REVIEW OF FAST STREAM RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

INTRODUCTION

1. Fast Stream recruitment has accounted for, on average, just under 5% of all recruitment into the Civil Service over the past four years. Whilst it is by no means the only way graduates (or other talent) are brought into the Civil Service, it is the only centrally run scheme for bringing in the most talented young graduates with the potential to become the Civil Service leaders of the future.

2. Consistent with its remit, the Commission has looked at whether Fast Stream recruitment and selection is compliant with the statutory requirement for appointment to the Civil Service to be on merit on the basis of fair and open competition (as expressed in the Recruitment Principles). It has done this by analysing material provided by Civil Service Resourcing (who now own and operate the Fast Stream) and observing Fast Stream selection processes.

3. The Commission is grateful to the Fast Stream team for the considerable time and resources they devoted to the review, and their genuine openness and willingness to discuss ideas for improving Fast Stream recruitment. Factual background on the Fast Stream and the recruitment and selection process can be found at Annex A. Annex B is an analysis of the application statistics published by the Fast Stream for the 2012 recruitment round. This review represents a snapshot of Fast Stream recruitment and selection at a point in time based on evidence made available to the Commission between January and June 2013. The Commission accepts that the Fast Stream may have adjusted its methodology and approach since then.

OUR FINDINGS

4. This review has confirmed that the Fast Stream is compliant with the Recruitment Principles. This conclusion is explored in more detail below in the context of merit, openness, and fairness. Wider considerations about the Fast Stream recruitment model are set out at the end of this report.

<u>Merit</u>

5. Appointing on merit means recruitment processes should ensure that the best available person gets appointed to a role. The review found that the assessment process, starting with the online test and concluding (in most cases and for those that get that far) with attendance at the Fast Stream Assessment Centre, was effective in testing applicants against the skill set for which they are being recruited (the Fast Stream competencies – intellectual capability, interpersonal skills and delivery skills). There can therefore be confidence that those who are offered roles are the most meritorious of those that applied.

Openness

6. The Recruitment Principles require job opportunities to be advertised publicly and potential candidates given reasonable access to information about the role, its requirements and the selection process. The Civil Service Fast Stream has a long established and highly regarded brand and continues to attract a large volume of applications (21,542 in 2012). The review found that the information available to potential applicants was, on the whole, very good. The Fast Stream website is comprehensive in its content. Adverts, when used, are attractive and clear. Outreach work undertaken by the Fast Stream team (at universities) is commendable given the very much reduced resources available. A low cost and potentially effective innovation is the increasing involvement of Fast Stream alumni in promotional activity.

7. In the Commission's view it is essential that the Civil Service continues to compete to attract the best graduate talent. However, the graduate recruitment marketplace is extremely competitive. Given the limited resources at its disposal the Fast Stream must monitor more effectively than it does currently whether its promotional activity is properly targeted and reaching the most talented graduates.

Fairness

8. Everything we have seen indicates that the Fast Stream recruitment process is objective, impartial and applied consistently without bias. Considerable cost and rigour is applied to ensure it is fair; for example, multiple assessors observe Assessment Centre exercises to guard against subjective bias.

Understanding who applies

9. The Commission concluded that the Fast Stream is compliant with the Recruitment Principles. However, analysis of application data published by the Fast Stream has raised some questions which need to be investigated and explored if the Fast Stream is to remain compliant in the future. We recognise and welcome the substantial improvement the FS has made in recent years in increasing the proportion of successful candidates coming from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) background – up from 3% in 1998 to 10% (12.5% when the specialist schemes are included). The Summer Diversity Internship Programme has now been running for 11 years and in 2013 will have enabled 162 young graduates or final year students from BME and/or underrepresented socio-economic backgrounds to gain work experience in the Civil Service. The most able are also offered coaching to help them in the Fast Stream selection process and a large proportion of those offered coaching succeed in their applications (22-40% over the past three years). The Commission strongly endorses and supports this initiative.

10. Despite the significant progress made over recent years in increasing the proportion of successful BME candidates, it remains the case that a significantly lower proportion of successful Fast Stream applicants are from BME backgrounds compared to both the eligible graduate pool (i.e. BME graduates with a 2.2 degree or above) and the number of BME applicants in the initial Fast Stream applicant field. Something similar appears to

be the case in relation to socio-economic status with those from routine/manual backgrounds being less represented on the Fast Stream than those from intermediate occupational backgrounds who were, in turn, less represented than those from higher managerial, administrative and professional backgrounds. This latter finding needs to be treated with more caution given that a sizeable proportion of applicants chose not to declare their socio-economic background.

11. These outcomes warrant much closer analysis, however, the Fast Stream does not appear to have the data to enable it better to understand the differences in the performance of different groups of candidates in the application and assessment process. Without this data it is simply not possible for the Fast Stream to identify the nature of the problem and therefore what action will be most effective in improving diversity outcomes. The Commission is very concerned about this.

12. For example, data was not available on whether the spread of applicants within each group was representative of the full ability spectrum – in other words, whether the Fast Stream was attracting its 'fair share' of the most able BME graduates or whether it should do more to target that group. The Commission's analysis also highlights the lack of cross-correlated diversity data. Such data would allow more detailed analysis of, for example, the interaction between gender and socio-economic background, or gender and ethnicity (for example, are similar numbers of male and female BME graduates applying for the scheme and how do success rates compare when gender and ethnicity are both taken into account?).

13. Better data would give the Fast Stream more insight into how best to focus promotional activity (i.e. attract the top BME graduate talent), or whether to target coaching more effectively. It is also not possible fully to discount the possibility of bias in the assessment process without better data. The Commission would like to see prompt and effective action from the Fast Stream to address this shortcoming in its data and analysis; and when that has been done to take the necessary action to tackle the problem.

WIDER CONSIDERATIONS

Fast Stream versus the private sector recruitment model

14. The Fast Stream assessment process is undeniably thorough yet other graduate recruiters seem to be able to conclude their selection processes and make job offers much more quickly than the Fast Stream. This may be because they are not subject to statutory requirement for merit, fairness and openness. It may be because their emphasis is much more on effective performance management of new recruits rather than intensive, up-front assessment processes.

15. There is at least a case for investigating whether equally capable Fast Streamers could be produced through a less elaborate up-front assessment process and more rigorous performance management of new recruits. This might allow the Fast Stream to make earlier offers to graduates and so compete more effectively with other recruiters.

The In Service Fast Stream

16. It has been announced that from 2014 there will be no separate In Service Fast Stream Scheme. Existing civil servants will be able to apply for the Fast Stream alongside external applicants. We understand that existing civil servants will still be able to claim an exemption from the degree requirement which applies to other applicants. The Commission is concerned to ensure that there continues to be a pipeline of talented and workplace-proven civil servants into the Fast Stream, particularly given that the diversity of successful In Service applicants compares very favourably with the Fast Stream intake as a whole.

The Civil Service recruitment model

17. There is no doubt that some sort of bulk 'graduate' entry accelerated development scheme has an important role to play for the Civil Service both now as it will in the future. However, the Fast Stream has particular significance because of the recruitment model used by the Civil Service as a whole. The long established practice has been to take in staff at the bottom end of the system and develop them internally, with external or 'open' recruitment to vacant posts generally being the exception rather than the norm. Whilst this has changed in recent years for many SCS posts, open recruitment – particularly to middle management grades – remains unusual overall.

18. A more flexible and permeable system that allows entry and exit to become more of a norm at all levels would increase the Civil Service's capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. It would provide opportunities for those with private, voluntary, or wider public sector workplace experience (and with much to offer in the skills areas where civil servants have traditionally been deficient) to join the Civil Service.

ANNEX A - About the Fast Stream

Purpose of the Fast Stream

1. The Fast Stream is the Civil Service's only centrally managed graduate entry training and development programme. The current objectives of the Fast Stream are expressed[1] as follows:-

   - to provide the Civil Service with a highly capable, flexible and cost effective resource that can be readily deployed to deliver on the Government's commitments;
   - to build a diverse talent pipeline into the SCS consisting of individuals with the skills and experiences required by the Civil Service now and in the future;
   - to ensure that the Civil Service remains an attractive employer to the most talented who have the potential to become future leaders in the Civil Service; and
   - to provide the Fast Streamers with the development opportunities and experiences that will enable them to reach their full potential.

Fast Stream Schemes

2. There are five separate Fast Stream schemes[2]:
   - The Graduate Fast Stream (the largest). Applicants can ask to be considered for Central Departments (essentially the Home Civil Service), the Houses of Parliament, the Diplomatic Service and the Science or Engineering Fast Stream. (273 fast stream vacancies in 2012)
   - The Analytical Fast Stream (Economists, Statisticians, Operational Researchers and Social Researchers)(255 vacancies)
   - The Technology in Business Fast Stream (33 vacancies)
   - The HR Fast Stream (60 vacancies)
   - The European Fast Stream (16 vacancies)

3. Fast Streamers are appointed to the Civil Service and join Departments at a specialist grade – HEO(D) – and take on average around four years to achieve promotion to Grade 7[3]. Overall turnover in the Fast Stream (2.9%) is lower than the overall Civil Service (7.4%). However, the Fast Stream has a slightly higher resignation rate (2.2%) than the comparator HEO/SEO grade (1.7%)[3].

How big is the Fast Stream?

4. As at 31 March 2011there were 1,910 Fast Streamers in post across the Civil Service[4]; about 0.4% of the total number of civil servants, with a Departmental distribution as follows:

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[1] It is has been difficult to identify a "mission statement" for the Fast Stream; these objectives were set out in the terms of reference for the 2011 Senior Steering Group which reviewed the Fast Stream
[2] This excludes the Northern Ireland Fast Stream which is the Northern Ireland Civil Service equivalent of the Graduate Fast Steam; Northern Ireland Fast Streamers are recruited by Civil Service Resourcing on their behalf. The Civil Service Commission has no jurisdiction over this scheme which is regulated by the Northern Ireland Civil Service Commissioners.
[3] Fast Stream Data Pack 2011, compiled by Analysis and Insight Team, ERG
[4] Fast Stream Data Pack 2011, compiled by Analysis and Insight Team, ERG

Figure 1 – Number of current Fast Streamers by department (as at 31 March 2011) (includes Northern Ireland Fast Stream (NIFS))
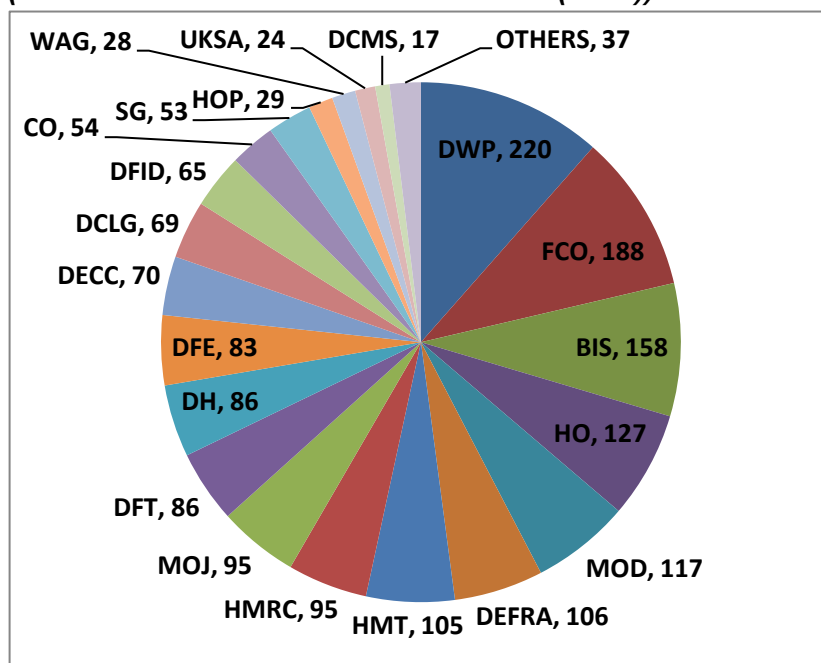
5. Fast Track recruitment into the Civil Service as a percentage of all recruitment has grown over the past few years :-

Table 1 – Number of new Fast Stream entrants (including NIFS)			
	2009/10	**2010/11**	**2011/12**
Total recruitment into Civil Service (Grade 6 and below)[5]	46,275	12,027	6,308[6]
Number of new Fast Streamers[4]	488	439	654
Fast Stream recruitment as % of overall recruitment (Grade 6 and below)	1%	4%	10%

Recent changes to the Fast Stream

6. Recent changes to the Fast Stream date from 2011 when the Minister for the Cabinet Office commissioned a task and finish group led by Lin Homer (Permanent Secretary at DfT at the time) to look at redesigning the Graduate Fast Stream. The review was commissioned because of concerns about the divergence between the way Departments

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[5] Civil Service Commission statistics
[6] SCS PB1 and below

managed and developed Fast Streamers and that the scheme was not delivering the fully rounded leaders needed for the Civil Service. The key differences between the new Scheme and what went before it are set out below:-

Table 2 – 2013 changes to the Graduate Fast Stream		
	Old Graduate Fast Stream	**New Graduate Fast Stream**
Scheme duration	No defined length	Four years
Graduation	Link between finishing programme and promotion to Grade 7	No link to promotion – but a clear route to 'graduation' after four years
Employment	Employed and managed by Departments	Employed by CS Resourcing throughout the four years.
Placements	Varies, but driven by Departmental practice and needs	Four six month postings for the first two years, followed by two 12 month placements in last two years.
Performance management	No assessment.	Stronger emphasis on consistent performance management, with a core curriculum and two-year and four-year assessments of development against trajectories.

How is the Fast Stream promoted?

7. The marketing budget available to the Fast Stream has decreased by nearly 90% over recent years. The Fast Stream's current marketing strategy is built around a combination of three things:-

- Online marketing - centred on the website which has been recently revamped and provides a wealth of information about Fast Stream careers. In addition there is some use of social media including Facebook, Twitter, Wikijob and other portals.
- Offline marketing – focuses on generating positive press coverage of the Fast Stream, quarterly newsletters to careers advisers, and leveraging various specialist and diversity networks and representative groups (ACS in the City, RARE etc.).
- More targeted on-campus marketing – this is focussed on a list of target universities[7] and revolves around attendance at career fairs, presentations from previous alumni who are now fast streamers, Q&A sessions and Dunchester's Millions – a half-day

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[7] Generated from a collation and review of data showing subject areas (from which the Fast Stream has previously been successful at attracting candidates), top performing universities in terms of gender, socio-economic status (i.e. working class students), ethnicity, and league tables comparing national university rankings.

policy game that illustrates some important aspects of a career in the Civil Service and gives participants an opportunity to learn something of how Government operates and in particular the role that civil servants play.

Awareness of the Fast Stream

8. The Fast Stream commissioned a graduate recruitment research report in 2012/13 which asked a representative sample of 2000 final year students across thirty universities 'How would you describe your knowledge of the Civil Service Fast Stream?' Over a third of respondents had visited the Fast Stream's website and a quarter had heard about the scheme from their Careers Service or had read their graduate adverts or entries in directories; 12% had met a member of staff from the Fast Stream at a careers fair or university presentation; just over half of respondents had no knowledge of or contact with the Fast Stream.

9. The UK Graduate Careers Survey 2013[8] consistently rated the Fast Stream's material and online presence as very good to excellent. However, when graduates were asked "What could the Civil Service do to make the idea of applying to the Fast Stream more appealing?", there was a general feeling amongst the audience that the Fast Stream does not have a particularly strong profile on campus and in career fairs and should improve upon this.
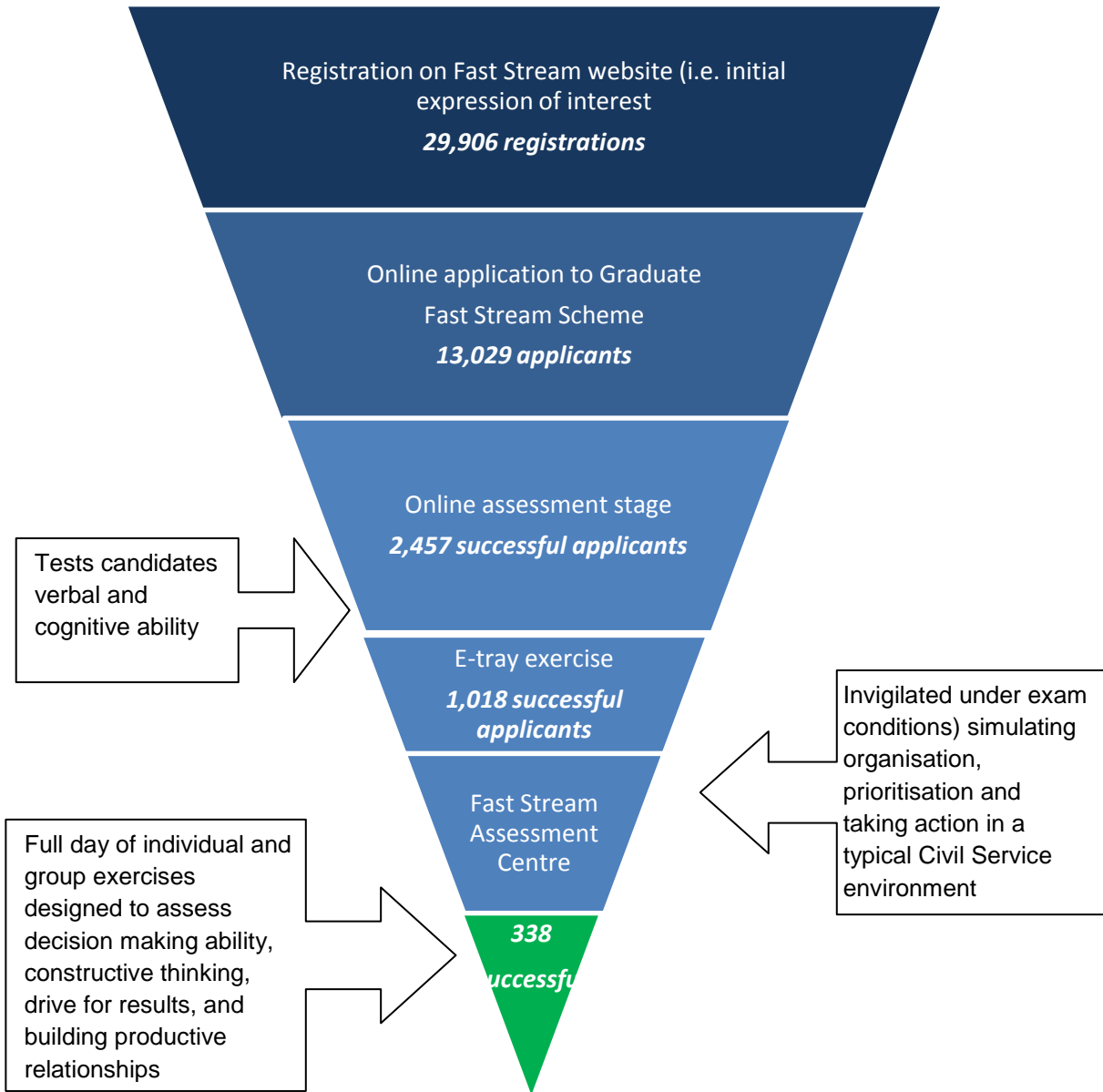
The application and assessment process

10. Anyone with a 2.2 class degree can apply for the Graduate Fast Stream; candidates for the Analytical and Technology in Business schemes need a 2:1. There is also a nationality requirement for the Diplomatic scheme (applicants have to be a UK national).

11. Civil Service Resourcing manages the delivery and development of the selection process. The recruitment process for the Graduate Fast Stream is set out in Figure 2 below along with key statistics about each stage. Candidates for the Analytical Fast Stream (economists, statisticians, social researchers and operational researchers) have a slightly different assessment process with discipline-specific assessment centres (instead of online tests and e-tray exercises), followed by attendance at the Fast Stream Assessment Centre.

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[8] This survey is one of the largest and most-comprehensive annual reviews of graduate recruitment at the UK's thirty leading universities; it is produced by High Fliers Research

Figure 2 – Graduate Fast Stream applicant journey (2012 candidate numbers)

Registration on Fast Stream website (i.e. initial expression of interest
29,906 registrations

Online application to Graduate Fast Stream Scheme
13,029 applicants

Online assessment stage
2,457 successful applicants

E-tray exercise
1,018 successful applicants

Fast Stream Assessment Centre

338 successful

Tests candidates verbal and cognitive ability

Invigilated under exam conditions) simulating organisation, prioritisation and taking action in a typical Civil Service environment

Full day of individual and group exercises designed to assess decision making ability, constructive thinking, drive for results, and building productive relationships

12. For the period we reviewed, Fast Stream candidates were assessed against six competencies, determined by the needs of the Civil Service, and spread across three skill sets. The new competency framework introduced during 2012 to support the Civil Service Reform Plan and the new performance management system was not adopted for the 2012 or 2013 schemes because development of tests had to be completed before the new framework was signed off. This meant that in particular there was not yet any reflection of the greater emphasis in the new competency framework on commercial skills.

Table 3 – Fast Stream competencies compared to new Civil Service competencies			
Fast Stream Competencies		**New Civil Service Competency Framework**	
INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY	Decision Making Constructive Thinking	SETTING DIRECTION	Seeing the big picture Changing and improving Making effective decisions
DELIVERY SKILLS	Drive for results Learning & Improving	DELIVERING RESULTS	Achieving commercial outcomes Delivering value for money Managing a quality service Delivering at pace
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	Building productive relationships Communicating with impact.	ENGAGING PEOPLE	Leading and communicating Collaborating and partnering Building capability for all

13. At the end of the process candidates are ranked in order of merit, based on their final mark at the Assessment Centre. All Graduate Fast Stream candidates who have opted for options other than to work in central Departments or Science and Engineering have to undergo an additional selection procedure (e.g. a panel interview for entry into the Diplomatic Service Fast Stream). However, all candidates who achieve a pass mark at the Assessment Centre have reached the required standard and are guaranteed a place in the central Departments scheme.

Fast Stream Summer Diversity Internship Programme and Coaching Programme

14. The Fast Stream Summer Internship Programme (SDIP) was introduced in 2002. Since 2011 the scheme has been aimed at ethnic minority and underrepresented socio-economic backgrounds. It aims to provide high calibre undergraduates/graduates with a paid six to nine week work training placement[9] that raises career aspirations, provides challenging work experience, and improves awareness of the Civil Service as an

[9] Paid for by the Department which takes on the intern

employer. 162 interns (from a field of 1,305 applicants) have taken part in the scheme in 2013.

15. The scheme is supplemented by a highly successful Coaching Programme for internship participants. Interns are screened for suitability for the Coaching Programme, after which they are supported and mentored through the application and assessment process. In 2011 and 2012 40% and 35% (respectively) of coachees were successful in their Fast Stream applications. The success rate declined in 2013, however, with only 11 of 50 interns offered coaching being successful in their Fast Stream applications (probably a reflection of the fact that the coaching programme was opened up to many more applicants). However, compared with the overall Graduate Fast Stream, where success rates in 2012 were 2.6% (1.5% for those from an ethnic minority background) the application success rate for those on the Coaching Programme was still markedly higher (22%).

16. The SDIP won the 2012 National Placement and Internship Awards diversity award and was 'Highly Commended' in the 2012 National Council and Work Experience awards. In 2013 it has been shortlisted for these same awards.

In-service Fast Stream

17. Existing civil servants are also able to apply to the Fast Stream through an in-service scheme, though from 2014 this will no longer be possible (civil servants will need to apply along with other external applicants but can still claim an exemption from the degree requirement). 105 candidates applied for this scheme in 2012, of which 48.6% were women, 11.4% from an ethnic minority background, and 6.7% disabled. There is no degree requirement for internal candidates who are tested alongside external candidates at the Fast Stream Assessment Centre. Candidates applying through the in-service nomination scheme have very high application success rates (36.2%); 50% of those appointed were women, and 10.5% from an ethnic minority.

Comparing the Fast Stream to other graduate recruiters

18. Many other public sector, retail, audit and banking organisations have similar graduate recruitment schemes to the Fast Stream, with similar recruitment processes i.e. an online application, online tests or a combination of both, followed by a combination of interviews in various formats and/or attendance at an assessment centre.

19. Any direct comparisons between graduate recruitment schemes are of course difficult without being able to objectively compare costs, volumes and processes (including duration), versus outcomes. There is also the question of economies of scale with some private sector employers recruiting a very high proportion of their workforce through graduate recruitment.

Table 5 – Comparisons with other graduate recruiters					
	Entry	**Salary**	**Scheme duration**	**Vacancies**	**2012 Top 100 ranking**
Fast Stream	2:2 [10]	£25-27k	4 years	650	7
KPMG	2:1	£25-29k + bonus from £50-£4k	2-4 years	1000	3
Deloitte	2:1	£27k, yearly increases	?	1200	2
HSBC	2:1	£25k + £2500 graduate bonus, location allowance and share scheme	2 years	ongoing	13
John Lewis	2:1	£25-29k plus employee bonus scheme	1-2 years	40+	11
PWC	2:1	£25-29k	Up to 4 years	1250	1
DFID Graduate Development Scheme	2.1	£22k	1 year	50	n/a

21. Over the last three years Deloitte, PWC and KPMG have consistently kept their top three rankings in The Times Top 100 Graduate Employer list. The Fast Stream reached number 3 in 2010 but slipped to number 8 in 2011[11], climbing back to number 5 in 2013. The list is compiled by responses from final year students leaving UK universities at the end of the summer semester who are asked "Which employer do you think offers the best opportunities for graduates?"

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[10] Entry requirement is 2:1 for Analytical and Technology in Business schemes
[11] The Times Top 100 Graduate Employers

Table 6 – Times Top 100 Graduate Employer ranking					
YEAR	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
FAST STREAM RANKING	5	7	8	3	4

22. The top three ranked employers host career fairs and insight days across the country as part of their campaign to attract talent to their graduate programmes. These insight days include guidance on application forms, tips for assessment and interviews, and input from their business experts to give candidates a more detailed picture of working for the employer. In addition summer vacation internship schemes are provided for those who may be interested in joining a graduate programme once they have finished their degrees, and many schemes offer direct conversion from internships to permanent employment.

23. The Fast Stream process from application to final selection can take up to 6 months to complete; this may not include the time taken to conduct security checks. In 2012, 98 successful applicants, out of a total of 654, declined an appointment. The time taken for a Fast Stream job offer compares favourably with some other public sector schemes (for example the Local Government Association's National Graduate Development Programme opens in October and does not make offers until the following September). However, there is some evidence in feedback to show that one of the reasons for declining an appointment is the length of the Fast Stream selection process; for example, PWC aims to complete its entire graduate recruitment process within three to six weeks.

24. In 2013, Departments were charged £4750[12] per Fast Streamer recruited. This is on a par with other graduate recruiters, for example, KPMG estimate that their cost of recruitment is also around £4,400 per graduate. The Department for International Development runs its own graduate intern scheme (giving new graduates a year's meaningful experience in the workplace) at about two thirds of this cost per placed candidate following broadly similar application and assessment methodologies.

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[12] This will reduce to £4,400 in 2014.

ANNEX B – Diversity analysis

1. We have analysed recruitment to the Fast Stream with regards to four characteristics: gender, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic group. We looked at a) the diversity of the 2012 field of applicants in comparison to new graduates[13] and b) success rate over the course of the assessment process according to these characteristics. As well as looking at pass rates at the three test stages (the initial psychometric tests, the e-Tray and the Assessment Centre), we have also looked at the numbers who self-deselect by withdrawing their applications during the process.

2. The relation of these characteristics to outcome in the assessment process is outlined below. If a characteristic is not mentioned in relation to a particular stage it is because that characteristic made no statistically significant difference at that stage, e.g. there was no difference in self-deselection rate for men and women.

3. The different Fast Stream schemes have slightly different diversity profiles. These may present different problems and require different approaches, so unless otherwise stated we have examined only the Graduate Fast Stream. These make up more than half of the total intake.

Gender

4. The gender make-up of those offered a place on the Fast Stream is close to that of new graduates, a good outcome. Higher success rates among women balance out a lower tendency to apply.

More men apply...	*In 2012 45% of applicants were women, compared with 57% of new graduates.*
...but overall more women are successful...	*56% of successful candidates were women, similar to 2012 graduates and more than at application.*
...because women performed better in the assessment process, principally at the Assessment Centre itself.	*41% of women attending the Assessment Centre were offered a place, compared with 31% of men. 3.2% of female applicants were successful, compared with 2.1% of males.*

Ethnicity

5. People from BME backgrounds are underrepresented in the Fast Stream, primarily due to a lower success rate in the assessment process. It would be useful to see more detailed information about the field of BME applicants, to identify what lies behind the lower success rate, including the degree to which there is an interaction between ethnicity and gender or other diversity characteristics.

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[13] 'New graduates' is used throughout to mean UK domiciled students graduating from UK universities in 2012 with at least a 2.2 (the minimum degree for a Fast Stream application). 2012 graduates have been used as a proxy for all graduates eligible to apply.

In purely numerical terms, there does not seem to be a problem in attracting BME applicants...	*In 2012 17% of those applying for the Fast Stream were from a BME background, compared with 17.9% of new graduates.*
...but there was a lower success rate for BME candidates...	*10% of those offered places were from a BME background. 1.5% of BME applicants were successful, compared with 2.8% of white applicants.*
...due mainly to less good performance in the psychometric and e-Tray tests...	*21% of BME candidates passed the online psychometric test compared with 24% white candidates and 28% BME candidates passed the e-Tray compared with 36.8% white candidates.*
...exacerbated by a greater tendency to self-deselect before even taking the initial online psychometric test.	*79% of BME candidates completed the online psychometric test, compared with 82 % of white candidates.*

Disability

6. The opportunity given to candidates with a disability to bypass the psychometric tests is highly effective in promoting their representation in the Fast Stream. Despite proportionally fewer applications, a higher proportion of Fast Stream recruits than of new graduates had a disability, making this an effective instance of positive action.

Slightly fewer people with disability apply...	*10% of new graduates had a disability, compared with 7% of those applying for the Fast Stream.*
...but the waiver of the psychometric tests made up for this...	*Some candidates with a disability sat the tests anyway, and others self-deselected, but nonetheless 73% made it as far as the e-Tray stage, compared with 18% of candidates without a disability.*
...leading to a much higher success rate overall.	*17% of those offered places had a disability, a significantly higher proportion than among new graduates generally (10%).*

Socio-economic group[14]

7. It appears that candidates from a background associated with 'higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations' (SEG 1) had the most success over the course of the process. Those from a background associated with 'intermediate occupations' (SEG 2) and those from a background associated with 'routine occupations' (SEG 3) were some way behind, though the former were at least more likely to apply. It should be noted that 9.6% of applicants declined to provide information about their socio-economic background.

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[14] Using the three-group version of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification, by most recent employment of highest-earning parent, step-parent or guardian.

SEG 1 candidates were more likely to apply than those from SEG 2, who were themselves more likely than those from SEG 3.	*73% of applicants were from SEG 1, compared with 5% of new graduates. 12% of applicants were from SEG 2, compared with 22% of new graduates. 6% of applicants were from SEG 3, compared with 24% of new graduates.*
SEG 1 candidates were less also likely than others to self-deselect before the psychometric tests...	*83% of SEG 1 candidates completed the test, compared with 79% from SEG 2 and 78% from SEG 3.*
...and more likely to succeed at both the psychometric and e-Tray tests.	*24% of those from SEG 1 passed the psychometrics tests, compared with 22% of those from SEG 2 and 16% of those from SEG 3. 37% of those from SEG 1 passed the e-Tray test, compared with 29% of those from SEG 2 and 31% of those from SEG 3.*

Diversity analysis in future

8. From this analysis, it appears that representation of women and people with disabilities is not a problem, but that of people from BME backgrounds and lower socio-economic groups may be.

9. However, to diagnose the cause of the problem more exactly it is essential to collate and analyse data at a more granular level – for example, to show how many candidates from a BME background were also females without a disability, and so on – and to look in more detail at university background and degree class. This would make it possible to see how underrepresented groups overlap, and potentially to home in on the real sources of discrepancies, and to assess whether the Fast Stream was managing to attract 'its share' of the most able graduates in all groups, including those from the top universities and with the highest degrees.

10. Increasing the level of granularity in this way is important for two reasons.

11. First, it might reveal underrepresented groups that would otherwise be hidden. For instance it could be the case that disproportionately more of the SEG 3 candidates are women while disproportionately few of the SEG 1 ones are.

12. Second, without this sort of assessment, it is not possible to judge effectively whether more diverse outcomes are more likely to be achieved through changes to the assessment process or a change in marketing strategy.

13. For example, if the scheme is currently missing out on 'its share' of the most able BME graduates from the top universities, that suggests that the scheme might achieve better diversity in terms of ethnicity if it invested effort in targeting the most able BME students, rather than simply increasing the *number* of BME graduates applying.

14. Alternatively, *if* there is no significant difference in success rate between female BME and female white applicants, this suggests that the lower average success rates for BME applicants is down to the performance of *male* BME applicants, in which case coaching programmes that target male graduates from BME backgrounds might have

greater impact in improving the diversity of the outcomes than ones that target male and female graduates equally.