

[News story: Jeremy Hunt launches reverse mentoring scheme for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic \(BAME\) staff](#)

To mark the end of Black History Month, the Foreign Secretary has launched a new reverse mentoring scheme at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) for ethnic minority staff.

The scheme will see senior figures from across the FCO paired with ethnic minority staff in junior grades within the Department, to help challenge ingrained views on what talent looks like, break down stereotypes and biases, get fresh perspectives and help improve diversity in middle and senior grades.

Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt said:

In the twenty-first century it is essential that our diplomats look more like our country as a whole. Especially when 2 of Britain's greatest assets are our diversity and deep inter-country ties.

Despite the improvements we've made on improving overall diversity, there remains a stubborn problem in improving racial diversity at the Foreign Office at senior grades, particularly amongst black staff.

Our reverse mentoring scheme will be a practical way for us to challenge stereotypes and improve diversity. It will help us use the fantastic people the FCO employs to forge stronger connections and boost our prosperity.

[Black History Month video](#)

The announcement comes following the recent publication of a new Foreign Office report, ['Black skin, Whitehall: Race and the Foreign Office, 1945 to 2018'](#) which provides an insight into the history of ethnic minority staff in the department over the last 70 years.

Although ethnic minority staff currently make up 13.4% of Foreign Office staff, 62.5% of those who have declared their heritage have spent over a decade in the lowest grades without progression, compared to 47% of all staff.

The new programme will help leaders understand how biases around race, gender, class and educational background can sometimes mean that they fail to recognise different types of talent, and how these biases can keep ethnic minority staff stuck in the most junior grades in the Foreign Office. It will also help create a network of champions, mentors and coaches required to help

move careers forward.

The scheme is part of a suite of measures to improve diversity in the FCO, including ethnic minority representation on the FCO Board, a continuing schools and university outreach programme, and an exciting new talent programme for ethnic minority staff.

Earlier this year, the Business In The Community (BITC) Diversity Benchmark awarded the FCO a silver banding for gender, and a gold banding for race. The awards recognised the FCO's strong commitment to creating inclusive workplaces.

Background

Further information