

Press release: Government outlines plan to become the UK's most inclusive employer by 2020

The Civil Service Diversity & Inclusion Strategy outlines a range of ambitious proposals to achieve this aim, including:

- to build a dedicated ethnic minority programme to improve the representation of ethnic minority staff at the most senior levels across the Civil Service;
- to create a Diverse Leadership Task Force that will report to the Cabinet Secretary;
- to publish a data dashboard tracking progress on diversity and inclusion targets by April 2018;
- to establish a new framework for measuring inclusion;
- to embed diversity and inclusion in Single Departmental Plans.

The Civil Service has already made significant progress towards increasing the diversity of its workforce. Introducing measures such as anonymised recruitment and making Permanent Secretaries accountable to the Head of the Civil Service for improving diversity and inclusion have made a positive difference to the amount of under-represented groups in the Civil Service.

On gender whilst 42% of current Senior Civil Servants are women, in 2017, 49% of all new recruits into the SCS were women. The proportion of women at Senior Civil Service level (42%) is now greater than the representation of female executives and Board Directors in FTSE 100 companies (26%).

The proportion of ethnic minority civil servants has increased rapidly from 9.4% in 2012 to 11.2% today, and representation of disabled people within the Civil Service has increased every year since 2010, from 7.6% to 9.9% in 2017. Only 4.6% of Senior Civil Servants are from ethnic minority communities, however, and only 3.3% report having a disability, so there is more to be done.

Speaking today at the launch of the strategy, Caroline Nokes, Minister for Government Resilience and Efficiency, said:

The Civil Service leads the way on diversity in many ways. The gender pay gap is lower than in the private sector, we have significantly increased our representation of minority groups at every level, and our award winning Fast Stream programme is now broadly representative of the wider population in terms of diversity characteristics and social background. We are committed to driving this further, however, and I am proud that we are putting inclusion at the forefront of our agenda and for the Civil Service to act as a leading light for other organisations across

the UK.

Cabinet Secretary Jeremy Heywood said:

In order to serve the country to the best of its ability, the Civil Service must ensure that it reflects the diversity of the UK. Having a diverse workforce is not enough though, if it is to be truly brilliant, the Civil Service must strive to be inclusive and must create an environment where differences of thought and outlook are not only respected, but expected.

Although progress has been considerable over the past few years, today's strategy highlights how we must go further. Our ambition to become the most inclusive employer by 2020 is testament to our commitment to diversity and inclusion and to making the best use of talent that exists in all parts of society.

John Manzoni, Chief Executive of the Civil Service and Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary, added:

There are many studies and reports that evidence that diverse and inclusive organisations perform better and have happier people. The Civil Service, in order to ensure that it delivers the best quality service to the taxpayer, has a duty to attract and retain the best people from all corners of society. Our commitment to becoming the most inclusive employer in the UK by 2020 should also set an example to other public and private sector organisations.

[News story: PM call with Chancellor Merkel: 15 October 2017](#)

A Downing Street spokesperson said,

The Prime Minister spoke to Chancellor Merkel earlier this morning.

They discussed Iran and President Trump's decision not to recertify the nuclear deal. They agreed the UK and Germany both remained firmly committed to the deal. They also agreed the international community needed to continue to come together to push back against

Iran's destabilising regional activity, and to explore ways of addressing concerns about Iran's ballistic missile programme. They agreed to discuss further at the European Council in Brussels next week.

They looked ahead to next week's Council, agreeing on the importance of continued constructive progress in the UK's exit negotiations.

News story: Foreign Secretary statement on Somalia attack

The UK condemns in the strongest terms the cowardly attacks in Mogadishu, which have claimed so many innocent lives. My thoughts are with families of the victims, and the Government and people of Somalia at this difficult time. I would also like to praise the swift response of Mogadishu's security and first responders.

Those responsible have shown no regard for human life or the suffering of the Somali people. The UK will continue to support Somalia in the fight against terrorism.

News story: Foreign Secretary hosts talks with European foreign ministers

The Foreign Secretary today (Sunday 15 October) held talks with foreign ministers from eight European allies.

Boris Johnson was joined by the foreign ministers of Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia at Chevening House to discuss shared challenges and the UK's continued commitment to European security.

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Our departure from the EU will make no difference to Britain's

unconditional and immovable commitment to the security and defence of Europe.

This meeting was a further demonstration that the UK is a vital partner in the security of our continent.

The Foreign Secretary will tomorrow (Monday 16 October) travel to Luxembourg for the EU Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) where he will continue his discussions with European counterparts on the implications of the US announcement on the Iran nuclear deal.

The UK will continue to work closely with the international community to preserve the deal. In parallel with efforts to keep the nuclear deal, collective concerns about Iran's ballistic missile programme and regional activities must be addressed.

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The Foreign Secretary hosted the following European foreign ministers at Chevening today:

- Bulgarian Foreign Minister Ekaterina Zaharieva
- Croatian Foreign Minister Marija Pejčinović Burić
- Czech Deputy Foreign Minister Ivo Sramek
- Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjártó
- Polish Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski
- Romanian Foreign Minister Teodor Melescanu
- Slovakian State Secretary Ivan Korčok
- Slovenian State Secretary Andrej Logar

Press release: Industry-led review details plans to supercharge UK Artificial Intelligence (AI) industry

The Government has been urged to help the UK become the clear world leader in the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) – to boost productivity, advance health care, improve services for customers and unlock £630bn for the UK economy.

Experts from industry and academia today (Sunday 15 October 2017) unveiled new proposals for how Government can work with industry to stay ahead of the competition and grow the UK's use of AI right across the economy – from smarter scheduling of operations in health care, to hiring on-demand self-driving cars.

The Industrial Strategy Green Paper, published in January, identified AI as a major, high-potential opportunity for the UK to build a world-leading future sector of our economy.

The independent review, 'Growing the Artificial Intelligence Industry in the UK', was announced as part of the Digital Strategy in March, and led by Dame Wendy Hall, Professor of Computer Science at the University of Southampton, and Jérôme Pesenti, Chief Executive of BenevolentTech. The reviewers were asked to report on how this pioneering technology can best thrive and grow in the UK and will inform BEIS and DCMS policy making relevant to this exciting new sector.

Culture Secretary Karen Bradley said:

I want the UK to lead the way in Artificial Intelligence. It has the potential to improve our everyday lives – from healthcare to robots that perform dangerous tasks.

We already have some of the best minds in the world working on Artificial Intelligence, and the challenge now is to build a strong partnership with industry and academia to cement our position as the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Artificial intelligence presents us with a unique opportunity to build on our strengths and track record of research excellence by leading the development and deployment of this transformational technology.

This important review exemplifies the world-class expertise the UK already has in AI, demonstrating the huge social and economic benefits its use can bring.

We will continue to work with the sector in the coming months to secure a comprehensive Sector Deal that make the UK the go to place for AI and helps us grasp the opportunities that lie ahead.

Many sectors across the UK economy are already embracing innovation through AI and benefitting from its use in how they do their business day-to-day including:

- Health: Using the most advanced Artificial Intelligence, Your.MD has built the world's first AI Personal Health Guide that provides users immediate trustworthy healthcare advice from the NHS to anyone with access to a mobile phone;
- Banking: To help verify customer identity and increase security for HSBC

customers, the bank has created an AI chatbot, Olivia, who can assist customers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with their enquiries;

- Education: With technology that records patterns of behaviour, including what learning style works for each student, CENTURY, an AI platform, is helping children learn and teachers provide more personalised education programmes, with feedback and suggestions to help fill knowledge gaps;
- Legal services: AI is helping lawyers to do legal searches and to draft the best standard documents, the law firm Pinsent Masons has developed its own team of computer scientists and legal engineers to put AI into practical context for its lawyers; and
- Cars: Driverless cars are set to make the roads safer for pedestrians and car drivers alike, with companies like Oxbotica developing fully autonomous operating systems that diagnose vehicle issues and identify the best, most logical route on the move.

AI is also being deployed in a variety of different ways to assist businesses and consumers such as:

- protecting consumers and shoppers against spam and bank fraud;
- computer vision that monitors CCTV to improve safety;
- managing and monitoring supply chains to reduce loss and waste;
- improving electricity grid management to save costs and reduce CO2 emissions; and
- using data to provide personal shopping recommendations.

Professor Dame Wendy Hall, Regius Professor of Computer Science at the University of Southampton said:

I was very honoured to be asked to co-chair this review at a time when AI is set to make major changes to the way we live and work. I'm particularly keen to ensure that we use it to inform the establishment of initiatives and programmes to help us extract the most value from artificial intelligence for the country; that includes an emphasis on increasing and improving our skill levels to prepare the workforce for the number of jobs the industry will need for the future.

AI has been around for a very long time as a concept and this latest surge of technological development is likely to see automation continue to escalate and accelerate in every walk of life. Now is the time for us all – scientists, researchers, entrepreneurs and the government – to come together and address the issues about how AI is going to impact society and seek ways to ensure that we're able to deliver the great breakthroughs the technology has the potential to deliver.

Jérôme Pesenti, CEO of BenevolentTech, the technology division of BenevolentAI said:

In our AI review, we focused on recommendations that are both practicable and deliverable. By following these recommendations, Government, Academia and Industry can help strengthen the UK's position in the global AI market. Our proposals are deliberately specific and boil down to three fundamentals – enable better access to data, create a greater supply of AI skills and promote the uptake of AI. I am looking forward to working with Government, Academia and Industry to drive these changes.

The report makes 18 recommendations for how to make the UK the best place in the world for businesses developing AI to start, grow, and thrive including:

- Skills: increasing the UK's AI expertise through new initiatives including an industry-funded Masters programme, and conversion courses to bring a broader range of people into the field;
- Increasing uptake: helping organisations and workers understand how AI can boost their productivity and make better products and services, including public services;
- Data: ensuring that people and organisations can be confident that use of data for AI is safe, secure and fair by making more data available, including from publicly-funded research; and
- Research: building on the UK's strong record in cutting-edge AI research, including making the Alan Turing Institute a national institute for AI.

These recommendations will now be carefully considered in discussions towards a potential Industrial Strategy sector deal between Government and the AI industry.

As part of the Industrial Strategy, the Government has increased investment in research and development over the next 4 years by £4.7 billion to create

jobs and raise living standards, including through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

The Business Secretary announced in April that the first £1 billion of investment is being made in six key areas in 2017/18, driving progress and innovation that will create opportunities for businesses and sectors across the UK.