Letter from the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to the Vice President of the European Commission: 2 February 2021

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Government Analysis Function D&I Champion biographies

Diversity Champions

The Government Analysis Function (AF) Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is supported by our D&I Champions. Read some of their biographies here.

Attract Champions

Patrick Rickles, Head of Digital Skills and Innovation (Oil and Gas Authority)

“My role at the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) focuses on establishing a digital academy for upskilling colleagues on spatial and non-spatial technologies. I also experiment with cloud technologies and scripting languages to innovate with geospatial artificial intelligence and machine learning.

I am Deputy Head of Diversity and Inclusion for the Government Geography Profession, and I also handle much of our design, communications and tech work. Coming from academia, I can see many crossover opportunities for students in Civil Service.

I have regular engagement with universities and external organisations as part of the Government Geography Profession, encouraging students from all backgrounds to join.

I am excited by the opportunity to extend this to even more disciplines that are part of the other professions of Government and act as a champion of

Diversity and Inclusion for them”.

Laura Armstrong, Head of Private Office for Director for Knowledge, Analysis and Intelligence (KAI) (HM Revenue & Customs)

“I’m a tax professional by background but have been working alongside analysts in KAI for about five years. I have a keen interest in people issues and have taken an active part in many initiatives including the National Mentoring Consortium and delivering disability masterclasses to managers across HMRC.

I’m always keen to see how we can make our recruitment process as inclusive as possible to ensure we have a diverse range of future leaders in the Civil Service. I look forward to working with the Analysis Function to deliver its Diversity and Inclusion strategy”.

Build Champions

Edisa Livingstone, Universal Credit Statistics (Department for Work and Pensions)

“I am in the final year of the Statistical Fast Stream. I joined the Civil Service four years ago and one of the things that attracted me as someone from an ethnic minority group was its reputation for valuing Diversity and Inclusion.
It is a fact that those from diverse backgrounds are under-represented in senior leadership roles, and I passionately believe we all need to do our part as analysts to address the issue.

I really benefited from the Fast Stream, as it has given me greater access to training, support, mentoring and guidance from senior analysts. I want to empower all analysts, of all grades and backgrounds, to see themselves as potential leaders, with access to the best opportunities for training, support, mentoring and guidance. The aims of the Build strand of this strategy align very closely with this goal”.

Ben Cowey, Principal Financial Analyst (Ministry of Defence)

“If anyone was in doubt about underlying tensions in our society and the need for greater diversity and inclusion, then the last year has certainly highlighted these.

As the UK Civil Service, it is vitally important we represent the population we serve otherwise we will struggle to deliver for all areas of society. In addition to being the right thing to do, diversity in our workplace is essential to designing policies that represent all UK citizens. This is why diversity and inclusion matter to me. Since joining my current team in the Ministry of Defence I have worked to make it more diverse and inclusive, I am very excited to work across the Analysis Function to do the same”!

Create Champions

Jo Lee, Data Scientist (10 Downing Street)

“I joined the Civil Service five years ago as a data scientist, after completing a PhD in Computational Biochemistry.

The most successful teams I’ve been part of are inclusive and promote diversity of thought. Diversity of thought challenges preconceptions and provides space to explore better solutions that we might otherwise have missed.

Despite the strategic importance, implementing this is challenging but can be done by creating a safe environment to allow change. In doing this, we can create a culture of empowerment where analysts can and do speak up, are heard, and experiment with new ideas. Then we all benefit”.

Paul Vickers, Deputy Director Insights Division, Analysis and Data Directorate, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

“Over the course of my career in the Civil Service I have worked in a number of departments, including the Home Office, HM Treasury and the Office for National Statistics (ONS). I lead a multidisciplinary analytical team in MHCLG. I have been involved in Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) for many years, having previously been a Diversity Champion in the ONS and sponsored the implementation of the Carers Passport which led to other types of passport which are now widely used across the Civil Service.

I am passionate about ensuring that everyone, regardless of their personal characteristics or background, can be the best version of themselves, can bring their authentic self to work and can be given the opportunity to develop and grow. I currently oversee the development of D&I statistics in MHCLG and am leading a group looking at diversity, inclusion and policymaking across the department.

I look forward to working with others across the Analysis Function to embed an inclusive culture where everyone is given a chance to succeed and take on high priority or challenging roles, and where the value that diverse perspectives add to our analytical outputs is widely recognised and valued”.

37th Universal Periodic Review: UK

closing statement

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a ‘peer review’ process that reviews the human rights record of every UN Member State once every four years. It is a unique tool of the Human Rights Council, aimed at sharing best practice. As a strong supporter of the UPR process, we have participated and raised priority human rights concerns in all reviews since the process began in 2006. This session reviewed 14 States: Australia, Austria, Georgia, Lebanon, Mauritania, Micronesia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Oman, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, St Kitts and Nevis and St Lucia.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery is a global problem requiring a global response. The Covid-19 pandemic has sparked a global health crisis with devastating impacts on some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in society, including victims of modern slavery and those that were previously vulnerable to it. International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF reports suggest millions more children risk being pushed into child labour as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, the first rise after 20 years of progress. As we mark the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour in 2021, we must redouble efforts to end child labour in all its forms by 2025 as set out in SDG 8.7.
During this session, the UK continued to make recommendations on modern slavery at every country review. Recommendations ranged from developing systems to identify and support victims of human trafficking, to the creation of national action plans to combat modern slavery. Further recommendations were made for the ratification of the ILO’s Forced Labour Protocol, which requires governments to take measures to tackle all forms of forced labour and provide protection to victims.

UN Treaty Body elections

Since 2017, we have consistently made the recommendation to ‘adopt an open, merit-based selection process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections’ to most states. These expert bodies are a central part of the UN human rights system, charged with monitoring the implementation of human rights conventions in states which have signed up to them. The UK continues to advocate strengthening the quality, independence and diversity of Treaty Body membership.

Australia

I welcome Australia’s long standing commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, this includes the positive steps taken by the Australian Government to tackle modern slavery, including through the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act 2018. I commend Australia’s progress on human rights issues since its last review and for its ongoing consultation with civil society in this process. I call on Australia to work closely with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to implement the Closing the Gap strategy, while ensuring shared decision making and genuine partnerships.

Georgia

I commend the Government of Georgia on the recent progress they have made on human rights including the creation of an independent agency to investigate human rights violations by law enforcement officers and the creation of a domestic violence unit. However, I remain concerned that the judicial reform programme has not been completed and I call on Georgia to make further reforms to ensure protection of minorities, including LGBT, women and children; and safeguard media independence. I also urge Georgia to implement all the recommendations of the OSCE/ODIHR report on the recent parliamentary elections as soon as possible to restore public confidence in democratic institutions and processes.

Myanmar

On Myanmar, I am concerned that civilians continue to bear the brunt of conflict between the Myanmar Military and Ethnic Armed Organisations. 860,000 Rohingya remain in Bangladesh, having been subject to a campaign of ethnic cleansing. Recent displacements in Kayin State, and ongoing impacts of conflict in Chin, Kachin, Rakhine, and Shan States, demonstrate the necessity of dialogue. Perpetrators of violations and abuses are not held to account, and full humanitarian access is denied to many regions. Hundreds of thousands of people live in displacement camps both in Myanmar and in border areas of neighbouring countries. Despite disenfranchisement of some minority groups, recent elections were an important milestone on Myanmar’s path towards democracy, I encourage the Government to continue on this path through constitutional reform. I urge the Government of Myanmar to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine, amend the 1982 Citizenship Law and incorporate a plan for voluntary, safe and dignified Rohingya repatriations.

Rwanda

I welcome Rwanda’s strong record on economic and social rights, and promotion of gender equality. However, I remain concerned by continued restrictions of civil and political rights and media freedom. I call on the Government to conduct transparent, credible and independent investigations into allegations of human rights violations and to bring perpetrators to justice; to protect and enable journalists to work freely, without fear of retribution; and to ensure that state authorities comply with the Access to Information law. As host of the 2021 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and incoming Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth, we look forward to Rwanda championing Commonwealth values of democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights.

I urge all countries under review during this session to give full and serious consideration to the UK recommendations. I encourage them not only to accept them, but also to implement all the recommendations in a timely and comprehensive manner. I look forward to the formal UPR adoption at the UN Human Rights Council in June 2021.

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Otodex Skin Cream – Product defect recall alert

News story

Product defect recall alert for: Otodex Skin Cream (Vm 13240/4000) by Petlife International Ltd

We wish to make retailers and veterinary surgeons aware that Petlife International Ltd has initiated a Class II recall to retail level for the product Otodex Skin Cream as the lidocaine content is marginally out of specification.

This recall is for the following batches only:

Batch No.	Expiry Date
E001	31/03/2021
E002	31/01/2021

Petlife International Ltd is contacting retailers, veterinary surgeons and wholesale dealers to examine inventory immediately and quarantine products subject to this recall.

For further information regarding the recall, please contact Dr J M Ballany on +44 1333 720257 or alternatively by email to johnballany@btinternet.com.

Published 3 February 2021