



Proactive Inclusion

Overview

The Civil Service Fast Stream is a talent management programme for future Leaders of the Civil Service. In this chapter we look at several years' work undertaken by the Fast Stream recruitment team to actively include underrepresented groups in their attraction and selection activities.

Some years ago, the Civil Service determined their vision, "to be the most inclusive graduate and early talent employer in the UK by 2020." They integrated diversity and inclusion principles into every aspect of their talent lifecycle.

This broad case study, which collects various initiatives together, demonstrates the complex considerations of an organisation seeking to be exemplary in inclusion from the attraction stage of recruitment and from that point forward. No doubt the reader will recognise that persistence is essential in addressing inclusion in a meaningful way, and sustained effort pays off.

Challenges

The Civil Service Fast Stream (Fast Stream) is a talent management programme for graduates who have the potential to become the future Leaders of the Civil Service. (Her Majesty's Civil Service is the permanent bureaucracy or secretariat of Crown employees that supports the UK Government.) A key focus for Fast Stream has been inclusiveness and, specifically, offering opportunities to those whose circumstances may traditionally have limited their prospects.

Underrepresentation of Applicants from Lower Socioeconomic Backgrounds

Socioeconomic status can be defined as the social standing of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of educational attainment, income and occupation (financial security), and subjective perceptions of social status. Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequities in quality of life attributes as well as access to opportunities and privileges afforded within societies.

Social mobility has been promoted from the very top of the Civil Service. The Deputy Prime Minister's Office delivers on a social mobility strategy which receives significant involvement and support from the Cabinet Secretary and the Head of the Civil Service.

The Fast Stream social mobility agenda has been driven by the Government's over-arching mobility strategy, captured in reports such as "Fair Access to the Professions," by Alan Milburn and "Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers," from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Milburn report emphasised that social mobility related, above all, to inter-generational mobility, with "each new generation benefiting from more and better opportunities to get on in life." It suggests "everyone has an opportunity to access those jobs and so realise their potential." The report specifically recommended monitoring the social backgrounds of

entrants to Fast Stream, thereby positioning Fast Stream at the very centre of the Government's social mobility vision.

A review of the demands of the socioeconomic inclusion agenda highlighted the central role that Business Psychology could play in addressing requirements. For example:

- Measurement of socioeconomic status
- Structuring work experience programmes
- Investigating and advising on new approaches to social mobility, such as contextual assessment
- Delivering skills and coaching sessions
- Positive action programmes
- Developing personal aspiration
- Assessor training
- Assessment development

Fast Stream Senior Managers therefore approved a costed project plan, to deliver outcomes within the social mobility strategy, clearly recognising the capacity of Business Psychology to leverage progress across all areas.

Underrepresentation of Neurodiversity in Applicants

The term neurodiversity refers to variation in the human brain regarding sociability, learning, attention, mood and other mental functions in a non-pathological sense. It was coined in 1998 by Australian sociologist Judy Singer, and popularised by Singer and American journalist Harvey Blume (Armstrong, 2011). Neurodiversity is a viewpoint that brain differences are normal, rather than deficits. Embracing neurodiversity can help to reduce stigma around learning and thinking differences (Chapman, 2019).

The Fast Stream specifically elected to focus on inclusion of individuals with Autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Notably, Autism is not a single disorder, but a spectrum of closely related disorders with a shared core of symptoms. ASD are described as neurological and developmental disorders that begins early in childhood and last throughout a person's life. They affect how a person acts and interacts with others, communicates, and learns. They include what used to be known as Asperger syndrome and pervasive developmental disorders.

Whilst receiving an increasingly high profile through TV, film, theatrical and other media sources, ASD has arguably still been misunderstood by many in the world of work and, indeed, elsewhere. In particular it is frequently characterised in its extreme forms – for example in terms of those who are high functioning and super smart versus those with very disrupted capability. But these are caricatures, with the reality of ASD being far more diverse and nuanced.

Sources vary, but generally it is suggested between 1% and 2% of the population have been identified with ASD, reflected in difficulties around social interaction and communication, that may be displayed in early infancy in terms of limited vocal sounds, poor use of non-verbal behaviour or understanding of social cues, difficulty showing empathy, overly-literal understanding, repetitive behaviour and a need for routine. Once those with ASD seek employment, they may find work to be problematic. For example, it may present challenges for individuals who struggle with noise, travelling and change of routine that can be necessitated within a job role.

Statistics illustrate the impact of these issues. It has been suggested about half of people with autism are unemployed, and one third of those with graduate degrees may be unemployed (Ohl, Grice, Sheff, Small, Nguyen, Paskor & Zanjirian, 2017). The National Autistic Society (NAS) however suggests, “Just 16% of autistic adults are in full time work. Our new research reveals that this figure has remained the same for the last decade.” Among those who find work, most are employed in sheltered settings working for wages below the national minimum (DePillis, 2016). According to NAS, “over three quarters (77%) who are unemployed say they want to work; four in ten say they’ve never worked.”

It was this troubling picture that the Civil Service was keen to address as an inclusive employer. The philosophy of the Civil Service is above all neuro-diverse, that avoids seeing ASD as a pathology or disorder but rather as a form of human diversity that does not necessarily conform to a clinical norm. Christine Breakey stated: “any understanding of autism should not be approached from a position of ‘deficit’ but rather a position of ‘difference’. Autistic people are not neuro-typical people with something missing or something extra added on.” (Breakey, 2006.)

As for social mobility, review of the demands of the neurodiversity inclusion agenda confirmed that Business Psychology could play a role in addressing requirements. So, the Fast Stream recruitment team undertook a two-year pilot intervention to include individuals with ASD, which is described below.

Approach

It is worth noting that a case study entitled, “Design and Impact of the Civil Service Fast Stream Assessment Process,” was included in the first ABP Workforce Experience Awards book, “Delivering Excellent Workforce Experiences.” That case study addressed Fast Stream recruitment practices including psychometric and other assessments in use in the years 2012 to 2014. It demonstrated how the Fast Stream recruitment assessment process aligned directly to the Civil Service Commission ‘Recruitment Principles’ of Merit, Fairness and Openness. Fast Stream selection has long supported these values with an approach that has been scrupulously merit-based, equality-driven and transparent. The additional actions taken, as described in this case study, build on that legacy of rigour and fairness.

Outreach to Applicants from Lower Socioeconomic Backgrounds

The Business Psychologists working in the Fast Stream paid specific attention to increasing representation of individuals of lower socioeconomic status on the Programme. To achieve this, they devised means to measure socioeconomic status, restructured work experience programmes and invested in training, development and coaching.

The Fast Stream social mobility strategy facilitated a range of complimentary interventions and offerings. Business Psychology methods and models were applied to these in respect of diversity, assessment, talent management and development.

Progressive Investment

The Fast Stream social mobility strategy incorporated a multi-faceted set of activities, applying Business Psychology models and techniques as summarised below. Collectively, these delivered high value outcomes. This range of interventions incorporated input and support from critical stakeholders, including senior leaders, students, candidates, interns, apprentices and unions.

This work took multiple years of effort and is addressed here in **two phases**, which were evaluated about three years apart – the second building on achievements in the first.

Research on Socioeconomic Status

The Business Psychologists for the Fast Stream Programme identified approaches to monitoring socioeconomic status (SES). SES in this context is an economic and sociological combined total measure of individuals' economic and social position in relation to others. Fast Stream wished to understand perceptions of students of diverse social background. In response:

- Fast Stream launched a national survey across undergraduates to develop their understanding of lower socioeconomic perceptions of the Civil Service graduate programme, to help further develop engagement strategies
- They researched how other graduate recruiters undertook socioeconomic monitoring, to help establish a consistent Civil Service approach to socioeconomic measurement
- Fast Stream put in place a comprehensive approach to monitoring applicant SES and success rates to measure progress
- They undertook an annual review of SES perceptions, working with High Fliers Research Ltd. to re-evaluate awareness and engagement

Having successfully measured these dimensions, they expanded to monitor additional metrics. In **Phase 2**, for example, they expanded evaluation of relationships between diversity metrics. For example, seeking to understand how an increase in BAME male appointments may be causally or otherwise related to their focus on outreach to applicants from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Outreach Addressing Socioeconomic Status

Phase 1 interventions were designed to address research findings. The Fast Stream approach to attraction, identifying and targeting students from under-represented groups, reflected a number of elements. Initially, in **Phase 1**:

- School aspiration workshops were delivered to support potential Fast Stream applicants to develop broader capacities, such as self-efficacy and confidence, career planning and political/emotional intelligence
- Targeted campus events were held across universities, that offered high levels of lower SES students. The events incorporated a range of engagement techniques such as hot drinks, hoodies, a gazebo and idea boards for capturing a student's background

But the research and measurement agenda did not stop there. Three priority elements of their ongoing activity were: how they developed the targeting of their attraction methodology; how they re-shaped talent identification; and how they evolved their inclusion approach. In **Phase 2** they were steered by commissioned diversity research (by the Bridge Group). At this time channels used to attract and raise awareness with diverse students included:

- Development of a diversity-focused, interactive, informative and user-friendly website
- Increased on-campus engagement, with a faculty focus, using existing Fast Streamers as advocates more extensively
- Increased use of social and digital media channels to reach the target audience
- Increased senior level buy-in to attraction and marketing activities
- Increased marketing for attraction of candidates to the first year, summer and ASD internship programmes
- Diversity-focused insight events, skills sessions, coaching and diversity networks

- Targeted messaging which showcased case studies of the participants and alumni of the Civil Service, promoting role model profiles and networking events
- Connecting with communities, such as faith schools and special needs schools

Their approach was informed by ongoing research and data collection. Using a specially commissioned bespoke methodology, for example, they targeted universities/faculties according to student quality, diversity and location. They also used different methods of recording the success of events (in terms of number of people positively influenced to apply) and the reach of events (in terms of the diversity of audience reached relative to the university population). This allowed them to deploy resources where they would make the most impact; on the basis of data insights gathered to evaluate the impression they had made on campuses and schools, from their outreach activities. They were able to classify 50 universities as 'high-touch' or 'medium-touch.' The universities classified for high touch were those identified as having the greatest potential mix of students from diverse backgrounds, geographic locations and relevant undergraduate courses

Partnerships

Partnerships were established with agencies, to access wider audiences that may previously have been beyond scope, specifically to address SES diversity. In **Phase 1** these included UpRising, Fastlaners, Elevation Network, Social Mobility Foundation and UpReach.

In **Phase 2** they continued to collaborate with many agencies and added more including Rare, My Kinda Future, Bright Futures, Ambitious about Autism and Stone Wall.

Contextual Recruitment

Fast Stream elected to adjust access based on SES background, with contextual recruitment. Contextual recruitment describes practices which consider an applicant's personal background when recruiting. Fast Stream developed a cross-sector initiative to recognise applicant's achievements in the context of their SES and background.

Selection Process Fairness

From **Phase 1**, Assessor and Candidate training addressed inclusion and diversity topics.

Fast Stream worked to ensure fairness and diversity within selection systems through training which included unconscious bias awareness for Assessors. Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form, outside their own conscious awareness. Contemporary theories of prejudice suggest that awareness of personal bias is a critical step in reducing one's prejudice and discrimination. When bias is cloaked in a way that people do not recognize, they are likely to continue to perpetuate their biased behaviours and unlikely to reduce their negative attitudes. However, when people become aware of their biases, they often adjust their attitudes and behaviour to be more egalitarian (Perry, Murphy & Dovidio, 2015).

SES candidates were also supported in training related to team working, transactional analysis, networking visualisation and neuro-linguistic programming.

- Team working skills typically include communication, conflict resolution, rapport-building and listening, decision-making, problem-solving, organisational and planning skills, persuasion and influencing skills, and reliability
- Transactional Analysis supports individuals' understanding of their role in interactions (transactions), so that they can be more conscious of their thoughts and behaviours, and ultimately have better, more constructive transactions with others (Berne, 1964)

- Networked learning, an aspect of social learning can enhance how an individual thinks about and structures their development. Visualising connections for support in learning can aid progression. Understanding network patterns and the creation of social relationships is key to understanding how people develop the ability to gain access to shared resources, ask for help and develop collaborations. This may offer self-insight into one's ability and potential to create or participate in social spaces that contribute to working and learning (deLaat, 2012)
- Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) models an approach to communication, personal development, and psychotherapy. NLP's creators claimed a connection between neurological processes (neuro-), language (linguistic) and behavioural patterns learned through experience (programming). They suggested that these could be changed to achieve specific goals in life (Dilts, Grinder, Delozier & Bandler, 1980)

Incorporating findings from reviews in the Phase 1 Selection Process, fairness was further pursued in **Phase 2** with changes made to talent identification approaches. These incorporated a new selection approach specifically focused on diversity enhancement and increasing engagement. The revised approach included:

- Removal of verbal and numerical online assessment
- Updated-digital testing
- Online 'strengths' video interview assessment
- Half-day, rather than full-day, assessment centres
- Increasing the number of candidates that could be assessed in a day four-fold, helping to deliver a shortened time to hire
- Provision of a new regional assessment centre site to include a more diverse population

Fast Stream Opportunities

- Internships and Work Experience
 - School- and college-level internships were offered for lower SES students
 - A Summer Diversity Internship Programme was delivered for undergraduates from lower SES backgrounds, focused on raising aspirations and the skill sets of those from less privileged circumstances
 - An Early Diversity Internship Programme, for first year lower SES students, offered opportunities for shadowing, skill development, workshops, and high-profile speakers
- Apprenticeships
 - A major government apprenticeship scheme was offered for those who chose not to pursue a university degree, providing new career opportunities for individuals from lower SES backgrounds
- Positive Action Scheme
 - A positive action scheme was pursued with the FDA Civil Service Union. (The FDA, formerly The Association of First Division Civil Servants, is a trade union for UK senior and middle management civil servants and public service professionals founded in 1919)
 - The positive action scheme, for lower SES students, included development centres and mentoring, to act as a feeder of applicants for Fast Stream

Inclusion at Work

Development of inclusion approaches to enhance workplace experience included:

- Enhanced tracking of diversity groups, when in post, in respect to progression, promotion, retention and performance
- Introduction of inclusive leadership workshops to develop skills around supporting, engaging and leading diverse groups
- Introduction of workshops in respect to overcoming self-limiting mindsets and low self-esteem in respect to diverse groups
- Enhanced mentoring and coaching strategies to offer practical advice to under-represented groups

Outreach for Inclusion of ASD Applicants

A two-week Internship Programme was created to provide workplace exposure and upskilling for individuals with ASD. The Programme was supported by “Ambitious about Autism,” a UK national charity dedicated to improving opportunities for young people on the Autistic Spectrum, including those with autism or Asperger syndrome.

Fourteen students, qualified to degree level, participated in the Programme pilot, drawn from the Ambitious About Autism charity’s network. Additional Participants joined the Programme in the year after the pilot.

A number of government departments took part as hosts, including the Departments for Education, Transport, Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, as well as Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs and the Department for Work and Pensions.

The two-week experience aimed to:

- Help young people develop skills and familiarity with a work environment
- Provide support and coaching, with a focus on recruitment practices, career development and networking for Participants
- Increase autism awareness in the business

The Programme comprised various elements, substantially developed by Civil Service Business Psychologists, within the Fast Stream team. Specifically:

- Pre-Programme autism awareness training was provided for host department teams, to enhance their understanding of autism and mechanisms for supporting Participants
- A facilitated introductory session for host teams and Participants
- Two weeks’ light-touch work experience within a Department
- Practical workshops, regarding selection and networking skills, delivered by Business Psychologists
- An opportunity for Participants to undertake one-to-one coaching sessions focused on career development, delivered by Business Psychologists and incorporating psychometric assessment

The Role of Business Psychology

In terms of psychologically-focused input, activity included:

- Building the training/development Programme for the interns

- Implementing coaching packages to increase self-awareness and self-confidence, to support students through the selection process for permanent opportunities
- Providing upskilling in respect to successful relationship building and networking

The focus of these interventions was to provide benefit to those with ASD, to develop areas that may expand their employment potential and life chances.

Business Psychology Models Applied

A number of psychological models were used to facilitate learning and coaching, including:

- Positive psychology (Seligman, 2009)
 - Positive psychology began as a new domain of psychology in 1998, introduced by Martin Seligman as, “the scientific study of human strengths and virtues.” Seligman describes the movement as, “The study of what constitutes the pleasant life, the engaged life, and the meaningful life”
 - Positive psychology complements traditional areas of psychology. By emphasizing the study of positive human development, it helps to balance other approaches that focus on disorder, and which may produce only limited understanding (Peterson, 2009)
 - A paper by Seligman and colleagues in 2009 considered the value of using ‘positive’ approaches in education
- Transactional analysis modes of interaction (Berne, 1964)
 - Transactional analysis, developed by psychiatrist Eric Berne, is a form of modern psychology that examines a person's relationships and interactions
 - Berne devised the concept of ego states to help explain how we are made up, and how we relate to others. These are the building blocks of Transactional Analysis which categorise the ways we think, feel and behave. The primary ego states are called Parent, Adult, and Child
 - Berne's three ego states can be confirmed with observable behaviours; enabling individuals to perceive the role of these ego states in their interactions can increase their effectiveness in relating to others
- Counteracting bias (Kandola, 2009)
 - Binna Kandola's book, *The Value of Difference: Eliminating Bias in Organisations*, is based on human behaviour and psychology
 - The book explores topics that are ever present in organisations – which are part of our make-up as humans, such as prejudice, bias, privilege and power – and provides practical guidance to organisations on how these complex issues can be addressed in organisational priorities
- Challenging stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995)
 - Anxiety can be created as a result of knowing that one is a potential target of prejudice and stereotypes (Allport, 1954. Goffman, 1963)
 - Claude Steele defined the phenomenon of stereotype threat as “being in a situation or doing something to which a negative stereotype about (an) identity is relevant”
 - Stereotype threat describes the risk of confirming, as self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one's group
 - The nature of impact of stereotype threat in some groups may include anxiety, self-doubt, stereotype avoidance and/or self-handicapping

Outcome

Inclusion of Applicants from Lower Socioeconomic Backgrounds

Measurement of outcomes had a quantitative focus, with some qualitative review. Clear impact metrics were used to identify trends across interventions and benchmark progress against the external market. Follow-up measurement allowed for progress to be monitored.

Starting in Phase 1, outcome metrics collected by the Fast Stream Business Psychologists were wide ranging. A sample of results, and associated learnings, are shared here. It is their belief that the positive results achieved would not have been possible without the targeted interventions pursued.

Monitoring Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Approaches were identified for monitoring socioeconomic status (SES) and understanding the perceptions of students of diverse social backgrounds.

- The proportion of lower SES applicants rose dramatically to around 40% in **Phase 1**, which reflected real progress on previous years
- There was a doubling of the success rate for lower socio-economic status (SES) candidates, a level which was maintained in subsequent years
- Lessons learned were applied in subsequent years to further improve upon SES monitoring and to create a survey to further develop new engagement approaches with SES students, into **Phase 2**
- **Phase 2** measures showed an application success rate of over 19% for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) candidates, exceeding their target at the time
- An increase in application rates was observed across diversity categories including BAME, SES, female, LGBT and disability
- By **Phase 2**, approximately 300% improvement was observed, over previous years, in terms of conversion of diversity internships to permanent Fast Stream roles

And the work did not stop there. The Bridge Group were re-engaged to examine and further enhance, beyond recruitment, performance and retention of lower socio-economic Fast Streamers in Civil Service roles.

Evaluating SES Interventions

- Evaluation metrics for Summer Diversity Internship Programme interns were very positive:
 - Interns were offered intensive coaching to support them in the selection success, with over 35% of Coaching Programme Participants being successful in applying to Fast Stream; this represented an appointment rate 15 times higher than typical for the Fast Stream Programme
 - 94% of the intern group reported that they would recommend the programme to other students
 - 91% of the intern group reported that they would consider applying to Fast Stream as a result of the internship
 - Over a four-year period, well over 100 interns went on to be appointed to the Fast Stream Programme
- Summer Diversity Internship Programme Participants who completed the internship became campus ambassadors and promoters in subsequent years

- The new Fast Stream website provided a clear indication of commitment to social mobility, through its diversity section and promotion of the Summer Diversity Internship Programme
- The apprenticeship scheme, with 300 Apprentices and a high SES representation, was introduced successfully, resulting in an increase in placements to 450 roles the following year
- Development of Interns and Apprentices continued to receive attention, with an ambition to achieve an even higher level of conversion to Fast Stream positions
- A prototype for contextualised recruitment was introduced, with Business Psychology expert input, to provide an opportunity for external organisations to operate contextualised assessment (to be expanded to support cross-industry rollout)
- Over 110 Fast Stream campus presentations/events were undertaken in one year, many at SES targeted universities
- FDA Civil Service Union's positive action scheme evaluation metrics indicated that 88% of those participating felt more confident about their career prospects as a result of participation, with 96% considering applying to Fast Stream schemes
- All of the socioeconomically diverse internal candidates, who were successful in advancing to the final stage of the Tax Professional Development Programme's recruitment process, achieved a place on the graduate entry scheme

External Recognition

Over the course of the years addressed in this case study, the Fast Stream was recognised by many industry bodies for their achievements in Inclusion, beyond the Association for Business Psychology's Workforce Experience Awards. For example, the Summer Diversity Internship Programme won a National Undergraduate Employment Award for a Work Experience Initiative, and was a finalist for Target Jobs' Social Mobility Award. Fast Stream received Diversity and Inclusion Awards from Target Jobs National Graduate Recruitment Awards for 'Best Diversity Strategy,' from FIRM Awards, for 'Best Diversity & Inclusion Recruitment Strategy,' and from the National Undergraduate Employability Awards for 'Best Diversity Initiative in Work Experience.' They were recognised as the highest public sector agency in the 2017 UK Social Mobility Index and were 'Highly Commended' in the UK Social Mobility Awards for 'Organisation of the Year.'

Inclusion of Applicants with ASD

The two-week Internship Programme provided workplace exposure and upskilling for Participants with ASD and showed very positive outcomes. On completion, 100% of Participants reported that they would recommend the Programme.

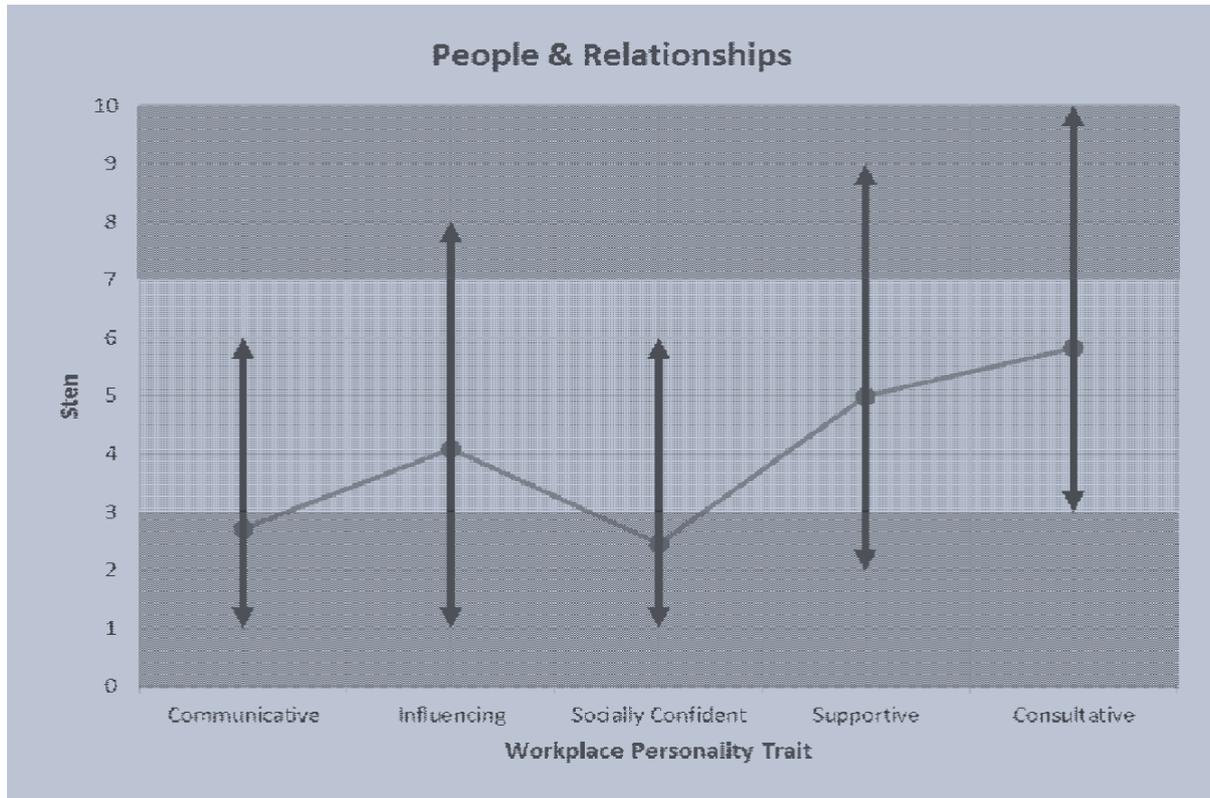
Evaluation of the Programme used a mixed-method approach, incorporating surveys and focus groups, at Participant and Manager (of the intern) level, and also drew on psychometric analysis. Overall, they saw a greater than 50% increase in autism spectrum employability rates compared to average employability for the group.

Psychometric Profiling

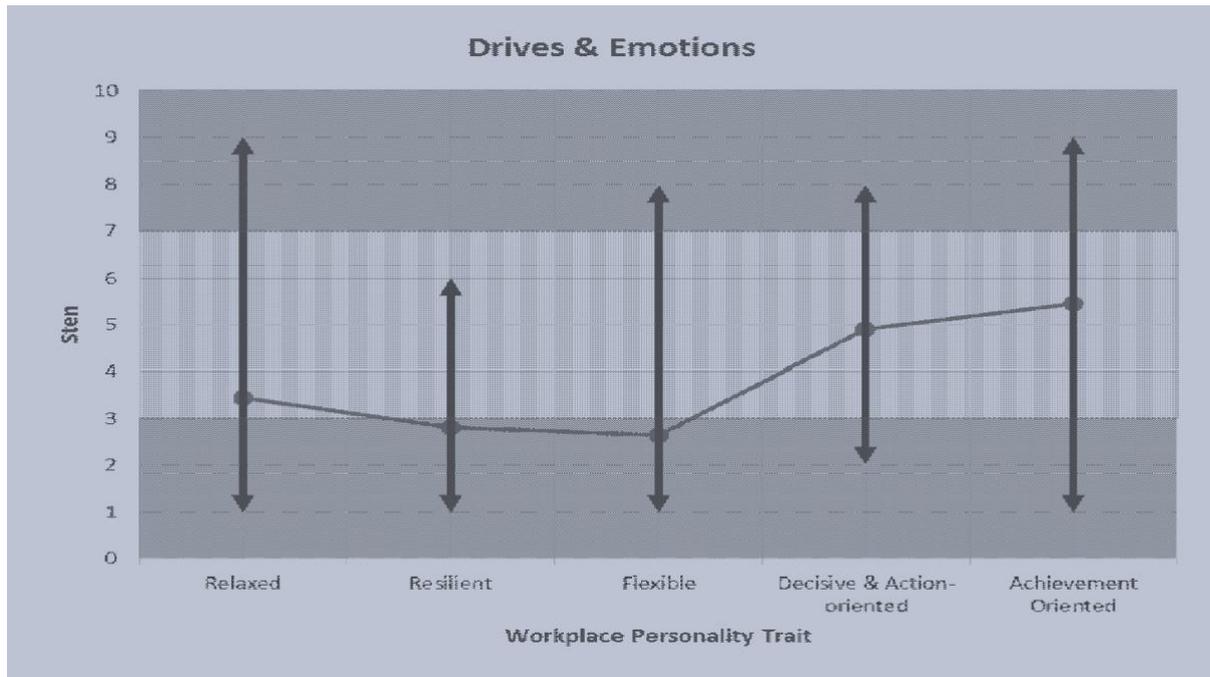
The Fast Stream Business Psychologists used the Talent Q Dimensions tool to gain a deeper understanding of the individuals included in the Programme. The assessment provided information on each individual's personality broken down into three broad areas; People and Relationships, Tasks and Projects, and Drives and Emotions with multiple scales in each providing additional detail. The tool also assessed eight 'derailers,' concerned with how the individual's personality may change when under pressure.

The Business Psychologists created a compelling aggregated description of Participants. These largely reinforced known ASD characteristics. From this profiling, alignment with expected autistic facets was strong, whilst still offering individual variations. These variations were used as a basis for coaching, supporting Participants to develop self-awareness:

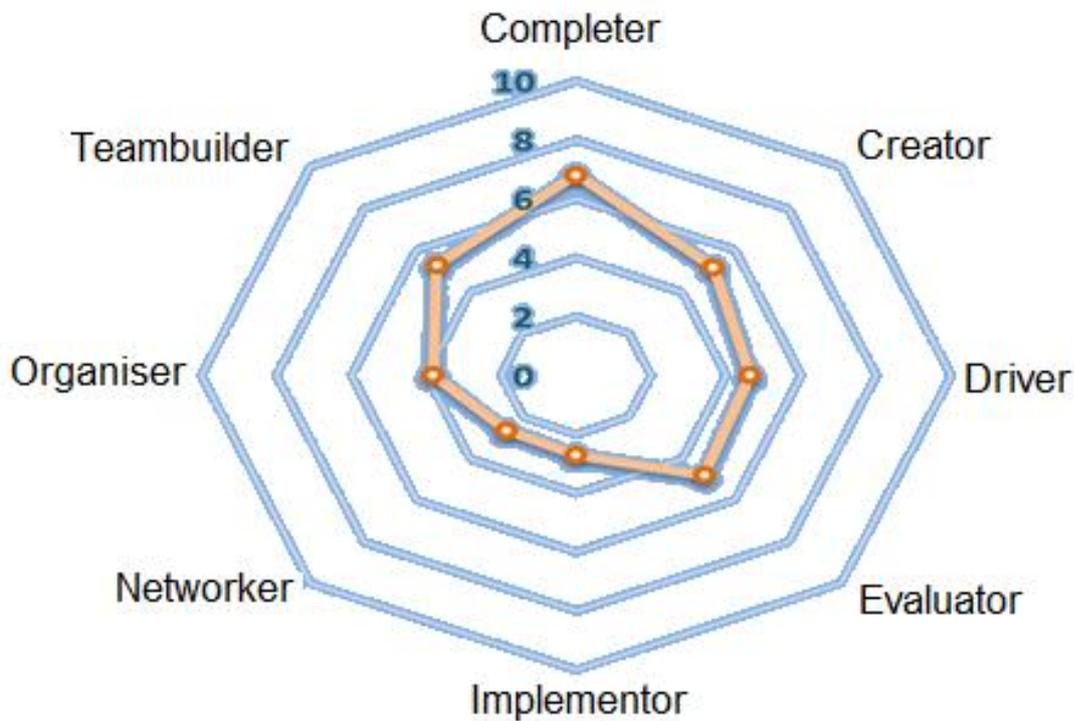
Notable results from the Workplace Personality Trait profiles, for People and Relationship dimensions, were low range mean scores for Communicative and Socially Confident:



Results from the Workplace Personality Trait profiles, for Drive and Emotion dimensions, showed low range mean scores for Relaxed, Resilient and Flexible.



On the team profile, notable results were low-range mean scores for Implementer and Networker preferences.



When viewing the group's 'derailer' results, indicators of how they may change when under pressure, it was noted that they had a low-range mean score for both Exhibitionism and Self-confidence.



Participant Feedback

A range of feedback was collected from the internship Participants. Notable testimony was highly positive. Quantitatively:

- 100% reported an increase in confidence
- 100% would recommend the Programme to others
- 100% would consider a career in Civil Service
- Average overall rating of placement 9.4 out of 10
- Average overall rating of support received 9.2 out of 10

In the Participants' comments, some described the experience as "Energising," or "Awe inspiring," with comments describing elements they appreciated such as: "How easy it was to fit in," "Placement was real work, not just made up work to make it easier," and "Simply being a member of a team doing important work and being appreciated for the work I do."

Manager Feedback

Intern Managers' feedback was similarly enthusiastic with comments on what they appreciated or learned from the experience including:

- "Really enjoyed having a different perspective"
- "Pleasure to see Participants relax"
- "How unhomogeneous people with autism are" *[sic]*
- "The ability to deal with tricky situations...was impressive"
- "Seeing the growth in the young people"

External Recognition

The Programme won the “Extending Reach” Award from the Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative (RIDl). In addition, high profile organisations, including Deutsche Bank and KPMG, adopted the Fast Stream approach and developed their own versions of the internship, to provide successful work experience opportunities.

Lessons Learned

Based on evaluation outcomes it was evident that a highly positive set of results emerged and reinforced the value of these interventions. Nevertheless, in the spirit of continual improvement and in the interest of sharing insight, the Fast Stream shared their ‘top ten’ learning points:

- ‘Distance travelled’ in terms of Participant development was more valuable than achieving a specific result
- Breadth of Participant talents was apparent, which needed to be accommodated where possible
- All levels of intern capability could be utilised in the organisation
- Managers needed to trust the ability of Participants to do given tasks to a good level
- Pre-intervention anxiety of Managers (and Interns) was significant in some cases; reassurance was needed
- Thorough induction/early awareness training was important
- Pre-conceptions around ASD, that overlooked individual differences, needed to be avoided
- Networking and coaching sessions were important interventions
- Quiet spaces for interns offered an important facility
- Flexible working arrangements could support easier commuting, time management, etc.

The Chief Psychologist reflected, “Above all, the success of this autism pilot is evidenced by the mainstreaming of the Programme, supported by Senior Leaders, as an established annual intervention, that we believe will make real in-roads into employability challenges.”

Acknowledgements

Philip Wilson, Chief Psychologist and Chief Assessor, Civil Service Fast Stream and colleagues operating with a central Cabinet Office diversity team who, in particular, steered logistical issues and arrangements

Many partner organisations supported this work, as mentioned in this case study

Editor’s Observations

The work done in this case study reflects practices supported by models and methods often associated with Business Psychology, although these are not all expanded upon in detail. Data collection through surveys and interviews, and analysis of findings, is common in studies seeking to understand human behaviour. When structuring interventions however, in the world of work, frames of reference can inform an approach. If addressing similar challenges, you may wish to consider:

- The consequences of social exclusion may be addressed at an individual level, a group level, an organisational level, or a societal level, summarised by Michàlle Mor Barak:
 - Individual members of a group may attempt to pass from a lower-status to a higher-status group through disassociating themselves psychologically and behaviourally from their low-status group. When successful, such a strategy will lead to a personal solution, but it will not make a difference in the excluded group's status
 - Members of a group may seek positive status for the group as a whole by redefining or altering the elements of the comparative situations. This could take place by, for example, changing the values assigned to the attributes of the group, so that comparisons that were previously negative are now perceived as positive
 - Organisations may implement policies that remove barriers to advancement and promotion of members of disadvantaged groups and thus open up ways for groups/members to improve their social identity, providing networking opportunities and mentorship programs, opening up advancement and promotion opportunities which can enhance their access to power in the organisations and contribute to improved group status as well as social identity of group members
 - Society as a whole may create social mobility of disadvantaged groups through legislation and public policies
- The concept of inclusion/exclusion in the workplace refers to the *individual's sense of* being a part of the organisational system in both the formal processes, such as access to information and decision-making channels, and the informal processes where information exchange and decisions informally take place (Mor Barak, 2005). Inclusion in organisational information networks and in decision-making processes has been linked to better job opportunities and career advancement in work organisations (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1992)
- Social identity theory is a cognitive social psychological theory which provides the connection between social structures and individual identity through the meanings people attach to their membership in identity groups, such as those formed by race, ethnicity, or gender (Tajfel, 1982). The theory postulates that people tend to classify themselves into social categories that have meaning for them, and this shapes the way individuals interact with others from their own identity group and from other groups (Tajfel, 1978, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987)
- Assessment specialists are best placed to advise on appropriate discrimination in recruitment processes, ensuring reliability, fairness and validity. (See the Appendix to the first book in this series, "Catching Unicorns: Business Psychology for Effective Assessment to Improve Your Recruitment, Development and Promotion Decisions.") The word discrimination is generally neutral in its meaning, but it has a negative connotation when applied to the context of employment. Discrimination in employment and consumer relations occurs when (i) individuals, institutions, or governments treat people differently because of personal characteristics such as race, gender, or sexual orientation rather than their ability to perform their jobs; and (ii) these actions have a negative impact on access to jobs, promotions, or compensation (Mor Barak, 2005)