



Civil Service Local News

Issue 8 - Spring 2014

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Welcome to the Spring Newsletter

Dare to share....

Email
the editor
here



Greetings to you all from CS Local. In this edition we are looking at how we all gain when we share our skills, experience and knowledge with those around us. We have examples from all around the country of how sharing has helped teams get to grips with new challenges. We will be reporting back on the latest round of our highly successful Engaging our Schools programme, looking at how continuous improvement techniques have brought a new approach to some of our prisons, networking, mentoring and much much more.

Now that Spring is well and truly here it is time to look ahead, and here at CS Local we have been doing just that. We have been giving some thought to how we can work with our departmental colleagues to bring you more and better opportunities over the next three years. We would love to hear your views about the projects that you value the most. If you have a story to tell us please do get in touch. As we go to press we are starting the process of moving our website, but don't panic you will be automatically redirected our shiny new web page on GOV.UK once it is up and running. There will also be a new CS Local blog which should make it easier for you to get in touch direct and for us to find out what works for you.



The CS Local Team

CS Live 2014

Plans are now well and truly underway for CS Live 2014. This year there will be three regional events Bristol 18 June, Liverpool 25 June and Newcastle 3 July, plus London 15 and 16 July – get the dates in your diary now so you don't miss out on these brilliant events. An exciting programme is being put together which should be relevant to all of us. CS Local will help host the three regional events and we look forward to meeting as many of you as we can. See www.civilservicelive.com for all the details. See you there!



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Learning from Each Other

North West Prisons Raise the Bar

Civil Service North West's Continuous Improvement Network has certainly done what it says on the tin this year, and a particular highlight has been their work with the National Offender Management Service. Whether you call it LEAN, CIT or Pace-setting probably depends on your department, but that was the expertise we tapped into when we brought together a team of qualified practitioners from the Ministry of Justice and HMRC.

In HMP Preston, focus was on the Home Detention Curfew (HDC) scheme. New ideas and initiatives have now been incorporated to improve workflow and reduce over-processing and duplication. One massive change was the time taken, it's been reduced from 118 to 33 days – a great result. Staff at the prison embraced the changes and are now implementing a much more streamlined approach.

Over in HMP Kirkham, it was the Release On Temporary Licence (ROTL) scheme that needed some attention. It was acknowledged from the start that the benefits wouldn't be immediate due to the complexity of the process. However, it's projected that there will be an estimated reduction of 44% to the volume of cases being sent to the ROTL board and a reduction to the time it takes for offenders to be notified of their ROTL decision. A new checklist means there'll be a more formalised approach to measuring quality in future. It's simple changes like these that will be beneficial to all – staff, offenders and their families.

The Prison Governors agree there's still more scope for reform and they're keen to work in partnership with more Civil Service departments in future. Both prisons gained from the experience, but feedback from the volunteers clearly showed that they also benefited from being involved – both personally and professionally. It was an opportunity to enhance and build their own strengths and skills in an environment that was very unfamiliar to them. The experience demonstrated the ethos of moving forward by pushing ourselves out of our comfort zones and meeting the challenge of changing things for the better by working together.

Simon Ecclestone said

"It was a great chance to up-skill our champions. Consultants would have cost around £100,000, so we made an enormous saving"

By working in a different department to make improvements and save money, new bonds were formed. These are the steps that take us ever closer to truly achieving our goal of having one Civil Service.

Job Shadowing in the South East

Job Shadowing can be an ideal opportunity to see how other departments in the Civil Service operate. It is a chance to gain new perspectives and build contacts with colleagues in other departments. Job shadowing is part of an on-going project and colleagues who recently took part share their experiences below.

Carol Snape ONS Portsmouth shadowed at the National Archives

My line manager & I went to the National Archives and met with Dr Paul Carter. He was really helpful and enthusiastic.

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He showed us original documents relating to the workhouses etc. and it was really interesting to see how this sort of thing was the first type of social help/welfare. We were able to see how detailed job descriptions were, which was of particular interest to us, as we classify occupations. It gave me a better understanding of how ONS classifications impact on other organisations.



Alexandra Ellis

Alexandra Ellis HMRC shadowed at MoD

I saw a range of roles in the MoD and was shown round the secretariat department involving media, parliamentary questions and heritage. I was introduced to staff and given an idea of their responsibilities. This opportunity gave me a real insight into the administration needed to run the Royal Navy. The visit to MoD made me definitely consider applying for future vacancies with them and I am looking at the Civil Service website for upcoming positions within MoD Portsmouth. Also, after being in HMRC for 23 years, it gave me the confidence to consider transfer to another government department. The work seemed interesting and the staff were very helpful.

Brian Budden from HMRC Southampton said:

"My shadowing session was useful as I gained some idea of what is involved in getting people registered for tax self assessment. This will help me if I contemplate ever working in a compliance team of this nature and also with understanding the background to the security referrals we get from time to time."



Brian Budden

Mentoring Masterclass – London

CS Local, Civil Service Learning and HMRC held a cross departmental mentoring masterclass, hosted at Bush House, London. The aim of the event was to help delegates gain a better understanding of what mentoring entails, the benefits gained, commitment and qualities required so an informed decision as to whether to become a mentor and/or a mentee can be made.



There was a morning and afternoon session with 82 civil servants from across 13 government departments, including Department for Work and Pensions, Home Office and HMRC. Dr James Pritchard from Civil Service Learning facilitated the event and guest speakers were invited to talk about their experience as a mentee or mentor.

There was a very positive atmosphere and lively discussions from all who attended. One of the delegates said

"Excellent workshop - enlightening and informative. The speakers were all excellent and fascinating"

For more details contact your CS Local co-ordinator at <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/improving/civil-service-local/civil-service-local-about-us>

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Engaging our Schools - Our Latest Round Up

Corsham School Students get behind the wire with the MOD

Liz McKenty, Project Manager from MOD Corsham tells her story....

Taking inspiration from the Civil Service Local 'Engaging our Secondary Schools' programme which aims to develop staff's competencies and give something back to the community in which we live and work, I put myself forward to lead a team of 6 volunteer mentors from the staff at MOD Corsham to take up the challenge of setting up and running a 6 week programme of 2 hourly events for the students of Corsham School.



Corsham EOS Project

The programme, supported by our Director, began in early October when 11 eager 17 year olds came behind the wire to enjoy sessions covering customer service, workplace behaviours, job application and interview skills. It also provided an opportunity to showcase the potential career opportunities that MOD has to offer.

With the help of staff at MOD Corsham the team were able to organise talks on the history of the site, satellites, operational tours, MOD apprenticeship schemes and a hands-on, practical demonstration of radio equipment and how the military communicate in the battle-space. There was also an opportunity to try on some field kit!

At the end of the programme the team gathered some excellent feedback from the students. Their managers reported that having time away from the day job to run the events had not impacted on the business, but had improved confidence levels and skills.

What next?

The programme has sparked interest from several areas and I was lucky enough to have the chance to brief the Minister for the Armed Forces, Mark Francois, who was extremely encouraging and made some really helpful suggestions.

It is planned to forge a long term relationship with Corsham School by running similar events each term. Other Departments are now showing a real interest in starting up Engaging Our Schools programmes of their own and I am enjoying being able to share my experience with them and pass on some hints and tips to help them get started.

Engaging Our Schools in the West Midlands

The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) has become the first MOJ department to take part in the Engaging Our Schools programme in the West Midlands.

The programme involves 16 and 17-year-old pupils from a local school participating in activities to help develop their teamwork, customer service, competency based application forms and interview skills. OPG became involved through the Civil Service Local West Midlands.

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**Heather Owen,
Project Manager, said:**

"OPG are excited to be part of this six-week programme and engage with Great Barr School; who are keen to build a link between local education and the business community."

The programme provides a great opportunity for Bands E & F staff within OPG to develop and demonstrate new skills and capabilities, such as leadership and coaching.

**Sultana Begum,
from OPG Accounts
Receivable, said:**

"I fully enjoyed the first session which was based on team working. It was very interactive not only for the staff involved but also for the students. Everyone actively participated in the session and were fully engaged in the activities. Looking forward to the second session!"

The first session of the six-week programme took place in January and was a huge success. Additional students will be joining the group for the second session, after pupils talked to others about the positive experience they had. This has given the volunteers further motivation to inspire the next generation on the benefits of the world of work.

Passport to Success

Her Majesty's Passport Office Peterborough partnered Thomas Deacon Academy (TDA) during November 2013, for the Civil Service Local Engaging Our Schools Programme, the first of its type to run in the East of England.



Her Majesty's Passport Office Team

A team of 7 HM Passport Office staff created and delivered lessons to two groups of Year 10 students, mentoring them over 6 weeks to help prepare for the workplace. The lessons formed part of the students Certificate of Personal Effectiveness qualification (CoPE) and covered Mission Statements, Customer Service, CVs, Competency based application forms, interview techniques as well as an insight into working for the Civil Service.

Lessons were loosely themed around Horrible Histories, X Factor and The Apprentice with video clips, music, quizzes and role play included to keep each lesson interactive and to build student confidence in public speaking. Mentors worked closely with students to complete their CV's and draft competencies which became part of their coursework and helped students prepare for interviews.

In the final week students attended a mock interview and each spoke at a celebratory event to their peers, family, teachers and guests from HM Passport Office about what they had learnt during the programme. The students performed to their audience 'A CV for Christmas', written for them by mentor Harry Husbands. Alison Longman, Area Operational Manager/ Assistant Director presented the students with Certificates of Achievement with prizes for individual and team winners.

The hard work and enthusiasm of the mentors was fundamental to the programme's success. They built relationships with the students, engaging them in the tasks and developing skills which should improve employability. Strong community ties are continuing to build with TDA approaching HM Passport Office Peterborough for assistance with Year 11 interview workshops. The CoPE students are also due to visit their mentors at work, before starting their own work placements across Peterborough.

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Volunteering Round Up

Help for the Homeless in the South West

Since 2010 Civil Service Local South West has worked in partnership with Business in the Community (BITC) to encourage staff to support the annual 'Pants for Christmas' appeal. Staff from departments including ACAS, PINS, HMRC, GCHQ and DWP encouraged their colleagues to make donations of new coats, underwear, hats and gloves as well as toiletries. Donations were collected in Plymouth, St Austell, Bristol, Cheltenham and Gloucester and distributed to organisations working with the homeless. In Bristol and Plymouth this was arranged by BITC, and in Cheltenham and Gloucester by the GEAR Project. In St Austell staff supported their local food bank by donating a wide range of groceries. In total 250 large bags of clothing and toiletries were collected, along with 7 boxes of groceries. The notional total cash value of the donations was just under £10,000.



Nicky Bale, Operational Manager from GEAR said:

"I can't tell you how brilliant this was; we were overwhelmed by the quantity and quality of the donations which we were able to give directly to the people who use the centre. This has made such a difference to their lives, helping to raise their self-esteem and keep them warm. A huge thank you to everyone who kindly donated".

In Bristol, 15 volunteers from DWP, Highways Agency and the MoD volunteered at the St Paul's homeless shelter during December. Donations of clothing were checked for quality – people who are homeless still like to look smart – and food checked for its sell by date. Blankets and duvets were moved to the blanket store and the shelter itself was prepared for opening on Christmas Eve with beds made up, floors and walls washed and the cooking area made ready.

Feedback from the volunteers was very positive. **Sally from DWP said:**

"2 of us shifted about 500 tins of baked beans into the store to make way for fresh food supplies. It has given me insight into what they need each year, which hopefully will help us target the donations better next Christmas, i.e. no baked beans!"

New Pilot Project - Helping those affected by Dementia?

Anyone affected by dementia will understand the devastating effect it can have on family and friends. It's a disease that affects 820,000 people in the UK and it's estimated that approximately 25 million of the UK population have a close family member or friend living with it.

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That's why The Charity for Civil Servants is working with Dementia UK to offer a new service throughout Surrey* which will support people living with dementia and their carers.



The service will enable civil servants living in Surrey* to have direct access to a Dementia UK Admiral Nurse.

The Nurse is a specialist who can provide a wide range of services, including psychological support, to help family carers understand and deal with their feelings, as well as practical advice and information on dementia, its impact and how to cope.

If you're eligible you will receive a two hour assessment and then four follow-up sessions, covering:

- The different aspects of caring for a relative/friend with dementia
- Emotional and psychological support at the point of diagnosis and throughout the caring journey
- The development of skills to assist with care giving
- Positive approaches to living with dementia

The Charity is piloting this scheme for the next six months in Surrey*. If you, and the person you care for who has a dementia-related condition, both live in Surrey* and you think this service might be helpful, please contact The Charity for Civil Servants on 0800 056 2424 or email help@foryoubyyou.org.uk.

*Excluding London Boroughs

Give & Gain Day Friday 16 May 2014

Give & Gain Day is the UK's only national day of employee volunteering. Every year since 2008, it has given companies a unique opportunity to bring community action to life, whether they're just starting out on the volunteering journey or veterans of it.

On Give & Gain Day 2013, 12,000+ business volunteers from 300 companies gave over 96,000 hours - worth over £1.3 million - in the UK alone.

Give & Gain Day connects skilled professionals with community organisations by matching them with a volunteering project. Business volunteers help with everything from school sports days to employability workshops for the long term unemployed. Give & Gain Day participants in the UK are part of a global movement of thousands of volunteers across 25 countries as diverse as Spain, Iran, Nigeria and Guatemala.

By making volunteering, fun, accessible and inspirational the aim is to make it something that all businesses encourage their staff to do. Volunteering offers employees personal and professional growth, as well as increasing loyalty and motivation.



Give & Gain Day can become a focal point for a company's year round volunteering activity, or a taster for businesses without anything in place.

In 2014, the intention is to inspire over 35,000 employees in the UK and abroad, to get out into their communities and volunteer their time for a good cause.

Give & Gain Day 2014 will take place on Friday 16 May. Want to get involved or for more information visit <http://www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/give-gain-day>

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Senior Leaders Networks

West Midlands' senior leaders get to grips with the new performance management system

The West Midlands cross-departmental Senior Leaders Network met in Birmingham on 7 February. As we were fast approaching the end of year review time the theme for the day was Civil Service Reform and the new Performance Management system.

The event began with a presentation from Greg Hobbs, Head of Continuous Improvement across Government in the Cabinet Office, who spoke about Civil Service Reform, the progress which has been made to date and the challenges which lie ahead.

This set the scene nicely for Shelley Myatt of CS Employee Policy who talked about the new Performance Management system from a policy perspective. She was followed by Babu Ganatra, a Customer Services Operations Manager in DWP who shared with the Group the lessons learned from taking part in the pilot in 2013.

This sparked a lively Q&A session and debate about the new system.

Feedback from the event was extremely positive.....



The next event is planned for May when the topic for discussion will be 'Digital by Default'.

If you are Grade 7 or above would like to be part of the Senior Leaders' Network, please e-mail: janice.smith@csresourcing.gsi.gov.uk

The One Sheffield Network

A key theme of the Civil Service Reform Plan is a more unified Civil Service. Senior Civil Servants representing departments across Sheffield have responded to this challenge by setting up a network to promote the sharing of ideas, best practice and information.

It is hoped that by working more closely together this will deliver opportunities and benefits for colleagues. At its first meeting the network explored a number of themes including what more can be done to develop our people, how to encourage greater movement between departments, the scope for greater cross site working and making

Sheffield the location of choice outside London.

This is early days for the network but it has the support of the Head of the Civil Service, Sir Bob Kerslake who recognises that there is much which can be achieved by exploiting what departments have in common.

You can find out more information about the network and how to join by contacting Gillian Hillier at the Department of Education via Gillian.hillier@education.gsi.gov.uk or 0114 274 2431

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Networking in the North East

Civil Service Local North East is focusing on developing networking opportunities. As well as our senior leaders' group and redeployment network we have developed Communications and Continuous Improvement Networks.

Ann White, Senior Communications Manager for Her Majesty's Passport Office (HMPO) approached CS Local to help establish a communications network. Since then we have brought together a network of people working in communications in government departments and agencies across the North East to share knowledge, news, best practice, and support each other to understand all of our priorities and challenges.



Ann White - CS Local North East Engagement Co-ordinator

After only two meetings the group are already starting to see the benefits of networking. HMPO in Durham has hosted two visits from the Ministry of Justice's Legal Aid Agency. One visitor attended a Home Office Bullying and Harassment training session and HMPO are supporting the Agency to introduce the training to their staff. Both visitors were taken through the passport journey, had an office tour, and discussed Managing Attendance and staff engagement with the HR Business Partner. HMPO and DWP also intend to meet to share best practice regarding the introduction of Sharepoint.

The network also hopes to learn from the wider public sector and at the last meeting Northumberland County Council presented their work to digitalise services and use social media to connect with residents and customers.

Ann is now working with us as Engagement Co-ordinator and aims to develop a similar group in Yorkshire and the Humber so if you are interested in that (or the North East group) please contact Ann White.

We are also working with Tracy Graham and Alison Roach, HMRC Pacesetter Practitioners, to develop a North East Continuous Improvement Network. The first meeting was held in April at HMRC, Waterview Park, with representatives from a several departments and agencies. Participants had a tour of the Child Benefit Centre Model Office. Model Office status is HMRC's recognition for an area that is assessed as operating at the highest level in continuous improvement. If you work in continuous improvement and would like to visit take a look at the 'What's New' section of our webpage. To join a similar network in Yorkshire and the Humber contact Richard Armstrong. As inventor Thomas Edison says "*There's a way to do it better—let's find it.*"

Finally, if you would benefit from networking with others within your field in the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber, contact Ann who says

"I'm very excited about joining the team and I can see great scope to take cross government networking forward to the benefit of everyone. It will be challenging as departments have to produce even more with even less resources but all the more reason to work together. So please get in touch and let's see if we can make great things happen!"



Civil Service LIVE 2014

SAVE THE DATE

Bristol 18 June | Liverpool 25 June

Newcastle 3 July | London 15-16 July



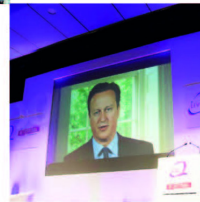
"Excellent event, great for learning, keeping up with new developments and networking. Time well spent."



"My first time at Civil Service Live but definitely not my last. I thoroughly enjoyed the event - it was inspirational!"



"Civil Service Live helps me to think and reflect, and encourages me to change and develop."



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Inspiring Others ...



A feature of our CS Local Academies is for delegates to come up with a project which promotes Civil Service Reform. Each team

pitch their ideas to a panel of 'Dragons' and if successful they then work on implementing the project over the next 12 months.

One of the teams from the SW Academy decided that they would create 'The Inspirational List'. The list is a collection of resources that have inspired senior managers and others. It is more than just traditional things such as books, films and famous people and can include anything which people have found inspirational such as pieces of music, sporting events, school teachers, family members, blogs, video-clips etc.

The aim is that contributors not only provide their list but a brief explanation of why they found the things on the list inspiring.

CS Learning have agreed to host the Inspirational List on their website at <https://civilservicelearning.civilservice.gov.uk/learning-resources/inspiration-list>

They are now looking for contributions. If you have a story about what has inspired you or your own list please send it to: Amanda.light@landregistry.gsi.gov.uk



Dee Dalton - ACAS, part of the Academy Inspirational List Team

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