

New plans to increase Civil Service diversity and better represent the people it serves

- New diversity and inclusion plan will help levelling up, as civil servants will better reflect the people they serve
- Engagement with schools with higher proportion of children on free schools meals expanded
- Civil Service to focus on creating a truly inclusive workforce, with diversity not an end in itself but a way of delivering better outcomes for citizens

The people who design and deliver government services across the UK should better reflect those they serve, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Steve Barclay has said.

His remarks come as the Civil Service launches its new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which will see the public sector draw on the widest range of talent from different geographical, social and ethnic backgrounds.

The strategy also steps up a range of engagement with schools and communities in order to increase diversity, including:

- 50 new Enterprise Advisers, to work directly with schools and colleges across the UK to raise awareness of and encourage education leavers into Civil Service roles
- Expanding outreach to schools with a higher proportion of students on free school meals
- Recruiting 1,000 prison leavers into Civil Service roles by the end of 2023, to give people from a wide variety of backgrounds a second chance in life
- Working with five local authority areas (Greater Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, North East Local Enterprise and West of England) to attract a broader range of talent into entry-level recruitment, including the Civil Service Fast Stream

Diversity of thought and embracing different perspectives is also a focus of the new strategy, with measures to ensure that groupthink is avoided.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Steve Barclay said:

It's vital that the Civil Service reflects the people it serves right across the UK.

That's why we're relocating Civil Service roles out of London, allowing us to draw better on the skills and talent of people across the country.

This will help us level up the country, while bringing in more key skills in areas such as data and technology.

As part of a broader drive to ensure value for taxpayers money and to reduce spends on consultancy in government, the Civil Service will also become less reliant on the advice of external organisations for its diversity advice and policy. This will include those whose activities sometimes do not align to the Civil Service's commitment to impartiality. A specialist in-house team will ensure that the new strategy is being successfully implemented.

Chief Operating Officer of the Civil Service and Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary Alex Chisholm said:

The Civil Service aims to be a model employer, attracting and making the most of all the talents available to us across the UK.

This new strategy will help us to deliver on this goal, strengthening our ability to meet the changing needs of modern Britain.

It is also an important part of our ongoing Government Reform programme".

Procedures will also be tightened up, in order to make sure that political views do not influence Civil Service advice on diversity and inclusion policies and actions, including through stronger internal guidance.

Clear action on stamping out bullying, discrimination and harrassment is also being taken, including implementing the recommendations of the 2018 Dame Sue Owen review and creating an open and transparent culture of reporting incidents, including through the Speak Up campaign.

The strategy launched today will create a Civil Service that understands, and is drawn from, the communities it serves. Through the Places for Growth programme, 22,000 Civil Service roles will be relocated out of London, contributing to levelling up and meaning that policy makers are closer to the people they serve. 2,000 roles have already moved and departments have already moved out of the capital. 50% of Senior Civil Service roles will also be located outside of London by 2030.

By moving more government policy jobs across the UK, people across the country will have the opportunity to influence key UK Government decision-making without having to move to the capital. Glasgow has already been announced as the location for the Cabinet Office's second headquarters and the Ministry of Justice will also be expanding their presence in Wales.

Added emphasis will be put on diversity within teams, ensuring those working on public services have different perspectives, experiences and insight. This will help innovation, problem solving and promote stronger decision making. To do this, line managers will be encouraged to develop diversity of thought

and avoid groupthink. Civil Service training will be adapted so that managers are able to unlock diversity of thinking.

The government is also partnering with national and local media to highlight the range of Civil Service roles available outside of London. The partnership will demonstrate the diversity of background and location of staff across the UK, and signpost opportunities for people to pursue a career in the Civil Service outside of London.

The launch of today's strategy also delivers on the commitment made within the Declaration on Government Reform in June 2021.