



civic
future.

Impact Report


December 2025



*Able people of sensible views do not go into politics.
Western democracies have a talent problem.*

— Financial Times

Civic Future identifies, supports and trains
highly-talented individuals to enter positions
of public leadership





ES 2021



Why Civic Future?

Civic Future began in 2022 as an idea: how do we improve the calibre of people entering public life?

For nearly three years I was the director of the Prime Minister's Policy Unit in 10 Downing Street. I watched Ministers, MPs, civil servants and political advisors working through the uncertainty of the EU referendum result, a general election and the Covid-19 pandemic. I came away convinced that although we cannot anticipate every challenge and obstacle this country will face, we can improve the quality of public servants and politicians who will address them.

Since then we have built a movement and institution dedicated to the formation of the next generation of leaders. We want to encourage Britain's best and brightest to consider roles in public life and to equip them with what they need to be effective. We are grounded in the values of liberal democracy and the conviction that Britain has a great future.

When I review how much Civic Future has achieved in the first three years I feel enormous pride. We have recruited 60 fellows, hosted over 60 events, created a broad portfolio of training courses for political candidates, current MPs and civil servants, and built a powerful network. With our firm commitment to free speech and open discussion, we have influenced national debates and built relationships with leading figures across the political spectrum.

Each year, we carefully select 14 individuals in the early stage of their careers who we believe have the skills, talent and values to improve Britain. Over twelve months they discuss policy and political theory, Britain's relationship with the world, and how to make an impact in public life, with leading figures from politics, business and academia. This year we launched a compressed programme for 18 exceptional mid-career individuals who are considering the switch into public life.

From teachers and prison officers to start-up founders, army officers and software engineers, I've been delighted and inspired by the people attracted to our programmes and the impact they say it's had on their lives.

We have ambitious goals. By 2030 our Fellowship network will be 200 strong, and an expanded training and events programme will be reaching 100s more. Our impact is already beginning as our Fellows start to enter public life and shape government and policy.

None of this would be possible without our supporters. Thanks to them we are able to keep our programmes largely free. We never want cost to be a barrier to attracting talented people, and we will continue to make public life more accessible for those who lack social connections or wealth. I am truly grateful to every one of our funders for their generous and far-sighted support.



Munira Mirza

Chief Executive, Civic Future

December 2025

The Problem

Trust in politics is collapsing

■ **Two thirds** of the British public see politicians as acting primarily out of self-interest – up from half of voters a decade ago. Just **4%** think they are trying to do their best for the country – down from **10%** a decade ago.

YouGov, Sept 10 2025

■ Between 2014 and 2024, the British Election Study showed that **three quarters of people** had low or no trust in MPs – up from half of people a decade ago. In another survey, only **14%** of people reported trusting politicians.

Electoral commission, Public attitudes 2025

MPs and public leaders need more training

■ **Less than a third** of MPs think their newly elected colleagues receive enough training.

■ Newer MPs were twice as likely as those elected before 2010 to say that training and preparation for new MPs was insufficient.

■ Nearly **40%** believe there is a need for more training in basic economics and domestic policy challenges. Roughly **60%** believe that support with navigating the policymaking process would be valuable.

■ The amount of training received by civil servants has reduced over time – and most of that is now delivered online.



The Solution

Our mission is to create a wider and deeper talent pool for public life, and ensure effective government and policies that work.

TALENT PIPELINE

Create a structured talent pipeline to identify and support people to enter public life

A NEW ROUTE

Provide a new route for those who have a lot to offer public life but are put off by modern party politics

NETWORK

Create an ongoing network and prepare future leaders more effectively

INSIGHT

Help future leaders and policy-makers to understand the moral, geopolitical and technological challenges of our time

Programme Overview

Civic Future Fellowship

A unique and fully subsidised 12-month programme for 14 early-career individuals. It includes weekly evening seminars, two residential weekends and a one-week trip overseas to Singapore. Fellows meet politicians, policy-thinkers and academics, ambassadors, business and military leaders, as well as journalists. All Fellows are offered mentors and some have the opportunity of a paid professional work placement. Applications are competitive and assessment and selection rigorous.

In 2025, we introduced the Public Leadership Programme, a compressed programme for 18 exceptional people in the mid-stage of their career who are considering a switch to public life.

Events

Over 60 public and private events since 2022, including summits, panel discussions and social meetups. Leading figures in public life have addressed a diverse range of topics – from economic growth to tackling extremism, AI and geopolitics to free speech. Our events have attracted a growing network of people, with extensive coverage of our annual conference in the media. We have been invited to run briefing sessions for MPs in parliament on a range of topics.

Training and skills

Over 250 participants have attended our popular, CPD-accredited Foundation and Applied Economics for Government and Politics training courses. We have expanded our training portfolio to cover education and criminal justice policy, legislative process and science in government. Additionally, we have hosted an informal series of events on Roles in Public Life, engaging approximately 140 senior professionals considering public appointments.

Impact

60+ private and public events

1400+ event participants

60+ media mentions

50+ major donors and supporters

4,000 subscribers to our regular newsletter



Event Speakers

Lord Blunkett • Rt Hon Michael Gove • Baroness Stuart • Lord Adonis
Lord Goodman • Lord Vallance • Lord Sainsbury • Lord Glasman • Lord Hintze
Sir John Jenkins • Sir Nigel Sheinwald • Sir Trevor Phillips • Professor John Bew
Professor Diane Coyle • Professor Deirdre McCloskey • Professor Tyler Cowen
Professor David Edgerton • Professor Mark Pennington • Professor Alexander Evans
Professor Richard Jones • Jon Cruddas • Rt Hon David Laws • Yascha Mounk
Dominic Cummings • Matt Clifford MBE • Marc Warner • Liam Halligan • Cindy Yu
Michael Lind • Sam Bowman • Daisy Christodolou • Henry Oliver • John Myers
Phil Collins • Samo Burja • James Orr • Elisabeth Braw • Grayson Perry
Walter Russell Mead • Stephen Bush • Tom McTague • Andy Street
Rachel Wolf • Jonathan Hinder MP • Lawrence Newport • Alan Chang
Baron Young of Acton • Sir Nick Gibb
and many more...

Media Coverage

“There are some encouraging attempts to repair the system from the outside. Munira Mirza, who ran the Downing Street policy unit under Boris Johnson in 2019-2022, has established Civic Future to attract more high-calibre people from a wider range of backgrounds into civic life, through scholarships, comprehensive lecture courses and conferences. Civic Future is particularly keen on demonstrating that public policy is an intellectual challenge as well as a great calling.”

Adrian Wooldridge, *Bloomberg*

“The aim of Civic Future is twofold. First, to improve the quality of our leaders by providing what in corporate life we would call CPD – continuing professional development. Most in Westminster and Whitehall are woefully under-prepared. [...] the second, even more important aim is to encourage diversity of experience and perspective.”

Sir Trevor Phillips, *The Times*



“It is to be hoped that Civic Future will be an idea that encourages others to do the same [...] Let us recruit from the best and brightest, irrespective of their socio-economic and cultural circumstances, and let us try also to bring in those with talents and qualifications from across the academic and practical spheres.”

City AM

“At the Civic Future Start Up Society Summit, a gathering of young entrepreneurs and innovators that I attended last month, I met twenty-somethings, bright as polished brass, brimming with rebel spirit. They drank, ate and argued with gusto about politics, religion and everything in between; they laughed at themselves and each other. They were charming, brilliant and clever.”

The Spectator

We've also been cited as a positive new force by

The Financial Times • New Statesman • Unherd • Politico • Conservative Home • BBC Radio 4 • The Daily Telegraph
LBC Radio • Labour List • Marginal Revolution • CapX • The Ruffian • The Wrong Side of History



**Feedback from fellowships,
conferences and courses**



"This conference gave me hope for the future of civil discourse in this country – a new generation of people eager to debate serious questions in a spirit of friendship and fun."

"The Senior Fellows retreat is the most powerful event I've attended for many years. It's a huge achievement to bring together such a talented group and to create the atmosphere and trust to allow so much and such valuable thinking so quickly."

"Informative, engaging and provocative, Civic Future's Education policy session should be a must for all those who are passionate about making the quality of education provision in our country world class."



"The Civic Future Fellowship has been, without a shadow of a doubt, one of the most formative, and valuable experiences of my life."

"You have changed political education in the UK for the better."



"The Economics for Government course was incredibly valuable. We were fortunate to have a host of economists who skilfully simplified and contextualised the subject."

"The design of the course was masterful and your attention to detail has been superb."

Our Fellows

Eli Nelson

23/24 Civic Future Fellow

Prison Officer (Unlocked graduate)

I was living in a Christian community in Cambridge and a friend told me about CF. I had been getting into politics that year while working in a special needs school, seeing some of the great things and terrible things that the government had done. The promise of a fellowship in the traditional sense was extremely attractive to me.

In many ways, the year with CF exceeded expectations. The quality of the content was like no other teaching I had ever experienced. The amount we were expected to read, the people coming from different disciplines to discuss it, the sense of direct application, the insanely high level of rigour.

I was constantly impressed and challenged by the course.

It also opened my eyes to the political situation in Britain and America. These are issues that are not being taught in the traditional academic context, either because they are too recent, or else because they are too controversial. But it also left me confused, because I had assumed there was a simple answer to some of these questions.

The fellowship format meant that we were having serious conversations very fast, which accelerated the relationships. I had never before been introduced to people from so many different disciplines, who are all extremely passionate about fixing the country.

More generally, the quality of the CF network is exceptional. For every field there were people at the forefront that we suddenly had access to – people you are reading about on the news, reading papers by.

It makes public life seem open in a way that it definitely did not beforehand.

The teaching exposes you to the many challenges Britain faces, but also gives you a map to navigate those challenges. CF made me realise the importance of grassroots politics. That's why I'm planning to become a councillor in the next four years.

Poppy Coburn

24/25 Civic Future Fellow

Assistant Comment Editor, *Daily Telegraph*

I was a Covid student and felt like I had missed out on a lot at university. So I was grateful for the opportunity to be taught by subject experts, and also to meet other people at an interesting political time, when radical ideas are circulating about what needs to be done to change the state.

I'm a journalist, so in some sense it's my job to meet people, to talk to people. But I don't have much interaction with people outside the SW1 bubble.

CF managed to attract people who are not just the same types you see hanging around at political events.

They give you a fascinating perspective on where the state is getting things wrong – and also the areas where things might be working.

CF has accelerated my desire to actually get involved, and pushed me and others in our cohort to think we could do this now – whether running for a party or offering advisory work. It is exactly the sort of organisation that is lacking for people who don't have an obvious pathway into politics, but are keen to fix things and want to get involved.



Aditya Rajan

24/25 Civic Future Fellow

Founder, Hyde

A few friends bullied me into applying for CF. One had been on the cohort the previous year, another knew the organisers. Initially I was very averse to the idea: despite being interested in politics in my mid-teens, I had decided it was nothing more than a hobby – not a legitimate choice for a career.

“I think the quality of an interview tells you a lot about the quality of an organisation. These were very interesting questions.”

Once I started the course I really loved Civic Future. During every session I had two separate notes on my laptop: one to write down political insights and the other to write down management insights. At times it felt like a mini-MBA, even though that was not the idea. But there were so many lessons on how to manage juniors and seniors, or how to be effective in an organisation – especially a stagnant one.

Before CF I had a very negative view of government. In some ways I still do: CF gives you an accurate picture of the public sector, which is scary at times. But I now have much better access: people and peers who could pull me in to work on a specific project. I have a much better idea of what the different roles are and what you need to do them well.

And I would be interested in doing a secondment, say a one-year stint in government during my twenties. Before applying to CF, that was unlikely, but now I would be very keen.

Michael Padfield

24/25 Civic Future Fellow

Head of Strategy for i.AI in the UK Government

I applied to CF because the mission really resonated with me. First, the idea of getting as many serious people into public life as possible. Second, making sure those people have gone through a rigorous process of figuring out what they think before entering public life.

I do not have a background in politics: I did a languages degree and then joined the civil service. So, I often find it difficult to escape my comfort zone and meet with people from all walks of life.

CF gave me connections with people I would not have been able to meet otherwise, often at a level of seniority I would not normally have access to.

Because I'm a civil servant, learning about how to get things done in government was directly relevant to me. The course we did on public speaking was vital as well: I deliver talks every week that make use of the principles I learnt. I also took a promotion halfway through the fellowship, and CF gave me the confidence to put myself forward and really seize the opportunity.

One of the main highlights was the trip to Singapore and meeting the AI team out there. I was working in an AI team at home and applied the lessons I learnt from that week in Singapore every day.

I now feel even more inspired to take further steps in public life – whether within the civil service or without.

I think every civil servant should do something like this: step out of the normal conversations you hear in Westminster to encounter a completely different perspective. Debate, discussion, diversity of thought – all this is incredibly healthy.



Jeremy Choo

25/26 Civic Future Fellow

Investment Banking Associate, TD Cowen

A friend of mine was in the first CF cohort. I saw how it transformed the way he approached the world – his analysis became more granular, less vibes-based and click-bait. He also formed lasting friendships with several people from his cohort and was introduced to a network that continues to shape his thinking today.

Probably over half of my cohort are genuine political outsiders – people with no prior connections to that world but a strong motivation to enter it. I'm one of them: I work at a bank, and before the fellowship I had no political network. Through it, I've been introduced to people who have helped me think more clearly about my next steps and how I might contribute.

Of course, you can build a network through other programmes – the attraction of CF for me was the intellectual content. The organisers wanted the fellows to grapple with important ideas.

“The career development is more than a side-effect; it's an equal partner to the intellectual development, ensuring that the ideas we discuss have a path to becoming something real.”

I went to a good university and work in a competitive job, but the general standard is far higher than both Cambridge and investment banking. Everybody has a distinct view that they have formulated individually – they have not just been told it – and it's always surprising. But they also have experience and have done things, meaning they can connect those views to the world.

When I thought about why I wanted to do CF, I thought mainly in terms of the things I would learn about myself or the world. I thought less about what I would get from being around the other fellows and how that would change my approach to things. But that has been an enormous part of the experience so far.

2030 Goals

Inspire generational change by identifying and training 200 talented young leaders. Engage with 5000 people through private and public events.

Build a strong and durable network of confident, competent people who care about improving government so that Britain can achieve its potential.

Enhance public debate and public policy with stronger advocacy of liberal values.

Please consider supporting us to help achieve our goals.
If you want to find out how, contact info@civicfuture.org



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