



Commercial



Rashida Denbow

What led you to apply for the Civil Service Fast Stream programme?

In my final year of university, I was searching for a competitive graduate programme that would push me to develop specialist skills and personal confidence as a leader.

What attracted you to the programme and this particular stream?

I really wanted a varied job that had a direct impact on society and the Commercial scheme was perfect. The chance to write, negotiate and agree contracts that will have a long-lasting impact on the provision of public services really interested me.

How did you first hear about the Civil Service Fast Stream programme?

I worked on climate science in the COP 26 Unit at the Cabinet Office as part of the Summer Internship Programme.

Tell us a little bit about yourself. What is your degree and how do you feel you can use it in the Civil Service?

I graduated from the University of Warwick with a degree in Law and Sociology before starting the Fast Stream.

I use my legal knowledge to assess contractual terms and conditions, identify assess and mitigate risks, and protect the interest of my respective department.

From a sociological perspective, I am keen to ensure that commercial activity in government considers social impact such as modern slavery in supply chains and equal access to skills for a green economy.

Tell us about your Civil Service Fast Stream experience. What kind of projects have you been involved in?

In my first posting, I worked in a procurement role on Project Gigabit – a high-profile, telecommunications infrastructure project in the Department for Culture Media & Sport (DCMS). I applied my commercial awareness and legal knowledge to ensure our processes were compliant and fair. As my manager was based in Manchester, I learned to work across multiple regions in a hybrid setting.

I am currently in a commercial policy role in the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), where I assess and implement Cabinet Office policy, guidance and best practice. I have task-managed colleagues, presented strategies to senior leadership

and attended a committee session in Parliament.

How have the projects you have worked on helped deliver better services for the people of the UK? What was your contribution?

In my first posting, I was responsible for leading several large procurement projects in the first year of the Gigabit Infrastructure Subsidy Programme at BDUK. I led the development, publication and evaluation of many multi-million pound procurements and supported the commercial process for awarding the first contract of the programme – topped off with a visit from the Prime Minister!

What has been your experience on the Civil Service Fast Stream in terms of Diversity and Inclusion?

I have worked with care leavers, colleagues from all regions of the UK and team members of different faiths and backgrounds.

With a passion for gender equality, I hosted a panel event for Women's History Month in DCMS which attracted external panellists and over 140 attendees.

I've sat on interview panels to recruit members of the Senior Civil Service, asking questions related to their approach to racial diversity and inclusion. I received an award for my commitment to creating an inclusive environment.

It's vitally important for the Civil Service to look like the public that it serves and I've found each organisation to be incredibly welcoming.