#

# The REACH Mentoring Programme:

The REACH Programme was developed as one of a number of tools to improve the diversity of the SCS. It has been created in partnership with Saxton Bampfylde, Global Executive Search Consultants and together, we aim to provide mentoring partners exclusively for Grade 6/7 (Band A) and Deputy Director (SCS1) colleagues with a disability. Each mentor is a leader in their own right from outside the Civil Service, who either has a lived experience of disability or who has been involved in shifting the dial on improving development opportunities, career progression and the wider workplace environment for people with any form of disability.

We are pleased to now launch the new REACH Programme to Civil Service colleagues and look forward to receiving your application. To help you complete your application, we have addressed the most frequently asked questions below. We will add to these as and when we receive additional queries. For queries not currently covered below, please contact **disability.inclusion@cabinetoffice.gov.u****k**

# Frequently Asked Questions:

1. **Is the programme open to non-civil servants?**

No. A key driver in launching the programme is to support the Civil Service in delivering on an ambitious target to increase SCS disability new entrant representation to 11.3% by 2025. It would therefore not be appropriate at this stage to open up the programme to non-civil servants in partner organisations or non-departmental public bodies.We may review this position at a later date, when the data shows clear evidence that we are well on track to meet the SCS New Entrant disability target.
2. **Can I apply for the programme if I am currently on maternity leave or about to commence maternity leave in the next few months?**

For the mentoring programme to be effective, the mentor will need to be able to draw on current work activities, development plans and career progression challenges in the workplace.

Individuals on maternity leave will therefore only be eligible to apply for the scheme in circumstances where there will be a small overlap between their planned maternity leave and the 12 month period, November 2019 to October 2020, of the mentoring scheme. If their planned maternity leave overlaps with all or most of the 12 month programme delivery window, they would not be eligible to apply on this occasion, but could apply for future cohort programmes.
3. **I am already a participant on a development programme - can I also apply to The REACH Programme?**

We are trying to ensure development opportunities are shared across the widest possible cohort therefore priority will be given to those not currently on a development programme. Applications are welcome from individuals that have already completed their participation on a previous development programme or have applied for a development programme and have yet to be advised that their application is successful.

1. **I have applied to the current round of the FLS - can I apply to The REACH Programme also?**

You **can** apply to the REACH Programme if you have applied for the current round of the FLS/SLS Programme. Because of the timing of the launch of the next FLS/SLS Programme, there is likely to be only a short overlap between the two.

1. **How will I be matched with my mentor and will I get a mentor that will understand my specific disability?**

As part of the matching process, we will consider your responses on your application form and make every effort to partner you with the most suitable available mentor. Each mentor has been selected for their wealth of executive leadership experience combined with an understanding of disability, either through a lived experience or because of their work in this space. We are confident that whoever you are paired with, your mentoring experience has the potential to be a rich learning experience.

1. **I prefer not to travel. Can I undertake sessions with my mentor via Skype/Google Hangout/Facetime?**

A personal 1-2-1 session is most people’s preferred communication method and we have mentors based across the country to facilitate this. However, it is for individual mentees and mentors to agree what works for them taking into consideration geographical distance and individual preferences.

1. **What grade is the REACH Programme available to?**

The Programme supports our aim to improve the diversity of our SCS cadre and is targeted at substantive Grade 6/7 and Deputy Directors (SCS1) with a disability.

1. **I haven’t told anyone that I have a disability. Can I apply for the scheme?**

Yes. Your data will be kept entirely confidential and will not be shared without your consent.

1. **I’m worried about confidentiality, who will know about my disability?**

All the information that you include in your form is confidential. Only the Cabinet Office D&I team and the Saxton Bampfylde team will be able to access the information and it is only used for the purposes to match you to the most suitable mentor. If you have any concerns please do get in touch with **disability.inclusion@cabinetoffice.gov.uk**We will not share your form with your mentor, but you may wish to send it to them once you have been matched.

1. **I am not London based, is the REACH Programme still available to me?**

Absolutely! Our mentors are geographically spread and we will do our best to match you to a mentor that works in close proximity to your work location, however, mentoring doesn’t have to happen in person: Skype or Facetime or another medium can be used to have your conversation provided both you and your mentor are comfortable

1. **How long will I be on the Programme?**

The formal mentoring relationship is scheduled to last for 12 months, however, there might be flexibility to extend this further should both parties consider this to be beneficial.

1. **I have a disability that means travel can be difficult or I am not able to communicate easily over the phone.**

We’d encourage mentors and mentees to discuss how best to communicate when you have your introductory meeting. If you have a preference to speak in person or through a particular medium please do put down your preference on the application form. We are designing the programme to be as inclusive

as possible and will work with you to find a way for you to participate that means that both you and the mentor can communicate effectively.

1. **How many times will I meet my mentor?**

We would envisage a minimum of 3/4 meetings throughout the year but the exact figure will be determined by the mentor and mentee based on individual requirements.

1. **What happens if I don’t get on with my mentor or mentee?**

After the initial start up meeting if either party feels that the partnership is not compatible they will have the option to end the relationship at any time, without recriminations. In addition, Saxton Bampfylde and the Cabinet Office will keep in close contact with both the mentors and the mentees throughout the relationship to ensure that both parties are best supported throughout the year to make the partnerships successful.

1. **My line manager has asked if they can discuss my mentoring arrangement with me, but I thought mentoring was a confidential, one-to-one relationship?**

Your mentoring discussions are personal to you and you can decide how much information you wish to share. Your line manager may wish to confirm with you in general terms that the mentoring arrangement is proving effective. They may also be able to offer general support from their own managerial experiences.

1. **Does the REACH Programme guarantee me promotion?**

We cannot guarantee promotion although your experience is likely to be a valuable part of your development and improvement journey towards career progression and promotion.

1. **I am on temporary promotion (TDA) to grade 7, can I apply to the REACH Programme?**

No. The scheme is open to substantive Grade 6/7 (Band A) or Deputy Director (SCS1) colleagues.

1. **Will there be a cost to my Department if I am successful in being selected.**

No - there is no cost for obtaining a place on the scheme. However any associated T&S costs should be met by your local business unit cost centre.

1. **Why is this scheme only available to disabled colleagues?**

The data shows clear evidence at Civil Service levels of under-representation of disabled staff at senior management level and feeder grades. There are complimentary mentoring programmes available for other underrepresented groups such as EMPOWER for ethnic minority staff.

1. **How many mentoring opportunities are available?**

We have identified a senior group of mentors across the UK. Any eligible applicant who is not matched with a mentor on this occasion will be placed on a reserve list for future matching activities.

1. **What selection criteria will you be applying to identify successful applicants?**

The assessment panel will consider your responses to the sections on your motivation, career aspirations, development areas, what you see at the benefits of participation and what efforts you've made to demonstrate your potential for career progression.

1. **If I have further questions that are not covered by the FAQs who can I speak to?**

For more information, please access the website in the first instance. If, having done so, you have been unable to find the information you need, please contact **disability.inclusion@cabinetoffice.gov.uk**