

Growing Government Science and Engineering (GSE) talent

News story

Supporting diverse STEM talent from early career to become highly influential and effective scientists and engineers in government.

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Growing diverse STEM talent from early career to highly influential leaders in government.



The Government Science & Engineering (GSE) profession has been supporting new joiners to the civil service through the Science & Engineering Fast Stream (SEFS) Programme. The programme has grown steadily across the years starting with a small cohort of 2 in 2014 to a current cohort of 60 with another 47 joining the scheme in October 2021.

In our revamped GSE Strategy, launching in July 2021, the profession is looking to maintain the growth of the scheme to ensure every aspect of government is supported by a diverse range of people and skills. We recognise how important it is to have science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills in government and our profession and this strategy commits to increasing and supporting diverse STEM talent from early career to become highly influential and effective scientists and engineers in government.

The revised GSE Strategy outlines a commitment to increase the promotion of STEM apprenticeships in departments and increase STEM outreach to diversify our early career talent pools through an annual STEM challenge event and the Science and Technology Network.

The strategy outlines our ambition to identify talented people and increase their opportunities for senior leadership roles by communicating and embedding GSE talent offers in departments and put career planning in place within departments so GSE members can apply for senior roles. We want to do this in order to develop confident science and engineering leaders that use their expertise to influence policy making decisions and who lead others by developing bespoke leadership learning offers. This will include established mentorship and coaching programmes.

The talent section of the strategy outlines continued development and having

a strong sense of belonging through a connected and well-engaged SEFS Alumni network that are closely linked with the network of government chief scientific advisers. This will be supported by promoting the SEFS Alumni network as an internal consultancy for science and engineering advice and we aim to ensure the network can be accessed across government, raising the profile and status of SEFS graduates.

These are some of the talent initiatives and commitments outlined in the [GSE Strategy](#). If you want to get involved in any of the projects get in touch with gse@go-science.gov.uk.

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[New trade report argues UK should reject 'green protectionism' and harness free market to address climate crisis](#)

A new report published today [21 July] outlines the role free trade and free-market can play in accelerating the global transition to a low-carbon economy, challenging green protectionism.

The second report by the Board of Trade – Green Trade – shows how free markets are critical to tackling climate change, enabling the free flow of information and proliferation of green technology, challenging the narrative that free trade is a threat to the environment. It also addresses green protectionism, whereby environmental aims are used as a cover to enact damaging protectionist policies.

The Board demonstrates how green trade presents a major economic opportunity for Britain that will drive high-value jobs and sustainable growth into every part of the country. The report encourages the UK to champion free trade and bring together the trade and climate agendas on the global stage.

It recommends the UK leverages its trade agenda to speed up the global green transition by:

- promoting the UK's green exports and technology overseas
- using the UK's independent trade policy to reduce barriers to green trade and tackle environmentally damaging market distortions – such as industrial subsidies
- attracting foreign investment to build the UK's green industrial base

The new report will be launched today at a Board of Trade meeting at Trades Hall in Glasgow, hosted by International Trade Secretary Liz Truss, where she will be joined by Advisers to the Board of Trade as part of a two-day visit to Scotland. The meeting comes ahead of the UK hosting COP26 in Glasgow this November.

During her visit, the Secretary of State will meet international investors, clean growth businesses and Scottish exporters who employ the latest green technology and export their products globally. This includes Mitsubishi, Scottish Power and BAE systems. She will also be hosting a fintech roundtable in Edinburgh, visiting Clydeside Distillery in Glasgow and attending a 'Made in Britain. Sold to the World' showcase of iconic Scottish exporters at an evening reception in Glasgow.

Liz Truss, International Trade Secretary, said:

The UK is a leader in green exports and this report shows how free trade, free markets and free enterprise can be leveraged to counteract green protectionist policies that hold back the global transition to a low-carbon economy.

Free enterprise is key to the UK's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, to tackling climate change, and to securing a stronger and freer trading environment that directly supports jobs in regions and nations across the UK.

Experts predict the UK's low-carbon economy could grow by 11% per year between 2015 and 2030 – four times faster than the rest of the economy – delivering between £60 billion and £170 billion of export sales in goods and services by 2030.

By 2050, there could be more than 1.2 million full time workers directly employed in England's low carbon industries.

RenewableUK CEO Dan McGrail said:

Internationally driven competition and innovation has helped to drive down the cost of renewables, which have now become the cheapest generators of new electricity, benefiting consumers as well as tackling climate change.

The global demand for clean energy is growing and our world-leading companies offer years of expertise and cutting-edge products which we're exporting globally. As this report highlights, this demand is set to grow exponentially, generating billions for the UK economy.

Lord Mayor of the City of London William Russell said:

I am proud the UK is a global leader when it comes to innovation and mobilising the capital needed to deliver a net-zero transition.

As this report shows, green trade is now the business opportunity of the century, with the potential to create thousands of jobs and substantial returns while also benefitting our planet and future generations.

With just over 100 days to go until COP26, we have a real opportunity to spell out clearly to the world the benefits of going green, and why the UK is the place to come for sustainable finance.

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

As we prepare to host COP26 in Glasgow later this year, today's Green Trade Report sets out how free trade can go hand-in-hand with achieving our net zero ambitions.

With a growing base of low carbon businesses, and home to almost a third of UK offshore wind jobs, Scotland has a lot to gain from green trade and the high-value jobs and prosperity it will create.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency and Adviser to the Board of Trade, said:

In the last month, we have seen fatal heat in Canada, floods in Germany and a climate induced famine in Madagascar. Natural disasters have caused \$3 trillion of damage this century. Trade policy has a role in ensuring greater physical and economic resilience.

Ahead of the G7, when members confirmed their strong determination to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, President Biden and the Prime Minister said trade, when done right, can support sustainable and green growth, good jobs for workers, new opportunities for innovators and businesses, and high labour and environmental standards.

The message that green trade presents major opportunities for the UK economy is an important one and, as the report also highlights, this needs to be underpinned with ambitious environmental regulations. This report also recognises the value of using trade levers appropriately to achieve more ambitious environmental

outcomes with high environmental standards.

Newport employer rated top for staff mental health

The IPO, which currently employs around 1,500 staff, received the Gold Workplace Wellbeing award from mental health charity Mind in their latest workplace report. This saw the IPO coming first in the UK in the employer assessment section with a perfect 100% rating, and fifth in the UK overall.

Mind say that the Gold standard is given to:

employers who have successfully embedded mental health into their policies and practices, demonstrating a long-term and in-depth commitment to staff mental health.

According to Mind's latest report, 87% of staff at the IPO said they felt consulted on how the organisation should be run and how to promote wellbeing. 90% said they encourage openness and discussion about mental health. A further 85% also said the organisation makes it possible to speak openly when experiencing mental health problems.

The award reflects the range of initiatives at the IPO to support the mental wellbeing of staff. These include a network of mental health first aiders, fully qualified staff counsellors and a dedicated wellbeing team. Talks and seminars are arranged regularly for employees by expert speakers on issues ranging from menopause to bowel health awareness. Staff are also supported to embrace local volunteering opportunities, working with organisations such as the Prince's Trust.

The IPO say that engagement with staff is central to their objective of making it a brilliant place to work. The IPO's Chief Executive Tim Moss said:

Our role is helping make the UK the most innovative and creative country in the world; one of the pillars of our strategy to do this is making the IPO a brilliant place to work and I'm delighted that the great work the team is doing is recognised through this award.

We believe in an inclusive workplace, one where everyone has the confidence to be themselves at work and feels supported with whatever challenges they might be facing, and the wealth of ideas

and initiatives originating from our staff will remain central to creating this.

Recognising the work done by the IPO which led to the award, Jodie Swanbo, Workplace Wellbeing Lead Engagement Manager at Mind Cymru, said:

It inspires me to see how the IPO has taken such positive steps to support the mental health of its employees. In the last year, the coronavirus pandemic has affected all our lives; the way we work has fundamentally changed, whether that is working on the frontline or working at home. Employers like the IPO have faced, and continue to face, significant challenges in effectively supporting the wellbeing of their people in this new and uncertain context.

Despite the challenging times we have all had recently, staff at the IPO told us they feel listened to and that there is an open culture around mental health. I look forward to seeing how their approach to workplace wellbeing will continue to evolve.

Note to editors

The IPO is the official UK government body responsible for intellectual property rights including patents, designs, trade marks and copyright. It currently employs around 1,500 staff in a wide range of roles, ranging from analysts and architects through to service designers, user researchers, finance and HR specialists.

The IPO was first accredited with the gold workplace wellbeing award by MIND in 2018. It has retained this following reassessment in 2021. The IPO was placed 5th overall out of 114 organisations included in MIND's index this year, and came first in the employer assessment section.

The IPO works with a range of external organisations, including Investors in People (IIP), Business Disability Forum, MIND and Chwarae Teg, that offer feedback and help provide a workplace that is safe and inclusive for all.

The [IPO's published strategy 2018-21](#) sets out a range of measures with a goal of making the IPO a brilliant place to work. This forms part of the IPO's overall strategy to make the UK the most innovative and creative country in the world.

The IPO is an executive agency of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

New Community Forest created in the North East to support a greener future

The North East Community Forest sees six local authorities joining forces with environmental organisations to plant trees across the region.

The initiative aims to plant up to 500 hectares of trees by 2025, with a long-term goal to increase canopy cover across the north east to 30% by 2050 – almost double the current national average.

The partnership will work with people in the community, businesses and landowners with the aim of bringing forests and woodlands to those most in need across Newcastle, Gateshead, North and South Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham.

Thousands of trees will be planted in the first year – up to 25ha, or around 35 football pitches – thanks to £480,000 in funding from Defra's Nature for Climate Fund.

Forestry Minister Lord Goldsmith said:

I am delighted to welcome the North East Community Forest to the expanding network of Community Forests across England. Supported by our £640 million Nature for Climate Fund, we will plant many thousands of trees and help rewild areas that are most in need.

Our economies, livelihoods and well-being all rely on nature, and tackling the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss are at the heart of this project.

Spending time in nature – particularly around trees – is proven to boost our physical and mental health and wellbeing, so I am pleased this project will be accessible to communities in Newcastle, Gateshead, North and South Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham.

Cllr Clare Penny-Evans, Newcastle City Council's cabinet member for climate change and public safety, said:

We know that trees and woodlands are of incredible importance to the people of the North East.

They help us create liveable and sustainable communities, contributing to our efforts to tackle climate change, supporting economic and social regeneration, and – particularly in a year when we've all spent more time at home – providing welcome opportunities

for relaxation and leisure.

Independently, the region's councils have been working towards their own planting targets, with some great successes, but in coming together and becoming the North East Community Forest, we can supercharge those ambitions for the benefit of all.

If trees are planted in the right place, we know that we can reduce the risk of flooding, create new habitat for wildlife, improve air quality, provide positive impacts on human health and wellbeing, boost the economy, provide new jobs, provide timber for sustainable building and energy production and store thousands of tonnes of carbon.

And not only will this protect and enhance our existing tree stock, green our streets and create woodland in our cities, towns and villages, it will give some of our more deprived neighbourhoods access to nature and improve community wellbeing in many ways.

Paul Nolan, Chair, England's Community Forests, said:

Today, the North East Community Forest has joined our thriving partnership of Community Forest organisations from across the country, all of whom are working to transform the landscapes and communities in and around our towns and cities.

This is an incredibly exciting moment for the people of the North East as their new Community Forest sets out to create greener, more tree-filled and accessible spaces for all to enjoy, encourage biodiversity to thrive, support local economic growth and help the city region tackle climate change.

We warmly welcome the North East Community Forest to our network and look forward to working side by side with all those involved.

Anyone interested in potentially becoming involved with the project can find out more at www.newcastle.gov.uk/northeastcommunityforest or email northeastcommunityforest@newcastle.gov.uk to be kept up to date with information and opportunities as they become available.

Chief Medical Officer Annual Report **2021**

- Chief Medical Officer's 2021 Annual Report highlights the substantially higher burden of physical and mental health conditions in coastal communities
- The health challenges of coastal towns are serious and today's report shows there is more in common between them than their nearest inland neighbours
- Key recommendations include proposals for a cross-government strategy, greater coastal deployment of healthcare staff and improved data collection

England's Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Professor Chris Whitty has recommended a cross-government national strategy to improve the health and wellbeing of coastal communities, as part of his 2021 Annual Report.

The report highlights that, despite the significant efforts of local leaders, coastal communities continue to have a high burden of health challenges across a range of physical and mental health conditions, often with lower life expectancy and higher rates of many major diseases.

The CMO developed the report, Health in Coastal Communities, over the last year and is recommending a cross-government national strategy be developed to improve the health of coastal communities.

He worked alongside Directors of Public Health in coastal regions who looked at case studies within large port cities and local authorities covering smaller seaside towns. The case studies provide an overview of the demographic structure of the population and their health and wellbeing outcomes, along with both the strengths and challenges facing their communities.

Major points from the report include:

- Older, retired citizens – who have more and increasing health problems – often settle in coastal regions but without the same access to healthcare as urban inland areas. In smaller seaside towns, 31% of the resident population was aged 65 years or over in 2019, compared to just 22% in smaller non-coastal towns.
- Difficulties in attracting NHS and social care staff to peripheral areas is a common issue. The report found coastal communities have 14.6% fewer postgraduate medical trainees, 15% fewer consultants and 7.4% fewer nurses per patient than the national average despite higher healthcare needs.
- An oversupply of guest housing has led to Houses of Multiple Occupation

(HMOs) which lead to concentrations of deprivation and ill health. Directors of Public Health and local government leaders raise concerns about the challenges of poor quality, but cheap HMOs, encouraging the migration of vulnerable people from elsewhere in the UK, often with multiple and complex health needs, into coastal towns.

- The sea is a benefit but also a barrier: attracting NHS and social care staff to peripheral areas is harder, catchment areas for health services are artificially foreshortened and transport is often limited, in turn limiting job opportunities. The least wealthy often have the worst health outcomes.

Another important theme was that the underlying factors in coastal communities with poor health outcomes share more similarities with other coastal areas than their nearest inland neighbours. For example, in terms of health characteristics, a resort town like Blackpool has more in common with Hastings, Skegness or Torbay than with Preston, just 18 miles inland.

The report highlights the paradox that coastal areas are generally intrinsically healthier than their inland counterparts due to the physical and mental health benefits to living near the coast, including better access to outdoor spaces for exercise, social contact and lower air pollution.

The CMO makes three key recommendations:

1. There should be a cross-government national strategy to improve the health and wellbeing of coastal communities, incorporating key drivers such as housing, environment, education, employment and transport.
2. The current mismatch between health and social care worker deployment and disease in coastal areas needs to be addressed. This should be actioned by Health Education England (HEE) and NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/I).
3. There needs to be a substantial improvement on the lack of granular data and actionable research into the health needs of coastal communities and research funders need to provide incentives for research aimed specifically at improving coastal community health.

Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty, said:

Coastal areas are some the most beautiful, vibrant and historic places in the country. They also have some of the worst health outcomes with low life expectancy and high rates of many major diseases.

These communities have often been overlooked by governments and the

ill-health hidden because their outcomes are merged with wealthier inland areas. A national strategy informed by local leaders and experts will help reduce inequalities and preventable ill health.

If we do not tackle the health problems of coastal communities vigorously and systematically there will be a long tail of preventable ill health which will get worse as current populations age.

Responding to the report, Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

I welcome this report from Professor Chris Whitty, which raises important points on inequalities that we must tackle to improve the health of coastal communities – and I will carefully consider these recommendations.

Those living in coastal areas clearly face different sets of challenges to those inland but everybody, no matter where they live, should have similar opportunities in education, housing, employment and health.

We are committed to levelling up across the nation and the new Office for Health Promotion – launching in the Autumn – will drive and support the whole of government to go further in improving people's health.

Julia Weldon, Director of Public Health, Hull County Council said:

Our coastal communities and Port Cities are amazing, have a huge part to play in terms of the health and wealth of our nation and yet have some of the worst health and wellbeing outcomes in England.

It is time to recognise and address the unjust and unnecessary burden of multiple health inequalities that means far too many people living in these communities have far shorter lives spent in far poorer health. We will only achieve this through targeted and sustained focus on Building Back Fairer.

Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health, Blackpool Council said:

Blackpool, like many other seaside towns has its strengths as well as it's challenges. The town is a major centre for tourism in

England with 18 million visitors annually. Housing, especially poor quality private rented, is a significant contributor to poor health in the town. Tackling the failed private sector housing, especially the large number of houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) will be key to tackling health inequalities in coastal towns.