

The Network



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for Education



Department
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Innovation & Skills



Cabinet Office



Department
for Work &
Pensions



Department for
Communities and
Local Government



HM Revenue
& Customs



Unlock your potential



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



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- B&C Learning Academy
- Going Forward
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Department
for Transport



Ministry
of Justice



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of Defence



Department
for International
Development



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of Health



Attorney
General's
Office

Issue 6

Welcome to issue six of The Network

Editor's Note

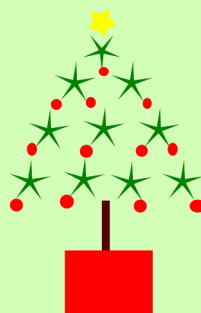
Let's start by wishing all my readers a Merry Christmas and to add to the festive excitement, welcome back to The Network.

This issue we are focusing on **YOU!**

We hear from Becky Liu and her journey to promotion within the civil service.

We Focus On development opportunities and initiatives to get you thinking about your career. Sherene Caesar-Johnson tells us about her Fast Stream experience and we also feature articles on the HMRC Learning Academy, the CS Local Going Forward project and the DfE Strictly extravaganza that is accepting competitors from across the civil service regardless of department or location.

Check out the Classifieds page for more North West based opportunities, and why not give our Christmas quiz a go to get into the festive spirit!



What's Inside

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What's going on in the region

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Meet The Network: Jane



Hi I'm Jane, I joined the civil service 25 years ago, which makes me feel really old! I've worked in various business areas within HMRC during this time and have seen a lot of change.

I'm currently working as a personal assistant to the Deputy Director of Charities, Savings and International. This is an interesting role and you never know what is round the corner.

I'm a mum to two boys, Harry aged 16 and Charlie aged 11, which keeps me extremely busy but I would not have it any other way. I enjoy going to the cinema/theatre as much as I can. I also go to bootcamp twice a week which is as bad as it sounds. I live for my holidays, the last being

in Orlando to see Mickey.

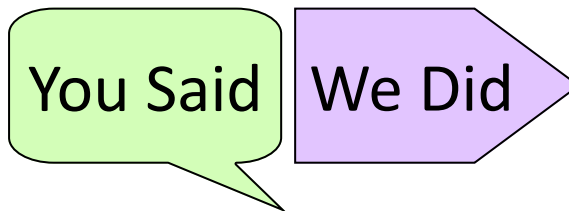
1. What is the last film you watched and a two word review? The Intern- Good fun

2. What books would be found on your bookshelf? Historical novels for example Phillipa Gregory

3. Who would be your 5 ideal dinner party guests? Richard Armitage (I've loved him since North and South), Daniel Craig (no explanation needed), Audrey Hepburn, HRH The Queen, and Michelle Obama.

4. If your house was burning down and you could only save two things, what would you take? My family (obviously!) and family photo's

Your feedback is invaluable, so here's...



You Said; We Did returns. It's been a quiet month for feedback (*Ed—is that a good thing!?*) with just one comment:

1. **You said**—"You Said, We Did should be **You Said; We Did**" (punctuation correction)

We did—Well, we don't profess to be experienced journalists and we will happily take on board and change any grammatical errors that are pointed out to us. See the opening sentence to this page for our amendment.

Thanks again for the feedback we've had so far; but it doesn't stop here; Contact one of the editorial team to let us know what you think of our latest issue; or email; thenetworknw@gmail.com

(Ed—Sorry; we couldn't resist!)



Advert



Introducing the 'Pandas' ...

...We are a team of cross department civil servants who all worked together at the 2015 CSNW Academy. The project which we are taking forward over the next 12 months aims to develop a network of 'Civil Service Champions'.

Our intention is to breakdown the barriers hindering knowledge of other departments and agencies.

Look out for our messages on all social media channels over the next 12 months.

Meanwhile, if you would like to find out more contact:

STEPHEN.COGLAN@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK



A close friend recommended I join the Civil Service. He worked in Home Office and spent his days “watching videos on his phone and stamping documents”. What a cushy life! I didn't really know what career path I wanted to take. My previous employment was either cleaning or making something edible and I walked out of the University of Hull with a Psychology degree when I enrolled for Chemistry.

My journey started when I joined Department for Education (DfE) as an EO in November 2013. I was a correspondence officer, specialising in child at risk referrals and child protection/safeguarding correspondence. It was certainly not as relaxing as my friend made it out to be! However, I

found the role challenging, exciting and fast-paced and learned to thrive off pressure.

My role model was a Grade 6 who I met at an away- day. She joined the CS as an EA and quickly moved up the ranks. I approached her and asked what I needed to do to get a promotion. She said: spend three months getting to know your job, spend the next three months excelling at your job and then take on work that goes beyond your role whilst applying for promotions.

I certainly did not meet this ambitious timescale, however, did follow similar steps. Do take the time to get to know your job and not fret too much about your future prospects during this time. Once you have mastered your role don't neglect the day job, but take on as much additional work as you can manage whilst keeping the day job quality/volume high.

I found approaching my line manager helpful in highlighting the competencies that required development and asked for their help to acquire work in those areas. Try to nominate yourself for tasks outside your usual work to expand your skill set and tasks that give you wider divisional/departmental visibility. The most important thing is to do it at a pace that feels right for you. The more confident and comfortable you are in your current grade the smoother the transition will be to the next. I had three EO positions, each varying in tasks/responsibilities, before securing my HEO role this August with the Education Funding Agency (EFA). EFA is one of three agencies that is part of DfE, along with National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) and Standards Testing Agency (STA).

My current aim is just getting to know the day job and see where things take me.

Getting to know...

Becky

1. What is your favourite food?

Blueberry muffins

2. What is the last film you watched and a two word review?

Terminator Genisys—Ridiculous plot

3. What books would be found on your bookshelf?

Fantasy books and quite a few manga's

4. Who would play you in a movie of your life?

Can I be a Disney Pixar movie instead? Don't mind the voice actor...

5. Who are your favourite sports team?

Team Liquid in Starcraft 2... It's technically a big sport in Korea!



'Focus On...' returns, this edition we are highlighting what is available for your development

Focus On...

Operational Delivery Profession

We support civil servants who run the front line services that citizens use, such as processing visas, passports and driving licences.

We're an informal network for civil servants involved in front line services for citizens.

The Operational Delivery Profession is one of the [Civil Service Professions](#). The profession is the largest in government and our work supports staff in tax and benefit offices, job centres, courts and prisons across the UK, and many working in consular offices abroad.

Operational Delivery Professions can offer you:

- Qualifications
- Career mapper
- Talent scheme
- Jobs

More information can be found on [CS Learning](#).

Whether you are focused on promotion or building your own capability there are a variety of ways to unlock your potential within the civil service, here are some of them



Civil Service Fast Stream

The Fast Stream is the Government's flagship graduate development programme. As a civil servant you can apply regardless of what age or academic qualifications you have. Applications have just closed for 2015, however, the Analytical schemes will reopen for a second round of applications early next year.



Civil Service Local Leadership and Management Apprenticeship

If you're able to commit to an 18 month programme, and are willing to dedicate some of your time to help deliver Civil Service reform in the north west of England, then you may be eligible to apply for a Level 5 Apprenticeship in Leadership and Management. This is a university level, formally accredited and recognised qualification which you can study towards through Civil Service Local, in partnership with Joint Learning Partnership (JLP).

For more information, an application form and hand book [please contact Helen by e-mail](#).



Sherene Caesar-Johnson tells us about her experience



I am a Generalist Fast Streamer and have just started my third year. Prior to joining, I was an Executive Officer (EO) for the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and Department for Education (DfE). But after three years I was ready for a change.

I was looking for a role that was challenging and would provide me with the opportunity to develop/progress. I was interested in working in other departments and saw an advert for the Fast Stream programme offering these opportunities. After completing the assessments I successfully gained a place on the programme in 2013.

My first two years were split into four 6 month postings designed to provide me with a breadth of experience within and outside of the Civil Service. These roles were varied, covering a range of functions including operational delivery, policy and digital. I have worked for the:

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCL)- appropriate use of Regional Growth Fund grants. **Department of Health (DH)** - Developing policy for the second phase of the Care and Support Specialised Housing fund and leading work to develop a Prevention Evidence library. **Manchester City Council** - Delivering a range of tools to support the implementation of the social value policy across Greater Manchester. **Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)** - Leading the implementation of tools to digitise incoming and outgoing mail across the Charities, Savings and International business area.

Each posting has provided me with autonomy and empowered me to make effective decisions within a safe working environment. I have been able to help to shape the direction of work.

I have gained experience of dealing with a range of situations; from those that were planned, to those that were unexpected and pressured. This has meant that I had to be flexible, adaptable and pragmatic. I had great support from the teams that I worked with, who shared their experience and knowledge. This was enhanced by the courses provided as part of the Fast Stream programme.

Over the next two years I will undertake two 12 month postings strengthening the skills and competencies I have already developed. In October I joined the HMRC's Strategic Resourcing team. I have only been in this role for 6 weeks but I'm already excited (and a little bit nervous) about the challenge that lies ahead.

Looking back over the past 26 months, it's hard to believe how much I have developed over such a short period of time. Despite some difficult moments I feel like a more resilient, well-rounded civil servant as a result of it. I would encourage anyone who is looking for a new challenge to consider applying for the Fast Stream.

For more information please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/civil-service-fast-stream>

Getting to know... Sherene

1. *What was the last film you watched and provide a two-word review?* Don't really watch films but partial to a good box set. Currently watching 'how to get away with murder' - unexpectedly dark and twisted

Ed—should we be worried?

2. *What books would be found on your bookshelf?* Legal thrillers by John Grisham and Jodi Picoult

3. *What music artists are you currently listening to?* Jess Glynne, Disclosure, Jennifer Hudson

4. *If your house was burning down and you could only save two things, what would you take?* My photos as they capture great memories, and my phone to call for help!

HMRC: Benefits and Credits Learning Academy



Benefits and Credits Learning Academy welcomes its 5000th visitor

Learning and development was heading in the wrong direction in 2014; with the People Survey telling us that teams didn't believe in our learning. The survey also indicated that programmes were not helping staff in their jobs and there was a lack of support for the development of future careers.

Building Our Future events in 2014 made us look beyond the office environments currently occupied and provided a vision of what a future workplace could look like.

With this in mind a business case was presented to clear the existing Ops area on floor 11 of the Guild Centre, creating a space in which to build a learning academy. Timing was critical, a potential underspend in 2014 meant there was some funding until March. But it was January already and the end of the financial year was rapidly approaching.

With some research into learning environments and help from our learning advocates, a plan for the Academy was put forward. The project would require collaborative working with Estates & Support Services (ESS), The Chief Digital Information Officers and Landlords/suppliers to achieve this huge project in a short timescale and with the budget available.



The end result is a vibrant and flexible learning space with 7 different environments. It will allow us to support our people with current tasks, give them a creative space to learn something new and help them with their career development. It will benefit around 3000 employees working within Benefits and Credits (B&C) in the North West and provide a stable platform from which to grow our learning and development.

And so on Thursday 15th October the B&C Learning Academy welcomed **its 5000th** visitor to the facility.



This figure represents the total number of customers including staff & learning-events facilitators who have visited the B&C Learning Academy since it opened for business in May 2015.

The Academy has facilitated many technical and task-based learning events since it was established - induction learning to approximately 350 new staff as well as personal development training events for many others. Hundreds of people have booked an e-learning pod for themselves to work on their own development and many have visited the facility for a tour, and to improve their understanding of how the resources can support themselves and their teams.

The large presentation area has also allowed us to hold several Civil Service North West local events, as well as business area planning and development events which otherwise would have required an external facility at additional cost.

Who was our 5000th visitor?

The lucky person was Tricia Ashcroft from Team 7/Group 1 in Compliance Operations 6.





Following on from the CS North West 2014 Academy I decided that I wanted to continue to further my development. I registered my interest in the CS local 'Going Forward' project which is designed to support our local community to improve 'job readiness' for offenders and to help bring down the rate of re-offending in our area.

I went to an induction day and after listening to colleagues who had been involved in the programme before I thought this would be a challenge, outside of my comfort zone and that I would learn a lot from the experience. So without hesitation I applied. I was placed on a project held at HMP Buckley Hall in Rochdale. I soon found out that this was not like previous Going Forward projects as this was the first time in a Category C prison with male long term prisoners, meaning prisoners who have been given a life sentence and instructed to serve a minimum amount of years before they can apply for parole! On finding this out I knew it was going to be a challenge as these prisoners were not likely to be released anytime soon but I was prepared to give it a go.

I attended an induction day at Buckley Hall; looking at the prison from the outside was very daunting. I had to go through several prison gates, doors and security before eventually meeting my colleagues. I am working with people from various departments such as HMRC and Veteran's agency. We learnt about the Prison Service and how the system works inside the prison which I found very useful. Then we were taken onto the a wing and met one of the prisoners who we would be working with. I had a look in his cell which consisted of not very much apart from a bed, TV, desk and shower cubicle. I must admit I was very apprehensive when I went on to the wing, and yes it is just like you see on TV. I think everyone has pre-conceived ideas of what prisoners are actually like but I was very wrong!

We also had the opportunity to meet another prisoner and ask questions about what prison life is really like. He was very open and honest and proved very interesting. It also put me at ease a little, although he did say he had been in prison for eight years and was nearly half way through the sentence to serve before he can apply for parole.

We were then given the topics to focus on and deliver with the prisoners throughout the 20 week programme. We have a total of 10 sessions to put together and the tough task now is to ensure we make the sessions true to life so the prisoners can relate to them. For example, we won't be looking at areas such as CV writing as this is something that would not be appropriate at this stage within their sentence so we are going to have to do a lot of thinking outside the box.

I am now four sessions into the programme and it has been a roller coaster of emotions and I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. This programme really does give you an opportunity to 'make a difference' and has helped me develop as a person. I would highly recommend it to anyone as this programme is rewarding in so many ways!

Getting to know... David

1. *What is the last film you watched & provide a two word review?*

Legend—'Five Star'

2. *What CD's are currently in your car?* Don't really have CD's, tends to be talksport on the radio

3. *What books would be found on your bookshelf?* Autobiographies, mainly football related

4. *What is your favourite sports team?* Burnley FC—I'll always be a claret

5. *Who would be your ideal guests at a dinner party?* My Grandparents who I miss very much and Sean Dyche - Burnley manager so we can talk football



Fancy strutting your stuff this December?

Then DfE's Strictly Dance event is the one for you



That time of the year is upon DfE again... It's the **DfE's Strictly Dance competition!** The tutu's and frolicking are back and bigger than ever! Each year DfE holds this extravagant event that pits civil servants against one another in the biggest dance competition this Christmas. This year will see the introduction of a couple of twists to the event...

Anybody can join! If there are any dancers or groups from within or outside DfE that wish to participate in the

competition held at Sanctuary Buildings in London then please contact [Servet Bicer](#).

Strictly will be coming to you even sooner with the Pre-Strictly event. We all have those unwanted gifts/items that we don't really know what to do with, well, as they say; one man's rubbish is another man's treasure. You are invited to bring in belongings and presents that need a new home and for you to find gifts to take home for your loved ones as stocking fillers... or to just treat yourself to an early Christmas present! We have already had some wonderful gifts donated, and there really are presents for all ages; books, jewellery, toys, arts and crafts... The list goes on! All funds raised go to the chosen Strictly charity, so go and see what treasures you can discover. Please contact [Anna Stojanovic](#) for more information on where and how to donate your goodies.

Get your raffle tickets here! Along with the Christmas Bring and Buy, we will also be selling raffle tickets for the Strictly raffle where you can also bag some amazing Christmas treats. Spend a buck and try your luck, you never know what ticket you have struck!

On Wednesday the 16th December we will be presenting our main event... The DfE Strictly Dance Competition.

We will see a number of dance acts battle it out to become the Strictly champions! There are already a number of fabulous acts confirmed:

- Swan Lake led by Education Funding Agency's Julian Wood and Finance and Commercial Director Simon Judge
- SCS Dance led by Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Group Director Hardip Begol and Academies Group's own Liz Francis
- Salsa led by Chief Analyst Donna Ward and Strategy Unit's Kris Cawood
- Modern dance act led by Regional Head in Free Schools Annie Nayer and Finance Team Leader Emily McGovern
- Musical treats from the Ministers of Sound and Michael Pandazis from EFA
- A surprise act – one not to be missed!

In addition, we will also be putting on a display of past Strictly events, participants and winners. We are still seeking even more toe tapping talent. Please contact [Servet Bicer](#) if you can take on the Charleston of Cha-Cha-challenges!

Mmmm... Cake! For those who are talented in the area of cake and bakery, we are also seeking volunteers to bake Christmas sweet treats for our **Strictly bake sale**; taking place alongside the dance acts. Please contact [Claudia Rodrigues](#) to offer your baking services.

Did someone say bar!? As if all that jam packed excitement is not enough to get your Christmas Cheer going, we're also offering a seasonal tippie. There will be a selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages with all proceeds, of course, going to charity.

Share your skills and knowledge



Wednesday 21 January is the UK's first official Employee Motivation

Day

You can share your great motivational stories via the Facebook or Twitter pages, using the hashtags #NatMotivateDay, #EmployeeMotivationDay, #EMD

Want to run your own Employee Motivation Day Find out more [here](#)

Or just use it as an opportunity to think about how we can motivate our workforce in the Civil Service—if you run any 'employee motivation days' or have any good news stories please [share them](#) with us and we will look to feature some in an upcoming issue of The Network

Become a school governor

Schools across England are in need of enthusiastic and skilled volunteers to become school governors.

School governors play an integral role in raising school standards. They hold senior leadership to account and make important decisions covering issues such as policy making, site management, the school's budget and the curriculum.

You don't need to have children or be a parent of a child at a school to become a school governor it's a great way to contribute to your community and use your skills and experience to improve the lives of local children.

To find out more, please contact Fay Marshall on fay.marshall@sgoss.org.uk or 020 7288 9541. Alternatively, apply online at www.becomeagovernor.com

If you are interested in the 'Going forward' project after reading David's article then please get in touch with [Jayne Krol](#)

See [leaflet](#) for more details

Calling all you budding dancers

We bring you DfE's Big Christmas event 'Strictly'

Based on Strictly Come Dancing (...other reality TV shows are available) there's a dance competition, raffle, bar, bake sale and various competitions on the 16th December in London. People from ALL Departments are welcome



The Network *Cross-Department Quiz*



Try your hand at our festive quiz and see who can be crowned King or Queen of Christmas! Just for fun no presents for the winner sorry!

1. What's the name of the period leading up to Christmas?
2. How does Good King Wenceslas like his pizzas?
3. Who brings presents to children in Holland on the 5th/6th December?
4. How many presents were given in total in the 12 Days of Christmas?
5. How many of Rudolph's eight companions names start with 'D'?
6. What country did Christmas Trees originate from?
7. What's the second line of "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas"?
8. What's lucky to find in your Christmas Pudding?
9. Where did baby Jesus sleep?
10. Christmas Island, in the Indian Ocean, is a territory of which country?
11. Peter Auty sang Walking In The Air in what film?
12. 'Nadolig Llawen' means Merry Christmas in which western European language?
13. In 1973 which record did Slade have a Christmas number one with?
14. Who stole Christmas from the town of Hooville?
15. Which Cliff Richard single was at number one over Christmas in the UK in 1988?
16. Many people claim that the first unofficial football international between Germany and a Scotland England side was played on a Christmas Day. The pitch or playing field was found between what?
17. In which city is Kevin left 'Home Alone' at Christmas?
18. According to the Christmas song, who had "a jolly happy soul"?



Just for Fun ^{You} Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9

		3	1		6			
2						5		8
				5				
		9		3			8	6
	4		7		1		3	
6	3			4		1		
				8				
1		7						5
			5		2	7		

Answers from last editions Sudoku puzzle

9	3	8	7	1	5	2	4	6
7	6	5	9	2	4	1	8	3
4	1	2	3	6	8	9	7	5
2	9	1	5	8	3	4	6	7
5	4	3	1	7	6	8	9	2
8	7	6	2	4	9	5	3	1
1	8	4	6	3	2	7	5	9
6	2	9	4	5	7	3	1	8
3	5	7	8	9	1	6	2	4

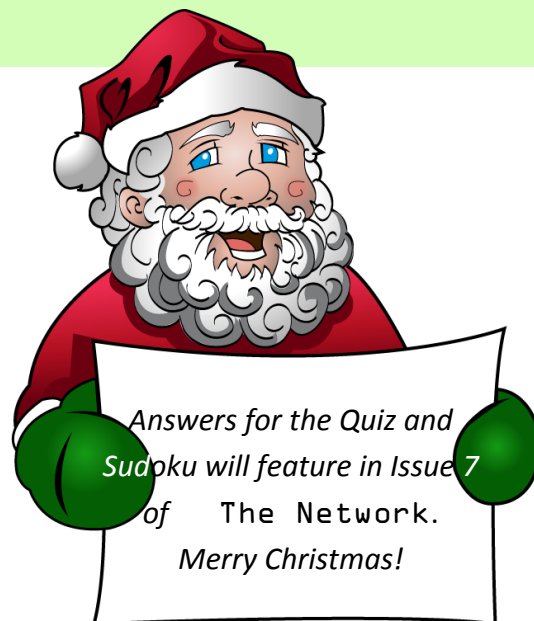
Word Search

Can you find all the words: BECKY, CHRISTMAS, DEVELOPMENT, FASTSTREAM, GOINGFORWARD, LEARNING, LEARNINGACADEMY, PANDAS

D	V	L	M	S	B	A	G	T	P	E	E	P	M	G
N	R	E	B	Y	P	M	H	A	Y	J	Z	S	T	I
T	T	A	C	I	K	Z	N	X	N	G	H	L	N	S
L	T	R	W	O	H	D	I	I	H	S	F	O	E	G
F	W	N	J	R	A	R	W	P	G	A	Y	I	M	S
A	E	I	D	S	O	C	U	M	W	Y	A	W	P	O
M	Q	N	R	P	L	F	H	V	H	L	Y	L	O	G
N	I	G	X	H	E	Z	G	R	I	F	B	P	L	X
Y	M	E	D	A	C	A	G	N	I	N	R	A	E	L
M	O	Q	O	K	M	B	U	K	I	S	I	E	V	Y
T	F	Y	K	E	S	K	L	C	J	O	T	K	E	W
X	W	K	L	N	G	Y	C	F	L	U	G	M	D	P
F	A	S	T	S	T	R	E	A	M	U	Y	Y	A	K
T	Z	I	Z	Z	Q	F	X	Q	M	M	V	A	H	S
M	B	Y	K	C	E	B	C	Z	V	X	A	A	T	C

Answers from last editions quiz

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Monster Mash | 10. Elizabeth Montgomery |
| 2. The Ring | 11. Gomez, Morticia, Pugsley, Wednesday, Uncle Fester, Grandmama, Lurch, Thing, Cousin Itt |
| 3. Carrie | 12. Coven |
| 4. Mexico | 13. North and South America |
| 5. He never! Muahahaha! | 14. Apples |
| 6. Rum | 15. Harold Ramis |
| 7. Candy corn | |
| 8. Edvard Munch | |
| 9. Thriller | |



The Network Back Catalogue

Click on a front cover to see a previous edition

