

Opportunities for all – how you can inspire the next generation

Volunteering plays such an important role in society today – making a difference to the people, communities and causes we all care about. Many of you already do some form of volunteering and it's something we are keen to encourage you to do under your Corporate Objective. Not to mention, you get five days of annual volunteering allowance.

Volunteering has made a marked difference during the pandemic, especially in local communities. As we finally begin to return to normality, with schools fully open, there is a volunteering opportunity open to all civil servants. Even just one hour of your time could make a crucial difference to inspiring the next generation.

You can't be what you can't see

It is very important that children are given the opportunity to meet real people with real jobs to form new connections. The aspirations of children are influenced by their surroundings and the people around them. As the saying goes

“you can't be what you can't see”.

By volunteering, you can offer young people, irrespective of their background, disability or ethnicity, the chance to hear about careers in A Modern Civil Service. This is a fantastic opportunity to show the Civil Service as a place where people do interesting work that makes a real difference.

Connecting across the country

Heads and teachers have been working very hard during the pandemic and are asking for your help to inspire and motivate young people and to help them to see what's possible. One very easy way of doing this is to chat informally with them. You don't have to give a talk – you can just answer simple questions about your job, your career journey and some of the exciting things you have done through your work. In doing so, you could introduce a child to new ideas or aspirations that they hadn't considered before.

Susan and I, and many Civil Servants from all fields, have taken part in interactive virtual sessions. You can see in this short video clip just how enjoyable these sessions are:



Sessions typically last an hour, with four or five volunteers from the public and private sectors also taking part. You will be answering questions from pupils such as:

- Do you use Maths or English in your job?
- Do you work in a team? or
- What was your first job?

Virtual sessions mean that, for the first time, children in any school across the UK can get the chance to meet a diverse range of people beyond their immediate networks and family. This could be transformational in helping to ensure that wherever a young person lives and whatever their background they have access to an amazing range of role models.

Challenging stereotypes

[Research](#) has shown that children from the age of seven often have ingrained stereotypical views about the jobs people do based on their gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background. Once established at a young age, this mindset is very difficult to change.

Working with primary schools can help us tackle tired stereotypes to ensure we can access a wide pool of talent, and that the workforce serves the needs of everyone in the future.

Easy to do and open to all Civil Servants

Getting involved is very easy. Simply register on the online match-making system '[Inspiring the Future](#)', which the Government launched as part of its work to improve social mobility. Over 5,000 people from a wide range of backgrounds, grades, ages and roles in the Civil Service and Arm's Length Bodies have already volunteered.

If you want to develop your skills further, we encourage you volunteer as a school or college governor – info [here](#). As a Civil Servant you have sought-after skills which are essential to supporting and challenging the school leadership to improve outcomes for all.

Typically taking 5-8 hours a month, governance is a strategic board level role and also a great opportunity to support your own professional development and expand your professional network. (*case study [here](#):*)

We hope many more of you will get involved and help us to inspire the generations to come.

Susan Acland-Hood
Rupert McNeil