

New programme aimed to boost diversity in boardrooms

- Government launches new programme to boost diversity in public boardrooms
- New scheme will spread opportunity across the UK as part of levelling up drive
- Aspiring board members to receive practical boardroom experience, knowledge and skills

Today, (2 September 2022) the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Greg Clark MP, has launched a UK-wide pilot Boardroom Apprentice programme to develop aspiring board members for positions across the public and voluntary sectors.

The programme aims to create a pipeline of more diverse talent to ensure public and voluntary sector boardrooms more closely reflect the communities they serve across the UK.

Candidates will undertake 12 months of board learning, development and placements, arming them with the knowledge and practical experience they need to become board members.

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Greg Clark MP, said:

Our boardrooms should be open to the best talent available.

I encourage aspiring board members from all backgrounds to apply for this unique opportunity to expand their skills, grow their knowledge and gain invaluable experience.

Today's announcement builds on a successful programme in Northern Ireland that has already seen over 50% of participants appointed to a board position within 12 months post completion.

Born to a Jamaican father and mother from Northern Ireland, David is a class of 2021 participant on the Boardroom Apprentice programme. David has been disabled since birth and has sought to overcome some of the challenges experienced by persons with disabilities.

David Johnston, Boardroom Apprentice, Community Relations Council, said:

Being part of the Boardroom Apprentice programme as a privilege.

For me the Boardroom Apprentice programme has reinforced the importance of being motivated and committed to enhancing public service delivery. Diversity is in the DNA of the Boardroom Apprentice programme, so apply and be the change that you want to

see.

Jo McGinley, from Derry/Londonderry in Northern Ireland, completed the NI Boardroom Apprentice programme in 2020. She applied to the programme because, her family and herself had a huge amount of support from voluntary and public sectors and she wanted to give something back to her local community.

Jo McGinley, Non-Executive Director on the Board of a local charity, said:

My impression was that you only went on to a Board when you retired or when you were senior in an organisation. Boardroom Apprentice fundamentally changed my opinion on that. The programme gives participants, regardless of their background or education; the knowledge, experience, and skills to sit on a Board.

I gained practical experience sitting on a Board, increased my understanding of the role of a Board member and developed a fantastic network of support. So, the advice that I'd give anyone who is thinking of going for the Boardroom Apprentice programme is to do it!

As a result of completing the Boardroom Apprentice programme, Jo is now a Non-Executive Director on the Board of a local charity.

The programme forms part of the government's wider mission to level up the country and strengthen the Union by spreading opportunity and improving diversity of thought, background, experience and geographic location of Board candidates.

We expect to open to apprentice applications in the autumn.