

The Network

Happy birthday to us!

Join us in our 2nd anniversary celebrations

Inside this issue

- The usual bump
- Jen reveals her 'darkest' secrets
- Jane goes on A/L
- Robbie grooms his beard
- Kelly Brook asks for Glenn's phone number

ISSUE 'LUCKY' 13

Welcome to Issue 13 of The Network

What's Inside

[The Network... is 2](#)

It's our birthday!

[The Guv'nor](#)

Jen's back in schools

[Kathie Bates](#)

It's all her fault!

[Stepping Up to SEO](#)

Robbie preaches

[Triple event!](#)

Women's event in Blackpool

[Derek's Story](#)

The Flamingo's Present...

[CS Local Pages](#)

Messages from our 'friends'

[Going Digital](#)

Continuous Improvement event

[Helping Hands](#)

Helping the homeless in Liverpool

[Business Connector](#)

The story continues

[The Plea Page](#)

Opportunities for all!

[Cross-Department Quiz](#)

Do you know your Valentines

[Just For You](#)

The forever popular feature

Can you believe it? Issue 13 of The Network is here. It only seems like 12 issues ago we were scratching our heads wondering what we had let ourselves in for!

Despite facing a magnitude of challenges (honest!), we have reached the 2nd anniversary since the very first issue of our magazine was published. But we like to think it has all been worth it (citation required).

Creating this magazine has had a real positive impact on the lives of the editorial team, both personally and professionally. We are all convinced that being involved has helped develop our careers (our competencies have certainly benefitted). There is even evidence of a calming of relationships between (some) Burnley and Blackburn fans... but this is not a constant.

The magazine has also had a positive impact on the lives of others. Kay Penkethman got in touch with the organisers of Scouse Kitchen after reading issue 12. Kay wanted to share ideas and work collaboratively with Scouse Kitchen and her own charity; 'Helping Hands' – see page 17.

We know our magazine is not the most professional you will ever read. It is, however, something we are all very proud of given the time and resource we have to produce it.

Thanks to you the readers; the writers; the supporters; and most of all the donators to Jen for her [dechox...](#)

Here's to another 13 issues. Cheers!

Editorial Team - Contact us

Glenn Atkins (DfE)

glenn.atkins@education.gov.uk

Jen Frankish (DWP)

jennifer.frankish@dpw.gsi.gov.uk

Jane Cunningham (HMRC)

jane.k.cunningham@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk

Robbie Roberts (DfE)

robbie.roberts@education.gov.uk



Civil Service Local is committed to ensuring that wherever possible our events are accessible to all participants. If you have any specific requirements that will enable you to fully participate, please let us know and we will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments.

The Network... 2 years on!

The date is September 2014, and 8 civil servants leave the CS Local North West Academy with a mix of emotions following the awards dinner: Exhaustion, pride, enthusiasm and a willingness to carry out the mammoth challenge they have set themselves; to produce a cross-government magazine to promote opportunities for all and encourage inter-departmental working.



The original project team line up: (top row l-r) Robbie Roberts (DfE), Jane Cunningham (HMRC), Kerry-Ann McKinley (HMRC), Rebecca Waters (HMCTS), Jen Frankish (DWP), Shelley Nixon (HMRC). (bottom row l-r) Anas Sheth (HMCTS - not sure what he's on here for), Glenn Atkins (DWP), Adam Lang (MoD).

Originally, the project team (now officially called an editorial team), thought that the hard work had been done—thinking of the idea and getting SCS support whilst at the academy. But, there were many more challenges we had to face. This included the logistics of organising cross-site meetings (whether by phone or face-to-face), meeting our SCS sponsors, learning about project management tools and techniques and overcoming the challenges of some of the team having to leave due to personal and professional circumstances. And this was all before a single page of the e-magazine had been written.

It soon became clear that we had spent too much time on what the look and content of the magazine should be, without fully considering how we would distribute it. In our minds, we imagined that North West civil servants would be linked by a central comms team that would cover all our departments and staff. How foolish we were!



Securing a contact list was key!

However, we soon were put on the right lines and targeted a couple of the larger departments with our 1st issue, with the goal of increasing our 'network' issue-by-issue, as the magazine developed. We used our own contacts and those of our colleagues. But the challenges didn't stop there as we still had to buy-in agreement for individuals to distribute the magazine around their departments.

Andy Leggett (HMRC): Our magazine SCS sponsor

THE NETWORK

Our original logo that was going to be used as part of the branding of the e-mag

[e-mail](#) The Network with any thoughts or suggestions! Page 3



The academy mid-year event line-up, just prior to the 1st issue being released (l-r): Glenn Atkins (DH), Robbie Roberts (DfE), Kerry-Ann McKinley (HMRC), Stephen Tysome (project coach - HMRC), Carol Culley (project sponsor - Manchester CC), Jen Frankish (DWP), Jane Cunningham (HMRC), and a bit of Anas Sheth's (HMCTS) shoulder and beard (again, not sure what he is doing on this photo?)

The challenges carried on arriving at our doors thick and fast. There are way too many to write in such a short article, but below is a list that we have overcome (somehow) and still continue to face:

- Securing and updating a robust contact and distribution list
- Obtaining articles from our colleagues
- Keeping the magazine 'fresh'
- Getting support from our line managers to complete the magazine
- Fitting in all the work it takes and combining it with our day job.



SOMEHOW, we have made it through to issue 13 and the magazine is still going strong. At one point, issue 12 had received over 40,000 'hits'!

It's not been easy and we were sad to see some of the original line-up having to leave the team for a variety of justifiable reasons, but those of us who have remained have developed a really close working relationship and even become good 'friends' (even though Jen is a Blackburn fan).

And to justify our work, we became the official comms product of CS Local North West.

We know the magazine isn't the most professional you will ever read—but we are really proud of what we produce with the time, resource and equipment we have.

All that remains to be said is "thanks": - to our sponsors; to the original team; to our line managers for giving us the time to complete the magazine; to CS Local for the support and the articles; and most importantly - **TO ALL OUR READERS - please keep reading and contacting us with ideas, articles and feedback. We really appreciate your input.**

AND DON'T FORGET: CONTACT THE EDITORIAL TEAM IF YOU HAVE AN ARTICLE OR EVENT YOU WANT TO PROMOTE.

The Network is now distributed in over 22 Departments and evaluation of one issue suggested we had over 44,000 clicks!

Who'd be a school governor? ... Jen

Frankish

I am vice-chair of governors in my local primary school where my 2 little boys attend. Whilst I began as a parent governor, a common misconception is that you have to be a parent to be on an LGC (Local Governing Committee as we are now called). In fact, the majority are not. We have 2 parent governors out of 12 vacancies. I am very conscious of taking my parent hat off when 'being a governor' and vice versa as well. As a governor I am in it for the good of each and every child and as a parent I am interested in what is going on in school and with my child with my parent hat on and not abusing my 'insider' knowledge.



However, I did first become involved with the LGC as a parent who wanted to make a positive contribution. I knew I wouldn't be around school at 'drop off and pick up' very often but I wanted to build a relationship with my son's school and really just help wherever possible so when 2 parent governor positions came up not long after my son started school I decided to apply. After writing 'my campaign piece' - a 300 word piece on why I wanted to be a governor and what skills I could offer—it turned out there were only 2 nominations for 2 vacancies and thus I was elected!

At this point I'm not sure I really knew what I was letting myself in for.

I think for anyone who cares about their local school, and the future of our children, then becoming a school governor is a very rewarding and exciting thing to do. So why then, according to a recent report from the charity Governors for Schools, are one in 10 governor posts currently vacant?

Well, I'm not going to lie there is an awful lot of responsibility and it takes up more time than, certainly I, first thought. Currently, as well as being overall vice-chair, I chair our standards and effectiveness committee, clerk our finance/budget committee, sit on the Head teachers performance appraisal panel, I am link governor for EYFS and Key Stage 1, link governor for pupil premium and special education needs, on our worship/SIAMS (Statutory Inspection for Anglican and Methodist Schools) governor team and lead on parental engagement amongst other little things. Somewhere along the way I fell into the role of chairing our PTA as well!!! I probably should mention I do have a real problem saying no to things haha. However, you know what? **I LOVE it!!!**



So what do governors do? Governors and trustees are one of the largest volunteer forces in the country and have an important part to play in raising school standards. The role of the governing board/committee is absolutely key to the effectiveness of a school. School governors and trustees provide strategic leadership and accountability in schools (National Governors Association).

Governors play a key strategic role in the drive to improve educational standards and this is done via the following key functions:

- Strategic planning: Planning for the future of the school and helping to determine improvement priorities
- Critical friend: Governors ask questions, challenge, seek information and suggest

ideas and improvements across a range of areas in school

- Accountability: The LGC holds school to account for standards of achievement in all areas of learning as well as for the budget/finances and ensuring the school's money is well spent.

So I chair our standards, effectiveness and curriculum committee (SEC). Within this committee we monitor data and subject leadership.

The main purposes of SEC are:

To monitor data relating to progress and attainment across school. Governors are unable to see any pupil's names on data and all the data is anonymized.

To monitor progress against the school improvement plan/priorities

To monitor and evaluate school provision such as leadership and management and SEN/Inclusion

To monitor subjects via subject leader reports

Complete governor visits and feedback to the committee. When we do a governor visit we are not assessing teaching.

We may look at books, speak to children and look at the learning environment.

We may also need to agree policies.

This gives you an idea of just some of the things you may get involved in as a school governor.

There's lots of governor training available, which you can access as little or as much of really. I prefer to feel knowledgeable about something before I will feel properly confident so I have attended quite a number of local authority run courses/sessions as well as completing governor e-learning.



Being a governor isn't about plaudits or money, and it is a lot to take on as a volunteer but it's about being involved in your community and giving your time/energy/experience to help local children get the best out of their education. I

think becoming a governor is very much a matter of taking the initiative and making the post what you feel is right for you. For me, it awoke in me a passion for education I never knew I had. So much so I am soon to be joining the Department for Education from DWP.



It is really interesting, very rewarding and there are so many transferable skills you can bring to your civil service roles, particularly around those leadership challenges we all face and increasing leadership capability.

Governing bodies make decisions that have a huge impact on the lives of young people. Every governor has a role to play in helping make sure every young person gets the best possible education.

The most important qualities for being a governor are **enthusiasm, commitment** and an **interest in education**. You don't need teaching experience, but it's useful to bring skills from other areas of your life—of which in the civil service we have many!

Resources

Inspiring Governance resources and training [links](#)

National Governors Association (NGA) [website](#)

DfE published the new governors handbook and competency framework in January 2017—view them [here](#)

If I haven't entirely put you off and you think you may be interested in becoming a governor you can speak to your local school directly, or you can register your interest via gov.uk [here](#)

You can also access the 'Inspiring Governance' section of the NGA website [here](#) where you can see a short video clip about

becoming a governor and you can register your interest via the governor 'match-making' service on the inspiring governance [website](#)



*Kathie Bates, your CS Local NW leader, provides her thoughts on **The Network**, and the journey the editorial team has been on since we first got together back in September 2014.*

According to Google, when used as a verb, the word 'network' is defined as "interact with others to exchange information and develop professional and social contacts"... and that's sums up perfectly what's been achieved by our The Network editorial team.

Back in 2014, on a sunny September morning, they came together as a group of strangers from different towns and cities and different departments. Fast forward to today and now Jen, Glenn, Jane & Robbie are not only firm friends and colleagues, but a well established professional editorial team who run **The Network** magazine, which has become the official publication for Civil Service Local North West.

Who would have thought that 4 perfect strangers would embrace the journey to become a **brilliant civil service** with such pride and passion. With an ever expanding readership, they help to connect the Civil Service through information, education, ideas and opportunities. They all have their own story to tell but from my point of view it's been a pleasure to work with such positive people and I've seen them grow into excellent leaders who Inspire others.

#proud

K



Stepping up from EO through to SEO

Our very own Robbie Roberts talks promotion



In a nutshell... I joined the Department for Education in March 2014 after spending 13 years in the private sector working for an organisation that specialised in the collection and delivery of parcels and mail. I had arrived at a crossroads in my life, a scaled down version of what Glenn is going through at the minute now he has hit 40... I needed a change, I'd become stale in terms of my career, just running on a hamster wheel – routine, little prospects, no real opportunities to develop.

My arrival into the civil service was more than a 'bit lucky'. I originally applied for a post but did not get through sifting. I asked for feedback, as you do, however "no feedback is available". Great. I then got an email from another team who picked up my application asking if I would come in for a 'chat'...a competency based panel interview... it went well :-)



I started as an EO working within DfE's agency National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). I was hungry again; the new job provided me ambition, drive, challenge. I wanted more. I would say yes at any given opportunity, no matter how remedial I thought a task was, it was something to deliver, it was potentially a new way of working but ultimately it would open doors to working with others and showcasing what I could do. It was something my mum suggested; she had spent the best part of 25 or so years working for the DfE in its various guises. Better still, it worked! **#mumsknowbest**

For example, I had the chance to go to the CS Local Academy in 2014, which I took, that resulted in being able to present my experience of the event to my Director General, which in turn gave me the opportunity to understudy in her office on multiple occasions. The academy was where The Network was conceived. Something I asked the same Director General to support by providing an article, which I would not have been able to do so easily if I had not developed a relationship with her and her team.

My point is, so many networking opportunities are around us, and it is important we take these as and when we can as they tend to lead to greater opportunities helping you get involved with different work, different people, and different experiences. All of which result in stronger evidence against your competencies.

Doing all this already but don't think it's working out for you? **Get a second opinion.** Having discussions with experienced colleagues helped me identify things that I have done that I should consider to use as evidence for competency-based applications. Things I would not have even mentioned never mind cantered an answer around have proven to score well in applications. All because I got a second opinion from two experienced civil servants who are higher grades and provided a neutral opinion and direction. I dare not name and shame those two... but without them and their support, I probably would not be where I am today.

It seems a little laughable reading all this back, but it has certainly shaped my career and me. I started as an EO in March 2014. By August 2015 I was appointed a HEO in the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). By May, I was taking SEO roles through Expression of Interests and short-term assignments. This helped me gather SEO evidence, meaning that by December 2016 I obtained my permanent SEO.

In summary:

1. Drive! Motivate yourself, nobody else will do it for you
2. Yes! Say yes to anything and everything.
3. Evidence! The drive, the opportunities, how you embrace them will give you the platform to develop potential competency evidence.
4. A second opinion! I was lucky to have two people who would be honest enough with me to tell me if something was good, or not so good... Find your own Dharini and Ellie...
5. Network! Share your experiences with like-minded people who are going through trying to get up the ladder. Conversations often provide give different perspectives.
6. Apply! Make sure you have the CS Jobs alert set so you receive emails about vacancies. Don't put off applying when you see one. If you get it done in plenty of time it mitigates the risk of speaking to people who can help you.



Getting to know...

Roberto

1. Who is your favourite member of The Network team?

Jen—she looks like Nadine from Girls Aloud

2. Who has disappointed you the most in The Network team?

Tough one; I'll have to say Jane. She forgot to leave her house keys with her hubby meaning she couldn't stay out on the ale all day

3. How do you plan to celebrate 2 years of success with The Network?

Well a pic was taken that night...



Michelle Duncan and Gillian Copsey DWP tell us about their event at Peel Park, Blackpool

Michelle Duncan and Gillian Copsey tell us about their event.

The North West Women's Network, Women in Technology Network Group and Fylde Women in Finance collaborated to hold our first IWD event on 8th March 2017.

As well as [#bebouldforchange](#) and Equality for Women, Equality for All, the day was themed around the four pillars supporting the [vision for 'A brilliant Civil Service'](#).

About 80 women from Peel Park and the North West attended the event. They were drawn by a great line up of inspirational guest speakers from across DWP in HR, Digital and Business Intelligence.

The speakers – these were incredibly motivational and inspirational – you could feel the whole room 'lift' during some of the speeches.

We were also very lucky to be joined by Sophie Allen from Microsoft who talked about **"Feel the fear and do it anyway"**. It was clear from the evaluation that Sophie's session, where she shared with us her career journey based on instinct and following her passion, was the highlight of the day.

My best bit of the event was hearing Sophie Allen, someone I can relate to, say "want a job that allows me to be creative, have fun and progress".

During the afternoon, the delegates split into breakout sessions which covered Breaking down Barriers and Leading Brilliantly.

The whole event was well overdue and completely refreshing and inspirational.

The three network groups also set up market stalls in the Atrium for guests to look around decorated with giant gold balloons. Tea and coffee were also available at registration.



I really enjoyed this event! Normally you can't wait for these things to end, but time flew and I could have listened a lot longer.

What can I say other than WOW; what a brilliant day.

The Flamingo's present...

Derek's Story

Derek, your colleague Sam alerted us to your remarkable story, could you tell us a little about what happened to you?

Just shy of my 38th birthday and five months after getting married, I had a massive and completely unexpected cardiac arrest whilst at work. I had always enjoyed robust good health previously. Luckily a security guard knew first aid and managed to give me CPR until the ambulance arrived. The first thing I knew about all this was waking up in intensive care some 10 days later.



Initially I was fitted with a defibrillator, which would shock my heart back to a regular rhythm should it need it. I was advised this would seldom, if ever, go off and for six months this was the case. Then however the device did start activating, just the odd time at first and then more and more often, until towards the end it was triggering several times a day. This was a painful and scary time.

Throughout all this I had been doing my best to keep up a level of normalcy and had kept returning to work at the Jobcentre. It is easy to be cynical at times when working for any big and at times impersonal organisation, but I have to say that the Department at the time were very supportive.

When my condition had drastically deteriorated, knocking my confidence regarding going out alone as I had started collapsing in the street, work became impossible and I was submitted to hospital for a do or die operation, that sought to burn away some of the nerve endings in my heart to stop it beating too fast. The operation failed and all of a sudden I was all out of options. My only hope left was a full heart



transplant. My cardiologist referred me to Wythenshawe Hospital, where I was to undergo tests for suitability and where just a couple of short weeks later I had a heart transplant. (My condition had worsened to such an extent that I was put on what they call the super critical list, as without the transplant I just had weeks left to live.)

My recovery was mercifully quick. I was standing up on my own two feet the very next day, a couple of days after that I was walking unaided. I was discharged from the transplant unit just over three weeks later and I returned to work before hitting the six months absence stage.

The donated heart is young and strong and has been working very well for me for nearly ten years now.

You mentioned support from the department previously, how else have they helped you?

Initially I was offered a phased return, but as my strength grew I soon returned to full time hours and after visits to the local heart gym at a nearby hospital my strength and confidence had returned to the extent that I returned to either walking or cycling to work, (I live three miles away from the office). The Department have continued to support me with Occupational Health and Safety interviews when required. They allow me time off to go to the hospital for infrequent tests. Initially when I first came back I was given a back of house role to avoid the risk of infection, but I quickly grew bored of this and requested to be allowed to return to full front of house duties.

And how are you now, has this led to you doing things you never thought you would?

Ten years on I am still either walking or cycling to work, exercising regularly and my general health is comparable, if not better than most people my age. Since being discharged from the transplant unit after the operation I have not had to spend another night in hospital and in the

last seven years I have not had one single day off sick. I've also done much more travel than before, seeing a number of places abroad and feel I can relax and enjoy myself more than previously.



Has this had affected your work, have you developed any further since the incident?

I'm very happy working where I am in the Wirral currently, I like the job I do and am good at it so don't feel great interest in pursuing progression currently. The experience has changed my attitude though, when work gets very busy I'm no longer as anxious or stressed and can keep focused on my work.

What effect have you seen on your colleagues by what happened to you?

Clearly colleagues were very scared by the event, it was worrying and painful to watch and wait for aid to arrive. They've also shown that they are happy about my recovery and the way I've been able to get back to living life like anybody else and some have said it puts things into perspective for them. I've also been able to encourage a lot of colleagues to sign up for the organ donor register because of this.

Have you done anything else in addition to encouraging sign up to the organ donor register?

I've sought to get involved with related charities and help those that supported me, selling raffle tickets for the transplant games each year and organising collections through the year. I also competed in the transplant games on one occasion, raising £500 in sponsorship, this was split between Wythenshawe Hospital, where my initial care was and the heart gymnasium at St Catherine's Hospital who helped recover my fitness after the transplant.

Thank you so much for sharing, where could people find out more?

They can find out more about organ donation on the NHS website <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/> and the transplant games at www.britishtransplantgames.co.uk

The Flamingo Family are seeking to share positive stories across the Civil Service – if you have a story to share please contact them via BIRKENHEADBRUNSWICK.THINKYOUCAN'T@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK





Welcome to the CS Local North West pages of **The Network**.

Read on for an update of all the exciting projects we have underway, and those that are being planned.

We've been busy with the mammoth '*Changing Horizons*' event, which was recently held at the Winter Gardens in Blackpool. Its aim was to 'raise aspirations' of school children in and around the resort—one of the recently named opportunity areas and part of a national focus of improving social mobility. Just the sort of thing CS Local loves getting involved with!

We'll be providing a full report in the next issue.



Meanwhile, keep up to date with all things CS Local by logging on to the:

[CS Local North West Blog](#)

[e-mail](#) The Network with any thoughts or suggestions! Page 13

The Changing Horizons event has been dominating our lives recently. The event's aim is to raise aspirations and provide skills for life and work for 700 children from the Blackpool region. The event took place on the 29th March (*we hope!*) and we will let you know how it goes in the next edition.

In addition to Changing Horizons we have still been doing loads of other stuff, a summary of some of the work is detailed below;

Homeless Project

It's great to hear that our second Homeless project in Lancaster was received well, with a number of citizens benefiting from the life skills & support our cross departmental team were able to offer—well done everyone!

Do Digital

Our projects show no sign of slowing down, with a project in Blackpool (Community Café) starting on the 16th March and our team in Oldham starting again on the 4th April. We're also looking for new locations in 2017.

Our Academies

This month, we have also seen the delegates from our first pilot Middle Managers Academy graduate. We were really inspired by the work the 48 delegates had done on their business challenges over the last few months, and even saw our first Academy cake. Due to the success of the pilot the Academy will be running again this year, it will take place in Blackpool from **27-30th June**. Invitations will be issued to our Steering Group reps by the end of March.



We have also had our mid year event for our Front Line Managers academy. The event was held at GRO in Southport and it was great to hear how the delegates have collaborated and grown over the last six months. It was also clear just how much work they need to do before the end of August. Good luck and we shall see you all at the end of year event in October.

We can also confirm that our 2017 academy will be taking place at Park Hall in Chorley from 12-15th September.

Springboard to employment

We have just finished our first pilot project in Burnley job centre. A new team were set up, designing the project to help our customers get back into work. The team offered four services; interviewing, personal statements, application forms and CV writing. The project was advertised in shelters, shops, libraries and on local radio to ensure our customers were aware of it. The team were in the jobcentre for five weeks and helped 60 customers with one or more of the sessions, with four people already finding employment! A full evaluation of the project will follow once we have tracked all the customers and hopefully, its something CS Local will run again in another location. CS Local would like to thank the project team for all their commitment and hard work— an amazing effort!



Autism Wide project

Following the article in the last edition further work has been undertaken on the scoping of the project. Look out for more information in the next issue of **The Network**.



Working in diverse environments,
acknowledging individual needs.

Cabinet Office

CS Local are getting ready for our move to Cabinet Office. Although we have worked for them for a while, until now, we have continued using HMRC systems. However, from 1st April we will move to Cabinet Office. Our email addresses will change from 1st April— but don't worry, our old emails will be forwarded on so you can still get in touch. Our phone numbers will remain the same, so we will still be contactable (there *really* is no escaping us!).

Social Media

Don't forget to follow us on Twitter and Facebook (@CSLocalNW). We regularly post about our current projects, share stories from our volunteers and citizens, and inform our followers what is coming up.

We would love to see more of you interacting with us and sharing your work — so a quick click to follow @CSLocalNW will mean you will be updated with all the latest exciting opportunities and events. Plus— we know how to take a great photo!

Get involved

We are always looking for volunteers on our vast number of projects, if you want to get involved please get in touch with your North West CS Local team, either by contacting [Janine](#) or [Andy](#) and we will link you up with the project managers.

Get in touch. It'll be worth it!

[e-mail](#) The Network with any thoughts or suggestions! Page 15

Going Digital – ‘Friend or Foe’

A North West Continuous Improvement Learning Day



The Venue: Manchester Fire & Training Centre

NEWSFLASH! New Date: 17th May 2017

Removing the Taboo of using Digital Tools and Methodology in Continuous Improvement

We have all come across Digital changes within work and our personal life. Come and join colleagues from a number of Government departments to share your success stories, views, experiences, challenges and solutions. Digitalisation will continue to knock on your door and Continuous Improvement opportunities will exist as there is always the need for improvement so we need to make sure we are ready. Enjoy our varied agenda of Continuous Improvement guest speakers, interactive workshops and networking.

To sign up for the event please use the Eventbrite link:

[Continuous Improvement—Digital Friend or Foe](#)

We are looking for different skills, new and previous attendees from mixed departments so please highlight this event to colleagues in your and other Civil Service departments if you think they will be interested in this opportunity.

Attendance is limited to 80 so don't delay, sign up today!

If you are unable to attend but would like to follow the event on the day there will be regular updates on Twitter as the days unfolds.



Civil Service
Local

Helping Hands

Kay Penkethman from DWP explains the work of this charity helping the homeless of Liverpool and tells us how The Network has linked her up with other Civil Servants with a common purpose...

The article in the last edition entitled 'Scouse Kitchen' really caught my eye... why... because I volunteer with 'Helping Hands' and run a soup kitchen in Liverpool twice a week. We provide hot food and drinks plus cold take away food, we also provide clothes, sleeping bags, toiletries and support and care to many desperate homeless people who without the volunteer work in place would have very little.

I am passionate about the work we do it involves collecting donations, shopping and cooking but most importantly listening and caring – it's the nights on the streets of Liverpool that I love the most, trying to make a difference, in fact I often say some of my best nights out in Liverpool have been spent at our Kitchen. You never know what will erupt in a night, some of our street friends are alcoholics, drug users, prostitutes, young and old, we never judge-that is not our role. What I have learned is that every single person has a story some will share, others don't. We just listen and help if we can, some stories are very disturbing and personal and involve being abused, its very sad. **Some have never shared their story before but choose to share it with you, we aim to make a difference and sometimes listening is all that's needed.**

The hardest part of our role is that sometimes when our stocks are really low and we have to say no to our street friends for the most basic items, socks, a coat, shoes or sanitary towels. Our kitchen runs on pure donations we get no funding at all, so it's all about people's generosity and they never let us down. **Your 'Scouse Kitchen' article put me in touch Debbie Wainwright and Donna Greenwood (pictured here)**, two angels who work in St John's House, Liverpool, ordinarily our paths would never cross but we share a common interest. These wonderful ladies have agreed to collect office donations and pass them on to our kitchen on a regular basis. I collected the first donation yesterday and can't express how grateful I am. The donation was wonderful and included sweaters, coats and hand knitted hats, every item will make such a difference and were handed out to those in need at the next kitchen the following Sunday.

I am sure this is just the start of a wonderful friendship with Donna and Debbie (the St John's Angels) and they have promised further donations – a regular supply is invaluable. I often get told I am doing amazing work, I don't see it that way I am just the middle woman collecting from our Angels and passing it on to those in need. It's the donators who are doing the amazing job.

Anyone can visit our kitchen its at St Luke's (Bombed out) Church at the top of Bold Street, Liverpool we are there every Sunday and every other Friday, we also offer other support on an ad hoc basis. If you are every in Liverpool please feel free to come and say hello.



If anyone wants to donate you can contact me via work email or phone 07889 470366 or alternatively you can follow us on our Facebook page Helping Hands Homeless and Community Support – the most valuable donations include underwear, socks, coats, tracksuit pants, shoes, sleeping bags, toiletries, sugar, tea and coffee. We do accept any items it does not have to be new just clean and useable, four of our homeless guys have secured flats in recent months so any household items are also most welcome.

Business in the Community Secondment

In edition 11 of The Network we met Matt Jacobson who was about to embark on a year's secondment as a Business Connector here we catch up with him to see what he has been doing...



What is a Business Connector? Not exactly one of the great political stompers of all time and certainly not originated from the back catalogue of Paxman's questions. But it was my first day in my new role as a Business in the Community - Business Connector, training now completed and here I was in front of the very first charity I was to work with and about to find out.

Luckily I wasn't lost in the wilderness of forgetfulness -out came my aims. Business Connector is located within local communities with the aim to harness the expertise and energy of business people to tackle local challenges., and to inspire motivate and encourage action across the community's landscape, enabling the community to lead their own regeneration.

Connections hopefully will lead to actions and relationships between the private and public sectors and voluntary / community organisations with a view to achieving sustainable improvements in; education , employment, enterprise, investment and community cohesion. Promoting community as a place to live, work, visit and invest. "I'm here to help" was the end of my speech. And with an eyebrow lift I was informed, "Here to help – I've never heard of that before". A common response I encountered during my initial scoping exercise to investigate the current needs of charities, community groups and small enterprise across my areas ; Runcorn and Widnes.

"I'm here to help"



Response to needs included; funding, resource, business acumen, office furniture, marketing and web design. To meet needs, I've met CEO's, Directors and Representatives from small sized to multi-million/billion pound industries. If they had a door I knocked on it. Knock knock – who's there ? Corporate social responsibility. Not the greatest punch line- but rejuvenating community is a serious business.

To date Banks, clothing brands, high street lenders, shopping centres, national train operators have opened the door for a chat and adhered to social responsibility. My results include organising connections in avenues such as ; funding, sharing resource and volunteers, marketing/web design, a full shopping unit with no charge, free financial/business support and tens of thousands of pounds worth of IT /office equipment. All, invaluable to those with minimal support mechanisms.

So what am I getting out of it?

A connectors role is challenging; organisations can promise, but forget to deliver. And businesses have different priorities, it can be frustrating. But when it works – it's a wonderful feeling. Receiving thanks for your efforts is wonderful but, not as wonderful as the people in community I've met - working for zero financial reward - supporting community from hearts not purse strings.

I've succeeded with large financial results, but a simple success can make the eyes fill. A group that supported children through bereavement required office equipment / resources. Asking young children to sit down and express feelings is difficult, so support officers allow children to play with toys and ask the questions to bring out feelings. I managed to secure from a shopping centre new toys for the organisation. The bereavement support officer eyes filled up as he informed me; due to the amounts of toys donated , for the first time they held a Xmas party for the children and gave out Christmas presents. With my heart in my hands I left and headed home. At the station, I met their Community representative and I told them about the toys and Xmas party - there and then they offered a funding opportunity for the organisation from the station. !



It really is true , Business Connectors – are here to help !

The Meerkats want you!

Our academy project is called CSNW Refresh. Our goal is to provide awareness for civil servants across the north west about transferable skills between departments. As well as offering hints and tips on interview techniques supported via social media twitter [@CSNWrefresh](#) and [YouTube](#).

In the coming months we'll slowly build up material for people to review with the aim of a workshop in June. Watch this space.



CSNW
Refresh

CS Live

CS Live 2017 will take place at Manchester Central on 15th June, keep your eyes open for further information. You can also check the CS Live website for details on when registration is open and details of events in other regions.



Looking for Development Opportunities in the North West?

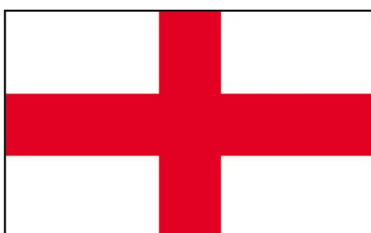
Take a look via the Civil Service Local blog [here](#). You will find advertisements to get involved in various projects they are promoting and job opportunities available. Check it out...

Keep up to date with CS local North West on their [blog](#) for news, opportunities and more...

The Network *Cross-Department Quiz*

Spring has arrived at last, and with that come's St. George's Day 23rd April. Test your historical knowledge with our St. George's Day themed quiz.

1. What is St George patron saint of?
2. In what year did St George die?
3. Which group of people brought the story of St George and the Dragon to Western Europe?
4. In which country was St George born?
5. What was Ascalon?
6. The capital of which Caribbean island is called "St. George's"?
7. Which island was awarded the "George's Cross" after WWII?
8. In which modern day country did the legend of St. George and the Dragon supposedly take place?
9. What does the Red Cross on the St. George's cross represent?
10. What do St. George and William Shakespeare have in common?
11. Why is St. George's day celebrated on the 6th May in Georgia?
12. "Follow your sprit; and upon this charge cry God for Harry, England and St. George!" Where does this come from?
13. In which sport is the St. George's Cup?
14. Which King created the George Cross medal?
15. How many times did St. George come to England?



See answers in the next issue

Sudoku

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

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

WORDSEARCH

Can you find these words: DRAGON, ROSE, SPRING, ST.GEORGE, ANNIVERSARY, FRIENDS

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

Answers from last editions Sudoku puzzle

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

Answers from last editions Quiz

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Sleepless in Seattle | 9. Aquarius |
| 2. Cupid | 10. Henry VII |
| 3. Aphrodite | 11. Verona |
| 4. Carol Ann Duffy | 12. The Empire State Building |
| 5. 14th February | 13. Sweetheart |
| 6. Eros | 14. Your Sleeve |
| 7. Tomato | 15. Yes |
| 8. Alfred Lord Tennyson | |

The Network Back Catalogue

Click on a front cover to see a previous edition



Answers for the Cross-Department Quiz and Sudoku will feature in Issue 14 of The Network