



Civil Service Race Forum Newsletter – June 2016

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Editorial

A lot has happened since the last newsletter, Iris Anderson has left the Civil Service, diversity is becoming and ever more important agenda for the Civil Service, and the world has lost Muhammad Ali, the people's champion.

What is the Civil Service Race Forum?

The Civil Service Race Forum is a collaborative group of staff networks working towards advancing diversity and equality for BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic) within the Civil Service and its associated organisations. This is through staff networks sharing information, building their knowledge base and providing an opportunity for them to network. Though the focus is around the Race equality agenda, networks from other diversity strands also participate in our work.

Membership is free and open to all members of staff network groups.

To join contact Winston Murray at the FCO:

Winston.murray@fco.gsi.gov.uk

Update on the High Potential Scheme Corporate Challenge by Mel Nebhrajani (DfT/GLS)

You may know that colleagues on Civil Service high potential schemes are offered the opportunity to volunteer for a "corporate challenge". A group responded to a challenge set by Richard Heaton, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, in his role as Civil Service Race Champion, on "why some BAME groups progress further than others and what actions can be taken to remove barriers to progression". Here is their update.

It has been a privilege to work on this project. For most of us it has involved a steep learning curve – working together across departmental boundaries, understanding a complex issue, and facilitating discussions. Over the 10-week period we undertook desk research and collated data, but above all we listened. Over 150 individuals, the majority from the BAME community, shared





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their experience and ideas through focus groups, surveys and interviews. We are grateful to everyone for their goodwill in giving their time to participate and the openness of discussions which gave a rich range of insights. We know that there were many more who would have liked the opportunity to contribute but who we could not accommodate.

We have worked to a challenging timetable to provide insights and ideas for improvement, rather than to provide the answers or present formal findings. We hope this approach has given impetus to this issue. We have pulled together our initial ideas, very much informed by what we have heard, and presented these to Richard Heaton and Jeremy Heywood. In summary, these are:

- Improving the accountability of Permanent Secretaries and departments – introducing a “comply or explain” approach, so that they are held to account, including by staff, for meeting targets;
- Making data and targets more transparent,

including looking at the specific professions (including the policy profession), so that progress can be measured and targeted action identified;

- Achieving better BAME representation in high profile roles; on selection panels (in particular for senior appointments and selection panels for talent programmes); and at the Civil Service Awards;
- Recommending work on how to achieve culturally neutral selection processes and competencies, to ensure that the civil service is genuinely drawing on the widest talent pool – expanding the recommendations in the most recent report on the fast stream;
- Promoting targeted mentoring for HEO/SEO and G6/G7;
- Investing time and money for staff networks, and the explicit support and endorsement of senior staff, to encourage the broadest participation possible;
- Launching an “It’s ok to talk about race”

campaign, to ensure a real spotlight on race, rather than a generic focus on diversity; and

- Creating a Toolkit for line managers, to equip them with the right skills to communicate with their staff, to identify talent and to develop BAME staff in their teams.

We have been overwhelmed by the degree of support shown for our work and tried to do justice to the wealth of evidence presented to us. One of the lessons we did learn as a group was the need to communicate to those who gave their time so they could see the value of their contribution. It will now be for those leading on civil service diversity to decide how to take our ideas forward. It was clear to all of us that there is a big challenge to be addressed, which requires much more work, but we hope that we have made a start and we look forward to hearing more of this.

We have met with the Civil Service Race Forum on 25 May and look forward to continuing the discussion. For now, we can all say that we have found the challenge an eye-opener, and have



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been struck by the career stories presented to us, as well as the passion of those we have discussed the issue with.

The CS Race Forum would like to extend their thanks to the team who undertook this challenge with such enthusiasm: Adam Baker; Richard Cienciala; Claire Fielder; Lorraine Jackson; Niran Khera; Andrea Ledward; Mel Nebhrajani; Brian Redford; James Snook Christopher Thomas.

Congratulations also to Mel on becoming Director of Legal at Department of Health.

PSG's 20th Birthday by Zoe Ryan (DfT)

On 15th April 2016 in the basement of Great Minister House the Department for Transport's Race network, the Positive Support Group (PSG) celebrated its 20th Birthday anniversary with CS Race Forum colleagues and [Richard Heaton, Civil Service Race Champion](#). It had been a good 2015 for PSG, after becoming the first Race network to win the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion

Staff Network award and the launch of its peer mentoring scheme with KPMG.

As well as celebrating the birthday anniversary we also celebrated Vaisakhi, one of the most important dates in the Sikh calendar, which celebrates the birth of Sikhism. The celebrations included a talk on the history of Sikhism, which helped us all understand a bit more about Sikhism and the importance of Vaisakhi.

Then everyone took part in the cake cutting ceremony, which was provided by Anita Lennon from DWP/GLS. Philip Rutnam, the DfT Permanent Secretary and the Civil Service Disability Champion, gave a very moving speech about the role of the PSG in DfT, its successes and awards, and took the opportunity to thank Kul Bassi for chairing the PSG.

Then in the evening we enjoyed a live dance performance from Nachde Sansaar, which featured DfT's own Pia Bahal, and then the restaurant Punjabee based in Southall provided us with an amazingly authentic and tasty meal.

Afterwards we danced the night away with a Disco.

One of the aims of the event was to raise money for Railway Children, as some of our colleagues in DfT are completing the three peaks challenge in aid of them. By the end of the night we raised £375.02.

Overall this was a great night and everyone had fun and we can enjoy this again for the 25th Birthday.

Congratulations to PSG and Philip Rutnam for being shortlisted for this year's Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion Awards.

Saying goodbye to Iris Anderson by Tania Celani (DECC)

On 31 March 2016, a large group of people from the Civil Service and beyond gathered together to say farewell to Iris Anderson, Chair of the DECC Religion and Ethnic Minority (REM) Network and Co-Chair of the Civil Service Race

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Forum (CS Race Forum) who sadly was leaving the Civil Service. The sheer number of people demonstrated how much of an impact Iris had over her impressive career.



Colleagues from across government come to say their farewells

Iris was never one to sing her own praises so let's just take a minute or two to remind ourselves of what she has achieved...

Iris played an outstanding role in improving the work experience and engagement levels of BAME employees in the Civil Service. Her 15 years+ of activity in the field of diversity and inclusion at Defra & DECC was recognised in the 2015 New Year's Honours when she was

awarded with a BEM for service to diversity in Government.

As chair of the DECC REM Network since its inception as well as in Defra and co-chair of the CS Race Forum since 2014, Iris led from the front, championing diversity with such passion and proactively engaging with Race networks across the Civil Service to identify areas of concern. She regularly brought those insights to the direct attention of both the Senior Civil Service and DECC leadership with a view to ensuring that action was taken, and she certainly didn't hold back!

At a local level Iris contributed to the creation of an inclusive culture by providing 1:1 support to many staff in terms of personal and career development. She has been an inspiration, full of passion in wanting to change things, and importantly a great friend to all of us. That individual attention led to her creating the mentoring scheme which formed the basis of the DECC mentoring scheme established more recently, developing the REM Network Coaching programme in 2012 and the department's reverse mentoring programme in October 2014.

As co-chair of the CS Race Forum, she was a driving force behind the forum's work and strategy. She led the Building Bridges programme and delivered a wide number of successful events from Black History Month to Chinese New Year events. She will be missed!



The REM team

A few quotes from some of the colleagues who worked with her over the years.

"Iris was such an inspiration to me and colleagues in the department. Her fire and passion for diversity shone through in every action she took. I will miss her sorely, she has

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been a great friend and champion.” Tania Celani, Acting Chair of DECC REM Network

“Iris has made a huge difference to diversity and inclusion within DECC and the across the Civil Service. A force of nature, she was confident in all circumstance equally prepared to challenge those in power whilst supporting anyone who needed assistance. To truly do justice to her work, our recognition of Iris must include the continuation of this agenda – which impacts on all of us - with equal passion and determination.” Angie Ridgwell, DG Diversity Champion, DECC

“Iris has been a persistent and able advocate, pushing and challenging the civil service to do better on diversity. She has also been a pleasure to work with.” Richard Heaton, CS Race Champion

“For more than 10 years I have worked with Iris, we have been through a great deal in what seems to be a struggle that never ends. We have worked together on a range of issues that are vital to the ethnic and religious minorities in the various Government Departments we have worked in. She is tenacious and her commitment

and integrity are an example to us all. There have been so many issues that she has worked on and so many policies and management actions that have needed to be challenged that counting is useless and of course so many individuals she has assisted in personal difficulties and others she has inspired to greater efforts. She seems to have been working forever on issues that could and should have been resolved, but instead have dragged on, yet she has never given up, never been disheartened, always ready to take on the next challenge or go back and tackle old ones where changes have not been made. She has worked with an optimism and an inspiring leadership that is rarely seen and we appreciate everything she has done and she is a great loss from the team that is leading this important area.” David Rigal, Co Chair DCLG BAMEnet Network

“Iris is what I call the ultimate activist – totally dedicated to “the cause” of not just diversity and inclusion but equality in all its form. And, in effect, it is because of this cause that she is gone and this article is being written.



Iris & Kul demonstrating team working

Iris is passionate about equality and diversity, she loved and enjoyed her role as Chair of her department’s staff network and cared deeply about her members and looked out for their interests, particularly helping them to advance their careers and running various initiatives to assist in doing this. One particular issue that exercised her was the data that constantly show BAME staff overly represented in Box 3 markings/Improvement Needed. She utilised every opportunity presented to her to challenge senior leaders on all aspects of this agenda,



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where she presented her views honestly and direct and was wholly unfazed by hierarchy.

Above all, her activism in the diversity space is an altruistic one; she never did anything for personal gain but was concerned that the potential of our collective actions now should make for a better future for younger BAME civil servants. I have worked with Iris for 6 years but it feels like a life time, as we are eye-to-eye on so many of these issues. Our last joint project was organising the successful event on UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (her idea), something that had never been done in the civil service before and she threw herself into it, pretty much making it her day job, leading up to her departure. Her loss to the CS Race Forum is immense and I will miss working with her and bouncing ideas off each other.” Dr Vivienne Connell-Hall, Diversity Engagement & Stakeholder Manager, MOD

“Thank you for your unwavering courage in continuing to push at the boundaries to help people in the CS understand the daily challenges

faced by BAME staff and for showing us how to work hard and play hard too.” Natalia Langlais, Chair DFID EMN Network

“A true giant in the world of Departmental staff networks. I had the great pleasure of being her co chair on the Civil Service Race Forum for 18 months and working alongside her for over 6 years on the Race agenda. A selfless individual who put the interests of her members at the heart of everything she did. Iris could be feisty on occasions, but very humble with no task being beneath her. I know with how much affection she is held by her rank and file members within DECC. On one occasion we were meeting up at DECC whilst Iris was on her secondment and I remember the buzz of excitement caused at reception – they hadn’t seen her for a while and were looking forward to her return. When I caught up with Iris she explained that she had not been happy with the pay and conditions of the building services staff and had campaigned on their behalf – all said as though it was a normal occurrence within Whitehall. That summed up Iris, not one to sit on the side-lines where she saw injustice. I am looking forward to

catching up with a dear friend...” Kul Bassi, Chair DfT PSG Network & CS Race Forum Co Chair

UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by Dr Vivienne Connell-Hall (MOD)

Colleagues from across Whitehall met on Monday 21 March 2016 to celebrate the [UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#). The event was fully subscribed was the first time that the civil service had formally recognised this important day. Featuring keynote speakers sharing different perspectives and points of interest about the movement to eradicate racial discrimination and how it has developed over the years.

Dr Iyiola Solanke, from the University of Leeds, provided the historical context for the UK’s position, illustrating her comments with a ‘Matrix of Racial Violence and Anti-discrimination Law’. The matrix gives an insight into legislative developments from the Race Relations Act 1965, up to the amendment in

2000, which accommodated significant changes. Dr Solanke highlighted that while changes in the law have been progressive, there is still much to do to tackle racial discrimination and related behaviours across the spectrum in terms of 'direct discrimination', 'indirect discrimination', and 'institutional racism'.

'Boom time'

This was followed by a presentation by Dr Michael Pearce of the University of Exeter. He gave an alternative perspective on how perceptions of Race in the film, TV and theatre industries have been shaped since the 1930s. Since then, he said, there has been a transformation in racial diversity in the performing arts, from an industry that was anecdotally referred to as "lacking, non-existent, not worthy", to one that is now moving into a "boom time for black theatre".



Sarah Guerra (HMRC) addresses the audience

This was followed by a free-flowing, open conversation with Sarah Guerra, Engagement lead at HMRC, and Rob Neil, Ministry of Justice. It focused on how diversity can add richness to institutions and aid the development of much-needed awareness of the contribution of different cultures across the entire workforce.

[Richard Heaton, Civil Service Race Champion](#), spoke about recent encouraging developments in the Civil Service, particularly around accountability for progress on [diversity and inclusion](#) among senior leaders. While he said

they were more prepared to have potentially uncomfortable conversations about diversity issues, he wanted to see more people from outside the BAME communities coming along to events like this one and taking part in the debate.

Richard Heaton joined Andy Heyn, Head of Diversity and Inclusion in the Cabinet Office, and the other keynote speakers in a panel discussion of questions from the audience on topics including, talent and positive action programmes, intersectionality, and the challenge of tackling the lack of BAME representation at senior leadership level across the Civil Service.

The audience were also treated to a performance by a special guest, rapper and poet [Alim Kamara](#), who told a traditional African story about resilience and determination.

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The whole audience were propelled to their feet in a unison chant of 'Shake it off and step up' – a timely reminder that we all have a responsibility to shake off misconceptions and prejudices about race and step up to the challenge of eliminating this pernicious form of discrimination.

Launch of the Senior Leaders Race Network by Navroza Ladha (DWP/GLS)

The “Senior Leaders Race Network” (now rebranded as **Race to the Top SCS Network**) launched on 16th March. This is a newly formed network of SCS from across the Civil Service working together to improve ethnic diversity at all levels in the Senior Civil Service.

The Network hopes to:

- inspire, support and champion BAME colleagues who aspire to be in the SCS;
- inspire, support and provide development opportunities for BAME SCS;
- encourage more inclusive decision-making in recruitment and progression processes; and
- reach out to our communities to bring greater diversity into the Civil Service.

The launch event was attended by colleagues from across the Civil Service, including our Race Champion Richard Heaton and Diversity Champion Sue Owen. There was considerable positive energy and a number of great contributions to help shape the agenda and Network’s priorities.

A key aim of the SCS Network is to encourage and strengthen BAME G6/7 colleagues. As an important step in this direction, it has partnered with the BIS BAME Network in supporting the establishment of an allied G6/7 Race Network launching on 16th June. The G6/7 Network will increase networking opportunities and provide a forum for BAME G6/7s to share ideas, discuss mutual concerns and develop solutions. Both new networks will share the Race to the Top branding and will work closely together in driving change.

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The CS Race Forum is looking forward to working closely with both Race to the Top Networks in the near future.



For further information on the SCS Network please contact: Navroza.Ladha@dwp.gsi.gov.uk and on the G6/7 Network please contact anita.bhalla@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

REM and CSRF Chinese New Year Event 2016 by Martin Hill (FCO)

Confused by Confucius? Think you are a budding Buddha? Well I thought I could do with a spot of cultural enlightenment. So this year I went along to celebrate Chinese New Year 'Year of the Monkey' hosted by the DECC REM Network and Civil Service Race Forum, in the splendid surroundings of the Durbar Court at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

We were treated to some live Chinese music while we tried our hand at a variety of traditional activities. The Chinese tea ceremony was very relaxing and made us realise that you should not really rush a good thing. Why not enjoy those delicate flavours and soothe away the troubles of a hectic day at Office with a thimble of detoxifying green tea? If you want to cleanse your system with a smile, try a cup of hot water and think of China.



My attempts to master the art of dumpling making got off to a bad start. But I think that, given a chance to practise, I could get the knack of that nip and tuck in the pastry which should produce a perfectly formed mini Cornish pastry – very nice with a drop of Tsingtao beer I am told.

The art of calligraphy is obviously not as simple as it first seems. But as with most things: patience is a virtue. My favourite was of course the paper cutting. Painstakingly picking out the

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tiny squares of coloured sticky-backed paper with a toothpick, I discovered a surprising serenity in this activity. As a monkey appeared out of the chaos (it is the year of the monkey after all) I remembered those happy, care-free days doing arts and crafts at primary school.

What a fun day out! Thank you to the REM Network and all the volunteers who shared their cultural heritage with us. We should do this more often.

Inclusive Leadership Conference & the Big Diversity Debate by Zoe Ryan (DfT)



Panel for the Big Diversity Debate

On 4th Dec 2015, KPMG hosted in partnership with the Civil Service Race Forum an Inclusive Leadership Conference and the Big Diversity Debate event. Both events were attended by civil servants from across government – with Departments such as Transport, the Ministry of Justice, Home Office and HMRC particularly well represented.

Inclusive Leadership Conference

After networking over breakfast rolls, John Manzoni, Chief Executive of the Civil Service and Permanent Secretary of the Cabinet Office, gave the opening address where he stressed the big challenges for the Civil Service and the need to get the right skills and being able to attract talent in competition with the private sector.

Lin Homer a keynote speaker, spoke about her experience as Chief Executive of HMRC and how she is fostering an inclusive culture and working in particular on preventing what she termed ‘cloning’ - recruiting in our own likeness.

The final session was delivered by internationally acclaimed Business Psychologist Binna Kandola, Senior Partner & co-founder of Pearn Kandola. Binna delivered a really engaging session on how we are all biased, and how we all tend to associate with people who are the same as us. Binna challenged us to acknowledge our bias when making decisions, so our bias becomes conscious.

The Big Diversity Debate Event

Following a networking lunch, ‘The Big Diversity Debate’, kicked off with Kru Desai, Head of Government & Infrastructure at KPMG and Philip Rutnam, Permanent Secretary of DfT and the Civil Service Disability Champion speaking about their organisations’ approach to diversity. Kru explained that unlike the Civil Service, KPMG had set targets in this area. Philip touched on some of the key challenges, in particular for disability and Race, being improving performance markings and staff survey results.

Lord Ahmad, Parliamentary Under Secretary at the DfT and the Home Office, chaired the debate



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with Philip Rutnam, Kru Desai joined on the panel by Richard Heaton, Permanent Secretary of MoJ and the Civil Service Race Champion, Susie Owen, SCS Lead on Diversity and Inclusion Strategy at the Cabinet Office and Stephen Frost, Executive Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion at KPMG.

The panel agreed that something needed to be done to increase representation at the top, and Richard and Philip spoke about the problems in the performance marking system and potential solutions to improve it. One of the most striking comments was when Richard said that ‘we have a lot of talking, it’s now time to act’ - an action for all of us attending to take away is that we must ensure we challenge our leaders on diversity and inclusive leadership to ensure that action is taken.

Both sessions gave attendees something to take away about their our role in creating a diverse Civil Service, and having KPMG host the event gave civil servants an opportunity to learn about a different approach to diversity, where often the challenges are the same.

“I found the whole event inspiring and hope that I do indeed see change soon within the Civil Service as we have some real good talent that need to be shown that they are worthy of reaching the top of the Civil Service.”

DfT Delegate attending both events.

CS Race Forum Black History Month Event by Tania Celani (DECC)

Since 2010 the CS Race Forum have been arranging a cross Whitehall event to mark Black History Month. The events have been thought provoking with prominent speakers and the 2015 event which focused on the portrayal of Race in the British media was no different.

On 27 October 2015, Iris Anderson Co-Chair of CS Race Forum, with the help of Vivienne Connell-Hall from MoD organised and ran the Black History Month (BHM) event at BIS. The room was packed with over 180 attendees and

fantastic speakers, poets and singers including Femi Otijoku from Challenge Consultancy, who educated us on our biases; David Olusoga, Historian, Author and BBC Presenter/Producer, who taught us about the portrayal of race generally and the associated myths; and Omar Khan, Director of Runnymede Trust, who spoke on concept of Inclusion, with reference to the Syrian refugee crisis. We heard powerful poems from Olivea Ebanks from MoJ and Audrey Simmons. Richard Heaton, the Civil Service Race Champion, and Andy Heyn, Head of Diversity at the Cabinet Office spoke about progress with the actions from the Talent Action Plan, and the challenge CS Race Forum has presented to keep the focus on delivery.



A captive audience hear from David Olusoga

The official feedback showed an overwhelmingly positive response to the event – such as:

“Excellent speakers throughout – informative, educational and highly thought-provoking”

“I attended the Black History event and wanted to email to say a very big thank you for the experience. As a BME, I had not previously attended any event of this kind and was surprised to see how popular it was. The vibe, the interaction mixed with the variety of speakers, poets and singer, really seemed to magnetise the audience and captured my attention for sure. I was moved and inspired and empowered. I left

there wiser and more determined to do anything I can to make a difference for not only my BME colleagues, but for myself too.”

“Thank you for a very interesting and thought provoking event - I certainly took away some learning points.”

Ninety-eight per cent of the delegate feedback said that the event either met or strongly met its objectives around educating, informing and dispelling myths around Race equality.