

# The Network

Issue 18

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- Plus the CS Local page...



# Welcome to Issue 18 of The Network

## Editors Note

Welcome to Issue 18 of The Network.

In this issue we focus on Border Force and the crucial role they play in protecting our country and hear from Liz Versi on her work with Border Force North.

Up next we hear from DWP and their activities to celebrate International Men's Day.

Traci Salisbury tells us about her secondment from HMRC to Environment Agency and the need to dig out her wellies.

In addition to this we have a GAP with CS Local and there's all our usual features including the plea page and our frosty Winter Olympic themed quiz.



The Network four become three!

I am leaving for pastures new and taking up a role working in a multi academy trust in Blackburn. I have had a great few years working with my fellow editorial team, and CS Local in general. I will certainly miss my Network colleagues but will look out for each edition when it's published. Glenn you will always be my favourite!! (*Come on Rovers—Top of the League!!*)  
Jen

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Including the back-catalogue!



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.

# Focus On... **Border Force**

Border Force is a law enforcement command within the Home Office. It secures the UK border by carrying out immigration and customs controls for people and goods entering the UK.

Border Force secures the border and promotes national prosperity by facilitating the legitimate movement of individuals and goods, whilst preventing those that would cause harm from entering the UK. This is achieved through the immigration and customs checks carried out by staff at ports and airports. Officers work at 140 sea and air ports across the UK and overseas.



## Border Force

The Border Force 'North' region includes a vast area. It covers all of the sea ports and airports ranging from Manchester Airport to Holyhead in North Wales in the west, and over to the Humber in the east. It also includes the whole of northern England and into Scotland - right up to the Shetlands, as well as Northern Ireland.

The Border Force is responsible for:

- checking the immigration status of people arriving in and departing the UK
- searching baggage, vehicles and cargo for illicit goods or illegal immigrants
- patrolling the UK coastline and searching vessels
- gathering intelligence
- alerting the police and security services to people of interest

Priorities are to:

- deter and prevent individuals and goods that would harm the national interests from entering the UK
- facilitate the legitimate movement of individuals and trade to and from the UK
- protect and collect customs revenues for trade crossing the border
- provide excellent service to customers
- provide demonstrable effectiveness, efficiency and value for money



*This issue, our SCS contribution is brought to us by:*

# **Liz Versi**

***Regional Director for Border Force in the North***



My role is Regional Director for Border Force in the North. It is a big 'North', covering all of the sea ports and airports from Manchester Airport where I am based, out to Holyhead in North Wales to the west, over to the Humber in the east, all of northern England into Scotland, right up to the Shetlands; and then west again to Northern Ireland. North region has the most ports in Border Force and so I travel a lot! We deal with all of the immigration and customs functions in these ports.

In the North West we have people based in Liverpool and Manchester Airports, Liverpool docks and Holyhead maritime port. There is a great deal of variety in the work. Some involves making immigration checks to ensure that the right people are allowed to enter and those we are concerned about are dealt with appropriately. We search both arriving passengers and freight to check for smuggling of goods that are either not allowed or haven't had the right duty paid. We have dog teams that you may have seen as you arrive or depart from the airport on holiday. Working in the maritime environment can mean spending a good deal of time outdoors in the elements, climbing in and out of containers and trucks or boarding ships.

What brings us all together is an important and straightforward purpose – to protect the borders of the UK from people or goods that could cause harm. That's not only about protecting our security and the vulnerable – we play a key part in protecting the revenue which is vital to keep all of our public services that you deliver functioning.



**Border Force**

- 1. What is your favourite TV programme?** *Can I only choose one? I watch everything Nordic noir from The Killing, The Bridge, Borgen and most recently the French cop drama 'Spiral'*
- 2. What was the last film I watched and review it in 2 words?** *We went to the Titanic museum in Belfast recently so I then re-watched the film Titanic. It sinks!*
- 3. And your favourite sports team?** *N/A...I hate sports, particularly football. Sorry!*
- 4. What music is currently in your car?** *At the moment obsessed with the amazing voice of Gregory Porter and have tickets to see him in April.*
- 5. Who would be your 5 ideal dinner party guests?** *Kiefer Sutherland. Melissa McCarthy. J K Rowling. Alistair Campbell. And Mr V.*



In Issue 17 we reported on International Men's Day. Since then the organisers have been in touch with this message!

*"We arranged a number of events over 3 days in Peel Park in November 2017 to celebrate International Men's Day (IMD).*

*We wanted to celebrate men, but also focus on mental and physical health issues, resilience and well-being, coaching, and highlighting positive male role models. Our speakers were*

*a variety of experts on health issues: senior managers in DWP and also people who volunteer on a mental health helpline; champion help for dyslexics; and a doctor who discussed men's health.*

*Over 200 people joined in, with Health and Mindfulness being very popular topics. Events were fairly evenly attended by men and women. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with many attendees rating the sessions at 9, or 10, out of 10. Many attendees requested events on physical and mental health issues to be run regularly at Peel Park. Thank you to everyone who joined in – either as a presenter or as a delegate. Along with our sponsor, the organising committee is looking at the legacy of this whole initiative. We have even bigger plans for Peel Park next year - look out for details."*



# Willows, Wellies and Water:

## Traci's diary



One of Civil Service Local's key aims is to encourage civil servants to see how other departments and agencies operate, and our People Connections programme enables them to experience working in a different environment.

**Traci Salisbury** swapped her HR role with HMRC for one supporting senior leaders in the Environment Agency, and her diary reveals that her secondment was an interesting and fulfilling experience.

**Week One:** Awoke early, feeling a tad nervous - and butterflies!

I was introduced to Sue, my mentor and go-to person, before I was bombarded with meeting requests and diary requirements. Time to take a deep breath and work through them one by one.

Apparently I'm 'doing great', though I'm not convinced myself – I don't really like this feeling of being the new kid on the block. However I will be back next week :)

**Week Two:** Arrived at work following a weekend of self-doubt as to whether I would ever understand what was going on, followed by giving myself a good talking to - I can't be expected to know everything straight away.

I realised that the anxieties and concerns that we have in HMRC are mirrored by staff in the Environment Agency (EA) – e.g. time pressures, resource challenges, conflicting demands, etc.

I have been asked to shadow the Environment Programme team, who will be planting trees and 'Doing something with willow' in the Lake District. I have a fine pair of wellies and am handy with a spade, so of course I said yes!



HM Revenue  
& Customs



Environment  
Agency

**Week Three:** Everyone is on high alert due to the wet weather conditions. The incident room is in full swing as teams track the rain and monitor the forecast. Some team members are going out checking on potential flood sites. Reassuringly everyone seems to know what to do. Apparently the teams based in Cumbria are having a tougher time, as numerous floods have been reported as the rain tracks north. All interesting stuff listening to the events as they unfold.

**Week Four:** Sat with some of the team who were on call last week, either staffing the incident room, or visiting people whose homes had been flooded - and even giving live reports and advice on local radio stations. It was great and very re-assuring to hear that the plans they have in place are carried out so effectively.

**Week Five:** My HMRC manager, Karen, came to visit this afternoon. It was great to see her and introduce her to Lee, my EA manager. We had a good conversation about the work I am doing here and the ideas I have put forward for smarter working.

EA staff are allowed 2 days' paid environmental leave every year to take part in activities that enhance the environment, engage with communities or educate people about the environment. I spent a day in the Lake District planting willow thickets and juniper bushes; over 1,000 trees planted before lunch was a brilliant effort. It was a great team building exercise - perhaps we could do something similar in HMRC?

**Week Seven:** I was happily granted an extension to stay until the end of January.

I went to Penrith to discuss and agree a way forward on how services could be improved. I was able to bring my experience of working in the director's private office in HMRC to the fore, and suggested a number of ways they could work together more effectively.

**Week Six:** I attended a team leaders' meeting this morning and, whilst some of the topics discussed went over my head, I was able to put my HR hat on to understand issues around recruitment, stressors in the workplace and stress-related absences. Interestingly a health and wellbeing tracker has recently been introduced, which is similar to HMRC's engagement barometer... I'm learning something new every day!

**Week Eight:** Carole, the new secretary, joined the team. She will permanently fill the role I am currently in. My training and coaching techniques have come to the fore, as I have been teaching Carole some key elements of her role.

**Week Nine:** I have thoroughly enjoyed my experience working for the Environment Agency. I can't believe how quickly time has passed! Reading through my diary, from my initial concerns regarding my ability to now, I can see how my confidence has grown no end – have faith in yourself, Traci!

I have received brilliant feedback. When you think you are 'just doing your job' I don't think you always realise the impact you have on other people. It felt so reassuring that they thought I had done so well, and that I had made a difference during my time here.

I will miss working here, as I have enjoyed the experience so much. However, I am looking forward to new challenges when I return to HMRC. I won't be going back to my previous role, but having successfully faced up to the challenge of working in a completely different environment on this secondment, I am confident that I will tackle my role going forward to the best of my ability, and I am looking forward to whatever challenges I may face.

I would encourage anyone to seek out an opportunity to go on loan or secondment. Having been in HMRC and its predecessors for 20 years or more, this has been an interesting and fulfilling personal journey.

I learned leadership and communications skills - and developed my coaching skills - during my secondment to the Environment Agency, and I would now consider moving to a permanent job in another department.

My advice to anyone considering a loan or secondment would be to grab the bull by the horns, don't be afraid to ask, and give it your best shot – I'm so glad that I did.

**So how about you? Would you like to experience life in a different department, and face new challenges? Take the first step now – ring Jo Nunnerley on 0746 498 9735, or email her at [jo.nunnerley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:jo.nunnerley@cabinetoffice.gov.uk) . Find out what else the Civil Service has to offer – what are you waiting for?**



This issue's Civil Service Local pages begin with a good news story...the award-winning **GAP** (Government Access Point) project.

**Last year, the Brilliant Civil Service awards scheme was introduced to celebrate outstanding examples of the vision in action.**

**So far over a 1,000 entries have been submitted on behalf of teams and individuals from across the Civil Service.**

**I am pleased to announce that the Government Access Point project (GAP) was shortlisted and highly commended recently within the Brilliant Civil Service, Skilled People pillar.**



The GAP team is a committed, cross-government highly skilled team providing a voluntary community service; utilising extensive leadership skills and excellent benefit knowledge to provide a unique service to vulnerable citizens.

GAP positively promotes Welfare Reform, clarifying understanding, effectively dispelling negative beliefs and encouraging citizens to engage with the change process.

GAP makes a difference by providing support/advice to hospice patients regarding benefits, tax and property. Often challenging, as patients are very poorly, some coming to the end of a difficult journey which requires the team to gain their confidence. GAP successfully demonstrates empathy, respect and active listening

Evolving over three years, assisting more than 216 citizens in three hospices GAP has received praise; Blackpool Gazette [click here](#), Hospice website [click here](#).



*"Patients leave with positive views of CS and faith in DWP. I admire the way the team works with our patients in what can be a difficult emotional environment. They show great respect and understanding, the work they do here is hugely valued, and the project is something we all feel very proud to be part of."* **(Hospice feedback)**



GAP recently embraced the challenge to expand their trusted service, extending their portfolio into a further hospice.

Valuing specific user needs and bespoke service requirements, the Project Lead promptly engaged the new hospice. Adapting her professional leadership style, to build an open environment for positive engagement and obtain critical user insight.

Remotely supporting each other, the team worked in an exemplary manner; rapidly planning to implement their service, embedding lessons learnt whilst identifying risks/mitigation.

At pace and united by a strong sense of public service the first visit was delivered within one month assisting 17 patients who found it extremely useful.

Recognising the value and success of the visit, GAP has been asked to commit to further visits. Conducting test and learn, GAP is evaluating to ensure continuation of exemplary service delivery, focusing on making a difference for vulnerable citizens.

GAP consistently utilises enhanced and broader developed skills enabling individuals to be more effective within their CS 'day jobs'.



If you are interested in joining this award winning project, please contact

[Gemma.Sprung@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Gemma.Sprung@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

This issue we hear from **Robert Fagg**, who gives us an update from...

# The Merchants

...a 2017 Civil Service North West Academy family



***Robert describes the challenges he and his colleagues in The Merchants family face, but it will all be worthwhile if they can achieve their ultimate goal in delivering their project - A 'Diversity Day' - raising opportunity and awareness for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) employees in the Civil Service.***

Currently I work on the phones at HMRC taking calls from customers about Tax and National Insurance, so a 'normal' day involves me dealing with high volumes of calls, especially come January with it being one of our busiest times of the year. I'm used to being a part of team - helping/supporting each other when needed but mainly doing my job by myself. However, working in a team towards the same goals is a challenge but also something I find exciting.

Admittedly post-academy, it has been tough trying to sort travel at short notice for meetings/conference calls, especially when I'm not due to have started work for the day, but it makes it all worthwhile when we see how things are progressing with the event.

Personally, there has been times when I've felt like I was behind with it all (mainly because of time off for medical reasons). Trying to balance getting back into the swing of things at work whilst catching up with all the updates to the project is a real challenge (my email inbox alone was swamped!). There were times when I had to ask myself if I could realistically do both, but everyone has been great and I soon got up to date with it all.

As mentioned, logistics has been a bit of a problem to say the least. We are all based in different government departments with different communication methods etc. and we are not even all based in the same area. We've tried our best to swap meetings between Manchester and Liverpool to make things fair for everyone.

I'll be honest, before being involved in this project the lack of BAME representation in senior civil service



Robert (second from right), and the rest of The Merchants

leaders is something I probably would never have noticed for myself, especially as in my office there's a diverse mix of staff. But when it was raised at the academy, it's the kind of thing you start to take notice of and pay attention to. It's now 2018 and there still doesn't appear to be a representation of diverse staff in our senior leaders. When you look carefully, there is so many things being mentioned within the media regarding diversity. Not just ethnicity but other areas as well, so it's nice to see that we're not the only ones who are attempting to tackle this issue, and that it is a hot topic in today's society.

The project itself is coming along well and we've had meetings or conference calls in smaller groups regarding specific areas that we're working on. The research has been pulled together and we've got some useful details from it all, the comms are being prepped to be sent out and we're now gathering details of possible speakers for the event to approach them about being involved...so if you're interested in this feel free to let us know! (**The Network** editorial team can link us up!). We are planning things for the day itself so it all seems to be coming along nicely.

There are always problems we have to overcome, for example, we did have an issue with the room booking which has hopefully now been resolved. Other than that, there hasn't been too many **major** problems, but I hope I'm not speaking too soon! We've got a meeting lined up for later this month where we're going to have to prepare a presentation for the mid-point academy meeting. The presentation has to be done in the style of a gameshow so that's going to be an interesting afternoon.

I honestly never knew that there was this much involved in completing a project as I've never done anything like this before. I've mainly been involved in other people's projects, but this has given me some really useful skills and experience which I can use when doing my own project for my apprenticeship at work - that's a major bonus for me. It's been great seeing how the team have pulled together, even if someone hasn't been able to do as much because of their own workloads or personal reasons. We've all been willing to help each other out and support each other.

I'm excited to see what's going to happen next with this project and where it could lead to as it really feels like we're onto something now. However, I have no idea how I'll feel when it's all over - it will be a strange time after all the hard work we've put in. Hopefully we will reflect on a job well done, and who knows what may come of it.



Bring on the next few months!







# The Network Winter Olympic Quiz

*Test your knowledge with our Winter Olympic themed quiz in homage to the recent Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang . Answers published in the next issue.*

1. In Skiing, what is another name for cross-country racing?
2. How many competitors form a team in bobsleigh racing?
3. What country did skating star Katarina Witt represent?
4. In Ice Hockey, what is the sin bin?
5. What is a piste?
6. In which year was the first Winter Olympics held?
7. What is the name given to a toboggan with metal runners but no steering or brakes, ridden in a sitting or face up position?
8. In Ice Skating what is tracing?
9. What is the crouched position in downhill racing on smooth straight slopes called?
10. In which country did Ice Hockey originate?
11. Which female member of Team GB successfully defended her Skeleton gold medal at the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympics?
12. What medal did Torville and Dean win at the Lillehammer 1994 Winter Olympics?
13. Which 1993 American comedy film is loosely based on the Jamaican bobsleigh team's debut entry into the Calgary 1988 Winter Olympics?
14. Which two sports are included in the Winter Olympic Biathlon?
15. In which year did Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards represent Great Britain in Olympic Ski Jumping ?

The Opportunity Wall is your brand new one-stop shop window for keeping track of Civil Service Local North West's volunteering opportunities. Updates to the Wall will be added to the [blog](#) over time as new opportunities become available.



GAP (Government Access Point) provides a friendly, face to face advice service, within a hospice environment, giving practical information and joined up advice on any Civil Service enquiry.

We are looking to extend our services to the Chorley /Lancaster area and are looking for volunteers from Land Registry/DWP Universal credit and HMRC to join our project.

If you would like to join our team, please complete the Civil service Local Application form, advising of which area you would like to join and forward to

[GEMMA.SPRUNG@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK](mailto:GEMMA.SPRUNG@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK)  
<https://civilservicelocal.blog.gov.uk/civil-service-local-application-form/>

Are you involved with a project that has made a real difference to someone in your local community?

We want to hear from people whose life has changed for the better, thanks to a citizen project. that you help manage.

Get in touch with The Network's editorial team, and we can give your public a voice!

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

Just for Fun <sup>you</sup>

# Sudoku

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

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

## Answers from last editions Sudoku puzzle

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

# WORDSEARCH

Have a go at our Winter Word search while you are waiting for warmer Spring days (here's hoping )

FROST, ICE, SNOWBALL, COLD, BLIZZARD

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

## Answers from last editions quiz

1. Advent
2. Deep and crisp and even
3. St Nicholas
4. 364
5. 3; Dasher, Donner and Dancer
6. Germany
7. Just like the one I used to know
8. A sixpence
9. A manger
10. Australia
11. The Snowman
12. Wales
13. Merry Xmas Everybody
14. The Grinch
15. Mistletoe and Wine
16. Between the trenches in no mans land, Christmas 1914. A match report is not available but there have been (hushed) murmurs that suggest the German's won by three goals to two!
17. Chicago
18. Frosty the Snowman



See you in the next edition when we'll be back with the answers for the Cross-Department Quiz and Sudoku in Issue 19 of The Network