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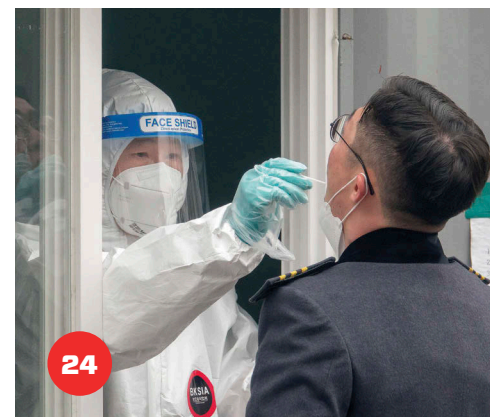
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FROM THE EDITOR

Last month in this space, I wrote about the cease-fire in the government's war on Whitehall, and how ministers should now prioritise reducing the tension with officials and working with the grain of the civil service to implement their vision for reform.

The weeks since have seen a further de-escalation of the febrile atmosphere in some parts of government, with the announcement that former Home Office permanent secretary Sir Philip Rutnam had ended his constructive dismissal claim against the government.

The out-of-court settlement concludes this chapter of a saga that began with Rutnam's unprecedented resignation statement in February last year, in which he said he had been the "target of a vicious and orchestrated briefing campaign" from allies of home secretary Priti Patel.

Following the agreement, a Home Office spokesperson said Rutnam and the government had "jointly concluded that it is in both parties' best interests to reach a settlement at this stage".

However, the resolution of Rutnam's departure will not alone be enough to draw a line under the affair. An investigation into Patel's behaviour concluded she had failed to treat civil servants with consideration and respect in a way that "could be described as bullying".

The probe said Patel's behaviour may have been unintended – and the prime minister decided she had not breached the ministerial code. He said he had full confidence in the home secretary and considered the matter closed.

But injecting the question of intent into the code means the issue cannot be left to rest. On the face of it, this puts ministers – who can now claim that they did not know that their behaviour was causing distress – on a different disciplinary plane from the civil servants they work with every day. As civil service guidance states: "Bullying is not about whether the perpetrator of the acts intended them or not, but about the impact on the recipient and how it makes them feel."

This distinction is un-



healthy, and, as the FDA union's Dave Penman writes in this month's CSW, also contrary to Johnson's own foreword in the ministerial code, which simply states that "there will be no bullying and no harassing...".

As a result, the FDA, who advised Rutnam in his case, is seeking a judicial review of Johnson's actions, which it says could allow ministers to get away with unacceptable behaviour in future.

The case is underway only after, Penman says, the FDA sought to work with government to amend the ministerial code to reflect the definition of bullying that applies in the civil service, but agreement was not forthcoming.

"I hope, even at this late stage, that the government

takes us up on our offer. Because whatever the outcome of the legal arguments and interpretations, it is this damage to confidence that should really worry the prime minister, who is after all, also minister for the civil service." Penman writes.

And not, indeed, only to that. The relationship between ministers and civil servants is best founded on honesty and trust. If the government has wisely taken steps to end the openly hostile briefing against officials that has characterised much of the last year, it still needs to take action to rebuild these dual pillars of the system, which have been degraded by the Patel case and much besides. Recognising – and addressing – the disparity in the ministerial code would be a good place to start. ■



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INBOX

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FINN OR LOSE

Readers were cynical about No.10 deputy chief of staff Simone Finn's ideas for civil service reform – including “breaking up” the traditional career ladder and becoming less risk averse.

“Oh dear, here we go again... Maude mark 2,” Barbara Baker wrote.

Alan Ramsay suggested the changes may never happen: “Every year, a new, dynamic, young superstar proposes a fundamental shake up of the civil service. ‘This will be a grass roots, bottom to top reform and will bring real and much needed, radical change to the civil service,’ they say. A year later, they’ve moved on, never to be heard from again.”

George Reid agreed it was nothing new. “I’ve lost count of the number of times I’ve heard this same nonsense – expressed in a variety of ways – over the years. We should value and celebrate our civil service, rather than disdain it simply because the honest and frank advice it gives doesn’t appeal to ministers.”

“Is it that the civil service is risk averse or rather that government ministers (of whatever party) are risk averse when they – at least used to – be held accountable for decisions that were wrong?” Alastair East asked.

And Mark Ryan said the suggestion of offering two-year secondments to professionals from outside government would never work. “What ‘professionals’ would work for the civil service for two years on the salaries we pay and the wage freezes... Put an independent body in charge of a

service review and you’ll get the answers about civil service reform. They wouldn’t be the answers you wanted, of course.”

Martin Basil agreed pay was the problem. “You have to get promoted to earn a decent salary. Pay more and people might stay in post.”

ABSENT MINDED

Nor were they impressed by health secretary Matt Hancock and Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove’s decision to turn down a request to appear before the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, which earned them a rebuke from the MPs.

“More lack of transparency and respect for parliamentary sovereignty and scrutiny. There is so much which is very wrong about the conduct of this government,” Geoff Eales wrote. “The secretary of state, who was found by the courts to have acted unlawfully in clouding transparency, further clouds it yet again by refusing to appear before parliament.”

Neil T. said the ministers showed “contempt for parliament, and legitimate scrutiny and oversight yet again. Truly disgusting.”

BRAND NEW

Business secretary Kwasi Kwarteng’s hints that he might be planning to rename the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy came as a shock to some.

“Oh my goodness. Please don’t rename the department yet again! I remember walking past that very door not long after it was made into BIS and as I recall the nameplate was rather

small, revealing all the screw holes for previous nameplates. At least they’ve learnt that lesson,” The Dissident Civil Servant wrote on Twitter.

TALK IS CHEAP

Hancock was also the target of readers’ ire after saying that civil servants “don’t get enough praise” for their work in the vaccine rollout.

“Platitudes don’t pay our bills,” Margi McMullen said.

“Maybe he can convince the chancellor to give us a cost of living pay rise too,” Mark Ryan suggested.

FROZEN OUT

The chancellor’s pay freeze, which unions say would cost civil servants dearly after the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasted an increase in the rate of inflation, continued to cause a lot of frustration.

“I am absolutely disgusted with this government who think that civil servants are easy prey to do what they like to. These same servants got them through a horrible Brexit and work tirelessly through this pandemic,” Peter Drummond wrote.

Martin Clements added: “All this and the government still continue to fund huge numbers of ‘contractors’ to ‘assist’ with the pandemic. Disgusting.”

PAY UP

More welcome was the news that unions had voted through a freeze-busting pay deal for HMRC staff, despite mixed opinions on the accompanying overhaul of terms and conditions.

“It’s an exceptionally well-run organisation, staffed with loyal, committed and highly capable people. I was delighted to learn that they have decided to recognise this after years of under-par pay awards. Hoping the rest follow

suit,” John Hatton wrote.

Gill Standen said the deal is “not only great for the vast majority of our incredible HMRC staff, it was actually designed by them”.

“Over 20,000 staff took the opportunity to contribute their views and ‘wish list’ wants, through workshops, focus groups, dial-ins, surveys, online discussion forums. This really is a home made deal that represents all their top ‘asks’ and paves the way for HMRC to make real progress in future on those asks that just couldn’t be squeezed in this time round,” she said.

“In 28 years as a civil servant I have never witnessed such a collaborative effort by staff, management and trade unions to get this reform right. I have worked for four government departments, but HMRC has always felt the most like my real career “home”. I am so proud of this deal, and I really hope it sets the blueprint for other departments to follow suit.”

MOVE ALONG

Chancellor Rishi Sunak received a mixed response when he announced in the Budget that the Treasury had selected Darlington as the home of its new northern base.

“Good, and not before time. It has taken too long to move London based jobs,” Barbara Baker said.

But Paul Mason wrote: “I thought that it was because Darlington is the biggest town next to his own constituency and is a Tory marginal seat.”

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

CSW takes a look at the development of Defence Digital
ON THE WEBSITE
Coverage of the integrated review of security, defence, and foreign policy

Ex-Home Office perm sec settles constructive dismissal case

Priti Patel spared employment tribunal appearance as ex-official reaches “six figure settlement” over departure from government. By **Jim Dunton**

Former Home Office permanent secretary Sir Philip Rutnam has reached a substantial settlement with the government following his resignation last year, which prompted the probe that found home secretary Priti Patel had bullied her staff.

The move means an employment tribunal that had been due to hear Rutnam’s constructive dismissal claim against the government, which named Patel as a respondent, will no longer take place.

When he made his unprecedented resignation statement in February last year, Rutnam said he had been the “target of a vicious and orchestrated briefing campaign” and did not believe Patel’s denials of involvement.

Rutnam, whose salary bracket for 2019-20 was £190,000-£195,000, said in his resignation statement that he had been offered a financial settlement by the Cabinet Office but had turned it down to “make a stand” in maintaining the quality of government in the UK.

Rutnam’s settlement has not been revealed, but CSW understands that it is a six-figure sum.

In a statement released by the FDA, which has been supporting the former perm sec, Rutnam thanked the union, former colleagues and his legal team.

“I am pleased to say that the government has settled the



claims that I brought against them and which were due to be heard in an employment tribunal in September,” he said.

“I have received excellent support during this process and I would like to express warm thanks to the FDA and to my legal team, Slater and Gordon and Gavin Mansfield QC. I also want to record my appreciation and thanks to the many individuals, known and unknown to me, who have expressed their support throughout.

“This settlement resolves my own case. The FDA is continuing to pursue in separate proceedings the wider issues that have been raised.”

Last month, the FDA launched a High Court challenge to prime minister Boris Johnson’s decision not to sack Patel after an investigation commissioned by the Cabinet Office found she had bullied staff, which is a breach

of the ministerial code.

FDA general secretary Dave Penman said Rutnam had made a “brave and principled” decision to resign and pursue a constructive dismissal case against the government.

“I’m pleased that we’ve been able to assist in finding a settlement to his claims,” he said.

The government updated Rutnam’s biography page on

“I am pleased to say that the government has settled the claims that I brought against them” Philip Rutnam



the GOV.UK website, saying it regretted the circumstances surrounding his resignation and was “pleased that a settlement has been reached”.

A Home Office spokesperson said Rutnam and the government had “jointly concluded that it is in both parties’ best interests to reach a settlement at this stage”.

“The government does not accept liability in this matter and it was right that the government defended the case,” they said.

The government also published the 29 February 2020 letter from then-cabinet secretary Sir Mark Sedwill to Rutnam accepting his resignation with regret and thanking him for his “devoted public service”.

Sedwill wrote: “I appreciate that this has been a decision you have reached reluctantly and I am sorry that despite our efforts this week, we were unable to agree a mutually satisfactory outcome.

“I am grateful for your devoted public service and excellent contribution over the course of your long and distinguished career in the civil service. I am grateful, too, for the commitment and dedication with which you have approached the significant senior leadership roles you have undertaken in the course of your career, particularly as the permanent secretary of the Department of Transport and the Home Office.

“You have ever been mindful of the civil service values, demonstrated in the way you have conducted yourself in your roles. You should be proud of the difference you have made as a highly regarded colleague and a corporate leader upholding our values as the civil service disability champion and member of the civil service board and senior leadership committee.” ■

Ex-PM Cameron criticises successors' Whitehall 'mistakes'

Coalition-era PM slams “very bad” error of combining cab sec and national security adviser roles plus merger of DfID and FCO

David Cameron has strongly criticised his two successors as prime minister for changes they made to the operations of Whitehall.

The former PM, who quit government in 2016 following the Brexit referendum, did not mince his words in describing Theresa May's decision to combine the roles of cabinet secretary and national security adviser.

Cameron said allowing Sir Mark Sedwill to retain the NSA role when he became cabinet secretary in 2018, following the death of Sir Jeremy Heywood, was “a very bad mistake” that had damaged the standing of the National Security Council. The move has been reversed by Boris Johnson.

Cameron's words came in an evidence session to parliament's National Security Strategy Committee on 1 March. The former PM also offered views on the creation of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office last year and the UK's pandemic preparedness, based on his experience from six years in Downing Street.

“I think it was a very bad mistake combining cabinet secretary and national security adviser – they are two jobs,” he said.

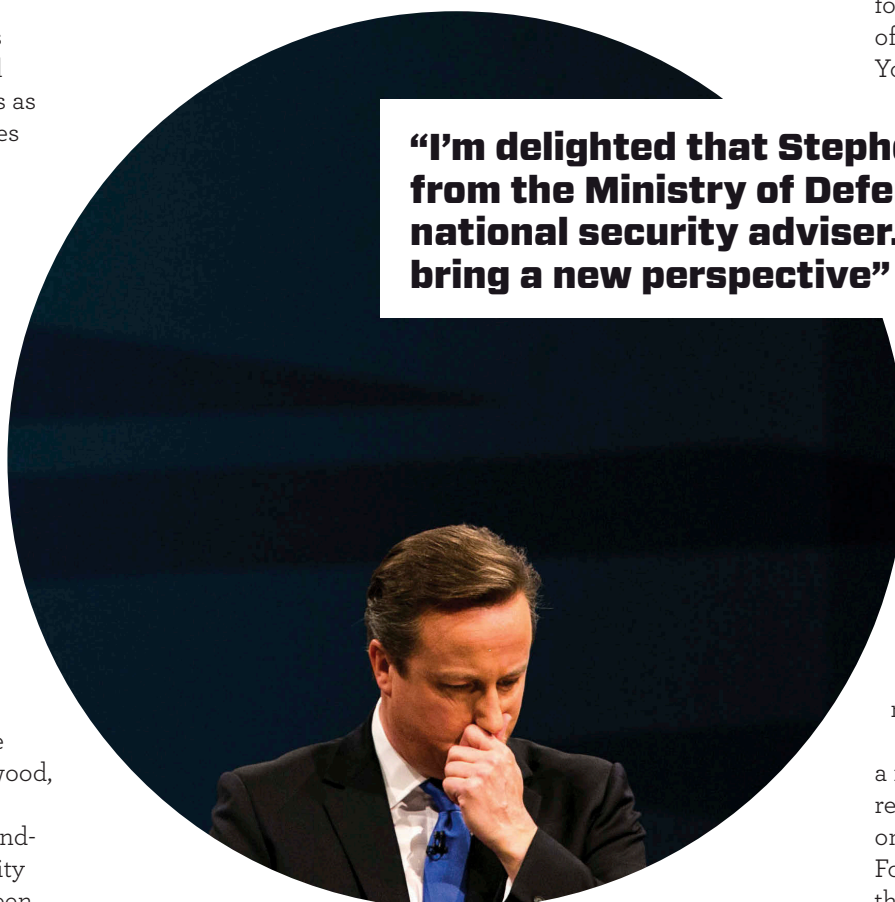
“One person, even if you

were a cross of Einstein, Wittgenstein and Mother Teresa, you couldn't possibly do both jobs and I think that temporarily weakened the National Security Council.”

Cameron told MPs and peers that there were a selection of well-qualified individuals who could have served the nation as a dedicated NSA.

“You need a good national security adviser,” he said. “Britain's got lots of incredible top diplomats and senior military figures and others, and I'm delighted that Stephen

“I'm delighted that Stephen Lovegrove from the Ministry of Defence is going to be national security adviser. I think that will bring a new perspective” David Cameron



not a role that needed to be undertaken by a politician.

“Your equivalents in, for instance, the United States are appointed civil servants, and that's an absolutely crucial relationship. So I don't think it's necessary,” he said.

“The great thing is that you don't have to have an FCO diplomat, you can have someone coming out of the military. You could have the former permanent secretary of the Ministry of Defence. You could have someone from

outside government altogether. Someone who is an expert in strategy, you can bring them in.”

Cameron also criticised Boris Johnson's decision to push ahead with the merger of the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office last year.

“I think abolishing DfID is a mistake too, for all sorts of reasons,” Cameron said. “But one of which is having the Foreign Office voice round the table and the DfID voice round the table is important because they're not necessarily the same thing.

“Having that deep development expertise about what we could do to help with the humanitarian situation in Syria [or] helping development in Afghanistan. Can you really expect the foreign secretary to be able to do all of the diplomatic stuff and be able to speak to the development brief as well? That's quite a task. I think it's good to have both.”

He added that the NSC should have input from both diplomats and development experts. ■

Lovegrove from the Ministry of Defence is going to be national security adviser. I think that will bring a new perspective.

“But I do think you need a prime minister who wants to use that machinery, and a national security adviser who feels bold and muscular enough to be a sort of plenipotentiary diplomat as well as a bureaucrat.”

Cameron was subsequently asked whether he believed the NSA could be a politician. He did not reject the idea, but suggested it was

STEPHEN BRIEN DWP SHOULD END TALK OF WELFARE

CORONAVIRUS HAS REVEALED THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE COUNTRY RELIES ON THE DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS. GOVERNMENT SHOULD HARNESS THIS TO CREATE A SYSTEM THAT MEETS THE CHALLENGES OF A POST-PANDEMIC ECONOMY, WRITES STEPHEN BRIEN

It's almost a year since the first national lockdown began. Then it was impossible to imagine the full extent of the challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic would pose and the support that the government would need to put in place

in response. As has been widely acknowledged – including by the Social Security Advisory Committee, which I chair – the Department for Work and Pensions responded impressively and at pace in improving policy and getting support out to huge numbers of people, with well over a million new claims for Universal Credit in the first fortnight of lockdown. It is far from clear that the legacy benefit system would have coped.

The health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic have also thrown up deeper questions about the underlying structure of the working-age social security system. These include the nature of financial support provided to working age individuals, for example when they experience temporary adverse shocks; and the key features of a social security system with flexibility to respond rapidly to new

labour market conditions and to a new set of claimants, many of whom are different from those who were receiving social security in the past, in order to help support individuals across the country to return to paid work and to progress in the labour market.

We were delighted that Nicholas Timmins and Gemma Tetlow of the Institute for Government agreed to work in part-

“While the current social security system has held up extremely well in the face of the pandemic, there are ways in which it could be fine-tuned to make it more effective”

nership with us on a project to rapidly explore these issues. We also benefited from a set of roundtable discussions with a group of former senior civil servants, academics and other experts.

The report we have published sets out the conclusions from this work. So what did we learn? While the current social security system has held up extremely well in the face of the pandemic, there are ways in which it could be fine-tuned to make it more effective. For example, we propose ways in which any potential additional support could be targeted at providing greater help to those losing their jobs in the first few weeks and months of

their out-of-work benefit claim. This could be achieved through a number of ways, such as starter payments, helping more individuals take up contributory benefits to which they are entitled, and a more generous treatment of those with financial assets.

The most important emerging challenge in 2021 is to manage the return to full employment, given the economic shifts that Covid has created and exacerbated. There is an important role for a number of government departments – and local authorities – to play, in conjunction with the Department for Work and Pensions, in bringing this about. This is understood within Whitehall, but a fully coordinated response is essential, especially around training and re-skilling. Another point of learning from the last year will be to expand the online services that are made available to those seeking work, including those not on benefits as well as those who are.

We also have an overarching proposal. There is also a strong



case for the government to reassess what the benefit system is for and to change the language used to describe it – re-adopting the language of social security in place of the widespread use of “welfare”. We have a social security system that is for many who are in work as well as those currently out of it, and it is also for those who face the risk of unemployment when the next major

shock hits. The language used to describe it should reflect this.

Our specific suggestions to work and pensions secretary Thérèse Coffey serve to illustrate

a direction of travel, rather than providing a complete blueprint to be implemented, and is designed to inform her department’s own work in this area. We hope that our report will be seen as a useful contribution to the debates in this area, and we look forward to receiving the government’s response to our conclusions. ■

Stephen Brien is the chair of the Social Security Advisory Committee. The report, Jobs and benefits: the Covid-19 challenge was produced jointly by the SSAC and the Institute for Government.

DAVE PENMAN SORTING THE MINISTERIAL CODE

BORIS JOHNSON'S BACKING FOR THE HOME SECRETARY DESPITE EVIDENCE OF BULLYING MEANS MINISTERS NOW HAVE TO MEET A LOWER STANDARD OF CONDUCT THAN CIVIL SERVANTS. THIS CAN'T GO UNCHALLENGED

In the wake of the Me Too movement, with scandal rocking the government, we were told that Theresa May, the then-prime minister, sought to send a clear message that bullying and harassment would not be tolerated.

The FDA met with the Cabinet Office to discuss changes to the ministerial code, which would include, for the first time, explicit references to bullying and harassment. This would of course mean such behaviours would be considered a breach of the code.

I was a little cynical at the time; indeed, some may say it's one of my finer qualities. Ministers, I contended, should not need an explicit paragraph of the code to tell them not to bully and harass. As is my style in these meetings, I sought to take an extreme example to make my point. It does not, I said in my best sarcastic tone, say that ministers should not microwave their civil servants, but presumably they don't need a paragraph in the code to make this clear.

My point was that we were way beyond simply making clear that bullying and harassment wasn't acceptable, ministers knew this. What we needed was for any enforcement mechanism to have teeth. What would happen, I asked, if a minister who was politically unsackable was found to have bullied staff? Given the lack of a transparent process for investigating and determining these issues, the danger was that a prime minister could block an investigation in the first place, or ultimately ignore the findings. They are solely responsible for both these decisions.

Who knew that witty, sarcastic commentary was only my second-most impressive quality, behind predicting the future? The debacle over the investigation into the home secretary's conduct was, therefore, entirely predictable.

As we now know, despite the evidence that the home secretary had bullied civil servants including shouting and swearing at them, the prime minister determined that she had not breached the ministerial code, prompting the resignation of his adviser on the code, Sir Alex Allen. In explaining his decision, the prime minister sought to give weight to the home secretary's assertion that her actions were unintentional.

The ministerial code could not be clearer. Not only do we have the paragraph inserted by Theresa May, but also in the foreword to the current version, Johnson chose to highlight this issue, stating that "there will be no bullying and no harassing". However, the consequence of his decision is that the prime minister has determined that intent must be shown for a minister to be in breach of the code.

This is not the case across the civil service. Both the Home Office's own policy and that of the Cabinet Office state: "Bullying is not about whether the perpetrator of the acts intended them or not, but about the impact on the recipient and how it makes them feel."

Across the civil service and beyond, bullying and harassment is defined by the consequences of the actions, not the intent of the perpetrator. Our view, therefore, is that the prime minister

misinterpreted the ministerial code and that the references to harassment, bullying and discrimination refer to workplace standards upheld across government and beyond. That is why we have sought a judicial review of this decision.

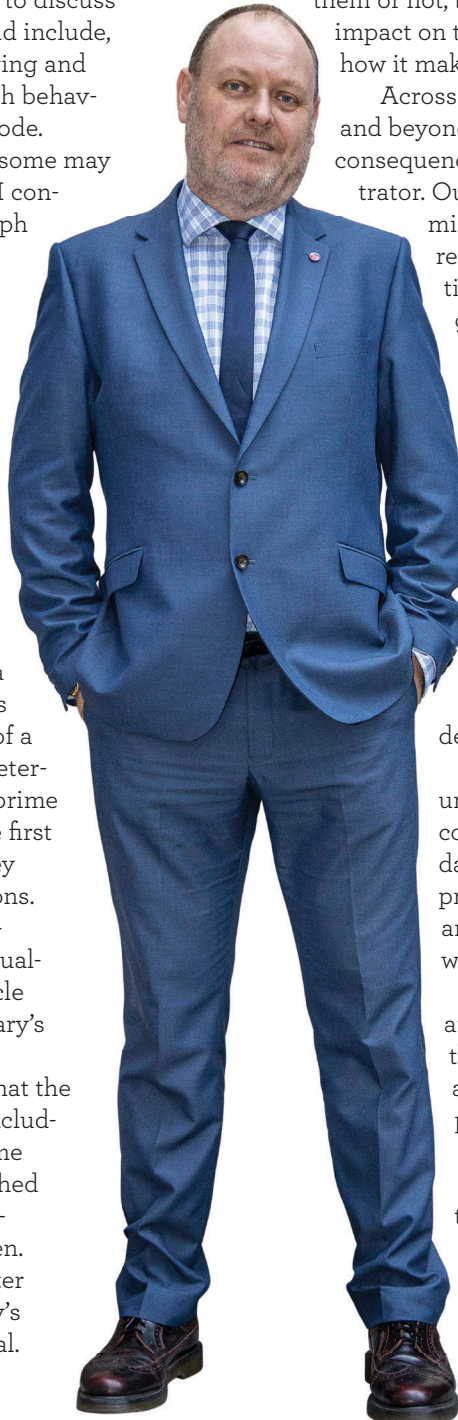
If the prime minister's decision stands, it will have a number of profound consequences. Firstly, ministers will be held to a different and lower standard of conduct than civil servants. Secondly, ministers may use the interpretation of intent as a mechanism for avoiding the consequences of their conduct in the future. Thirdly, it potentially creates confusion in the civil service – if a Home Office civil servant is found to have bullied a colleague, can they now claim that intent should be a factor in this determination as it was for the home secretary?

And finally, this whole sorry saga has fatally undermined trust in the process for addressing complaints against ministers. This was already damaged by public statements of support from the prime minister before he had seen any evidence and by his delay in making a decision, which was only forced from him by inevitable leaks.

This is why we sought to avoid a judicial review and offered the government a way out. Amend the code to reflect the definition of bullying that applies in the civil service and we would not proceed. Unfortunately, that offer was rejected.

Whatever the outcome of the legal arguments and interpretations, it is this damage to confidence that should really worry the prime minister, who is, after all, also minister for the civil service. ■

Dave Penman is the general secretary of the FDA union. He tweets @FDAgensec



DANIEL KORSKI MAKING ARIA SING

THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW RESEARCH AGENCY NEEDS THE FREEDOM TO SET ITS OWN MISSION, SAYS A FORMER DOWNING STREET ADVISER

Last month saw formal confirmation of the launch of the Advanced Research and Invention Agency (Aria). Often controversial, seen as a pet project of former No.10 advisor Dominic Cummings, and thought to have stalled following his departure, the agency – modelled on the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) – will finally launch in 2022.

For the agency to succeed, Aria's designers will need to decide key aspects now, at this formative stage, to allay concerns that it might be just another R&D agency with no unique selling point. The government has offered reassurance against many of the concerns, but questions of leadership, delivery model and funding remain.

Firstly, however, Aria's leaders must be empowered to embrace a significantly enhanced appetite for financial risk. Those who spend public money should do so responsibly, but few would argue that there are many private sector organisations better placed than those in the public sector to take on high-risk "moonshot" innovation projects.

Embedding this appetite in Aria would create a UK body uniquely well placed to take on such issues. Early reports had suggested this might become a legal commitment. While no reference to this was made in the announcement of the agency, those responsible clearly see

this as a defining characteristic for Aria; as the press notice asserted: "freedom to fail is often also the freedom to succeed".

The agency will be "led independently by our most exceptional scientists"; protection perhaps from the short-termism sometimes seen in government-led projects. It will take experimental approaches to delivering funding "flexibly and at speed"; this will "complement the work of UK Research and Innovation", Aria's closest UK analogue.

Areas where detail is less clear include on leadership. With a recruitment campaign to launch shortly, the "visionary scientist" chosen will have a key role, not just in setting Aria's agenda, but also its structures. The challenge will be to identify a candidate that balances scientific credentials with skills more often seen in private sector R&D or finance. Investors like Kate Bingham, the vaccine czar, and Balaji S. Srinivasan, who predicted much of the Covid-19 crisis, are the sort of people that should be appointed. The more international its leadership the better as well.

It may be tempting for legislators to codify an operating model similar to that of DARPA. BEIS will no doubt be considering the "programme manager" model that has been so effective for DARPA, thanks to the staff there and their efforts to coordinate projects and partnerships with teams within the US Department of Defence.

Budget may still present a challenge, too. The £800m announced so far should be seen as a good first tranche; Aria's ambition is to deliver funding quickly to high risk-projects and this will be expensive. This figure, spread out over five years, may not be

sufficient to achieve all that the agency's sponsors hope for.

Then there is the question of purpose. While the Commons Science and Technology Committee report on the new agency was favourable, the committee's chair, Greg Clark suggested that Aria may become "a brand in search of a product". Here, ministers

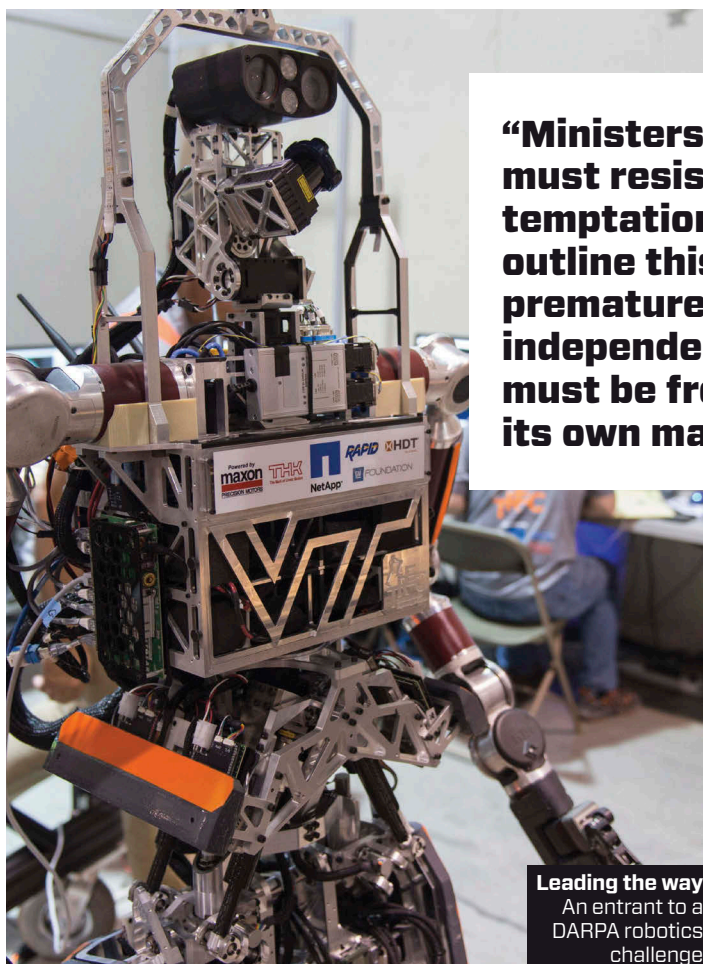
must resist the temptation to outline this mission prematurely. An independent Aria must be free to set its own mandate; it should be equipped with the skills and staff it needs to forge its own path – pioneering, yet accountable.

There is much to be thankful for in the news of Aria's launch; those working on plans for its creation have clearly been listening to warnings over the risks of creating simply Innovate UK 2.0, and have taken steps to prevent this.

Yet, the devil will be in the details. To get Aria right, government will need to provide it

with the tools it needs to do the job without subjecting it to the traditional restrictions that – for its new leader – may feel like they are trying to drive forward and fund innovative projects with one arm tied behind their back. ■

Daniel Korski is chief executive of Public, a venture capital investor focused on govtech start-ups. He is also a former senior Downing Street adviser.



“Ministers must resist the temptation to outline this mission prematurely - an independent Aria must be free to set its own mandate”

Leading the way
An entrant to a DARPA robotics challenge

SOCIAL VALUE TIME TO GRASP THE OPPORTUNITY

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER PUBLIC SECTOR BODIES CAN USE PROCUREMENT TO HELP BUILD SOCIAL VALUE. CHARLENE MAGINNIS FROM THE CROWN COMMERCIAL SERVICE SETS OUT SOME TIPS ON HOW TO GO ABOUT IT

Every time a local authority, central government department or healthcare organisation signs a contract with a supplier, there are opportunities to increase the value delivered for UK citizens.

The public sector needs to recognise this opportunity and understand what their options are to boost social value in their area. More than that, it's actually now a requirement for central government to explicitly evaluate social value in its procurement.

As an active member of the National Social Value Taskforce, Crown Commercial Service is working with buyers and suppliers to make it easier for public bodies to measure the value they are helping to deliver through their procurement.

There are many opportunities to integrate social value into central government procurement.

For instance: public bodies can now ask that suppliers sign up to schemes that offer support for their workers' mental health – a serious issue for employees in industries that suffer from uncertainty about where the next contract is coming from.

And NHS bodies can enhance sustainability and reduce their environmental footprint when procuring technology by moving to greener energy sources and reusable hardware, having a positive impact in their local area and beyond.

In September, the Cabinet Office published Procurement Policy Note (PPN 06/20): taking account of social value in the award of central government contracts.

The guidance note requires all central government departments to explicitly evaluate social value in their new procurements, where the requirements are relevant and proportionate to the subject matter of the contract.

The PPN also includes a new social value model, which contains a menu of priority social value themes and policy outcomes that can be applied in new procurements and contracts.

What departments need to consider

- Build from the ground up

Social value in procurement doesn't work when it's treated as an afterthought – it needs to be baked into frameworks and contracts from the start, for instance, by taking account of mental health support for workers in the construction sector. Consider how each of your contracts can be maximised to generate additional social value, and who will benefit.

- Engage with your supply chain

Suppliers often have a close ear to the ground in terms of what opportunities are available and achievable in their industry – IT suppliers are able to recommend sustainable, environmentally-friendly solutions including refurbished or remanufactured hardware. Speak to suppliers and users of the particular goods or services you're buying to gain a balanced and realistic view of what social value options can make a real difference.

- Decide what themes and outcomes you're working towards

The latest PPN (06/20) sets out social value themes you should consider and the kinds of outcomes you might be able to deliver – from supporting the recovery of local communities from the effects of the pandemic to tackling workforce inequality.

- Understand your options

Local government, healthcare, and education organisations can now choose to reserve their procurements for small businesses or social enterprises to support their local economy, thanks to a recent change to procurement rules. Make sure you understand what your options are to get the maximum benefit.



“It's actually now a requirement for central government to explicitly evaluate social value in its procurement”

- Be bold in how you measure delivered value

Social value delivers benefits that go so much further than pounds and pennies. You can measure and quantify social value delivery using financial proxies, but don't forget that each initiative tells a story of an impact on individuals, communities or the environment – and these should shine through when you talk about how you've delivered social value.

You can find out more about social value and making responsible buying decisions on the CCS website. ■

Charlene Maginnis is Crown Commercial Service's head of policy delivery – supply chain and service offering

Notes ON JEREMY'S LIFE

Suzanne Heywood's biography of Jeremy Heywood gives an extraordinary insight into the late cabinet secretary's time in government and at home. She speaks to **Beckie Smith** about recording her husband's life, what he would have made of the coronavirus crisis, and the music he loved



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Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots may not strike you as the most likely track to appear on a cabinet secretary's playlist of favourites. Nor would the Flaming Lips' dreamy synth-pop hit put most people in mind of the 2000 fuel crisis.

But when it came to dividing her late husband's life into chapters, Suzanne Heywood says it seemed only natural that Jeremy Heywood's favourite songs provided the titles. Each chronicles a crisis, a change of government, the development of a new policy or a step towards civil service reform. *Yoshimi* – who has a black belt in karate and is fighting to defeat the “evil machines” – marks the government's handling of the protests sparked by rising fuel costs. “It did feel like that was quite a battle, as it were.

And it was one of his favourite songs, so it had to go somewhere,” Heywood says.

Readers learn early on in *What does Jeremy think?* that one of his prized possessions when he went to university was a turntable his parents had given him. That love of music carried on strong throughout his life, so the chapter titles were, says Heywood, a way to “bring a little bit more Jeremy in”.

But the playlist from which the book's titles are borrowed was compiled near the end of Jeremy's life, when he was undergoing treatment for lung cancer. Heywood recalls: “When he started doing radiotherapy, he had to go into this big machine and lie there quite still for quite a long time. And he came back and he said he hated it. And I said, ‘Why did you hate it?’ He said he hated the whine of the machine – he hated all medical things anyway – and just to make it all worse, he had to listen to terrible music playing through the speakers. I thought, ‘I can't do anything about the first couple of things, but I can sort out the music.’”

So Heywood bought him an MP3 player, taught him to use Spotify and made a playlist of 20 songs. “He came out saying, ‘Well, that was a lot better. The only problem is that they told me off because I'm not allowed to hum during radiotherapy because it upsets the machine.’”

For the next year and a half – the remainder of Jeremy's life – the pair continued »

WHAT DOES JEREMY THINK?

Jeremy Heywood and
the Making of Modern Britain

“I was either going to write it then and interview him then or try later without the benefit of his memories. That seemed like a loss”

SUZANNE HEYWOOD

to add to the playlist as he listened to it on repeat during his many hospital visits. From it, Heywood would later choose REM's *Everybody Hurts* to recount the strife of negotiating a coalition government; Franz Ferdinand's *Take Me Out* for a reshuffle; the Bee Gees' *How Deep Is Your Love* for plebgate and David Cameron's pledge to hold a referendum on EU membership.

Heywood, an executive and former Treasury civil servant, always knew she wanted to write her husband's biography. "I never had any doubt about that, I told him for many years," she says.

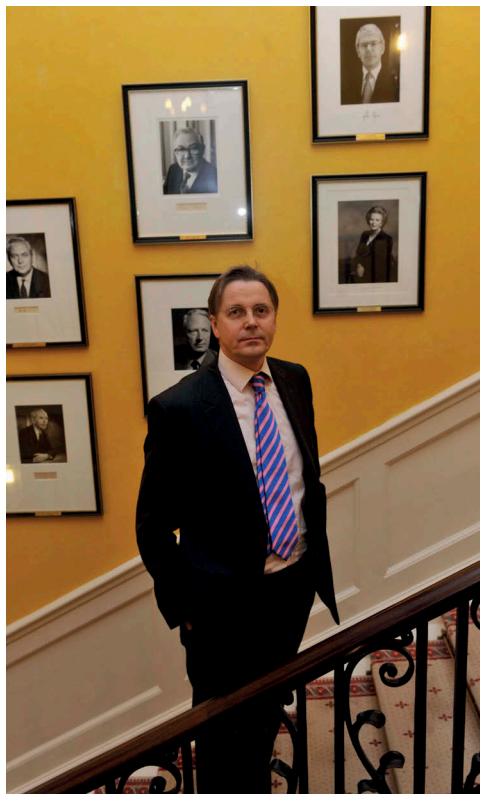
Of course, she didn't picture doing it under the circumstances she did – interviewing Jeremy in his final few months of life, hurrying to write so she could show chapters to him, and conducting scores of interviews after his death for a book that would be published just a couple of years after he stepped down as cab sec. "In an ideal world, we would have done exactly what Jeremy's predecessors have done: he would have stepped down after a period of time, which he hadn't decided on; then would have done radio interviews and TV, commentating – as his predecessors do, and they do a fabulous job of that – and in doing so, he would have shared a lot of the learnings that he got from his time in government, and also be able to comment on the issues of the day. Then after a due period, we would have done his biography."

While there are mixed opinions on the extent to which former top civil servants should opine on the government's choices once they have left, there is certainly no doubt that after more than 30 years in government, Jeremy Heywood had accrued a huge amount of knowledge and experience from which civil servants could learn.

CSW wonders what Jeremy might have made of the government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, and what his contribution might have been. Heywood says that if Jeremy were around today, he could "absolutely" have contributed to the response. "Having somebody with that depth of experience would, you hope, have been helpful," she says.

But she says if he had left government, he wouldn't criticise the response. "He wouldn't have thrown stones from outside because he would have known from bitter experience how hard these things are to manage with things changing at pace, particularly against this unknown virus that for a lot of the time was only partially understood."

But he would have wanted to see government learn from the crisis by drawing



out the positives – "he would have loved the open policy bit, involving SAGE, the Vaccine Taskforce, bringing in outsiders like Kate Bingham to run that" – and interrogating the rest. "He'd want to ask, 'Okay, once we get through this and we're stabilised, let's really look at what worked, what didn't work, what can we learn from it? How do we make government better?'"

This was a theme of Jeremy's career. The book tells of his efforts to reorganise Downing Street, beef up the No.10 Policy Unit, and build skills the civil service lacked. Heywood says he had a "constant dissatisfaction with the status quo, always asking what can be improved, always demanding change".

This was a frequent talking point at home. Suzanne Heywood's own four years in the civil service – where she started as a fast streamer, before becoming private secretary to the Treasury financial secretary – meant she understood first-hand the structures Jeremy was working with, while her move to McKinsey after that gave her an outside perspective.

"We used each other as sounding boards," she says. "The people things are often harder to solve than the policy things – trying to find a way through things with the various different personalities, or situations where Jeremy wanted to create change and it was a question of how to get that change embedded within the civil service."

She describes Jeremy as a "maggie" for new ideas. He used an idea she shared from McKinsey, where associates vied to share their best ideas in a prestigious quarterly publication, as the blueprint for the Civil Service Quarterly. "We talked a lot about ideas like that," Heywood says.

Jeremy would later learn from his own experience in the private sector too, after leaving government for a four-year stint at Morgan Stanley in the 2000s. Returning to the Cabinet Office in 2007, and then Downing Street, he would draw on that experience when he was helping to deal with the financial crisis.

Heywood adds: "By the way, he stole ideas from everybody else as well. At every dinner party, or every event that he went to, he would come away with two or three ideas, or four or five people he was going to connect with somebody else, or something that he was going to do. That's the kind of restless curiosity he had."

In summer 2017, soon after Jeremy was diagnosed with lung cancer, the Heywoods began working on a book about his life. "We didn't get a choice on when to write it, because I was either going to write it then and interview him then or,

because he had a terminal illness, I would have to try and write it later but without the benefit of his memories. And that just seemed like a loss,” Heywood says.

Were there any lessons Jeremy was adamant she should get across in the book? Heywood says he was happy for her to tell his story as it unfolded, but she noticed some “very clear themes” emerging. “He was a passionate believer of evidence-based policymaking, and I think that becomes very clear – the first place he goes is to try and work out what’s going on,” she says. “He really strongly believed in open policymaking as well, which is making sure that you involve a wide group of people when you’re thinking about a policy, particularly those who are close to the front line of what’s happening.”

Heywood also interviewed more than 200 of Jeremy’s former colleagues and friends – aided by long texts from her husband with suggested lines of questioning. “I learned a lot during those interviews; I was hugely privileged to be able to do that,” she says.

“His determination to keep working through to pretty much the end was extraordinary. Also infuriating”

She learned a huge deal about policy – Jeremy had a long and varied government career, and the book covers his role in everything from negotiations over the Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1992 (*Money*) to the aftermath of 9/11 (*Nothing Will Ever Be The Same*) and preparations for Brexit after the 2016 referendum (*Begin Again*).

But she also learned more about the man she was married to for more than two decades. “What was interesting was learning how people saw him. Several people said to me that they prepped more thoroughly for a meeting with Jeremy than even when they were going in front of a select committee in the House of Commons. And when I said to them ‘Why, were you scared?’ they said, ‘No, we weren’t scared, we loved him. But we really want to impress him, we wanted him to think we’d done a really good job. And he also had this unerring ability to know which piece was the weakest bit of our presentation’. People made huge efforts because they wanted him to think well of them.”

But Heywood’s book is not just a biography of an official. It is also a deeply personal account of her life with Jeremy. It recounts the couple’s struggles to conceive, and attempts by Jeremy – then PPS



to Tony Blair – to keep their spirits up with humour during five failed rounds of IVF.

The same chapter also details the work Jeremy became absorbed in at the time – the prime minister’s 10-year plan for the NHS, a spending review, the G7 summit. Heywood writes of feeling “jealous of his ability to compartmentalise our grief” and to throw himself into work.

Former colleagues and friends have often commented admiringly on Jeremy Heywood’s devotion to his work. He was a dedicated public servant who continued working even after being diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer.

“In a bizarre sort of way, for me, his character became really clear as he became sicker,” Heywood says. “His determination to keep working and keep helping the prime minister right through to pretty much the end was absolutely extraordinary.”

“Also infuriating,” she adds. “He just did not want to stop. But his character was very vivid in that last bit, so it was really important to tell that bit of the story.”

Before embarking on the final chapters that follow that diagnosis, readers might need a stiff drink, Heywood says.

I don’t want to talk about it is an apt soundtrack for the penultimate chapter: the diagnosis is quickly followed by a blur of failed cancer treatments; investigating sexual misconduct allegations against Damian Green; Brexit preparations; a trial for an experimental drug; a reshuffle; an investigation into the Novichok poisonings in Salisbury. The final chapter is even tougher reading – documenting the cabinet secretary’s final days and his family’s grief.

It’s hard not to wonder why someone would choose to put themselves through that relentless work schedule amid the whirlwind of gruelling treatments and bad news.

“He really thought he was making a difference,” Heywood says. “Mrs May needed his help and he felt he was making a difference. One thing that really upset him when he finally did have to stop was just watching the television and going, ‘I really want to help; I really want to be there.’”

“And then I think it was a displacement thing as well,” she adds. “So people can criticise [his decision], but for him, it was immensely helpful to focus on something that he knew he did tremendously well and was making a difference doing, and not focus on something that was really so awful. The book served a similar purpose, actually, at the same time.” ■

What Does Jeremy Think? Jeremy Heywood and the Making of Modern Britain is published by William Collins



The relationship between ministers and civil servants is the most important in government. *CSW* sat down with one former minister and one former permanent secretary to find out how it works in practice

Caroline Flint was the Labour MP for Don Valley from 1997 to 2019, and held a host of ministerial and shadow ministerial positions, including minister for Europe, housing minister and employment minister. Philip Rycroft is a former permanent secretary at the Department for Exiting the EU, and has held other civil service roles including being head of the UK governance group in the Cabinet Office. He has also worked for the Scottish Government in a number of roles, including director general for education. In this exclusive interview, they discuss the relationship between ministers and the civil service.

CSW: What is the first day as a minister like?

Caroline Flint: Exciting and daunting. If I go back to my first ministerial job, I was on a plane flying back from Kuwait, having been with the parliamentary armed forces scheme in Iraq in June 2003.

We were on the plane with other parliamentary colleagues, and we knew there was a reshuffle going on, but we weren't sure what was going to happen. I landed at Heathrow Airport, and I got a message from my husband to ring No.10, and get up there as quick as I could. I was wearing my chinos and my fatigues, having been with the army out in Iraq, and was carrying my rucksack.

with this. David very quickly got all of us in the ministerial team together, and that was a regular activity. We would meet as a team of ministers with the permanent secretary, but also on our own politically too. And that is helpful because you need to have that sense of: what is it your goal, and what does the secretary of state, what does the prime minister want? That acts as a sort of compass for how you proceed.

Then you're working on your own a lot with officials, and they provide you with briefings on each of the areas you're covering. So you get the headlines, and that helps you get on with the job quickly. One thing I made very clear early on was: if there's something going wrong, please don't wait until five to midnight to tell me. Let me know if there's a problem brewing earlier in the process, rather than when it's all hitting the fan.

So I was summoned to No.10. I walked down Downing Street and none of the media gathered there had a clue who I was, as I clearly wasn't dressed for a new appointment. I remember them shouting out to [former Labour MP and defence minister] Ivor Caplin, 'what do you think you're going to get, Ivor?'. I got nothing like that, because obviously nobody recognised who I was.

I met the prime minister, Tony Blair, in my chinos and my dusty jacket and he told me I was going to the Home Office. From there, I went and got tidied up and then you go straight into the department and start meeting your private office. People come through, obviously, your other colleagues on the ministerial team, and for me the secretary of state was David Blunkett. It was exciting. I was covering the brief of organized crime [and the interactions with] justice and home affairs in the European Union.

It was daunting. In my first fortnight I had to deal with questions in the House of Commons, I had an adjournment debate and I also had to take over a bill in committee. So you have to hit the ground running.

CSW: So what do ministers want from civil servants on their first day, and in those early weeks in the department?

CF: It's hugely important to get to know your private office. They are your gatekeepers. They are the people you're going to spend most time with as a minister and those early relationships are important. I think the other aspect which is incredibly useful is knowing what your secretary of state wants, and David Blunkett was brilliant at helping

CSW: And how does the civil service prepare for new ministers?

Philip Rycroft: It depends quite a lot on the circumstances. So you can have ministers coming into government for the first time, or indeed, from a party that has never been in government before - I have experience of the SNP as a minority government in 2007 in Scotland. That's a very different business than if you're in a reshuffle context where somebody has been promoted, maybe from within the department, or come from another ministerial job, and they know the ropes and they know their way around.

Ahead of an election, you've got time to think about it, with lots of work going on preparing the brief for incoming ministers. That's part and parcel of what the civil service does. Sometimes, you get no time at all. So in my last job [as DExEU perm sec], I had a fairly rapid turnover among secretaries of state. And these were resignations, so not planned - people suspected they might be coming, but they couldn't be certain they were coming. So an incoming secretary of state needed to be on top of the brief absolutely from day one - as Caroline said, this is very daunting stuff. Not only do you need to understand what's going on in the department to be able to deal with ministerial colleagues, but you're in front of the media pretty much from the moment you step into the job.

The civil service responsibility in that space is to make sure that the minister or the secretary of state has got the right briefing at the right time. There's a great temptation to throw everything at them, but that's just impossible. A human understanding of what the minister is facing

and what their priorities are is absolutely critical to getting that right. But the civil service can feel the tension a little bit in those first few days, as new ministers get their feet under the desk to get settled in.

CSW: Do you feel that you had that kind of support and working relationship established fairly early in the department?

CF: Phil's absolutely right that you need information on the need to know basis. If they just pile everything on you, you would have a nervous breakdown. So the way you get information has to be customised to the individual. I always used to say I want 10 killer facts, something that is tangible that I can refer to in each of the areas of my portfolio.

I was a minister who didn't live in London, I lived in Doncaster in my constituency. So I would arrive on a Monday and go back to Doncaster every Thursday, and I did



“If there's something going wrong, please don't wait 'til it's all hitting the fan to tell me”
Caroline Flint

that pretty much all through my ministerial career. So early on people used to pile up stuff for Thursday for me to either take home to Doncaster or have a box delivered on the weekend. And I had to make clear that, I wanted to work long hours, definitely, Monday to Thursday, but I couldn't have all the submissions piled up on for Thursday lunchtime to take away with me. I didn't think that was a good use of my time. So I did say early on that, for the routine submissions - signing parliamentary question answers, signing letters - I wanted to get everything cleared before I left for Doncaster on a Thursday and only the really urgent stuff would I deal with over a weekend.

PR: The civil service could sometimes be more sensitive early on, so that they don't have to be told how to work with >>

a minister sensibly. Everything piling up on a Thursday or Friday afternoon is for the convenience of the people producing it. They want it off their desk at the weekend, they don't think about the poor minister or permanent secretary – who is also often at the receiving end and has to wade through it on a Friday night.

I also never stayed in London, I was always commuting from Scotland in my 10 years down in Whitehall. So I had the advantage of a Friday night four-hour journey home where I knew I could get through stuff. The team understood that but I'd say to them that if I've not done it by the time I get into Dunbar station on a Friday night, I'm not looking at it until I get on the train again on a Sunday evening. You've got to have that strength of mind to be disciplined, or to require that discipline of the civil service, otherwise your good nature as a minister will maybe get stretched a little bit.

CSW: Did private offices work similarly cross departments?

CF: There are norms across the civil service, but every department is like another country in terms of its culture and how it works. So there is a civil service, but it is maybe quite different from one department to another. When I went to the Foreign Office, I inherited a private office in which the experience of being in a private office

was very limited. That was because within the Foreign Office at that time, it might have changed since, there were rules about how long you could stay in a post in the UK, as opposed to overseas, so it was a quite a large turnover. You want fresh ideas coming in, but understanding about the role of private office, and the relationship to parliament, does require experience.

I was at the Department of Health as public health minister for two years, but when I moved to what was then the Department for Communities and Local Government, there was a vacancy for a diary secretary and I wanted my diary secretary from health to come with me. I actually succeeded in encouraging that to happen. However, by the time that was done, I was then being moved on to the FCO. So DCLG inherited this wonderful woman who still works in the civil service, she's in No.10 now. I felt I'd done my best for DCLG and then lost a very good support person moving to the FCO.

PR: From a permanent secretary point of view, knowing that you've got really smart people in a private offices is a very good investment of your time. Good private secretaries are absolutely critical as the oil in the machine to help it all work together. It's a brilliant training ground. A lot of senior civil servants who get how ministers work, if you look back in their careers, you'll find they had a stint at some point





**“No.10 is ever watchful, ever present, and you never quite know when they’re going to come in and demand something”
Philip Rycroft**

in a ministerial private office, because it gives you just such a great insight into that nexus between the political world and the world of the civil service.

DExEU had a lot of a lot of ministers, comparative to the size of the department, and we had quite a rapid turnover. So almost every two or three months, I was having to get to know incoming new ministers as well as the secretary of state. But I made it a priority to be pretty much first in the office with a private secretary to say: “Hello, I’m here. Here’s my phone number, this is what I do and we’re here to help”. And to also say that we know this is a tough agenda, and we know the politics is really, really difficult around this, we

understand that and we’re on your side. I think is just absolutely central to the role of the permanent secretary, the instinct to understand where ministers coming from, and how they can support that agenda.

CSW: Where does the PM and No.10 fit into this relationship?

CF: Both at the Home Office and health, I used to do quarterly reports to the prime minister and his officials and political advisers in No.10 about a new strategy we had between the Home Office and health to tackle acquisitive crime for drug use – we developed a strategy about getting people into treatment earlier. It was an exciting programme.

At these quarterly meetings, we’d have our statistics about how we were doing, with all those traffic lights and indicators. It was daunting, but I enjoyed it for two reasons. One, it said to me the prime minister thinks this work was important enough to spend time on, and second it allowed us to develop some of those relationships with some of the people in No.10, both political advisers and officials, that could help us with some of the problems we were having, as well as sharing the good outcomes.

As I said earlier, knowing what your boss’s view is on something – whether it’s your secretary of state or the prime minister – is really important, and I didn’t find that sort of contact intrusive or wearing, I found it really positive. What you don’t want is a situation where you think you’ve got some direction from No.10, and maybe it doesn’t go quite as well as expected, and then they act like they didn’t know what was going

on, and you’re on your own. That happened on a couple of occasions, and that really isn’t the best in terms of your relationship.

PR: A big part of the job is supporting the secretary of state and ministers in navigating those relationships, particularly if they’re newer to the department than you. Some secretaries of state would do their best to work with the grain of No.10, some would sometimes find No.10 a bit arbitrary in its decisions.

Sometimes the No.10 grid [for scheduling government announcements] could be a bit of a tyrant stopping them doing what they wanted to do. There were one or two secretaries of state to whom I’d have to say, you can’t announce that, because it’s not on the grid and No.10 has said no. And they would say “yeah, well, maybe, but what are they going to do about it, if I do announce it?” It is important to know what the limits are of that sort of behaviour and how you could manage that, trying to get the best of both worlds. But what you can’t do is ignore No.10, and allow your department to slip out of view, even if that’s what the secretary of state thought was best for them[[[. Because No.10 is ever watchful, ever present, and you never quite know when they’re going to come in and demand something or comment on something, or try and divert attention in a particular direction. ■

This interview was conducted in partnership with Dods Training. Dods specialises in policy development and parliamentary training, including communications and leadership skills related to those topics.

Good policy making improves outcomes for citizens and Dods works to help civil servants develop the skills they need to deliver better outcomes for citizens.

Our associates have close experience of working within the civil service in senior policy, communications, HR, and operational roles. This experience means we understand the culture and challenges of the civil service.

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Produced in association with CSW's sister title *PublicTechnology*



MAKING CONTACT

More than 20 million UK citizens have downloaded the NHS Covid-19 app. One of the leaders of the development process discusses its impact and future plans with **Sam Trendall**

For the 20 million citizens that have downloaded the NHS Covid-19 app, a digital service has surely never reassured and terrified them so much at the same time.

Launched across England in September, the app is updated weekly. Its most significant revamp took place

in October and aimed to reduce instances of so-called ghost notifications – contact alerts which disappeared when users tried to open them.

Further code updates have been implemented more recently to integrate with and support the introduction of policies such as the tiering system – which is split by local authority areas, and not postcodes,

as the app previously was – and the launch of isolation payments of up to £500.

The app has also been amended to reflect the more widespread usage of lateral flow tests, which are quicker but somewhat less reliable than PCR tests. Users who enter a positive lateral flow test result are now encouraged to take a further PCR test to confirm the result.

But *PublicTechnology* missed these new features because, as we tell Wolfgang Emmerich, UK chief executive of Zühlke UK, the main commercial partner in building the technology, we always dread opening the app and have not done so in weeks.

He laughs in recognition, and says our experience of app-ordered confinement – which lasted for nine full days, concluding at midnight on Christmas Eve – came during a particularly busy period for notifications. (He is yet to receive one, he reveals – although his daughter has.)

Further improvements to the app may cover the provision of information on whether users have been vaccinated or

Produced in association with CSW's sister title *Public Technology*

not, Emmerich says, although no definitive plans for this have yet been made.

In the nearer term, a focus will be aligning technological operations more closely with the manual contact-tracing programme.

“The role the app plays is that we can do contact tracing extremely cheaply – orders of magnitude smaller than the cost of manual contact tracing,” he says. “But there is a case for manual contact tracing and the app to work together, and we have built some of those mechanisms. For example, when you scan your QR code [to enter a venue]... the app can detect outbreaks, without contact tracers having to go into the back end.”

Emmerich adds: “But there is also a need for manual contact tracing because not everybody will be able to run the app or have the technology to do so.”

Zühlke's involvement in the programme began a year ago; between March and May 2020 it was awarded three contracts worth a cumulative total of almost £3m to work on the development of the original app, which was ultimately ditched.

Unlike many deals entered into by government organisations over the last year, these contracts were awarded following a full competitive process in which the Switzerland-based firm beat a number of other bidders, Emmerich says.

NHSX led the process to develop the original app, which the government hoped would allow data gathered to be pooled in a centralised repository for study by public-health authorities. This technology was ultimately scrapped in June after it was discovered to work only patchily on Android devices, and barely at all on iPhones.

The Exposure Notification system jointly developed by Apple and Google was then used as the basis for the development of a second app, which runs on a decentralised model, where data is only stored on individual users' phones.

Emmerich says that the Apple-Google technology was not available until April – by which time work was already well underway on the government-led app.

“We provided independent field testing on the first app and also helped them

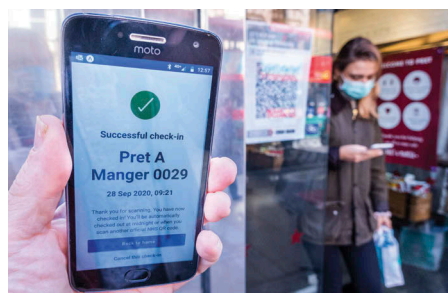
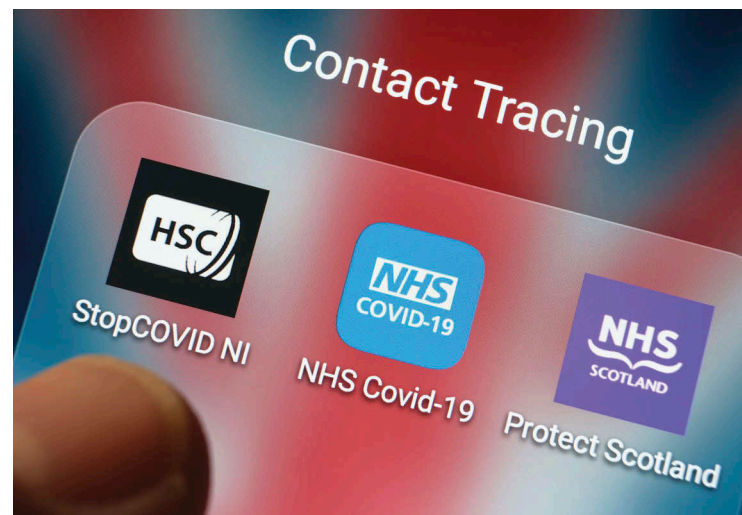
assess the outcome of the first trial, on the Isle of Wight,” he says. “As much as we would have liked that to succeed, we came to the conclusion that it was in the best interests of the country to stop. This was no fault of the development team... it was not possible to fight [Apple's] policy.”

“The first app was stopped on our recommendation and... [we then] rolled out a national feasibility study and we developed the second app using the contract that was set aside for the first app.”

Working together

After the initial app was ditched, the programme to develop a second was moved from NHSX to then-recently launched Test and Trace programme.

Development work was conducted



“As much as we would have liked the first app to succeed, we came to the conclusion that it was in the best interests of the country to stop”
Wolfgang Emmerich

by a large team that included 70 staff from Zühlke, alongside civil servants, representatives of other suppliers such as Accenture, and various external parties that contributed along the way.

This included the incorporation of a QR code-generating feature developed by Rush Digital and the New Zealand Ministry of Health for use in the NZ Covid Tracer app.

“We also worked with organisations

in Europe who use the Google and Apple API – such as NearForm, which built the Irish, Northern Irish and Scottish app,” Emmerich says. “And we reused code from Germany, whose app was built by SAP.”

He adds: “We brought policy into the development to ensure we worked together very closely with the policy team and user researchers. What is unique here is that we had to bring together a team within a day or two and build the first release of the app within six weeks... which is very unusual in a government development.”

When its initial contract with the Department of Health and Social Care ran out in September, the company was awarded a further £9m deal which is due to conclude at the end of this month.

Emmerich says that his firm's engage-

ment with the government is likely to continue for a while yet, as focus increases on driving further uptake of the technology.

Capacity is not a problem, he adds, with the Amazon Web Services environment in which the app is hosted allowing it to grow “more or less infinitely”.

The importance of ensuring even wider adoption is demonstrated by recent research from The Alan Turing Institute that found the app's average of 4.4 close-contact notifications per positive case could have prevented as

many as 900,000 extra cases this winter when compared with purely manual tracing. For every percentage point increase in the proportion of app users, the amount of infections is liable to be reduced by 2.3%, the research claims.

Emmerich says: “We are trying to encourage people to use the app because of the superlinear impact that has on cases... 56% of the population has it – but that still leaves 44%.” ■

Produced in association with CSW's sister title *PublicTechnology*

PT Public
Technology.net

FINAL PERFORMANCE

Government is closing two centralised tools to make data available to departments and the public. **Sam Trendall** finds out more

The GOV.UK Performance Platform, which collates and publishes data on almost 800 services across departments, is to be closed this month.

The site brings together in one place a range of information designed to offer a snapshot of the performance of 777 citizen services, as well as tools such as the Digital Marketplace procurement platform, and the Verify identity-assurance product.

Information includes usage, cost-per-transaction, digitisation rate, completion percentage, uptime and user satisfaction.

Also being retired is the Registers service, which brings together a number of databases to provide information for use in the design of government services and online forms. This includes various comprehensive lists, including local and central government organisations, education providers, allergens, and countries and their demonyms.

Both platforms were created and are run by the Government Digital Service.

A note recently added to each site says that “GDS is deprecating the Performance Platform effective from 15 March 2021”.

Historical data from each will be made available via the National Archives.

Users of the Registers platform are advised to “ensure you have downloaded the latest version” of all the information they need prior to 15 March.

In the case of the Performance Platform, organisations are advised that “future performance data hosted by services will be available via data.gov.uk.”

It is understood that the move to close the platform is intended to place greater responsibility on individual departments to publish and maintain publicly available data, rather than a single repository that is run by the central digital agency. Any information that continues to be published on data.gov.uk will also be publicly downloadable in spreadsheet form.

It is not known how service performance data will be presented or collated on data.gov.uk, and whether it will be housed in a single, easily navigable place as it is now – or if it will be dispersed across multiple sections.

Produced in association with CSW's sister title *Public Technology*

It also remains to be seen the extent to which departments will continue to collect and publish this information without the impetus of being expected to contribute to a centralised platform.

Previously, new services developed by departments or agencies were required to integrate with the platform in order to comply with the GDS-managed 14-point Service Standard checklist – which must be passed as a service passes through the various stages of the development process.

The 'About' section of the platform also makes clear that, as well as providing useful information for researchers, journalists and the public, maintaining a dashboard offers valuable data for the government entity in question.

"If you're a government service manager, you can see how your service is doing by using a performance dashboard," it says. "A dashboard lets you quickly spot problems with your service so you can take action to improve it. You need to integrate your service with a performance dashboard to... avoid spending time manually collecting data about your service, make decisions on the latest data available about your service, compare how your service is doing with other public services, [and] be open to the public. If you work on a government service, we can help you create a dashboard."

It adds: "The performance dashboards are just another way the government is opening up data to the public. If you're a service manager, you may be concerned about presenting facts about how your service is doing so openly. In general, the novelty of open data has worn off. There is nothing sensational about seeing how many people are satisfied with a government service, or how many people completed an application."

A mixed picture

The data currently available through the platform is mixed in its comprehensiveness and recency; the dashboard for the most-used government service of all, Vehicle Tax Checks by Individuals, contains quarterly-usage and digital-uptake stats no more recent than those that date from 2017.

But other data – including completion rate and user satisfaction – continues to be published in weekly or monthly tranches.

This mix of outdated, new and incomplete information is repli-

777

Number of services with a performance dashboard

15

March

Date that the Performance Platform and Data Register will be 'deprecated'

51

Number of registers available – including comprehensive lists of world countries, UK local authorities and jobcentres, and allergen groups

cated across many other services.

The Performance Platform spent several weeks "closed for maintenance" in the latter part of 2019. Some speculation at the time suggested that this was a precursor to the service shuttering for good.

On that occasion it did come back online – albeit without any visual representations of data or graphs allowing users to study performance over time.

"[GDS] have also thought quite deeply about the future of the Performance Platform," he added. "Some of the data had not been updated very recently."

According to Freeguard, a key question now is the extent to which departments will be required to follow standards for publishing data, how this will be enforced, and by whom. The recently-created Data Standards Authority – a cross-government entity that sits within GDS but works closely with the Office for National Statistics and major Whitehall departments – is one candidate to take on this job.

Whatever approach is taken, Freeguard said this year could be a landmark year for use of digital and data in government, with new leadership figures at GDS, the beginning of the rollout of the National Data Strategy, and some high-profile global government events, such as the

COP26 climate change conference.

"Even if this is only temporary until a new system comes in, it is not great from a transparency perspective – an issue which is facing some challenges," Freeguard said. "The world looks at the UK for open government and digital government – what face does the UK want to put forward?" ■



For the last year, all information has been presented solely in text form.

Gavin Freeguard, an independent digital and data consultant and former programme director at the Institute for Government think tank, said that the closure of the registers has "been a long time coming – as it has not had the buy-in it needed".

As the NHS performs the difficult balancing act of carrying out a nationwide vaccine rollout while trying to mitigate the spread of new Covid variants, **Geoffrey Lyons** peers beyond British borders to review five innovative and relatively inexpensive responses to Covid from foreign governments

A GLOBAL EFFORT

An interesting, if obvious, lesson from the pandemic is that viruses aren't very respectful. They don't respect status, as over a dozen world leaders have discovered; they don't respect time, as critics of former US president Donald Trump anxiously cautioned during his three-month presidential transition; and they don't respect borders. To Covid-19, there's no Switzerland or Hong Kong, Mexico or Nepal. There's no Europe or Asia or, for that matter, western or eastern hemispheres. There are just hosts, human or otherwise (according to a study in *Science*, cats and ferrets are "highly susceptible" to the disease).

And yet borders are useful in a pandemic because they provide a framework to determine what's effective. Each country is like a separate laboratory, with some producing undeniably good results (New Zealand, Singapore), some tragic failures (the US, Brazil), and the majority something in between.

While success seems to hinge on the same fundamentals – like how early a government intervenes, how strict its lockdown measures are – it's in the details that we find policy inspiration: what are the specifics that countries do that help contribute to success, and that others can learn from?

The five examples below were selected from among hundreds that have been applauded the world over for their ingenuity. Readers who want to learn about others can find catalogues of innovative responses to Covid on the websites for global institutions like the UN and OECD. Oxford's Blavatnik's School of Government also has an online tool that allows users to track and compare policy responses from around the world.

GERMANY

Level playing field

Like most who have endured long lockdowns, Berliners have felt that their home has lost much its character. As one blogger put it, "the sounds of chatting in restaurants, glasses touching the tables in bars and pubs, music from clubs, and broken bottles in front of Spätis [late-night convenience stores] were transformed into a silence no

one could relate to".

Counted among those once familiar sounds is that of children playing, which was effectively muted by the government's temporary ban on outdoor group exercise. As a direct result, playgrounds across Berlin were taped off and children restricted to indoor activity.

With few green spaces for



Play time Berlin's first temporary play street



ance with social distancing.

It's a textbook example of what some are calling "tactical urbanism": low-cost interventions that achieve long-term outcomes (other examples include

youngsters to play in, the artsy borough of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg was especially affected. Luckily, the district office had a clever workaround: it opened 30 streets on Sundays for the creation of temporary playgrounds, managed by residents to ensure compli-

miniature libraries and "seed-bombing" neglected patches of soil). Hopefully the outcome won't stretch too far into long-term, however, so the kinder of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, one of Europe's most densely populated urban areas, can return to their usual play.

INDIA

Corona, meet CARUNA

Talk about cross-departmental collaboration. In April 2020, officials spanning different branches of 22 of India's civil services joined forces to create the Civil Services Association Reach to Support National Disasters (CARUNA), an initiative that pools data on migration, essential supplies, and PPE to assist district-level efforts to tackle Covid.

Launched on the heels of the world's largest lockdown, CARUNA has already helped

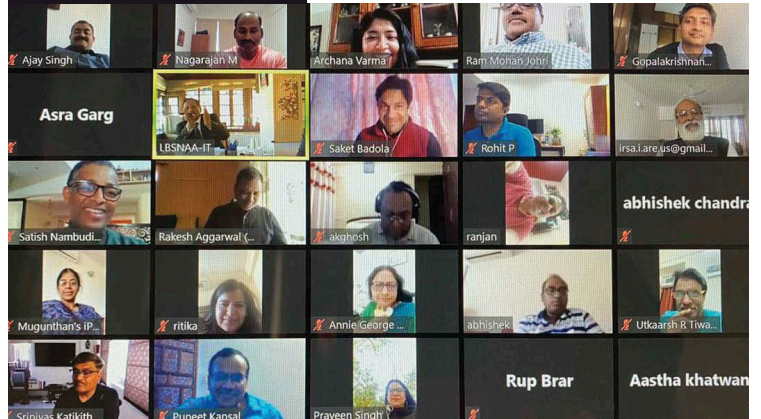


field operatives with training, facilitated delivery of PPE, and even set up temporary shelter for frontline workers. It has also assigned officers to support prime minister Narendra Modi's "11 empowered groups", which are teams led by senior representative from the prime minister's office and the cabinet secretariat that focus on

specific areas of the pandemic response (such as medical equipment and human resources).

"We are here to

In the room Officials meet up



assist, support and supplement the government efforts with regard to coronavirus using our networks, skills and resources," Indian Administrative Service vice president Sanjeev Chopra, who launched CARUNA, told newspaper *ThePrint*. "Since

civil servants are spread out across the country, this network can be used to create a database of information."

India has so far had 154,000 deaths from COVID, which is third highest in the world behind the USA and Brazil.

SOUTH KOREA

Drive-through open

What's fuelling Korea's coronavirus success? What's South Korea's secret to keeping Covid deaths down to 1,496? Headlines pose these questions daily, and yet there's no code to crack. The answer lies in an effective three-pillared approach: expansive tracing, zero-tolerance isolation of the most severe cases, and fast and free testing. While the tracing and mandatory isolation measures have been impressive, it's the testing that has garnered the most media attention. And for good reason: by early

March 2020, South Korea had already tested 145,000 people, which by then was more than the UK, US, France, Italy, and Japan combined.

One way South Korea achieved such remarkable results was by pioneering the walk-in booth,

piloted in early March 2020 and quickly scaled up to include hundreds of locations across the country. The booths, which effectively increased the number of people being tested tenfold, immediately relieved hospital capacity and were hailed as a success not only by Koreans but also by other countries looking to follow suit.

Not everyone had easy access to these booths, however, so Jaemyung Lee, the governor of Gyeonggi province, came up with the idea of drive-throughs. They first emerged in the

city of Goyang, at the city hall car park. Drivers were registered, checked for symptoms, and swabbed before their car was thoroughly disinfected

– all in about ten minutes. Three days later they received their results via text message.

Officials experimented with different iterations of the drive-through. Some sites were container-based, where drivers would pull up to a registration container followed

by a health-check container and so on. The containers took up a lot of space, however, and required drivers to leave their vehicles, so a more efficient alternative developed that used a single open medical tent where doctors could easily swab drivers

Right steer A drive-thru Covid testing centre



through their window. The biggest advantage of the tents was their cost: one tent costs up to fifty times less than a set of containers. Unsurprisingly, most drive-throughs currently operated by local governments employ the tent model.

These early developments in South Korea led to the development of drive-through testing centres in many countries around the globe, but not every country has been able to mimic this success. As one study highlights, South Korea's highly connected population and thriving software industry make it especially well positioned to deploy mobile apps, making the execution of such large-scale programmes seamless. >>



PAKISTAN

All aboard

Travel has been one of the most conspicuous casualties of the pandemic, so much so that global carbon emissions fell by a peak of 17% in April last year. While many cheered this news, scientists cautioned that carbon concentrations are still high, and that a deadly virus is by no means a sustainable solution to a warming planet.

But that doesn't mean all those unused vehicles can't be put to use, which is exactly what Pakistan's railway officials were thinking when their trains screeched to a halt. As soon as travel was suspended, state-owned Pakistan Railways immediately got to work converting air-conditioned sleeper and business class train carriages

into Covid wards, each with a capacity of about 36 patients. The best part about these retrofitted wards, besides the fact that they took in thousands of patients, was their mobility. They could easily be sent to any part of the country with rail access so that local areas in dire need of help could have a small hospital on their doorstep within hours. In cases of emergency, patients could be swiftly shuttled to the nearest hospital.

The first train ward was established in Rawalpindi, just a few kilometres outside Islamabad. Shortly after that Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Shakkar, Quetta, and Multan followed suit. Other countries like China, India, and Indone-

Safety first Quarantine in Rawalpindi



sia also implemented similar programmes, examples of what observers call "frugal innovation": creative efforts to do more with less despite institutional voids and resource constraints. Distilleries using their machinery to churn out hand sanitiser is another example, as well as sports stadiums used as temporary hospitals.

Pakistan began its vaccination campaign on 3 February, administering the first of half a million doses of China's Sinopharm vaccine. The World Health Organisation's COVAX programme, which aims to provide equitable global access to vaccines, ranks Pakistan as among the top three priority recipients along with India and Nigeria.

AUSTRIA

Hacking away

Hackathons are exciting for several reasons, not least of which is that they generate several ideas in a short span of time. The typical hackathon lasts a mere 24 to 48 hours, when teams of software developers frantically compete to create the best prototype. A winner is ultimately selected, but in the end all entries are shared, making hackathons an ideal medium for situations (like a pandemic) in which fresh thinking is so desperately needed.

So far, hundreds of virtual hackathons have occurred as a direct response to Covid, with names like #Hack-CoronaGreece and #CodeVsCovid19. One of the biggest

communities of Covid hackers is Hack the Crisis, which is currently comprised of 68 different hackathons. There's Hack La Crise in France, Mega Hack in Brazil, Hack the Virus in Moldova, and dozens with the community's namesake (e.g. Hack the Crisis Cyprus, Hack the Crisis Poland).

Hack the Crisis Austria was organised by the Aus-

trian Startups Community and sponsored by the country's Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs, the Austrian government's financing bank, and dozens of corporate partners. It took place over three days last March with over 500 people participating to create 52 projects. Entries included an automated health hotline, a dashboard that bundles and updates information from the federal government, and a web-based video platform to link self-employed people like therapists and coaches with their customers.

The winner was Public Spacers, a mobile app that provides load-balancing control for trains. By allowing users to see the number of people who have already booked each train, the app makes it easy to avoid crowded services and gives

passengers peace of mind.

Other submissions also stood out for their ingenuity, including Safe Glove Pack, a new design for non-sterile, single-use medical glove boxes. Gloves are removed at the cuff rather than the palm or fingers, leaving the surface of the glove uncontaminated. The designers believe their idea could considerably reduce the transmission of pathogens in hospitals and nurseries, where 90% of viruses and bacteria are transmitted by human hands.

Austria has had several innovative policy responses to the pandemic, including assigning men from the *Zivil-dienst*, the mandatory alternative community service for military draftees, to assist health workers, and a collaboration between the healthcare sector and companies with 3D printers to print facial protection shields. The country is generally seen to have been successful in mitigating Covid's impact, with just over 8,000 deaths. ■



High track An Austrian app keeps people Covid safe on trains



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Winners



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Category Champions



Alex Aiken
*Executive Director,
Government
Communications Service*



Madeleine Alessandri
*Permanent Secretary,
Northern Ireland Office*



Jim Harra
*Permanent Secretary
and Chief Executive, HM
Revenue and Customs*



Sarah Healey
*Permanent Secretary,
Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media and Sport*



Simon Case
*Cabinet Secretary and
Head of the Civil Service*



Alex Chisholm
*Civil Service Chief
Operating Officer
and Cabinet Office
Permanent Secretary*



Stephen Lovegrove
*Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Defence*



Dame Shan Morgan
*Permanent Secretary,
Welsh Government*



Mike Driver
*Director General,
Managed Quarantine
Service, Department of
Health and Social Care*



Tamara Finkelstein
*Permanent Secretary,
Department for
Environment, Food
and Rural Affairs*



Sarah Munby
*Permanent Secretary,
Department for
Business, Energy and
Industrial Strategy*



Antonia Romeo
*Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Justice*



Elizabeth Gardiner
CB QC
*First Parliamentary
Counsel and
Permanent Secretary*



Sue Gray
*Permanent Secretary,
Department of
Finance, Northern
Ireland Executive*



Peter Schofield
*Permanent Secretary,
Department for
Work and Pensions*



Sir Patrick Vallance
*Government Chief
Scientific Adviser
and Head of the
Government Science and
Engineering Profession*



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The Citizenship Award

Recognising exceptional individuals who go way beyond what could reasonably be expected of them, to improve the lives of citizens or communities. Their contributions could be in the workplace, or as volunteers outside work, or both.



Sarah Morton

Department for Work and Pensions

Working with local communities in Liverpool, Sarah supports homeless people, assists with food banks, and works to eliminate period poverty. She encourages her work colleagues to recognise the hardships faced by vulnerable citizens, organises charity drives, and enables colleagues to assist in their communities. Sarah has worked alongside local councillors, gaining valuable insight into the economic pressures they face, particularly during the pandemic. This insight guaranteed she focused her efforts where need was greatest. Sarah is fully committed to enhancing quality of life for all and works tirelessly to ensure everyone can live the best life possible.



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The Collaboration Award

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Recognising excellent collaboration that spans the boundaries between sectors, administrations, or layers of government.



Shielding

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

On the 22 March 2020, the government introduced new shielding health guidance and a support offer to help protect the people most vulnerable to COVID-19. What made this task truly remarkable was not only the scale and pace of the programme, but the unprecedented collaboration across MHCLG, DHSC, NHSE, NHSD, GDS, DEFRA, DWP, CO, local government and local delivery partners. Over four months, 2.2 million people were contacted by the programme, 1.2 million signed up to the website, and 4.7 million food boxes were delivered to over 500,000 people, with every department pulling together to help protect people's health.



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The Commercial Award

Recognising exemplary commercial skill and sound business judgement in delivering an exceptional outcome, with value for money for government.



Complex Transactions Team - COVID-19 Response *Cabinet Office*

To support DHSC and NHSE&I during the COVID-19 crisis, the Complex Transactions Team (CTT) enabled the delivery of 15,154 ventilators designed and built within 4.5 months, operationalisation of testing from a daily testing capacity of 3,000 to 100,000 in six weeks, and 32 billion items of PPE equipment. This was achieved by deploying 57 commercial specialists to all COVID-19 cells (Ventilation, Testing, Nightingale Hospitals and PPE) and the Civil Contingencies Secretariat. The team took a leadership role in delivering the commercial arrangements to secure supplies and services, working at rapid pace under highly pressurised conditions.

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The Communication Award

Recognising exceptional performance by a communications team to deliver a highly effective national or international communications campaign.



DVLA Vehicle Tax Evasion Campaign 2020 *Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency*

This nomination is to recognise DVLA's work to tackle vehicle tax evasion. The agency has a long-term strategy to keep vehicle tax evasion low, and uses a wide range of prevention and enforcement measures to remind motorists of their legal duties to pay vehicle tax on time. Using an evidence-based approach, DVLA planned and delivered a fully integrated behaviour change communications campaign at the start of 2020 using communications targeted to the highest evasion areas in the UK.



supported by:



The Developing People Award

Recognising excellence across all areas of learning, skills development, strengthening capability, and talent management.



Inclusion Apprenticeship Programme

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

How can we become the most inclusive employer by 2020? By designing an inclusive resourcing process focusing on equity of opportunity for all applicants, regardless of their social or educational background. The Civil Service recruitment principles encourage this type of approach but apprenticeship schemes typically follow a traditional selection route. Removing minimum entry requirements, targeting marginalised candidates, linking with local authorities and schools, holding outreach events, running a social media campaign, outlining the selection process at an open day and partnering with the department's Social, Economic Diversity and Inclusion Network, the team delivered an apprentice cohort which reflects the Civil Service's desire to be the most inclusive employer.

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The Digital, Data & Technology Award

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Get Your State Pension

Department for Work and Pensions

The Get your State Pension (GySP) digital service has transformed the way citizens claim their state pension. Developed in 2018, within two years it has progressed from being a mainly form-based service to become the first benefit which can award and pay the customer without any agent intervention, in a process called Citizen Straight Through Processing (CSTP). In 2018, 25% of customers invited to claim their state pension did so online. Today, that figure is 75%. Over 60% of customers are now paid using CSTP. Through collaborative working across departmental boundaries, the customer experience has been transformed in a positive way.



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The Diversity & Inclusion Award

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Campaign & Projects Leeds D&I Group *HM Revenue & Customs*

Campaign and Projects, Leeds, is a new office of over 400 people from a diverse range of backgrounds. The Diversity & Inclusion Group was formed by 11 volunteers who aim to ensure that staff recognise everyone's individuality, with different values, skills and ways of thinking. They promote the benefits these differences bring to HMRC, and raise awareness of a range of topics; in the last year, the group has delivered over 30 awareness campaigns. Their 'Time to Talk Day' events promoted better understanding of mental health, and for Inclusion Week, the group organised engagement workshops such as exploring identities and 'speed-inclusion'. Recognising the potential wellbeing impact of working from home due to COVID-19, the group developed online weekly group tasks to promote inclusion, bring teams together and combat feelings of isolation.

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to all nominees and winners

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The Health & Wellbeing Award

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The Charity for Civil Servants

Recognising people who have made a highly effective contribution to promoting or improving health and wellbeing within the Civil Service.



Gillian Whitworth

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

Gillian demonstrates extraordinary commitment, courage and compassion in raising greater awareness of eating disorders, an issue often stigmatised and overlooked. At BEIS, she collaborated with colleagues to form the first Eating Disorder Support Group across the Civil Service and has continued to raise awareness at the FCDO. She has spearheaded work to highlight how eating disorders may present in the workplace and how we can be more inclusive, providing clear constructive advice on eating disorders, body image and diet culture. Colleagues have welcomed Gillian's empathetic approach, creating spaces for colleagues to share, connect and learn about this difficult, emotional issue.

Civil Service Awards 2021

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Accelerated Capability Environment (ACE)

Home Office

The Home Office's ACE team solve public safety challenges from data and digital technology, at the pace demanded by a fast-changing world. ACE challenged conventional problem-solving, introducing agile, collaborative ways of working that accelerate solution-finding from years to months or weeks. This imaginative, entrepreneurial team found a new, cost-effective way to drive start-ups, SMEs, the not-for-profit sector and academia to bring cutting-edge expertise to bear on these challenges. The team won the Institute for Collaborative Working's 2019 innovation award, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology cited ACE as an effective model which should be replicated across government.



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The Inspirational Leadership Award

Recognising individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, regardless of grade or role.



Chris Atkinson
Northern Ireland Office

Chris Atkinson led work to establish a scheme for payments to recognise and support those seriously injured through no fault of their own during the troubles in Northern Ireland (NI). For years it seemed impossible to get agreement for this scheme. Chris's passion for making a difference to the lives of these vulnerable people is commendable. In putting people at the heart of his approach, he pitched a way forward focused on practical action and a sensitive framework for managing political differences.

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GO-Science COVID SAGE Secretariat

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) secretariat delivers scientific advice to decision-makers during emergencies. Co-chaired by Chief Scientific Advisor, Sir Patrick Vallance, and Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty, SAGE first met in January to discuss an outbreak of a novel coronavirus in Wuhan. The secretariat has since delivered over 60 meetings and released 400 papers, convening hundreds of experts and leading specialists from the UK's diverse scientific community to provide timely, impactful advice to the Cabinet. The secretariat has championed independence, proactivity and transparency, welcomed challenges, and provided an authoritative, unified voice to inform the UK's response.

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Virtual Machine Environment, Replacement (Jobseekers Allowance)

Department for Work and Pensions

The project to replace DWP's benefit systems within the UK's National Critical Infrastructure was the biggest in Europe. As well as these systems being old, replacement of the systems was necessary to enable future welfare policy changes to be implemented. This was undertaken as an in-house exercise between DWP Digital and Service Planning and Delivery colleagues, requiring precision in planning and execution with zero disruption to DWP benefit operations. The latest system, Jobseekers Allowance, was to be replaced in the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The outcomes achieved have been independently recognised by Internal Audit and Senior Officials.



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Joint HMRC/HMT CJRS, SEISS and EOHO Teams *Cross-government*

HMRC and HMT delivered HMG's flagship economic interventions to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and protect businesses and jobs. CJRS (or the furlough scheme) has helped employers pay the wages of nine million people across the UK - over a quarter of the workforce. Over 2.7 million people have been supported by the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), and hundreds of thousands of businesses have been supported, including through Eat Out To Help Out (EOHO). These schemes have all been delivered as a partnership between experts from HMT and HMRC, who have operated as a single virtual team. They have been delivered successfully at a rapid pace.

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The Resilience & Rapid Response Award

Recognising excellence in crisis management, contingency planning, or major incident response.



The Isolation Note; DHSC (Alexander Peck), DWP (Ailsa McGinty, David Long), NHSX, (Diane Baynham), NHSD (James Higgott)

Cross-government

Nominated for the Health Tech Awards 2020, the Isolation Note is an example of Civil Service collaboration at its best. The Isolation Note was introduced at the start of the pandemic as a digital means by which individuals can certify absence from work for COVID-19 reasons via NHS 111 Online, and is a pragmatic, creative and flexible solution to mitigate complications arising from COVID-19 for citizens, GPs, employers and benefit claimants. Available UK-wide, more than 2 million Isolation Notes have been issued (correct as of December 2020) and the system has been adapted and adjusted to reflect the latest requirements and guidance from the Government. The Isolation Note's introduction has empowered citizens; protected GP clinical time; safeguarded access to and payment of benefits; and given needed reassurance to employers and employees. The initiative has also provided valuable lessons and acted as a springboard for future government improvements around certification requirements.



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The Rising Star Award

Recognising a civil servant who has made a significant impact within the first eight years of their Civil Service career.



Abigail Agyei

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Abigail has passion and commitment to public service and has made a significant impact to communities, dedicating her career to supporting marginalised and minority communities and amplifying their voices.

She has worked with Grenfell victims and survivors, and supported children being brought safely to the UK from Calais and is currently working in MHCLG engaging with faith and BAME communities following COVID-19. Abigail has been instrumental in leading on race in the Civil Service and enabled uncomfortable conversations to happen, in order to create an inclusive, safe and accountable culture particularly with the Black community with the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on minority ethnic people and the witnessing of the death of George Floyd and many others.

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The Science Award

Recognising the outstanding advancement or application of science to improve policy, service delivery or public administration.



International Travel Risk Assessment Team

Animal and Plant Health Agency

The International Travel Risk assessment team engaged in cross-disciplinary science, working with Public Health England (PHE) to develop innovative models to inform the UK government on the risk of entry of SARS-CoV-2 to the UK via international travel. Delivering at pace, the team provided robust results that fed into policy discussions, identifying countries from which the risks are highest and alternative health measures to 14-day self-isolation. The team stepped outside their scientific comfort zone and displayed fantastic teamwork in order to aid PHE at this demanding time.



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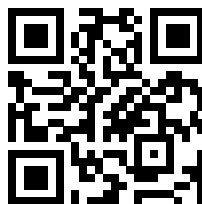


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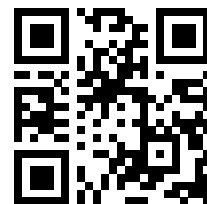
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Presented by CSW editors Jess Bowie and Suzannah Brecknell, The Civil Service World Podcast is an essential tool for navigating the challenges facing public servants today.

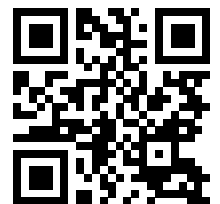
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