

# The Network

Issue 22



Civil Service



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- CS Local North West's latest recruit

# Welcome to Issue 22 of The Network

## Editors Note

Ho ho ho readers! Welcome to Issue 22 of The Network.

Can you believe it!? Another year is coming to the close. One step closer to the biggest break up Britain will ever see... how much longer has Jose got at Man United... perhaps he will need legal advice?

Speaking of which, the Head of Contract management Rowena Foxwell talks to us about her journey and the Legal Aid Agency.

You got to be one tough mother to get involved with Tough Mudder! Andrew Stonham and colleagues from HMRC certainly proved that. They tell us about their mucky adventure.

It was awards season across the Civil Service as the CS Awards were held in London. Tracey Waltho and Michael Silcock tell us about (spoiler alert) CS Local's successes!

CS Local have been recruiting. James Dumbill is the new North West Co-ordinator. We learn a bit about him and the challenge ahead of him.

And sadly, its goodbye to The Merchants who are now travelling off on their separate ways. We hear from Robert Fagg on the positive impact of their experience.

All that remains to be said is Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all the editorial team—thank you for your continued support.

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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... *Legal Aid Agency*

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) provides civil and criminal legal aid and advice in England and Wales to help people deal with their legal problems.

LAA is an executive agency, sponsored by the [Ministry of Justice](#).

The LAA is responsible for:

- making sure legal aid services from solicitors, barristers and the not-for-profit sector are available to the general public
- funding the [Civil Legal Advice](#) service
- publishing statistical information on legal aid and the Director of Legal Aid Casework annual report, which states how the post-holder carries out independent decision-making duties each financial year
- running the Public Defender Service to give a range of services within the criminal defence market.

The LAA has a team of around 1,450 staff and offices in towns and cities across England and Wales.

The LAA's main north west office is based in Manchester.

The head office is based in London.



## Legal Aid Agency

LAA's priorities are to:

- improve legal aid casework, for example by speeding up payments and eligibility assessments
- grow the capability of the LAA by investing in staff development and improving its working environment
- work with its partners to deliver changes to legal aid, including informing policy development and increasing online working.

*This issue's Senior Leader Contribution with:*

**Rowena Foxwell**

*from the Legal Aid Agency*



**Legal Aid  
Agency**

**What is your current role, and what does it entail?**

I am currently the Head of Contract Management for the Legal Aid Agency (LAA). My team is over 100 staff based in 12 regional teams across England & Wales, although I'm based in Manchester – a proud Northerner! Contract Management's key task is to ensure compliance to the contract between the LAA and legal aid advice providers and make sure that key requirements are adhered to. The LAA spent £1.6bn providing legal aid to help people deal with their legal problems in 2017/18, and the amount paid to providers ranges from a few thousand pounds annually to the largest provider who took a total of £32million across all of their offices. We have nearly 3,500 contracts with solicitors and not-for-profit organisations delivering civil, crime and mediation services.

Contract Managers are the external face of the LAA to providers and stakeholders alike. They manage financial, political and reputational risk to the LAA and the Ministry of Justice by developing and sustaining productive relationships and by ensuring compliance with LAA contracts, helping and educating providers where appropriate, and sanctioning the same when requirements are not met. All this helps to ensure that the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) can deliver a modern courts and justice system.

My job is a senior leadership role providing strategic direction to the Contract Management team, managing and mitigating emerging risks through the team and playing my part in wider corporate duties as a member of the LAA's Executive Leadership Team.

**What is the best part of your role, and what are the greatest challenges?**

The best part of my role is the people I work with. I really enjoy getting out and meeting with the teams and hearing first hand the issues they are currently facing and hopefully being able to do something about removing obstacles which could make their role difficult, or identifying opportunities for continuous improvement. I am very fortunate to have a very varied role – I worked on Civil Service Live earlier this year as theme lead for 'A Great Place to Work' which was a fascinating insight into the wider Civil Service. This made me realise even more the difference we can make to people's lives through the services we provide. Seeing that direct impact is so motivating to me.



## What has your Civil Service career journey been so far?

I led a very insular life in the public sector up until about 5 years ago. I joined the Legal Services Commission (the LAA's predecessor) in 2000 in a planning and partnership role working with Local Authorities and other public and private sector bodies to define the need for legal and advice services and help focus on areas that needed it most. The most rewarding success of that era was helping to set up a Law Centre in an area previously underserved where the local population were in dire need for services.

I have since had several roles within the LSC/LAA including Contract Management, Business Change and Project Delivery. In 2013, the LAA was created and became an Executive Agency to the MoJ. At this point, we formally joined the Civil Service and I was keen to get a better understanding of what we were to become. Thanks to an excellent mentor (take a bow Gill Hague, Regional Director at HMCTS in the North West) I was introduced to Kathie Bates and Civil Service Local and haven't looked back since. My first foray into the wider Civil Service was leading a project team working with offenders coming up for release at Thorn Cross prison. I met colleagues from across the Civil Service and gained a broader understanding of our component parts. I would actively encourage anyone to make links outside of your own Department – CS Local is a great way to do this. Our impact is very far reaching and if you are fortunate enough to attend Civil Service Live or similar events, you can see just how diverse a group we are and yet share a common vision and goals which makes working together that much simpler when we get the opportunity.



### ***Thorn Cross Prison:***

***Rowena's first involvement with CS Local was leading a project working with offenders due for release***

## What advice would you give to civil servants who want to advance their careers?

Be clear on what you need help with. Find opportunities to develop (for me that included working outside of my home Department for example through volunteering). Find a more experienced mentor who can help explore those opportunities with you and give advice on how you can develop further. Don't focus solely on promotion – focus on personal development so that you are ready when opportunities come along. A sideways move can be as beneficial.





## Is there anything else you would like to add about your role?

I enjoy my job and the company of the people I work with. From travelling to visit other offices, attending meetings in Whitehall, being a 'Dragon' for the CS Local Academy, volunteering through the MOJ's Social Mobility programme or meeting with senior stakeholders from the Justice system, reviewing mobilisation plans for a new multi-million call centre contract or discussing the People Survey and plans for the LAA with my Executive Team colleagues, the variety is so interesting that no two days are ever the same. Not every day is perfect and there are always challenges along the way but it is never not interesting!

I really value the opportunity to do what I do in the broader Civil Service too and recognise that not everyone is part of an organisation of 430,000 people with shared goals and a common identity as we are. I find that really inspirational.

## Getting to know....Rowena

- 1. What music is currently playing in your car?** *I tend to only make short journeys in the car so usually have the radio on. If I'm listening on my phone I enjoy a good podcast – usually Richard Herring's or just heard Pep Guardiola's 5 Live interview which was very good – I am biased...see next answer*
- 2. Name your favourite sports team?** *I've been a season ticket holder at Manchester City for 28 years. I feel like I've earned these good times. Outside of professional sport, my sons swim for Stockport Metro so I will go for two clubs if I may.*
- 3. The last movie you watched – and a two word review...** *Tag! "Rather disappointing"*
- 4. What's on your bookshelf at home?** *Travel guides. I read novels on my kindle. I love my touristy holidays so the last book I bought was for 'Los Angeles'*
- 5. Your 5 dream dinner guests (dead or alive) would be...** *Emmeline Pankhurst, David Bowie, Roberto Mancini, Oprah Winfrey and my Mum! Gosh, that is rather an eclectic mix. Might not work but you asked for 5!*



# When the Going Gets Tough...

## Civil Servants Get Going!



### Andrew Stonham from HMRC tells us about his 'Tough Mudder' adventure

6am on a Saturday is not a time that is usually associated with me being awake. However, on the first two Saturdays in September all that was to change!

On 5th September myself and a group of colleagues, Helen Burrows, Lynne Molyneux, Pete Stam and Brian Galvin, known as the Bootle Metafitters arose early and made our ways to Cholmondeley Castle in Cheshire to take part in The Tough Mudder, an event course that tests your physical strength and endurance and as the name suggests copious amounts of mud.

We checked in and got ready and made our way to the start and to warm up. On our wave was a former New Zealand rugby league captain who led us in the Haka.

And so we started and made our round the course which contained such obstacles as Mud Mile, Kiss of Mud, Hero Walls and Everest. We successfully made our way around the course and collected our headbands, finisher t-shirts and a very welcome bottle of cider. And so with aching bodies we made our way home ready to face the next challenge.

The following week, with the addition of Fiona Richardson, Marina Winnard, Victor Oziabor Nikki Stam and Louise Burrows, we left the Triad at 8.30 to travel to Heaton Park in Manchester for The Gauntlet Games. Again this was an obstacle course but without the mud. There was however plenty of water.

Obstacles including Stepping Stones, Bounce and Splash, Slide and Splash and Belly Slide made sure that we got wet. Once again we successfully made our way round and collected our medals and finisher t-shirts.

As well as enjoying both events we have also raised money for Alzheimer's Society. It's not too late to make a donation. This can be done by contacting [me](#) directly or on the Just Giving website.







## *Getting to know... Andrew*

1. **Favourite food?** *Full English breakfast*
2. **Name your favourite sports team?** *Ipswich Town and Llanelli Scarlets.*
3. **The last movie you watched – and a two word review...**  
*Johnny English Strikes Again “Very funny” .*
4. **What’s playing in your car?** *Queen for me; McFly, Take That and Olly Murs for the family.*
5. **Your 5 dream dinner guests (dead or alive) would be...***Tim Vine, Freddie Mercury, Jamie Oliver, Bobby Robson and William Booth.*



# And the Winner is...

## More success for CS Local



# Civil Service Local

***Tracey Waltho, Director General of the Civil Service Group (CSG) and Michael Silcock from Cabinet Office, have some good news from the recent Civil Service Awards ceremony. We start with Tracey's contribution...***

There are lots of ways we celebrate success – from saying well done to a colleague and CSG's Reward and Recognition Scheme, to things like the monthly [A Brilliant Civil Service](#) awards. But the most important way we celebrate achievement (and the most glamorous) are the annual [Civil Service Awards](#).

This year's Civil Service Awards were presented at Lancaster House, London. CSG was represented at the ceremony, with CS Local forming part of teams shortlisted for two awards – the Innovation Award (for the [Going Forward into Employment Team](#)) and the Health and Wellbeing Award (for the [A-Z to Better Wellbeing](#)).

I'm delighted to tell you that CS Local won both awards! This is an amazing achievement, recognising that CS Local's collaborative approach is making a real difference (I had the pleasure of spending a day with CS Local in Huddersfield, seeing their excellence first hand!).

I am so proud to see members of CSG recognised in this way. I hope you will join me in saying congratulations to everyone in CS Local, and their colleagues in other departments, who contributed to the A-Z to Better Wellbeing and Going Forward into Employment projects.



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### **And Michael adds...**

The Civil Service Awards, sponsored by EY, are a highly respected and prestigious cross-government programme to recognise and celebrate the wealth, knowledge and experience of individuals and projects within the Civil Service.

There were a record-breaking number of nominations for the Awards this year. More than 1,200 civil servants identified a team or individual who they believe had gone above and beyond to deliver better service for the public.

This year's ceremony was held in November at Lancaster House, London. We are pleased to announce that teams within CS Local were the incredibly proud winners of two awards:



The Health and Wellbeing award was given to **Team Chaffinch**, the A to Z to Better Wellbeing Team. Team Chaffinch, is made up of eight civil servants and aspiring junior leaders across government departments who met in June 2017 at CS Local ESEL Junior Leadership Academy as part of a year-long programme. Their aim is to support the vision to be 'A Brilliant Civil Service', making it a great place to work with a commitment to Health and Wellbeing.

Wellbeing is valued by senior leaders and colleagues alike and this is why the team researched, designed and delivered a toolkit that brings together the latest information that can be accessed in one simple click. The toolkit is now used by individuals and teams to help improve health and wellbeing.



The Innovation award went to the **Going Forward into Employment Project Team**, a collaborative project jointly led by the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Justice. They work with the Civil Service Commission, with the aim of encouraging the employment of ex-offenders into the civil service. The pilot project began in October 2017, focussed in the North West of England, working with three low security prisons to match ex-offenders on their release with suitable vacancies in civil service offices in the area.

As of today, ten candidates are deployed in six departments. A diverse range of roles have been identified, and controlled matching is used to ensure candidates are placed into roles closely aligned to their skill sets.

Feedback from individuals selected and employing departments has been excellent (including some very moving testimonies), and the pilot is currently being evaluated with the aim of expanding into further areas.

*Well done to everyone who was nominated, shortlisted or received awards. We look forward to seeing more ideas and ways to improve the Civil Service and hopefully more awards in future.*

*This issue, we meet...*

# James Dumbill

*The new CS Local North West Co-ordinator*



## Civil Service Local

I am now in my second week as the North West Co-ordinator for Civil Service Local and it's fair to say that the old cliché is true- no two days have been the same. Given the range and scope of the work perhaps that should come as no surprise. It has been wonderful to start to get a sense of that work, both through attending events and by meeting people.

The first event I went along to was a CS Local Career Pathway Discovery Session at HMRC's Learning Academy in Preston. 60 staff, mostly from DWP and HMRC, listened to Matt Bulmer from the DfE and Jenny Sandham from the MoD giving entertaining accounts of their successes and failures to date and the lessons they have learnt across their careers.



I was lucky enough to experience the CS Local Middle Manager Academy North in Huddersfield on Wednesday and Thursday. The 66 delegates came from 19 departments or agencies across the North of England. Although the 'families' (the name given to teams at MMA) had only previously spent two days together in early October, they had to present their initial ideas in response to the business challenges they had been set to a 'Dragons' Den' style panel. They did so superbly, ably assisted by the eight facilitators who had volunteered to help. They also benefitted from a range of great presentations on subjects such as how to pitch an idea, leadership and wellbeing delivered by speakers from across the departments.

When I got home from the Academy, it was great to discover that CS Local had won two prizes at the Civil Service Awards. You can read more about these elsewhere in this issue.



*This issue, we meet...*

## **James Dumbill**

**The new CS Local NW Co-ordinator**



**Civil Service  
Local**

Since joining CS Local, it has been great to discover how many opportunities there are across the Civil Service. This week alone, I have met an award-winning meat inspector and the person responsible for our nuclear submarines, as well as many others with roles I would never have imagined would be in the Civil Service. My own Civil Service background is with the DfE, where I was the West Yorkshire lead for the Regional Delivery Division. In my time there, I also worked on International Teacher Recruitment and in the Regional School Commissioner's office.

Prior to that, I was a teacher. My subjects were Latin and Greek and I also coached football teams, led trips etc. I was, at various points, Head of Sixth Form and Head of Boys. I am sometimes asked whether I miss teaching and although on balance the answer is no, I did sometimes miss dealing with such a broad range of people - I think it's fair to say that you meet every conceivable type of person at a school in that we all went there once.

It is the opportunity to work with all sorts of brilliant people that excites me most about this role and I'm looking forward to meeting and working with many more of the North West's 52,000 civil servants and working for its vulnerable adults and children through our many and various programmes.

If you like the sound of the work that we do then please volunteer to help us if you are able to do so.

### *Getting to know... James*

- 1. What music is currently playing in your car?** *Odd hybrid Spotify playlists that combine my own choice of music (crooners, rock and rock'n'roll, country, Motown and hip-hop) and my daughters' (soundtracks to films like Coco, Trolls and My Little Pony).*
- 2. Name your favourite sports team?** *Liverpool FC*
- 3. The last movie you watched – and a two word review...** *Crazy, Stupid Love. Enjoyable romcom!*
- 4. What's on your bookshelf at home?** *All sorts- I'm a compulsive buyer of books. I'm currently reading The Discovery of France by Graham Robb, the latest William Boyd and Peter Crouch's autobiography on a rota depending on my mood.*
- 5. Your 5 dream dinner guests (dead or alive) would be...** *This is very tricky. The guest list is male dominated because my house isn't! Johnny Cash, Muhammad Ali, Elvis Presley, Dean Martin and Jurgen Klopp.*

# The Merchants

... a 2017 Civil Service North West Academy family



***Robert from HMRC reflects on his time with The Merchants and the impact of attending the CS Local NW Academy.***

It's strange to think that it's over 12 months since The Merchants met for the first time and decided to start on a project that would eventually become Breaking Down Barriers for BAME. In that time so much has happened to us including promotions (not me yet but I'm still trying!) and dealing with reduced numbers on the team.

The event was a major success and I'm really proud of it and how well we did. Overall, I've really enjoyed working on this project and being a part of the Future Leaders Academy - it's certainly been an eye opening experience for me. It's also made me more aware of Diversity and Inclusion, so much so that I've now joined the Civil Service Local NW D&I Network. I'm also working on another project regarding D&I with our project coach Ruth.

I do feel that I've been lucky to be with this group and had the opportunity to work on a project that's both interesting and very topical at this moment in time. A few things have also happened for me personally as I turned 30 at the beginning of September, I visited Barcelona for the first time (weirdly someone from my office was there at the time but we never bumped into each other!) and at the end of September, my new baby niece was born on the same day as one of my other niece's 21st birthdays!

I have had two interviews within the space of a week; one of which I'm now on the reserve list for. Both of the jobs have been level transfers, but I think before doing the Academy I've put a lot of emphasis on progressing upwards, but never considered making a move sideways to get experience of a different department. If successful, it will give me new skills I can take forward.

We also attended the end of year Academy event last month which was actually a lot of fun, especially performing a play written by yours truly about our adventures along the way. Moving forwards we're now in the process of finalising a report for senior leaders and then that will be the end for The Merchants working together - although I'll still be working with Cara and Sasha with CS Local D&I Network. Also thanks to my former HO, I've been nominated for a HMRC People Award for my work involved with D&I so fingers crossed I get through to the finals.

To anyone interested in attending the Academy I say go for it! You never know what may happen as a result and I've met some great people and been involved with a fascinating project. Who knows this could soon be you writing for **The Network**.



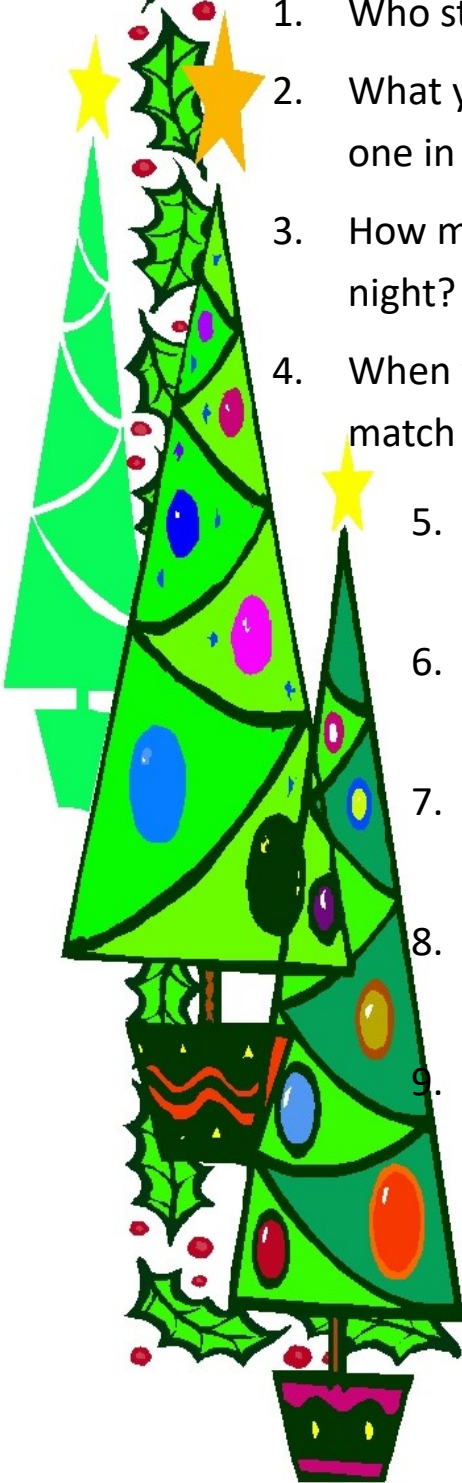
**Breaking down barriers for BAME**

[email The Network](#) with any thoughts or suggestions! Page 13



## The Network Christmas Quiz

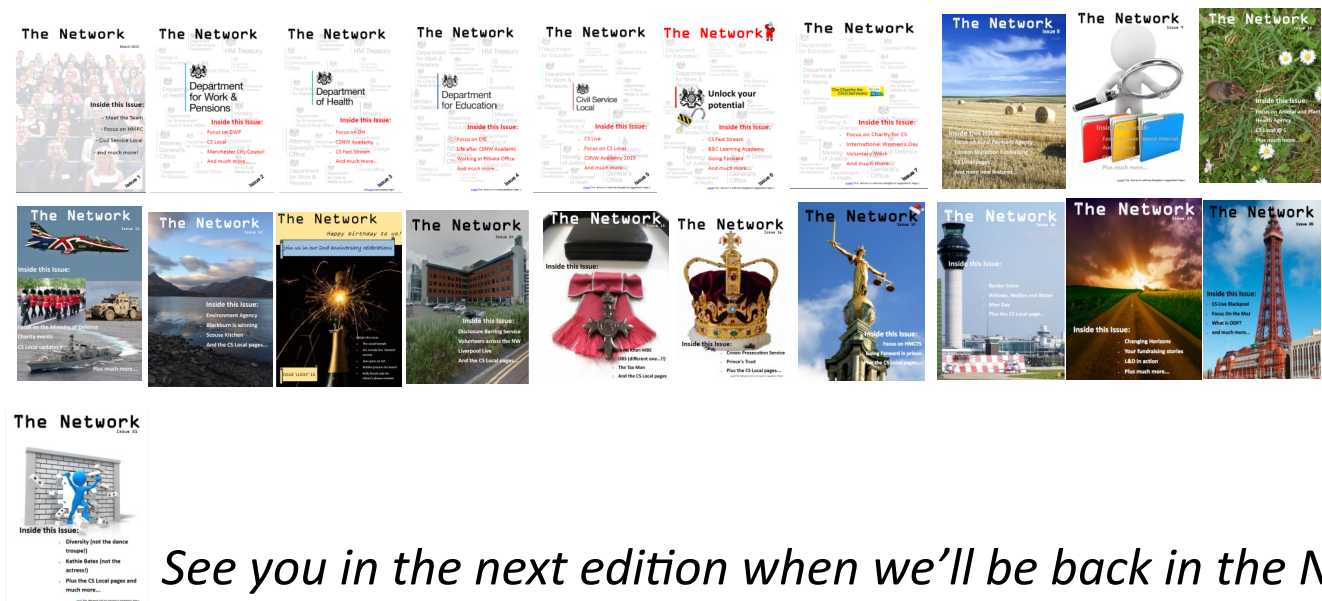
The holidays are coming!!! What better way to greet them then our famous re(i)ndition of the Christmas Quiz!

- 
1. Who starred as Buddy in the film Elf?
  2. What year did Bohemian Rhapsody reach number one in the UK charts on Christmas Day?
  3. How many reindeer pull Santa's sleigh on the big night?
  4. When was the last time an English league football match was played on Christmas Day?
  5. Who is the author of "How the Grinch stole Christmas"?
  6. Macaulay Culkin appeared in how many Home Alone movies?
  7. Who sang the first line of the 1984 Christmas number one "Do they know it's Christmas"?
  8. TRUE or FALSE; There are three towns in the USA named Santa Claus.
  9. What country hosts the annual Boxing Day Test match?



## Answers from last editions quiz

1. All Saint's Day (1 November)
2. Jamaica Inn
3. Terry Pratchett
4. Morticia and Gomez
5. Trick or Treating
6. The Druids
7. Treehouse of Horror
8. Coven
9. Bobbing for apples
10. Samhainophobia



*See you in the next edition when we'll be back in the New Year for Issue 23 of The Network*