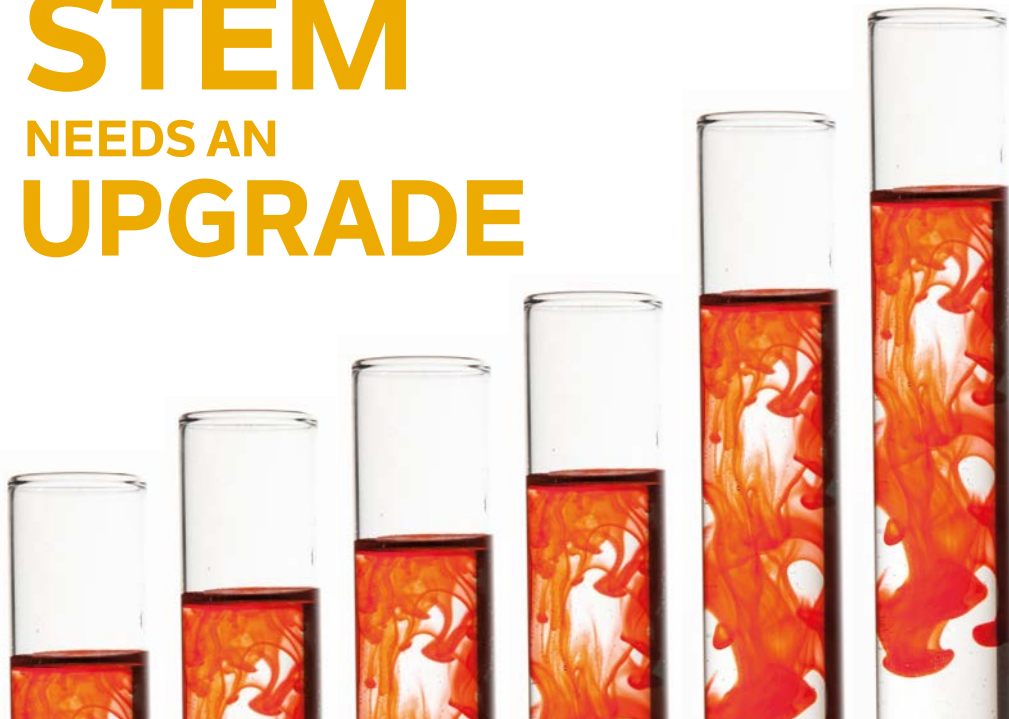


# STEM NEEDS AN UPGRADE



UK STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) is at a generational turning point. With issues of pay and reward deficits combined with critical skill gaps and uncertainty related to Brexit, the industry is in disarray. We must act now or risk irreparable damage to the UK's scientific future.

The Government Science and Engineering (GSE)'s latest strategy gives some focus to these issues, but action is needed now. Prospect represents more than 50,000 people working in science and engineering across the UK, and these experts and specialists need to have their voices heard.

[prospect.org.uk/join](https://prospect.org.uk/join)

 @Prospectunion  Prospectunion

# STEM NEEDS AN

Prospect members working in STEM in the public sector are not only suffering the effects of a prolonged pay squeeze, but also from under-valuation of the work that they actually undertake. It is simply not fair.

For example, the Government has relaxed the pay cap for police officers, but not for the forensic scientists who work alongside them to produce the evidence for criminal conviction.

Members have stayed in public service because they care about the work that they do, but there is a growing recognition that this cannot be sustained when 'you are struggling to pay the mortgage'.

## REWARD

Data commissioned by the Cabinet Office demonstrates a private sector premium both in pay movements and pay levels over the last 3-4 years. This data shows a gap at all civil service levels, but is highest for more senior roles. Significantly, it now also applies to total reward, so any notion that lower public sector pay is compensated by higher pension is simply wrong.

There are numerous anecdotal examples of pay comparisons, which help to illustrate this situation, such as:

- A recent electrical apprentice who had completed their course and taken a permanent role moved to Amazon for a £15,000 pay rise.
- A computing specialist earning £48,000 was offered a job with less responsibility in the local area with a £70,000 salary
- Statistical posts have been filled only by paying more than the advertised rate.

## OUR SURVEY SAYS...

Prospect surveyed our public service members in May 2017:

- Just **38%** say that they receive information from their professional group that is relevant to their career development;
- **29%** consider that they have good engagement with their professional group; and
- **22%** believe that their professional group has a strong identity



# UPGRADE

## **TALENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

68% of our survey respondents reported that their organisation has difficulty recruiting or retaining people with the relevant skills and 69% reported that this has got worse in the last year. Data from the UK Commission of Employment and Skills (UKCES) shows the civil service has lost around 14,000 science, research, engineering and technology professionals since 2010.

## **CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

Nurturing talent and offering opportunity is also a significant factor when looking at talent retention;

- Just 11% of Prospect survey respondents reported that they have a clear career path across government that provides opportunities to gain experience in their specialist field. 74% said that this was not the case.
- Only 39% felt they had access to appropriate opportunities to prepare them for more challenging roles, 48% did not.
- 59% considered their main barrier to career progression is lack of opportunity within their current organisation.

## **UNION PRESSURE MAKES A DIFFERENCE**

Prospect has recently negotiated an equal pay deal with the Met Office, despite the Government's public sector pay cap.

This is the union's third high profile equal pay victory, following similar success at the HSE & Intellectual Property Office. These are all deals that have benefited women and men.

**'In several areas, despite approval to recruit, significant challenges exist and suitable candidates for the roles are not being found.'**

*- Science and Technology  
Facilities Council's  
ISIS Group business  
report 2016/17*



Prospect members and Met Office staff lobbying parliament on equal pay, February 2016

## BEYOND BREXIT

The related issue of critical skills gaps is also likely to become increasingly important. Based on Prospect's survey data, it is estimated that up to 15% of the Government STEM work force are non-UK EU or EEA nationals. This will undoubtedly impact on available capacity as the Brexit negotiations progress.

Prospect is working with the GSE to push forward work on reward, recognition and talent management. But we know that action is needed now. Any steps by Government to relax the public sector pay cap must include STEM.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Join Prospect. The more members we have the stronger our voice.
- Encourage your colleagues to join Prospect
- Host a workplace event
- Share your story with us. Do you know of a skilled scientist who has left for better opportunities? Are you struggling to recruit or manage workloads? Email your story to [campaigns@prospect.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@prospect.org.uk).

## IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN PROSPECT

You can join us online at [prospect.org.uk/join](https://prospect.org.uk/join)

For an application form, email [membership@prospect.org.uk](mailto:membership@prospect.org.uk)

Call **0300 600 1878** or write to: **Freepost Prospect Membership**

[prospect.org.uk](https://prospect.org.uk)

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