



Civil Service

Civil Service Local

Annual Review

2015/2016



Contents

1. Introduction	Page 1
2. Delivering our Business Outcomes	Page 3
Business Outcome 1 Support a more unified Civil Service by building greater cross departmental collaboration ensuring that staff are represented through our CS local networks.	Page 4
Business Outcome 2 Champion Civil Service Reform by reaching out to Civil Servants across all regions, raising awareness, promoting inclusion and encouraging participation.	Page 6
Business Outcome 3 Help build the capability of the Civil Service by design and delivery of cross departmental initiatives in each region. Promote active career management, priority skills and corporate leadership.	Page 9
Business Outcome 4 Enable Civil Servants to connect with their local communities by facilitating cross departmental volunteering opportunities working with schools and community organisations.	Page 12
Business Outcome 5 Encourage a culture of innovation through design and piloting of creative solutions and new ways of working.	Page 16
Business Outcome 6 Demonstrate the financial benefit of a collaborative and innovative Civil Service by working with partners to achieve notional savings equal to the CS Local budget of £1.1m.	Page 18
3. Measuring our Delivery	Page 19
4. Looking Forward to 2016/17	Page 12

1. Introduction

Our Annual Review provides an overview of our work in 2015/16 and how we have delivered our business outcomes.



It is our opportunity to take a more qualitative review of what we have achieved, the impact that it has made and how this should inform our future strategy. It allows us to reflect with our partners on how we can build on our successes and learn from those projects that did not go entirely to plan.

Our overall approach in 2015/16 was to strengthen our collaboration with departments and also to build upon our creative ethos.

We recognise that whilst we have built a solid platform of delivery there is no room for complacency and we need to continue to evolve our offer and performance to stay ahead of the curve.



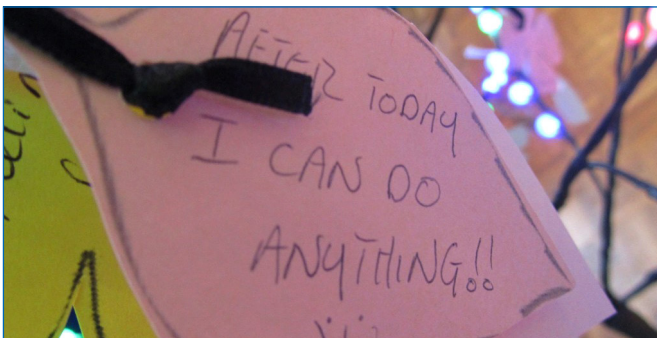
2. Delivering our Business Outcomes

Our portfolio is wide ranging with flexibility to meet evolving priorities, there are however some core principles that underpin all that we do.

These reflect where CS Local can use its strengths and unique position to best effect.

We have captured these within our six business outcomes and they are set out in the business plan for 2015/16.

Over the next pages is a summary indicating the purpose behind each outcome and our approach in tackling the issues involved. We have also included a number of case studies that highlight what we have achieved in practice.



1

Business Outcome 1:

Support a more unified Civil Service by building greater cross departmental collaboration ensuring that staff are represented through our CS local networks.

Why is this important and how have we delivered the outcome?

The Civil Service is a vast and complex organisation, but ultimately it is a single organisation. To serve our citizens more effectively we need to recognise that and act as one. Good services need departments to deliver their core business efficiently, but customer needs are complex and evolving. To continue to meet those needs we all need to look beyond our own horizons at the bigger picture. This hasn't always proved easy to do outside of Whitehall. Even when departments may be located in close proximity this does not guarantee a good regular dialogue across the Civil Service and it is easy for each organisation to become inwardly focussed upon their own delivery. This is where CS Local has a distinctive role to play. Connecting up the Civil Service, particularly outside of central London is our core business and we have a central role in facilitating this, bringing together individuals and organisations with a common purpose to improve service delivery, make better use of resources and share knowledge.

In 2015/16 CS Local identified two key work strands. Firstly to continue to strengthen our cross departmental contacts, particularly with senior leaders and managers who play an important role championing the work that CS Local does in the regions. Finding sufficient time is an issue for all but particularly those in senior roles. Knowing this, we placed greater emphasis upon building a deeper understanding of our stakeholders' priorities and the challenges that they face so that communication could be more focussed and constructive. This in turn allows us to respond to these challenges more directly when developing future projects.

Secondly we also reviewed our network coverage, continuing to support those networks that were already up and running and considering where there were obvious gaps. In some cases our networks have reached a level of maturity and confidence that they feel able to share their expertise more widely. Where this is the case we have facilitated events to showcase best practice and encourage wider participation. Where there was demand for, or an obvious benefit a creating a new network we worked with colleagues to bring participants together, clarifying terms of reference and facilitating the first steps to help the network become well established. By the end of 2015/16 we had over 50 active networks including a Diversity & Inclusion network and/or a Staff Engagement network in each region.

1

Business Outcome 1:

Support a more unified Civil Service by building greater cross departmental collaboration ensuring that staff are represented through our CS local networks.

Case Study: East of England Staff Engagement Network

The East of England network was keen to share good practice on staff engagement across the region. Members of the network developed a set of generic activities that could be used in any department to boost participation and engagement. This included a bespoke engagement workshop and a complementary resource pack to augment the workshop based learning.

The workshop was road-tested at HM Passport Office Peterborough and the initial evaluation confirmed that the content was well received. Follow-up discussions, seeking views of managers, confirmed the success of both the workshop and resource pack. The resource pack has since been distributed to over 20 departments and agencies within the region and shared with equivalent networks around the country. HMRC and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science have subsequently requested that additional workshops be run in their local offices. The example demonstrates the value of networks in helping to build a body of best practice and knowledge both amongst members but also more widely across with colleagues across the locality.

Next Steps

We know from experience that building a strong collaborative base is fundamental to achieving successful and meaningful outcomes. Throughout 2015/16 we have sought to strengthen our contacts at every level, to listen carefully to what stakeholders and customers tell us that they value most and to support our networks as they develop. Looking forward to 2016/17 we will continue to place great emphasis upon this as we recognise that it underpins all that we do. The recent political and policy changes may have a significant impact upon what and how departments deliver their business in the year ahead. CS Local needs to be ready to respond to this, understanding the changing government landscape, customer needs and seizing new opportunities as they arise.

2

Business Outcome 2:

Champion Civil Service Reform by reaching out to Civil Servants across all regions, raising awareness, promoting inclusion and encouraging participation.

Why is this important and how have we delivered this outcome?

Reform and change needs strong leadership but it also needs to be inclusive. In an organisation as large and complex as the Civil Service, getting the message out and encouraging colleagues to participate is not always straightforward. Away from London there is the danger that colleagues can feel cut off and disenfranchised. When this happens change is often viewed as something that happens to people rather than something that they can help shape and be part of. The role of CS Local in this respect is twofold. Firstly to help establish a better dialogue between Whitehall and the regions. Experience from the front line is invaluable but it needs to be drawn down at the appropriate time to help shape change, CS Local is well placed to do this quickly and effectively through our network of contacts. Secondly CS Local is well placed to help engender a more proactive response to change within the regions themselves, encouraging colleagues to shape working practice from the ground up and taking a more inclusive approach that reflects the local workforce and community.

To help highlight this exchange and activity CS Local has continued to support CS Live, co-hosting the regional events in Bristol, Newcastle and Manchester and also being part of the 2 day London event. These events offer the opportunity for staff to hear first-hand about the latest reform topics from the most senior leaders including John Manzoni, Sir Jeremy Heywood and to try out new ideas for themselves. The events are also an opportunity to showcase local reform initiatives and build local collaboration. At CS Live Bristol a group from our Welsh Academy were able to demonstrate their project 'a day in the life' which aims to raise awareness of the breadth of different roles carried out by civil servants by asking individuals to provide details of what their typical looks like. All the CS Live events were very well attended with approximately 5000 attending the regional events and a further 5000 in London.

CS Local has also continued to use its flexible Discovery Session format to provide concise and interactive introductions to priority topics. In 2015/16 we were able to offer these opportunities to more staff by finding new locations and venues. Where there was demand we also delivered more in-depth Discovery Events which provided an all-day practical introduction to particular subjects.

2

Business Outcome 2:

Champion Civil Service Reform by reaching out to Civil Servants across all regions, raising awareness, promoting inclusion and encouraging participation.

Case Studies: Promoting priority skills and hot topics through Discovery Sessions

- Sound programme and project management (PPM) is a priority skill to help deliver services on time and on budget. Increasingly such skills are being asked for but not everyone has the resource or time to pursue a course on PPM. In response CS Local trialled a dedicated PPM Discovery Event in Newcastle, working with colleagues from HMRC and DWP to run a series of presentations introducing project and programme management techniques. The sessions also discussed the range and function of roles typically present on project teams, some career histories and some 'how-to' practical advice on applying for PPM vacancies.
- Leadership and effective change management have also been a priority area. CS Local worked with colleagues from the Cabinet Office and senior personnel including a number of Permanent Secretaries to lead a series of Discovery Events looking at two key areas namely, corporate leadership and championing difference. At each event delegates heard from top leaders about the leadership statement and the refreshed talent action plan. These events emphasised the 3 key characteristics all leaders in the civil service need to be - inspiring, confident and empowering. The speakers explained what the leadership statement meant to them personally and the importance of demonstrating leadership through positive behaviour. The events also looked at what civil servants can do to make the organisation more inclusive, respecting and celebrating difference, leading by example and being willing to listen. Events were held in Birmingham, Nottingham, Plymouth, Exeter, Bristol Manchester, St Leonards, Leeds, Norwich, Cardiff, Newcastle as well as London. Many of the events were oversubscribed reflecting the continued interest across all grades in these subjects. Complementing these events CS Local Yorks & Humber ran a further Discovery Session looking at how change can be managed more effectively, whilst the North West also held a workshop focussing on resilience and how to cope with the stress that rapid change can sometimes bring.
- Digital capability remains one of the skills that civil servants need to master to deliver services more effectively. CS Local joined up with colleagues from the Government Digital Service and the Office of the Public Guardian to trial a 'discover digital' workshop in the South West. This event explained the background to the digital agenda and the practicalities of how new on-line services are being developed and delivered.

- Devolution has been high on the agenda, but knowledge of what it means and the implications for how we do our jobs is scant. CS Local in conjunction with Cabinet Office colleagues delivered two devolution events in Manchester and Southampton. The events explained the basics of devolution and importantly how it may be relevant to people's daily roles, highlighting the need to improve the working knowledge of devolution amongst all Civil Servants, not just those working within the devolved administrations. The theme of elections and devolution was also picked up at a special 'What the election means for us' event held in Preston. We have also continued to work with the Parliamentary Outreach team to deliver the extremely popular 'Understanding Parliament' Discovery Sessions to new locations including Southend on Sea and Preston. These sessions provide an insight into how Parliament works and an understanding of how a role as a civil servant fits within the Parliamentary context.
- Becoming a Reserve for the armed forces offers civil servants the opportunity to harness their skills for the benefit of our country. Throughout 2015/16 CS Local facilitated a number of introductory sessions looking at the work of the Reserves and how civil servants might get involved. The events were designed to be thought-provoking and stimulating based on 'immersive experience' demonstrating work that Reservists might be expected to support – such as force protection, logistics, capacity building, medical care and intelligence. At each event there was the opportunity to talk to Reservists from the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force and find out more about the benefits of combining Reserve service with a career as a civil servant. The events were held in Manchester, Newcastle, Birmingham and London.

Next Steps

For 2016/17 we will continue to review and refresh the Discovery Sessions that we offer, to respond to the changing government context and new challenges as they arise. We will look specifically at how we encourage underrepresented groups to take up the opportunities available.

3

Business Outcome 3:

Help build the capability of the Civil Service by design and delivery of cross departmental initiatives in each region. Promote active career management, priority skills and corporate leadership.

Why is this important and how have we delivered this outcome?

Corporate talent pathways for senior leadership are already well established. But developing potential at all levels in the Civil Service is important if we are to diversify that pipeline and to achieve uplift in capability across the board. In CS Local our focus is to provide a first step on that journey for junior grades, particularly those based outside central London. In total we provided 17,000 learning and development days in 2015/16 including 5 residential and 2 modular career academies. The academy programme helps staff recognise their own potential and can light the touch paper of aspiration. Not everyone will have the drive and ambition to reach the most senior positions but many have the potential to progress beyond their current roles, perhaps becoming leaders in their region or business unit. These high quality learning products help delegates to do just that. To achieve the best outcomes our programmes are open to all departments in the region, fuelling cross fertilisation of ideas and a richer experience for those taking part. The content and delivery of both these programmes is reviewed each time to ensure they reflect emerging priorities and the latest thinking.



3

Business Outcome 3:

Help build the capability of the Civil Service by design and delivery of cross departmental initiatives in each region. Promote active career management, priority skills and corporate leadership.

Case Study: Raising Capability through the Academy Programme – Mark Williams DWP

Earlier this year, I was invited to take part in the first Civil Service Local All Wales Academy for Future Leaders at RAF St. Athan. This was a unique experience, where I was able to meet colleagues from across the Civil service in Wales and enhance my presentation, public speaking and leadership skills.

I returned to the office full of confidence and positivity. Just a few weeks after the course I put myself forward to lead an exercise and was tasked with clearing 1500 compliance files as part of a national DWP strategy. In my new role I liaised with my leadership team devised a local strategy, producing a step by step guide for colleagues. My next task was to provide coaching for over 50 Pension Credit processors, so that they were able to clear files accurately and collate stats in the correct format. I constantly monitored clearance against the 1500 case target and was able to use these figures to agree staffing levels for the following weeks with my leadership team. Statistics were recorded on a daily basis and fed to the national co-ordinator. At the end of the project I was told that Swansea had hit the target, using the least amount of hours in the network, referring recoverable overpayments of £1,900,000.

As a result of my involvement in the exercise, I was nominated by my line manager and leadership team for an award at the One Service Network DWP Wales People Awards. On the 24th September, I attended the awards ceremony and was announced as the winner in the Future Leader category.

I truly believe that if I hadn't attended the Academy I wouldn't have won this award. The experience really boosted my confidence levels, enhanced my skill set and made me realise that I am capable of pushing myself by taking on challenges that take me out of my comfort zone.

In August I applied for a promotion within DWP and one of my examples was purely based on my work within the academy. Just two weeks after receiving my award, I was advised that I was successful in gaining promotion and I start in my new role in November. My advice would be that if you get the opportunity to attend a CS Local Academy, grab it with both hands.

Next Steps

We fully expect the residential and modular Academy programme to remain a key deliverable in 2016/17 as demand remains high and at present it is a unique opportunity not replicated elsewhere in the Civil Service. To stay ahead of the curve we have introduced regular assurance to ensure the programme content continues to evolve and meet our customer/partner needs. During 2016/17 we will need to review our evaluation across our key programmes, including the Academy to ensure that we have a more accurate understanding of the difference such opportunities make.



4

Business Outcome 4:

Enable Civil Servants to connect with their local communities by facilitating cross departmental volunteering opportunities working with schools and community organisations.

Why is this important and how have we delivered this outcome?

Volunteering provides positive benefits to all those involved, including the individual, the home department and most importantly the citizens that we serve. It enables civil servants to connect with customers broadening understanding of their needs and providing targeted help to those that



need it most. It also provides an opportunity to reach out those parts of society that are currently underrepresented in the Civil Service, improving the diversity of future recruits. Lastly it provides a rich and rewarding learning experience for those taking part, in roles that are stretching and developmental in their own right.

As a large and geographically spread organisation the Civil Service has the potential to make a significant difference through volunteering. In Civil Service Local we have sought to harness this collective corporate muscle and focus it towards helping the more excluded members of society and those groups that remain underrepresented within the organisation. We have specifically looked to use the existing generic skill base of Civil Servants, deploying it in new ways for the benefit of these groups. In practice this has meant developing a programme for schools and for vulnerable groups which focusses upon employability, improving self-confidence and aspiration. We delivered 2,500 volunteering days in 2015/16 and whilst there is still huge scope to increase participation, the impact for the individual customers concerned already often substantial and in some instances life changing.

4

Business Outcome 4:

Enable Civil Servants to connect with their local communities by facilitating cross departmental volunteering opportunities working with schools and community organisations.

Case Study: Changing Lives in Exeter - Lizzy Tones YMCA Job Club

I am a Project Worker for YMCA Exeter's Job Club Project, which engages with around 250-300 individuals each year.

The Job Club project runs both drop-in services for anyone to come along to of any age, but also specialist employment help for young people at risk of homelessness and also ex-offenders.

- 48% of our current clients have disclosed that they have some sort of physical disability, mental health need, learning disability or learning difficulty
- 23% have disclosed that they have a criminal record
- 4% disclose that they have never worked
- 46% are classed as long-term unemployed

On top of this, many of our clients are facing issues such as debt or drug and alcohol addiction. However, despite these more obvious barriers, the main reason that most clients access our support is computer illiteracy, which as you can imagine is extremely debilitating in today's job market.

Our job club drop-in sessions have always taken an internet café style approach, offering friendly and non-judgemental support from YMCA staff and a team of volunteers. In March last year we were approached by Richard Hill from Civil Service Local who offered to bring his own expertise to our work in the form of employability workshops and a team of willing Civil Servant volunteers. Richard led workshops across a three-week period and covered essential topics that many of us take for granted but that most of our clients struggle with, such as conversational skills and team work. Richard encouraged individuals to interact and support each other, building their confidence as well as their abilities. He even ran training sessions for both Civil Servants and YMCA Staff so that we have been able to continue running workshops of this style every week to this day and have a team of around 20 regular Civil Servant volunteers who have come back and offered mock interview help, CV reviews and even led employability training themselves.

In the 6 months leading up to Richard Hill's workshops last March (2015), 45% of the individuals that had attended our Job Clubs at least once were reaching the goals of either finding employment or engaging in education, training or volunteering. Given the difficulties that our clients face and that our statistics rely on client's own self-reporting, we were very pleased with this percentage and indeed it compared well with local work program providers. However in the 6 months after Richard Hill came and brought the expertise of Civil Servants into our project, 100% of those that attended at least one workshop were reaching the target of gaining employment or engaging in education, training or volunteering.

I would like to share a short case study about a client named Luke, aged 55.

When Luke first came to Job Club he had been unemployed for 5 years. He was suffering from a number of mental and physical health concerns, which stemmed from him being the victim of discrimination and abuse. Furthermore, Luke was not confident reading or writing when he first joined us and was also dyslexic and completely computer illiterate. As you can imagine he took up a lot of our time and we were delighted when Luke agreed to come along to Richard Hill's employability workshops. Luke came to all three sessions, including a mock interview with two Civil Servants, and afterwards we saw a huge and almost immediate change in him.

From the advice that his interviewers had given, Luke decided that he wanted to take up some IT training. This was huge for us as we had been trying to persuade Luke to do this for some time but it is quite typical of the clients that we work with to be nervous and untrusting when it comes to engaging with other organisations. That is why it is so fantastic when Civil Servants come and meet our clients where they already feel safe, and give non-judgemental but highly professional advice.

From this point on we were able to link Luke up with an appropriate IT training provider as well as Maths and English courses and his confidence and abilities grew rapidly. Within a few months Luke had found a job as a retail assistant and has now been in that position for over 8 months. He popped in to job club last week to tell us that he had been promoted to supervisor and to thank us for all the help that we had given to him.

Our plans for the future are to continue working with local Civil Servants in Exeter and in fact we already have a Civil Servant on board developing a mentoring project for our clients as well as digital skills courses.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the Civil Servants that have helped our clients over this last year. As a charity, we simply could not afford the kind of knowledge and expertise that they bring and I know that all of our clients are so, so grateful.

4

Business Outcome 4:

Enable Civil Servants to connect with their local communities by facilitating cross departmental volunteering opportunities working with schools and community organisations.

Case Study: Inspiring Year 9 - Jayne Kroll

How do we ensure that the UK Civil Service becomes a model for diversity and inclusion? It's not just about focussing on the current workforce, but also about inspiring the next generation to fulfil their potential, regardless of their background, and attracting talented young people into the brilliant careers that we offer.

The Whitehall Internship Programme (part of the Government's social mobility strategy) aims to achieve this by raising aspirations of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and showcasing the Civil Service as a potential career option. In July 2015, CS Local delivered five outreach events to over 400 school students from 33 different schools around the country. As part of the design team, I had no idea how challenging this would be, but building on our CS Local ethos of innovation and creativity, we managed to change the perceptions of these 13-14 year olds with a little help from some canine friends, Lego, a few misshapen eggs and a suitcase.

The events were aimed at Year 9 students and we invited secondary schools from around the country that met our demographic and achievement criteria. The day-long sessions were full of short, interactive and fun activities that promoted the Civil Service as an excellent employer, challenged perceptions and promoted the Fast Track Apprenticeship professions. It was a real team effort with 175 volunteers from 16 different departments helping to showcase the range of jobs available in the Civil Service.

The results were overwhelming, with 80% of those attending saying they had learned something new about the Civil Service, and 57% saying they would consider a career in the Civil Service. Although the day focussed on the Civil Service, the bigger objective was to show these pupils that they have valuable skills and can aspire to great careers regardless of their background. This is something I was already passionate about through delivering the CS Local Inspiring Young People programme. It's an important aspect of our work and one that I hope will continue to grow.

Next Steps

In our view volunteering will continue to be a key area where CS Local can make a profound difference, providing the opportunity to help our citizens in a way that complements mainstream business delivery. The volunteering programme also provides an opportunity to trial innovative approaches to service delivery at a small scale. For 2016/17 we will evaluate how we can evolve the volunteering programme further to provide most value to the customer, staff and business.

5

Business Outcome 5:

Encourage a culture of innovation through design and piloting of creative solutions and new ways of working.

Why is this important and how have we delivered this outcome?

In CS Local we recognise that we often need to do things differently to do them better. In a large organisation such as the Civil Service it is easy to focus upon improving delivery within known parameters rather than going back to basics and asking is this the right approach? Asking questions, and more importantly developing potential answers has always been part of our ethos. As a small and flexible network we have the ability to trial approaches at a small scale, to test out ideas and learn what works in practice. This approach is most evident in some of the projects that we have developed, which bring together expertise from across departments to solve an issue that touches us all.

Government Access Point is one such case. Initially trialled in one hospice in the North West, the approach is now being extended not just in that region but across the country. Whilst the initial pilots are small scale, this provides the advantage of rapid learning and adaptation and a positive attitude to risk that encourages further innovation.



5

Business Outcome 5:

Encourage a culture of innovation through design and piloting of creative solutions and new ways of working.

Government Access Point: Innovation in Action - Chris Hare

In the last 2 years, more than 40 colleagues from 7 Civil Service departments have been involved with the GAP project. They've had the opportunity to develop their skills, display a wide range of competencies and learn about other areas of government, as well as taking on new roles such as marketing, running training events and mentoring.

The volunteers enjoy being part of the team, as it provides an opportunity for them to give something back to their local communities. Those taking part are in the privileged position of being able to help people who don't know where to turn, and to make a difference at a difficult time. The work we do is valued and it can be enormously rewarding.

Working in a hospice is challenging, and the volunteers are frequently faced with situations they wouldn't come across in their normal, day-to-day roles, but they have still provided the highest levels of customer service. The ability of the team to work together in difficult circumstances exemplifies the true spirit of Civil Service reform, and it showcases what we can achieve when we work together across departments.

The most valuable asset to every department is their staff, and by allowing their people to take part in GAP, departments are making a significant investment in their workforce. The pay-back is that volunteers return to their normal roles more confident and with a renewed sense of pride about their work. Many of the team speak of feeling re-invigorated and re-energized as a result of a customer service experience no training course can provide. The GAP team's commitment, enthusiasm and dedication is what will ensure the project's continuing success. Perhaps the best measure of GAP's success is the trust placed in the project's volunteers by our partners, working in such a sensitive and emotional environment as a hospice is a great honour and I believe the work we do is actively changing the perception of civil servants.

Next Steps

As a small and flexible organisation CS Local is well placed to explore innovative techniques and their application. During 2015/16 we started to place a greater emphasis upon this area of our work and we will continue to develop and expand this in 2016/17, encouraging others through demonstrating the benefits of this approach.

6

Business Outcome 6:

Demonstrate the financial benefit of a collaborative and innovative Civil Service by working with partners to achieve notional savings equal to the CS Local budget of £1.1m.

Why is this important and how have we delivered this outcome?

Much of our work focusses upon what can be achieved through greater participation, cultural change and local solutions, however we recognise that as a team we need to demonstrate that CS Local provides good value for money overall. This year we achieved real and notional savings of over £2.2m, double the operating budget for CS Local and is an example of how a small initial investment can be used to pump prime activity well in excess of the original value.

The CS Local approach is to instil a culture of positive change and creative thinking from the ground up, using existing resource more effectively to improve outcomes. With ever increasing emphasis on value for money and reducing budgets we will need to ensure that our initiatives remain pivotal to the reform vision 'a brilliant Civil Service' and to meeting our customer and stakeholder needs in the year ahead.

Next Steps

As with our main delivery programmes, our emphasis in 2016/17 will be to refine our evaluation and data capture. This will enable us to interrogate our findings more rigorously and ensure that we continue to achieve good value and the real savings throughout our programmes of work.

3. Measuring our Delivery

In addition to looking at how we met our business outcomes we continue to measure our delivery performance on a monthly basis through a matrix of targets.

This enables us to quantify progress in each region and across the team as a whole. From this fine grained assessment we are able to draw down a summary of our high level performance against key indicators.

This is included in the table below and confirms that in most instances we met or exceeded our KPIs in 2015/16. In the year ahead we will be looking to further refine our performance management system. We have already reviewed our targets, and we will continue to improve the quality of our data and evaluation to drive our performance forward.

Key Performance Measures for 2015/16

Values	Target Measure	End of Year Position
Learning and Development Days (DS, Academy, Mentoring, CS Local awareness sessions etc.)	6,000	17,898.5
Volunteering Days	2,500	2,498
Financial Savings (£300/L&D day, savings as a direct result of CS involvement - free places on a training course etc.)	£1,100,000	£2,200,000
Staff engaged with CS Local activity	No Target	12,171
External citizens directly engaged with CS Local activity (Schools, Volunteering in the community etc.)	No Target	12,768

4. Looking Forward to 2016/17

At the beginning of 2016/17 we undertook a substantial review of our business purpose reviewing our role, seeking views from our stakeholders and analysing our experience to date.

The conclusions from this exercise have already helped us develop our strategy for the year ahead and the key points from this Annual Review will help to inform how we interpret this as we take it forward. We are clear that the outcome we are seeking is to make a positive difference, to encourage the behavioural and cultural changes that lead to a more productive and engaged workforce and to offer some direct assistance to vulnerable citizens in our local communities.

We know that continuing to be a credible player takes time and effort and keeping a rich and regular dialogue with our key partners will remain an important part of how we operate, including a more informed understanding of our customer needs and better analysis of how we might meet them. A key part of this will be to explore how we evaluate the outcomes from our programmes. We recognise that we need more accurate and reliable data if we are to use this information to drive innovation and further improve what we do, and how we undertake our activities.

Geographically we will aim to offer a full programme across all regions and to extend our reach to new locations wherever possible. We have already started to address how we can tackle underrepresentation in the take up of our opportunities and continuing to reach out and encourage colleagues from diverse backgrounds to participate will continue to be a priority for us in the year ahead. We will also be working closely with the Scotland Office and the Welsh Assembly to offer a better range of opportunities to those civil servants working in the devolved administrations.

As we look ahead 2016/17 is already shaping up to be a challenge, but challenge is also an opportunity to improve and develop. CS Local has always embraced change and used it to drive positive development and we intend to continue to do so in the year ahead.

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