



Department for Education

DIRECTOR GENERAL, REGIONS GROUP

Information pack



**Fostering
Friendly**
The Fostering Network

We're proud to be a
Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer.



Saxton Bampfylde

Opening message from Susan Acland-Hood, Permanent Secretary, Department for Education



"This job is about leading with vision and determination to improve education and care for children and young people across all nine English regions, in active partnership with local and regional actors. If you want to make a difference to the lives of children and young people across the country, I want to hear from you"

Thank you for your interest in the role of Director General, Regions Group, in the Department for Education. This is an exciting opportunity to drive transformational change and deliver the government's ambitious regional approach to improving outcomes for children and young people, and driving high and rising standards for all.

As Director General for Regions, you will lead nine regional teams with significant powers and responsibilities, including the newly established RISE teams (Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence), which are integral to delivering focused interventions to tackle underperformance and drive sustainable improvement. Your leadership will shape the Group's vision, mission, values, and goals, ensuring a culture of collaboration, innovation, and accountability across the education and care sectors.

You will spearhead improvements in early years, schools, SEND provision, and children's social care, working in partnership with academy trusts, local authorities, dioceses, and other key stakeholders.

I am looking for an accomplished leader who can inspire a diverse and dynamic team, lead through change, create an ethos of excellence, develop people brilliantly, and ensure the Regions Group delivers impactful results. You will need exceptional skills in leadership, collaboration, and delivering system-wide improvements, along with a deep understanding of place and a passion for improving education and care services. You will also help the whole Department to develop a stronger sense of place in its policy making, and ensure that frontline experience informs policy.

You will need to be a brilliant partner and collaborator, with an excellent track record of delivering pacy improvement in complex systems, have a deep understanding of place, and a passion for improving education and services for children.

At the Department for Education, we believe in breaking down the barriers to opportunity for all children and young people. If you share this passion and are ready to make a transformative impact across the education and care system across the nine English regions, I want to hear from you.

Best wishes,

Susan Acland-Hood
Permanent Secretary

The Civil Service delivers public services and supports the government of the day to develop and implement its policies. Much of this work happens in our individual Departments (of which there are over 40), but we also have 12 cross-Government functions - along with numerous arm's length bodies who work across the public sector.

This role is based in the Department for Education, which is one of the biggest organisations in the Civil Service, responsible for delivering children's services and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.

You can find out more about the organisation at gov.uk.

This role is a Director General role. If you have never worked in the Civil Service, as a general guide, each Department is headed by a Permanent Secretary, and their direct reports are our Directors General and some functional leaders. Although comparisons are not always straightforward, that means this role is equivalent to an Executive Committee role in the private sector. The size and shape of Director General portfolios varies by Department, but each role will have its own delivery priorities, plus a contribution to Departmental leadership - and a broader commitment to collective leadership across the Civil Service as part of our Civil Service Leadership Group (the most senior 250 civil servants).



The purpose of the Director General, Regions Group is to improve outcomes for children, families and learners, especially those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable, across the nine regions. You will lead a Group comprising nine regional teams and two central functions, which delivers for and responds to local needs, and understands impacts on children and learners, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people. Specifically, the teams will deliver locally across Children's Social Care, SEND, and Schools. This will depend on extensive collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders. Your work on improving outcomes across the education and care systems will play a central role in delivering the objectives of the government's Opportunity Mission. The Group will also have an essential role to play in helping shape policy across DfE to reflect local needs.

Key responsibilities will include:

Regional school improvement and interventions – overseeing RISE (Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence) to deliver high and rising standards in education by ensuring targeted intervention in schools that need it most, identifying local and thematic school improvement priorities, and promoting wider school improvement support in close collaboration with local authorities, academy trusts, and dioceses.

Children's social care improvement – leading reform efforts in failing children's social care functions within local authorities, working in partnership with the sector to identify and implement rapid improvements. The role also involves supporting wider social care system reforms through cross-government collaboration.

Academy trust oversight and system management – building strong relationships with academy trusts and local authorities to drive improvement and innovation. Supporting academy trusts to thrive, including intervening in failing schools and academies that Ofsted has judged in a category of concern.

Education and care system capacity and strategy – ensuring every local area has sufficient, high-quality school places, overseeing the implementation of a DfE-wide strategy for place, and driving DfE's ambitions to become an influential place-shaping organization.

Regional leadership and partnership building – leading relationships with key regional stakeholders, including local authorities, Ofsted, the Association of Directors of Children's Services, dioceses, and Mayoral Combined Authorities.

Cross-department collaboration and innovation – working closely with other DG-led groups within DfE, particularly the policy groups covering **Schools, Skills, and Families**. Additionally, delivering a data-driven strategy for Regions Group to inform future policies and interventions.

The Director General will attend the DfE Board and associated committees. They will act as a corporate leader of the whole Department, alongside the rest of Leadership Team and their Board colleagues, including Non -Executives, and will work jointly to continue to improve the effectiveness of the Department and the capability of staff, and to set and communicate clear, shared priorities.

The Civil Service is open to talented people from anywhere in the world, subject to immigration status requirement, and from any career background; we will always seek to identify transferable skills from the individual's experience.

To succeed in applying for this role, you must be able to demonstrate that you meet the following Essential Criteria:

- ❖ A strong track record of excellent leadership and of driving school improvement across the system to achieve improved quality and outcomes. Excellent understanding of the education and children's social care sectors, with a strong grasp of current policy and practice.
- ❖ Strong operational delivery leadership experience, with the ability to translate strategic priorities into effective action; and to ensure policy and decision-making are properly informed by frontline experience.
- ❖ Experience of regional or local delivery with a track record of leading others to adapt and shape delivery to fit local and regional contexts effectively while retaining any necessarily consistent national elements, and with the ability to lead through change.
- ❖ Significant experience in engaging and influencing those at the most senior levels, both internally and externally to Government, including ministers, mayors and other local government leaders, advisers and local and regional bodies to ensure collaboration and partnership working, with the ability to identify and construct shared solutions to challenges across systems, with flexibility and pace.
- ❖ Outstanding record of people leadership, including experience building and maintaining a strong senior management team, building a diverse and inclusive culture, and leading through change.



Diversity is vital to the success of this role, and to the Civil Service as a whole. We actively welcome applications from candidates from all backgrounds, with different experiences and perspectives - and we are committed to ensuring that we work in an inclusive way that means everyone in the Civil Service can perform at their best.

Civil Service recruitment processes at Director General level are regulated by the [Civil Service Commission](#), and we follow clear guidelines to ensure that our recruitment is fair and open. We also design our recruitment processes to reflect our values-based approach and to ensure that shortlisted candidates have the opportunity to meet key stakeholders for the role, before they join us.

We expect the process for this role to be as follows:

- ❖ **The closing date for applications will be 23:55 on Friday 13 June.**
- ❖ Longlisted candidates will be invited to meet with Saxton Bampfylde for a preliminary interview.
- ❖ A shortlist of the applications will take place w/c 14 July.
- ❖ During w/c 21 July, all shortlisted candidates will then:
 - ❖ Participate in an individual sector engagement exercise including a selection of people from across the department and key stakeholders external to the department. This will be facilitated by an Occupational Psychologist and observed by Naomi Schweitzer, Director Human Resources, Department for Education.
 - ❖ Undertake aptitude tests.
 - ❖ They may also be asked to meet with further key stakeholders, potentially including a senior Minister or leader from the Department for Education.
- ❖ Inputs from all of those steps will then form the basis of a panel interview. As part of this you will be required to prepare a presentation. The panel will be chaired by **Tony Poulter** from the Civil Service Commission during w/c 28 July. Other panel members at the interview will include but may not be limited to **Susan Acland-Hood**, Permanent Secretary, Department for Education, **Kevan Collins**, Lead Non-Executive Board Member at the Department for Education, **Sarah Healey**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and **Shazia Hussain**, Director Children's Social Care – Safeguarding at the Department for Education. Naomi Schweitzer, Human Resources Director at the Department for Education will be an observer.

Please note that references and open-source due diligence checks (including into social media accounts) may be undertaken for all short-listed candidates.

Full details will be provided to shortlisted candidates and recognising that there are a number of steps in the process, we will do our best to arrange the sessions in a way that works for you. We hope that this process will be conducted in face-to-face sessions, but if you need any adjustments do let us know.

- ❖ This role is being offered on a **permanent** basis. This role is also available on a secondment basis for up to 2 years.
- ❖ If you are successful and are from outside of the Civil Service, you can expect your salary on appointment to be **£160,000 per annum**. If you're an existing Civil Servant, your salary will be agreed in line with the Civil Service pay rules in place on the date of your appointment.
- ❖ This is a **full-time role**, but all flexible working arrangements are welcomed and will be considered (including existing job share arrangements). You can be based in any DfE location (Bristol, Cambridge, Coventry, Croydon, Darlington, Leeds, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield, Watford). This role will require frequent presence in our London office, due to its proximity to Ministers, so you will need to be prepared to spend time there.

Please note that:

- ❖ **Civil Service pension** arrangements will apply and you will have the option of joining the Civil Service Alpha Pension Scheme, a defined benefit (DB) pension scheme. The current employer contribution rate for this salary level just under 30% of salary as explained at [Civil Service Pension Scheme](#).
- ❖ The role includes **25 days annual leave**, increasing on a sliding scale to 30 days after 5 years' service. (This is in addition to 8 public holidays and one privilege day).
- ❖ If successful you must hold, or be willing to obtain, security clearance up to **SC** level. More information about the vetting process can be found [here](#).
- ❖ You will need to hold the right [immigration status and nationality requirements for this role](#) - please email sarah.vale@cabinetoffice.gov.uk if you have any questions.
- ❖ Unfortunately we will not be able to reimburse you for any **expenses** incurred as part of this recruitment process.

To ensure the integrity of the judgments and decisions they make every day, all civil servants must make sure that no conflict arises - or could be perceived to arise - between their public duties and their private interests when joining, or leaving, the civil service. This is a requirement of our Civil Service Code and is designed to protect both individual civil servants and their employing departments. If you believe you have any interests that might be relevant (or be perceived as relevant) to your ability to undertake this role, please let Saxton Bampfylde know early in the process. Such interests may be financial or may be related to the relationships you have with specific individuals, organisations, or employers. Saxton Bampfylde will be able to discuss those interests with you and help work through potential next steps.

HOW TO APPLY

Saxton Bampfylde has been appointed as an employment agency adviser to assist with this appointment.

To apply for this post, you will need to submit the following documentation through Saxton Bampfylde's website www.saxbam.com/appointments using code **OBFU** by no later than 23.55 on **Friday 13 June 2025**.

- ❖ **Your CV**, with educational and professional qualifications and full employment history, including an explanation of any gaps in your employment history, and details where possible of budgets and numbers of people.
- ❖ A short covering statement of **no more than two A4 sized pages (1000 words)** explaining why this appointment interests you and how you can evidence your suitability for the role, with particular reference to the criteria in the 'relevant experience' section on page 5.
- ❖ A **diversity monitoring form**. All applicants are invited to complete this information to assist the Civil Service with monitoring its recruitment process. All data is reported in an anonymous and aggregate format and will not be seen by anyone assessing your application.
- ❖ A **declaration of interest form**.



This vacancy is part of the [A Great Place to Work for Veterans](#) initiative. For further information on whether you are eligible to apply under this scheme please follow the link.

In addition to this, Department for Education is an accredited 'Disability Confident Employer' under the government's **Disability Confident Scheme** which denotes organisations that have a positive commitment towards disabled people. Applicants with disabilities who meet the essential criteria, as stated in the person specification, the Civil Service nationality requirements and indicate they are applying under the Disability Confident scheme will be guaranteed an interview. Please highlight that you are applying under this scheme when you submit your application.

The law requires that selection for appointment to the Civil Service is on merit on the basis of fair and open competition as outlined in the [Civil Service Commission's Recruitment Principles](#). The selection panel, working to the standards required by the Civil Service Commission, will assess applications on merit and will employ open and transparent processes in determining the candidate considered most suitable for this appointment.

The Civil Service Commission has two key functions:

1. Providing assurance that selection for appointment to the Civil Service is on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. For the most senior posts in the Civil Service, the Commission discharges its responsibilities directly by overseeing the recruitment process and by a Commissioner chairing the selection panel.
2. Hearing and determining appeals made by Civil Servants under the Civil Service Code which sets out the Civil Service values – Honesty, Integrity, Impartiality and Objectivity – and forms part of the relationship between civil servants and their employer.

More details of the Commission's role in Civil Service recruitment and a downloadable copy of the Recruitment Principles can be found at <http://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk>

If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the Recruitment Principles, and you wish to make a complaint, you should contact sarah.vale@cabinetoffice.gov.uk in the Senior Talent and Resourcing Team, Government People Group in the first instance.



The [Civil Service Code](#) sets out the standards of behaviour expected of you and other civil servants. These are based on the core values which are set out in legislation. As a civil servant, you are expected to carry out your role with dedication and a commitment to the Civil Service and its core values of:

- ❖ 'integrity' is putting the obligations of public service above your own personal interests
- ❖ 'honesty' is being truthful and open
- ❖ 'objectivity' is basing your advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence
- ❖ 'impartiality' is acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving equally well governments of different political persuasions

These core values support good government and ensure the achievement of the highest possible standards in all that the Civil Service does. This in turn helps the Civil Service to gain and retain the respect of ministers, Parliament, the public and its customers.





Department
for Education

Saxton Bampfylde