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My name is Rob. I have been a civil servant for 34 years. I began my career as a clerical officer with the Lord Chancellor's Office in North West London, before progression to work in regional (IT) and then our national (HR) office. I have spent the past 17 years (half my career age) working in diversity and inclusion. I am a qualified trainer and an HR practitioner.

Following elections in September 2016, I began my role as the Chair of our Civil Service Race Forum (CSRF) in October 2016 and together with our Deputy Chair, Harsha Savani (Department for Work and Pensions – DWP), will serve an agreed term until January 2018.

In the first six months, Harsha and I recruited an Executive Committee (ExCo), commissioned a refresh of our brand, launched our Twitter account and identified four key work streams, each of which are led by a member of the CSRF ExCo.

1. Communications – Michael Livermore (Ministry of Defence – MoD)
2. Learning & Development – Frank Munro (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs - DEFRA)
3. Leadership & Talent – Smita Mehta (Ministry of Defence MoD)
4. Culture Change – Paul Haughton (Ministry of Justice – MoJ)

Yep as a team of volunteers, we've been extremely busy.

The next phase of work will be very exciting, challenging and transformational. As the two-year Civil Service Talent Action Plan now draws to a close, CSRF has been collaborating closely with Cabinet Office and our membership – spanning 25 government departments across the Civil Service and growing. We have identified seven game-changing principles that we believe will help to turn the dial on race equality.

1. DATA – collection, publication and access thereto
2. GOVERNANCE – where does a representative voice sit and on which boards
3. POLICY – a shared, endorsed and published commitment

4. ACCOUNTABILITY – a quality mark compelling leaders to: do, evidence and share effective practice
5. INVESTMENT – resources allocated and assigned to staff networks as business critical entities
6. SCRUTINY – timely participation of staff network members in centrally owned task & finish groups
7. FUTURE PROOFING – include staff networks in OD and develop tools that support contribution

CSRF is now ready and extremely keen to work with our fellow cross-government BAME networks, namely: BAME Fast Stream, G6/G7 and Race to the Top (Senior Civil Service), to prioritise key messages and align a range of activities designed to deliver a more inclusive Civil Service. For example, all four BAME networks are now represented in the Cabinet Office Employee Voice Group, and early thoughts expressed here are being fed through to the Civil Service People Board.

Finally, I very much welcome your thoughts, your contributions and your ideas. CSRF is an umbrella network and, via your own departmental BAME Staff Network, I invite you to continue supporting this critical game changing forum.

Unity is Strength

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