

CIVIL SERVICE QUARTERLY

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THE CSQ INTERVIEW -
WITH CABINET SECRETARY
AND HEAD OF THE CIVIL SERVICE
SIR MARK SEDWILL

**TEN YEARS OF THE NATIONAL
SECURITY COUNCIL**

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS -
GENERATING INNOVATION
IN SOCIAL POLICY



Civil Service

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EDITORIAL



Welcome to this, the 22nd edition of Civil Service Quarterly, which is also my last as chair of the CSQ Editorial Board.

Regular readers will recall that Civil Service Quarterly was the brainchild of the late Jeremy, Lord Heywood. His vision was of a publication that not only showcased the very best of Civil Service policy-making and analysis, and shared its innovations, but opened it up to challenge and new ideas. In October 2014, having chaired the editorial board for its first five issues, he invited me to take over, from my vantage point as head of the Government Policy Profession. The time is now right for someone else to take the reins, both as head of the profession and chair of the board, and I'm delighted to be passing both batons on to Jonathan Slater, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Education.

Jeremy was a great champion of policy making and I hope that in the seven and a half years I've been Head of Profession, we have moved policy making forward. I am particularly proud of the work we have done to improve the training and development offer for policy making, including the development of our Masters programme with the LSE, and the recent addition of a flexible, modular, postgraduate programme, building to a postgraduate diploma with King's College London. But policy-making has to continuously evolve and improve, and the profession will not only have to step up to new challenges, but also seize the opportunity for how we work,

brought about by advances in science, technology and data.

Honouring Lord Heywood's original conception, this edition of CSQ features a familiar breadth of subject matter, showing policy becoming practice. In each case, it offers an examination of how government is addressing a specific policy-related challenge, while adapting to rapid political, cultural and technological change in the world at large.

This issue opens with a new in-depth interview with Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service Mark Sedwill. Now in post for over a year, he offers his reflections on his combined role and, as Brexit is delivered, he sets out the immediate and long-term challenges he sees for the service and the way it works.

As Darragh McElroy notes, the first responsibility of every government is often seen to be the security of the country and the safety of its citizens. It was only ten years ago that a single, high-powered, central body was given the authority to co-ordinate strategy to ensure that security. Darragh charts the creation of the National Security Council and describes the main challenges it faces today.

A striking development in recent years has been the spread of automated processes to improve the efficiency of both public services and back-office functions. The Department for Education now benefits from the Government Communication Service's very first robot, ARNOLD. You will have to read Gemmaine Walsh's article to discover what that stands for, but ARNOLD is making a huge difference to the speed and effectiveness of communications between DfE and the public.

Fraud is among the commonest crimes, affecting the public sector no less than other parts of the economy. We have looked previously at government initiatives to counter this menace, and the time is right for an update on progress. Mark Cheeseman, Deputy Director of the Counter Fraud Centre of Expertise in Cabinet Office, writes that in

its professionalisation of counter fraud in the public sector, the UK is establishing itself as a world leader.

Shevaun Haviland, from the Government's Business Partnerships Team, explains how building long-term partnerships between business and government can help us to tackle the UK's biggest social and economic challenges, and create a fairer, more inclusive, society.

The funding of research is big business and supports vital innovation in areas from medicine to climate change, and from the arts and humanities to engineering. To maintain the UK's reputation for excellence and effectiveness in this field, arrangements for funding previously managed by seven separate UK research councils have been brought together under a single body, UK Research and Innovation. UKRI's Emma Lindsell and

Isobel Stephen describe how this works and the benefits it will bring.

During my seven and a half years as head of the Policy Profession, the training and development of policy professionals to help them shape policy in an increasingly complex world has been a top priority. The introduction of an Executive Masters in Public Policy programme, which the Civil Service co-designed and delivers with the London School of Economics, is a signal innovation, bringing together leading practitioners and academics on key policy challenges. We asked Della McVay, a recent graduate of the programme, to describe her experience and what it has taught her.

Part of Jeremy's thinking in creating Civil Service Quarterly was that, as much as the Civil Service needed to open itself up to new ideas, it also had

much to be proud of and shouldn't be afraid to shout about it. So, I am delighted that, in this, my last edition as chair, we make room to celebrate some of the winners of the 2019 Civil Service Awards and their brilliant work.

It has been a pleasure and honour to chair the Civil Service Quarterly Board and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank both my fellow board members and the excellent team at the Cabinet Office who do the hard work of putting Civil Service Quarterly together. The best bit of chairing the board is that you get to learn about the amazing work that different parts of the Civil Service do, and I will look forward to continuing to read about them in future editions of Civil Service Quarterly.

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

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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 frontline staff and respond to new challenges with innovation and boldness.

Any civil servant can write for Civil Service Quarterly – contact
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THE CSQ INTERVIEW: SIR MARK SEDWILL

Cabinet Secretary and
Head of the Civil Service

A photograph of Sir Mark Sedwill, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service, speaking at a table. He is wearing a light-colored striped shirt and a dark tie. His hands are raised in a gesture as he speaks. The background is a blurred indoor setting, likely a meeting room or a formal dining area.

“The most impressive thing I’ve seen is that public trust in the Civil Service continues to rise and is now at record levels”

OVER A YEAR SINCE YOUR APPOINTMENT, WHAT ARE YOUR PRINCIPAL REFLECTIONS ON YOUR ROLE AND HOW THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF IT INTERSECT?

It has certainly been an extraordinary last 12 months. I have one role that combines being Head of the Civil Service and National Security Adviser, as well as Cabinet Secretary. I have found that the issues I deal with engage at least two of those at any one time.

To give an example, one thing we needed to do when Boris Johnson became Prime Minister was to supercharge the work on no-deal planning, which was essential because of the commitment to leave, one way or the other. That required a great deal of work in Cabinet, with ministers and others, to make sure they really understood the issues, and could focus on the big decisions they needed to take.

At the same time, we had the duty of communicating with the Civil Service. First, to engage the energy and enthusiasm of those people working directly on the preparatory work – quite a large group of people in itself. And then to say to the wider Civil Service – the huge majority, who deal daily with issues in social care, immigration and all the other frontline services – to be aware that, while many of their colleagues were working flat out on EU Exit, we relied on them to keep going with their own vital work.

WHAT HAS MOST IMPRESSED YOU ABOUT THE CIVIL SERVICE RESPONSE TO YOUR FOCUS ON TEAMWORK, IMPACT AND TRUST AND THE CHALLENGES WE HAVE FACED IN THE LAST YEAR?

I think those messages have landed pretty well. I was trying to find a way of describing those priorities that was meaningful and felt relevant, whether I was talking to a Permanent Secretary in Whitehall, or to a civil servant on the front line in any and every part of the country.

In many ways the most impressive thing I've seen is that public trust in the Civil Service continues to rise and is now at record levels – particularly impressive when the Civil Service has sometimes been drawn into the political debate.

That's probably the most pleasing aspect, and is, I believe, down to two things.

One is, when we've been dealing with the issues in the headlines, we've absolutely maintained those core values of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity. Second – and perhaps even more importantly – the fact that, every day, civil servants get on with the job of running frontline public services and looking after their fellow citizens. And they do it brilliantly – often in a way summed up by a word that doesn't appear in the formal values but which is absolutely critical to how public servants operate, with 'compassion'.

For most of the civil servants dealing with the public, compassion is at least as important as those central values. I think that's the thing that I've seen most. And, of course, it has an impact – one that's most effectively delivered when people are operating effectively as part of a team.

THERE HAS BEEN SOME MEDIA REPORTING AROUND CIVIL SERVICE IMPARTIALITY. HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?

It's frustrating, but we can't be completely immune from the wider public and political debate. One of the things I said in a message across the Civil Service was that Brexit is a polarising issue. That is a fact. It's not like other political issues. It wasn't that people agreed or disagreed about, say, the role of the state in the economy, where people have lots of different views. It was a binary proposition. And, as I said at the time, civil servants, as citizens, weren't immune from that.

Inevitably, every institution was being drawn into the debate. It would have been virtually impossible for the Civil Service – particularly in Whitehall – when the country's going through something that significant, and the political temperature is that high, not to find ourselves drawn in – even if we didn't step into the debate ourselves.

However, I do believe the wider Civil Service was largely immune from it. Whitehall is probably only 10% of the Civil Service organisation.

It is frustrating to hear civil servants' impartiality being questioned, because I simply don't think it's true. I genuinely don't know – and don't need to know – how civil servants voted in the referendum. Some of our most talented people, at all grades, of all ages, from all parts of the country, absolutely threw themselves into the Brexit project, supporting the Government and delivering its policy, whether it was in DExEU, in the teams in the Cabinet Office, or now in the teams in No.10. So, in the end you think, well, that's what's real and important.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE BIG CHALLENGES FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE OVER THE NEXT PERIOD?

Our challenges, in a sense, are the same ones the Government faces. We now have a government with a strong majority to deliver Brexit. So our priorities and challenges are about helping the Government deliver on its agenda more broadly, through the Brexit inflection point. But there's also the considerable economic reorientation as we change our trading relationship with the EU and build new trading relationships with other big countries and markets. It's a significant economic challenge for the whole country, and we have to help businesses and citizens navigate their way through it.

Then, we have the commitments on climate action: Net Zero carbon by 2050, but also climate adaptation. Huge programmes will be required to manage that adaptation, including in infrastructure. It will demand intense engagement with industry and the public, many of whom are already really engaged by the climate change issue and believe in the necessity for action.

We've also got the fourth, technological, industrial revolution and all the changes that's going to bring. We've got dual channel shift within the Civil Service itself and other public services: the digital agenda, delivering more and more services to the bulk of the people in the country through digital means.

And – I mentioned compassion earlier – we need to ensure that we wrap around our services in a more holistic way – particularly the acute services that people in the most challenging circumstances, and those with complex needs, require.

So, we've got to make sure our services and our operating model moves in two directions – these two channel shifts at once. That's a huge transformation programme. It will be part of the Spending Review and we'll need exceptional change leadership. We will also need people whose EQ – their emotional intelligence – is at least as good as their IQ, to deal with those citizens who need our support and are often least equipped to navigate the complexities of state provision.

And, of course, we need people who can deal with the wider global issues that come along. Just consider the last few decades: the fall of the Berlin Wall, 9/11, the Arab Spring – events that essentially defined their decades but weren't anticipated. Part of what the public service must be able to do is adapt to whatever the next big event is – it could be economic, it could be political, it could happen overseas, but we have to be ready.

HOW DO YOU THINK WE CAN BE BETTER ORGANISATIONALLY AND IN THE WAY WE WORK TO MEET THOSE CHALLENGES?

I've talked to the Prime Minister at length about civil and wider public service reform – because it isn't just about the Civil Service, it's broader. And I've discussed the dual channel shift with both him and his advisers. Alongside that are other questions: what is the employment model; what kind of people are we going to need, not now but in 2030? Because we've got to be recruiting now, and attracting, retaining and motivating. How do we shift more of the leadership and the Civil Service away from London, and use the public service as a whole as part of the engine driving the levelling-up agenda around the country.

There was an interesting piece in one of the Sunday newspapers recently from Andy Street and Andy Burnham, the metropolitan mayors of the West Midlands and Greater Manchester, from different parties, essentially talking about the infrastructure programme. The Civil Service needs to be involved in the regeneration of some of the big metropolitan areas. Moving people into hubs is part of that.

We need to be part of a whole range of changes, and the challenge for the Civil Service is to make sure it's fit to play its role in the 2020s and beyond. And we should be leading that effort ourselves, generating our own ideas, to be sure, but also looking internationally at the best practice and asking, what can we learn?

We came top of the International Civil Service Effectiveness Index in 2019, which is very gratifying. But we came top in only one of the index's dozen core indicators. And though we're in the upper quartile of some, in other areas we aren't. So we need to be asking ourselves what we can learn from Finland or Singapore or Canada or elsewhere, about digital delivery or some of the other areas where others do it better.

We need people whose EQ – their emotional intelligence – is at least as good as their IQ, to deal with those citizens who really need our support

HOW DO YOU SEE THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND THE FUSION APPROACH FITTING INTO THAT LONG-TERM AGENDA OF CHALLENGE AND CHANGE?

This is as much about government as the Civil Service per se, but we must be a big part of that agenda.

Essentially, the Strategic Framework is taking some of the lessons we've learnt in National Security, and from countries who do these things really well. New Zealand has pursued reforms of this kind for several years. They established a National Performance Framework, which doesn't just, for example, take data on unemployment, inflation or economic growth, but looks across other areas of government activity and asks: how well are we doing across the board?

The Wellbeing Index introduced under the Cameron government is an example of that approach, but we need to look more broadly. The Strategic Framework is really saying, we have a series of economic goals, set by government. Then we have goals around the wellbeing of the individual citizen. These relate to the inclusiveness of

communities, the safety of individuals, whether they can go about their daily lives in the way that they want and get the education they need, is crime being tackled in their areas, and so on. You have a whole series of issues around security and safety, and around sustainability and the environment, and then a set of issues around the country's role and influence in the world. And what we're saying is, we need to judge how we're doing as a government and as a country, not on purely economic criteria but against those broader measures.

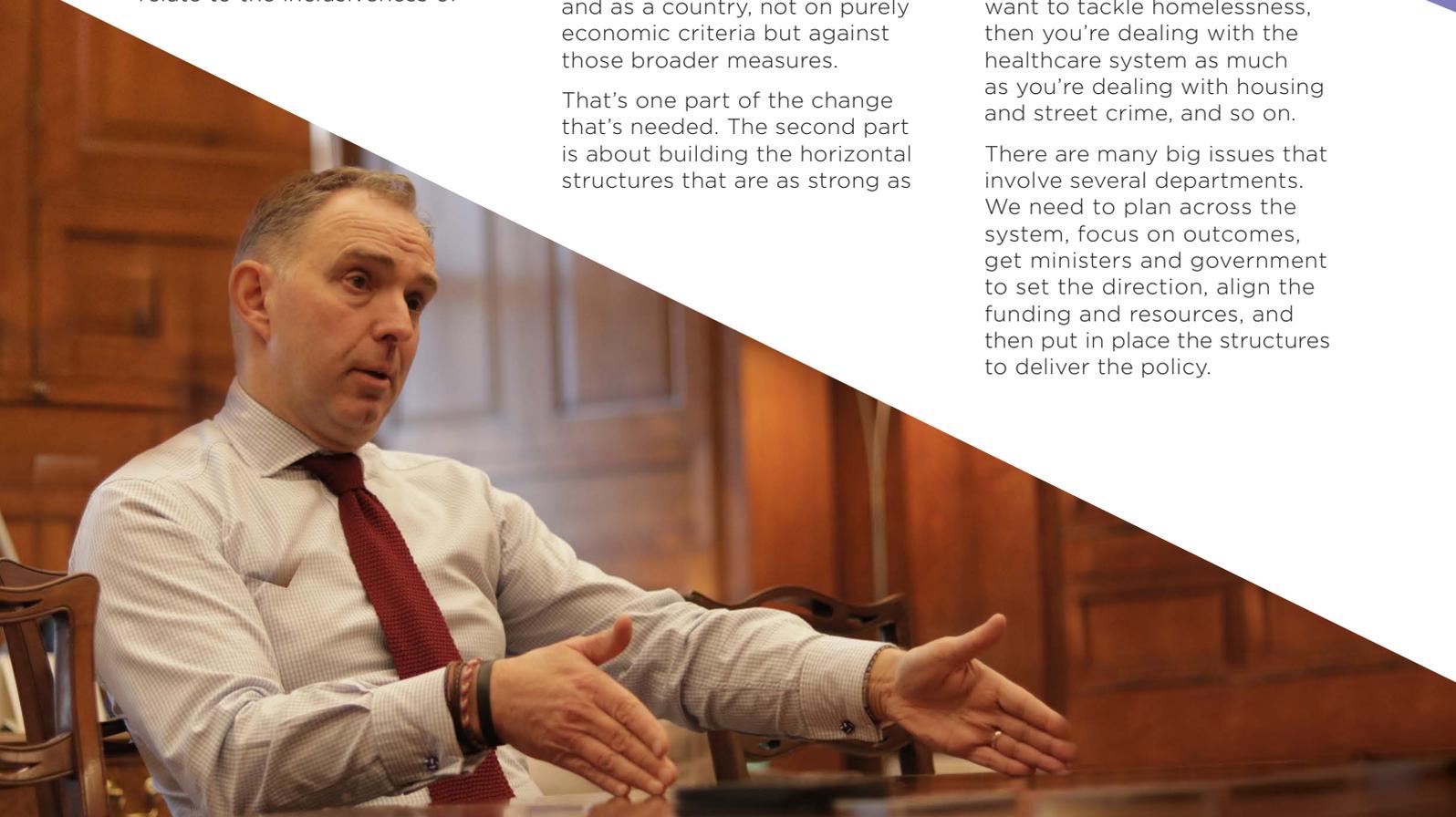
That's one part of the change that's needed. The second part is about building the horizontal structures that are as strong as

the traditional vertical structures of government departments. It's been attempted before, by trying to turn the vertical into the horizontal, and that hasn't worked. It's one of the areas where we need collaborative effort across government. Climate action is probably the biggest single example, but there are others. If you want to cut crime, you need a whole range of social policy actors, as well as the criminal justice system, to do that. If you want to tackle homelessness, then you're dealing with the healthcare system as much as you're dealing with housing and street crime, and so on.

There are many big issues that involve several departments. We need to plan across the system, focus on outcomes, get ministers and government to set the direction, align the funding and resources, and then put in place the structures to deliver the policy.



The Strategic Framework is saying... we need to judge how we're doing as a government and as a country, not on purely economic criteria but against broader measures



This doesn't apply universally. Some things are better done by individual departments. But some things need to be done in a cross-cutting way. That's what that part of a fusion approach is about – doing that in a purposeful way, bringing programme and campaign disciplines, all of our capabilities, to bear.

It's then about system leadership to deliver, and that's about ensuring that we are engaging the wider public service, as well as the private and third sectors.

I have noticed that, if you get a group of public servants together from different organisations, and create the conditions for them to work as a team, across boundaries, where their expertise is respected, on a common problem – let's say, the rehabilitation of offenders – they just love doing it. I saw this borne out recently, when the Public Service Leadership Group, convened by Cabinet Office, brought together senior civil servants from different disciplines, local authority officials, and representatives of other public sector bodies from across the country, at Wormwood Scrubs, specifically to address this issue.

Because most public servants are natural team players, it's not actually about encouraging

them, it's about removing barriers and giving them permission. That's what resetting the relationship between Whitehall, the wider Civil Service and the wider public service is all about.

DOES HOW WE PREPARED FOR BREXIT HAVE ANYTHING TO TEACH US?

Yes, I think it does. If we look at the Brexit operations committee, for example, that group drew upon experience we've had elsewhere – in national security, crisis management, the COBR system, and so on. So, we draw on those and say, we know we do those things really well when reacting to something, and it breaks down the barriers and everyone gets on with it. Acknowledging that, how do we translate that culture, and the underlying systems and structures, into this big project that is Brexit readiness?

That bringing together of experts, ministers and others, in a purposeful way, at a high pace, with actions decided, drawing on operational experience from the areas I mentioned, has been really instructive. It's not appropriate for very long-term, strategic issues, where you're making massive decisions about business cases on infrastructure, say. But it is appropriate to dealing with something as all-encompassing – and

requiring as many different agencies to engage at pace – as Brexit readiness did last year.

CAN WE CONTINUE TO RELY ON THE PUBLIC SERVICE ETHOS TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN CIVIL SERVANTS; AND WHAT CAN WE DO TO REDUCE STAFF MOVEMENT WITHIN AND OUT OF THE SERVICE, WHICH HAS ATTRACTED CRITICISM?

I think the criticism has some point. You can see turnover if, for example, the offices of different departments in the same city pay different rates. And though you see more turnover in Whitehall, again, we mustn't confuse Whitehall, which accounts for only about 10% of the entire workforce, with the Civil Service as a whole. And it's also true that in certain specialisms, people don't tend to move. But that doesn't mean the criticism's not valid. It comes as much from civil servants themselves as from anyone outside.

I think there are structural factors. Pay is clearly one of them. A decade of pay restraint has made it harder and has incentivised some behaviours that are sensible



The public service ethos... that's got to be the core of our offer, always... while being a great all-round employer



for the individual but not in the interests of the organisation as a whole. If the only way of getting a pay increase at your grade is to move departments, or the only way to get promoted is to move jobs, then people will move. There is something about those embedded incentives we need to address.

Personally, as we make the channel shift, I would like to see more processes handled by automation, AI and intelligent software. This means that, overall, we will probably need fewer people. And our turnover means that we can manage that in a smooth way; that we will be able to pay those people who we retain more. It means training them more. It means ensuring, in particular, that where we value EQ as much as IQ, we're really equipping those people to do the job well.

There's also something about whether we genuinely facilitate interchange with the third sector and private sector, or, in effect, say we do but put structural barriers in the way. In my own case, returning after a couple of years away at NATO, I recall feeling that more value could have been applied to the experience I'd gained.

Whether people go out to the private sector or the third sector, we need to get those things right.

We're not likely to compete on pay, particularly in London, with the leading private sector organisations. But other parts of the Civil Service package are absolutely at the top of the employment offer table - on

diversity, on flexible working, on pensions, and job security. People can join the Civil Service and know that, for example, the maternity and paternity leave offers are near or at the very best of any employer in the country.

It's a competitive package. But the fundamental motivation for civil servants is going to be the public service ethos, and doing something that is both worthwhile and really interesting. That's got to be the core of our offer, always, while also being a great all-round employer.

Sometimes, the job is to steady things and keep your head

DO YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BALANCE YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE?

People never believe this, but, no, I really don't.

To be clear, going back to where we started this interview, I've only got one role. It has different facets, but that's true of any big job. And the role of Cabinet Secretary has changed over the years, according to circumstances. Many of my predecessors did all of the things I'm doing - because they didn't have National Security Advisers for most of that time - and were also, for example, Permanent Secretary for the Cabinet Office, running a single big institution.

You just have to manage the job in the way that works best for you. I tend to work long days and a short week. And I don't live in London, so I can get away and be with my family. I think that's so important. We live in a rural area. It's a very different world to metropolitan London, and it gives me a different perspective on some of the issues I'm dealing with. I believe that's part of where I add some value and helps me maintain a balance.

William Hague had a great line on leadership. He said it's about three things: have big ideas

and communicate them; pick a great team and trust them; and stay calm.

The third one I found particularly interesting: staying calm, and projecting that, helps the people around you stay calm. Even neuroscience tells you they perform better as a result. And sometimes the job is to steady things and keep your head.

BECOMING A POLICY ‘MASTER’

Della McVay, Deputy Director for
External Affairs and Partnerships,
Universal Credit Programme, DWP



I can now help
my teams frame
advice to ministers
that genuinely
influences and
challenges policy
development



*Della McVay working
on her master's
in a café in Florence*

The Executive Master of Public Policy (EMPP) qualification offered by the Government Policy Profession is co-designed and delivered by the Civil Service and the London School of Economics. Its aim is to equip talented civil servants to deliver effective policy in an increasingly complex world.

Over a period of 19 months, participants study part-time and attend lectures at the LSE campus. So far, 111 candidates have completed the programme. A fifth cohort of students began their courses in December.

We asked recent graduate Della McVay to give us her reflections on the course.

Writing this on a Sunday afternoon brings to mind when a significant proportion of my weekends was spent writing essays or sitting exams for the EMPP. I have a tenuous claim to fame for writing essays on a plane, on the Trans-Siberian Express and in Italy, Cambodia, Russia and China.

I take huge personal satisfaction from completing the EMPP. I've chosen two areas that I believe had the most transformative effect in making me a more confident leader and ready to take on new challenges.

CONFIDENCE IN ENGAGING WITH EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

Seeking this was one of the key drivers for my applying for the EMPP. It has made me a more intelligent commissioner, consumer and analyst of empirical evidence.

The EMPP international development module helped me to develop a framework for reading academic papers, understanding them and being able to identify problems in the evidence. I can now work out the motivation, conceptual structure, identifying assumptions, and effects of research behind a policy, its implications and suitability for wider implementation.

Further, I recognise that you don't need to be an expert in a particular field to be an effective policy-maker, and believe that the empirical skills I have gained would enable me to work effectively in any policy role, including my aspiration to work in international policy-making.

I was proudest of my essay for the empirical methods class, and of creating a Randomised Control Trial research design.

I also used this work to challenge arguments for legislation requiring a policy intervention in my own work area. I suspected this intervention would be both costly and not beneficial to an individual's welfare, and helped to design a trial of its effectiveness. Building an evidence base put a persuasive counter-argument and created the possibility of better outcomes through alternative interventions.

CONFIDENCE IN PRESENTING EVIDENCE AND MAKING COMPELLING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

I realised that a humanities degree and a decade as a civil servant had led to some bad habits: particularly, too much focus on navigating the political landscape, and a misconception of Civil Service neutrality.

A large part of my role had been to smooth the passage of policies already decided, rather than helping to shape new ones and challenge those presented to us by ministers. I'm here to help ministers achieve their goals, but this does not mean my advice should be overly safe.

My approach had been to provide supporting evidence for all sides of an argument. This objectivity, laudable in itself, lacked rigour and failed to present ministers with clear, workable policy choices.

The EMPP has given me the confidence and skills to source evidence, analyse it, consider the policy implications and craft a paper that is neutral

but compelling in the options it offers. I can now help my teams frame advice to ministers that genuinely influences and challenges policy development, rather than simply offering implementation advice. It has also given me the conviction to challenge evidence that is misleading or flawed in its methodology.

FOUR TIPS FOR NEGOTIATING THE EMPP

- The first few months are the toughest. Block out as much time as you can and try not to leave essay writing until the last minute, otherwise your grades (and your holidays) will suffer.
- Get to grips with the structure of effective essay writing as soon as possible. Narrow your focus in essays as much as possible. Choose something that interests you and that you can argue strongly. Even better, if you can, form an argument against some of the academic material by using examples from your work.
- Don't be scared to test ideas with the academic staff. It can be difficult to understand where you're not quite hitting the mark. So, ask for more feedback to help you adapt to the very specific style expected at LSE.
- Participate as fully as possible. This is an incredible opportunity, not just to learn new things but to meet new people with different perspectives and make connections, including with other civil servants and the cohort of predominantly international students on the sister programme (Executive Master of Public Administration)

For more information, please email: policy.profession@policyprofession.gov.uk

10 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Darragh McElroy, Deputy Director,
National Security Communications



UK troops leaving Afghanistan
Photo: © Crown Copyright
www.defenceimages.co.uk

The assertion that keeping the country safe and secure is the first priority of any government has been a commonplace of political discourse for generations. Yet it was only ten years ago that a Prime Minister, David Cameron, took the significant step of establishing a powerful body responsible for co-ordinating the responses to any dangers that British citizens might face.

Successive premiers had attempted to re-engineer the machinery of central government, in pursuit of the best arrangement of resources and personnel to meet the threats facing the UK. When first mooted by Cameron and a group of his policy advisers (including Baroness Pauline Neville-Jones, a former head of the Joint Intelligence Committee) the idea of a central body to co-ordinate all the power a PM can summon to protect national security was met with cynicism in certain quarters. One official commented that the idea of “instant cross-Whitehall coordination in a crisis was a dream, and would remain one”.

TERROR-RELATED THREATS

In 2010, the then PM presided over the first meeting of the National Security Council (NSC), appointing the highly regarded Sir Peter Ricketts, then Permanent Undersecretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to the new role of National Security Adviser (NSA), based in the Cabinet Office.

The first item on the NSA’s agenda, unsurprisingly, was to review terror-related threats to the British mainland, followed by a discussion about the stability of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Around the table were a cast of political heavyweights, the Chancellor, the Foreign Secretary, the Home Secretary and the International Development Secretary.

However, the then PM made it clear that the council would be able to summon to its weekly meetings virtually anyone qualified to contribute to its purpose of defending the country.

That would, of course, include representatives of the Armed Forces and the heads of the main intelligence agencies, MI5, MI6, GCHQ and DI (Defence Intelligence), who could share the latest reports with ministers, all of whom would have signed the Official Secrets Act. Not that even that level of security could prevent alleged loose talk – in April 2019 an inquiry was ordered into the leaking to the Daily Telegraph of a decision by the NSC to allow Chinese tech giant Huawei to bid for ‘non-core’ elements of the prospective 5G mobile communications network.

One official commented that the idea of ‘instant cross-Whitehall co-ordination in a crisis was a dream, and would remain one’

CORE PRINCIPLES

At the time, the creation of the NSC was supported by the Labour Party, with the Shadow Defence Secretary, Vernon Coaker, stating: “we support its foundation... and it is vital that we see the NSC deliver the long-term strategic direction for which it is established.”

From its first meeting, the NSC set about establishing a national security strategy that enshrined three core principles: the protection of the citizens of the UK; protection of its global influence; and the promotion of its prosperity.

A decade later, the NSC – and the supporting National Security Secretariat (NSSec) – is viewed as the perfect case study of how, within an enviably short time from concept to implementation, and in a constantly changing political climate, the centre of government can adapt to meet its responsibilities and effectively coordinate a key area of policy.

BRINGING CLARITY

One former senior intelligence official has described the creation of the NSC as “like the lights coming on; because it was very difficult under the previous arrangements to necessarily detect what decisions, if any decisions, were being taken on a number of issues, and the thinking that led to those decisions was even more opaque.”

A Civil Service report on the NSC found that, “in terms of regularity of process, frequency of high-level ministerial and official attendance at meetings, and focused secretariat support, it has brought greater clarity to a broad range of national security policy issues.” The review concluded: “The NSC demonstrates the potential benefits of a ‘strong grip’ at the centre and the ‘halo effect’ of consistent prime ministerial investment of time and effort in committee work.”

It is widely acknowledged that the NSC owes its success, in no small part, to the quality of its National Security Advisers, beginning with Sir Peter (now, Lord) Ricketts, and continuing with Sir Kim Darroch and the present NSA, Sir Mark Sedwill, who is also Cabinet Secretary.

EXPERIMENT AND RECALIBRATION

Before Cameron’s initiative, his predecessors had grappled for over a century with similar problems of security coordination. Several had experimented with different combinations of senior official appointments to deal with the responsibilities of national security (which, broadly, encompass defence, intelligence, foreign affairs, internal security and civil contingencies).

Long-serving prime ministers, like Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair, had begun to favour smaller, less formal, circles of national security advice and decision-making. For each premier, the Civil Service had to be ready to recalibrate arrangements for providing the necessary support, and to stand its ground in arguing that each step away from formal committee processes could jeopardise clarity and transparency within government.

Today’s NSC, aided by its well-resourced secretariat, is a world away from how national security was handled a century or so ago, when it was merely an item to be raised at Cabinet meetings. In their early days, such gatherings functioned without minutes and could be long, rambling affairs, ministers departing with little idea of what had been decided. Their private secretaries would then have to correspond in an attempt to clarify the details. For example, an appeal to one of Gladstone’s secretaries stated that ‘there must have been some decision... My Chief has told me to ask you what the devil was decided, for he be damned if he knows.’

“The national security strategy... enshrined three core principles: protection of the citizens of the UK; protection of its global influence; and promotion of its prosperity”

SEPARATION OF POLICY

Arthur Balfour was the first PM to suggest that the areas of foreign and defence policy should be treated separately from domestic matters at Cabinet. In 1904, he formed the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID), a precursor to the NSC. The secretariat of the CID, under Sir Maurice Hankey, provided the basis of the Cabinet Office, which was created in December 1916 - with Hankey as the first Cabinet Secretary - to facilitate collective Cabinet decision-making. Hankey held both secretaryships until 1938.

Having been tweaked by subsequent PMs, including Asquith and Lloyd George, the CID continued to develop until the outbreak of war in 1939, eventually becoming known as, simply, the Defence Committee. As with the NSC today, other ministers attended these meetings at the prime minister's behest, as appropriate to the subjects under discussion.

Incidentally, in terms that may still resonate today, the CID's first head, Sir George Clarke, recognised the challenges to any prime ministerial adviser facing competing departmental centres of power and influence. He lamented having to operate by "the gentle pulling of strings", rather than "being able to speak with power", given his status as a "mere" civil servant.

Sir Maurice Hankey, from 1916 to 1938, secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence and Cabinet Secretary (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)



Today's NSC is a world away from how national security was handled a century or so ago, when it was merely an item raised at Cabinet meetings





“

Ultimately, the NSC will be judged on whether it has improved the effectiveness of national security decision-making

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TWEAKS AND CHANGES

A significant change came in 1968, with the appointment of a Coordinator, bringing a senior security official into the Cabinet Office to assist the Cabinet Secretary with his intelligence-related responsibilities, including reviewing the agencies' performance and scrutinising their annual bids for budget allocations.

Another tweak, after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, was the appointment of Sir David Omand to a new role as Security and Intelligence Coordinator, to oversee both the intelligence agencies and the Civil Contingencies Secretariat.

But until the formation of the NCS in 2010, the responsibility for national security continued to be divided among several cabinet committees, with specific responsibility for dealing with the changing concept of security, whether coordinating anti-terrorism efforts or dealing with the threat of nuclear attack (a conspicuous concern during the Cold War).

At times, intelligence and policy became too close. The 1983 Falklands Islands Inquiry, and the 2004 Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction, stressed the need to uphold the independence and objectivity of intelligence assessment.

FOUR MAIN CHALLENGES

Today, the responsibilities of the NCS remain the same, in enabling a government to coordinate the information gathered by the intelligence agencies to secure the country against serious organised crime, terrorists and hostile foreign intelligence agencies.

The council continues to meet weekly when Parliament is in session. The usual procedure is for papers to be taken on two subjects, with short presentations followed by a discussion on each. Ministers who are not standing members of the NSC are invited to attend, as necessary, to discuss issues affecting their departments.

The council adheres to the National Security Strategy, which states four main security challenges for the UK for the coming decade:

- the increasing threat posed by terrorism, extremism and instability;
- the resurgence of state-based threats, and intensifying wider state competition;
- the impact of technology, especially cyber threats, and wider technological developments; and

- the erosion of the rules-based international order, making it harder to build consensus and tackle global threats.

The strategy sets out a number of other risks: civil emergencies; major natural disasters overseas; energy security; the global economy; and climate change and resource scarcity.

ARE WE SAFER?

During its first ten years, the NSC has delivered collective decision-making and strategic oversight on everything from terror attacks in London and Salisbury, to military deployments in Afghanistan and Libya.

Ultimately, the NSC will be judged on whether it has improved the effectiveness of national security decision-making. Is the UK safer – or, at least, are its leaders making better-informed and more timely decisions on security – because of the NSC?

Part of the team involved in the clean-up operation following the Salisbury nerve agent attack in 2018.



FIGHTING FRAUD AT HOME AND ABROAD

Mark Cheeseman,
Deputy Director, Counter Fraud Centre
of Expertise, Cabinet Office



It is hard to escape the shadow of fraud, which media headlines frequently cite as the most prevalent of all crimes. In the UK, we estimate fraud and error loss at between £31 billion and £48 billion per year across the public sector – and we are not alone.

As well as one of the most common crimes, fraud, by its very nature, is complex and hidden. However, as civil servants, the public entrust us with their hard-earned money to deliver the services they rely on. It takes courage, persistence and a good deal of skill to embrace the task of detecting fraud, bribery and corruption and dealing with them effectively.

TYPES OF FRAUD

Government has been collecting data since 2014 to further understand the different types of fraud in the public sector. The Cross-Government Fraud Landscape Report 2019 will publish the loss data by typology for the first time.

As a result of this work, we now know that 85% of detected fraud across government relates to external fraud, whereas 15% of detected fraud stems from internal fraud types. This information helps us to know which areas are likely to be targeted, and where we should focus resources to better protect ourselves and vital public services.

WELFARE AND HEALTH FRAUD

To take types of fraud in just two areas, welfare and health. Failure to notify changes in circumstances is a major driver of fraud and error in the welfare system. These can often be relatively low-value changes, but over time can lead to significant overpayments and result in both civil and criminal sanctions. Working to reduce these is a key part of the Welfare Fraud, Error and Debt strategy.

In the health system, high-volume / low-value fraud is a significant area of loss in many parts of government. This is probably best demonstrated by the issue of prescription fraud in the NHS in England and Wales. Current estimates suggest losses of around £162 million in 2017/18 resulting from individual charge evasion at £8.60 each, or around 19 million charges evaded in total.

THE FRAUD ICEBERG

In the UK we split fraud into three classifications: **Detected, Estimated and Unknown**, using an iceberg analogy to illustrate this.

Estimated: just below the surface, government estimates £26.8 billion of fraud and error. These are estimates from loss measurement programmes in areas such as welfare, tax, credit and health, and include the tax gap – unexplained discrepancies in the tax take/return.

Unknown: deep below the surface: £2.0 billion to £19.6 billion, calculated as 0.5% to 5% of annual government expenditure.



Detected: in 2017-18, government detected around £8.8 billion of fraud and error, which includes welfare and tax – the tip of the iceberg.

Total estimated fraud and error loss per year: £31 billion to £48 billion

A NEW FUNCTION

To improve our capability, the Government has invested in the Counter Fraud Function and Counter Fraud Profession.

The Function and Profession are co-ordinated by the Counter Fraud Centre of Expertise (CoEx) in the Cabinet Office. The profession recognises experts working in counter fraud, bringing them together as a community and introducing common standards and guidance.

COEX PRIORITIES

Over the past six years, the CoEx has grown from just four people to a team of 40 counter-fraud specialists. Its work to improve the response to fraud has included:

Changing the culture to one where finding fraud is a good thing

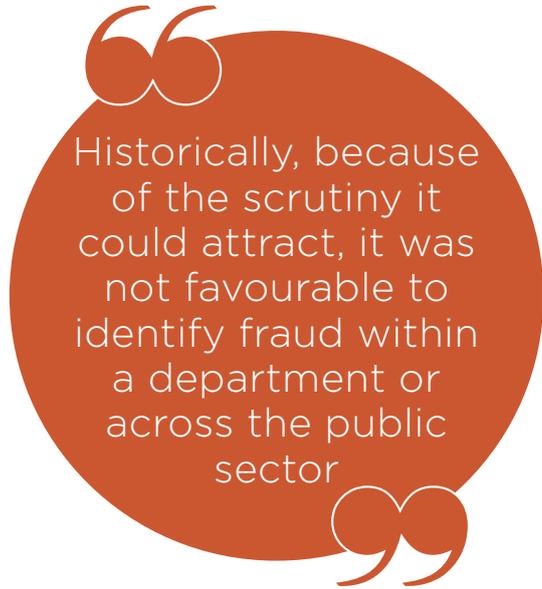
Historically, because of the criticism and scrutiny it could attract, it was not favourable to identify fraud within a department or across the public sector. Having people working to find fraud and devise ways to strengthen our controls and stop fraudsters should not be seen as a failing.

Building a credible evidence base

This was no mean feat. Before 2013 there was no single source of evidence for fraud loss in the public sector. Researching approaches domestically and internationally, the team has worked to develop a unique, world-leading methodology to measure fraud loss.

Bringing experts together to drive transformation

Because of its diverse and complex nature, tackling fraud demands a similarly diverse set of skills. These include capability in data and analytics (to prevent and detect fraud), measurement, investigation and fraud risk assessment. The CoEx team has brought together experts from across the public sector



Historically, because of the scrutiny it could attract, it was not favourable to identify fraud within a department or across the public sector

to share leading practices and make common cause in dealing with UK public sector fraud.

The result of these initiatives is that the UK is establishing itself as world-leading, trusted and innovative in its fight against fraud, particularly in the public sector, and is forging relationships internationally.

IS THERE A BEST APPROACH FOR DETECTING FRAUD?

When fraud professionals consider how to increase the detection of fraud, they quickly acknowledge that there is no single way of doing so and, further, that we cannot rely on a single control measure to provide protection. A multi-faceted approach to detection and prevention is required.

Because fraudsters exploit control vulnerabilities and continually test our defences, the best strategy is to invest

in multiple control layers to bolster those defences. For example, while we may use data analytics to identify fraud based on a known pattern, the point of attack can quickly shift to new areas. So, it's important to understand the limitations of the control, and to leverage new capabilities such as artificial intelligence to identify new trends as they emerge.

TACKLING UNKNOWN FRAUD

Government is addressing the issue of unknown fraud through initiatives such as the fraud measurement and assurance (FMA) programme, developed by the CoEx. This programme helps organisations to find fraud in areas considered high risk - but where little is known of current fraud levels - through transaction testing and sampling. It also helps to identify gaps in the control framework, with an emphasis on managing known loss once it is found.

RESULTS IN UK COUNTER FRAUD

Around 15,000 people work in central government alone tackling fraud against the public sector. The CoEx sets the strategy, standards and policy for the Counter Fraud Function.

Since its inception, the CoEx has supported UK Government departments to prevent £400 million each year in fraud loss through new initiatives. Other departments and agencies (not including tax and welfare) have also benefited from CoEx initiatives in fraud detection, with reported fraud in those agencies rising by 284% (from £31 million to £119 million) over three years.



“ The UK is recognised as a world leader in dealing with public sector fraud ”

The CoEx team in Washington, DC

Since 2014, 53 loss-measurement exercises have been undertaken across government. These exercises also inform the estimated range of losses that could reasonably be expected to exist in areas of unmeasured government spend. This range stands at 0.5% to 5.0% of annual government expenditure.

HOW FRAUD MEASUREMENT AND ASSURANCE (FMA) CAN HELP SHINE A LIGHT ON FRAUD

As part of their responsibility to protect public money, Government departments are required to shine a light on areas where fraud could exist, and measure the extent of fraud when it is discovered.

The CoEx in the Cabinet Office has developed the FMA programme to support departments in undertaking fraud measurement activity. The programme involves three key steps:

1. A spend area fraud risk assessment to identify and assess three high-risk areas of spend.
2. A detailed fraud risk assessment on a selected high-risk area.
3. Testing and measuring the levels of fraud and error in a selected high-risk area.

These steps are cyclical, and should be repeated in order to see an overall improvement in fraud detection rates and measurement within a department.

The FMA process enables departments to understand their fraud risks and take preventative action where fraud and error is identified. Where little or no fraud is found, the process offers assurance on the tested area.

REPORTING SUSPECTED FRAUD

Across government, organisations have whistleblowing and reporting routes to increase the reporting of fraud. These routes are available to all civil servants and it's important that, if you suspect fraud or wrongdoing, you report your concerns so it can be dealt with appropriately.

No one should feel they can't speak up, and the sooner we find the fraud, the quicker we can prevent it.

The UK is the first country to launch a Counter Fraud Profession

INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC SECTOR FRAUD FORUM

While the focus of the Counter Fraud CoEx is protecting public services in the UK from fraud, fraudsters don't respect jurisdictional boundaries. So, in 2018, ministers challenged us to look outwards, establish global relationships on this theme, and share leading practices that would help us and other countries to fight fraud.

Since then, we have hosted the four other countries in the Five Eyes intelligence alliance (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the US) in a new group focused on tackling fraud in the public sector, the International Public Sector Fraud Forum (IPSFF).

In establishing the forum, the CoEx has brought together senior experts in counter fraud from the various agencies in the Five Eyes countries to share best practice. Last year, forum members published a guide on dealing with public sector fraud.

As a result of the UK's leading role in this group, and the progress made by the CoEx, countries have requested UK support to develop their approach to public sector fraud. For example, after a challenging request from the Australian Attorney-General's department, the UK conducted the CoEx's first paid consultancy project.



SUPPORTING AN AUSTRALIAN COUNTER FRAUD COEX

The challenge was to help Australia build a convincing business case for investment in their own Counter Fraud Centre of Expertise. The Attorney General's Department (AGD) wanted to quantify potential losses to the Australian public sector. At the same time as working with the UK CoEx, they employed a private sector consultancy to help develop a model.

The consultants concluded that:

“Due to its focus on public sector fraud and error loss, and its detailed methodology... the UK Cabinet Office (CO) Cross-Government Fraud Landscape methodology provides the best approach to estimating the total cost of fraud against the Australian Commonwealth.”

We worked with the Australian AGD to show that the UK approach (investing in prevention through identifying and mitigating vulnerabilities in policies and programmes

before they are implemented, and throughout their life cycle, using fraud risk assessments) is a much more economical and effective investment than investigating and recovering detected fraud.

We helped the case be clear that counter-fraud activities have to be holistic – with fraud prevention and detection alongside disruption, investigation and enforcement activity.

We also identified that improved fraud control, especially prevention, would contribute directly to keeping the economy strong. It would also ensure that public funds reached the intended recipients, including the most vulnerable, and were not diverted to criminals and fraudsters.

These measures will allow the AGD to support the development of a comprehensive Australian approach to countering fraud. The CoEx continues to assist the department – including with the secondment of UK staff – as it builds its own Counter Fraud CoEx.

CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

Work is ongoing to support our other IPSFF partners, with collaboration on a series of products, to share best practice and maximise counter fraud efforts. This activity will include thought papers on the use of Artificial Intelligence to counter fraud, and the development of fraud-awareness training for public servants.

As well as being recognised as a world leader in dealing with public sector fraud, the UK is emerging as a pace-setter in the professionalisation of counter fraud, being the first country to launch a Counter Fraud Profession.

As the profession develops, for example in the use of data and analytics and fraud risk assessment, we are confident the other Five Eyes will be looking on with interest and ready to reach out for support.



THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS: DRIVING INNOVATION AND TACKLING POLICY CHALLENGES

Shevaun Haviland,

Deputy Director, Business Partnerships Team,
Prime Minister's Office and Cabinet Office



There are deep-rooted social challenges in the UK that affect the lives of thousands of citizens every day.

Over 800,000 young people are not in education, employment or training, meaning they cannot secure and retain meaningful employment. Some 5.5 million people are in bad debt and do not have access to affordable credit. Additionally, many employees do not feel their mental health is supported in the workplace – an issue that costs the economy an estimated £74 billion to £99 billion per year.

Tackling these entrenched challenges, to unleash the potential of people and communities across the UK and create a fairer, more inclusive society, requires a new and innovative approach. That is why we have created the Inclusive Economy Partnership (IEP), between the economy's three major sectors, business, civil society and government, bringing together their distinctive skills, insights and networks in pursuit of a common goal.

THE PARTNERSHIP MODEL

The IEP partnership model is designed to accelerate progress towards meaningful change: amplifying the efforts of organisations working on the same issues, helping companies and social innovators to scale proven solutions, and pioneering new initiatives to age-old problems. Such partnerships allow every IEP member to achieve more by working together than they could alone.

The approach of organising, planning and collaborating across government and sector boundaries to address complex, multi-dimensional national issues, echoes that adopted in the Strategic Framework for how government and the wider public sector can work together.

SOCIAL IMPACT

The IEP, driven by the Cabinet Office and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, has harnessed the unique convening power of government to create an initiative that doesn't just talk about change, but delivers it.

Supported by an advisory board of business leaders, government ministers and civil society champions, including the CEOs of Nationwide, the Co-op, the National Lottery Community Fund and UnLtd, we have convened over 175 organisations and catalysed over 100 social impact partnerships. Thanks to these partnerships, over 50,000 additional people will now benefit from: fairer and more informed access to financial services; access to services that support their mental health; and tools to improve young people's access to the job market.

The IEP's first accelerator programme supported the scaling ambitions of innovators with proven, on-the-ground solutions to social challenges. During the accelerator, we made 230 introductions between the social innovators and corporate partners, resulting in over 100 high-impact partnerships.

In addition, the social innovators generated around £650,000 in additional grant support, and £1.2 million in savings and in-kind support, with revenue of £3.2 million forecast over the following year.

CREATING HEALTHIER WORKPLACES

One example of a high-impact partnership set up through the accelerator was between This is Me – a campaign, part of the Lord Mayor's Appeal scheme, that aims to create healthy workplaces by encouraging employees to share their mental health stories – and Landsec, which buys, sells, develops and manages commercial property in the UK.

For This is Me, the partnership provided access to a whole new sector and a typically hard-to-reach audience of young males, and also helped expand the campaign beyond London. For Landsec, it gave them access to high-impact mental health resources, allowing their employees to be more open about their own experiences and creating a more productive work environment.

The IEP is a great example of the power of cross-sector partnerships to deliver impact quickly
*—Jeremy Quin,
 Parliamentary Secretary,
 Cabinet Office*

INTO WORK AND BEYOND

Similarly, we supported MyKindaFuture, a mobile platform that improves disadvantaged young people's access into work and beyond, via digital mentoring from employers and a peer-to-peer forum.

Through the IEP, MyKindaFuture formed successful partnerships with Accenture (who provided pro-bono advice in utilising cutting-edge technology to enhance the digital platform) and M&S (who used the platform to support 3,000 young people transitioning from work experience into full-time employment).

“Our partnerships will build evidence for impact and of the return on investment for employers – there's much more to come and it's hugely exciting.

—Will Akerman,
Founder and CEO,
MyKindaFuture

CROSS-SECTOR PROJECTS

Alongside the accelerator programme, we have developed a series of innovative cross-sector projects. For example, we led a pilot in the West Midlands – in partnership with Accenture, Movement to Work, UnLtd, O2, Youth Employment UK and the West Midlands Combined Authority

– to open up 1,000 new work placements in the region. The placements were delivered by local employers in conjunction with training providers with an aim to support the young people into full time employment or further training following the placement.

We also launched a challenge prize, Open Banking for Good, supported by a £3 million fund from Nationwide, to find and scale ways to improve financial inclusion and wellbeing using open banking technology.

LESSONS LEARNED: SECRETS TO BUILDING EXCELLENT PARTNERSHIPS

The IEP's innovative approach to partnership working has shown real impact in addressing tough policy challenges, but that's not to say we don't face challenges. Deep-seated competitive dynamics or a lack of understanding between businesses or civil society organisations – or even different government departments – can often preclude true partnership working.

While we convened some of the most successful CEOs from business and civil society, we still had to encourage them to leave their organisational cultures at the door and define a new way of working with one another in equal partnership.

THREE KEY INGREDIENTS WERE CRITICAL FOR SUCCESS

Firstly, we did a lot of work to make sure we had the right people around the table – the entrepreneurial leaders who were ready to unleash their inner activist. We needed to

find leaders who were ready to take a new approach to problem solving, and we needed them to be from a range of industries across the UK. Using the established reach of the Business Partnerships Team and the 120 accounts we manage, we were able quickly to identify who those people were. We put the time in to ensure they got to know each other as people, not just as CEOs of organisations. This helped to build strong working relationships and establish an inclusive community built on respect and trust.

Secondly, we established a culture of experimentation and quick delivery. This was an important signal that we were interested in impact over and above convening people for a talking shop. By encouraging experimentation, we also showed that we prioritised trialling new solutions over guaranteeing success. This gave our partners more confidence to push themselves out of their comfort zones and lead new initiatives, such as Nationwide's Open Banking for Good.

Finally, we ensured that our CEOs had a real understanding of the deep-rooted challenges we were tackling. Meetings and decisions were not confined to corporate boardrooms in London. Instead, we visited different communities and included the voices of citizens or organisations driving action on the ground, which created a shared ambition and motivation to drive change.

In discussion at an Inclusive Economy Partnership event



“

We received around 50 applications for our Open Banking for Good programme, demonstrating the power and appeal of acting together... The IEP provides an opportunity for genuine collaboration towards mutual aims.

— Joe Garner, Chief Executive, Nationwide Building Society

”

A CALL TO ACTION

The IEP has proved that to create a society we can all be proud of, everyone has a role to play. We must all do more.

Businesses can do more to harness their skills and networks; creating inclusive employment opportunities, serving vulnerable customers and helping to build thriving communities. Likewise, civil society can do more to share its knowledge of the problems; sharing best practice more widely and co-creating models for change that can be

adopted by others facing similar problems.

In government, we can do much more to harness our influence and convening power; joining the dots between organisations and looking to bring diverse voices around the table to help us develop new approaches to perennial policy challenges.

Although we are working on three specific social issues, we believe our partnership model can work across many more, both nationally and regionally, by joining up previously siloed initiatives, amplifying successful

ones and enabling good ideas to be shared.

If you, too, believe in the power of partnerships to create social change and want to find out more about how our partnership model can be used to solve seemingly intractable policy challenges, please get in touch with the Business Partnerships Team at partnerships-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk. We have the network, skills and passion to drive cross-sector partnership working across government.

MEET 'ARNOLD' - THE FIRST ROBOT IN GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS

Gemmaine Walsh,
Director of Communications,
Department for Education



ARNOLD - Automated Robot Negating the Onerous Logging of Data - is having a massive impact on how we communicate with the public



Back in the 1980s, everyone thought that by now we would all have robots like R2-D2 and C3PO working diligently at our sides. While that has not quite turned out to be the case for most, here in the DfE comms team we recently welcomed the Government Communication Service's (GCS) very first robot.

Now, 'Automated Robot Negating the Onerous Logging of Data', or ARNOLD to its friends, doesn't look like the robots we all imagined. It is actually a computer programme, but it is having a massive impact on how quickly and effectively we are able to communicate with the public and address their concerns.

Effective, responsive communications and engagement with the public and taxpayers has to be at the heart of all public service. The search for a new approach to managing these contacts has focused on using technology to improve the accuracy with which they are handled so that they can be responded to in a timely and appropriate way.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is an emerging trend in government and an increasingly popular technology in both the public and private sectors. In essence, the robots here are programmes that harness artificial intelligence to make decisions about how data is handled. It is known to reduce costs and boost productivity, as well as improve the accuracy of data collection while freeing those who were collecting the data to focus on other tasks.

Seeing this trend, the Strategic Improvement (SI) team in DfE's Communications Directorate approached other departments to learn more about the technology. Having now applied that technology to our own work, we can testify to the benefits it brings.

FINDING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

Before ARNOLD arrived, the DfE responded to the public's important questions, comments and complaints - around 120,000 of them each year - by manually inputting data into a system. Each email and letter needed to be read, understood and categorised before it could be allocated to the correct person for a response.

Knowing that, in the private sector, the emerging practice is to move away from doing this kind of thing manually, the team took the bold step of exploring what robots could do for us.

“With ARNOLD we can better spot the important issues that people get in touch with the department over



The DfE team behind ARNOLD

“
 What RPA means
 in practice is that
 we can make sure
 that our team focuses
 on delivery
 ”

Once they had gathered best practice advice from other departments about the success of RPA in their areas, the SI team applied what they had learned to create a proof of concept robot, which would grow up to become the ARNOLD we now know and love. Delivered through the Cabinet Office Centre of Excellence (CoE) for RPA framework, this scans the content of emails, prioritises them based on risk, and then completes the data entry into the system.

ARNOLD operates on a set of rules to make decisions when processing incoming emails. These rules help the robot to classify each email through hundreds of variables and distribute them to the appropriate parties for response. ARNOLD has now replaced the manual data entry of all user emails and letters.

What it means in practice is that we can make sure that our team focuses on delivery rather than admin. It frees us up to focus on our channel shift strategy so that we can keep pace with the changing way in which people want to contact government departments – moving beyond traditional letter writing and the public helpline and more towards live chat and social media.

Put simply, and fundamentally, with ARNOLD doing the admin, we can better spot the important issues that people get in touch with the department over, from child-safeguarding concerns to under-performing schools.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

With this being the first robot in DfE, and the GCS as a whole, one of the principal challenges was both winning support for the concept from users and getting their feedback for iteratively improving the efficiency of the robot after it went live.

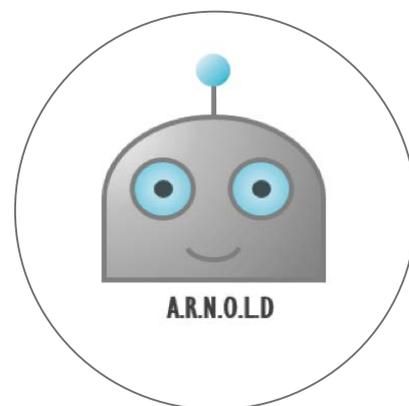
Within a limited budget, the team was looking for innovative ways to use technology to deliver quicker results and free up staff time for other duties. At the beginning of the project, in November 2017, they were unsure whether the robot would be able to scan unstructured emails and letters accurately. The easy thing at this stage would have been to walk away. The key was to confront the problem, stay focused on the potential outcomes and apply problem-solving skills to issues as they arose.

The team made full use of data and worked with stakeholders to develop and modify the robot to increase its accuracy and get user emails to colleagues drafting replies more quickly.

The robot creates a report for everything that it logs on the database. There are checkpoints throughout the process and, when it encounters a possible problem, ARNOLD sends out an alert, prompting colleagues to review a particular email. It also flags any exceptions or wider technology issues that prevent it working as expected. The team can then investigate and take corrective action where needed.

This approach is consistent with the idea that ARNOLD is part of the team – everyone is clear about roles and where technology plays its part. Where problems are raised, all emails and letters are also checked by staff, with any issues identified and corrected, and iterative changes made to the robot if required.

Running the project has led to the team developing networks of contacts across government, including with other departments who might be able to use the robot code in their own correspondence systems.



To help government get serious about automation, Crown Commercial Service is launching the Automation Marketplace

HOW RPA CAN CREATE REAL VALUE

ARNOLD has already proved its worth. As of November 2019, it had logged over 24,000 user emails, and reduced by nearly a third the time it would have taken (over 145,000 minutes or 100 days) to process them manually.

One of ARNOLD's most important functions is its ability to scan and review an email in order to identify extremist messages or children at risk. These emails are flagged, expediting response times and enhancing the department's ability to provide critical support where necessary.

On top of this, the department has already seen reduced waiting times for users, greater

email processing accuracy, and reduction of back-office processes.

The potential for robots to improve communications across government is huge. In DfE, with the introduction of RPA, what was once a repetitive manual process is now more efficient and streamlined, using an innovative and low-cost solution. The challenge now for the SI team is threefold: to scale up the way RPA works in the department, join up processes, and build on its cross-government networks so that they can progressively improve ARNOLD's efficiency and deliver even better service to the public.

THE AUTOMATION MARKETPLACE – THE NEXT STEP FOR RPA IN GOVERNMENT

In 2017 the Cabinet Office launched a three-year RPA partnership with an external supplier, with the aim of accelerating the adoption of RPA across central government. This partnership has successfully supported departmental investment in automation, but as it comes to an end, a new commercial route is needed.

Building on the foundations of the RPA Partnership, and to help government get serious about automation, Crown Commercial Service is launching the Automation Marketplace from March 2020. Valued at £100 million over four years, the marketplace will be an electronic platform (Dynamic Purchasing System – DPS) that will offer a wide range of automation services to the public sector, helping departments access expertise and technology more easily.

For additional information please refer to the CCS website: <https://www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/agreements/RM6173>

INNOVATION NATION

Emma Lindsell and Isobel Stephen,
Executive Director, Strategy, Performance and Engagement,
UK Research and Innovation



“

Research and innovation are vital to making people’s lives better

”

A scientist from the British Antarctic Survey taking measurements using LiDAR (light detection and ranging) technology



The start of a new decade always prompts questions about pivot points, and this certainly feels like a key moment for research and innovation. The huge challenges facing the human race can only be tackled by bringing together research across disciplines, and the UK's economic prosperity outside the European Union demands innovation that draws on the very best thinking.

We joined UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) as a jobshare Executive Director, Strategy, Performance and Engagement, mid-way through 2019, and are excited about what UKRI can do to support excellent research and innovation, and the potential its creation can unleash in the sector.

BIG BUSINESS

The UK has a long and proud record in research and innovation. The British state has been funding research since Charles II established the Royal Observatory at Greenwich in 1675. Today, this activity is big business, and global opinion polls of academics and employers show that it is an area where we are considered to excel. In 2017, 1.7% of UK GDP, or £34.8 billion, was spent on research and innovation, with £8.2 billion of this being spent in universities and by government.

The aim now is to leverage UK research spending – in line with the Government's ambition to increase investment in R&D overall to 2.4% of GDP – to realise long-term benefits across the country. This reflects both political and public awareness that research and innovation are vital to the success of UK growth as we forge a new path in 2020.

Put simply, research and innovation are vital to making people's lives better: by pushing the frontiers of human knowledge and understanding; improving economic performance and social prosperity in all regions of the UK; and supporting our society and others to become enriched, healthier, more resilient and sustainable.

GENERATING GROWTH AND IMPACT

Our role is to ensure that UKRI gets the strategy right for delivering funding and support to the research and innovation community. Our success will be in generating the most economic growth and positive societal impact possible from our sector.

We believe it is more important than ever for funding to be coherently managed, with access more streamlined, and for the culture UKRI fosters to be as inclusive, fair, equal and diverse as possible.

In the past, research funding was managed by seven research councils, each with their own remit, ranging from the arts to engineering, and by other organisations with a role in university funding and in innovation.

On the recommendation of a report from Nobel-Prize-winning biologist Sir Paul Nurse, these organisations have been brought together with the creation of UK Research and Innovation, a result of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. UKRI is building on the strengths of the research councils with an objective to make research funding even more efficient and effective, and more responsive to stakeholders.

GROUNDBREAKING SCIENCE

UKRI funding supports 58,000 researchers, including over 20,000 research students, while UKRI itself employs 8,000 people and put £6.4 billion into research in 2018/19. Most of this money went into universities, although some of the research councils run their own research centres. These include such well-known bodies as the British Antarctic Survey, part of the Natural Environment Research Council, or the Medical Research Council (MRC) where researchers carry out ground-breaking science in MRC-funded facilities.

Decisions on funding individual bids for research grants are made by academic or industry experts, and UKRI provides the background against which they work. This includes the development of research strategies and subject priorities, as well as leadership in areas such as research ethics, publishing policy and diversity.

A central objective of the transformation is to establish 'a single front door' for anyone wanting to apply for research and innovation grants, to make the process more straightforward and efficient. This ambitious goal is set to be achieved over two years, with most of the changes taking place in 2020.

We have made it a priority to ensure our systems and processes free up researchers and innovators to focus on their work, while supporting us to make the best funding decisions.

For example, from March 2020, grant applicants will no longer be required to provide a 'Pathways to Impact' plan or complete an 'Impact Summary'. Also, over the next 12 months, UKRI will be piloting simpler, streamlined application and assessment processes for its research and innovation calls. These will reduce the burden on researchers and innovators applying to UKRI and ensure it continues to invest in the best ideas and people.

INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Professor Sir Mark Walport is Chief Executive Officer of UKRI. He says: "Even at this early stage, we are seeing tremendous results from the councils' sustained activity over many years, and the benefits of bringing them together in UKRI are beginning to emerge."

Perhaps the most important gain he sees is a simpler approach to funding interdisciplinary research. Interdisciplinarity is universally regarded as a vital route to insightful and influential research. Many of the greatest challenges require multi-disciplinary approaches - climate change, for example, to examine the causes and effects, using environmental science, soil science, geology and meteorology. The same approach can be applied to global politics, the influence of individual people's behaviour, and more.

The Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) is also being led by UKRI, to ensure that investment links up effectively with government research priorities and opportunities. The fund supports high-quality multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research programmes, which might otherwise be missed by traditional funding channels. It has already funded projects across the themes of environment, biology and biomedicine, and artificial intelligence.

DIGITAL FUNDING

To deliver our competitive grant funding, we are developing a new digital funding service. This will make it easier for our research and innovation communities to find and apply for funding, and for us to be highly productive and deliver a growing portfolio of investment, using our data to monitor impact and direct future investment.

The new service has been designed to offer a unified and simpler application process, with consistent policies, that delivers all funding opportunities through a single website and single service. This will free up people's time, automate tasks where possible, remove duplication of effort, simplify rules, processes and policies, and reduce the time taken to deliver funding to researchers.



At its heart, the task of transformation is doing things in one way, not nine different ways.

- Dr Geoff Robins, UKRI Transformation Director



Dr Geoff Robins is UKRI's Transformation Director. At its heart, he says, the task of transformation is "doing things in one way, not nine different ways [including Innovate UK and Research England, now under the UKRI umbrella], while retaining the diversity of approach that the individual research councils bring through their links to universities and other innovation bodies". The ambition is to be "the world's best funding organisation for research and investment, spending its money in the most effective manner".

MAKING LIVES BETTER

UKRI research is responding to the challenges and producing solutions that will change people's lives for the better. Already, these range from the discovery of plastic-eating enzymes and new ways to make hydrogen to fuel cars, to the discovery of the earliest galaxies and the award of the 2018 Nobel Prize for Chemistry to Professor Sir Gregory Winter. And from research to solve specific societal or technical challenges,

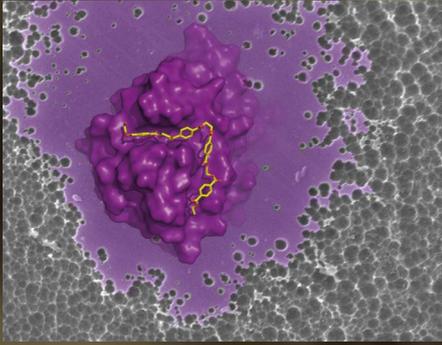
to blue-skies, curiosity-driven research that can deliver unpredicted benefits.

Economies around the world are being transformed by research and innovation. As we steer UKRI strategy, our focus will be on enabling the UK research councils to work together in new ways to deliver an ambitious agenda, building on the strength, breadth and diversity of its portfolio.

NERC-supported Antarctic research provides vital understanding of how the polar regions are responding to natural and human-driven pressures, and their impact on global climate



The RRS Sir David Attenborough on deployment



The 3D structure of the plastic-digesting enzyme PETase in purple, with the surface of a partially digested plastic bottle in the background.



A new digital funding service will make it easier for our research and innovation communities to find and apply for funding



Professor John McGeehan, director of the Centre for Enzyme Innovation at the University of Portsmouth, in the laboratory (credit: Stefan Venter, UPIX Photography)

WHY UK RESEARCH MATTERS

PLASTIC-EATING ENZYMES

UKRI-supported scientists have engineered an enzyme that can digest some of our most commonly polluting plastics, providing a potential solution to one of the world's biggest environmental problems.

The discovery could result in a recycling solution for millions of tonnes of plastic bottles made of polyethylene terephthalate (PET), which currently persists for hundreds of years in the environment.

Professor John McGeehan, at the University of Portsmouth, and Dr Gregg Beckham, at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), solved the crystal structure of PETase - a recently discovered enzyme that digests PET - and used this 3D information to understand how it works. During this study, they inadvertently engineered an enzyme that is even better at degrading the plastic than the one that evolved in nature.

The University of Portsmouth and NREL collaborated with scientists at the Diamond Light Source to create an ultra-high resolution 3D model of the enzyme with the synchrotron that uses intense beams of X-rays to act as a microscope powerful enough to see individual atoms.

HYDROGEN FROM WASTE

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council-funded researchers at Swansea University have found a way to turn discarded plastic into hydrogen to fuel cars.

Light-absorbing material is added to the plastic, before it is placed in an alkaline solution and exposed to sunlight, which creates hydrogen.

Billions of tons of plastic are used each year and only a fraction is recycled. Most plastic bottles are made from PET, which can be recycled but is often burned or thrown into landfill.

The beauty of the new process, which could be cheaper than recycling, is that it can degrade all sorts of plastic waste, and the plastic does not need to be cleaned to produce hydrogen gas.

DISCOVERY OF THE EARLIEST GALAXIES

UKRI-funded astronomers, together with US colleagues, have found evidence that the faintest satellite galaxies orbiting our own Milky Way galaxy are amongst the very first formed in our universe. Segue-1, Bootes I, Tucana II and Ursa Major I are thought to be over 13 billion years old. Our universe is thought to be 13.8 billion years old.

Dr Alis Deason and Professor Carlos Frenk, from Durham University's Institute for Computational Cosmology (ICC), together with Dr Sownak Bose, from the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in the US, identified two populations of satellite galaxies orbiting the Milky Way.

Finding some of the very first galaxies orbiting in the Milky Way's own backyard is the astronomical equivalent of finding the remains of the first humans that inhabited the Earth.

It supports the current model for the evolution of our universe, the 'Lambda-cold-dark-matter model', in which the elementary particles that make up the dark matter drive cosmic evolution.

With the formation of the first galaxies, the universe burst into light, bringing the cosmic dark ages to an end.

MODERNISING ANTARCTIC RESEARCH

The next decade will see major investment in the UK's world-leading Antarctic research capability. The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)-funded British Antarctic Survey (BAS) is transforming how it supports frontier science with a £300-million Antarctic Infrastructure Modernisation Programme, launching the UK's

new polar research ship, the RRS Sir David Attenborough, and undertaking the full modernisation of Rothera Research Station, the main entry point for UK Antarctic operations by air and sea.

The RRS Sir David Attenborough will replace two existing polar research vessels, supporting up to 60 scientists with state-of-the-art laboratories, equipment including remote

and autonomous underwater vehicles, and will be the first UK polar research vessel with a helipad and moon pool.

NERC-supported Antarctic research provides the UK with vital understanding of how the polar regions are responding to natural and human-driven pressures, and their impact on global climate.

SPOTLIGHT: BRILLIANT CIVIL SERVANTS - CIVIL SERVICE AWARD WINNERS 2019

Imogen Findlay,
Senior Corporate Communications Manager,
Cabinet Office



Members of the Department for Education's Care Leaver Policy Team, with their Developing People Award, accompanied (right) by award presenter Elizabeth Gardiner, First Parliamentary Counsel

The 14th annual Civil Service Awards ceremony took place on Thursday 21 November at Lancaster House, in central London, hosted by Sir Richard Heaton, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Justice and Awards Champion.

The awards recognise excellence and achievement by teams and individuals, and commitment to the core Civil Service values. They reflect the full range of Civil Service activity, with categories ranging from Policy to Operational Delivery, from Commercial to Innovation and Science, and from Citizenship to Diversity and Inclusion.

From “gobsmacked”, “so pleased” and “incredibly proud”, to “very passionate”, “fantastic recognition” and “we’re not going to stop smiling for a fortnight”, the winners were full of excitement upon hearing their names announced. They all appeared to share the sentiment expressed neatly by one winner: “I never thought it would be me.”

We take a closer look at some of the 2019 winners, and the work that won them their awards.

LIFE-CHANGING OPPORTUNITIES

The Department for Education’s Care Leaver Policy Team and HR team took home the Developing People Award. Working together, they increased the work experience offering for people leaving the care system, providing these individuals with a valuable opportunity to experience the world of work and professional life in general, and employment in the Civil Service in particular.

These internships help participants to develop their work-based skills, increase their professional confidence, test their abilities, and consider pursuing a career in the Civil Service. The opportunities have been described as “life-changing”.

Some 40% of care leavers aged 19 to 21 are not in education, employment or training, compared to 13% for this age group overall in the rest of society. The 2016 care leaver strategy, *Keep on Caring*, recommended that government departments and their agencies should play a greater role in offering work experience, traineeships, apprenticeships and jobs to care leavers.

Reaching out

The project team succeeded in getting buy-in from many government departments and private organisations in support of their aim.

The scheme in its current format started with a modest 15 care leavers, growing to 55 last year. This year, 225 internships are available across 25 departments around the country. As well as reaching out across government to develop the internship offers, the team worked with councils, charities and other organisations that work with care leavers, to encourage these individuals to apply for the internships and to support their applications.

The project team said of their success:

“We can make a huge impact by simply mobilising the support of our colleagues across government. A fairly modest scheme or policy measure can go on to mature and grow into something very powerful and impactful. Use the beneficiaries of the policy measure to help improve, design and promote it.”

We can make a huge impact by simply mobilising the support of our colleagues across government
– *DfE Care Leaver Project Team*

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

The recipient of the Citizenship Award was Mairi Macneil of the Department of Work and Pensions.

Mairi was nominated thanks to her work over many years with local charities and groups, which has helped in her day-to-day role as a work coach at the Stornoway Jobcentre in the Outer Hebrides, where she has worked for 40 years.

During her Civil Service career, Mairi has created partnerships with voluntary groups and organisations, securing tens of thousands of pounds in funding for charities such as The Dyslexia Group, Enable, and Western Isles Carers, Users and Supporters Network. She works energetically to raise awareness of the causes she cares about, particularly the issues facing unpaid carers and service users around benefits, respite, adult carer support plans, and hospital and social care services.

Mairi currently works with 50 carers, providing personalised support within the local community.

The award was presented by Melanie Dawes, Permanent Secretary for the Department for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. She praised Mairi for working “tirelessly to improve and support the services provided for disabled people and the caring community of the Western Isles”, and for campaigning with “enthusiasm, energy, determination and commitment” for the most vulnerable in the community, who are often unable to voice their needs and concerns.

CUSTOMER-FOCUSED DIGITALISATION

The Digital Award was won by the team from Her Majesty’s Passport Office who developed

the Digital Customer Service (DCS) for passport applicants. Presenting the award, Clare Moriarty, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Exiting the EU, noted that DCS has now received nearly five million applications, making it much easier for British citizens to apply for or renew their passport online.

DCS replaces “the complex, multi-section, paper form and the accompanying 27-page guidance note” with a streamlined, online passport application system which is “designed around users’ needs to make application easier, quicker and more accurate”.

User satisfaction and savings

Since the change, on average, applications now take fewer than 10 minutes to complete and user satisfaction rates regularly top 95%. Because DCS helps HMPO to deliver processing savings, digital applications are also £9.50 cheaper than their paper alternatives. This has also allowed DCS to reduce post-application follow-up to correct errors or request missing information by 50%, which will save £5 million per year. Scanning costs have also been reduced owing to 6.5 million paper documents being eliminated from applications per year, an annual saving of £2.6 million.

The team has also won an IT industry award. Its user-focused improvements included removing delays from the process by introducing online identity verification, allowing applicants to upload their own photograph, and having applicants sign their passport on receipt. This was particularly important in the run-up to the UK’s prospective departure from the EU in March 2019, when DCS was scaled to receive eight times the normal peak demand

[The Passport Office’s] Digital Customer Service has now received nearly five million applications, making it much easier for British citizens to apply for or renew their passport online

– Clare Moriarty, Permanent Secretary, Department for Exiting the EU

following media publicity about passport renewal dates.

The team’s success is attributable in part to its working culture. Neil Carne, Portfolio Director, has “always sought to help create an environment where people can feel valued and make a contribution using the skills and experience that they have”.

MAKING MENOPAUSE SUPPORT THE NORM

One group of civil servants was recognised for, in Cabinet Secretary Mark Sedwill’s words, “effectively serving twice”, as volunteers, above and beyond their professional roles. The Cross-Government Menopause Network won the Health & Wellbeing Award for its contribution to the welfare of the Civil Service community and wider society.

Established in 2017, the network promotes awareness and support in the workplace for colleagues going through the menopause, including launching a set of guiding principles and a toolkit for managers and colleagues.

Network chair Bernice Allport describes winning as recognition of how far the network has come in pushing its important agenda. She said: “Volunteering in a network that allows me to make a difference to the lives of my colleagues matters to me”.



The Awards celebrate the very best of our service. They also reflect the challenges we have faced, the skills we've applied to solving difficult problems and the way in which we have worked together

*- Sir Richard Heaton,
Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Justice*



FAIR AND FRIENDLY

Tasked by the National Asylum Intake Unit with tackling an ongoing problem in the asylum process, the Midlands Intake Unit made “a significant improvement in the service to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and vulnerable adults at remote locations”. For this achievement, the Midlands team won the Public Service Award.

The process has helped to clear a backlog in asylum applications. Appointments are now offered weekly, rather than fortnightly, within a seven-day period, rather than three to four months, and lasting one hour, rather than four to five.

The Midlands Intake Unit created a simple referral mechanism and introduced regular stakeholder engagement with clear feedback loops. They also improved the consistency and quality of the production of Asylum Registration Cards, which allows customers prompt access to services, and developed asylum registration for Operation Innerste children that allows local authorities to quickly access funding.

Consultation

The network consulted on a review of Civil Service Employee Policy’s Attendance Management Gateway product that has helped to make the Civil Service better for those going through the menopause. The review aimed to ensure that the menopause was fully reflected in the product, evaluating and supporting the CIPD’s guidance on ‘Managing the menopause at work’. This guidance was based largely on the legacy of the Cross-Government Menopause Working Group, driving an agenda where the provision of menopause support will be the normal working experience for all women in generations to come.

Jonathan Jones, Head of the Government Legal Service, and Civil Service Health and Wellbeing Champion, presented the award and highlighted the network’s positive work in response to “both the lack of consistent, good quality support available for women experiencing menopausal symptoms across the Civil Service; and the provision of advice available for line managers to support health and wellbeing requirements on this issue”.

*Awards Champion
Sir Richard Heaton
speaking at the Civil
Service Awards ceremony*





“Positively impressed”

The team received positive comments after a visit by a Customer Service Excellence (CSE) assessor in early 2019. The UK Visas and Immigration CSE lead confirmed that “the assessor was positively impressed with our operation at Yarl’s Wood (and so were we!) and there may not be any improvement suggestions from him”. The assessor specifically commended the team’s method of flexible interviewing, which allows adjustments for children.

Duncan Gerrard, a Chief Immigration Officer (CIO) in the team, says that a key motivator for his work is “seeing that we have made a difference, and knowing that the vulnerable people we come into contact with now receive protection and greater customer service as a result of our process”.

The team put treating their customers with dignity and respect at the heart of the process they designed.

THE VALUE OF PARTNERSHIP

Antonia Romeo, Permanent Secretary for the Department for International Trade, presented Cindy Kim with

the Rising Star Award. This was a new category for 2019, recognising a civil servant who has made a significant impact in the first eight years of their Civil Service career.

Antonia highlighted Cindy’s “unflappable commitment, common sense and tremendous appetite for learning”, resulting in her being recognised by colleagues as “one of the best commercial officers in the [regional] network”. Cindy is credited with export wins in excess of £150 million since 2014. She also delivered one of the first mega-tech missions in the network in 2017, which was subsequently replicated elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region.

Personal development

Cindy is clear on the value of learning and development to career progression, and created Personal Development Plan materials which she shared with the Regional Learning & Development team. Along with her drive to create a dedicated L&D Room in the embassy in Seoul, this has

benefited numerous colleagues both in Seoul and in the wider Asia-Pacific region.

In her role as local and regional High Value Campaign (HVC) Champion, Cindy mentored all HVC owners as they worked through their forecasts and plans, spreading best practice in approaches to forecasting and encouraging innovative approaches to marketing. The positive impact on HVC delivery across the North East Asia Region was recognised by the UK sector and business planning teams.

Cindy puts great emphasis on the value of networking and partnerships which, along with “choosing your battles carefully”, she believes, allows you to focus on “what is essential and has a more significant impact”. She enjoys feeling that she is “in the right place to help and make a real difference to people’s lives and their businesses”.



Civil Service Award winners

ALL THE WINNERS

The full list of 2019 winners is as follows:

Citizenship Award:

Mairi Macneil, Department for Work and Pensions

Collaboration Award:

Offender Accommodation Pilot Project, Ministry of Justice

Communication and Engagement Award:

Digital Infrastructure Communications Team, Welsh Government

Developing People Award:

Care Leaver Policy Team and HR Recruitment Team, Department for Education

Digital Award:

Digital Customer Service, HM Passport Office, Home Office

Diversity and Inclusion Award:

Bristol Race Network, HM Revenue and Customs

Health and Wellbeing Award:

Cross Government Menopause Working Group, Cabinet Office

Commercial Award: Voluntary Pricing and Access Scheme Negotiating Team, Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England

Innovation and Science Award:

Troubled Families Evaluation and Policy Team, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Inspirational Leadership Award:

Paula Holbrook-Witt, Defence Science and Technology Laboratory

Policy and Use of Evidence Award:

Ellen Lynch, Connie Smith, Guy McGivern, Karen MacNee (Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest), Scottish Government

Project Delivery Excellence Award:

Marine and Fish EU Exit Programme Team, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Public Service Award:

Midlands Intake Unit, Home Office

Resilience and Rapid Response Award:

Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre Blue Watch, Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Rising Star Award:

Cindy Kim, Department for International Trade

You will find details of all the award winners at: www.civilserviceawards.com/winners

“ A big thank you to everyone involved with the 14th annual Civil Service Awards for your achievements over the last 12 months. The awards represent the pinnacle of what civil servants do every day in the service of the citizens of this country

– Sir Mark Sedwill,
Cabinet Secretary and
Head of the Civil Service

A Brilliant Civil Service

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