

CIVIL SERVICE QUARTERLY

**ANTONIA ROMEO ON
THE FUTURE FOR UK
TRADE AND SHAPING
OUR ROLE IN THE
WORLD**

**HOW THE CIVIL SERVICE
HAS PREPARED FOR
EU EXIT**

**TACKLING KNIFE
CRIME IN SCOTLAND**

**SUE OWEN:
REFLECTIONS ON A
CIVIL SERVICE CAREER**



Civil Service

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Civil Service Quarterly opens up the Civil Service to greater collaboration and challenge, showcases excellence and invites discussion. If the Civil Service is to be truly world-leading, it needs to collaborate more, learn from experts outside the Civil Service, listen more to the public and front-line staff and respond to new challenges with innovation and boldness.

Any civil servant can write for Civil Service Quarterly – contact csq@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

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EDITORIAL



WELCOME TO THE 20TH EDITION OF CIVIL SERVICE QUARTERLY.

Although there is no formal theme running through this edition, several articles either focus on or significantly mention the work of the Civil Service to prepare government and the country for withdrawal from the European Union and a new global role.

In our lead article, Matthew Coats, Director General, EU Exit Implementation, looks in detail at the wide-ranging preparations for withdrawal – in any scenario, including the possibility of leaving with ‘no deal’. He reflects on the “scale and urgency” of the Civil Service response, characterised by collaboration and shared understanding of the issues. Without this, he concludes, the level of preparedness achieved by 29 March for ‘no deal’ would not have been possible.

As one of the departments most affected by exiting the EU, Defra offers a case study of how the Civil Service has “raised its game” to prepare for it. Senior policy adviser Tamsin Gowney gives a detailed account of the depth and breadth of work required to ready the department, and how this has influenced the way Defra sees itself operating in the future.

Turning to other matters, Scottish Government Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans recounts how policy towards tackling knife crime in Scotland has undergone a sea change over the last decade, with striking results.

Meanwhile, Sue Owen, retiring Permanent Secretary at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, looks back at a Civil Service career of great variety and achievement. This has taken in spells at No. 10, HM Treasury and DFID, as well as DCMS. She talks about the guiding principles of her career and about what has changed – and, in some cases, stayed the same – over the course of it.

Our Spotlight feature in this edition is trained on the Government Economic Service (GES), and its delivery of the UK’s first economics degree apprenticeship. A priority for the degree programme was to secure applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds. Two GES professionals describe how they set about this.

Twenty years after the creation of devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, and the establishment of a new Northern Ireland Assembly, Welsh Government Permanent Secretary Shan Morgan lays out 10 lessons we have learned from devolution.

The simple explanation of what actuaries bring to government is that they help decision-makers to understand the challenges around financial risk and uncertainty, spend wisely and save money. As Government Actuary Martin Clarke explains, experts in his department make a vital contribution to issues that can affect us all, from the cost of pensions, to amounts paid out in personal injury claims, and planning financial assistance for those affected by natural disasters.

Civil Service Chief Executive John Manzoni considers how applying the principles of Smarter Working is supporting the wider transformation under way to create a brilliant Civil Service that is a great place to work.

The latest of our articles focusing on civil services in other countries comes from the outgoing Finnish Ambassador to the UK, Päivi Luostarinen. She argues that her nation’s consistently high ranking in international measures of happiness and stability stems from a high-performing public administration based on values such as equality and transparency.

Returning to matters related to EU Exit, we close this edition with an interview given by Department for International Trade (DIT) Permanent Secretary Antonia Romeo. Antonia talks about how DIT is helping to shape the UK’s place in the world.

Sir Chris Wormald, Permanent Secretary, Department of Health and Social Care

HOW THE CIVIL SERVICE HAS PREPARED FOR EU EXIT

Matthew Coats, Director General,
EU Exit Implementation



Matthew Coats

The Civil Service has worked for well over two years to prepare for the UK to withdraw successfully from the European Union. In the run-up to 29 March, around 17,000 civil servants were working in EU-Exit-critical roles. They were working to progress over 300 workstreams designed to ensure that the UK is ready to leave the European Union in any scenario.

Of course, the date of the UK's exit has now been extended, potentially until the end of October 2019. If a deal between the EU and UK is agreed and ratified in Parliament before that date, the UK could leave earlier.

While our planning for withdrawal continues, this extension gives us a natural point to consider how we have progressed this work to date.

PREPARING FOR ‘NO DEAL’

The Government’s preferred outcome has always been that the UK leaves the EU with a deal. In the six months prior to 29 March 2019, the focus of much of the Civil Service’s domestic work was to make sure that the UK was able to leave the EU in the event of there being no deal in place. As has been said many times, it’s only sensible to prepare for a range of possible outcomes, and given the potential unwelcome consequences that could arise in a no-deal scenario, this was a vital contingency measure. It did, however, present an almost unique challenge for both the Civil Service and the wider public service: how best to shift from one scenario to another in the fastest possible time, while accelerating delivery of a range of projects that had not previously been the primary operational focus of government.

CREATING A SHARED CONTEXT

John Manzoni, the Chief Executive of the Civil Service, brought together the Permanent Secretaries from the departments most affected by EU Exit to exchange information and ensure that everyone was working to a shared agenda. These conversations proved fruitful and led directly to the development of a range of products that formed the basis of our no-deal planning. The work this small group initiated included shared planning assumptions, the secondment of staff between departments through a staff ‘clearing hub’, and the identification of areas of concern for assurance and remedial action.

The level of collaboration fostered by this group was almost unprecedented in my time as a civil servant.

Taking the staff clearing hub as an example, the Civil Service HR Function had long been working with departments to establish a clear picture of demand for exit-related roles. By the end of 2018, it had supported departments in the appointment of around 11,000 staff in just two years. Early in 2019, when no-deal plans were intensified, there was an urgent demand for 1,800 new staff to be placed into a range of no-deal roles. There simply was not enough time to advertise, interview, onboard and induct new staff into these posts, meaning that a different solution had to be found.

What the HR function did was to match departments without a significant exit workload with those that had a lot of work to

demonstrate the power of shared understanding and collaboration across the system.

Similarly, the communication campaign that preceded ‘no deal’ was almost unprecedented in its scale and urgency. It saw 145,000 businesses contacted with advice on how to prepare for no-deal customs procedures; the publication of over 106 technical notices to inform businesses and citizens about what they may need to do to prepare for a no-deal scenario, on issues ranging from exporting items of cultural interest, to how the UK would test medicines; and the creation of a new GOV.UK service to ensure people both inside and outside the UK could understand the implications of no deal and how to prepare for it.

This service involved not only a vast amount of high-quality information but the development of an effective way to present it. It drew in staff from DExEU, other government departments, Government Digital Service, and the Government Communication Service (GCS). The aim was to ensure that all parts of the system were working to a common standard and launching information in a way that was easily understood and accessed by the public. It serves as another example of the power of joint working across the system.

GCS established a communications hub that acted as an editorial board for exit-related communications, a fact-checking service, and a vital link into the co-ordinating functions of government. All to ensure that announcements had appropriate levels of agreement and clearance in advance of a publication. Without this shared effort, it is hard to imagine the communications campaign succeeding to the extent that it did.

IMPLEMENTATION

While the work outlined above involves collaboration between departments, the work to ensure

It’s only sensible to prepare for a range of possible outcomes, and given the potential unwelcome consequences that could arise in a no-deal scenario this was a vital contingency measure

do in a no-deal scenario. These matched departments then worked with HR to move staff from non-critical roles to critical no-deal ones. Within three months, the 1,800 posts were filled and, in fact, we had people to spare who could be deployed should they be required in a no-deal scenario.

Without this collaboration, the UK would not have been ready to leave the EU without a deal. Our preparedness

that services were as ready as possible for a no-deal scenario was largely led by individual departments.

When the Civil Service began this work two years ago, DExEU worked with departments to identify over 300 issues that would be impacted by the UK's withdrawal from the EU. When no deal became a key focus operationally, this list of projects and the reporting associated with it became the basis of the centre's work on no-deal planning.

It saw departments reporting back to the centre on progress in completing work on each issue, and using the reporting process to highlight where matters needed to be unblocked.

A subset of 43 programmes was identified by the Functional Support Team and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA). Each programme was assured by the IPA to generate 361 recommendations, to be worked on by departments to make sure the programmes were on track for delivery by 29 March 2019.

The Functional Support Team then worked with departments and the cross-government professions to ensure that these assurance reviews and the associated actions were meaningful. This was done by linking up departments and relevant interlocutors in each of the functions – primarily GDS and the Government Commercial Function – to make sure the appropriate expert support to resolve issues was provided.

The information generated was also shared back to DExEU so that unresolved issues were highlighted and another lens on progress was provided. DExEU was able to use this information and that collected from departments to prioritise interventions and support policy development. Once again, this illustrates the power that joining up the entire system can offer in solving shared problems.

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

The examples set out above barely touch on the scale of the work undertaken in the six months prior to 29 March 2019. However, they do show where near unprecedented outcomes have been achieved through joining up across the system.

It's important to reflect upon what we can learn from this and how we can apply it to the future. To me, the principal lessons are as follows:

- Firstly, Cabinet Secretary Sir Mark Sedwill often refers to the Fusion Doctrine and how we can bring together all the levers of the Civil Service to bring about better outcomes. Each of the examples I have cited shows that this approach undoubtedly works, and that the more we can do to bring together all our national capabilities around common problems, the more we can achieve. This sense of shared purpose and teamwork must be maintained beyond EU Exit so that we get the best possible outcomes for the country.

This sense of shared purpose and teamwork must be maintained beyond EU Exit so that we get the best possible outcomes for the country.

- Secondly, EU Exit work has underlined the importance of specialist skills and getting the right people into the right place at the right time. The best outcomes were consistently achieved where staff with different skill sets were working on the same problem. The IPA's work to

assure the programmatic elements of DExEU's portfolio of issues highlights that bringing policy specialists and project specialists together to consider a problem generated different insights and unlocked new solutions. That's also true where digital and commercial specialists have assisted in solving problems in departments. In part, this is a testament to the increasing maturity and capability of the functions, but it is really a lesson in having the humility to collaborate and respect one another's expertise.

- Thirdly, the importance of common understanding and a shared context should not be underestimated. The excellent work of DExEU to map out the entirety of the domestic EU Exit landscape made it possible to identify cross-cutting issues and to understand the pressures being placed upon departments as they progressed no-deal plans. Without this work it would have been near impossible for the HR function to help departments transfer staff, for the IPA to assure programmes, or for the communication profession to develop and launch a range of products so quickly. As we move forward, I sincerely hope we can keep this shared context in place: it has proved to be a vital tool in the rapid and effective mobilisation of the Civil Service for this era-defining work.

VITAL LESSONS

We've made good progress on EU Exit and learned some vital lessons. These lessons have application beyond EU Exit. We need to consider carefully how we will absorb them and ensure they are applied to the future.

The months spent to prepare the Civil Service for no deal were challenging for thousands of civil servants, but all involved should be proud of what was achieved and learnt in a relatively short period of time.

15,500

civil servants now working on EU Exit priority areas




145,000

businesses which trade with the EU were contacted with information and guidance



Over 300

workstreams were designed



17,000

civil servants were working in EU Exit critical roles in the run-up to 29 March



Published a paper on citizens' rights, giving people clarity on the future



Signing **5** civil nuclear agreements, including two safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency



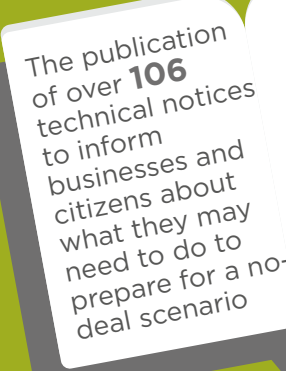
Finalising **international agreements** and **introducing legislation**



Announcing the conclusion of **10** new aviation agreements, including with the US and Canada



The publication of over **106** technical notices to inform businesses and citizens about what they may need to do to prepare for a no-deal scenario



Brought forward legislation that takes account of different scenarios including the **European Union (Withdrawal) Act, the Nuclear Safeguards Act, the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act, and the Haulage Permits and Trailer Registration Act**

Over 100

pages of guidance on processes and procedures at the border in a no-deal scenario



DExEU worked with departments to identify **over 300** issues that would be impacted by the UK's withdrawal from the EU



Appointed around **11,000** staff in just two years



A RADICAL APPROACH TO TACKLING KNIFE CRIME IN SCOTLAND

Leslie Evans, Permanent Secretary, Scottish Government



Leslie Evans in conversation with young people during a visit to HM Young Offenders Institution Polmont, Falkirk

Here in Scotland we have an important story to share, in how we have reframed this problem and implemented a radical approach to tackling knife crime. As a result, key decision makers – including the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and the Justice Minister for England and Wales – have been looking to Scotland to learn about our experience of dealing with knife crime.

The UK Government, the police and the authorities have refocused their efforts to tackle the problem. There has been political will from all sides and an impressive range of initiatives deployed. A violence reduction unit has been set up in London with the promise of more to follow. Changes are being proposed to the laws governing offensive weapons. And community-based approaches have been introduced to provide positive alternatives for young people who are most at risk of becoming involved in knife possession and knife crime.

THE SCOTTISH CONTEXT

Each local context is unique, and Scotland has its own particular experience of these issues. Around 14 years ago, stabbings certainly seemed to be a ‘Scottish problem’, with Glasgow gaining a dubious reputation as the UK’s capital of knife crime. At that time, young men were routinely turning up at hospital emergency departments with horrific knife wounds. Gang-related violence had become a depressing – and seemingly inevitable – way of life for many. In 2005, both the UN and the World Health Organization published reports highlighting the issue and Scotland’s appalling record on violent crime.

In response, the authorities took the bold decision to form Scotland’s Violence Reduction Unit (SVRU). This was Scotland’s first independent centre of expertise on the issue, funded by central government since 2006.

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

The SVRU offered something different. It was independent of the police and so did not treat violence as a traditional law and order matter. Rather, it viewed violence as a public health issue – as a “disease affecting communities”. And because that disease is caused by poverty, inequality and despair – issues that lie outside the bounds of policing – the SVRU knew that an alternative approach was required, one that dealt with the root causes of violence and tried to prevent it happening in the first place.

The SVRU searched the world for possible solutions to tackle Glasgow’s violence. This included approaches being developed in Chicago (which involved mapping the epidemic curves of violence, in the same way that this method is applied to containing infectious diseases); and Boston (where gang members were given the option to renounce violence and get into education or work, or face tough penalties). In both of these American cities, traditional enforcement measures were being used alongside preventative measures, in line with the public health approach.



Over the last few months, EU Exit has dominated the news and has led to an unprecedented and intensive organisational response across all areas of government. But another issue has never been far from the headlines. Knife crime in England and Wales has continued to rise, with the loss of too many young lives.

The statistics are stark. Last year, there were 209 knife-related fatalities in England and Wales – the highest since records began in 1946. As I write, there have been over 20 fatalities from stabbings in London this year – real people and real families’ lives shattered.

From the outset, the SVRU's mantra was that violence is always preventable, not inevitable. By diagnosing violent behaviour much like any other disease, the SVRU analysed the causes, examined what works and developed solutions. Once evaluated, these solutions were scaled up to help other communities across the country.

PREVENTION AND ENGAGEMENT

Iain Murray, who previously worked as a police inspector for the SVRU, neatly summed up this shift towards prevention in a media interview. From the start, he says, the SVRU attempted to “understand what the problems are”:

“The police for years had been experts at detection and enforcement. I'd much rather be at the top of the cliff putting a fence up, stopping someone from jumping over, rather than at the bottom of the cliff waiting until they've jumped. That's the public health approach as far as I'm concerned. You're engineering out issues, rather than waiting for them to happen.”

The SVRU was pioneering in another respect. It engaged directly with some of the most violent and disruptive young people in the country. It was – and still is – relentless in its approach. It drafted in former offenders - inspirational individuals - to share their experience. It encouraged team-building and fostered empathy. It showed that there were alternatives to lives impoverished by gangs, alcohol and toxic masculinity.

As a result, behaviours began to change. Threats were replaced with respect. Rivalry and territoriality were replaced by compassion and hope. And, very gradually, some long-established gangs began to disperse.

The impact in Scotland has been profound. All the key indicators point towards a sustained long-term reduction in levels of violence. Most recently, the publication of Scotland's Crime and Justice Survey showed that violent crime has reduced by nearly half in the last decade. Similarly, emergency hospital admissions for assault fell by 55% between 2008-09 and 2017-18. During the same period, the proportion of recorded serious assaults cleared up by the police has increased from 62% to 79%. Between 2006-07 and 2017-18 there has been a 65% decrease in crimes of handling offensive weapons (not used in crimes against the person).

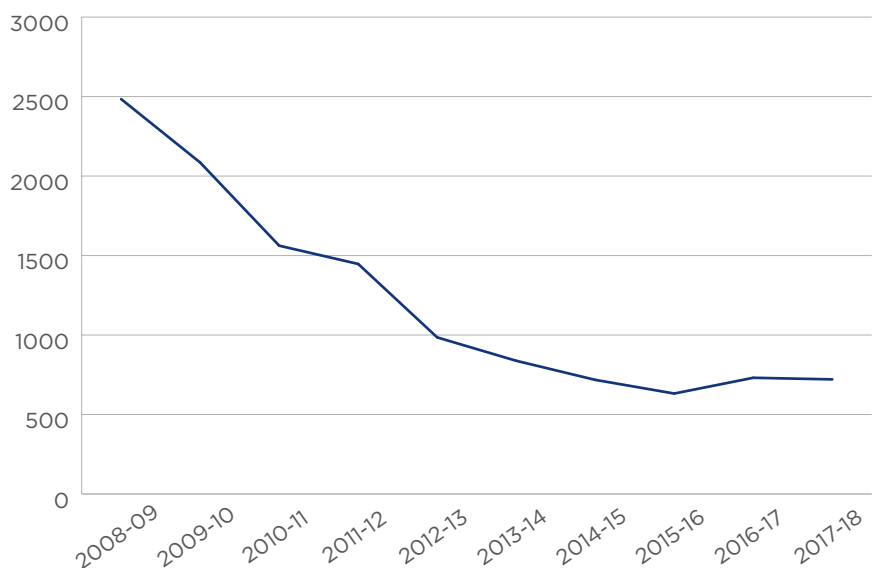
RANGE OF MEASURES

However, we know violence remains a very real problem in Scotland. The Scottish Government and authorities know we must continue to work hard to sustain the downward trend. Domestic abuse and

sexual violence remain significant areas for concern – as does the often toxic relationship between alcohol and violence, which still features in the majority of serious assaults in Scotland.

However, there has certainly been a shift in our focus in dealing with the problem. Stop-and-search as an early enforcement tactic had a role to play but, in Scotland, the emphasis has not been on tough enforcement; our police and authorities have long realised that we cannot simply arrest our way out of the problem. As such, stop-and-search must be used proportionately, alongside a range of other measures, such as prevention and education. Above all, the absolute focus is on policing by consent and community partnerships. This means that the police and authorities have actively sought to engage with young people at risk, built trust and forged better relationships with them.

Police-recorded offences of handling an offensive weapon not used to commit another crime, Glasgow City, 2008-09 to 2017-18



Source: Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2017-18

CONNECTING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

The Scottish Government has an overarching policy aim to make Scotland the best place to grow up for all our children and young people. As Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government, engagement with young people is, therefore, central to my role, permeating everything that I do. Over the last few years, I have been especially proud of the way that the Scottish Government has connected directly with young people, not only through the SVRU but also through a range of programmes to prevent them from falling into violent lifestyles. Programmes such as No Knives Better Lives, Police Scotland Youth Volunteers, and Mentors in Violence Prevention all offer young people opportunities to engage and for their voices to be heard.

In terms of youth justice, the Scottish Government is pioneering the Whole Systems Approach. This highlights the importance of different organisations and professions working together to support children and young people before situations reach crisis point. In Getting it Right for Every Child, we also have a national approach for improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of our children and young people by offering the right help, at the right time, from the right people.

BREAKING THE CYCLE

Since 2015, the Scottish Government has also supported a Navigator programme, now operational in four Scottish hospitals. The Navigators use the opportunity provided when people with chaotic lifestyles are admitted to hospital, to break the cycle and help them gain access to vital services. Many of these individuals are repeat victims of violence.

I saw the programme in action when I visited Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and heard vivid and unforgettable stories about how Navigators are empowering victims of violence and offering them a helping hand at those 'reachable moments'. I was inspired by the commitment and compassion from both medical and non-medical staff. One consultant summed it up when she said it was "lovely, at last, to have hope for these patients when they leave hospital". Kindness is a word that is not used often enough in the context of public services, but the work of Navigators certainly has kindness and compassion at its core.



NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

And kindness features in Scotland's recently refreshed National Performance Framework. The framework has been in place for over a decade, ensuring that all policies are sharply focused on the achievement of national outcomes, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish. As with all work on violence, the Navigator programme is aligned to the achievement of an overarching national outcome (in this case, that "we live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe"). In this way, we describe the difference the approach will make, draw in funding and resources from different

sources, and support partners to work together – collective and collaborative leadership with shared purpose.

With the National Performance Framework as our North Star, we can be innovative in how we tackle different issues, and more joined up in our work. For example, new approaches are being developed across Scotland's public sector to minimise the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). As we know, ACEs can increase the likelihood of experiencing violence in later life.

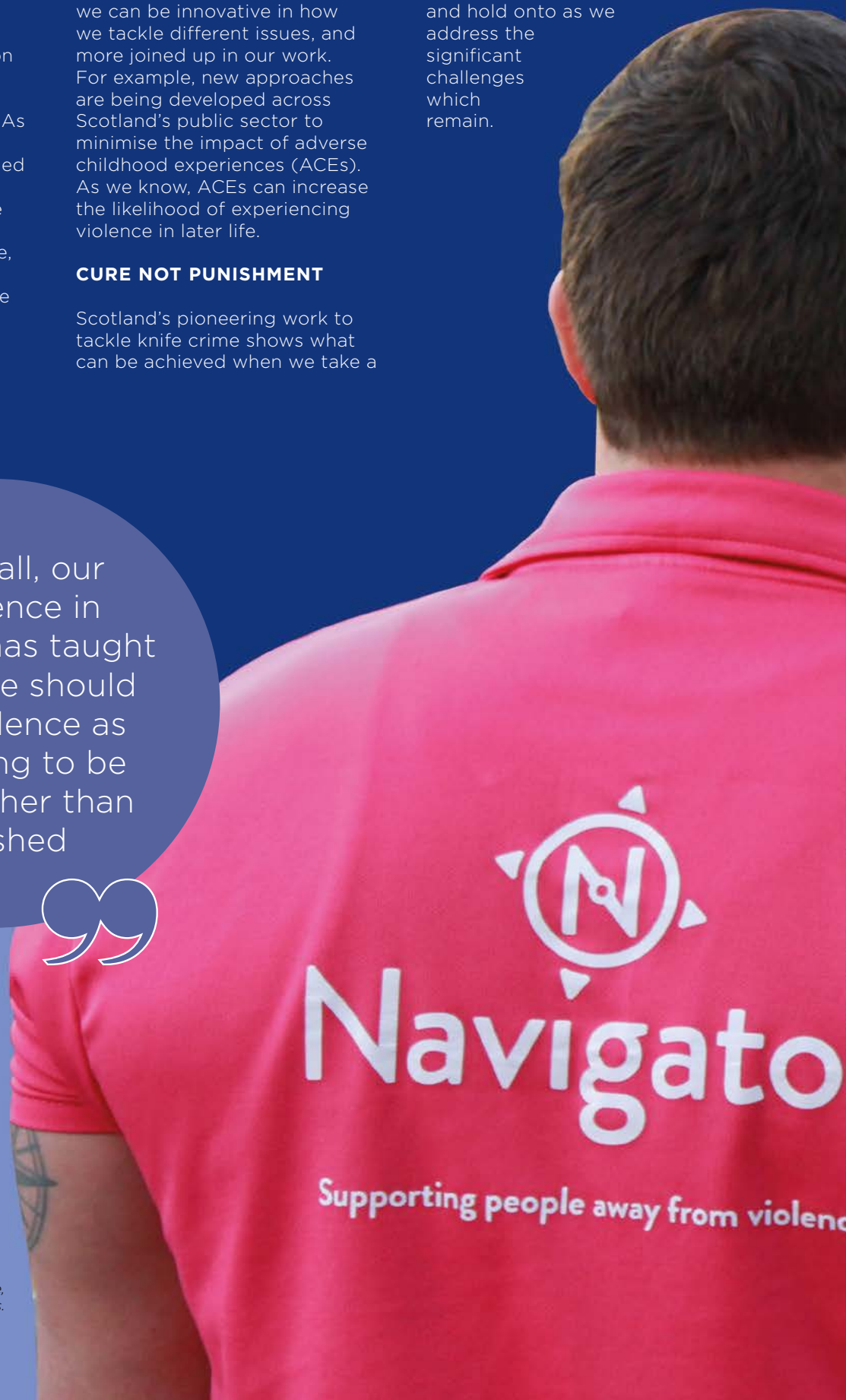
CURE NOT PUNISHMENT

Scotland's pioneering work to tackle knife crime shows what can be achieved when we take a

creative and tenacious approach to improving outcomes. Above all, our experience in Scotland has taught us that we should treat violence as something to be cured rather than punished. This is the learning to share, and hold onto as we address the significant challenges which remain.



Above all, our experience in Scotland has taught us that we should treat violence as something to be cured rather than punished



A member of the Navigator programme, which is active in four Scottish hospitals.

dent & Emerger

Ambulance Entry Only



REFLECTIONS ON A CIVIL SERVICE CAREER

Dame Sue Owen, former
Permanent Secretary,
Department for Digital,
Culture, Media & Sport

A portrait of Dame Sue Owen, a woman with short blonde hair, wearing a dark blue blazer over a dark blue top with a feather pattern, a gold necklace, and a gold bracelet. She is standing in front of a green and yellow abstract background.

“
Events are arguably
more important in
the Civil Service than
in most jobs - you
have to be ready for
anything
”

Events are arguably more important in the Civil Service than in most jobs. You have to be ready for anything. In my case, that included dealing with protestors throwing rotten tomatoes at the Chancellor; getting the RAF to chase off low-flying aircraft that were ruining a meeting; and welcoming my sixth Secretary of State in 5 years at 30 minutes' notice.

I joined the Civil Service 30 years ago, after a decade in academia. My research on the distribution of unemployment spells, and on the implications of women's lower lifetime earnings, had brought me in close contact with the Department of Health & Social Security (now the Department for Work & Pensions), and it seemed a government role afforded a much better opportunity to effect real policy change. A varied career followed, first as a government economist, and then in leadership roles.

During 14 years at HM Treasury, I worked under Chancellors Lawson, Lamont, Clarke and Brown. It's not unusual there to move around a lot: I was involved in the macro forecast, on labour market spending, on Germany after we fell out of the ERM (Exchange Rate Mechanism), and on Europe from 1995 to 1998. In that last role I helped the new Labour government run the EU presidency. This included the UK chairing the meetings that launched the euro; resolving the competition between Trichet and Duisenberg to chair the embryonic European Central Bank; and the European Council that selected the countries eligible to join the euro.

EXTRAORDINARY TIME IN THE USA

Then, for a complete change, I worked in No. 10, recommending two weeks' paternity leave – something I'm very proud of, because it made a real difference for millions of families.

That middle part of my career culminated as counsellor at our embassy in Washington – the only female at that rank or above. I experienced the end of the Clinton presidency, the dead-heat 2000 presidential election, and the start of the George W Bush presidency. The job ranged widely, from advising on control of teenage pregnancy to regulation of over-the-counter derivatives, and a monthly letter to the Bank of England. Basically, you needed to know who to ring. And, of course, I was there for 9/11, an extraordinary time to be in the United States.

RETURN TO THE TREASURY

In the final third of my career I moved from jobs where you do the work, into leadership roles, where everyone knows more detail than you about everything, but only you know how it all fits together.

So, I returned to the Treasury in 2002 to lead the 'five tests' work on whether to join the euro. The decision not to do so was universally acclaimed as correct. While politics were important, the economics were clear, and several of my European counterparts wished they had at least done the analysis to know what was coming. In that job I also managed the national debt. It was so low at that time that we were able to launch the first index-linked 50-year government bond in 2005.

BAD MOMENTS AND EASY WINS

After that, I was promoted to a chief operating officer role at the Department for International Development (DFID). I worried about a range of issues, from the way our £10 billion aid budget was spent, to the safety of our staff, most of whom are locally hired.

There were several bad moments. They included the kidnap of five members of staff in the Ethiopian desert; visiting a school in North Pakistan and realising the lookout guard at the back of the jeep we were riding in had a gun inside his tunic; and protecting our gay staff in Uganda.

There were some fascinating easy wins, too, such as how to control teacher absenteeism in remote schools? The solution was to give the kids a camera that records the date on every image. And how to get girls to school? Dig some latrines.

Continuing the large money theme, I moved to DWP – which has 90,000 people and a £200 billion budget – working for three years with Ian Duncan Smith on his reform of the welfare state. (It's little-known that his Labour predecessors had contemplated something similar.) That role involved overseeing one of the most important government behavioural economics 'nudges' – 'automatic' enrolment into private pensions, where inertia means most stay in their scheme.

INCREASING STAFF ENGAGEMENT

I was promoted in October 2013 to Permanent Secretary at the then Department for Culture, Media & Sport. My leadership challenge there was existential – how to justify a department of, at that time, around 380 people, with a staff engagement score of 45%, the lowest of all government departments? Happily, we are now at 1,200 staff, and enjoy 70% staff engagement, just behind Treasury and DFID. We did this by consolidating all the digital, technology, data and data protection policy from several departments into DCMS, as well as responsibility for civil society.

Accordingly, we are now the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Just as important for me was establishing a values-based, no-blame culture in which everyone is respected, and that affords all staff total responsibility for their work, knowing that others will help if something goes wrong. We now have the highest rate of inclusion in the annual Civil Service People Survey.

SOCIAL POLICY FRONTLINE

Our strapline is “driving growth, enriching lives, and promoting Britain to the world”. The domestic and global economies have changed beyond all recognition during my career. Indeed, creative industries now have a power that heavy industry and manufacturing would have envied, even in their heyday. The sectors we are responsible for account for 15% of the UK economy, including the fastest-growing sectors, and 25% of businesses.

But the “enriching lives” aspect matters just as much, and we are at the social policy frontline.

The work of DCMS has a demonstrably beneficial impact on health, crime levels, education, and employment. High-speed broadband in rural areas increases access to work for marginalised people, and digital progress generally enables more to work from home.

Then there are the personal, more intrinsic or ‘wellbeing’ benefits from participating in our sectors, be it sport, the arts, or World War 1 commemoration. We are also concerned with new areas of social protection such as internet safety and gambling addiction.

DCMS is responsible for great institutions, such as our national museums, galleries and theatres, and for the Premier League and the BBC, which all enhance our ‘soft’ power and Britain’s reputation abroad, which will be even more important beyond EU Exit.

CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT

So what has changed over the course of my career in government? I would pick out a number of things.

First, flatter departmental structures and devolution of responsibility. There is less checking and double checking, which is good, as it makes jobs more interesting. However, to work better, government requires an inclusive culture – which I shall return to.

Second, much better use of evidence, with analysts and experts integrated in policy teams. Indeed, there is greater professionalism all round. We have true finance experts, not generalists, in charge of the money; commercial experts doing procurement; programmes led by experienced senior responsible owners; and delivery folk involved in policy formulation at an early stage, rather than as an afterthought.

Third, Permanent Secretaries have far more varied career backgrounds. I’ve personally worked in six departments, and only a couple of my colleagues are departmental ‘lifers’. Most of us now have some outside experience, too.

Fourth, I would say leadership. There is much better appreciation that leaders with emotional intelligence are more likely to get the best from their people, to get along with ministers, and help the Civil Service cope with uncertainty and seismic change.

DIVERSITY SHIFT

And last, not least, and particularly close to my heart, diversity, which I championed throughout my career. Happily, the dial has really shifted, with a realisation that diversity and inclusion is about better policy, good customer service, and the improved performance that staff who feel valued will give.

“...important for me was establishing a values-based, no-blame culture in which everyone is respected, and that affords all staff total responsibility for their work, knowing that others will help if something goes wrong”



When I joined the Senior Civil Service in 1995, it was 16% female – now it's 44%. I had a female line manager for just one year in 30, but the chances of that happening now are remote. In recent times, I have rarely attended a meeting dominated by men; and meetings of the Permanent Secretaries are now generally 30% female. We have far to go on other aspects of diversity, but we appreciate the need for change.

People ask what I did personally to effect some of that change. There are a few things I would point to. First, presenting senior leaders with the data on diversity, and mining the data to destruction. Second, championing a group I wasn't part of. As straight ally to the

LGBTi community, I persistently turned up to their events and spoke on their behalf. And third, focusing on the whole Civil Service career pipeline, not just the section leading to roles at the very senior level. If all ethnic minority staff aspire to roles one grade above the one they currently fill, we can change things for other underrepresented groups, as we have for women.

AS YOU WERE

And what hasn't changed? British ambivalence towards Europe.

Back in 1998, and where I began this article, we had the tomato-

throwing protestors opposed to the Maastricht Treaty and determined to wreck the EU Finance Ministers' informal meeting in York. Now, 20 years on, my sixth Secretary of State arrived just a few hours after Boris Johnson resigned over the Prime Minister's proposed approach to EU Exit.

Plus ça change...

SPOTLIGHT:

DELIVERING THE UK'S FIRST ECONOMICS DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP

Ahad Rawat and Maryke Jesudason, Government Economic Service



“We get paid and we get a degree? What’s the catch?”

That was the question put to Shamim Miah, one of the economists at the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, when he visited Acland Burghley school in North West London to talk about the Civil Service economics apprenticeship.

“The students couldn’t quite believe the offer”, said Shamim, who is helping to roll out the programme. “They thought there must be some downside, like it’s not a proper degree, or not with

a real university, or that they wouldn’t be paid. But there’s no downside. It is a job, a career and, while you work, you earn towards a full economics degree at the University of Kent. Some were worried that it wasn’t for ‘people like them’, but I’m from Tower Hamlets and my message was they could all flourish in our Civil Service.”

GES economists Manraj Bhamra, HM Treasury; Lucia Slater, Department for International Trade (DIT); Olivia Goldin, DiT.

DIVERSITY - THE WATCHWORD

Delivering that diversity was the watchword for Government Economic Service Heads Sam Beckett and Clare Lombardelli when they decided to use the opportunity of the apprenticeship levy to open up new routes into the economics profession.



“The GES has tended to be more diverse than many of the other routes into government” they said, “but we are always constrained by the composition of those graduating from universities. We saw the opportunity to use the apprenticeship to influence student choices directly before university to try and get greater diversity in the profession.”

And it seems to have worked. Although the scheme started with just 75 places, and a 6-week application window, it received some 2,500 applicants.

“We were bowled over by the response” said Alison Kilburn, head of the GES central team. “Not only did we have a huge volume of applicants, but we were able to attract a diversity in applications we haven’t traditionally seen in the GES and maintain that diversity throughout the assessment centres. Moreover, we’ve done so without sacrificing quality. We’ve rigorously tested these candidates and have been really pleased with the standards.”

REACHING THE TARGET AUDIENCE

Alison puts the attraction down to the social media campaign. “As analysts you’d expect us to try and understand the market, but we spent quite a bit of time up-front working out how to secure our target audience.”

With a modest budget, the team focused on Instagram and Snapchat to engage the applicants, and Facebook to influence their parents. We’ve also been surprised with some of the engagement we’re getting on social media, especially around Gladstone, the Treasury cat, who received 2,500 likes for his posting on the apprenticeship.

Getting to this point has been a huge, cross-profession effort over two years. Over the past six months, one team was running the attraction campaign and working with the Government Recruitment Service to design a set of selection tests to select potential recruits. At the same time, a second group was working with the University of Kent to design the programme.

As well as the logistics of arranging teaching provision across the country, there has been the opportunity to design the economics curriculum to meet the practical needs of life in government.

“As well as the core academic content” notes Shamim ‘we’ve been able to add courses in public economics and key skills such as coding and data science, so we can be sure that our recruits have the skills needed for the job”.

LOOKING AHEAD

The first recruits received their offers in early May, and the 75 successful candidates now have to wait until BTEC and A-level results day in August to know if they have made the grade.

But, already, Sam and Clare see it as a success: “Our initial results show we’ve been able to shift the dial on our diversity stats, particularly on gender, which is an area where economics has traditionally struggled. But we aren’t stopping now. We’ve learned a lot, and we are going to be even more ambitious for next year’s recruitment.”



DEVOLUTION AT 20: 10 LESSONS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

Dame Shan Morgan, Permanent Secretary, Welsh Government





Dame Shan Morgan

As we look back at two decades of devolution in the UK, one of my main reflections from leading the civil servants supporting one of the administrations, is that we have learned a considerable amount during the last 20 years.

Here are 10 brief lessons from my perspective, but, I believe, with relevance for colleagues in every administration:

1) IT'S GOOD TO TALK

Since becoming Permanent Secretary of the Welsh Government, I've been really impressed with the huge amount of dialogue there is throughout the Civil Service and across the devolved administrations. I've experienced first hand how problems and issues have been resolved through discussions between colleagues at all levels; and how we can avoid weeks – or even months – of letters and emails by investing the time to talk things through.

2) THE LAWS OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The system of devolution we have in the UK is a complex mix of devolved, partially devolved, and reserved matters. What I've seen throughout my Civil Service roles is that policy decisions and legislation in one nation can have significant and perhaps unforeseen consequences in another, even if it's in a non-devolved area.

3) NEVER ASSUME

Similarly, the different systems of devolution mean that no two settlements are the same. None of us should assume that because an issue is devolved in one nation it must be in all of them. If in doubt, it's always best to check.

4) IT'S A PROCESS NOT AN EVENT

It's really important to remember that we work in an evolving and developing system of devolution. In Wales, for example, the very limited powers devolved in 1999 have grown over two decades to include primary law-making powers and taxation. A commission is also currently examining the case for the devolution of justice, showing that the system is never standing still.





5) LABORATORY UK

Devolution has given the individual nations of the UK powers to implement new and innovative solutions to issues that face us all. It's an amazing chance to learn about the way new ideas work in practice. So, taking the time to look at developments in other administrations can lead to richer, wider, and more practical solutions for everyone.

6) BEST PRACTICE SHOULD ALWAYS CROSS BORDERS

Regardless of the political differences between administrations, professional development is a priority that we all share. Again, I'm impressed by the way that different professions share information, expertise, best practice and training across governments to the benefit of all of us.

7) KEEP YOUR HEADS WHEN ALL AROUND YOU...

For me, one of the great strengths of the Civil Service is that, even when there is political conflict, colleagues can maintain valuable co-operative relationships and avoid personalising issues. We all fully reflect the positions of our different governments, but in a way that is measured and respectful at all times – that's why the UK Civil Service is highly admired around the world.

8) LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS

It goes without saying that strong leadership at the highest levels is vital. However, I've observed the power of excellent leadership right across the Civil Service at all grades, in all functions and in all professions. We should never underestimate or take for granted the contribution our teams have made to the devolution story.

9) NEVER WASTE A GOOD CRISIS

Collaborative, joint working is often hard given the day-to-day pressures we all face. But I've seen how a crisis draws people together and accelerates the kind of working together that we all want to see – Brexit being the ultimate example. Not only does this put us in a far better position to respond collectively to the issue at hand, it develops partnerships and ways of working that are invaluable for the future.

10) A SMALL COUNTRY CAN LEAD THE WAY

Wales is a nation of 3 million people and perhaps the biggest step we've taken over the past 20 years is to realise the impact we can have both at home and across the world. Devolution has given our ministers the opportunity to develop home-grown, ground-breaking policies and approaches, such as opt-out organ donation and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

THE EXPERTS WHO ASK THE 'WHAT IF?' QUESTIONS

Martin Clarke, Government Actuary, and **Chris Paterson**,
Government Actuary's Department





Martin Clarke, Government Actuary

Our country and government face many challenges, which are almost defined by their uncertainty and require specialist help in risk and finance.

Questions we need to address include how we pay for pensions in the future, and how we best help developing countries deal with the fallout from natural disasters exacerbated by climate change. What are the biggest financial risks facing the country in the next 30 years? How do we plan to decommission our ageing nuclear power stations?

More immediately, as a country we must also consider how our approach to these and other questions changes once we exit the European Union. Who does the Civil Service turn to for specialist help in these areas?

WHAT IS AN ACTUARY AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

Put simply, actuaries help the government spend wisely and save money. Using statistical techniques and mathematical skills, they assess the probability of an event and its financial consequences.

Experts in GAD help public sector clients understand complex challenges around financial risk and uncertainty. This includes, for example, the longer-term implications of climate change, and developments in human longevity.

Actuaries ask, then analyse and advise on, the 'what-if' questions around public sector pension schemes, insurance and investment markets, and undertake financial modelling and quality assurance.

UNCERTAIN FUTURES

In 1919, the UK faced an uncertain future of a different kind following the conclusion of World War 1. To be fit for the new peacetime priorities, government had to be reorganised. It was in the landmark Haldane Report of the Machinery of Government Committee – which set the pattern for much of the modern form of government we are familiar with today – that the role

of actuaries in government was formally recognised, leading to the founding of the Government Actuary's Department (GAD).

The Government Actuary and a team of specialist actuarial professionals are still working hard in government today. Because actuaries deal in long-term issues, some of the areas we work in are the same now as they were 100 years ago. For example, we continue to advise on how to pay for Civil Service pensions and on the planning of National Insurance funds. Our mission to support effective decision-making and robust reporting within government has also broadened our work into new areas.

FINDING THE ANSWERS

Experts in GAD have been seeking to understand where our knowledge of financial risk and uncertainty, investments, insurance and mathematical modelling can help other government departments. We have found lots of answers to this in the past few years.

Put simply, actuaries help the government spend wisely and save money

ACTUARIES AND ANALYSTS IN GOVERNMENT

GAD's actuaries and analysts are part of the Civil Service's Analysis Function, alongside other analytical professions including economists, engineers, operational researchers, scientists, social researchers, statisticians and data scientists.

The Analysis Function is the "go-to hub for best practice research and analysis services within Government"¹. Within that, the actuaries in government are concentrated in GAD to provide critical mass for advice, challenge and insight based on evidence to help client departments deliver improved outcomes.

We aren't the only actuaries in the public sector, however, and we are seeking ways to collaborate on leadership and learning with other actuaries in the sector. These include actuaries in the Prudential Regulation Authority (part of the Bank of England), the Financial Conduct Authority, the Pension Protection Fund, and the Pensions Regulator.

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/742625/P19650_Analysis_Function_Document_landscape_HI_RES.pdf

We work for departments in many areas across government, including:

- advising the government on the cost of pensions
- building the methodology to help investors decide what to pay for student loans
- modelling the risk to enable planning of financial help for people who need it most after natural disasters
- building understanding of the cost of helping passengers get home if their airline becomes insolvent
- advising on how to determine the amounts paid out in personal injury claims

WORKING ACROSS GOVERNMENT

Experts at GAD provide specialist knowledge and advice on the liabilities held across government. This work was part of the recent balance sheet review work carried out by HM Treasury (HMT).

These liabilities are made up of a wide range of explicit or implicit promises and guarantees made. For example, a promise to pay pensions in the future, or to step in if losses on a contract get beyond a certain point. Having built up knowledge through the review of these liabilities, we saw the opportunity to work with other government departments to share best practice in managing liabilities and help lead co-operation and co-ordination of effort.

So, in February 2019, GAD and HMT held an event where the people responsible for taking on and managing financial liabilities in their departments could share their experiences. These included stories on liabilities from drought risk in developing countries, flood risk to academies, and local government risks. Cross-departmental groups collaborated to come up with new ideas and approaches.

Following this event, GAD and HMT continue to work with departments to look at how liabilities can be managed in line with best practice. This helps protect the government against unnecessary financial losses, as well as helping to compensate for the risks it takes on.

A NEW ASSET CLASS

In December 2017, the government began the sale of student loans to private investors. This was the first sale of this type of loan and, as a result, created a new type of investment asset in the UK. The challenge for UK Government Investments (UKGI) was to put a value on this new asset, in a way that was transparent, accurate, and could be shared with interested investors. Doing this would allow UKGI to achieve best value for money for the sale.

UKGI chose GAD's approach of offering both modelling accuracy and simplicity, ahead of competitors' proposals. We built a new, statistically based computer model, taking into account the needs of UKGI and the other stakeholders.

We worked side-by-side with UKGI at their offices and have established a secondment programme, which continues to operate and provide financial modelling expertise. The model enabled the first sale of its type and continues to support further loan sales.



DISASTER PROTECTION

In 2017 the Prime Minister announced the creation of the Centre for Disaster Protection. Based in the City of London, it is funded by and is a close partner of the Department for International Development (DFID) and the World Bank's crisis and disaster risk financial London hub. The centre works to find better ways to prevent disasters from devastating lives and economies, supporting countries to manage disaster risk.

GAD provides analytical capability to the centre, building on work we have done in the past few years in this area both for DFID and the World Bank.² Our analytical expertise and understanding of risk have allowed us to help set up

© *Marisol Grandon/Department for International Development*

risk-financing programmes in developing countries. These programmes are designed to get the money quickly and efficiently to those hardest hit by drought, flood and other disasters.

In 2018, GAD provided analysis for the World Bank to help with their work to strengthen Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme. The programme, supported by both the World Bank and DFID, provides 'shock-responsive' social protection, supporting chronically poor people in northern Kenya with regular unconditional cash transfers. In this case, being

shock-responsive means that, in the event of weather-related shocks such as drought, the programme scales up to provide cash payments to those affected; for example, if their crops fail.

GAD's analysis looked at how the shock response could be financed by assessing the amount of funding required and the likelihood of it being needed. This was used to inform and guide the policy dialogue between the World Bank and the Government of Kenya.

² <https://quarterly.blog.gov.uk/2016/11/01/insurance-as-a-tool-to-fight-poverty/>

HELPING REGULATORS TO HELP CONSUMERS

Economic regulators typically set price controls on the companies they regulate, to limit the maximum revenue the firms are permitted to earn. This is to protect consumers in industries where there is a monopoly or a low level of competition, such as utilities. As part of this process the regulator has to consider a company's often significant pension commitments, to ensure that unnecessary pension costs are not passed on to consumers.

GAD provides actuarial support to economic regulators such as Ofgem, the Utility Regulator Northern Ireland, and the Civil Aviation Authority to help them do this. Our work provides the regulators with an informed view of the relevant pension arrangements, to help them work out the allowance to be made for pension costs when setting price control limits.

LITTLE THINGS TO HELP EVERY DAY

When procuring services, government professionals rely on central guidance on how to set up contracts, including managing the associated risks. GAD has been working with the Government Legal Department and the Cabinet Office to write new guidance to help in this area. The guidance will help make it easier to think about what insurance is (or isn't) needed.

While this is a relatively small piece of work for us, it makes a real difference for others in government. We have spoken to procurement teams across government to ensure the guidance meets their needs. They have shown a keen interest, as this is a complex area where they often need help.

WHAT ABOUT EU EXIT?

At this point you might be asking, what about EU Exit? Will there be areas where GAD's specialist advice can help with the uncertainty here?

We have begun to help in some areas, such as looking at how travel insurance and pension arrangements will be affected. We anticipate that, as the focus of government action moves from short-term planning to longer-term issues, we will have much more to contribute. The changing nature of our relationships with EU countries will affect how we take on and regulate risks to the country and government, and our goal is to be there to help when departments need us.



“

We punch above our weight when it comes to making decisions around risk, uncertainty and financial complexity

”

LOOKING FOR CERTAINTY IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

As well as celebrating our centenary this year, GAD is helping other departments with specialist advice to help make better decisions. We are still evolving – investing in new ways to share our analysis through advanced data analytics and tackling new areas for actuaries such as disaster risk finance and climate change.

With fewer than 200 people in our small department, we punch above our weight when it comes to advice on making decisions around risk, uncertainty and financial complexity. We look forward to the challenges of doing so for the next 100 years.



EU EXIT: HOW DEFRA RAISED ITS GAME

Tamsin Growney, Senior Policy Advisor, EU Exit Overview, Defra



“

Without doubt, preparing for EU Exit has changed our organisation, culturally and structurally, and we are determined to retain the positives of that change

”

It's widely known that Defra is one of the departments most affected by EU Exit. We are also one of the departments that will be most changed by EU Exit. As the extension of Article 50 allows us to take a breath, the department is taking stock of this change, and how to retain and build on our enhanced relationships and new capabilities.

THE SCALE OF THE CHALLENGE

For Defra, the task of preparing to leave the EU was daunting, to say the least. Nearly all of our responsibilities are framed by EU legislation, and a quarter of EU laws apply to our sectors. With policy responsibility for major areas of the UK economy, such as food and chemicals, our EU Exit portfolio is varied and wide. We've needed to establish new arrangements for the import and export of animals, and a new regulatory function for the chemical industry; work on major new policies for agriculture, fisheries and the environment; and execute a formidable legislative programme.

As the possibility of a 'no-deal' exit became palpable, the need to mitigate the risks it presents to businesses, communities and families became urgent.

"[Defra] is a key player within government in negotiations on the withdrawal agreement and the future relationship with the EU, in future trade agreements, border planning and in agreeing future arrangements with the devolved administrations. It is responsible for 43 of the 300-plus Brexit-related workstreams across government. Almost half of these have an IT component, and some require establishing entirely new bodies to take over EU regulatory functions.

BREAKING NEW GROUND

Given the volume and complexity of what we needed to do, we know that we were as ready as we could have been for a 'no-deal' exit in March or April 2019.

We had built brand-new IT systems to protect UK trade across a range of industries, including animals and animal products, fish, veterinary medicines, and chemicals, including fluorine and ozone-depleting substances. Bucking the trend in large-scale government IT projects, they were all delivered in record time and have received positive feedback from industry, customers and partners.

We broke new ground in terms of how we worked with our business and delivery partners, using agile delivery techniques to overcome unique challenges. Our new digital services, forged in the fire of EU Exit, have taken both our internal digital skills and those of our customers to a new level.

We built a vastly improved project management skillset, running targeted training programmes, as well as establishing and publicising a project delivery community in order to deliver the EU Exit

On top of this, it has to manage a sizeable legislative programme, including two major pieces of new primary legislation on agriculture and fisheries, continue its business as usual, and achieve efficiency savings of £138 million in 2018-19."

Report of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the UK Parliament, May 2018

portfolio. We intend to ensure that this valuable skillset continues to grow as we go forward into the next phase of EU Exit.

We laid 122 statutory instruments in seven months, and completely changed the way we deal with them (previously we had laid 70 to 80 a year). We reprioritised business-as-usual Statutory Instruments (SIs), to make way for EU Exit SIs; worked closely with devolved administrations to clear SIs before they were laid in Parliament; sourced staff from other government departments to ensure we kept up pace and quality; and ran training sessions for policy officials to ensure all understood the parliamentary process. Our secondary legislation team produced centralised core briefing for policy officials to help in the preparation of materials for affirmative debates. And our primary legislation team designed and ran training sessions for policy officials, including mock debates.

BUILDING TRADE CAPABILITY

Together with Whitehall colleagues, we have sought to position the UK economy on the front foot by building trade capability. Over the past two years we have created the Defra Trade Cadre, a network of almost 500 people whose work involves trade in some way. We work really closely with the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office Trade Faculty to deliver masterclasses and other learning events as part of the new cross-Whitehall International Trade Profession.



Visitors at an event in Shanghai to promote UK food and drink exports

Many Defra trade professionals work in our Bristol and York offices, so we are promoting e-learning. Our learning products – including two new e-learning modules about agriculture, food and trade – are accessed by hundreds of colleagues every month. We've also developed a cross-Whitehall Women in Trade initiative with DIT. This makes the most of the founding of a new profession in Whitehall, encouraging equal opportunity from the start, as well as showing the rest of the world what to expect from the UK on trade policy.

EMERGENCY STAFFING

Building on Defra group expertise and experience in incident response, we stood up an emergency centre. With support from other government departments, as part of impressive cross-departmental collaboration, Defra filled 100 emergency centre roles at pace. We have been able to stand this down quickly and smoothly.

This coalition of staff has left a blueprint for collaborative working that thrives in a fast-paced and rapidly changing environment, and can be stood up again if required.

We benefited from the co-ordinated movement of staff from other government departments into key EU Exit projects, particularly as we increased our focus on 'no-deal' readiness. This showed the Civil Service operating at its best, moving experienced and skilled people to where they were most needed.

Our experience in Defra was that volunteers were highly enthusiastic and capable, and able to add value from the moment they joined. Staff from other government departments were vital in being able to stand up our emergency centre at pace and supported a range of key EU Exit projects.

We've also built a workforce and a leadership cadre with a truly impressive professional range, putting Defra in a good position to meet future challenges.

We are extremely grateful to colleagues across the Civil Service who volunteered to support Defra with our vital no-deal work, and to their home departments who reprioritised work in order to release people. This has been an example of great public service professionalism, and the Civil Service at its best.

Defra Permanent Secretary,
Tamara Finkelstein

HOW WE DID IT

We didn't – and couldn't – do it on our own. The collegiate way in which departments helped us, and in which departments liaised and collaborated, is a fantastic example of the Civil Service working together in the interests of the public. Within Defra, we've identified the key actions that have meant success.

First, we joined up policy with delivery more. Many EU Exit projects have been genuine collaborations between the department and arm's length bodies.

We set up a portfolio management office to monitor, track and report on progress; and manage the flow of statutory instruments.

To improve our project delivery capability, we joined corporate recruitment campaigns – and ran our own – to bring people in, eventually recruiting 450 project delivery professionals. In the meantime, we brought in contractors to help us put in place key governance, planning and processes. We strengthened our Defra Project Delivery Profession through a targeted training programme, an online community hub and the successful launch last year of a new Project Delivery Leadership Academy.

AUDIENCE-FOCUSED APPROACH

We developed an audience-focused approach to our priority business sectors (food and drink, farming, fishing, vets and chemicals) and used many channels and intermediaries to get messages to audiences, tracking our level of engagement. Key stakeholders particularly

welcomed weekly face-to-face engagement with ministers. This fostered frank and pragmatic discussions in a confidential environment. Communications professionals from stakeholder bodies were also immensely helpful in shaping our engagement so that it would land effectively with target audiences. The approach was recognised as best practice in an independent Cabinet Office review.

We set up a scenarios team to identify the plausible scenarios of a no-deal exit and test those scenarios with policy teams; not only to identify the anticipated impacts, but also the potential policy responses and interventions.

The No Deal Policy Playbook contained 32 'issue cards': statements of the key risk, the events that could trigger the risk, and the anticipated impacts. Over 100 potential interventions were identified to mitigate these risks. This represented an enormous amount of information gathered from policy teams and analysed and refined with those teams. As the political context changed, the playbook helped policy teams to reprioritise their intervention options. This work could not have been done without a

genuine partnership between the scenarios team, policy teams and analysts right across the department, all working at pace.

SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

All our achievements are down to our people. We knew we needed to support them well as they delivered for the department. This was partly about ensuring people felt equipped with the skills they needed to play their part – legislative or parliamentary learning, training on incident management and emergency response, or more broadly on leading in an ambiguous environment. It was also about supporting their wellbeing as they weather the pressure, pace and uncertainty.



We engaged with colleagues across the organisation to develop agreed ways of working with each other to maximise collaboration and positive working practices. We encouraged conversations at one-to-one, team, and directorate levels about how people were feeling and how things could be better. We supported individuals and managers with tips, toolkits, training, conversation starters, checklists, and people to talk to. We were also realistic and, recognising that some colleagues need additional support, ensured easy access to coaching and employee assistance support.

DEFRA EU EXIT BEHAVIOURS CHARTER:

- work together to get the job done
- have honest conversations, trust each other and assume positive intent
- take collective responsibility
- be kind and look after our own and each other's wellbeing

This isn't to say that we solved the wellbeing challenge. Preparing for EU Exit has been intense, and stress has been unavoidable. There has been great pride in our successes; and also anxiety and fear of failure. Part of our lessons learned work is to enable people to be honest about the impact this work has had on them, share stories and identify how we can create a working environment that works for everyone.

NOT OVER YET

Defra has stood down emergency operations, as has been done across government. With the Extension of Article 50 to 31 October, the challenge for all government departments is to be ready for a negotiated settlement, while retaining our readiness for no deal. We need to 'be with' the uncertainty for a short period and not rush into the next phase. We need to help people adjust to a slower pace, while maintaining the necessary focus, and to manage expectations and anxiety about what happens next.

Without doubt, preparing for EU Exit has changed our organisation, culturally and structurally, and we are determined to retain the positives of that change. We are engaged in a lessons-learned exercise, collecting reflections, stories and learnings across the organisation, from teams and individuals, to help us understand what these changes mean for the organisation and its people in the longer term. In order to maintain and build on our new capability, we need to maintain morale, and to bottle the team spirit and dedication displayed. And we need to maintain our much-strengthened relationships with our sister departments.

EU Exit has challenged the whole UK Government to do things differently, adapt quickly and invest more in the development of our people, in order to ensure good outcomes, whatever the eventual exit route from the EU. In Defra, our response and learning gained through this period of ambiguity and unprecedented change have helped to develop the way we see our department delivering in the future.



WHAT MAKES FINLAND HAPPY?

Päivi Luostarinen, Ambassador of Finland in the UK
(September 2015 to May 2019)

For the second year in a row, Finland has been ranked as the world's happiest country in the annual UN World Happiness Report. Finland's former Ambassador to the UK argues that her country's consistent good performance in various international rankings stems from its well-functioning public administration, based on values such as equality and transparency.





Päivi Luostarinen

Finland's modern and functional governance model is the result of a long historical development.

The country established its own public administration in 1809, in connection with the transfer from Swedish rule to the Russian Empire as an autonomous Grand Duchy. As a result, by the time Finland acquired its independence, in 1917, it already had a century's experience of running its own administration, and had built long-term links with wider Nordic administrative culture.

At the start of the 20th century, though Finland had its own national economy, currency, parliament, education system and cultural life, it was still one of the poorest and most agrarian countries in Europe. Therefore, the country's transformation from a modest developing economy to one of the world's wealthiest, happiest, modern nations is a great success story.

Finland's reinvention was enabled by a strong societal commitment to equality, a problem-solving mindset, transparency and consensus-based political decision-making, even in times of crisis. It also aimed to provide high-quality education for all.

We are now facing many of the same challenges as other European countries: climate change, demographic change, urbanisation, technological change, falling trust and the risk of growing inequality. However, those same principles continue to form the basis of our society and our public administration. As such, Finland's response has been to work systematically towards equality, while focusing on sustainability and ensuring a secure and stable society.

TRUST KEEPS OUR SOCIETY TOGETHER

Trust counts as important capital in Finnish society. Strong traditions of trust building have helped Finland reach consensus on how to address many major policy challenges in the past. Citizens' confidence in government in Finland is still among the highest of OECD countries, though it has decreased since the financial crisis.

Societal trust in Finland is underpinned by three key elements: equality, education and transparency.

Firstly, simple things like Finns being able to interact directly with one another, and aiming for everyone to have equal opportunities to succeed, are examples of how equality supports trust.

In terms of gender equality, women have long been active members of society. In 1906, Finland was the first country in

the world to grant all women full political rights, including the right to vote and stand for elections. In the new parliament elected in April 2019, 46% of the MPs are women. However, equality goes far beyond issues of gender. It also concerns equality between different socio-economic groups, minority rights and regional equality.

Secondly, an effective and inclusive education system helps the Finnish public to understand and evaluate the decision-making processes, strengthens their media literacy, and enables them to safeguard their rights as citizens. Therefore, the basis of equal opportunities and participation has always been to provide access to high-level education for all.

Thirdly, public administration needs to be open, transparent, inclusive and comprehensible for citizens to trust it. Transparency and openness of information also helps fight corruption, and ensures that citizens and civil society can contribute to the development of society. Free and independent media, and responsible journalism, are also crucial in informing citizens and monitoring how the principle of transparency works in practice.

These elements still require determined, efficient and persistent effort and deliberate decisions as we tackle new and emerging challenges.

Continuing to engage citizens in the ongoing development of society supports trust and confidence. Finland has a strong civil society and a well-anchored tradition of participative decision-making, which includes a wide range of groups, including NGOs and businesses. However, citizen participation remains a challenge – though it must be mentioned that at Finland's parliamentary election this spring, voter turnout was the highest since 1991, at 72%.

One good example of citizen participation has been Finland's sustainable development policy, which has succeeded in involving different societal groups. As a result, sustainable development has become a widely accepted aim. This success is based on a holistic approach and strong co-operation between a variety of different actors.

**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
ENHANCING THE CORE
VALUES - AND CONSTANTLY
IMPROVING ITSELF**

Equality, education and transparency are conspicuous core values in the Finnish Civil Service.

Finland employs a little over 70,000 central government personnel, of whom around 49% are women. In the Finnish Foreign Service, women make up about 45% of ambassadors and over 50% of the 560 diplomats.

Civil servants are well educated. Over 33% of central government personnel have a Master's degree or higher qualification.

Finally, the principle of transparency in Finland goes back to 1766, when Sweden, of which Finland was then part, became the first country in the world to implement an Act on the openness of administration. To ensure a high level of trust, government structures and practices must be known and understandable to citizens.

The Finnish public administration has invested in communication activities including publishing information online, engaging with citizens on social media and encouraging all civil servants to take media training. It has also created participation services and electronic tools to support open discussion of policy issues and how they are to be tackled. Online services are collected under one portal, Demokratia.fi, which also provides up-to-date information on the stages of policy decision-making and law-drafting.

While our core values remain stable, public administration needs to innovate and improve continuously to tackle emerging challenges.

Finland has well-developed research and analysis practices, both to ground new policies in evidence and to continuously analyse whether existing policies are effective and relevant. Research-based experiments are key in innovative public administration. The Government has been promoting an experimental culture, which can promote both efficiency and empowerment. During the past few years, Finland has been experimenting with, for example, basic income, digital solutions and local services.

International co-operation - sharing experiences and learning from each other's expertise - can be key for successfully tackling the challenges we face. Finland and the UK have collaborated successfully in many areas, from gender and human rights issues, to climate and international security - and we should extend this to co-operation in the field of public administration.



“The Government has been promoting an experimental culture, which can promote both efficiency and empowerment”



FINLAND TODAY

- Population: around 5.5 million
- Area: 338,440 km²
- Capital city: Helsinki
- The most stable country in the world, according to the Fragile States Index
- The best governance in the world, according to the Legatum Prosperity Index 2018
- Finns consume more coffee per head than any other nation
- Finland has the third-least corruption in the world, according to the Corruption Perceptions Index
- For the second year in a row, Finland ranked as the happiest nation in the World Happiness Report in 2019
- Has around 188,000 lakes and at least 1.6 million saunas
- Fourth most gender-equal country in the world, according to the World Economic Forum
- Second best country to be a mother, according to Save the Children
- One of the world's most literate nations, and among the most enthusiastic users of public libraries





TOM DODD, BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO FINLAND, SAID:

FINLAND AND THE UK

- Finland and the UK celebrate 100 years of diplomatic relations this year. The UK formally recognised Finland’s independence on 6 May 1919
- Finland and the UK have co-operated closely in international forums, especially on gender, human rights, climate and international security issues
- The UK is Finland’s 7th-biggest trading partner
- Around 5,000 UK nationals live in Finland, and around 25,000 Finns in the UK
- Last year, over 500,000 Britons visited Finland, and over 200,000 Finns visited the UK

The British Embassy in Helsinki is delighted to celebrate the milestone centenary of diplomatic relations throughout 2019. Finland has always been a strong partner for the UK in trade, culture, education, research and on many global issues.

The ties between our countries were first established almost 1,000 years ago, well before Finland joined the EU in 1995, and will continue long after the change in our relationship with the EU through Brexit. The patron saint of Finland was English. Finland’s first factory was founded by a Scot. We have a similar sense of humour and a common national resilience.

The UK and Finland share key values that drive our international vision and domestic agendas: equality of opportunity, a belief in democracy and human rights, the rule of law, and free trade, to name a few. We are both at the forefront of technological and societal invention in meeting the many challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, from climate change, to artificial intelligence and an ageing

population. We continue to stand should-to-shoulder to defend the rules-based international system against all those who would seek to undermine it.

Hundreds of thousands of Britons and Finns have decided to live, study and visit each other’s country over the last decade, and the numbers are growing. These people-to-people connections are our most precious link. The UK will continue to offer friendship and assistance to Finland into the future, including during its forthcoming EU presidency.

FINLAND FOCUSING ON SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable development is both a necessity and an opportunity

Finland is committed to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the UN's 2030 Agenda. This can only be done by co-operating extensively with civil society organisations, companies, educational institutions, research institutes and the public.

Finland's sustainable development approach has succeeded in involving different societal groups, and a recent inquiry found that an ambitious climate policy is widely supported by Finns. Of the respondents, 75% considered climate change mitigation an important goal, and 65% that Finland must continue

efforts to reduce emissions, independent of what other countries are doing. Climate issues were also widely debated in the parliamentary elections in the spring of 2019.

The principles of sustainability and combating climate change must be promoted in all sectors of society but, even more importantly, they need to be applied in practice. Finland has a medium-term climate policy plan to 2030 and an Energy and Climate Strategy, but the Finnish public administration is also committed to playing its part in combating climate change.

The Finnish Government aims, for example, to reduce its carbon footprint by a fifth by 2026. Climate change policy will be one of the key themes when Finland assumes the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in July 2019. And sustainability will be factored into all meeting arrangements, projects and materials.

For the Government's efforts on climate change mitigation to yield results, it is important to ensure that individual citizens have the ability to make climate-friendly choices easily in the course of their everyday lives.

In 2018, the Government launched a new service to help citizens combat climate change and promote sustainable development. By using the Commitment2050 website, anyone can calculate their personal carbon footprint and draw up a personal plan to reduce it. The site has increased citizen's knowledge of their impact on the environment and understanding of the importance of individual choices. It is an innovative way to engage wider society in climate action and implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



MAKING THE CIVIL SERVICE A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

John Manzoni, Chief Executive of the Civil Service, and Permanent Secretary, Cabinet Office



John Manzoni

In April this year, the Reform think tank invited me to speak about Smarter Working in the Civil Service.

The venue for the speech, appropriately, was the BT - formerly the Post Office - Tower. Appropriately, because BT was one of the early advocates and adopters of Smarter Working, and because the tower has additional symbolic relevance. Once the UK's tallest building, it was state of the art in construction techniques, and a flagship for advanced communications, at a time when microwave technology was considered the future of telecoms. But it had to adapt to changes in technology, and did so successfully, becoming, in 2016, the highest building in the world to host an Internet of Things base station.

That's relevant because technology is so influential in the way we work and changes so fast. We have to be alert to

those changes - not just technological, but social and cultural - adjusting to them in how we think about our workplaces, if we are to function at our best.

WORK IS ABOUT WHAT YOU DO

But how does Smarter Working contribute to our becoming a 21st-century Civil Service?

A central principle of Smarter Working is pretty simple - it says that work is really about what you do, not where you do it. It's about the quality and effectiveness of the outcomes.

For the public sector, that means finding new and better ways of designing and delivering public services that are focused on what citizens need.

We want the Civil Service to be the best place to work. Smarter Working taps into something in the synthesis of people, place and culture that is fundamental for determining the most effective ways of working, and we can use this to create the best outcomes for the citizens we serve.



A happier, more productive workforce and better outcomes are inextricably linked



Smarter Working is also one of the drivers that will attract the civil servants of the future, because it understands that a happier, more productive workforce and better outcomes are inextricably linked.

CODE OF PRACTICE

How are we embedding Smarter Working in the Civil Service? And what's the evidence that it delivers results in: better work/life balance for our employees, with advantages for recruitment and retention; greater openness to diversity; better mental and physical health; and more effective use of property?

Government has pulled together best practice and evidence into a national standard, PAS3000, a Code of Practice for organisations in all sectors. And our most recent Government Estate Strategy goes deeper than just reducing our estates footprint and saving money – it enshrines the Smarter Working principles.

Part of that strategy is to baseline against the Smarter Working PAS 3000 standard. It identified 18 departments with established Smarter Working programmes, with 7 more already showing as mature.

And we've seen a link between departments with Smarter Working programmes and increased staff satisfaction.

STAFF SATISFACTION

- After the Home Office's recent workspace redesign, which introduced a desk ratio of 1 to every 2 members of staff, the staff survey showed a 4% increase in employees feeling they have the right tools to do their job.
- After Ofgem moved into the new Government Hub in Canary Wharf - designed to Smarter Working standards - survey results showed a 3% rise in teams recommending Ofgem as a great place to work.
- DCMS met the challenge of a 300% increase in staff by redesigning their existing workspace. With only a 20% increase in square footage, the department delivered a 200% increase in 'places to sit', and an annual saving of £3 million.
- The MOD's Defence Infrastructure Organisation reduced its head office footprint by over 50%, staff travel by 20%, and improved the success of recruitment campaigns by being able to target a wider pool of applicants.
- A Welsh Government Smarter Working pilot in Merthyr Tydfil resulted in the highest levels of staff engagement across the Civil Service, with staff reporting reduced stress levels.



NEW CAREER PATHS

Of course, the physical environment helps people feel comfortable at work and perform better. But we are also looking at how we achieve the right mix of skills in the Civil Service. This is necessary to refocus our efforts on delivery, complementing traditional strengths in policy-making - and it represents a fundamental shift in the balance of skills and experience in civil servants.

To achieve this we're laying down new career paths that flow from the specialist professions and give more opportunities for civil servants to acquire depth of professional expertise.

We want young people entering the Civil Service to see a way ahead to learn the skills they need, accumulate deeper experience and build a career in their chosen profession. We can certainly offer that experience, because we do more commercial deals, more infrastructure, more communications - more of pretty much everything - than any other employer.

We're making a complementary change in how we reward our people, with flexible remuneration structures that recognise specialist paths.

Through the functions and specialist professions, we are stitching into the fabric of every department the professional expertise we need in vital disciplines, from finance, to digital, to commercial, project delivery and human resources.

To reflect this change, we are taking a broader and more inclusive approach to all our recruitment and internal promotion, with Success Profiles. This moves us away from an overreliance on basic competencies. These still matter, but we are looking at the full picture of what candidates can bring to the job - their track record, technical ability, behaviours and values. For the leaders of the future, this means confidence beyond their immediate profession, and a

preference for collaborative working across boundaries.

GOVERNMENT HUBS

We also need to find ways of making it easier to collaborate across the silos that exist in our organisation.

Part of the solution is to accommodate teams from different departments in a single space, as we're doing with the UK-wide network of Government Hubs. Co-location in these modern workspaces, with up-to-date technology, encourages collaboration and a combined response to the needs of users, while at the same time offering broader career opportunities for our workforce.

Some 8,000 civil servants already enjoy these benefits in the Croydon and Canary Wharf hubs. Another 12 are in delivery for a further 48,000 civil servants, with plans for more across the UK. And that means being more widely dispersed and not so disproportionately located in London and the South East.

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES

The Places for Growth programme is central to the long-term goal of taking departments, agencies and other public sector bodies closer to the people they serve. This means creating more senior roles - and career paths - beyond the areas where historically senior civil servants have been concentrated. This will allow us both to access and support local talent and better connect with communities.

This work is already progressing: in Leeds, with the Department of Health & Social Care; in Birmingham, growing our transport-focused presence; and in Manchester, capitalising on its established media hub.

The Government Estate Strategy embraces all of this - it reflects our ambition to ensure that public services better meet customers' needs; it generates more land for

housing; and it supports regional growth and opportunities, while ensuring we optimise efficiency across our estate.

BECOMING THE MOST INCLUSIVE EMPLOYER

But to fully connect with the people of this country, the Civil Service has to reflect communities in all their diversity.

Diversity is at record levels: 53.9% of civil servants are women; 12% are from ethnic minorities; and 10% have a disability. 44.2% of senior civil servants are women. For ethnic minorities and people with a disability, across the whole

To fully connect with the people of this country, we have to reflect communities in all their diversity



workforce and at senior levels, Civil Service diversity has risen consistently since 2010 and today stands at record levels.

This is great progress, but we need to do more to realise our ambition of being the UK's most inclusive employer by 2020.

Inclusion is more difficult to measure. We're working with other employers and the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development to agree a new measurement framework.

However, the latest People Survey results relating to inclusion show that how staff feel they are treated is at an all-time high (78%); and responses to a new question show 75% feel their organisation is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workspace.

How and where we work, our connection with communities and how citizens experience our services, are underpinned and enabled by technology.

You can now check the performance of approaching 800 services online, from high-volume services like the vehicle tax checks by individuals, and the multi-million State Pension claims and passport applications, down to niche ones, like import licence applications for pets and rare birds.

Technology is also driving modernisation in the benefits system, with Universal Credit;

and the Justice system, through the Courts Transformation Programme, to name just two. The next step is to apply technology to the maximum in internal processes.

We have started to apply robotic process automation (RPA), but so far in only a few places.

HMRC is the main early adopter of RPA in government, using it for processes associated with student loans, the tax self assessment dashboard, the tax credit digital service. Automated services like employer registration reduce processing costs by around 80%. And employers who register with HMRC to start paying staff receive confirmation three times faster than before.

We plan to accelerate our use of RPA, exploiting the potential for better, more efficient, and more accurate service delivery, while taking advantage of the opportunity to deploy employees into more customer-facing work.

FUNDAMENTAL TRANSFORMATION

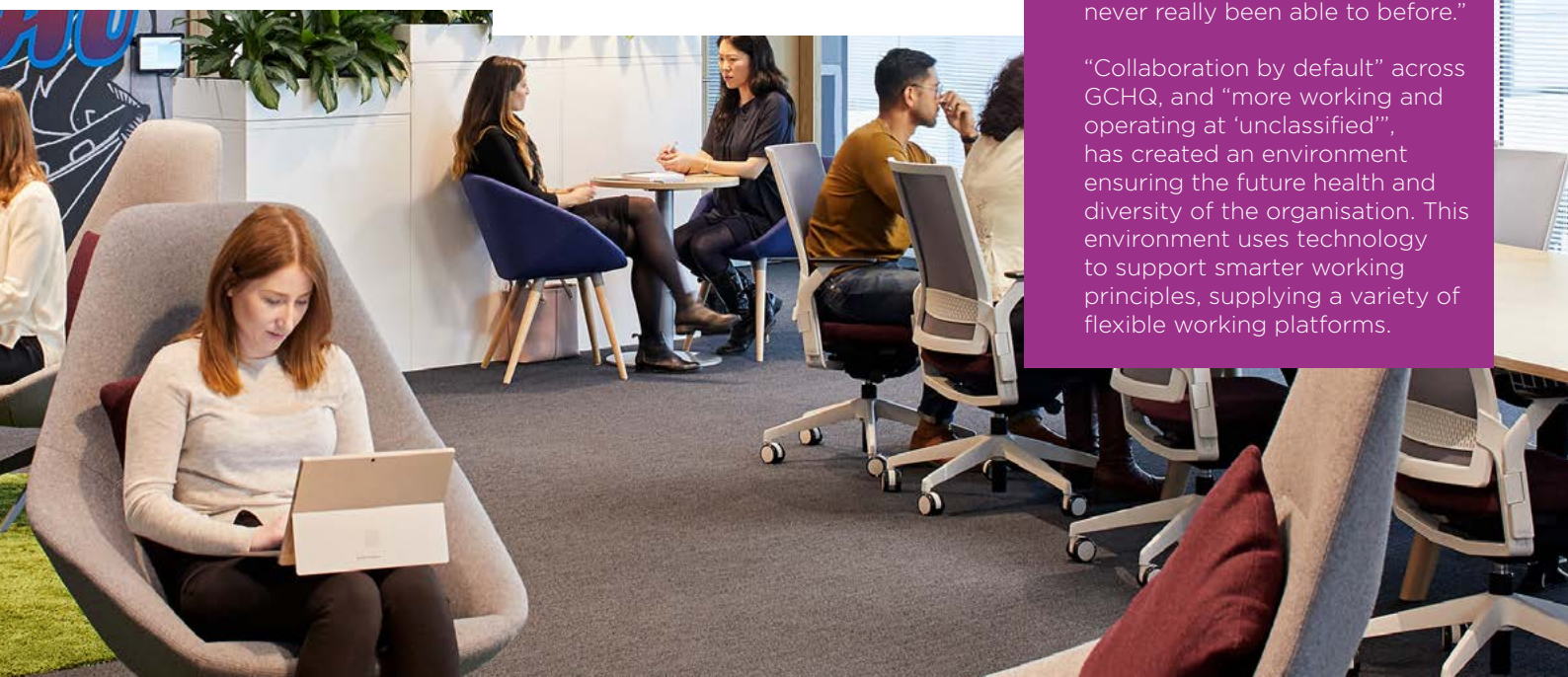
These developments in how we leverage the elements of Smarter Working - the combination of people, place and culture - to deliver better outcomes for the public we serve, amount to a fundamental transformation in our working practices, skills and capability, leadership, and culture. They sum up our progress towards becoming A Brilliant Civil Service.

We are not there yet. And we should treat exceptional demands, including preparations for EU Exit, as accelerants to greater efficiency and effectiveness of the sort that Smarter Working enables - the sort of improvements necessary if we are to tackle not only EU Exit, but everything required of us in the day-to-day running of government and public services.

REACTIONS TO SMARTER WORKING

- Tricia Jakeman, of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), which won the award for Corporate Leadership in the 2019 Smarter Working Awards, said: "I had an email from a member of our wider DIO organisation last week, who unfortunately has been through some awful circumstances, and she wrote to me, 'I feel so fortunate to work for an organisation where the leadership puts people first and can be flexible in their approach.'"
- Alistair, a spokesperson for GCHQ, which won the Smarter Working 2019 Award for Technology, said: "GCHQ makes a big thing of neurodiversity in our recruitment, because one of the things we say is that GCHQ's success depends on great minds not thinking alike. And some of those people really don't like looking at other people in the eye; and those people can engage on a level playing field with everybody else [with Smarter Working], which they've never really been able to before."

"Collaboration by default" across GCHQ, and "more working and operating at 'unclassified'", has created an environment ensuring the future health and diversity of the organisation. This environment uses technology to support smarter working principles, supplying a variety of flexible working platforms.



AN INTERVIEW WITH **ANTONIA ROMEO,** PERMANENT SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE



HOW IS DIT SHAPING THE UK'S ROLE IN THE WORLD AND WHAT IS IT DOING THAT WASN'T DONE BEFORE?

DIT will be three years old this summer. We were set up in 2016 with a remit covering all trade and investment promotion, trade policy, opening up international markets and championing free trade around the world. As well as meaning we have a Secretary of State who is focusing solely on global trade, it also means for the first time we have a department that brings together both a network across the UK and a network across the world, joining up exporters and investors with opportunities end to end.

It also means that we have, in one department, the ability to talk to business, and to use that feedback directly to influence policy. For example, we can align our trade policy with what business wants and needs. The key thing is, as we are opening up markets overseas, that we only open up markets where British business will benefit from that market access.

We provide a full range of services on trade: we can do government-to-government intervention at the top level, and provide government solutions to help small and medium-size businesses. We essentially act as a joint venture with business, and we open markets for business to trade through. That's what it's all about – real exports, creating real jobs and lower prices for consumers.

DO YOU THINK THERE IS AN AWAKENING GOING ON IN THE UK? SOME BUSINESSES ARE STARTING TO SEE THAT THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES OUT THERE. HOW CAN WE ENCOURAGE PEOPLE WHO DON'T SEE THEMSELVES AS EXPORTERS, BUT DO HAVE THE POTENTIAL?

'Encourage' is one of the strands of our Export Strategy, which has the ambition to increase the amount of GDP that comes from exports to 35%. We do need both to encourage more companies to export, and also make it easier for them to export through improved market access. We also need to focus on those companies that just want to grow, no matter where they are selling their products. That's why we also work with intermediaries, like marketplaces, where a company can sell its products in the marketplace, no matter if it's to China, Latin America or Bournemouth.

COULD YOU TAKE US THROUGH THE JOURNEY OF DIT, FROM ITS CREATION TO NOW?

The department was created following the EU Exit referendum in 2016. Essentially, there were four components of the department: the organisation UK Trade & Investment (UKTI); a small group of about 40 doing trade policy in what was formerly the Business, Innovation and Skills department; the GREAT campaign; and UK Export Finance.

I started in this new job in March 2017. The story of my first 18 months was building up the leadership and capability of the department, working with the brilliant team in place.

I had three priorities on day one: work with the ministers on setting the strategy; developing the leadership capability to deliver it; and re-aligning the department to prepare for the challenge ahead.

My particular focus was on building capability, both on trade policy and leadership. We brought in Crawford Falconer, DIT's Second Permanent

Secretary and Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser; three new Directors-General; and appointed nine 'Her Majesty's Trade Commissioners' [HMTCs] across the world, leading on all trade, investment and trade policy in-market. We also built up our DIT trade policy capability to 500-strong (from 40), and created a Global Strategy Directorate to help align our prosperity work with wider global security and stability activity.

Another crucial element of our approach is 'One DIT'. Our USP is the ability to join up an exporter in Birmingham with an export opportunity in Canada. To do that, you need a system that functions from end to end. This is partly about how people work together, designing the digital ability for people to communicate better, no matter where they are based. But it is mostly about the culture: we consider collaboration – the spirit of working together – a crucial part of our culture in DIT.

Overall, we've gone from about 2,500 to 3,800 people over three years. I'm really proud of what we've done as a team.

TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT HOW YOUR EXPERIENCE INFORMS WHAT YOU ARE DOING HERE, AT DIT

I have been involved in quite a few machinery-of-government changes during my 19 years in the Civil Service. I was Principal Private Secretary at the Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Ministry of Justice was created from our merger with part of the Home Office. I had seen a few times what worked and what didn't in various government departments. And prior to that, in my early career in the private sector, I worked on several best-practice mergers and integration, particularly in financial services.

The future economy is increasingly an international economy. We have got to understand what it means to trade in the world, building up a full suite of tools to promote global Britain

Getting it right isn't an enigma. There are known things that make a success in delivering change. In particular, in bringing a new organisation together, setting the culture is the most important thing. There are also a lot of processes to get right. And much of it is about leadership. The first thing I focused on was building the senior leadership of the department, and working together in our Executive Committee and Directors group. We now have a lot of great leadership and development initiatives, many of which have come from building the right leadership cadre.

I often say DIT is a joint venture with business. We have a large number of colleagues recruited from the private sector, particularly in our sector teams. If you want to talk to business, you need people who really understand business. Nothing we do on trade is going to make a difference to the real economy unless a business decides to invest or export as a result of a change in trade policy. To do that, we need to have a strong relationship with business and understand what businesses really want. Business is enthusiastic to have a department dedicated to helping it invest and trade, and it's important there is join-up.



THIS IS A DEPARTMENT THAT IS ALL ABOUT THE FUTURE. YOU HAVE CREATED A WHOLE NEW INTERNATIONAL TRADE PROFESSION AS WELL. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THAT?

The International Trade Profession, which is led by Crawford [Falconer], was launched in May 2018 and goes much wider than just DIT. It now includes more than 2,800 people, from across Whitehall.

It is the first time in 40 years that we in the UK are going to be negotiating our own independent trade policy. Creating the International Trade Profession is about building up the muscle that will allow us to open up markets and make a success of these negotiations. This is completely new. We used to rely on the EU to do it. Now, we are going to have to be very effective in negotiating our own agreements. The

new profession aims to raise the skills of those working and aspiring to work in international trade, by providing innovative



I've put inclusion at the heart of our vision. I want DIT to be the most inclusive department in Whitehall



learning and development, and training opportunities including negotiation simulations.

WHAT ABOUT JOINT WORKING IN WHITEHALL?

DIT is a department that will succeed only if we collaborate across Whitehall. We work very closely with a range of departments, from HMT, BEIS, DCMS and DEXEU, to DfID and FCO overseas, in order to deliver the Government's trade agenda.

The future economy is increasingly an international economy. We have got to understand what it means to trade in the world, building up a full suite of tools we have across the whole of government, to promote global Britain, and project the



I've put inclusion at the heart of our mission, and the 'DIT Spirit' – 'Expert, Enterprising, Engaged and Inclusive'. I want DIT to be the most inclusive department in Whitehall. To do this I have shamelessly stolen diversity and inclusion best practice that I have seen work in other departments. One of the main success factors is for the leadership to talk about inclusion and its importance to the mission. I believe that if you're the leader and you talk about something, it sends a strong signal that shows how important it is to you and the organisation.

We have 12 diversity networks, which are all staff-run. We focus on celebrating staff successes, but also talk about areas where we need to improve. I am also Gender Champion in the Civil Service, a role I recently took over from Melanie Dawes [Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government].



We are planning [for Brexit] all the time, for multiple scenarios. We will be ready when we leave the EU, no matter when it comes



In DIT's Women's Network, we talk a lot about the 'transition blackhole', which is the transition between a long period of leave, such as maternity leave, and being back at work after that leave. On disability, we talk about things like workplace adjustments, which are so important, and making sure people know where they need to go. We are running specific targeted actions and

UK overseas. This includes using 'Fusion' principles and the 'Strategic Framework', across the whole of Whitehall in support of Government trade objectives.

HOW IS THE DEPARTMENT APPROACHING ISSUES OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION?

This is an area where I think Whitehall is best in class. The Civil Service's aspiration and ambition to be the most diverse and inclusive organisation in the country by 2020 is a great ambition, and one I think we will achieve.



networks through the different parts of the organisation, and we actively share best practice between them.

COULD YOU SAY WHY HM TRADE COMMISSIONERS ARE IMPORTANT?

Before DIT existed, in UKTI, there was already a network of excellent people working overseas and talking to business. But we didn't have a regional approach. The HMTCs oversee nine regions across the world, and they have deep expertise in their regions. Each HMTC leads an international network focusing on

economic and commercial issues, and is responsible for trade promotion, export opportunities and investment in their region.

Having nine HMTCs covering the globe is great, as you can bring them all into one room, around one table, and have a great and insightful conversation on business issues across the world. The regional approach allows this depth of knowledge at that critical strategic level.

The appointment of HMTCs shows DIT's commitment to its overseas operations and the importance of Britain's international trade and economic relationships. British businesses say they love the model.

IS DIT READY FOR A NO-DEAL BREXIT?

We are planning all the time, for multiple scenarios. We will be ready when we leave the EU, no matter when it comes. If you work in trade negotiations, you are used to operating in both certainty and uncertainty, and using those as part of the approach. Working in uncertain times is in our DNA.





Civil Service

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A Brilliant Civil Service

OGL

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