for our recruitment campaigns and we advertise these campaigns across diverse networks such as Stonewall, Diversity Jobsite and Mumsnet.

All GCS vacancies are advertised on the GCS careers page to ensure internal staff in all government and public bodies have equal access to opportunities across the profession.

“Our ambition is to make GCS the ‘go to’ employer of choice so that we can attract and retain the most talented people – regardless of background, ethnicity, gender or disability”

Sam Lister, Director of Communications, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

What have we achieved so far?

- We have widened our search for diverse talent and improved access to government communications through a specialist GCS apprenticeship scheme, with an innovative outreach strategy.
- We have doubled our intake of communication Fast Streamers to 25 in the last year, and increased the intake of GCS apprentices from 20 in 2015/16 to 29 apprentices for the 2017 intake.
- In 2016/17 we introduced a bespoke GCS summer diversity internship programme to encourage students from more diverse backgrounds to gain experience in government communications.

- We have run centralised recruitment campaigns for entry level talent that have attracted approx. 9000 applications and led to 20% BAME applicants who secured posts across government and agencies.
- We incorporated ‘strength based’ interviews into new entry level Assistant and Information Officer (AIO/IO) and mid-level Senior Information Officer (SIO) grades, and Fast Stream recruitment. This combination of strength and competency based interviews has ensured a more open, inclusive approach to assessing candidates.
- Our AIO/IO recruitment is on an upward trajectory for BAME (number of applications up to 27% from 16%) following targeted marketing with the support of the Civil Service diversity networks.

In 2017/18, the GCS will commit to:

- Being early adopters for new recruitment techniques which limit unconscious bias and make our processes more inclusive.
- Expanding the use of strength based interviews alongside the existing GCS Competency Framework, working with Civil Service Chief Psychologists to develop training for interview panels.
- Continue our focus on marketing for diverse pipelines in AIO, IO, SIO and apprenticeships campaigns.
- Widen assessor training to upskill panel members on the GCS competency framework, diversity and inclusion profiles, and support consistency and fairness with assessment of potential candidates.

Government Communications Fast Stream

The GCS Communications Fast Stream launched in 2015/16 to recruit and develop the profession's next generation of leaders. The scheme continues to be one of the most popular Fast Stream scheme options. In 2016/17 we doubled our intake to 25 applicants on the specialist programme.

The Bridge Group [report](#) (February 2016) on socio-economic diversity in the Civil Service Fast Stream looked at why applicants from lower socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to apply to the Fast Stream, and are less likely to succeed if they do apply.

As a result of The Bridge Report the following actions were taken forward by GCS:

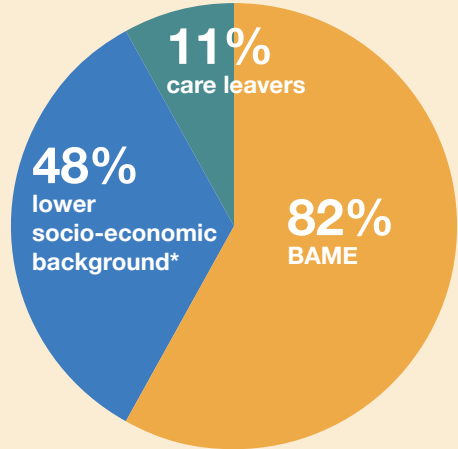
- Shortening the length of the recruitment process.
- Introducing a regional location for assessment centres to take place.
- Exploring greater use of strength based assessment.
- Updating candidate assessment materials and exercises to improve candidates' experience and engagement with the recruitment process.
- Selecting diverse Fast Stream assessors from a range of managers across GCS.

The GCS will monitor the diversity of the 2017 intake and report progress to the GCS Board of Ministers and Directors of Communications.

The GCS Diversity Internship

- In 2016/17 we launched a new GCS diversity internship programme. The targeted 6-12 weeks paid summer internship is open to students from BAME, socially or economically disadvantaged backgrounds, or care leavers. Selected candidates met 100% of the diversity criteria (see chart below).
- The GCS internship offers students the opportunity to undertake real work experience to give them exposure to the communications profession, experiences to talk about in interview and opportunities to develop their competencies.
- In Summer 2017 the GCS is welcoming 28 interns into the Civil Service and public bodies who will be joining from a wide range of departments and agencies.

2017 participants on the GCS diversity internship.



*composite socio-economic measure (education, free school meal eligibility, parental education & parental employment)

The GCS Diversity Internship



“ The GCS diversity internship is taking steps to create a more inclusive environment, one which better reflects the general population within the Civil Service.

How much you get out of it depends not only on how hard you work, but also the people you work with.

I've done it all - from media monitoring of government campaigns and news stories; filming interviews around

London, the East and South East of England, to social media listening during the appointment of a new Prime Minister and Cabinet reshuffle - it's safe to say that I've been part of history these last three and a half months.

I've been lucky enough to be part of a great team, whose encouragement, support and advice has enabled me to get the most out of my internship, grow as a communications professional and receive lots of information and support when thinking about the next step in my career, potentially working in government communications in the future.

Lena Ofosu-Apeasah
GCS Diversity Intern,
Cabinet Office



The GCS apprenticeship programme

The GCS apprenticeship programme, now in its second year has 30 additional apprentices starting in roles across the GCS in October 2017. This is a specialist communications apprenticeship programme, designed to bring talented young people into the GCS who would not have previously considered a career in government. We specifically target young people from BAME and lower socio-economic backgrounds.

43% of apprentices are BAME, up from 20% in the 2016 intake. In terms of social mobility, from our pipeline of applicants, only 4% came from an independent fee paying school and 78% of applicants' parents did not go to university.

“ I joined the Department for Business as an apprentice and have found it a great way to begin a career. When I joined I had little experience of communications – after 18 months of the apprenticeship scheme, I had worked in the Media, Internal Communications and Ministerial Visits Teams and achieved a higher qualification in Public Relations. I stayed on as a Ministerial Visits Manager and now have a new role as the Communications Directorate's Senior Professional Development Manager, for which my apprenticeship experience of workplace learning has prepared me well. **”**

Harry Wingfield
Senior Professional Development
Manager, Department for Business,
Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The GCS Apprentices

“ Throughout my apprenticeship the Government

Communications Service has given me the opportunity to work on flagship campaigns such as, the Get in Go Far campaign, Together We Can Tackle Child Abuse campaign and the Gender Pay Gap campaign, learning exactly how a campaign is formed, from the original planning to the final implementation. I have attended high profile events with ministers, including the Institute for Apprenticeship event, where I met the aspiring business woman Karen Brady and got to hear about her own career progression.

So far the highlight of my apprenticeship has to be when I was given a tour around the Prime Minister's private office 10 Downing Street as a celebration for National Apprenticeship Week!

Nieve Oakman, GCS Apprentice, Department for Education



“ I started my apprenticeship as an 18-year-old, straight out of sixth form. The GCS Apprenticeship programme has provided me with an immediate hands-on experience of working as a communications professional.

A GCS apprenticeship appealed to me as an attractive career pathway, rather than the traditional university route. My ambitions centered around combining practical learning with the opportunity to earn a salary. Since starting my role I have been involved in implementing various projects from 10 Downing Street and the Cabinet Office through the work of the GCS.

Not only have I been introduced to the world of full-time work in a historic organisation at the centre of government, I now have constant opportunities arising to further my career within the GCS. I wake up motivated everyday, knowing I'm doing something I enjoy whilst making a difference.

Giorgio Di Tunno GCS Apprentice, Cabinet Office

Nurturing our diverse talent in GCS

“ *We recognise that to be the best, we need the best – and this can only be achieved by an open, transparent culture and a workforce that is truly diverse. Our competitive talent programmes have been designed to include a wide range of development interventions, creating a clear talent pipeline for the communications profession.* **”**

Kohinoor Meghji, Senior HR Business Partner to the Government Communication Service.



The Government Communication Service is committed to developing exceptional communications practitioners and to establishing a strong, diverse pipeline for future leaders in government communications.

We want to build on our extensive learning and development curriculum and set out the skills communicators need and progression options to help develop their careers. Our Modern Communications Operating Model (MCOM) provides the framework to define career pathways and support progression through raising the profile of loans, secondments and interchange opportunities.

What have we achieved so far?

- The senior talent *Inspire* programme now incorporates a specific diversity and inclusion module for our future leaders to embed the profession's culture of inclusion and translate its commitment to diversity into action and results.
- We have increased ALB participation to 20% in the GCS Early Talent Programme.
- We introduced a standardised and fairer self nomination and application approach for participants for the Early Talent and senior *Inspire* programme, moving away from management-only endorsed applications.



In 2017/18, the GCS will commit to:

- Defining Career Pathways for the profession to signpost practical guidance, career development tools and support, so individuals can take ownership of their development.
- Building a career offer that is appealing and accessible to people from all backgrounds. We will highlight short term managed moves, secondments and longer term career development opportunities.
- Expanding the coaching offer more widely across the GCS to include communication professionals who are not currently on a talent scheme.
- Improving our diversity data (declarations) of senior talent *Inspire* candidates.
- Panels involved in approving applications, departmental sifts, or cross-government moderation will need to confirm they have completed unconscious bias training.

Early Talent and Inspire programmes

The senior *Inspire* programme is aimed at grades 6 and 7 (and equivalent) and the Early Talent programme is targeted at Assistant to Senior Information Officer level. They aim to develop excellence in leadership skills and build a strong talent pipeline for the profession.

Both schemes have been successful in attracting participants representing a more diverse gender and ethnic profile than that currently represented in communications or the wider Civil Service. However these proportions are not reflected in senior level communications roles across the GCS.

Overall applications to the Early Talent programme have risen from 42 for cohort 1 (2015) to 91 for cohort 3 (2017). A review of our 2016 intake on the Early Talent programme has shown that we have a 15% BAME population and 45% of applicants' parents did not go to university. Pipelines such as AIO/IO level recruitment and apprenticeships are essential in helping us to rebalance this mix.

We have made good progress across the talent schemes. The current *Inspire* cohort has a 60/40 women to men gender split, with nearly a quarter (22.5%) of participants from ALBs, and nearly a fifth (17.5%) based outside London. This compares to just over 10% from ALBs, or outside London in our pilot programme in 2014.

Both external and our own research has shown that mentoring, coaching and informal networks all offer proven benefits to individuals' career progression. GCS Early Talent and *Inspire* programmes, specifically looking at the link between executive coaching and measurable behaviour showed a positive correlation between executive coaching and increased self-efficacy, influencing skills and developing a growth mindset. Our focus going forward will be to raise the accessibility of these opportunities to our wide GCS member base, whilst ensuring a diverse range of mentors and coaches.

Increasing representation and inclusivity on the GCS Early Talent Programme

In the first 2015 intake for the GCS Early Talent Programme of 42 people, all but one of the participants worked in Whitehall departments (2.3%) and only four were based outside London (9.5%). Recognising that this was under representative of the GCS, we have expanded the programme to over 16 candidates from Arm's Length Bodies. Our marketing now better promotes the inclusive and flexible nature of the programme and has increased the opportunity for interested candidates to ask questions about their working patterns and locations.

To support people not living in London or working part time we now publish the curriculum in advance to allow for those with caring responsibilities to make arrangements around their learning commitments with alternative video conferences and dial-in options for our master classes.

As a result, the representation from ALBs and colleagues outside London has increased year on year. In the most recent cohort of the Early Talent Programme, 20% of participants are from ALBs, and 15.5% are from outside London.

Inclusive and diverse leaders

We expect our leaders to reflect the diversity of the audiences and communities we serve.

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 continue to share lessons from the careers of diverse colleagues and clearly set out the benefits of working for the GCS.

All directors of communications have a personal diversity and inclusivity objective that they share with leadership teams to ensure leaders at Deputy Director and G6/7 level and their equivalent mirror those objectives in supporting this diversity and inclusion strategy.

What have we achieved so far?

- We have developed an enhanced and diverse mentoring and coaching offer and revitalised SCS networking opportunities to provide more tailored, timely and accessible opportunities for all.
- We have built on existing executive interview support by offering interview training and established mock interview panels for senior level roles. We offered additional support for near-miss candidates including mentoring and coaching.
- We introduced a 'shadow board' of staff from underrepresented groups to participate in Directors of Communication monthly meetings to build capability and insight.

In 2017/18, the GCS will commit to:

- Using succession plans and development conversations to best effect.
- Identifying stretching 'stepping stone' senior roles and facilitating targeted 'managed moves'.
- Offering coaching to allow individuals a safe space to explore perceived lack of confidence about whether they 'fit' organisational expectations.
- Inviting BAME staff at Grade 6/ Grade 7 level (or equivalent) on talent or leadership development programmes to senior conferences for networking and speaking opportunities across functions and departments.
- Increasing take up of the GCS development offer for 'unconscious bias' training for leaders at senior (SCS1/2, Grade 6/7) or their equivalent.



Léonie Austin - Diversity Champion and Director of Communication, NHS Blood and Transplant



What do you think are the most compelling arguments in favour of greater diversity within the GCS?

For me it is crucial the profession reflects the society we serve. At NHS Blood and Transplant we need more blood, organ and stem cell donors from diverse backgrounds to meet the needs of patients who benefit from a close ethnic match. Having people in my marketing and

communications team from those backgrounds brings audience insight and helps us reach out in ways that are relevant to those communities.

Are there any D&I issues that you think are of particular importance?

In addition to ethnicity, which is important to the patients we serve, we are also able to offer flexible working. As a nationwide organisation we have a range of good quality marketing and communications roles in the main cities which means we can attract the best talent.

How has D&I changed since you started in the GCS?

I am delighted with the progress we have made over the last year, particularly in building the pipeline of professionals for the future. The truly diverse approach to giving more people experience of working in government communications is a great step forward.

What do you think are the next steps to be taken in addressing D&I?

We need to continue to recruit and develop people from all backgrounds and improve our approach to flexible working. It's important that we develop strong teams that allow for different working practices even in high pressured, fast moving environments.



8. Fostering a culture of inclusion

The GCS works across the UK and the world. We will develop and expand our training, operations, events and activities around the UK.

We are committed to creating a working environment that values difference and fosters an inclusive workplace culture, where staff across the GCS from all backgrounds can give their best, are treated fairly, valued for their contributions, and can progress their careers.

‘Be Yourself’ campaign at Department for Transport

When People Survey results showed that staff with a disability or in junior grades were less positive about work, Department for Transport (DfT) decided to put inclusion at its heart through creating its ‘Be Yourself’ campaign.

An ongoing campaign, ‘Be Yourself’ encourages everyone who works at DfT to feel able to bring their whole selves to work, through celebrating individuality and supporting story sharing.

‘Be Yourself’ involves staff as co-creators so that it isn’t just talking about inclusion – it is inclusive. It has resulted in staff:

- Wearing something that expressed their personality or identity.
- Taking photos and creating cards that said something about what makes them individual.
- Getting involved in and entering the ‘Be Yourself’ video challenge.

On the day of launch, 100 staff members shared something about themselves across DfT. As a result of the campaign’s rollout, 94% of staff said they felt comfortable at work, compared to the 87% pre-campaign baseline.

The biggest takeout from this campaign was that people work best and remain engaged and loyal when work enables them to be fully who they are.



Public Services and Arm's Length Bodies

Arm's Length Body (ALB) organisations are a core part of the work of government and wider public services. We know that drawing on the diversity of their communication and marketing professionals and their work gives a reach into the nations, communities and society that can feed back into central government to enrich policy and thinking.

Our research with a wide range of regional ALBs' practitioners showed a great passion for the profession. They also valued the development opportunities, tools, guidance and frameworks as part of the GCS membership offer. ALB members of the GCS strongly wanted to be part of a GCS community and saw a strong local network as particularly essential to the success of their jobs.

Our inclusivity lies in our shared aim to serve the public.

The voice of ALBs is helping the GCS to create and shape the profession to be a more open and accessible profession, designed to support, develop and include all members regardless of location, organisation or level.

What have we achieved so far?

- We now work more closely with GCS colleagues across our ALBs so we are demonstrably more inclusive of those outside of central government departments and not part of the Civil Service.
- We have achieved greater engagement with ALBs including establishing a single point of contact in each of the ALBs for the GCS.
- GCS Local have established a regional networking group.
- We rotate the Directors of Communications meetings across the nations and regions, most recently in Edinburgh and Cardiff.
- We run training events across the UK including most recently in Edinburgh, Bristol, Cardiff, Birmingham and Manchester.
- We established a rolling secondment within the Cabinet Office to support development and bring the ALB voice into GCS work.

In 2017/18, the GCS will commit to:

- Reviewing the training provision and accessibility for ALBs using digital learning options and events outside of London.
- Extending job and secondment opportunities on the GCS website beyond the Civil Service to public service outlets including NHS Jobs.
- Organise GCS development conferences in every region and nation.
- Setting up an inclusion network for the profession to provide support on barriers to progression and to share best practice.
- Supporting flexible working and nurturing personal leadership styles.

“ As an ALB secondee to the Cabinet Office I thoroughly recommend the experience as a chance to see how central government works, while also being able to share your ALB insight to help **”** shape thinking.

Ruth Verrall, Internal Communications Manager, NHS Blood and Transplant



9. Understanding our audiences

We have made good progress in understanding and communicating to our audiences but 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 audiences. Best practice guidance, training and insight will be shared collectively across the profession.

Outreach activity across communications teams has been vital in helping us better understand our audiences particularly for internships and apprenticeships open events and targeted recruitment materials that raise awareness of the GCS with diverse audiences.

Our Directors of Communications lead from the top, and will be setting personal objectives – from understanding personal style to being aware of our own unconscious bias.

Through leadership, understanding and engagement we believe we can lead the way on diversity and inclusion, for our profession within government and also for the communications profession across the wider public, third and private sectors.

NHS Blood and Transplant #ImThere campaign

As communications and marketing professionals we need to reflect the society we serve. At NHS Blood and Transplant we need more blood donors from black African and black Caribbean backgrounds to meet the demand for blood required by sickle cell patients. We are better able to reach these communities if we understand the cultural differences and this is much easier with people from a similar background working on the campaign.

Research identified those people most likely to become blood donors from the black community and that a positive call to action would be most effective. It also showed there was little awareness that the treatment for sickle cell disease was blood transfusions. This insight helped inform the campaign proposition to be there helping someone else while getting on and living your life.



The campaign kicked off in National Blood Week in June 2017 with a PR launch and an appeal to stakeholders to support our drive to recruit 40,000 new black donors. We have a range of activity lined up including attending high footfall events, working with churches with large black congregations, paid media and media partnerships, use of influencers and engaging with the sickle cell community.

NHS Blood and Transplant is urging people to say #ImThere and start saving lives by registering as new blood donors at www.blood.co.uk or via the 'NHS Give Blood' app. Giving only takes an hour and you can save up to three lives. Whether you are a long-term donor or newly registered, show your support for blood donation and those patients whose lives depend on it today by saying #ImThere on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

10. Accessible Communications

We are committed to making our GCS communications as clear and accessible as possible. This means ensuring government messages reach target audiences and are in formats that are appropriate to individuals with specific information needs.

Our ambition is to make the GCS a leader in the field of accessible information. We remain dedicated to meeting our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people and the public sector Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out our activities.

The determination we have to make our communications accessible is not simply because of legislation; it is also because we believe everyone should have equal access to information. We understand the barriers disabled people face and think that access to government information should not be one of them.

All government communicators should understand the importance of accessible information and feel confident in using the most appropriate communication channels and formats to reach people with disabilities.

To meet this accessibility ambition, the GCS will commit to:

- Working with the Office for Disability Issues to develop new guidance on making government communications accessible. This will be published by October 2017.
- By March 2018, government communicators will be trained on accessibility to help them feel confident and competent in producing accessible information.
- We will pilot a new approach to make three major government campaigns fully accessible. Learnings will be shared across the GCS and government departments will be supported to adopt the approach with their future campaigns.



Outreach

Outreach plays a crucial role in improving diversity, raising awareness for the jobs and career paths available in the public sector and inspiring people from under-represented backgrounds to aim high.

The GCS want to reach out to people at different stages of informal education, from secondary school to college to university. A range of university visits, discovery days and exchange opportunities for school children to learn about the GCS will be planned for 2017/18.

We are encouraging GCS members (at all grades) to support outreach activities in 2017/18 including a new schools outreach programme targeting BAME and deprived communities across the UK.

In 2017/18, the GCS is piloting a schools outreach programme with students from lower socio-economic communities across the UK to attract them to a career in the GCS and Civil Service. Using an interactive 'crisis communications' simulation exercise, specially developed for the GCS, we challenge Year 12 school children to experience what it is like to be a government communicator. Raising awareness of the important work that government communicators do day in day out matters for building our pipeline of talent for the future. We are piloting in four schools across London and Newcastle during summer before a planned roll out in autumn 2017.



Ministry of Defence (MOD) BAME Outreach

The Directorate of Defence Communications in MOD approached BAME focused community groups and charities to offer free communications and social media coaching. To date we have worked with two major 'hub' organisations:

Working with the Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI) – a confederation of over 5,000 charities, MOD ran a social media coaching session and distributed their social media top tips and

offered follow-up coaching sessions with BAME focused organisations.

On 20 June the Foundation for Social Improvement hosted their annual 'Big Abilities Day', a series of workshops and individual sessions for charities who need help with a variety of topics such as communication, finance and governance. MOD are now the official helpers for marketing and communication.

MOD's communications function have worked with the Hackney Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) to offer workshops on social media and opportunities to join the GCS.



Home Office and EY Smart Futures Programme

The Home Office is collaborating with the EY Foundation, an independent charity that works with disadvantaged young people, to build and develop routes into education, employment and enterprise. The 'Smart Futures' programme is designed to support young people aged 17-18 from lower socio-economic backgrounds towards a rewarding career, through either securing a good first job or progressing to further education.

The Home Office Communications team hosted three participants over three days to provide an insight into communications, campaigns and social media.

Simon Wren, Director of Communications, spoke with students during their visit. "I'm so pleased that we have been able to host these really promising young adults. They were great, really enthusiastic and engaged, and they have given us even more than we have given them – by openly sharing with our colleagues what they thought about the Home Office."





11.GCS commitments to diversity & inclusion

Our vision remains for the GCS to become a leading employer and champion for reflecting modern Britain in all its diversity. It supports wider Civil Service ambitions of the Chief Executive, John Manzoni for a more diverse Civil Service.

The purpose of a new strategy is to renew our commitment, embed what we have learnt and build on the range of activities across the GCS.

We will do this by:

- **Fostering a culture of inclusion** - incorporating flexible working, nurturing personal leadership styles and supporting shared networks across all regions of the UK
- **Growing our diverse talent** - addressing diversity and inclusion in our talent programme pipelines
- **Building home-grown**, diverse talent through greater support to reach our top leadership positions, in particular representation of women
- **Recruiting inclusively** - improving the future diversity of our profession by growing the number of apprentices and further improving our recruitment practices.

On talent and recruitment the GCS will commit to:

- Expanding '**strength based**' **interviewing** alongside our existing GCS Competency Framework.
- Continue our focus on **outreach marketing** for diverse pipelines for our entry level and apprenticeships campaigns.
- Widening **assessor training** to upskill GCS panel members in diversity and inclusion profiles and consistency and fairness of assessment of potential candidates.
- A **schools outreach** programme targeting Year 11 and Year 12 students from lower socio-economic communities across the UK to attract them to a career in the Civil Service. We are currently piloting this in schools across London and Newcastle before a planned roll out from autumn 2017.
- Defining **Career Pathways** signposting practical guidance and tools so members can take clearer ownership of career development.
- Short term **secondments** across Departments and roles.
- Capturing **diversity data (declarations)** of senior talent programme *Inspire* candidates.

- More inclusive **nominations for selection** to talent programme. Panels involved in sifting/moderating applications, will need to confirm they have completed **unconscious bias training**.

On leadership, GCS will commit to:

- Identifying stretching '**stepping stone**' senior roles and facilitating targeted 'managed moves'.
- **Coaching** to allow individuals a safe space to explore lack of confidence about whether they 'fit' organisational expectations.
- Inviting **BAME** members on talent or leadership development programmes to **SCS conferences** for networking opportunities across functions and departments.

On inclusion, GCS will commit to:

- Reviewing **training provision/ accessibility for ALBs and UK nations**, through using digital learning and events.
- Extending **job/secondment opportunities** on our GCS website beyond Civil Service to public service outlets, such as NHS Jobs.
- Supporting **flexible working**.

12.Data and monitoring progress

Summary of Office for National Statistics (ONS) Civil Service Statistics

The table below indicates the diversity declarations for Civil Servants who declared their profession in communications.*

Civil Service Statistics – ONS					
		2016/17		2015/16	
		Communications Profession	Civil Service	Communications and marketing profession	Civil Service
Gender	Male	42%	46%	43%	45.9%
	Female	58%	54%	57%	54.1%
Ethnicity	White	88%	89%	88%	89.4%
	BAME	12%	11%	12%	10.6%
Disability	Declared disability status	8%	9%	7%	8.9%
	No declared disability status	92%	91%	93%	91.1%

*These figures are based on 3,405 survey responses.

Civil Service People Survey

We will continue to use the Civil Service People Survey to assess the profession on engagement. The 2016 People Survey results for the function show that the GCS is one of the leading professions on inclusivity and fair treatment. However further work needs to take place on discrimination, and bullying and harassment. These commitments have been embedded into the GCS leadership objectives.

GCS Skills Survey

For the first time in 2017 GCS introduced diversity questions in the annual GCS Skills Survey, which reaches a much wider membership of the GCS, not all of whom are Civil Servants. This initiative was in direct response to feedback from the newly set up Shadow Board and now includes many more members in ALBs.

The aim of adding D&I questions to this survey was to:

- Establish a baseline of diversity and equality data.
- Build a better understanding of the link between diversity and self-assessment of skills in each of the MCOM capabilities.
- Investigate whether there is any link between diversity and the self-reported ability to demonstrate the leadership behaviours outlined in the Civil Service Leadership statement.

42% of the profession completed the GCS Skills Survey 2017, key relevant findings are:

- Those with a Personal Development Plans (PDPs) report higher levels of skills.
- Women are less likely to have PDP than men.
- Part time workers are less likely to have a PDP or do CPD than full time workers.
- 52% of people with a disability faced barriers to developing leadership skills compared to 37% the profession as a whole.
- 8% of people who are gay or lesbian did not feel able to collaborate across the profession compared to 4% of the profession as a whole.
- 6% of people who were gay or lesbian disagreed that they welcomed challenge however uncomfortable compared to 3% of the profession as a whole.

Along with the initiatives and actions outlined in this strategy, the GCS will commit to:

- Continue to collect and analyse robust data through supporting departments in their initiatives to increase diversity declarations.
- Encourage more staff to complete the annual MCOM Skills Survey so that the diversity data can be used against the current benchmark.
- Run focus groups with GCS communicators to get behind the numbers and firmly set out what needs to be improved and how.
- Repeat the GCS Skills Survey in 2018 to monitor progress.



13. Support and engagement

All GCS members at every level are responsible for leading, contributing and embedding the diversity and inclusion initiatives as part of our collective professional and personal development.

Some practical ways members can support in their departments and Arm's Length Bodies include:



Employee network group

Holding events within your departments and using diversity forums as a safe channel to seek advice and support.



Diversity days

Holding conferences, insight sessions and training days to raise awareness and understanding.



Shadow Board

Nominating staff to participate as Shadow Board members to Directors of Communication, as membership is renewed every nine months.



Focus groups

Staff from across departments and public bodies sharing their perspective on issues and defining action plans resulting from the GCS Skills Survey.



Volunteer to be a mentor

The GCS Mentoring Programme was launched in 2012, and is an excellent way for experienced communication professionals to share their skills, knowledge and experience.

GCS Flexible working network



Sara Vogt

Head of Corporate Communications,
Ministry of Justice.

Why does the GCS need a part-time network?

While communications professionals right across the GCS already work part-time, I've heard many people say there is a need for more consistency on how it's applied, and on attitudes towards part-time working.

I think it's important that we send out clearer signals as GCS senior leaders – whether we work part-time or not – that part-time and flexible working in the GCS is endorsed and benefits us as a profession.

Our new network has been created to promote the value of part-time and flexible working, and bust myths, while also providing practical advice. We want everyone working part-time

to feel that the GCS supports them to work part-time, and for even more managers to understand the benefits. There is also a role for championing job-sharing: I had a fantastic experience job-sharing in a challenging G7 role at the Cabinet Office, whilst working three days, yet it's still uncommon: only 0.5% staff across the Civil Service (People Survey 2015) job-share.

Why is this important?

Part time and flexible working broadens the available talent pool for roles and also helps increase the diversity of people and thinking in the GCS. Personally I feel strongly about this because I've experienced first-hand the opportunities to do exciting roles in the GCS part-time – across strategic communications, campaigns and internal communications - while retaining work-life balance.

How can I get involved?

You can become part of our virtual community by signing up to the Civil Service job-sharers and part-time group on LinkedIn, where you can share your ideas for how we shape the network in the year ahead, and hear about upcoming activity.

Please send us your feedback on this strategy, and tell us about the initiatives you are doing in your organisation to improve GCS diversity and inclusion at gcs@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

**Tweet us at @UKgovcomms
#GCSdiversity**