

The Network

Issue 21



Inside this Issue:

- Diversity (not the dance troupe!)
- Kathie Bates (not the actress!)
- Plus the CS Local pages and much more...

Welcome to Issue 21 of The Network

Editors Note

Welcome to Issue 21 of The Network.

As always, there's loads happening in the North West. We are more than happy to bring you updates on just a sample of some of the projects your fellow Civil Servants are involved with.

Garry Woodworth tells us about a recent discovery session on resilience and how you can help yourself overcome disappointments and frustrations in the workplace.

Diversity is certainly a key focus of 'A Brilliant Civil Service' and Liam Shields reports from an event planned and hosted by a CS Local Academy 'family'. We also hear from the organisers to get their view on the challenges of such a project.

GAP is a cross government team providing a unique support service to local hospices - read all about it in this issue.

And we start by hearing from the CS Local national lead—Kathie Bates...who in her previous role was the North West CS Local co-ordinator.

Finally, why not get into the Halloween spirit and try our spooky quiz.

As ever, if you have any feedback, events that you are planning, or if you have attended something that you would like to let others know about, please contact the editorial team.

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A Brilliant
Civil Service



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.

This issue we catch up with CS Local's national lead:

Kathie Bates



Inspiring Each Other...

Civil Service Local is all about people! Whether it is Connecting people from different departments, working with the Citizens we're here to serve, building people's Capability or supporting future leaders to become the best they can be....it's people, people, people at the heart of it all.

Getting out and about and spending time with people from all walks of life, learning about them, their challenges and achievements, is the favourite part of my job. But I've remembered...it's more than that, they inspire me!

At two unrelated recent events I heard a couple of things which really resonated with me personally and feel sums up CS local quite nicely.

Firstly, a delegate at our Midlands End of Year Academy celebration used a quote from Jesse Jackson

"If my mind can conceive it, and my heart can believe it, I know I can achieve it".

I'm often asked what is it that makes CS Local work and it's quite a tricky question to answer. There is no simple magic ingredient other than passionate people, but with the help of Jesse my answer from here on will be that we enable people to conceive new possibilities for a different future, instil belief that it's possible and support those building their capability to achieve it. The people stories on our [blog](#) show you how.

The second bout of inspiration came from Mark Sedwill (Acting Cabinet Secretary & National Security Advisor) speaking on leadership and resilience to directors at Civil Service Live. Mark also used a quote, from William Hague when he was Secretary of State. In response to a question about his view on the key to successful leadership he offered 3 things:

A clear set of goals

Build a great team

Stay Calm

In my first 10 months as the Head Of Civil Service Local we've invested heavily in being clear about what we are doing, why and the impact it has and we've enjoyed building a stronger more focused Leadership team. And as for staying calm....I think we're doing ok. In an environment where there's always plenty going on, a great demand for our services and genuine belief that if it feels the right thing to do try it, if it worksdo it again, if it doesn't...don't!



Civil Service
Local

We offer a swan like service, often saying yes to an opportunity and then working out the how later!

It's been a busy time at CS Local across the nation. Our diverse comprehensive regional programmes have provided over 270 opportunities for Civil Servants to engage in cross government activities and this year has also seen us:

- deliver a number of '**A Brilliant Civil Service Events**' in conjunction with our Cabinet Office colleagues
- meet for the first time with our Perm Sec Champions as a collective team
- expand into Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, making exciting and promising contacts

Excitingly, we've recently heard we made the shortlist for not one but two of the prestigious 2018 Civil Service Awards. Our:

- Chaffinches (Academy Family) with their A-Z of well being shortlisted for The Health and Well Being Award
- Going forward into Employment Pilot shortlisted for 'The Innovation Award'.

This is a very special moment for us as a team, having won the 2014 Excellence in Reform Award, it is both a privilege and an honour for our work to be recognised again in this way, although I have to say...it's kinda the icing on the cake ...nothing compared to the feeling we all get knowing we've made a difference to someone lives. Fingers crossed though...as no team has ever won twice!!

So what next? In the words of John Manzonei....the next 6 months will be “complex and challenging” although I suspect less so for CS Local than the country! That said...it's going to be very busy as our regional team will continue to offer interesting and exciting opportunities to civil servants across the land and a few new innovative pilots on the way.

So, if after reading this you feel inspired to get out and about, learn more about the place you live and work or just simply would like to try something new then CS Local might be the place for you as we continue to move towards making A Brilliant Civil Service.

If you're interested in finding out more take a look at [our business plan](#), [the Quarter 1 report](#) and get in touch with [the team](#) in your area.

Getting to know....*Kathie*

1. What's currently playing in your car? - *Bon Jovi—what else!*
2. What was the last film you saw and write a **two** word review? - *Ant-Man: Farfetched fun*
3. Pet hate.... - *People opening doors but not closing them*
4. Your ultimate dinner menu is.... - *something with mushrooms, salmon and vanilla ice cream and hot chocolate fudge sauce*
5. And pick your 5 celebrities (dead or alive) to share that menu....*Patrick Swayze (obviously) Elvis (must have been fab to know him) Peter Kay (for humour) Karen Brady (inspiration) Pink (I love her songs)*

Not Just Bumping Along!



Garry Woodworth from Carers Allowance Unit (DWP) reports from another popular CS Local discovery session 'Bumps in the Road'

This CS Local introductory session was for staff looking for quick tips on how to overcome setbacks at work, put disappointments into perspective and build resilience.

Thirty people took part in the session and all were asked to pick the three things most important to them in their life – surprisingly, no one in the room said it was their current job or where they work!



The group was also asked questions such as:

Do you know...

- someone at work who always makes mountains out of molehills?
- someone who is always negative?
- a manager who makes a big issue out of everything thereby adding to everyone's stress levels?
- someone who won't let go of something that has gone wrong?

Some other key points to think about:

- The event is a failure, not you so don't let it affect other aspects of your life.
- It's okay to not feel okay if something goes wrong – everyone needs "wallow" time to recover from a situation.
- If people feel they've been given a fair hearing, they'll usually 'come round'.
- 'Quick wins' (doing stuff that you know is straightforward) can get you going again after the problem.
- And the biggest one of all (although it's not easy to do) - Try not to worry about things that you can't actually change!

All in all, it was a useful session to get you thinking - and it's worth keeping an eye out for any future repeats!

We learnt how the environment around you (including the culture where you work and the people) can affect your reaction to an event and how, if something goes wrong, support from other people around you is key to helping you to recover quickly.

One of the main themes of the session was that small things (particularly at work) can appear big at the time but, when compared to the things that really matter to us, often fade quite quickly to the back of our minds.

It's important to understand how you react to situations so that you can 'interrupt' your own behaviour when you feel yourself overreacting to situations. One tip was to rate the problem honestly on a scale of 'one to ten' to try to put the situation into perspective.



Health and Wellbeing

Michelle Rooney from HMRC's Risk & Intelligence Service Team in Bootle tells us about the recent event held in St John's House...



The St Johns House Health & Wellbeing Group located in Bootle, Merseyside organised a Market Stall event on Wednesday 5th September, with representatives from a range of health related organisations in attendance, including HMRC's very own RIS Attendance & Wellbeing Champions, together with Slimming World, Department of Transport, Sefton Stop Smoking, BHSF, Merseyside Fire Brigade, Sports Masseuse, Carers Network, Autism Buddies & Women's Health.

In the spirit of Health & Wellbeing the group raised funds in the weeks prior to the event playing office bingo to pay for refreshments and fruit which was given to attendees free on the day - contributing to one of their 5 a day and a healthier diet. The event was well attended with 200+ people visiting the stalls and positive feedback passed on to the group, the vast majority of whom are volunteers and undertake duties in addition to their day job.

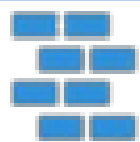


One attendee said the following:

"I have just been to the Health & Wellbeing Event here in St Johns House. It was really good and I spoke to lots of the stall holders and learnt something at each, that I did not know. Sometimes I feel a little nervous approaching stalls, such as those today, but I was made to feel very relaxed and found myself talking about, in particular, mental health concerns... So **thanks** to you and the St Johns House Wellbeing team."

Getting to know... Michelle

1. What is your favourite food? **Prawn Pil Pil**
2. What is your favourite sports team? **Liverpool FC**
3. What was the last film you watched? **Three Billboards outside Ebbing Missouri – two words to summarise: Girl Power**
4. What CD's would be found in your car? **Now CD's for the kids but if I had my own way it would be Bob Marley**
5. Who would be your 5 ideal dinner guests? **John Lennon, David Attenborough, Lady Diana, Freddie Mercury & Tom Hanks**



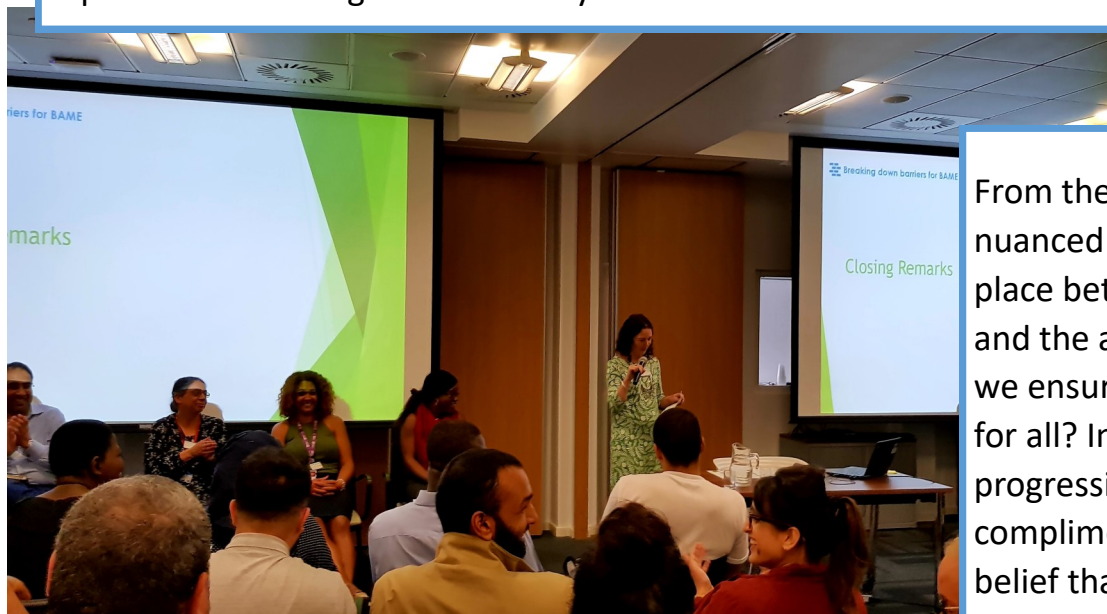
Breaking down barriers for BAME

HMRC's Liam Shields reports



Breaking down barriers for BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) came to a packed Piccadilly Gate meeting room in July. The event was organised by **The Merchants**, a cross-government team formed at Civil Service Local North West's Leadership Academy 2017. Their goal was to increase awareness of the challenges ethnic minorities can face within the Civil Service and SCS (Senior Civil Service).

Diverse staff from over ten Civil Service departments listened as team member Sasha explained that The Merchants conceived the idea for the event due to her experience of low racial diversity levels in certain areas of the Civil Service. Research suggested that while upwards of **11%** of the UK population is BAME, SCS consists of **7%** BAME staff. Therefore it became apparent to The Merchants the need for an event to recognise the gap in representation along with other key issues and successes.



From there, a passionate and nuanced conversation took place between senior leaders and the audience; how could we ensure a level playing field for all? Inspirational views and progressive ideas were being complimented by a shared belief that the Civil Service needs to remain adaptive to change.

HMRC's Philip Thomas told the audience, *"We can't allow ourselves to be divided. Don't focus on those sub-layers of diversity. Focus on what is important to you as a person and find your sense of peace in that. You will be at an interview where you will find yourself at the right panel who will make that decision. Be resilient, be confident, be happy with yourself."*



HM Prison & Probation Service's Craig Simpson, the national lead for staff network RISE (Racial Inclusion & Striving for Equality), said that those in power need to work to create a change of culture and remove obstacles to racial progression. He went on to say that representation at all levels is the first step towards making this happen. A goal that **John Manzoni, Chief Executive of the Civil Service**, advised by video that the organisation is making rapid progress towards.

John told the audience that representation is increasing year-on-year to ensure all people can *"feel as included as we'd like them to be"*. He also said the Civil Service is aiming to be the most inclusive employer in the UK by 2020 and that there are a number of initiatives in place to help with this. These include John personally chairing a Diversity Taskforce to focus on issues such as encouraging internal candidates to look for promotion; providing mentoring opportunities; and the Civil Service working strategically to attract minorities into all levels of the organisation.

From audience interaction on the day and early feedback – including one guest who said it had been *"inspirational"* and by far the best session of its kind they had attended – the event appeared to be a great success. The Merchants team member Katie advised the group will be carefully tracking feedback going forward and said she encourages those who attended to tell them about their progress both implementing change and reporting on progress in their business areas.

Bernadette Thompson, Diversity Consultant for the Home Office and co-Chair of the Race to the Top G6/G7 network, may have best summed up the energy of the day when she told the audience in her speech:

"Anyone can start a movement – Sasha and the Merchants did. You don't have to be Barack Obama – everyone can inspire someone. If you inspire someone, that, to me, automatically makes you a leader."

To find out how your business area can take steps to improve diversity and inclusion, contact Civil Service Local North West's Inclusion team at colin.connor@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk or sarah.scott-legal@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk.



This issue we hear from **Cara Oladeji** from...

The Merchants

...a 2017 Civil Service North West Academy family



Cara from HMRC reflects on a hugely successful event - Breaking down the barriers for BAME - raising opportunity and awareness for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) employees in the Civil Service. An event that was devised at the 2017 CS Local NW Academy.

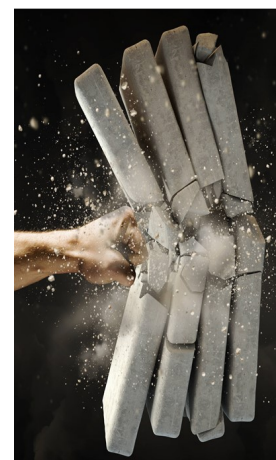


I have loved my time on the Future Leaders programme. It's been a privilege to work on such a worthwhile and high profile project. Our group was so diverse in every way, and this led to such a well organised and presented event. We all had our own strengths and developed more as we were willing to go out of our comfort zones. The event was amazing and the feedback is testament to this. I particularly felt proud of the mix of

speakers we had, adding to the dynamic of the day. There was an altercation a couple of days beforehand but I'm not surprised about this, we had strong personalities and the stress didn't help as we were all focused on delivering an excellent event. I insisted on electronic feedback after the event and ensured questions were tailored so we could use feedback received going forward. We are now working on a report with recommendations to circulate to our SCS so everyone's feedback from the day will be used to improve opportunities for BAME staff in all our departments. Prior to the event, I was contacted by the CS Local NW Diversity and Inclusion Network and they attended on the day, securing new members from different CS departments. Three of us from The Merchants have joined the group and look forward to continuing our success. From a personal development perspective, I enjoyed organising the event, leading to me organising 'Learning at Work Week' in April and 'National Inclusion Week' in September. I haven't yet been promoted but I have taken advantage of our coach, Ruth and she is now my mentor!



Breaking down the Barriers for BAME



 **Breaking down barriers for BAME**

There's a 'GAP' in the North West... but thanks to CS Local, that's good news!



Civil Service
Local

Suzanne Taylor-Jack explains all

Civil Service Local (CSL) is a cross departmental organisation commissioned to support transformation within the Civil Service and wider Public Sector. Its aims are to:-

- Connect the Civil Service
- Reach out to our local communities
- Pilot solutions

One aspect of CSL is the Government Access Point Project (GAP) and this is where I have become involved.

GAP is a cross government team providing a unique support service to local hospices. The team that I work with support Trinity Hospice in Blackpool and during July we had our quarterly visits.

Trinity Hospice have a Day Therapy Unit that gives patients the chance to enjoy a wide variety of therapies and activities along with a change of environment and scenery, promoting physical, psychological and spiritual well-being. The unit offers a 16 week programme to their patients and GAP is one of a number of support organisations that visit to provide face to face practical information and support. In order to get to meet all the participants on the programme we attend for four days over two weeks.

During our visit the GAP team give an informal presentation explaining who we are and what we are there for. In a nutshell we are able to provide general advice on a wide variety of Civil Service benefits and Government Departments and signposting to more detailed information. We will then speak to each of the patients to see if there is any advice that we can provide and then we set up appointments to discuss their concerns or queries in detail.

For this set of visits we were joined by a number of new recruits who were keen to get involved and understand what we do. I asked them for some feedback on how they found the experience.



Yvonne

"My first experience of joining GAP was very rewarding. I wasn't at all apprehensive to meet the patients at Trinity as I could see the team were experienced and able to answer all my questions! I was keen that in some small way I could make a difference to the patients and their families by providing our knowledge of benefits. Following the visit I have already learned new information on DWP benefits and gained confidence in being part of GAP for the future."





Civil Service
Local

Chelsey

"I felt very at ease being able to discuss what we think would benefit the patients. All members work well together. Lots of information to take in and I am looking forward to the next event."



Louise

"I was a bit apprehensive but on entry to Trinity Hospice it seemed a lovely warm place. I was greeted by friendly supportive colleagues for the day when we got to the project room. I learnt quite a lot about the different benefits which DWP offer as I'm more clued up on HMRC areas. I think it was rewarding to work across government areas and I was proud of myself for taking part in the GAP project."



Chris

"From the moment I entered the hospice right through to the end of the day I felt very welcomed by GAP team and by the workers at Trinity House. The patients were engaged in group activities and looked in good spirits and all made a point of smiling at me. All this helped me feel at ease."

I personally thought the day went very well. It was very clear the patients had benefited from our visit, and vice versa. The patients which I spoke to all said they enjoyed speaking to us, and were very thankful with the information we had supplied. I'm more than sure all the patients felt the same."



It is great to be adding new members to the GAP Project team, bringing their positivity and knowledge to help us all improve the service that we provide.

If anyone would like any further information about the GAP Project please contact:

GEMMA.SPRUNG@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK

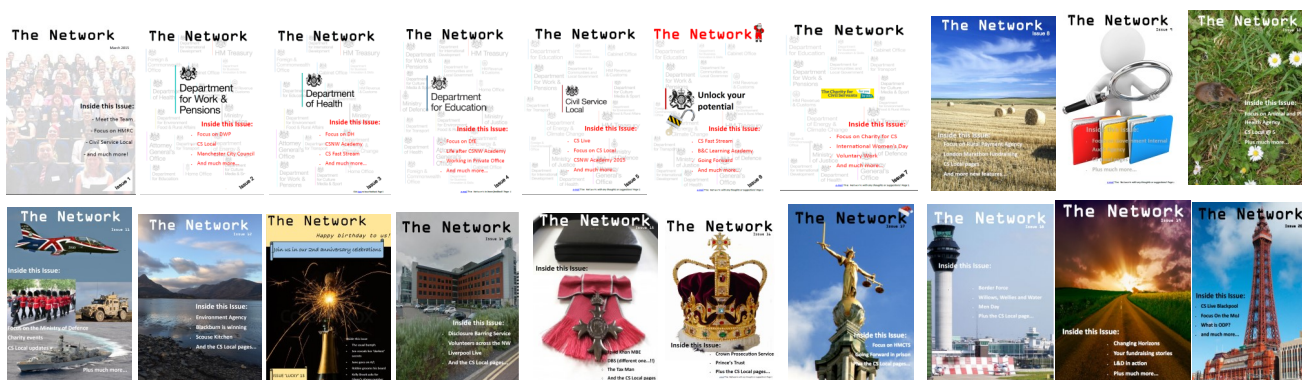
The Network Halloween Quiz

A spook-tacular quiz for you this month as we look towards our favourite reason for listening to Thriller. Do you know your ghouls from your ghosts? Your witches from your wizards? Your vampires from your werewolves?

1. 'Hallowmas' is another name for which festival?
2. Which legendary coaching house in Cornwall is said to be haunted and inspired a novel by Daphne du Maurier?
3. 'Ponder Stibbons' is the name of a wizard in books by which author?
4. Name the parents from the Addams Family.
5. 'Guising' is another name for which practice?
6. Who first celebrated what we have come to know as Halloween?
7. The Simpsons Halloween Episodes are an annual tradition in which there are three separate, self-contained pieces. By which title are these episodes known?
8. The collective noun for a group of witches is a ____ of witches.
9. Which famous Halloween party game originated from a custom to establish who would get married first?
10. The fear of Halloween is known by which other name? Fourteen letters.

Answers from last editions quiz

1. March and October
2. The Pope
3. June
4. Glastonbury
5. Raspberries, black-
currants or blackber-
ries
6. Open University
7. Queen of Hearts made
some tarts
8. Dates
9. Mercury
10. Iceland
11. St Swithin's Day
12. Sonnet 18
13. December
14. Calvin Harris
15. Estate



*See you in the next edition when we'll be back with the answers
for the Halloween Quiz in Issue 22 of The Network*