



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Diversity and Equality Report 2014-15

in response to the Equality Act 2010

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Foreword by Simon Fraser, Permanent Under Secretary (PUS) of the FCO and Head of the Diplomatic Service

This time last year I had been in the role of Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Champion for only a few months. I'm pleased, a year on, to report real progress. A new Talent Action Plan (TAP), shaped by staff, has committed us to a two year programme of practical action to remove barriers to progression for under-represented groups. I was pleased to report to the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee in November that the FCO ranks in the top four departments for our progress in implementing those recommendations.

The work we have done in the FCO in recent years is bearing fruit. Our Board is now 45% women, the number of female Heads of Mission has risen from 22 in 2008 to 36 (19%) and a further 14 will be appointed by the end of this year. 11 of our Heads of Mission now declare themselves

to be from black and minority ethnic origins.

Our goal remains a truly inclusive and diverse workforce in which staff of all backgrounds, ages, race, gender and sexual orientation, and people with disabilities, can fulfil their potential. We are rich in diversity: two thirds of our 13,600 staff are employed locally overseas, with 267 posts in 168 countries and territories and 9 multilateral organisations. Embracing difference is fundamental to our aim of becoming the best diplomatic service in the world. I am proud of the work we have done in the last year to support parents in returning to work after career breaks, nurture black and minority ethnic (BME) talent, and make postings for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) staff with same sex partners easier. We have also promoted diversity of thought through senior role models, talks, blogs and our external Diplomatic Excellence panel. We have worked to ensure greater regional and socioeconomic diversity in our recruitment through targeted outreach for graduate and summer internship schemes, through Fast Stream entry and a campaign for our recent recruitment at some junior staff levels, which broke new ground in Whitehall by including an allowance for relocation to London.

We ranked in the top 40% of employers participating in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index in 2014 and we will continue to measure our progress through external benchmarking. This ensures challenge to our policies and helps identify how we can improve.

Support for diversity and equality continues to be central to our wider approach to foreign policy and delivery of consular and other services around the world. We have ensured our consular services are better equipped to address the needs of those with mental health conditions and made sure that LGBT travellers have the advice they need from us to be able to make informed travel choices.

As required by the Equality Act 2010 this report shares information about the equality impact of our employment practices and activities. Where our data highlights discrepancies between groups we will continue to seek to understand and address these.

Simon J. Fraser



Introduction

This report is part of the FCO's response to the Equality Act. It is intended to offer data on the equality impact of the Foreign Office's employment practices and activities.

The *Equality Act 2010* creates a public sector equality duty to:

- > Consider how different people will be affected by our activities;
- > Deliver services which, while efficient and effective, are accessible to all and meet diverse needs;
- > Have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people (both employees and others) who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected characteristics covered by the equality duty are:

- > age;
- > disability;
- > gender reassignment;
- > marriage and civil partnership;
- > pregnancy and maternity;
- > race (embracing ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality);
- > religion or belief;
- > sex;
- > sexual orientation.

Note: The FCO has not incurred the expense of collecting data specifically for the purpose of this publication other than staff resource. These are online publications and therefore no additional printing costs have been incurred.

The data provided here is also provided in CSV format.

The majority of data presented represents a snapshot of the FCO as at 31 March 2015. Where data represents a different time period it is highlighted.

Section 1 – The FCO’s employees

The FCO has two different categories of employees. The UK Diplomatic Service and other Home Civil Servants working for the FCO are known collectively as *UK based staff*. These staff take a range of jobs during their careers both in the UK and at diplomatic posts abroad. But the majority of the FCO’s employees are hired to perform specific functions at individual posts abroad and are known as *Local staff*. It is unusual for these employees to transfer between diplomatic missions or to work in the UK.

The diversity data in this report does not include FCO Services or Wilton Park, Executive Agencies of the FCO, or staff working for the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

Both UK based and Local staff are graded into a hierarchy as follows:

Generic UK Civil Service Grade	Foreign Office Grades	
	UK based Staff	Local staff
Senior Civil Service (SCS)	Senior Management Structure (SMS)	SMS(L)
Grade 6	D7	D7(L)
Grade 7	D6	D6(L)
Senior Executive Officer	C5	C5(L)
Higher Executive Officer	C4	C4(L)
Executive Officer	B3	B3(L)
Administrative Officer	A2	A2(L)
Administrative Assistant	A1	A1(L)
Non-Professional functions	N/A	S1-S3

Recorded data

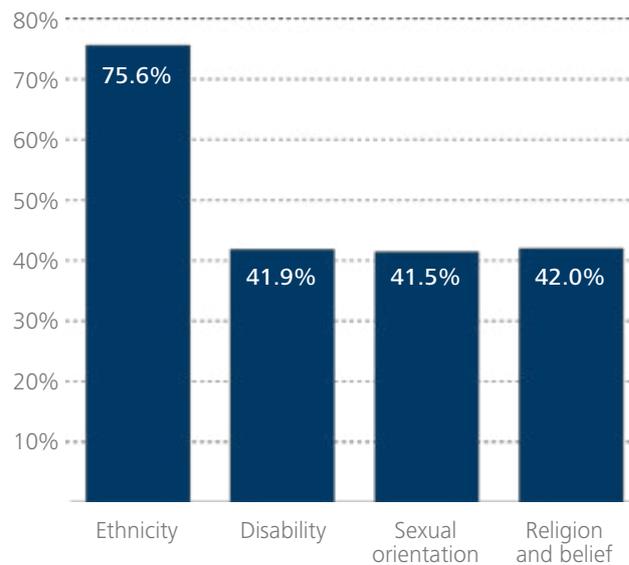
The FCO collects and holds human resources data on a centralised Management Information (MI) system. The gender and age of all staff is automatically recorded on this database, as is maternity leave when taken. UK based staff are asked to add information about their ethnicity, disability status, sexual orientation and religion or belief. In 2014, flexible working patterns were added to this list and it was agreed in early 2015 that caring responsibilities should be added this year. Supplying this data is voluntary. Although the FCO encourages staff to supply it, recording (or “declaration”) rates vary by characteristic. To protect the privacy of staff who do not wish to record any of this personal

information, it is possible for individuals to record on the database that they do not wish to declare.

Local staff are able to add these details to their records but we do not require them to do so. This is due to sensitivities linked to the recording of some characteristics in a number of countries. Recording rates amongst Local staff are therefore far too low to enable us to report on the representation of different groups. As a result, data on gender is included in this report, but not data on other diversity characteristics.

The recording rates amongst UK based staff, including those who have stated that they do not wish to declare are as follows:

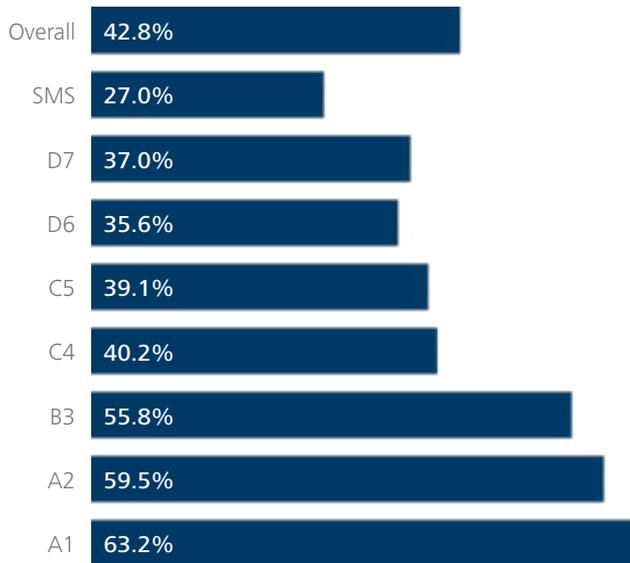
FCO UK based staff diversity declaration rates



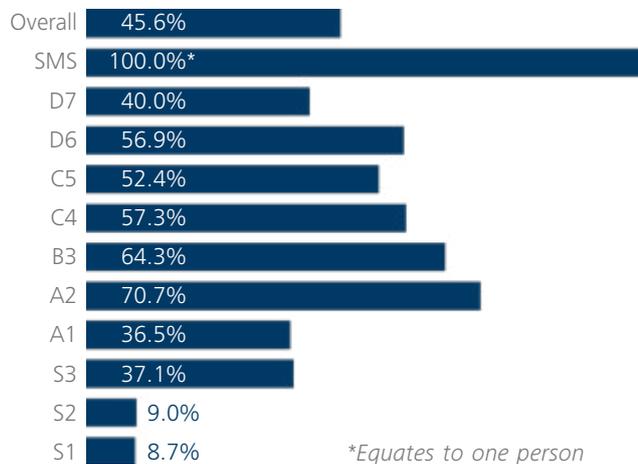
Profile of the workforce

The FCO employs almost 13,600 people, a third of whom are UK based and two thirds Local staff.

Proportion of female FCO UK based staff by grade



Proportion of female FCO Local staff by grade

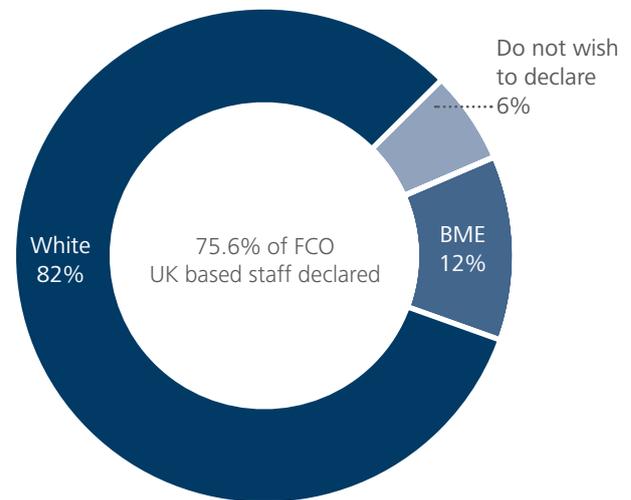


Gender diversity of UK based Heads of Missions overseas

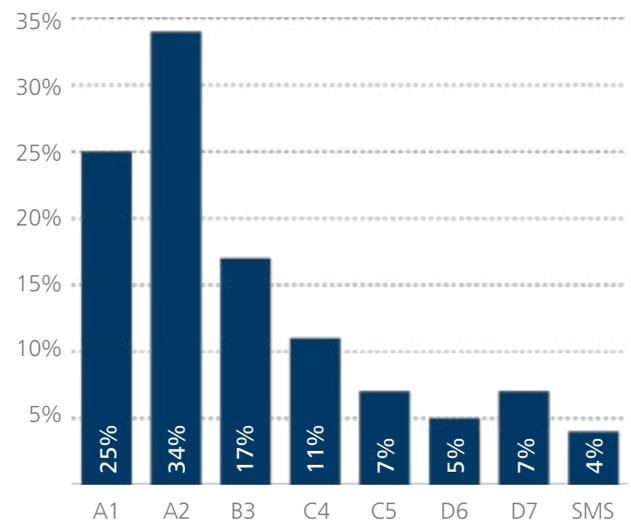
Heads of Missions include Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Governor’s General, Consul Generals and Heads of Diplomatic Offices. As of 31 March 2015, there were 36 female UK based Heads of Mission overseas (made up of SMS and Grades D and C). A net total of 13 female Heads of Mission have also been appointed and are preparing to take up their postings.

Ethnic profile of the workforce

Ethnicity, declared FCO UK based staff

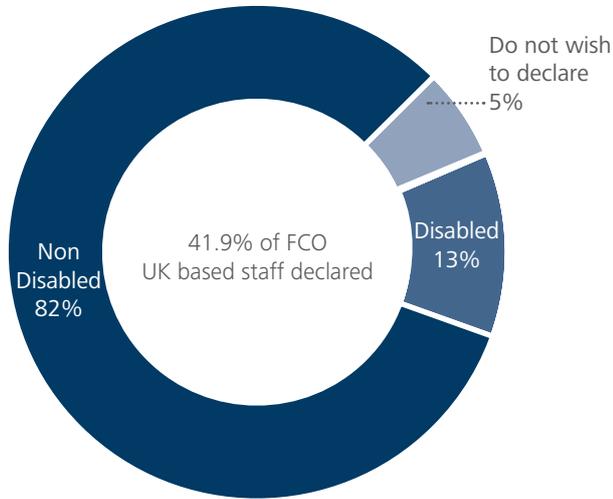


Proportion of declared black or minority ethnic (BME) UK based staff by grade



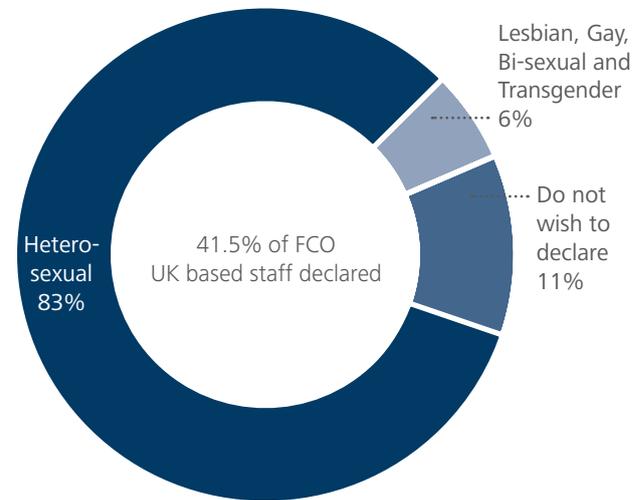
Disability profile of the workforce

Disability, declared FCO UK based staff

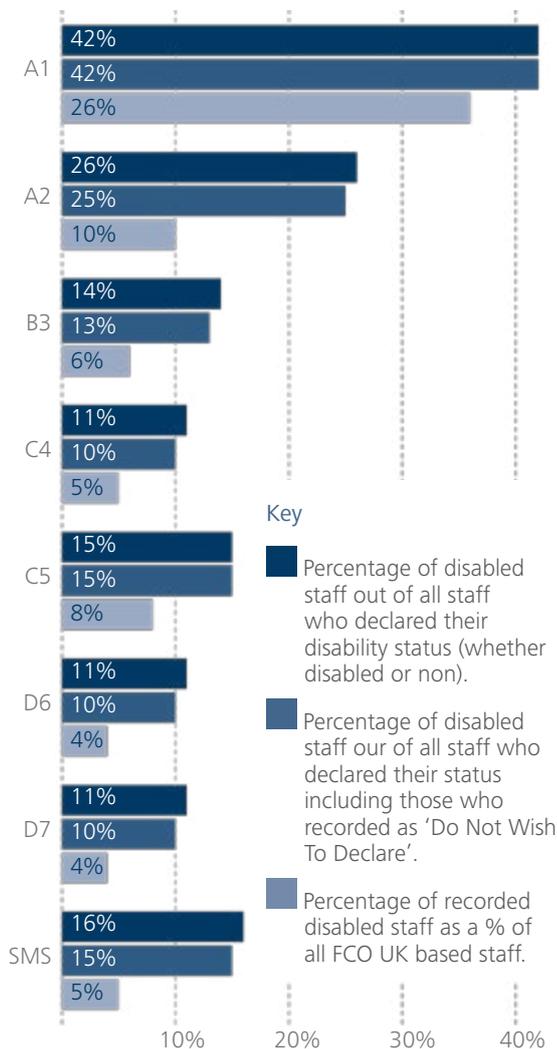


Sexual orientation profile of the workforce

Sexual orientation, declared FCO UK based staff



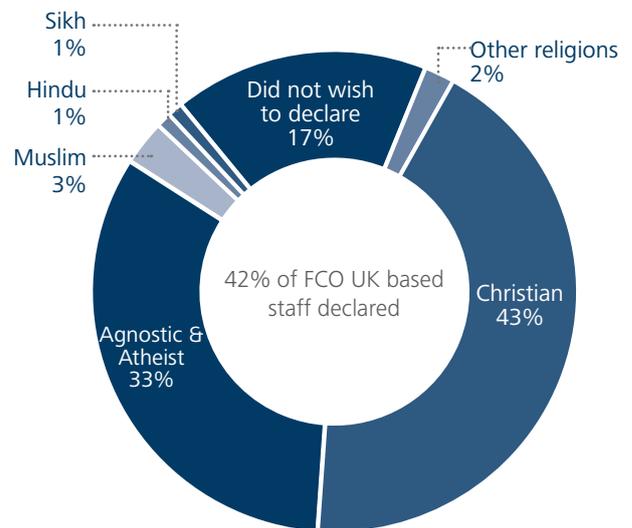
Staff with disabilities as a proportion of FCO UK based staff by grade



Recording rates for sexual orientation are too low to enable the data to be analysed by grade.

Religion and Belief profile of the workforce

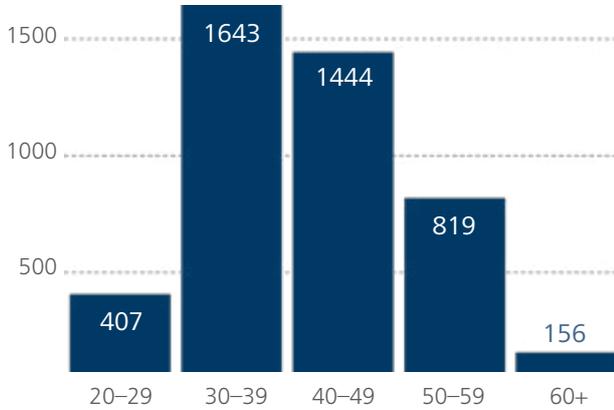
Religion & belief, declared FCO UK based staff



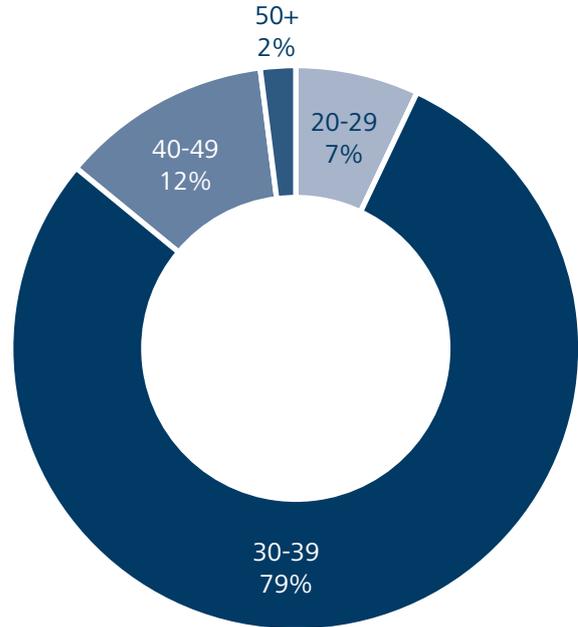
Recording rates for religion and belief are too low to enable the data to be analysed by grade.

Age profile of the workforce

FCO UK based staff by age

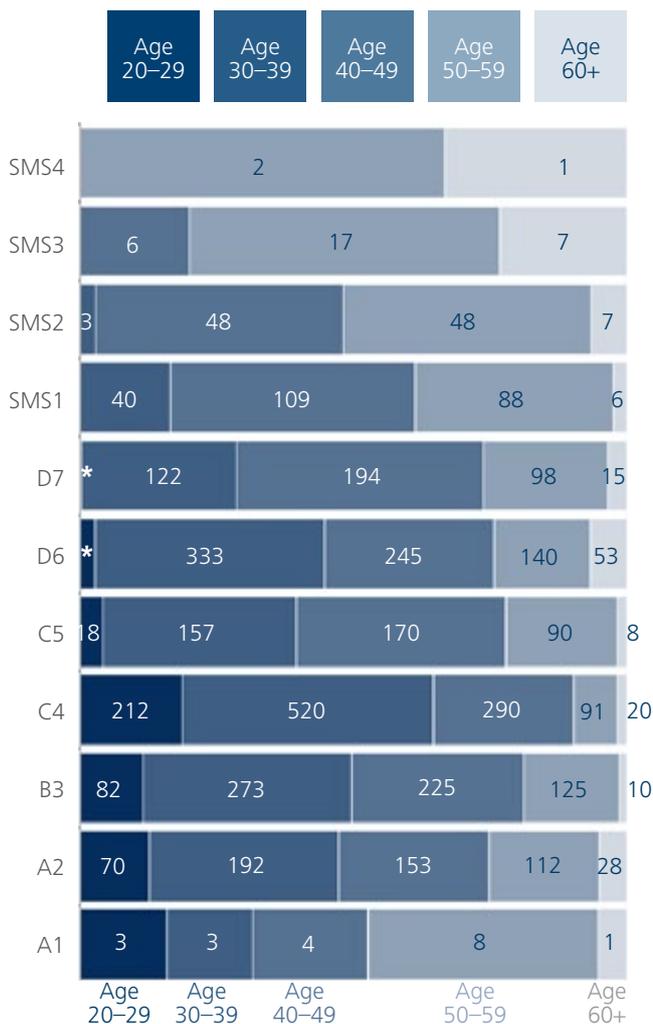


FCO UK based staff on maternity by age



Maternity leave by age

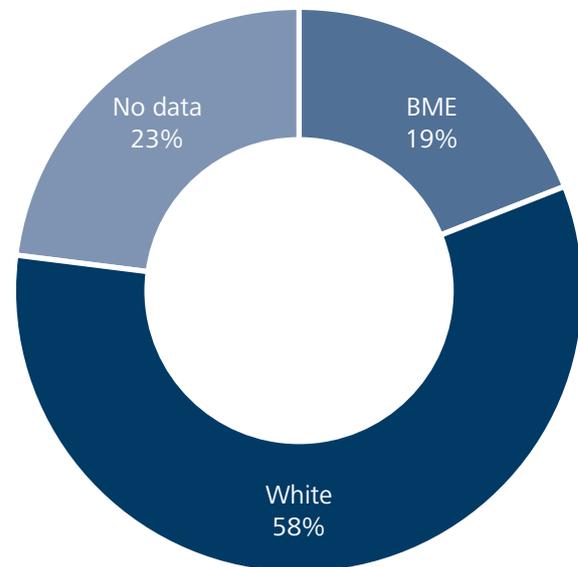
FCO UK based staff by age and grade



*Grade D7 has 1 staff member age 20-29
Grade D6 has 21 staff members age 20-29

Maternity leave by ethnicity

FCO UK based staff on maternity by ethnicity

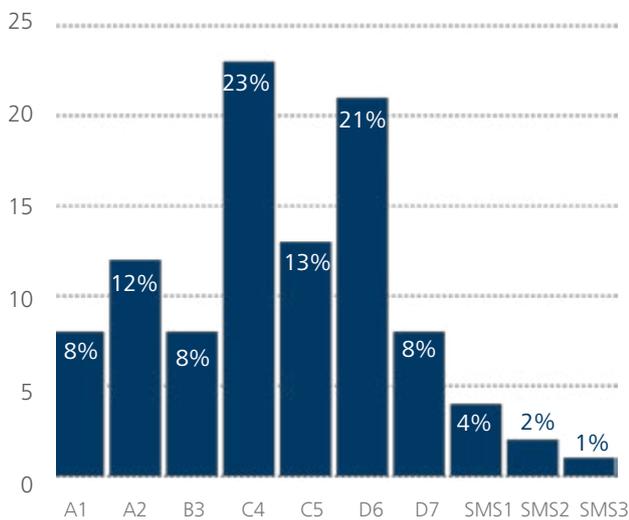


Staff Retention

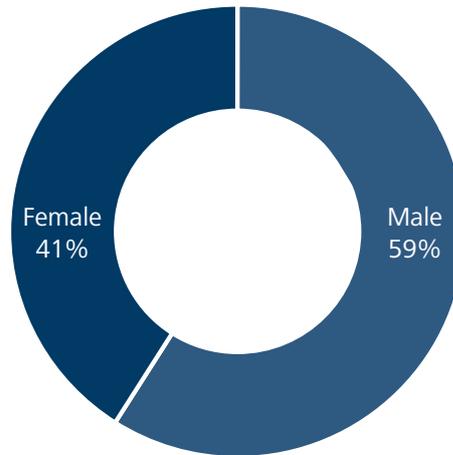
The figures below show the gender and grade percentage breakdown of staff who left the organisation due to retirement, resignation, termination of employment, via a voluntary exit scheme, or through career breaks, permanent transfers to other departments or due to death in service.

Three percent of the FCO's UK based staff either resigned, had their employment terminated, or permanently transferred out of the FCO between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015.

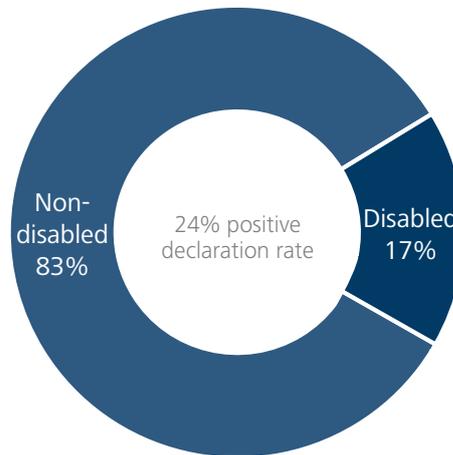
Number of FCO UK based staff leavers by grade, FY 2014/15



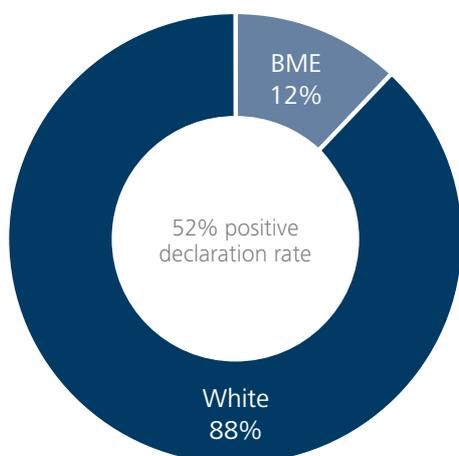
FCO UK based staff leavers by gender



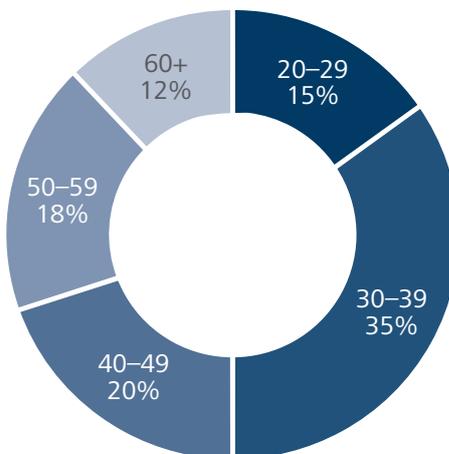
FCO UK based staff leavers by disability



FCO UK based staff leavers by ethnicity



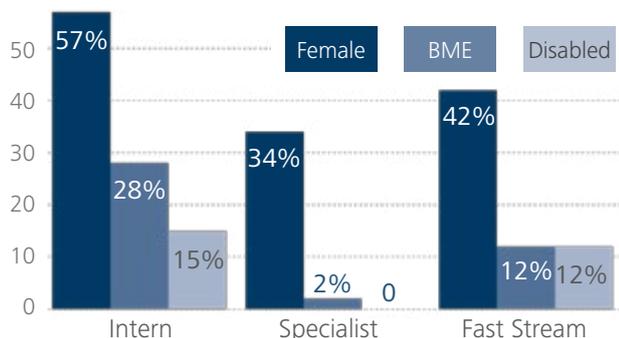
FCO UK based staff leavers by age



Recruitment

The FCO recruited 77 UK based staff between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015, made up of 26 policy entrants from the Civil Service Fast Stream (C4 grade) and 51 posts requiring specialist skills in a variety of different roles including sensitivity reviewers and accountancy trainees.

Proportion of Female, BME and Disabled staff of total Intern, Specialist and Fast Stream staff employed, 2014/2015



Work Experience and Internships

We aim to recruit a talented and diverse workforce which reflects the society we serve. To generate interest in FCO careers from a broader applicant base, the FCO offers a range of work experience opportunities each year.

We hope that, by giving individuals from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to sample working at the FCO, they may consider the FCO as a future employer, as well as gaining beneficial work experience.

Our work experience opportunities, which are paid, are therefore particularly focused, through targeted recruitment campaigns, on individuals from backgrounds currently under-represented in our workforce, and on those who bring skills we require to achieve our objectives. All work experience placements are then awarded strictly on merit, after a competitive application process. Schemes in 2014/15 included the Summer Diversity Internship Programme, and Graduate Internship Programme which gave UK citizens from diverse backgrounds (either BME, disabled or those from a disadvantaged socio-economic background) the opportunity to see what a career in the Civil Service is like.

Equality of Pay

Foreign Office pay is determined by a range of factors including grade, performance and length of time in employment. As part of the FCO’s commitment to putting equal pay into practice, regular monitoring of the impact of pay practices is carried out, including Annual Equal Pay Audits.

The table below illustrates that when comparisons are made within roles of the same grade (of equal work) when broken down by grade the average pay gaps in the Delegated Grades of the FCO are between 0.08% and 2.23%. The overall average (mean) pay gap across the FCO is 10.06%. This is mainly the result of the composition of the FCO workforce, with more male staff in more senior grades whose salaries are therefore higher. The overall mean gender pay gap in the Civil Service is 13.3%.

FCO Average Base Pay for UK based staff as of 31 December 2014 by Gender

Grade	Average Female Pay	Average Male Pay	% Average Pay gap
SMS 3&4	£116,967	£130,267	-10.21%
SMS 2	£88,405	£90,027	-1.80%
SMS 1	£68,217	£69,039	-1.19%
D7	£57,604	£58,571	-1.65%
D6	£47,219	£47,567	-0.73%
C5	£35,469	£36,277	-2.23%
C4	£28,645	£28,779	-0.47%
B3	£24,644	£24,784	-0.56%
A2	£20,889	£20,719	0.82%
A1	£18,353	£18,368	-0.08%

FCO Average Base Pay for UK based staff as of 31 December 2014 by Ethnicity

The table below is using the data based on those who have reported their ethnicity. The comparison by delegated grade shows pay gaps of between 0.08% and 2.75%. The average salary pay gap is 19.90%. The workforce comparison data shows that this is because of the smaller proportion of declared BME staff at more senior grades.

Grade	Average Minority Ethnic Pay	Average White Pay	% Average Pay gap
SMS 3&4	No reported staff at this grade	£126,388	No comparison can be made
SMS 2	£86,638	£87,710	-1.22%
SMS 1	£64,334	£67,731	-5.02%
D7	£57,756	£58,003	-0.43%
D6	£47,990	£46,704	2.75%
C5	£35,115	£35,983	-2.41%
C4	£28,182	£28,953	-2.66%
B3	£24,638	£24,914	-1.11%
A2	£21,002	£20,985	0.08%
A1	£18,337	£18,377	-0.22%

FCO 2014 Staff Engagement Survey

Alongside the Civil Service, all FCO staff can take part in a Staff Engagement Survey (SES) in October each year. The 2014 SES had an 86% participation rate. The FCO's overall engagement score (based on five questions which show how positive, attached and motivated we feel) dropped one percent from 68% to 67%. Despite this small drop our engagement score is 8% above the Civil Service average.

As part of the survey, staff are also asked if they have been subjected to bullying/harassment or discrimination (BHD) at work, in the previous year. Reports of bullying and harassment across the FCO have remained flat at 12% since 2011. The discrimination figure remains unchanged from 2013 at 13%. Very few demographic groups appear to be more vulnerable to BHD than others, with the notable exception of staff with a disability who reported a markedly higher incidence. The results shown below are broken down by age, gender, disability status, sexual orientation and ethnicity. However, some staff did not supply this demographic data, which means that the disaggregate data can appear in some cases to be incompatible with the overall results.

	Discriminated against			Bullied or Harassed		
	2014	2013	2012	2014	2013	2012
Overall	13%	13%	12%	12%	12%	12%
Gender						
Male	12%	11%	11%	10%	10%	10%
Female	13%	13%	12%	12%	13%	12%
Disability						
No	12%	12%	12%	11%	12%	11%
Yes	27%	29%	26%	23%	23%	26%
Black or Minority Ethnic						
Non BME	11%	11%	10%	11%	11%	10%
BME	14%	14%	13%	11%	12%	13%
Sexual Orientation						
Straight	12%	12%	11%	11%	11%	11%
LGBT	13%	16%	13%	14%	13%	15%
Age						
20-24	13%	11%	12%	12%	10%	13%
25-29	12%	12%	11%	11%	12%	12%
30-34	14%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%
35-39	13%	13%	12%	10%	12%	10%
40-44	12%	12%	12%	10%	12%	11%
45-49	11%	11%	10%	10%	11%	10%
50-54	11%	12%	11%	12%	10%	8%
55-59	9%	10%	10%	7%	9%	10%
60-64	10%	10%	8%	10%	7%	9%
65+	6%	10%	15%	8%	6%	11%

The scores on BHD continue to be above the Civil Service average. The FCO Board has made clear that this is unacceptable and that there is no place for these behaviours in the organisation. In early 2015 a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) was appointed and will lead a new two year Action Plan to tackle BHD through a Working Group reflecting affected groups and experienced staff with a record of reducing incidence of BHD in their teams and Posts.

FCO Diversity Policy and Engagement

The FCO believes diversity in who we are and how we work is essential to making us the best diplomatic service in the world. The key to achieving this is retaining a talented and engaged workforce; greater diversity gives us a better understanding of the people we represent and work for. It’s also important as a Government Department that our leadership represents the country we serve. Work supporting greater diversity and inclusion is driven from the top of the organisation by Permanent Under Secretary and Civil Service Diversity Champion Simon Fraser, the FCO Management Board and Board Diversity Champion and Chief Operating Officer Deborah Bronnert. The Board meets every six months to assess progress against our diversity and inclusion priorities, including representational targets for our senior management, and the Civil Service Talent Action Plan “Removing Barriers to Success” programme.

In October 2014 the Board agreed that the FCO diversity and inclusion priorities should be:

- > to continue to use the Senior Management Structure (SMS) targets as a benchmark for our performance on diversity; setting new 5-year targets to better align the FCO with other Government Departments; and agreeing a new target for LGBT staff in the SMS;
- > to prioritise work to meet these targets and in support of this to implement the Civil Service ‘[Talent Action Plan](#)’.

Diversity targets

The Board agreed 2019 targets for the representation of women (39%), disabled (7%) and ethnic minority (7%) staff in the SMS. The Board also agreed to establish an LGBT target at 6% in December 2014. Progress made towards these targets can be seen below.

Target	2019 target	October 2014	31 March 2015	Reporting rate (declarations)
Women	39%	25.6%	27%	100%
BME	7%	3.8% of those declared	4.1% of those declared	86.9%
Disabled	7%	4.4%*	4.7%*	31.7% of whom 14% declared as disabled
LGBT	6%	3.2%*	3.4%*	50% of whom 6.8% declared as LGBT

**measured against SMS total, rather than as a % of those declared, due to low declaration rates for this characteristic*

Work undertaken to meet the targets

Diversity is an important aspect of all our Human Resources (HR) policies and practices and we incorporate diversity considerations when taking decisions on other issues. The FCO has also continued to carry out a range of activities aimed at embedding a culture of inclusion and removing barriers to the progression of under-represented staff. These have included leadership and culture change, structural interventions and communications campaigns. Highlights are as follows:

Leadership and Culture

- > Diversity was a key theme of the 2014 FCO’s annual Leadership Conference for all senior staff with a series of short presentations (‘Pecha Kuchas’) including by Staff Associations, sparking debate about tackling unconscious bias in recruitment and performance management and the inclusion of a diversity category in the staff awards for the first time, which celebrated success stories from across the network.
- > All SMS officers have continued to be appraised and rewarded (through SMS Pay Panels) for their contribution to the diversity agenda.
- > We have continued to increase line manager awareness and capability including by promoting ‘Unconscious Bias’ face to face and e-learning for all managers and interviewers, which 4,143 officers have undertaken to date. Permanent Under Secretary, Simon Fraser, also personally pledged for all SMS staff to undertake face-to-face unconscious bias training by end 2015.
- > We have also promoted diversity of thought and approach through the challenge offered by our Policy Unit and external Diplomatic Excellence Panel, through recognition of diverse approaches and innovation in our annual Staff Awards last July, and through senior role models, lunchtime talks and blogs.

Structural Interventions

We have continued to work to remove barriers to career progression for all talented staff under-represented in our senior grades including through:

- > New and forward leaning guidance from June 2014 about how to support overseas postings for LGBT staff and facilitate visas for same-sex partners;
- > Improving guidance to support postings by single parents;
- > Updating our flexible working toolkit to support remote working;
- > Ensuring all job specifications offer guidance on the available options for flexible working;
- > Continuing a job share register, regular job share coffee mornings, “Bring your bump” teas and an annual Permanent Secretary brown bag lunch with all staff on maternity leave, secondment or special unpaid leave (SUPL).
- > Running the second phase of an award winning pilot to enable staff on long-term career breaks to smooth their return to work through initial short-term project work.
- > Specific Learning and Development opportunities for under-represented groups when preparing for promotion.
- > Ensuring staff associations are consulted during policy development.

We have also implemented several new policies as part of a consultation with staff associations to support greater diversity. These include (a) the option of extending tour lengths for staff with disabilities, beyond five years; (b) diverse panels at all grades, including the involvement of staff junior to the post being interviewed; and (c) ensuring staff are aware of the provisions of the Equality Act on how and when diversity factors can be considered a legitimate consideration in appointment decisions.

We have worked to ensure greater regional and socioeconomic diversity in our recruitment through targeted outreach for graduate and summer internship schemes, through Fast Stream entry and a campaign for our recent A and B recruitment, which broke new ground in Whitehall by including an allowance for relocation to London.

We have continued to offer targeted learning and development to talented staff from under-represented groups to support progression into FCO leadership positions. This included:

- > Career Development training for staff at A-C Bands;
- > A BME Leadership Programme for 12 staff at D Band;
- > Funded places for LGBT, BME, female and disabled staff on the Civil Service Positive Action Pathway;
- > Board member-led action learning sets for under-represented groups;
- > The extension of a sponsorship scheme for talented women at SMS to include talented staff who are BME, LGBT or have a disability;
- > A targeted package of coaching and action learning sets.

Communications and Campaigns

The Board agreed in 2014 to extend to mid-2015 a BME campaign to recruit and support a pipeline of talented BME staff. Activities have included a University Roadshow, the creation of Youth Inspiration Group (YIG) and a Band D BME leadership programme. The road show was commended at the 2014 Race for Opportunity awards; it has reached over 3,500 students from 31 universities over 2 years and positively influenced attendees views of the FCO: of the 254 BME attendees in 2014, 89% became more positive about the FCO as an employer and 30% more said they would consider applying. The YIG has also had success beyond its original BME remit, giving insights into youth perceptions of the FCO.

Benchmarking and Awards

The FCO sustained silver banding for its support on gender and race from Opportunity Now and Race for Opportunity in 2015 and was confirmed to be in the top 10 public sector organisations for supporting gender inclusion. We have won praise for our outreach to potential BME graduate recruits.

We also participated, as part of a 3 year benchmarking cycle, in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index on LGBT issues in September 2014 and placed 160/397, in the top 40% of participating employers, and 16/33 in the Government sector. Areas of good practice

recognised by Stonewall included our assessment of senior managers on diversity achievements during appraisals, a practice not widely seen, and our work to improve the working environment for LGBT staff and to promote sexual orientation equality globally. We are also working closely with our LGBT staff association FLAGG to implement the lessons learned.

Civil Service Talent Action Plan

The Civil Service launched a Talent Action Plan (TAP) in September 2014 which prioritised the more visible championing of under-represented groups, more diverse panels and shortlists, and more flexible working. It also required more substantial support for staff on maternity leave (MATL) and special unpaid leave (SUPL). The FCO was at the forefront of the Civil Service in implementing these recommendations. When Cabinet Office assessed all departments' progress the FCO's progress was assessed as among the best in Whitehall, in many cases going beyond the recommendations in the TAP, including by:

- > Following our existing policy of no single-sex shortlists or interview panels at SCS, unless by exception, as well as promoting diverse panels at all grades;
- > Having a Board Level Diversity Champion in addition to SMS sponsors for all staff networks;
- > Board-level mentoring of staff from under-represented groups;
- > Communications to showcase role models from under-represented groups;
- > Implementation of the Shared Parental Leave provisions, and active communications on these.

A refreshed Talent Action Plan was launched on 26 March 2015. It was based on further research and consultation with BME, disabled and LGBT staff and recommended additional measures from the centre and individual departments. The FCO has already started to implement these recommendations.

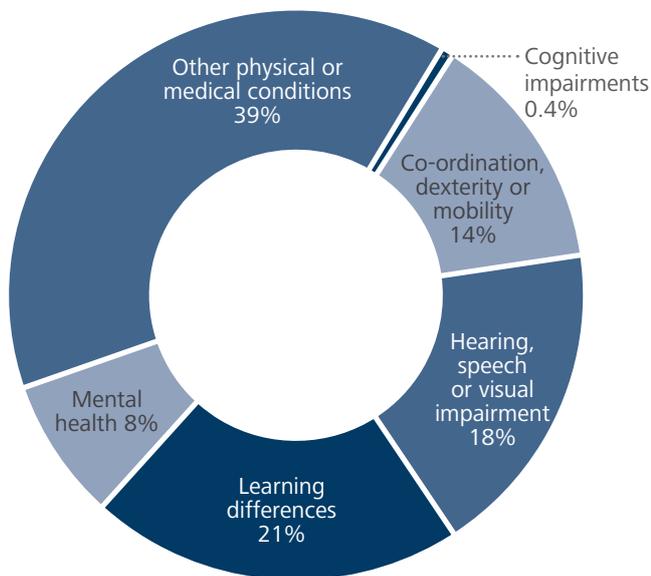
Disability Policy and Support in the FCO

Disability support for UK based staff is provided by a specialist team our Human Resources Directorate (HRD). This support is provided in partnership with the FCO's disability consultants, Key 4 Learning, who provide reasonable adjustments to disabled staff in line with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. Terms and conditions for Local staff working at FCO Posts abroad are governed by local law. The FCO encourages Posts to adopt a best practice approach in terms of support for their Local staff, with advice and support on disability issues available to them on a request basis.

Disabilities disclosed by UK based staff cover a broad range of conditions, including neuro-diverse conditions (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia & Asperger's), mobility issues and hearing or visual impairments. Further details of the workforce who have disclosed disabilities are provided below. The provision of workplace reasonable adjustments for disabled staff can include an expert disability assessment; the supply of specialised office equipment or provision of IT software and appropriate training. More general awareness training and support is also available to disabled staff, their managers and (where appropriate) their team colleagues as well. Staff who are profoundly deaf or with a significant hearing impairment can additionally request the support of qualified British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters & Lipspeakers.

The FCO is also a member of the Business Disability Forum (BDF), a not-for-profit member organisation that makes it easier and more rewarding to do business with and employ disabled people in the UK. In September 2014 the FCO hosted a Business Disability Forum roundtable meeting designed to get disability support teams from across Whitehall departments together to hear about the latest developments on disability issues and to network and share best practice.

UK based staff with disabilities by type of disability



The FCO is also committed to supporting staff with mental health conditions. In September 2014 Permanent Under-Secretary Simon Fraser formally signed the Time to Change Pledge committing to end the stigma and discrimination against people with experience of mental health problems. **Time to Change** is the UK's most ambitious campaign to end mental health stigma. Led by Rethink Mental Illness, in partnership with the charity Mind, it has been set up to create a positive shift in public attitudes towards mental health problems which impacts on many people.

FCO Staff Networks

The FCO's Diversity and Inclusion team and senior management work closely with staff networks and with the Diplomatic Service Families Association (DSFA) to understand and address issues faced by staff they represent. As part of this we support a group of senior Champions who provide staff networks with coaching, strategic direction and support and champion the issues they represent with senior leadership.

Our staff networks and highlights of their work, and joint work with HRD this year are:

Women's Association: sponsoring learning sets involving some 50 women across the network, to share good practice on inclusive leadership;

promoting role models through lunchtime talks and external speaker events including an International Women's Day reception and talks by Madeleine Albright, Helen Clarke and General Karin Lund. Gender Champion Wasim Mir has also been nominated for several awards this year for his joint work with HRD and fellow network champions to improve our diversity data, drawing on FCO project resource.

FLAGG: securing Board agreement to a target for LGBT representation in senior management; opening up development opportunities for under-represented staff to LGBT officers; promoting role models through talks at our annual Leadership Conference, by a high profile LGBT ambassador and at external events; supporting HRD in submitting and following up the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index; and improving the guidance available so LGBT staff can make more informed choices about overseas postings.

Enable: launching a community site sharing knowledge and advice among members; supporting the Time to Change pledge and the launch of a WellBeing network to offer peer support to staff; contributing to cross-Whitehall action on disability via the Civil Service Disability Network; running a pioneering Disability Learning set that has generated advice on policy amendments; and ensuring accessibility is addressed in our major UK Estates Reform and IT Overhaul programmes.

Flexible Working Network: providing advice and support to individuals and departments on FW options; supporting our job-share register and coffee mornings; and running events promoting FW including during Work-Life Balance week in September 2014.

FCO/DSFA (Diplomatic Service Families Association) Carers' Network: raising awareness in the FCO of the issues faced by those with caring responsibilities, through e.g. a talk by Jackie Ashley, journalist and wife of Andrew Marr, on supporting him post-stroke; providing advice on how to manage a work/care balance situation.

Minority Ethnic Action Group: helping shape a successor scheme to our D Band Leadership Programme for BME staff and securing Ministerial support and successfully hosting a unique Black Opera event in October 2014.

Single Parents Network: agreeing changes to policies on medical journeys, allowances and childcare which now recognise the needs of single

parent families. Continuing to pursue casework, support and advocate for staff members and monitor other areas - accommodation, travel package, post reports - to level the playing field and remove barriers to single parents working for the FCO.

Mother's Support Network (MSN): supporting individual staff including through "bring your bump" teas for staff going on Maternity leave.

Religion and Belief Group: managing the FCO's multifaith prayer room and enabling staff to share information on issues related to faith.

Section 2 – Regard for Equality within the FCO’s Activities

Foreign Policy

The promotion of human rights, including equalities issues, is at the heart of British foreign policy. This means all FCO Posts have a responsibility to monitor and raise human rights in their host countries. Government Ministers and FCO staff raise our concerns with host governments and where possible take action on individual cases and lobby for changes in discriminatory practices and laws.

The FCO publishes an [Annual Human Rights Report](#) each spring which covers our global work on human rights issues over the preceding year.

Freedom of Religion or Belief

Worldwide, we have continued to promote the right to freedom of religion or belief in four ways. We have: acted through multilateral organisations and with a wide range of international partners; raised issues bilaterally; funded targeted project work; and continued to improve the religious literacy of our own staff, to equip them better to engage with faith groups and to appreciate the many ways in which the right to freedom of religion or belief may be violated.

In the multilateral system we have worked to ensure that the two resolutions on this subject – the EU-sponsored text on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the parallel text led by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on combating religious intolerance – were again adopted by consensus at the March session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and then at the UN General Assembly (UNGA).

Over the course of the year, every FCO Minister has raised individual cases where individuals’ freedom of religion or belief has been violated and discriminatory legislation and practices in the countries for which they are responsible.

Despite the intrinsic difficulty of designing effective projects on this topic, we increased the number

of good quality bids to our Human Rights and Democracy Programme Fund. Amongst other projects, we funded a series of workshops to promote responsible media reporting on sensitive issues around religion and conflict in Burma, and worked to enhance the role of the judiciary through policy reform and training in Indonesia. We also pledged a contribution to and joined the Executive Board of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). This is a new global fund, drawing on resources from both public and private sectors, dedicated to building resilience against violent extremist agendas through local community based projects.

We continued to run our programme of religious literacy training for our staff, holding our one-day training course three times in the year and continuing our regular series of lunchtime seminars. Topics covered this year have included the role of religion in Israel/Palestine, media reporting from religious hotspots, understanding Hinduism, militant Buddhism, and World Christianity and its influence on international affairs. A prominent speaker in this series was former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Rowan Williams.

Women’s rights

The promotion and protection of women’s rights is enshrined in international human rights law, and we believe that it is essential for stable and prosperous societies that women fully participate in political, economic and social life. This is why women’s rights are a key priority for the FCO. Without gender equality, development goals and poverty reduction cannot be fully realised. Without the participation of women in conflict resolution and peace-building, there can be no sustainable and equitable peace. Tackling those issues is a priority for the UK and central to our work to advance gender equality and empower women.

We work in many countries around the world, and at all relevant multilateral bodies to promote and protect them. It is why in 2014 the FCO hosted the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in

Conflict, and why the Department for International Development, the Home Office and the FCO worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the Prime Minister’s Girl Summit (July 2014) on ending female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage.

FCO officials also attend regular meetings with other UK government departments to ensure that all our efforts are consistent and complementary, including meetings chaired by the Home Office to chart progress against the government’s Violence Against Women Action Plan. Within this plan, the FCO has specific commitments, which include raising awareness of forced marriage, supporting the ratification of and carrying out lobbying in support of the full implementation of the Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

We are committed to supporting innovative new projects in the poorest countries and working with international organisations and governments overseas to promote women’s rights globally and reduce the impact of conflict on women and girls. For example, during 2014, in **Brazil**, FCO funding helped develop a smartphone application called Smart Women App. This app provides routes to the nearest place to get help if threatened with violence, offers information regarding the Maria da Penha law on domestic violence, and provides access to a helpline. The initiative was later federalised by the Brazilian government and now reaches the whole country. In the **Dominican Republic**, the Embassy supported a project aimed at empowering women; the project won first prize at the GEM-Tech Awards 2014, which encourages young women from science, technology, engineering and mathematics clubs to continue their higher education.

The FCO network marked **International Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls Day** on 25 November and the subsequent 16 Days of Activism with a host of initiatives, only some of which are recorded here. The British Embassy in **Washington** painted their red telephone box orange; in **Brunei**, staff wore orange; and in **France** our Embassy published a video blog on domestic violence which attracted over 1,000 views on Facebook and Twitter in a single day. In the **Seychelles**, our High Commission sponsored and took part in the “orange” march organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs that kicked off their 16 Days of Activism. The British Embassy in **Tel Aviv** engaged in two online campaigns: a local campaign called “I’m Changing”, led by a civil society organisation, and the UN’s UNiTE campaign to end violence against women.

During 2014, we continued to build support for the Declaration of Commitment to **End Sexual Violence in Conflict**, which the then Foreign Secretary, William Hague, launched with the Under-Secretary General and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Mrs Zainab Hawa Bangura, during the 68th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2013. 155 states have now endorsed the declaration – 80% of UN member states – a remarkable reflection of the strength of support for the urgent need to address this issue, and the shared commitment to doing so.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights

We believe that the international community must stand firm against all forms of discrimination, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and that we should all accept, respect and value diversity. This is why we and like-minded countries work through the UN to address discrimination and violence against LGBT people, and why we work with individual countries to encourage them to review, revise and abolish discriminatory laws and policies.

We strongly supported the adoption of the United Nations’ second ever resolution on sexual orientation at the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) in September. The resolution, led by Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay, passed by a much bigger majority than the first resolution on this issue in 2011, and requests the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to write a follow-up report on violence and discrimination on the basis of a person’s sexual orientation and gender identity.

In 2014, the UK became a member of the UN LGBT&T Core Group in New York, an informal network of UN member states which ensure that the rights of LGBT persons are appropriately protected in UN fora. We actively participated in the group’s activities, including taking part in high-level events on LGBT rights during the opening of the UNGA in September, and on respect for the diversity of families on Human Rights Day on 10 December. The core group and the UN jointly hosted a “Free and Equal Photo Booth” during the opening of the UNGA, where visiting diplomats, UN staff and friends and family had the opportunity to show their support for LGBT rights, and were offered the chance to publicise this through social media.

A number of Embassies and High Commissions across the globe marked International Day against Homophobia

and Transphobia in May 2014 by holding events with civil society and local LGBT organisations. Staff also attended Pride marches and organised events around them. Examples in 2014 included a pre-Pride reception to mark **Delhi** Queer Pride, and a video blog by our High Commissioner in **Pretoria**. In **Trinidad & Tobago**, the High Commission has facilitated bimonthly safe space coffee mornings for the LGBT community, with discussions on how they can best defend their rights.

Disability rights

The FCO supports international initiatives which help realise the vision of people with disabilities able to achieve their potential as fully participating members of society, whilst removing barriers which impede this, for all people with disabilities around the world.

We consistently advocate special consideration of the rights of persons with disabilities in all relevant UN intergovernmental negotiations. Officials at the UK Mission to the United Nations in New York engaged actively at the UN General Assembly's Third Committee (on social, humanitarian and cultural issues) and during the Commission on Social Development to agree resolutions focused specifically on promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The UK co-sponsored resolutions that highlighted the need to realise the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally-agreed development goals for persons with disabilities, and to mainstream disability in the UN development agenda beyond 2015. We also remained strong advocates for national and international data collection systems that disaggregate relevant data by age, sex, and disability, in order to improve policy formulation and service delivery for persons with disabilities.

At the March HRC in Geneva, the UK co-sponsored a resolution on the right of persons with disabilities to education in line with Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We also joined the EU's statement during the Council's Annual Discussion on Persons with Disabilities.

The FCO is also helping to improve the situation of people with disabilities in China, supporting families with autistic children in Xinjiang, and providing social activities for mentally disabled children and their parents in Gansu. Chinese and UK experts held a workshop on disability rights as part of the 21st UK-

China Human Rights Dialogue held in May 2014.

In **Russia**, we supported the visit of two British Paralympic athletes to travel to Moscow to encourage young people with disabilities. The Paralympians met school children at an inclusive education school and shared experiences with a group of young leaders with disabilities. With our support, the Russian disability civil society organisation, Perspektiva, is building a network of disability NGOs to support people with disabilities by helping with legal advocacy in eight Russian regions.

Indigenous issues

Indigenous people continue to be amongst the poorest and most marginalised in the world. As such, we continue to work overseas and through multilateral institutions to improve the situation of indigenous people, and continue to provide political and financial support for their economic, social and political development around the world. We continue to call on those states that have indigenous populations to sign and implement the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (DRIP), and to ensure other relevant safeguards are in place to ensure they have equal rights, through international human rights mechanisms such as the Universal Periodic Review. In this regard, we believe that the UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples that took place in New York on 22 and 23 September 2014 provided an important venue that ensured indigenous people's voices were heard and heeded as they again called for the realisation of the DRIP. We were pleased that this was reflected in the conference outcome document, along with a call for an effective UN-wide approach to indigenous issues.

More widely, British embassies and high commissions monitor human rights in their host countries, and routinely raise our concerns with their governments. In 2014, they have continued to work with international and local NGOs on a variety of UK-funded projects to encourage local communities to participate more actively in the democratic process. For example, in **Colombia**, we worked with women's civil society groups and indigenous communities to create community networks to prevent sexual violence and provide support to victims, whilst promoting coordination between indigenous authorities and local government to strengthen referral mechanisms and improve access to services for victims. In **Bolivia**, we continue to work with EU partners to ensure indigenous communities

are protected. We are also supporting projects on police and prison reform, as well as on strengthening the judiciary. All of these elements directly impact indigenous people’s access to justice. In **Brazil**, we are working with EU partners to help empower and protect indigenous people, especially through the joint human rights defenders (HRDs) project between the EU and the human rights secretariat of the Brazilian government.

Consular services

The FCO’s Consular Service offers assistance to British nationals in difficulties abroad.

The customer charter of the Consular Service commits to:

“Be professional, non-judgemental, polite and helpful to you whatever your gender, race, age, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, religion or belief.”

Approaches to FCO Consular Staff Overseas – for the period 1 January 2014–31 December 2014 – by Type

Nature of Service	Number of Clients
Visiting counters at overseas missions	144,548
Written Enquiries	184,203
Telephone Enquiries during working hours	461,258
Telephone Enquiries outside working hours	8,086
Total	798,095

The FCO does not collect data on the diversity (gender, ethnicity or other protected attributes) of those to whom it provides services.

Forced Marriage Unit

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is a joint Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office Unit that provides assistance in cases of forced marriage in the UK and consular cases involving British nationals overseas, including dual nationals. Forced marriage is a crime (it became a criminal offence on the 14th June 2014); is a serious abuse of human rights and a form of domestic abuse. Where children are involved, it is child abuse. Staff are also trained in the specific issues relating to victims who are LGBT or who have a disability and provide tailored assistance in these cases.

The FMU also runs an extensive outreach programme, which raises awareness of forced marriage and related issues among potential victims and statutory agencies including police, social services and health professionals. Statistics from the FMU suggest young people aged between 16 and 25 are most at risk of being forced into marriage.

In 2014 the FMU gave advice or support related to a possible forced marriage in 1267 cases¹.

- > Where the age was known, 11% of cases involved victims² below 16 years, 11% involved victims aged 16-17, 17% involved victims aged 18-21, 14% involved victims aged 22-25, 8% involved victims aged 26-30, 5% involved victims aged 31-40, and 2% involved victims aged 41 or over. 32% involved an adult whose age was not known.
- > 79% of cases involved female victims and 21% involved male victims.
- > The FMU has handled cases involving a total of over 88 different countries³. In 2014 this included Pakistan (38.3%), India (7.8%), Bangladesh (7.1%), Afghanistan (3%), Somalia (1.6%), Turkey (1.1%), Iraq (0.7%), Sri Lanka (1.1%) and Iran (1.0%). The origin was unknown in 3.5% of cases.
- > 23% of the cases handled by the FMU were domestic and had no overseas element.

1 This statistic includes contact made to the FMU via the helpline or by email in relation to a new case

2 Victim includes people thought to be at potential risk of future forced marriage, those currently going through a forced marriage and those who have already been forced to marry.

3 This includes countries to which a victim is at risk of being taken or has already been taken to in connection with a forced marriage.

- > Within the UK the regional distribution was: London 23%, West Midlands 11.9%, South East 10.8%, Yorkshire and Humberside 8.9%, North West 8.1%, East 4.7%, East Midlands 4.4%, Scotland 2.3%, South West 1.7%, Wales 1.4%, Northern East 1.3% and Northern Ireland 0.7%. The region was unknown in 20% of cases.
- > 135 cases involved victims with disabilities.
- > 8 involved victims who identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT).

Assisting British Nationals with mental health conditions to prepare and travel “well”

Over the past few years we have seen an increase in the number of British Nationals overseas requiring assistance who have mental health conditions, making them particularly vulnerable. The customer insight team worked with the Consular Lead Social Work advisor and a partner research agency to speak to those travelling with mental health conditions, and their friends, families and carers, to better understand their experiences and expectations. What we learned has enabled us to deliver improved guidance and services that better respond to their needs. The team challenged previous assumptions that it was inappropriate to seek direct feedback from customers in such sensitive cases and delivered a successful approach where customers welcomed the opportunity to participate. The team worked with MIND and other stakeholders to understand the results and make impactful changes to the way we help mental health customers prepare to travel (to prevent them getting into difficulty in the first place), to our services and to our caseworker training to ensure our staff feel well equipped to support this group.

In addition we spoke to staff about their experiences, and found relatively low levels of staff confidence overall (37%) in dealing with these cases. This was at odds with the confidence the customers felt in receiving the service, but highlighted the need for further work to ensure our staff feel supported and empowered.

Results from the project have already changed our service delivery, to both this and other marginalized groups. In particular, prevention and awareness activity is aimed at both the potential customer and also the

travelling partner/ carer, and we are actively seeking better working with third parties such as MIND to support prevention/ awareness building activity. We created a new Know Before You Go [checklist](#) about travelling overseas with mental health needs, which was pushed out through social media and our partner network on World Mental Health Day in October 2014. Feedback on the checklist during the customer insight research was positive. Additionally, there is now greater focus on our caseworkers, to ensure that through a combination of training and expert/ champion networks they feel confident to give the advice necessary to this group when in need of assistance overseas.

- > In 2014 the FCO dealt with 504 cases where British nationals required assistance when experiencing mental health needs abroad, an increase of 16% on 2013. In 2013, these cases covered 77 countries/territories, with the highest number of cases in Spain, France, and the USA.
- > 80% of casework staff have received mental health training in 2014 (up from 50% in 2013).

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) campaign

In 2014 the FCO launched a ‘[Know Before You Go](#)’ [campaign](#) targeting British LGBT travellers intending to travel overseas. This followed the introduction of same-sex marriage in England and Wales, which brought with it the potential for an increase foreign travel among this group for honeymoons. To deliver the campaign we worked with a range of organisations with an interest in travel and built new partnerships with many that connect with the LGBT community in particular, such as the Gay European Tourism Association, as well as organisations such as ILGA (the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association). Over the course of the campaign we successfully reached out to potential travellers through national, regional, specialist and social media and partnership marketing activity, providing them with key information on how to help enjoy trouble-free travel, including by fully researching the local laws and customs of their destination. One key call to action from the campaign was encouraging travellers to read our [country-specific travel advice](#) pages, as well as our generic [advice for LGBT travellers](#) heading overseas.”



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