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CIVIL SERVICE WORLD 



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SAFE FROM HARM



Security & Policing focus 2022

FEATURING

Sir Simon Bollom,
CEO, Defence
Equipment &
Support

Paul Taylor, chief
scientific adviser,
National Police
Chiefs' Council

Anita Friend,
Defence and
Security Accelerator

Cyber experts
look ahead to key
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CONTENTS

March 2022

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RED BOX

4 INBOX

Letters and Whitehall Wisdom

6 NEWS

National College for Security plans

OPINION

8 ALEX THOMAS

9 HARSH BEHL

10 ANDREW HUDSON

11 DAVE PENMAN

12 ANDY COWPER

14 ANITA FRIEND

DIGITAL AND DATA

16 TECH-ING OVER

The new Welsh digital chiefs
planning a technology overhaul

FEATURES

20 CYBER WARS

The biggest cyber threats in 2022

24 LAST LINE OF DEFENCE

Departing DE&S chief Sir Simon
Bollom on 40 years in defence

30 VAX TO THE WALL

How the vaccines programme rolled-out

32 SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY

The first policing scientific
adviser on embedding S&T

36 SECURING OUR FUTURE

CSW meets the head of UK
Defence and Security Exports

39 RAG AND BONES

Update on government reform plans

45 CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

How volunteering can boost civil service

48 SELECT WORKS

Preparing for select committees

LIFE

46 BOOK REVIEW

The Coincidence of Novembers



FROM THE EDITOR

In the early days of the pandemic, listening to government news conferences was a surreal experience. Can they *really* be closing the schools? Are we *really* being told to stay at home to save lives? Is the chancellor *really* going to pay millions of UK workers not to work?

With a sense of history unfolding around us, and deep uncertainty about the future, one source of distraction – for Suzannah, at least – was the past.

On the day chancellor Rishi Sunak announced that mind-boggling furlough scheme, she began reading a history of the welfare state written by journalist and Institute for Government fellow Nick Timmins, and wondering what social or institutional change might emerge from the tumult of the pandemic.

Timmins's colleagues at the IfG have this month provided us with one potential answer. In a report arguing that the civil service needs a new statutory footing, the think tank suggests that the pandemic, coming hot on the heels of Brexit, has shown faults in

our system of government that we can no longer ignore.

These faults require urgent and radical reform, the report argues. (Though, in the civil service tradition, this is tempered radicalism, with reforms referred to variously as “careful but radical” and “radical but precise”). The IfG's Alex Thomas sets out the key points in a column for us on (p.8), but the full report is well worth your time. Clearly argued and wide-ranging, it even contains a proposed 14-clause statute which would form the basis of an Act of Parliament setting out “the civil service's permanence, its values, its objectives and how – at the highest level – it should be run and held to account.”

There may be quibbles over details, but it is hard to see how anyone could argue that we don't need *some* sort of urgent change for the civil service. Even the government has set out – in its June 2021 Declaration on Government Reform – the need to review systems of governance and accountability for both officials and ministers. It has not yet begun the promised reviews, as we detail



in our assessment of progress against the DGR (p.44).

Whatever shape those reviews take, it would be a desperate shame if we see no serious reform, but simply more “muddling on” for the civil service as a whole.

For while the opportunity of welfare reform provided by the Second World War was realised, another opportunity was lost.

In a speech given last year, cabinet secretary Simon Case referred to this missed opportunity, as described by Whitehall historian Peter Hennessey. The civil service had drafted in a range of talented “outsiders” during the war, but failed to make the most of their specialist skills during post-war reconstructions. “There was never a

formal examination into how the state as a whole had performed in the war,” Case said.

Alongside the expected government reviews, we will soon have the promised Covid public inquiry, which will surely also lead to calls for change. However, given it took centuries for the civil service to receive any form of statutory recognition, it would be surprising if a new act is passed any time soon. Yet UK politics in recent years has been nothing if not surprising. And that's all the more reason why the civil service needs a stronger footing to build confidence and clarity, and allow the permanent part of the UK government to provide the stability and long-term view which should be one of its key strengths. ■

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INBOX

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LONELY OUT HERE

An opinion piece on a recently-announced pay rise for MPs sparked a strong reaction. Prospect deputy general secretary Garry Graham wrote that civil servants feel “abandoned by their political masters”, whose pay has risen at more than double the rate of their own over the past decade.

“Do civil servants feel abandoned? Or do they feel victimised? Harassed? Villainised?” **Joann Robertson** asked. “There is no end of slurry flung at civil servants, so much so that they probably feel more like targets than abandoned employees.

“The matter of pay is less an abandonment than a reinforcement of a them and us system that prevails across the parquet of power.

“Organisational division doesn’t lend itself to efficient or effective performance and if the root cause of that cannot be tackled then the system cannot be tackled.”

“Not helped by endless ‘efficiency drives’, restructuring and recruiting bans whilst the spad count increases inexorably,” **Colin Taylor** agreed. “Spads tell ministers what they WANT to hear, not what they NEED to hear.”

“I remember a time when MPs’ salaries were like those of mid-ranking civil servants,” he added.

GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

Some commenters were taken aback by the advertised salary for the Department for Work and Pensions’ next communications director, with up to £120,000 on offer for the right candidate

 **OheMCEE @OheMCEE** Good grief. What grade is that??

 **Christine Kay @ChristineKay** It was going to be £121,040 but the government cut it by £20 a week.

But **Colin Taylor** added: “Not mentioned is that they will also be scapegoated when government policy goes wrong.”

CUTTING REMARK

Not everyone agreed with Cabinet Office minister Steve Barclay’s assessment the government’s plans to pare back the civil service headcount by tens of thousands of jobs will be “empowering” for junior staff by reducing middle management layers and giving them more access to ministers. “Mm. Not quite sure he’s got the hang of this,” **Jerry Alexander** said.

FOREVER HOLD YOUR PEACE?


Readers weren’t all too pleased to hear Conservative MP – and former minister – Esther McVey has been told off by the anti-corruption watchdog for the second time in three months. Acoba wrote to McVey in February after learn-

ing she had joined a public-speaking agency without seeking formal approval for the role – not long after taking her to task over a similar failure to inform the committee she had taken a job as a presenter for GB News.

Former civil servant **Caroline Slocock**, who served as the first female private secretary in 10 Downing Street, commented: “A minor breach of the rules, perhaps, but a repeated pattern and part of a wider picture of ministers and ex-ministers thinking rules and standards in public life don’t apply to them. Over to Steve Barclay, PM’s chief of staff, to do something about it, apparently...”

FOR YOUR DISINFORMATION

There was some scepticism about the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport’s reticence to release information about the work or remit of its Counter-Disinformation Unit, as revealed in a long-running investigation by CSW sister publication PublicTechnology

 **Rick B @TenPercent** Secrecy around its work is maintained on the grounds of a need to protect government’s “relationship with social media platforms”, as well as a desire to “preserve a ‘safe space’ around ministers and government officials” Yeah, right... ■

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

An exclusive interview with Rupert McNeil as he prepares to step down as civil service chief people officer.

WHITEHALL WISDOM

The great and good pass judgement on government

Quotes taken from the *Civil Service World* archive

PRIVATE LIFE

“I met somebody at a drinks party... who said: ‘Why don’t you go and see somebody in Room 055 at the Ministry of Defence?’ I can’t remember what the term was – a wonderful euphemism. I think it was an ‘independent branch of the Ministry of Defence’, some slightly weird formulation.

“I don’t recall any tests; any means of checking whether I was competent or capable or literate... I joined only half realising what I

was joining, partly out of curiosity. There was a good deal not said until you were inside.

“Men were in all the dominant posts... there were a number of jobs that women were not allowed to do. It was not thought acceptable for women to put themselves in any danger. And it was assumed without question that women weren’t suitable to do various jobs, like seeking to recruit a source agent, because what self-respecting Palestinian terrorist, Irish ter-

rorist, Russian intelligence officer, would consider being recruited by a woman?

“This failed, of course, to take into account that half the world are women; and, secondly, failed to take into account that certainly in some cases – like the Russians – they weren’t able to see you coming. So that was complete nonsense; but it changed.” **Former MI5 chief Eliza Manningham-Buller reflects on joining in the mid-1970s, in a 2014 interview for CSW**



Courses at new National Security College will start this autumn, says Cabinet Office



As a new college opens providing strategic training for top policy experts alongside science and technology skills boosters, **Jim Dunton** finds out more and talks to former chief scientific officer for national security Prof Anthony Finkelstein

Almost seven years since creating a virtual national security academy was trailed in 2015's Strategic Defence and Security Review, the Cabinet Office has said the new UK College of National Security will launch next month.

The college will begin training officials in the autumn and ministers have said its first international partner will be the National Security College at the Australian National University.

Cabinet Office minister Michael Ellis said the UK college's programme would provide training to officials in national security teams across government, with a "particular focus" on strategic training for policy experts at the height of their careers.

He said making sure officials were up to speed with the latest science and technology skills would also be a core offer.

"International collaboration is a key pillar of the college"
Michael Ellis

"The programme will build our resilience capabilities, enhancing of officials' skill sets and utilising the knowledge of our security experts to inform them of the best ways the UK can be protected," he said.

"By taking a wider systems approach to learning and development through collaborating with experts across sectors and continents, we are maximising the resources and expertise available to us and ensuring that we can deliver the best possible national security policy."

Creating the new college was mentioned as part

of the wider Campus for Government Skills initiative in 2020, and formally proposed in the subsequent

Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

The Integrated Review identified a need to upskill the national-security sector's workforce, build resilient networks among professionals, and provide a platform for international collaboration.

The college will be run from the Government Skills and Curriculum Unit, which is part of Civil Service HR in the Cabinet Office. Its curriculum will be developed in partnership with the Royal College of Defence Studies, the Intelligence Assessment Academy and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's International Academy.

Unlike the old Civil Service College at

Sunningdale, in Berkshire, which is currently being redeveloped as luxury housing, the new Government Campus – which the CfNS will be part of – is a looser organisation.

Civil Service World understands that the security college's programmes will run out of existing facilities across the national-security community, and offer training in a range of online and in-person formats.

Ellis said he expected the college's work with the Australian National Security College to “harness our collective expertise from opposite sides of the globe” and keep both nations on the front foot in tackling the growing



range of domestic and global threats.

“International collaboration is a key pillar of the college and we are proud to be working with our Australian colleagues to leverage resources and opportunities from across government, industry, academia and the private sector to drive forward this exciting initiative,” he said.

Prof Rory Medcalf, head of the Australian National Security College, said work was already underway to explore exactly how the two national colleges could best collaborate.

“We've begun discussions with the leadership of the new UK college and we'll work closely to map a partnership spanning shared curricula, staff exchange and priority research,” he said. ■

“THIS IS EDUCATION FOR A RECONCEPTUALISED UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE OF NATIONAL SECURITY”

Prof Anthony Finkelstein was the government's chief scientific adviser for national security from December 2015 to June 2021 and part of the cross-civil service team that laid the foundations for the college, in conjunction with the national security community.

He tells *Civil Service World* the CfNS is an altogether more substantial training offering than what was proposed in 2015, and is designed to meet a rapidly evolving, broader concept of national security.

“Originally, what was proposed was the virtual academy bringing together a lot of strands of existing work,” he says. “But the coalition hadn't been built for it and the money wasn't there. Also, it's actually more difficult to build a virtual entity than it is to build a real one. It sounds counterintuitive, but it's true.

“Bringing people together around a true joint initiative is easier than disag-

gregated collaboration.”

Finkelstein, who is now president of City, University of London, among other roles, said departments across government have “chipped in” for the CfNS, making it a significant collaborative achievement and reflecting changes to the understanding of – and threats to – national security.

“Hitherto, quite a few issues were seen as a periphery of national security, and now they're seen as its essence,” he says.

“If you look at future national security, science and climate change, prosperity and geopolitics are all bound together in very different ways. And we're going to have to form the professionals of the future in different ways.

“People who are engaged in national security, there

are the obvious people in defence, in the Joint Intelligence Committee and so on. But actually, those networks are much broader. They span across to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, and they go outwards to people who are involved in

“It's actually more difficult to build a virtual entity than a real one”

critical national infrastructure.

“So this is education for a reconceptualised understanding of the role of national security.”

Finkelstein says that, along with the definition of national security, the skills required to tackle key issues are “quite fundamentally” changing.

“Increasingly, science and technology lie at the centre,

large-scale organisational transformation lies at the centre, and networks inside and outside government increasingly

are relied upon,” he says.

“So changing understandings of national security meant we needed to have a different way of preparing future national security professionals.”

Finkelstein says witnessing the Australian National University's work on national security was “quite inspiring”, however he does not expect the CfNS to be an identical twin.

“The Australian National University is an amazing place; there was a lot to learn,” he says. “But I think the UK enterprise is at a different scale and a different level of ambition, so I think we're taking a step forward.”

Finkelstein adds that the new college “exemplifies” wider thinking about the future of learning across the civil service.

“If you had to look at the broader state of learning, you would say that focused professional learning and particularly learning grounded in evidence-based thinking were not at the heart of the way that people were trained and educated,” he says. “And this is actually a significant change in that.” ■



ALEX THOMAS STATUTE AND BRANCH REFORM

PARLIAMENT SHOULD LEGISLATE FOR A NEW STATUTE TO STRENGTHEN THE CIVIL SERVICE'S ACCOUNTABILITY, IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

The civil service is central to government in the UK. Civil servants advise ministers, implement government's policies and run many of its services. But throughout its history the civil service has been missing a clear statement of its role, definition, purpose, remit, leadership, governance and accountability.

A hard-to-pin-down civil service has sometimes seemed to benefit British government, adapting itself to new administrations and changing priorities. When ministers and officials are working well together in pursuit of a common goal it might seem counter-productive to try to define the specific responsibilities of civil servants.

But in a new Institute for Government paper we argue that confused accountability between ministers and civil servants

“Responsibilities are blurred and more errors are made, while lessons of failure are harder to learn”

makes government less effective. Responsibilities are blurred and more errors are made, while lessons of failure are harder to learn. Ministers are expected to oversee huge bureaucracies while civil servants fear public criticism for taking the

management decisions needed to run the organisations they lead.

It also makes it hard for parliament and the media to hold government to account. That might suit some in government in the short term, but leads to worse outcomes over time. It also means – as we have seen in recent years – that the career consequences for public servants when things go wrong are less about what has happened – or not happened – and more about presentation, power and relationships.

That in turn leads to a lack of confidence inside and outside the civil service in its identity, legitimacy and authority. If civil servants, without clear accountability structures, become fearful of mercurial ministerial or media storms, they are more likely to temper their advice, avoid risk and fall in with conventional wisdom.

In the same way, the current system disincentivises long-term workforce planning and leaves too much ambiguity over who owns and needs to manage risks and ensure the state is fit to respond to crises and emergencies.

That is why we have concluded that the time is right for precise but radical reform, in the form of a new statu-

tory role for the civil service. A statute would give more clarity about what civil servants are responsible for, strengthen their ability to act within that sphere of responsibility and improve how officials are held to account.

More specifically, we propose legislation to:

- reaffirm that the civil service is a permanent institution, and that civil servants must demonstrate impartiality and objectivity, while maintaining the highest standards of ethics
- set a statutory objective for the civil service to implement government programmes and respond to events as directed by ministers
- give the head of the civil service and permanent secretaries a responsibility to maintain the capability of the UK governments to carry out that objective, including on standards of policy making, advice on the constitution, crisis response, use of data and digital, finance, project management, recruitment and other core activities
- create a new Board including a minister and non-executive appointees to hold top officials accountable for their performance against the statutory objective for the civil service, and how they discharge their responsibilities to maintain the capability of the government. It would have two sub-committees, one to appoint and performance manage the head of the civil service and the other to operate and manage the civil service
- strengthen the civil service's relationship with parliament, with the Board reporting annually on performance against its objective. Parliament would also have more opportunities to scrutinise permanent secretaries.

This model would help hold the civil service to account without undermining ministerial accountability to parliament, and give parliament a more coherent role and a closer relationship with civil servants. It would also improve policy advice and the role of civil servants in maintaining the long term capability of the state, and lead to a more legitimate and more confident civil service

A new statutory role for the civil service would also help with

the age-old problem of cross-department co-ordination. Better defining the job of the head of the civil service would give them more authority to influence the federated structure of the civil service on policy and management issues. That would include strengthening the role of the head of the civil service in setting and enforcing service benchmarks and helping to resolve cross-cutting issues and departmental arguments.

We hope to start a debate in government and parliament

about how to achieve this important reform. A new statutory role for the civil service would benefit the government, parliament, the civil service itself, and most importantly, the public they serve. ■

Alex Thomas is a programme director at the Institute for Government



HARSH BEHL FORENSIC EXAMINATION



HOW CAN THE DIGITAL FORENSIC SCIENCE STRATEGY UNIFY A “SLOW, FRACTURED AND PIECEMEAL” SYSTEM AND HELP POLICE FORCES TO DEAL WITH DATA MORE EFFECTIVELY?

Digital forensics today suffers from a lack of cohesion. A fragmented collection of county-based units makes it difficult to systematically gather information and to conduct cross-border investigations. While digital kiosks are frequently used to submit data on site, front-line officers still often have to drive miles to the nearest digital forensics unit to submit any subsequent data, and this may mean evidence is not analysed side by side, leading to connections being missed.

Small wonder, then, that digital forensics has been described as “slow, fractured and piecemeal”, while crime has accelerated in digital sophistication. It’s now estimated that over 90% of offences have some digital element, while the exponential growth in data produced by digital devices is 20 times that of other police data. And it’s growing, with cyber-crime data said to be doubling every 18 months, resulting in a data processing backlog that is delaying prosecutions and threatening to destabilise the judicial process.

Future reforms

To help address this pressing issue, the Digital Forensic Science Strategy published by the National Police Chiefs’ Council sets out a number of goals for 2025.

Chief among these is centralising data management, facilitating collaboration between officers and digital forensics investigators, and moving processing to the cloud to benefit from automation, data storage and scalability. The aim: to achieve a national digital forensics science service fit for the 21st century.

At the same time, forces and the criminal justice system are now under pressure to collect forensic data more sensitively. In the wake of an Information Commissioner’s Office investigation into mobile phone data extraction, currently calling for reform, the College of Policing released guidance on the extraction of material from digital devices last year and this means data collection will become more discriminating, with technology used to hone in on relevant material.

Technology will therefore play a major role in digital forensics as it moves forward, by providing the scalability to tackle the data mountain; the flexibility to cope with obtain-

ing specific data from different endpoints; and faster processing to reduce the time taken to collect, process, analyse and review evidential data. But to achieve the ambitions of the strategy, all these aspects must be combined.

A national forensic service will require a shared information architecture that can scale from the individual user processing large datasets to multiple users, a lab environment, a departmental environment, to an agency. Using a single platform, it will seek to facilitate collaboration in real time between officers and investigators and from any location, enabling resource to be more flexibly deployed and key case-evidence to be expedited to ensure the timely closure of cases.

Cloud-based digital forensics

Housing this platform in the cloud can provide this kind of distributed user environment. A web-based user interface can provide real-time review for data validation, making the service accessible to both technical and non-technical users, from officers on the ground to investigators in the lab. Repetitive tasks such as evidence acquisition and evidence review and export can be automated to alleviate workloads. Data can be pulled in from any source, be it cloud data, structured repositories or endpoints on or off the network, and analysed in a single view. In the case of chat, for instance, the user can review chat logs, videos and documents across social platforms without the need to switch applications.

A cloud-based service also stands to benefit from a number of security mechanisms such as single sign-on, multi-factor authentication and role-based access, with configurable case files that ensure reviewers only see the data that is relevant to their assigned cases. Plus, it would make it easier for police digital forensics units to meet their obligations to comply with the ISO 17025 forensics standard by October 2022, which sets out data capture requirements for on-scene digital forensics incident response examinations.

Moving digital forensics into the cloud promises to transform

“Cybercrime data is said to be doubling every 18 months, resulting in a backlog that is delaying prosecutions and threatening to destabilise the judicial process”

the way evidential data is captured and processed today, but it will also make it easier to take advantage of new

technologies in the future. AI-based features such as image labelling and video recognition are just the beginning, but we need a single shared infrastructure in order to harness them, drive down processing times and increase speed to justice. ■

Harsh Behl is an expert in digital forensics technology

ANDREW HUDSON MORE THAN A STICKING PLASTER

OPPORTUNITIES OUTWEIGH THREATS IN THE NEW WHITE PAPER ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INTEGRATION

Two recent announcements have focused on aspects of joining up government. It is an important theme in the levelling up white paper, and – of more direct interest to me now – is at the heart of the white paper, *Health and social care integration: joining up care for people, places and populations*.

My own experience – trying to make partnerships work in local government, setting frameworks in Whitehall, and writing about the accountability aspects more recently – underlines the familiar point that relationships matter more than structures, and that these take time to build. But there isn't unlimited time to invest in getting to know each other, so there are certain things that central government, local leaders and regulators can do to help the process of building integrated services along.

How does this look for the health and care white paper?

It's a good start that the paper doesn't pretend integration is a panacea for the major challenges of the shortage of staff in both health and care, and the shortage of funding in many areas. Sensibly, it has far fewer short term targets and bold promises than many such documents. Instead, its tone is mostly permissive, making "space for local leaders to agree shared outcomes that meet the particular needs of their communities, whilst also supporting national priorities", and empowering them "to deliver against the agreed outcomes".

To help maximise the opportunities, central government needs to stick to its word, and keep prescription to a minimum. It's also important to keep both central and local targets stable: one of the main concerns from managers I spoke to for my earlier paper was changing lists of things to report, and different indicators for different bosses on different timescales. Central government can also support integration, and indeed good management all round, by providing its guidance and funding announcements – for both NHS and local government – in good time for local budget-setting. And it should eschew further structural change, even apparently minor – this is more likely to detract from progress on outcomes, when we should all be concentrating on bedding in the new integrated care systems.

Health and care leaders can take the white paper as a green light

to get ahead with planning what works for each locality. It helps that the document is jointly published by the secretaries of state for health and care and for levelling up (which includes local government), and feels more like a genuinely shared agenda than some previous work on integration. There are plenty of examples of progress at local level – in City and Hackney, where I'm a non-executive director at Homerton Healthcare Trust, the trust CEO is also the place-based leader shaping joint work across the boroughs with primary care and the local authorities. The challenge for us all is finding headspace and resource, rather than needing permission.

Accountability for integrated services will always be complicated so long as we have different funding streams, with the NHS funded by the national taxpayer and social care by elected local authorities. There has been a lot of focus on the white paper's call for "a single person, accountable for the delivery of the shared plan and outcomes for the place".

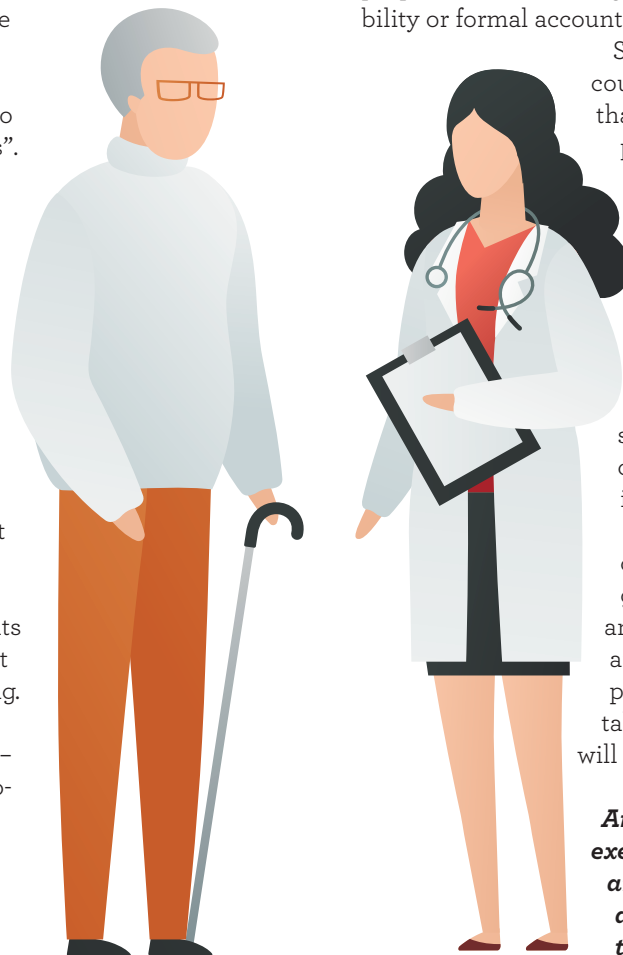
The radical simplification implied here is not possible, as the section goes straight on to say that this person "will be agreed by the relevant local authority or authorities *and* integrated care board" (my emphasis), and that the proposal will not change the current local democratic accountability or formal accountable officer duties within local authorities.

So local leaders are bound to be accountable to at least two masters. But that is not unworkable. And more important, success will depend on that person building good relationships rather than pretending they can exercise command and control.

The final point for lasting success is that the government should commission proper evaluation of how the emerging arrangements are working. The proposals so far draw on some evidence from existing models, and continuous learning is important. But that is no substitute for a formal evaluation.

Overall, this is a framework which could enable real progress on integrated services. If central government and regulators stick to the streamlined and proportionate approach in the white paper, and local leaders show they can take advantage, patients and service users will see change for the better over time. ■

"Accountability for integrated services will always be complicated so long as we have different funding streams"



Andrew Hudson is a former chief executive of the Valuation Office Agency and director general of public services at HM Treasury. He currently chairs the Centre for Homelessness Impact

DAVE PENMAN OUR ANNUAL DANCE WITH THE SSRB

COMPETENCY BASED PAY COULD REPRESENT SOME LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL, BUT IT NEEDS PROPER FUNDING OR IT WILL BE JUST ANOTHER TRAIN

This year will bring the 44th report from the Senior Salaries Review Body, and for the last third of its existence, I've sat in front of its members saying basically the same thing. At the end of February, we went through the ritual again. I'm not being disrespectful, far from it. The review body does exactly what it is supposed to – including taking evidence from the unions and from government, who are invariably late while we move mountains to get our evidence in on time (and I'm sure our assistant general secretary Lucille Thirlby, who wrote our submission, lost a few weekends to it).

The SSRB also talks to civil servants and the Civil Service Commission. The point of the review bodies, rather than just straight bargaining on pay, is to bring evidence to bear and avoid conflict or politics getting in the way. As we see each year with MPs' pay, the review body comes in for stick from almost everyone except the FDA. Every year, politicians find a reason to wear the hair shirt and say they're annoyed at getting a pay rise and, of course, the usual suspects find any reason to suggest that the inhabitants of the House of Commons don't deserve it. The FDA, usually as a lone voice, believes that independent review bodies should be left to get on with their job unencumbered. In many ways, the whole point of an independent body is to make difficult decisions.

Similarly, there are few votes in awarding pay rises to senior civil servants; that's why the

“Get paid less than in the private sector, work more and have your reputation trashed – it's not really a big sell”

review body was set up in the first place. Unfortunately, government after government have sought to emasculate it, restrict its remit or just point blank ignore it. So, we commissioned external research on comparable pay levels, principally because the government has repeatedly refused to share its research with us. See if you can guess why?

The facts are stark. SCS Pay Band 1 roles are typically between 10% and 20% behind the rest of the public sector, and are around 33% behind pay rates for comparable jobs

in the private sector, rising to 40% if you include bonuses.

SCS Pay Band 2s are paid half what they could earn for comparable roles in the private sector, while at Pay Band 3, the total cash reward is about a quarter of what they could get in the private sector.

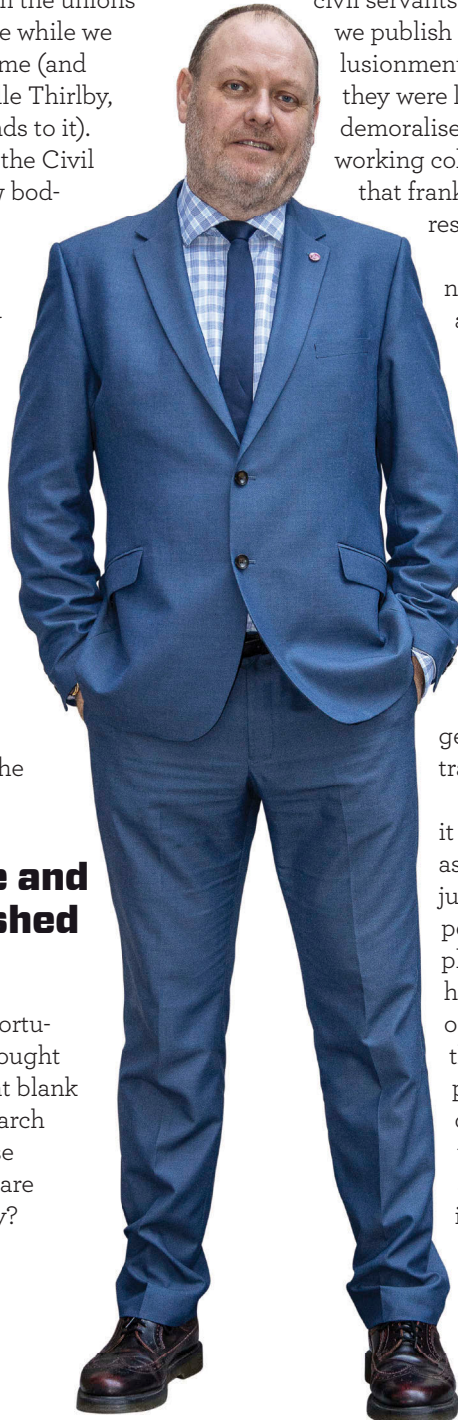
Of course, none of this is new. The government relies on the public sector ethos where talented people will stay because of the challenging and rewarding work they do. Most senior civil servants made choices long ago to work in the public sector when greater reward was on offer elsewhere.

You would think that a government that relies on its senior civil servants being committed, even when they could earn significantly more elsewhere, would be careful to ensure those people felt valued. It is worth reading the comments we get from senior civil servants (though I'm not sure many ministers do), which we publish as part of our evidence. It tells a tale of disillusionment. One who worked on the Covid response said they were leaving because of low pay and being “completely demoralised by the continuation of rhetoric aimed at hard working colleagues... I'm going to join another organisation that frankly pays a lot better and hopefully see a more respectful relationship with their employees”.

Our survey showed that a staggering 94% do not believe the pay system is fit for purpose. Is it any wonder that two thirds say there are recruitment and retention difficulties in their department, and increasingly tell a story of over reliance on consultants and contractors to fill roles?

Long hours with a refusal to offer any compensation, low comparable pay levels and the constant drip feed of the culture war from ministers. It's hardly a surprise therefore that nearly two thirds say they are more inclined to look for a job outside the civil service than they were 12 months ago. It's not really the big sell to all those people ministers want to bring in from the private sector to senior civil service roles: get paid less, work more and have your reputation trashed. At least it would fit on the side of a bus.

Much of this isn't new, I've been banging on about it in each of those 15 years I've been giving evidence, as has the SSRB in its reports, to be fair. There might just be some light at the end of the tunnel with Competency Based Pay progression, if they can un-complicate the system, get decent funding and work out how the rest of the pay system operates. That's a lot of ifs and so there's a lot at stake with CBP, which the government wants to roll out this year to inform pay decisions in 2023. It's been the big promise over the last couple of years to resolve some of the main pay gripes. It's taken too long to bring in and is still largely untested, but most significantly, it needs to be properly funded. If not, that light will turn out to be just another train coming. ■



Dave Penman is the general secretary of the FDA union

ANDY COWPER THE GODOT OF PUBLIC POLICY



WORKFORCE SHORTAGES AND AN END TO FREE LATERAL FLOW TESTING ARE JUST SOME OF THE ISSUES GIVING OUR HEALTH COLUMNIST A HEADACHE THIS MONTH

The NHS workforce plan is the Godot of public policy. As discussed last month, we have the elective (electoral, as health secretary Sajid “The Saj” Javid keeps calling it) recovery plan, and the new integration white paper. A new white paper is quite the thing at this point, while the current health bill is still not passed (more on that shortly). But the workforce plan – a 15-year framework, we are promised – remains a mystery. (F15 is the inevitable abbreviation – perhaps not a great sign, given that F15 is also the brand of a well-known US combat jet.) This is not just a free-standing mystery, of course: it’s also a source of big, real problems.

Cutting through

NHS workforce shortages have cut through to register in public opinion, as a recent Ipsos MORI poll for the Health Foundation proved. That makes it a political problem for the government.

The internal War of the Briefings that we saw between The Saj and chancellor Rishi “The Brand” Sunak over funding for the “electoral” recovery plan and NHS targets is as nothing to what is likely coming over the resource implications of F15 being anything that’s of practical value.

The Treasury’s clever stupidity over workforce training

The Treasury’s approach to NHS workforce spending is a bit: “A-ha! If we don’t fund the NHS workforce training, then we won’t have to pay the salaries! Clever, eh?”

Nope. Very stupid: a bit like aiming to save money on public transport by not commuting to work, but then not earning your salary as a result. In reality, as opposed to Treasuryland, NHS workforce shortages drive a) low care quality and safety, which is expensive; b) high use of agency and bank staff, which is expensive; c) poor retention of existing staff, which is expensive; d) massive backlogs, which are expensive.

Then there’s the big problem of workforce shortages being obviously an issue for the existing NHS staff we do have, as YouGov polling shows. The workforce is knackered from two years of battling Covid. Many are leaving early, as recent data show.

We’re very used to hearing that there are 100,000 full-time equivalent vacancies in the NHS. We need to come up

to date: NHS Digital’s latest figures show this has now passed 110,000. In the NHS in England, one in 10 full-time nursing posts are vacant; likewise, one in 17 doctors’ posts.

I’ve been pointing out for well over a year that the no-longer-that-newly-announced community diagnostic centres will need staff and people to read the resulting tests and scans: this has now been picked up in a fairly decent piece in the *Guardian* entitled “NHS lacks 6,000 staff needed to run testing centres in England”.

It covers health minister Edward Argar’s written answer to a parliamentary question, which reveals that the centres will need an extra 3,500 radiographers to carry out diagnostics tests and 2,000 radiologists to interpret the results; as well as 500 advanced practitioners, who are senior nurses.

So there’s another few thousand staff shortages to add to the vacancies pile. And this pile is being exacerbated by about 400 NHS staff quitting every week for reasons related to work-life balance and burnout, according to new research by former DHSC strategy director John Hall for Engage Britain, shared with the *Observer*.

Oh, and on pay and conditions ...

The DHSC’s submission to the Pay Review Body was spotted by *Health Service Journal*, which reports that the department favours holding down pay to catch up on the backlog and on “lost” efficiency from the pandemic. In a clearly Treasury-inspired move, DHSC’s submission argues “NHS financial sustainability is key to its post-pandemic recovery with increasing productivity crucial to restoring the performance of the NHS... There is an expectation that the NHS can catch up on some of the lost efficiency and make productivity savings in 2022 to 2023 in order to return to financial balance...”

“Any pay recommendation needs to be absorbed within existing budgets. To put this into context, each additional 1% of pay for the workforce costs around £6m per year allowing for the full system costs. This equates to around 100 full-time nurses or 3,500 procedures. For the [hospital and community health service] workforce as a whole, an additional 1% of pay costs around £900m, which is equivalent to around 16,000 full-time nurses or 500,000 procedures.”

In a gorgeous piece of symmetry here, 16,000 nurses maps near-perfectly onto the 18,500 sub-figure used within the government’s manifesto-promised 50,000 more nurses to describe those who would have quit, but will now decide to stay. The irony is mordant.

“It’s time we got our competence back, but this government wouldn’t recognise competence if it bit them on the Big Dog”

Hunting transparency on workforce plans

These workforce issues are behind Health Select Committee chair (and erstwhile health secretary) Jeremy Hunt’s proposed amendment that NHS workforce projections and trajectories towards achieving them should be independently and regularly published.

Although this was rejected on second reading in the Commons, the idea is being re-moved in the Lords Report stage of the Bill Committee.

The bill for the workforce

Speaking in favour of Hunt’s proposed amendment on 3

March, resurrected by Baroness Cumberledge, former NHS England boss Lord Stevens of Birmingham noted that “as of 10am this morning, Health Education England *still* does not have its workforce operating budget from 2022-23. We need to look beyond our nose.” It’s worth reading his speech in full.

Ministerial reassurances that “key conclusions” of the F15 workforce would be “set out” were rightly ignored by the Lords Spiritual And Temporal, who roundly supported the workforce publication amendment by 171 to 119.

Lords vote for no “more Matt Hancock”

The Lords also supported restrictions to the proposed powers for the secretary of state (what I call the “more Matt Hancock”) amendment by 145-122. Those kinds of numbers usually get a boxing match stopped. This, and the other “dog” area of increased SOS interference powers (the “more Matt Hancock” stuff), will leave the government – having already accepted both of the Stevens amendments on publishing mental-health spending and on net zero – facing a quandary when the bill goes back to the green benches.

Assuming that Lord Stevens’s political coalition-building holds effective (against which one wouldn’t wisely bet), then Commons-Lords “ping-pong” on these topics – neither of which were not manifesto commitments, so the Salisbury Convention doesn’t apply – risks seeing the bill run out of time in this session of parliament.

The PM announces ‘Living With Covid’

The PM announced the much-trailed end of Covid-19 precautions and mitigations to the Commons. Thank goodness that the hell of free Covid-19 tests and mandatory self-isolation will both soon be things of the past.

From the aptly-chosen date of 1 April, lateral flow tests will become free market commodities, as trailed. The free market worked absolutely brilliantly for overseas travel testing. It surely gives us all huge faith in this move.

The PM claimed that “we should be proud that the UK has established the biggest testing programme per person of any large country in the world”. No. We should be proud of the bits of test and trace that worked, but given its cost and declared “world-beating” intentions, it was rightly judged a costly failure.

“It is time we got our confidence back” was a genuinely pathetic line from the PM. It’s time we got competence back, but this government wouldn’t recognise competence if it bit them on the Big Dog.

Responding to Labour leader Keir Starmer’s statement, the PM’s point that “week after week, month after month, I have listened to the Labour party complaining about NHS Test and Trace, denouncing the cost” was an absurdity. Test and trace was a costly failure at its own declared aims, as the

Public Accounts Committee report made amply clear.

Known unknowns

The PM’s statement overall was surreally absurd, as *The Times’* Chris Smyth pointed out on Twitter: “Remarkably little detail in living with Covid plan. Unresolved points include age at which you will get free tests after April; what advice on isolation will be after March; size of stockpile of LFTs/PCR capacity; scale of ongoing NHS and social care testing.” It’s equally worth reading the Twitter thread by Imperial College Health Partners boss Axel Heitmueller, formerly of NHS Test and Trace, on the implications of the announcements for a wider Covid-19 strategy.

In an excruciating Downing Street briefing that evening, the PM’s boosterism stood in marked contrast to the words of the chief scientific adviser and chief medical officer.

Patrick Vallance said “This virus feeds off inequality and drives inequality... I’d like the rate of infections to be lower”; Chris Whitty added that “the Omicron wave is still high, still between one in 20 and one in 25, according to the ONS survey... this is still a very common infection... we all expect there to be new variants.”

The PM suggested that the UK should be more like Germany, where workers don’t have a “habit of going into work when not well”. Mmmmm. It’s worth noting that statutory sick pay in Germany is 50% pay for 84 weeks; in the UK, it is £96.35 per week for 28 weeks. Mr Johnson also announced that who is eligible for free testing from 1 April will be decided “in March”. Yes, I’m reassured too.

The price of LFTs

I’m intrigued by suggestion that a box of

seven LFTs will retail

here for around £20, or £2.85 each. Wholesale, a pack of seven costs £1.85 bought in bulk in the UK. In a major French supermarket chain, a pack of five LFTs costs €6.20 – the equivalent of about £5.20, or just over £1 per test. That’s quite a disparity. Given the disgraceful price-gouging we saw on travel testing, and the incompetence of delivery, this should be a concern.

Last August, a large number of travel test providers were warned by the government over misleading prices. The Competition and Markets Authority is investigating a number of those providers.

I’m becoming very curious as to what the Department for Health But Social Care is paying for a pack of LFTs.

It’s also worth noting that while DHBSC recently set up a procurement framework for LFTs, they then completely ignored it by awarding a £62m LFT supply contract via direct award to MedCo Solutions (the Plymouth Bretheren-linked newly-incorporated company also awarded £84m worth of PPE contracts). Likewise, Innova just picked up another LFT supply contract worth £143.7m. ■

Andy Cowper is the editor of Health Policy Insight



ANITA FRIEND SAFETY IN IDEAS



IN AN UNCERTAIN AND INCREASINGLY COMPLEX WORLD, FINDING, FUNDING AND SUPPORTING INNOVATION IS CRUCIAL FOR THE SECURITY OF THE UK

The security challenges facing the UK are diverse and growing increasingly complex. National security, protecting our people and our values, is one of the most important and challenging responsibilities of government. The UK is facing an ever increasing number of threats from state and non-state actors and needs to be able to stay more than one step ahead. However, this is becoming increasingly difficult given the increasing ease of access to advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence, data analytics and encrypted communications.

To ensure that the UK can maintain strategic advantage, we need to make sure that our intelligence agencies, frontline public safety organisations, law enforcement agencies and private sector operators have access to the best technologies and solutions which enable them to secure and protect our communities.

Innovation is at the heart of this and needs to play a key role in helping to leverage the talents and skills flourishing outside of government to address security end-user needs. It is only by

“Innovation is not just about finding and developing good ideas - it is crucial to support and nurture the business behind the innovation”

accessing the broadest range of innovators that government can find the best solutions. By supporting new businesses to enter the defence and security market, government can gain access to ideas and solutions that may not have been “in the network” before.

I believe that innovation (the process of getting from an idea to impact) is fundamental for government when it comes to tackling the most pressing national security challenges. Gone are the days when it was the sole preserve of government to develop the



next big idea or invent the technology that would change the world. Now it is only by working with that broad range of innovators – large industry players, small and medium-sized enterprises, micro businesses and academia – that government can truly access the wealth of innovation that is out there and find solutions to security challenges.

I also recognise that the security sector can be challenging to navigate – with a huge variety of government security stakeholders, not to mention the key role played by private sector operators. I want to help government colleagues to provide clear demand signals to innovators – matching ideas to end-user needs – and to engage with innovation projects to ensure that outputs meet operational requirements. This inclusive and collaborative approach is critical to pull-through and the translation of research into capability.

Moreover, innovation it is not just about finding and developing good ideas – it is crucial to support and nurture the business behind the innovation. Those with innovative ideas may need additional support to get their company investment, market and supply chain ready. By helping companies identify and access the expertise and funding required to overcome challenges to business growth and realise their ambitions, you ultimately contribute to a thriving security innovation ecosystem.

I am privileged to be playing a part in the ADS Security Innovation Award 2022 with the winners to be decided at the Security and Policing event. The award recognises the innovative capabilities and services developed by UK security companies and, this year, more than ever, I am excited to watch the final pitches and

see what new innovations could be supporting the security and defence of the UK in the future.

Innovation and ideas are all around us but we need to find and harness the best ideas at the right time in order to achieve a real difference for security stakeholders and innovators. While the future may be uncertain, what is certain is that a need for innovation is not going to go away. In fact, I believe it will play an increasingly important role and should become the default position in helping tackle threats to UK security and safety, enabling threat prevention, or enhancing the threat response. ■

Anita Friend is head of the Defence and Security Accelerator. She will be giving a keynote speech at Security and Policing and taking part in the judging panel for the ADS Security Innovation Award on Tuesday 15 March. DASA will also be exhibiting at the event at stand C1



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JOINT ACCOUNT



Strength in numbers Myra Hunt (left) and Harriet Green

The Welsh Government has created an agency to drive technology innovation throughout the country's public services. Its recently appointed co-leaders, **Harriet Green** and **Myra Hunt**, tell **Sam Trendall** about their plans

It is approaching a quarter of a century since the people of Wales voted in favour of establishing a national assembly with devolved governing powers; the 25th anniversary of the devolution referendum takes place on 18 September this year.

Clearly, a lot has happened since then: the world has changed in innumerable small and not-so-small ways, both in Wales, and far beyond its borders.

The operations of government – the kind of government that Welsh people chose for their country – have changed greatly too.

In 1997, fewer than one in 10 UK

households was connected to the internet. It was the year Google was founded and the BBC launched its first website – some four years before Government Gateway appeared online, allowing people to access a small number of public services, including customs declarations and agricultural aid grants.

Hundreds more services have followed since, including many that are now delivered almost exclusively digitally. All the while the ranks of civil servants employed in digital, data and technology roles have swelled to almost 20,000 – led by the 800 or so that work in the Cabinet Office's Government Digital Service

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and Central Digital and Data Office.

It would appear that the Welsh Government's Centre for Digital Public Services – an arm's-length body, established in September 2020 – has a lot to catch up on.

Its establishment co-incided with the start of work on a national Digital Strategy for Wales. Published six months later, the document set out a range of ambitions and actions across six core missions, focused on: digital services; digital inclusion; digital skills; digital economy; digital connectivity; and data and collaboration.

Although it has a role to play in supporting all aspects of the strategy, the foremost remit of CDPS is to progress the ambitions of the first mission, which CDPS chief executive Harriet Green describes as “the delivery of safe, secure, easy-to-use public services that are designed around the needs of the user”.

Green shares the CEO position with Myra Hunt, leading a team of eight full time equivalent staff plus a roster of “digital squads” which can be deployed to public sector bodies around Wales to help with service design and the adoption of agile methods. These teams – the use of which “ebbs and flows”, according to Hunt – takes the total team to about 40 people.

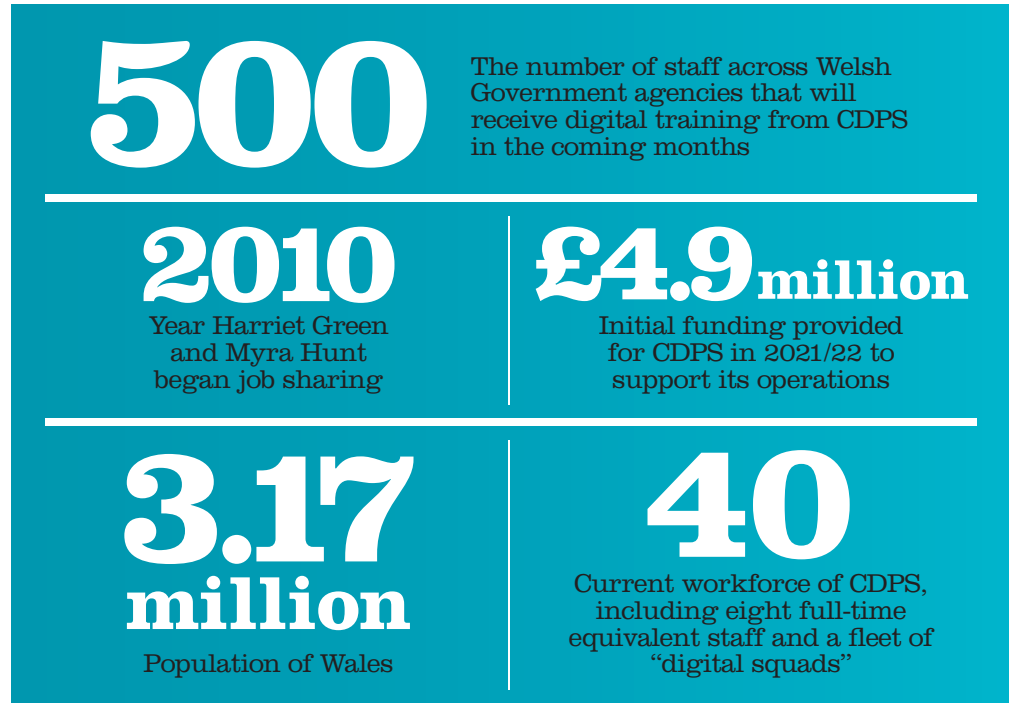
Given its comparative lack of in-house personnel resources, a key facet of CDPS's work will be serving as a convening point for technology leaders and other stakeholders.

This corralling of support and ambition will be assisted by a tech leadership structure that includes three national chief digital officers: one for the Welsh Government itself; and one each for the local government and health sectors. Glyn

“When me and Myra started off, we tried really hard to be the same person. As we've grown in the job share, I think we have relaxed about that” Harriet Green

Jones and Sam Hall respectively occupy the first two roles, while the latter position is currently being recruited for.

“CDPS has the cross-Wales role,” Green says. “One of the terms we like to use is that we are setting the digital agenda *with* Wales and *for* Wales – working with those chief digital officers in the specialist areas. And our job is to bring everybody



together, to get everybody to agree what the risks and challenges and opportunities are, and work out who's going to do what to meet those risks and opportunities.”

Setting a good example

But the centre intends to serve as much more than a muster point. It will also deliver “exemplar projects – to show what good looks like”, which, according to Green, will seek to embody the core agile tenets of user-centred and iterative design, and continuous improvement.

The CDPS is nearing the conclusion of a review of the existing landscape of digital services across the Welsh public sector. The results of this exercise will help identify where it could have the biggest impact by leading exemplar projects.

Hunt says: “There's a range of criteria that we're applying to that [review] and also looking at the maturity of the different services... [we are] really trying to define our service owners and service landscape, looking at where there are opportunities for departmental transformation – because that department is saying: ‘That's how we want to work, that's how we want to change.’”

The review, which is expected to publish a beta report in the next month, will also seek to ascertain where there

are individual services that represent “low-hanging fruit” that is ripe for digitisation. This will create a “mixed and balanced portfolio” of projects where CDPS can lead transformation.

“The timing of the report is also fortuitous because we can dovetail in with the planning cycle of [agencies] and also their policy objectives,” Hunt adds.

The co-leaders namecheck a handful of areas and branches of the Welsh Government that they believe represent the most impactful opportunities for CDPS to enable transformation.

Among them are Natural Resources Wales – the responsibilities of which include overseeing farming, the environment, and weather warnings – and the Welsh Revenue Authority, which administers taxes on landfill disposal and land transactions; the latter is the equivalent of the Stamp Duty Land Tax levied in England and Northern Ireland.

“That is a department which is really interested in how do they deliver all of those services digitally... the opportunities in benefits and taxation are significant,” Hunt says.

Supporting technological reform in the NHS – in particular through assisting with the Welsh national Digital Services for Patients and Public programme that was launched a year ago – is a “big piece” of the picture, she adds.

“We're looking at [things like] e-

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prescribing and digital in primary health care and we've got discovery [projects] in flight on this," Hunt says.

Green adds that the CDPS is currently engaged in a project to use digital tools to better support the delivery of adult social care by local authorities around Wales. "The project aims to address that situation whereby either you [yourself] or on behalf of a relative have asked for social care intervention and, at the moment, [people] can feel like that request has gone into the ether," she says.

“We do not necessarily have the same kind of levers that GDS had in the early days - but we have the advantage of all the learnings and understanding and experience of GDS” Myra Hunt

“We have set up a relatively simple, text-based solution, which gives you updates on where your request is at, who's it with, and who should you next expect to hear from. So, these are relatively simple things, but that demonstrate the difference that you can make relatively quickly by sending in a digital squad.”

Green adds: “Everything we do, we view as an exemplar: so, it has to have further potential for scalability, or to demonstrate the value of an element like user-centred design, and how that helps you actually create a better service. So, everything we do is exemplary.”

Shared story

The most obvious comparator for CDPS - as for many such organisations in governments around the world - is the Government Digital Service, which has now been a fixture in the Cabinet Office for more than 10 years.

Indeed, as has been

the case with government digitisation agencies set up in various countries, the Welsh entity has already benefited from the expertise of GDS alumni, including Sally Meecham - who served as interim CEO before the appointment of Hunt and Green - and Rhiannon Lawson, who recently arrived as head of standards, having held a similar role in Whitehall.

CSW wonders whether it is beneficial to conceive of the centre as playing a similar role to GDS - particularly during its early years.

“I think it's a really useful comparison - but we are constituted differently,” Hunt says. “We do not necessarily have the same kind of levers that GDS had in the early days - but we have the advantage of all the learnings and understanding and experience of GDS

that we can draw on. There are similarities around assurance and standards and also that desire to mobilise squads to work with partner bodies - in partnership; I think that's really important. The style of

THE SIX MISSIONS OF THE DIGITAL STRATEGY FOR WALES

- Digital services
- Digital inclusion
- Digital skills
- Digital economy
- Digital connectivity
- Data and collaboration

mine and Harriet's working is very much to work in partnership and a lot of this is about winning hearts and minds, and cultural change. There is a great desire across the Welsh public sector to really improve digital services. But, also, we really need to bring in skills and expertise.”

The style of working Hunt alludes to has now been honed over more than 11 years spent job-sharing - most recently as the chief digital officer at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and before that as digital director at the British Council.

For the two leaders, who typically overlap on for some or all of Wednesday, such roles allow them - and, indeed, millions of others with caring responsibilities - to continue their career

Hands on Deputy minister Lee Waters takes a keen interest in the Centre's work



at a level of seniority commensurate to their experience and expertise.

Hunt says: “At the same time, your employer gets the benefit of two brains; so, even when I am on my days off, I am still thinking: ‘I wonder, if Harriet has picked up on X,Y or Z?’ – and then I’ll ping her a little text [to ask] something. You peer-review your decisions and your thoughts, and you do that robustly – because sometimes you differ – and then you have to come together on a shared position to lead your teams and interact with your stakeholders.”

Green adds: “When me and Myra started off, we were probably more anxious about the whole thing, and we tried really hard to be the same person ... As we’ve grown in the job share, I think we have relaxed about that and we have really thought: ‘No, actually – let’s play to our strengths here’ – and I think we dovetail together, in terms of our strengths, in a multi-layered way, that we are more and more familiar with, and more and more comfortable to exploit. But we do have a mantra which we absolutely live by, which is that no one else has to work harder because there are two of us. So, we do all the inter-communication and briefing each other.”

Hunt and Green began their working lives as journalists at the BBC and enjoyed long and distinguished careers at the state broadcaster, rising to respective roles as head of new media for the corporation’s global news division, and as a commissioning editor for the BBC World Service.

The two knew of each other during those years but had not worked particularly closely together prior to both taking career breaks in the late noughties.

Around which time Hunt “came to live up the road” from Green and the pair – who now each had young children and did not want to return to a life of commuting to London five days a week – saw an opportunity to jointly apply for the role at the British Council.

Now, they are determined for CDPS to “walk the walk on being a modern organisation that does things differently”, Green says.

To which end “staff polices are absolutely crucial”; a recent example is a workplace policy for periods and menopause that is currently being refined via staff feedback and will, ultimately, form part of the organisa-

tion’s wellbeing policy for workers.

The digital agency has also appointed 27-year-old astrophysicist and start-up founder Jessica Leigh Jones as chair of the organisation.

“She is amazing, and she exemplifies that statement of intent about CPDS’s [desire] to do things differently, and to walk the walk,” Green says.

Talking my language

Asked what success for CDPS would look like more widely over the next year or two, Hunt says that the deputy minister overseeing the work of the agency – Lee Waters, whose brief includes climate change, as well as digital government – expects “tangible examples of delivery and services”.

“We would want to see tangible improvements in some identified services, and also the beginnings of change and transformation within departments. I think bringing in new roles into departments is really important – [such as] product managers, and service owners – as is the retraining of staff: we’ve trained about 100 people so far, and we have a pipeline of 500 for the next few months. The reskilling of the workforce and training of public sector employees, I think, is a really important deliverable this year.”

In 2017, the Welsh Government set

CDPS’S DIGITAL SERVICE STANDARDS

Meeting user needs

1. Focus on current and future well-being of people in Wales
2. Promote the Welsh language
3. Understand users and their needs
4. Provide a joined up experience
5. Make sure everyone can use the service

Creating good digital teams

6. Have an empowered service owner
7. Have a multidisciplinary team
8. Iterate and improve frequently
9. Work in the open

Using the right technology

10. Use scalable technology
11. Consider ethics, privacy and security throughout
12. Use data to make decisions

out an objective to double the number of citizens that speak the Welsh language by 2050; the current tally is less than 600,000, out of a population of about 3.2 million.

The CDPS aims to support this drive for bilingualism, and its training offering already operates under both English and Welsh branding – Digital Campus and Campws Digidol – and there are plans for future resources to do the same.

Whatever language is being used, Hunt acknowledges that driving the transformation towards a modern government can be “a long, hard, and painful journey”.

But Green and Hunt add that Wales has some natural advantages, and has already laid some important groundwork – all of which made the challenge of leading the country on its digital journey an appealing one.

Hunt cites the singular digital potential of small nations and large regions, such as the Flanders region of Belgium and the Basque region – both of which, like Wales, are multilingual and have a comparatively high level of devolved governance.

“This is an opportunity to make a real difference, and that’s incredibly exciting in a small nation that could build its identity globally,” she says.

Green, meanwhile, was attracted to the CDPS role in part by “the simplicity of the digital strategy statement – which is about improving the lives of everyone in Wales through collaboration, innovation and better public services – which is just fantastic”.

“And our minister, Lee Waters, says to us: ‘get me more user researchers’. I haven’t come across a minister that says that before!,” she adds. “Having that political backing and drive – he reads all our week notes! – was incredibly attractive... There is also the fact that we can bring everything that we know and all the things that we’ve experienced together – and, because of the scale of it, this is something that you can get your arms right around, and really drive change.”

But change does not always equate to transformation.

“We’re wary of using that word,” Green says. “We just need to keep getting better and better – it is not a transformation that’s going to happen by a certain date; it’s a forever thing. But we want to drive the next phase of CDPS, so we can show what the future could be like.” ■

CYBERCRIME - MODERN WARFARE



The global threats faced by the UK are increasingly digital. Amid reports of cyberwarfare in Ukraine, CSW hears from key voices on the biggest threats to cybersecurity in 2022 and what the public sector can do to minimise them

TOBIAS ELLWOOD

Chair of the Defence Select Committee

“Cybersecurity must be consciously and consistently integrated into both military and civilian planning and activities, whether we face open hostilities or not. Military networks are critically important to protect, however this protection must extend beyond the military alone. Our heavy reliance on technology creates a vulnerability that hostile states can easily exploit, and the only way to address this is to entrench cybersecurity in public life.

“Just recently we’ve seen Ukrainian government websites targeted by malware in order to undermine and sabotage the Ukrainian state. Cyberattacks on public institutions are now part and parcel of modern warfare. The public sector should work closely with agencies such as the National Cyber Security Centre to ensure that channels of communications, and the sensitive information they contain, are provided watertight protection.”

“Our heavy reliance on technology creates a vulnerability that hostile states can easily exploit, and the only way to address this is to entrench cybersecurity in public life”

CHITRA BALAKRISHNA

Program Leader for cyber security at the Open University

“In the current times, businesses and individuals are always under threat or risk from a cybersecurity attack or a breach. Malicious hackers exploit certain geopolitical events such as wars, elections, natural catastrophes and accelerate their attacks. For instance, during Covid, the number of phishing attacks increased by 400%. “Ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine and the consequent response from the western democracies has already

resulted in heightened threat and risk to businesses and individuals within western nations. Recent reports published by intelligence agencies in the UK and US have identified a new malware attributed to a Russian hacking group.

“Businesses, particularly those offering critical services such as health-care and financial services should take proactive measures. They should make sure that their fundamental cybersecurity practices and procedures are

in place and functioning and offer a temporary boost to their defences.

“This should include running a robust awareness campaign among their workforce, so they do not fall prey to a malicious phishing attack that could potentially lead to a wider data breach. In the current geopolitical climate, the threat of cyber warfare could be as dangerous as a territorial military invasion and potentially cause similar havoc and disruption to nations and their people.”

DAN PATEFIELD

Head of cyber and national security at techUK

“The pandemic has accelerated digital transformation across all sectors and organisations. In parallel, the cyber threat landscape continues to evolve with key challenges including those around securing the supply chain and ransomware attacks. In order to tackle this growing threat, all public sector organisations must regularly assess and update their cybersecurity capabili-

ties recognising that cyber is an enabler of everything modern organisations do.

“We have recently seen the Cabinet Office publish the Government Cyber Security Strategy which clearly outlines an ambitious programme for how the public sector will look to instil further resilience across the public sector estate. This includes learning lessons from CNI sectors, broadening coordination between

departments and acknowledging that cybersecurity is a shared responsibility, from director level to front line services.

“The UK is well placed to achieve these ambitions with world-leading capability and an innovative and growing cybersecurity sector. Guidance from the National Cyber Security Centre is always a useful place to start for any organisation.”

JOHN EDWARDS

UK information commissioner

“My office has seen a 19% rise in reports of cybersecurity incidents involving people’s personal data over the past two years. Our experience is that many of the issues are preventable and getting the basics right is the first step.

“It’s not a question of do it once

and forget about it. It’s about creating a culture of vigilance. Our stats show that a growing number of cyber-attacks come from phishing, with emails looking to trick or persuade staff to share usernames and passwords. Measures such as multi factor authentication help here, but up-to-date staff training is essential

to spot and report phishing attempts.

“Cybersecurity can seem intimidating, but it doesn’t have to be. There’s a wealth of advice available including our practical guide to keeping your IT systems safe and secure as well as information from the National Cyber Security Centre and the Cyber Essentials campaign.” ■



THE GOVERNMENT HAS ITS LIMITS

Plexal and IBM have found a new way for the private sector to meet the government's aims of spending more with SMEs and building sovereign technology capability

The government's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy made it clear that regaining technological advantage when it comes to key areas like AI and quantum computing is a top priority, and that unlocking innovation at home is in the national interest. And its most recent National Cyber Strategy sets out its aim of taking a whole-of-society approach when addressing cyber security challenges that affect individuals, the economy and critical national infrastructure.

These are mission-critical goals that policymakers recognise can't be left to market forces alone – they require ambitious funding and strategic direction. But as chancellor Rishi Sunak himself admitted in his latest budget, the government has its limits when it comes to enabling research and development that spurs innovation.

The problem is, self-financed R&D among businesses as a percentage of GDP is less than half the OECD

average. And not all of that will be funnelled into UK-based projects, companies and technology.

Innovation company Plexal sees this as a challenge it's willing to take on. It's mobilising the research and development budgets of tech giants in the private sector to solve challenges that the government has identified – but the market hasn't solved yet. It's most recent project with

IBM – the Mission Technology Integrator – is an ongoing initiative that's allowing IBM to develop initial proofs of concepts with SMEs in response to specific government challenges. The first two sprints saw the creation of new technology solutions relating to patterns of life analysis and automating the analysis of CCTV footage to improve public safety. Another proof of concept project has just begun that's exploring Internet of Things devices when they're intermittently connected to networks.

"This is a hugely exciting way for us to build new offerings with SMEs in a really focussed way. We're developing, integrating and exploiting new mission capabilities at pace," explains Ed Gillett, client partner at IBM. "By joining forces we're creating new technology and new ideas that we couldn't have done on our own."

The Mission Technology Integrator also removes some of the barriers that typically stop SMEs from becoming a government supplier or partnering with a large tech company – while making sure large companies are incentivised to spend their R&D budgets in the UK.

"The relationship between startups or SMEs and Big Tech is often fraught and characterised by a lack of trust," says Andrew Roughan, managing director of Plexal. "We've helped IBM find those one in 5.6 million SMEs relevant to a very specific innovation opportunity. We designed terms of the engagement that made sure everyone's interests were taken care of – the SME got paid for their work and had full access to the value that was created. That's extremely unusual."

The government is already laying the groundwork for innovation through its tax reliefs for investing in startups, its R&D expenditure and reforms to



Ed Gillett (Client Partner, IBM) and Andrew Roughan (Managing Director, Plexal)



“The role of the government here is to set the objectives and support this sort of private sector co-creation.”

Plexal Office

listings rules. But does this go far enough? Plexal and IBM believe their model will be crucial to unlocking the potential that exists in the private sector to find technology being developed by small companies, pair it with a large company's capabilities and point it towards a challenge that's in the public interest. And it's this three-way collaboration that will stem the flow of private sector innovation budgets going elsewhere.

“This model of government-led innovation is critical for us to become a technology superpower capable of addressing some very

pressing threats,” says Roughan. “We don't want to be in a situation where the technology that shapes so much of our lives is created in a vacuum without any direction from the government. The role of the government here is to set the objectives and support this sort of private sector co-creation.”

Plexal's playbook for better private sector collaboration

- Make sure there's a societal need for a new technology – and that the market isn't already addressing it
- Cast your net wide when looking for SME capability
- Make sure everyone has access to the value that's created
- Pay the SME for their work
- Act quickly – an innovation sprint shouldn't take more than 10 weeks and you shouldn't allow contracting and procurement terms to get in the way of speed

CASE STUDY: CREATING A NEW PATTERN OF LIFE ANALYSIS SOLUTION

Patterns exist all around us, most of which we don't notice. For example, transport systems have standardised timetables and financial transactions operate within strict regulations.

By capturing and analysing what usual behaviour (also known as pattern of life) looks like, you can tell when something unusual happens.

Plexal identified under-the-radar Telicent as the best candidate for IBM to work with. After eight weeks, IBM had built more advanced applications on top of Telicent's platform capable of carrying out advanced pattern of life analysis. Both companies are now able to take this proof of concept to the government or private sector clients.

For more information about the Mission Technology Integrator and the upcoming sprints, go to plexal.com/IBM





THE BOLLLOM LINE

As he steps down as chief executive of Defence Equipment and Support, **Simon Bollom** talks to **Tevye Markson** about handling criticism, tips for his successor and semi-retirement plans

Sir Simon Bollom is looking forward to irritating his kids. The Defence Equipment and Support chief executive is stepping down in May and plans to spend more time with family and his hobbies.

“You don’t get any younger in this game,” he says. “There are plenty of other things that I really want to do. These jobs are all consuming, seven days a week, a lot of unsociable hours. Although my kids are grown up and they live in different areas, I’m going to irritate them. I’ll probably be doing DIY for both of them.”

It’s not surprising that Bollom has been working unsociable hours: With 11,500 civil servants and military personnel located across the UK and abroad, a £10bn annual budget and responsibility for ensuring the UK’s armed forces have the equipment for all their operations, DE&S is a major cog in the Ministry of Defence machine.

Bollom took on the role in 2018, originally signing up for three years before extending the contract by an extra year.

One hopes his father would be proud: 40 years ago, when Bollom was studying me-





chanical engineering, his father persuaded him he needed to “find a proper job”.

He quickly chose the Royal Air Force, attracted by the opportunity to stick with engineering without being “sat behind the glowing screen all day”, as well as the operational nature of a forces career and the idea of assuming a position of responsibility at a young age.

Joining in 1981, he rose up the RAF and ended up as director general for air, leaving after 35 years for the lure of the private sector. “I got to the point where I was probably of no further value to the RAF,” Bollom says.

Setting up his own consultancy in 2016, he was then asked by Tony Douglas, DE&S chief exec at the time, to run “the big ships organisation” as interim director general of ships.

“I don’t know very much about ships,” Bollom told Douglas. “You’re exactly the right man for the job,” Douglas replied.

Defence procurement is complex work; DE&S runs 600 programmes across the Royal Navy, British Army and RAF at any one time. Bollom relishes this aspect of the job, but complexity also means there are many things that can go wrong.

In CSW’s annual permanent secretaries’ roundup, Bollom used his entry to hit out at “negative publicity” about projects not being delivered on time.

The National Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee have both raised concerns about the MoD’s defence equipment programmes in recent years, including overspending, missed deadlines, poor oversight and a lack of skilled workers.

PAC criticised the MoD’s track record, saying it “continually fails to learn from its mistakes”, has 21 years of delays across 13 major programmes recently examined by the NAO and has “wasted billions of pounds”.

Explaining his frustration, Bollom says: “The NAO report was reasonably well balanced, to be honest, but I don’t mind saying I was very disappointed by PAC and the reports and media that followed on from that.

“Although we’ve got areas that we need to work on and get better at – and I have always been very straightforward about that in front of various commit-

tees – I thought it was quite a one-sided report, when it talks about billions wasted.

“Of my projects in the project performance table, a snapshot that the NAO take of the projects we manage, 81% of them have run under cost.

“The net cost of my programme has actually reduced over the last three years and my team have delivered something like £6bn in terms of efficiencies, so that is real money that’s been added back into the defence budget.”

Does criticism affect him and his staff personally?

“You get irritated by it, but you hire people like me that have got a certain amount of experience and resilience,” he says. “Does it bother me? Yes, because

I’m competitive. I want to showcase the outstanding work this organisation does. It’s more of a frustration than something that bothers me. It challenges both me – ‘why are you not getting the narrative out there properly?’ – and my organisation. It’s something that we’ve got to keep questioning. It does weigh on people heavily, people that are very proud of the job they do, when they see things misre-

ported in the press. It hurts them deeply.”

This is not to say Bollom thinks the MoD can’t get better at learning from experience.

One of the most controversial defence programmes in recent years is the delayed £5.5bn procurement of Ajax armed vehicles, which reportedly caused damage to soldiers’ hearing during trials.

The MoD announced in December that it is planning to appoint a senior legal figure to investigate what has gone wrong.

Bollom says the noise and vibration issues were not escalated quickly enough.

“I very much regret that this may have been the cause of injury to soldiers. That absolutely is not where we should be in a trials programme. We’re absolutely determined to fix it. The actual vehicle itself is a phenomenal piece of kit. It is two steps beyond the capability that is currently out there, which is nearly 40 years of age. We’ve got to get this into the hands of the army, but clearly it’s got to be safe to operate.”

Asked about the achievements he is proudest of in his current role, Bollom is reluctant to take credit but fiercely proud of the work he and his colleagues do.

“I don’t think you can sit at the top of any large organisation and talk about







your own achievements. I could talk about Carrier Strike [A Royal Navy force at sea for seven months that supported HMS Queen Elizabeth's maiden operational deployment in 2021], I could talk about Poseidon [DE&S recently delivered nine Poseidon P-8A aircraft, which specialise in anti-submarine warfare]. I could talk about taking 30% out of support contracts and delivering improved availability to the frontline. But this is a team effort. That's not done by any individual. And so the pinnacle of my career has been leading this organisation, improving it and delivering better outputs for defence."

When asked about his own sources of inspiration, Bollom reveals his penchant for reading autobiographies – his bookshelf contains memoirs from military leaders like David Petraeus, Colin Powell and Peter Inge as well as business leaders like Richard Branson and Alan Sugar.

"The golden thread in there is that vision and focus and bringing your people with you," he says.

"You can't do any of this on your own. To be a successful leader, you've got to get the people wanting to work for you."

Does Bollom have any tips for his successor?

"Hit your targets. You've got to be fiercely analytical because finding your targets is all about the data and spotting where things are going well, where things are going not so well and then getting engaged with them. You've got to be a good judge of people," he says. "You've got to understand what the strengths and weaknesses of your teams are and make sure that you're there to help them in their particular weaker areas. It's also making sure that you've got a team that isn't all of one type, one way of thinking, and that they complement each other and compensate for each other's strengths and weaknesses."

Creating a more diverse workforce is one of the major aims in DE&S' new strategy, launched last May, which focuses on people, technology and innovation.

One glaring issue in defence is the lack of women, with the MoD having the lowest percentage of women in government.

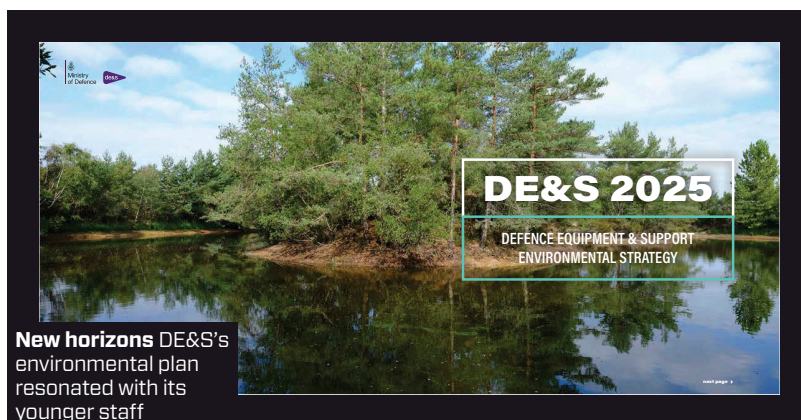
Last year, DE&S set a target for 35%

of its civilian workforce to be female by 2022. It is currently on 34%, Bollom says, compared to the civil service overall, which is 54% female. The number of civil servants from ethnic minorities is 7%, compared to 14% in the overall workforce.

"The stats haven't moved significantly," Bollom says.

One of the difficulties is that the engineering profession makes up a large proportion of his workforce and is notoriously male-dominated.

"Twenty-three percent of my people are engineers and if you look at the national average for the engineering profession, it's 12% female," Bollom says. "So that makes my job doubly taxing to be able to hit those 45% or 50% targets, but that doesn't mean we're not trying



and I'm really proud of the diversity and inclusion plan that we put in place."

That plan includes a focus on making sure people understand the standards and behaviours that are expected of them, updating outdated recruitment processes and having role models at the top.

"We're getting there and I'm impatient that we make further progress, but it's not going to happen overnight. One of the really important things is people realising their potential and finding mentors for women and for people of different ethnicities and making sure that we give them every opportunity to get through the system. For a long time, it was 100% white male on my executive group. We're not on a 50:50 yet, but we've now got seven male, two female, and some ethnic diversity, so that's helpful in terms of setting the trend."

Bollom is keen to highlight a new element of the strategy: social value. "The thing that changed is that at least 10% of

the marking that we will award to a bidder is now about social value," he says. "It's about levelling up, diversity and inclusion, and supporting less economically benefited areas. That is a really new emphasis".

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the eye-watering "21 years' worth" of delays to major defence projects cited by the NAO, another emphasis in the strategy is increasing pace. While going faster can lead to more mistakes, Bollom is confident DE&S can avoid this.

He agrees that "you would instinctively say to go faster, you're likely to make more mistakes" but does not think going faster and reducing mistakes are incompatible bedfellows.

For Bollom, going faster means removing non-value-added activity by using a bit of common sense. An example he gives is cutting back on unnecessary checks when producing value for money business cases "where the answer is reasonably obvious".

"I think agility and speed can be achieved without incurring additional risk by applying judgement. We don't have to be exhaustive in our assessments. We need to be more targeted. There are plenty of examples of where

we can and have done that. The Type 31 frigate – we launched that programme in half the time it has taken previously. The national flagship project was initiated and brought into the programme inside a year.

"Look at the work that we've done with the National Health Service in response to the pandemic, like purchasing PPE when the country was within 24 hours of running out. My people got involved with that and we got the pipeline flowing again. The ventilator challenge was another area.

We can move at pace and we will move at pace. And it's not just about DE&S. This is a defence enterprise, which ministers, the permanent secretary, myself and the team are really invested in."

With the government pledging to hit net zero carbon emissions by 2050, in the race to stop the planet reaching 1.5c, climate change is another area where there is a need for speed.

"It's front and centre of our strategy. It has really resonated with the workforce, particularly a lot of the younger people

"Does criticism bother me? Yes, because I'm competitive. I want to showcase the outstanding work this organisation does"

in the workforce,” he says. “It’s their planet. It’s their future.”

DE&S is aiming for its operations and infrastructure to be carbon neutral by 2035, a stretch target beyond the MoD’s 2040 goal.

Plans include solar panels, wind power, 600,000 trees, sequestering carbon, alternative fuels for aviation, electric and hybrid vehicles on land and sea, cutting down on electricity by turning lights off and reducing unnecessary travel.

The last of these has been sped up by Covid.

A lot of DE&S staff have not been able to work from home during the pandemic, such as those working on classified systems or in a munitions warehouse. But, for those who can, DE&S has set up smart working and hybrid working facilities, aiding the organisation’s ability to cut back on unnecessary travel.

“That’s where I wanted to get to actually, but I was looking at maybe a five-year horizon where we’ve had to do it in 12 months, so it’s quite positive from that perspective,” Bollom says.

Having discussed climate change and Covid, we could not end without touching upon Brexit.

“Brexit has been interesting in as much as Nato and defence, from my perspective, have transcended it,” he says. “It’s been interesting how keen [our allies] have been, particularly my European allies, to make sure that they get closer to the United Kingdom. There was a sense of ‘well, we don’t want you to drift away from us’. An essential part of the strength of Nato and the strength of Europe has been our international collaboration. So Brexit has produced a heightened sense of awareness. The UK is a very important part of Europe and Nato and that heightened sensitivity has probably opened more doors than might have hitherto been there.”

That said, Bollom acknowledges that life outside the EU hasn’t all been plain sailing – Brexit did put pressure on the supply chain, which was only compounded by the Covid pandemic. However, Bollom adds that DE&S had, in relation to Brexit at least, “anticipated



some of those issues” and worked closely with suppliers to minimise disruption.

As his time as DE&S chief exec comes to an end – a role he describes as the “pinnacle” of his 40-year career – Bollom has many plans afoot.

Alongside bothering his kids, Bollom – a keen sportsman – wants to spend more time cycling and running. He is also planning to extend his qualifications as a tree feller to expand on his volunteering on woodland conservation projects.

But he’s not ready to leave defence

behind entirely. He plans to take on a few non-executive positions “to keep the fire burning” and to continue doing what he enjoys most – problem solving on complex programmes.

“That’s nearly 40 years that I’ve been involved with defence and one of the reasons I came back when Tony Douglas gave me a call is because defence runs through my blood. I’m very proud to be part of the national defence effort,” he says. “And I can imagine that there will be things that will come up that will keep me close.” ■

A REAL SHOT IN THE ARM

In a bleak and challenging time, the breath-taking speed and success of the Covid-19 vaccine rollout provided much-needed hope across the country.

Beckie Smith meets **Antonia Williams** and **Leila Tavakoli**, who worked on the programme, to discuss what they learned from this award-winning endeavour

The vaccines programme was named Programme of the Year in the 2021 Civil Service Awards. This unprecedented endeavour brought together teams from the Department of Health and Social Care, the Vaccine Taskforce, NHS England, the UK Health Security Agency, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, and NHS Digital. So far, it has deployed over 100 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines.

Antonia Williams, director of Covid vaccine deployment at DHSC, and **Leila Tavakoli, deputy director: Covid-19 vaccines strategy,** sat down with CSW to share their experiences working on the programme.

Congratulations on the award – have you enjoyed telling people about it?

AW: I think everyone feels really proud to be a part of this, and it's lovely to have that recognised through the awards. So many people have been working so hard [over the course of the pandemic] to prepare and be ready to deploy a vaccine.

What's it been like working on the programme over the last couple of years?

AW: It has been very intense. I have sometimes felt like it's like a very long hurdle race: the minute we get over one

challenge and achieve something, the next appears. It's been quite unrelenting in that respect, but it's also felt like the privilege of a lifetime. I've never done a job like this and I don't think I will again. But it's serious, hard work – people have given up their lives for years for it.

How have the extraordinary circumstances – the time pressures and scale of the challenge – changed the way you've operated, compared to a standard government programme?

AW: There's been such a clear and nationally significant mission at the heart of it, so we've had a very clear objective and the whole weight of government, the public service and the public has got behind this single mission. I think a huge part of the programme's success is having the support of every government department and the sectors they represent – which have not only been willing to help, but have proactively stepped forward offering resources, people and expertise. Whether it's the Department for Education, helping with the rollout in schools; MHCLG, helping bring together local authority chief execs and finding our local sites; the Treasury expediting funding processes – there's just been that real sense of goodwill and willingness for it to succeed.

What lessons do you think government can learn to improve its delivery in future?

AW: A couple of things come to mind. There's been a real model of bringing together expertise from a range of different backgrounds. Across the vaccines programme, we've had clinical experts, commercial experts, operational, policy, legal, data and tech experts, all working as a single team. Because we've had support right from the prime minister down, we've managed to cut across those silos.

I think there's a lot to take into other programmes about the use of data, particularly in tackling the challenges around health inequalities and targeting areas of lower uptake. We've been very focused on reaching as many people as we possibly can, encouraging everyone to come forward for the vaccine. There's a lot to learn for other health programmes, as well as wider public sector programmes, on the multidisciplinary approach and the use of tech and data.

LT: I think this probably happened across quite a few parts of the Covid response, not just vaccines, but we can also learn from the way that teams have challenged themselves to improve their processes in the moment. For example, the MHRA carried out their stages of work concurrently, rather than in sequence, which sped up that whole process of authorisation while still maintaining all the safety standards. I think that approach of testing a longstanding approach to something and seeing how we can improve it was really important and worked really well.

Are there particular lessons for government to learn around innovation and harnessing science and technology?

AW: Yes, that's been a huge plank of the whole programme – having a much more venture-capital approach to risk and bringing that expertise in house. But also, the government took a much more proactive approach to identifying research questions that will give us the information and data we need, and then working with industry and the academic communities to get the right trials set up.

So we felt that on the policy side, we have been at the forefront, globally. Lots of other countries have been waiting for UK trials to conclude, for example, looking at the effectiveness of the booster vaccine and the mix and match of vaccines. Again, that was a result of collaboration, with government providing money but also helping to frame the policy and clinical questions, bringing academics and industry together. [Outgoing deputy

chief medical officer] Jonathan Van Tam was the main driving force behind that.

Government programmes can suffer when people work in silos – what worked well when bringing different organisations together on this programme?

AW: That's the question: how do you bottle it and maintain it? We've had really strong leadership from some critical people – in particular the likes of Emily Lawson, who has led the deployment programme across the board. We've had really strong leaders that people have mobilised behind, but also leaders who have been mission and people-focused, which really inspired people.

We also had ministers very much with their sleeves rolled up, wanting to get things done. The prime minister had weekly meetings, the secretary of state had daily meetings, so any issue that emerged with another government department or a funding issue was immediately escalated right to the top.

The fact that this was one of government's top priorities, with the civil service and public sector support behind it and ministers putting their time and energy into those priorities – that's made a big difference. The fact that it's been a life-saving programme has also helped with getting people energised!

What were some of the hurdles that you had to overcome?

AW: The thing that jumps out is the speed at which we knew we had to go. During the preparatory work, we knew we had to be ready the second there was a safe vaccine. And the

second we knew there was going to be a safe vaccine, we had to get it in arms days later, as fast as physically possible. Every hour counted in terms of saving a life.

Doing all that whilst ensuring it was safe and maintaining quality and operational excellence was the big overall challenge. That mattered for the long-term confidence in the programme. We knew that every announcement, every person's experience, all added up to the reputation that could help reassure the significant number of people who were – and are – nervous about it.

There were lots of other hurdles along the way. There were times when there was nervousness around the supply chain, or if we could get enough workforce out

there to give us the scale of operation. Then when we had the vaccine and the staff to do it, the hurdle shifted to: are there enough people coming forward?

The other big concern has been whenever safety questions arose. For example, when the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation provided advice around offering AstraZeneca preferentially to the over-40s, rather than the under-40s, that was very challenging for our comms colleagues, in terms of getting the messaging and language right. Those were particularly intense periods.

LT: We have been working on this for a long time, so one challenge has been sustaining enthusiasm and motivation

World first Margaret Keenan, 90, was the first person in the United Kingdom to receive a covid-19 vaccine



across the whole workforce, including people on the ground. That's where really strong leaders come in, I think.

How have you supported your team while you've been working under this enormous pressure over such a long period of time?

AW: There are multiple teams across the system, and I was leading the DHSC team of about 50 individuals. It has been a real challenge. I'm taking a break now, which I needed after 14 months. We tried to staff up and have spare capacity to be able to make sure people are getting breaks. We thought quite hard in the team about how people can cover for each other and rotas to make sure people are getting proper time out. That

“The second we knew there was going to be a safe vaccine, we had to get it in arms days later, as fast as physically possible – every hour counted in terms of saving a life” Antonia Williams

has happened across the different programmes – it's been very supportive.

LT: In our team we have focused a lot on keeping an eye on each other. We have regular meetings, checking in, because we've been quite virtual. All of that helps, I think, in terms of keeping morale up.

AW: We've also made an effort to share positive stories. Everybody's got one about a family member who managed to get vaccinated or persuaded. I think the team has felt a part of something really important, which has helped to keep people motivated. But it's a big challenge, which is much wider than vaccines. People have worked so hard, and there are still many challenges ahead, so we need to keep supporting each other. ■

THINKER TAYLOR

Paul Taylor was named the first national policing chief scientific adviser last year. He tells **Beckie Smith** how he's working to improve the way science and technology is used in policing - and the "Del Boy moments" he's had along the way

One minute, Paul Taylor is talking about the ocean, and the next, he is talking about dogs - neither of which CSW expected to cover in an hour-long video call with the national policing chief scientific adviser.

Taylor is illustrating his own surprise over the last few months at how many areas of policing are impacted by science and technology. In particular, he says, he was surprised by the breadth of scientific questions surrounding police dogs.

"They're a really critical capability in policing," he says. "You have issues around training and selection - because they're very expensive, believe it or not. And some just aren't fit for it, particularly the dogs that support frontline policing. They get put in some quite intimidating scenarios and they have to be brave enough to act, and act proportionately.

"Then there's questions like: how effective are they at smelling various things, from explosives, to weapons, to multimedia, and so on? There's loads of science around there."

Another area he hadn't expected to spend much time on was oceans. "I got schooled earlier in the week," he says, recalling a meeting of the government-wide chief scientific adviser network, where he was asked if policing had a scientific interest in an ocean project the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs was getting underway. Initially, »





“I think we should only be using public money if we can demonstrate and have a track record of showing how valuable it will be”





he was inclined to say no. “Then my colleagues told me, ‘of course we do. You’ve got seaweed and algae and other things affecting the decomposition of bodies.’”

In the manner of a true academic, Taylor – a psychologist by training – lights up as he lists a few more areas he has delved into in the last few months. “Materials science is really critical for policing, because it goes into how comfortable uniforms are, it goes into body armour. It goes into how you’re building things, and so on. Behavioural science, that’s another thing that we’ve driven forward quite a lot over the last six months – because ultimately, policing deals with people, so we really ought to have a strong behavioural science capability to understand things like crowd intervention, how people are going to react when we come out of Covid, and so on. The list is endless.”

It is Taylor’s job to ensure the policing sector – which includes the College of Policing, the National Crime Agency, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, and individual forces – has access to evidence and advice on these and any other areas where science might contribute to crime prevention.

Taylor and his team are currently working on a strategy that will aim to show how policing can benefit from science and technology, and identify areas where policing bodies should concentrate their research and investment to expand the evidence base on promising technologies.

The strategy, Taylor says, will “articulate for the first time how a very complex landscape is going to interconnect”. It will complement strategies being developed by individual police capabilities – including the National Police Air Service, which has what Taylor calls a “very ambitious desire” to use drones to cut down on the use of helicopters. Doing that means addressing several “meaty, technological problems”, as well as getting the right standards in place.

Alongside the strategy, the National Police Chiefs’ Council is in the process of setting up a National Crime and Justice Laboratory which will, Taylor says, “allow us to do more strategic analysis of police and justice data to understand what’s going on in the system, and look for ways to improve delivery”. Creating this lab will meet a pledge made in the 2019 Con-

servative Party election manifesto. Policing bodies, the Home Office, the government funding body UK Research and Innovation and others will be collaborating on setting up the lab over the next 12 months.

Much of the work to address policing’s big science and tech challenges is done in collaboration with academics, and when Taylor was named as the first national policing CSA last spring, strengthening collaboration with external experts was one of the stated reasons for creating the role.

This is familiar ground for Taylor, who started his own career with a PhD on hostage negotiation before later going on to lead the Centre for Research and Evidence on Secu-



On duty
Police dogs are a “critical capability”

Hard evidence
forensic science can help solve crimes



Face off football fans protest police use of facial recognition software outside Cardiff City Stadium in 2020

riety Threats at Lancaster University – a hub for behavioural and social science for national security, funded by intelligence and security agencies and the Home Office.

He says there have been “a few Del Boy moments” where – needing an expert in a specialist area to weigh in on a complex problem – he’s excused himself from meetings to give an old colleague a call. “You’re halfway to a solution then – because you know the solution exists, it’s just not made its way to us [yet],” he explains.

In one initiative to strengthen collaboration with academia, the Economic

and Social Research Council – part of UKRI – shared access to a catalogue of projects it had funded in the policing space over the last five years. That led to meetings discussing how researchers could work together, as well as a conference the police will run later this year.

In another effort to increase collaboration with external experts, Taylor has recently set up a police Science Advisory Council – a mechanism used by chief scientific advisers in government departments that acts as a “critical friend” to the organisation.

The police SAC includes university vice chancellors, chief technology officers of major tech companies and forensics specialists. It advises on strategic challenges and stress-tests plans, says Taylor: “It might be thinking about how we’re going to deal with digital forensics – what we should do to invest, how can we accelerate that work? It could

be: how do we best engage academia and industry? How do we ensure that we have developed science and technology in a way that earns the public’s trust, using a variety of mechanisms to engage the public?”

One topic where the police may have a long way to go in winning public trust is in the use of facial-recognition technologies. A 2019 study by the Ada Lovelace Institute found public support for facial recognition was “conditional upon limitations and subject to appropriate safeguards”, and there has been vocal opposition to trials of the tech by different forces in public spaces.

In 2020, the Court of Appeal ruled that the use of automated facial recognition by South Wales Police over the previous few years had been unlawful – in part because the force had failed to provide evidence of an adequate data protection impact assessment. The scheme, which matched images of passers-by against people featured on criminal “watchlists”, also failed to meet its Public Sector Equality Duty as it failed to ensure the software had not embedded bias on racial or sex grounds.

Asked how scientists have responded to these concerns, Taylor says forces have “grown in their maturity” in recognising the issues that need to be addressed with facial-recognition tech. Studies on facial recognition software, for example, must use a sample of faces that meets particular diversity criteria. Committees at force and national level, as well as the Science Advisory Committee, meanwhile advise on and review protocols.

“Historically we haven’t been good

enough at selling how much we invest in ensuring these systems are not biased and they're not discriminatory. It really is at the top of the minds of those who are leading those programmes of work. We invest, we do trials," Taylor says. He adds that the part of his role that entails engaging with the public on the use of such technologies involves "a little bit of myth busting".

"I think sometimes people think we're doing things with face recognition... that we're not actually doing," he says. He notes forces more commonly use retrospective facial recognition, such as analysing CCTV footage, than live facial recognition – although the Met and South Wales police forces say they use both. Last summer, then-information commissioner Elizabeth Denham said she was "deeply concerned" about the potential for live facial recognition to be used "inappropriately, excessively or even recklessly", and that every investigation by her office into deployment of the technology to date had found illegality.

Another way the police can strengthen public trust, Taylor says, is through open science. "The general thrust that I've had since I've been in office is one of real transparency and really buying into the open-government and open-science agenda," he says, adding that the Met and South Wales Police have published the findings of their facial recognition trials online.

Publishing information about trials, along with research findings and anonymised datasets, is "a really important way to build public trust so that the wider professional research community can interrogate what we're doing and critique it and say, 'actually, no, I think you've got it wrong or you've missed this'," Taylor says. "I think that allows for wider public trust in the system."

Later this year, the NPCC will launch a website – science.police.uk – that Taylor says will act as "a single gateway into science in policing" with news on what technologies are being used, alongside primers, a magazine and other information. "We have a federated model of policing for very good reason. But what that does mean is that sometimes, somebody in Merseyside doesn't know what somebody in the Metropolitan Police is doing around, say, coding and data analytics," he says.

As well as giving forces a better idea of what is happening elsewhere in the country, the website will act as a "signpost to academia and industry" of the NPCC's areas of research interest. "If you talk to technology companies, they're often a bit frustrated that they don't know exactly what we want sometimes, and they're not quite sure who to go to [to find out]," Taylor says.

"And it's also a great way for other government departments to know what we're doing as well. We're very keen on cross-department join up and it's a great way of allowing people to see what we're doing."

It is also being developed with the public in mind. The chief scientific adviser's office funds around 50 research projects, and details of that work and its outcomes will be shared on the website. "I don't think we've been as good as we could be about demonstrating the value-add that science and technology is bring-

ing to the efficiency, to the transparency and to the value for money that policing's offering the public," Taylor says.

"I think we should only be using public money if we can demonstrate and have a track record of showing how valuable it will be," he adds. "The challenge is to get to that point where it's demonstrably clear that this investment will save us money in the short to medium or even longer term."

Not only is that understanding critical to knowing which areas to invest in but, Taylor hopes, it will also help to make the case for investment where resources are already stretched. He shares the example of a study that Lancashire Constabulary began in 2018 to improve the performance of its force control room by getting a clearer picture of demand and capacity.

The force knew it received 1.2 million 999 and 112 calls a year, but had very little data on what those calls were about. Using voice-to-text transcription and natural language processing enabled the force to understand why people were calling, and when the most high-risk calls were coming in. It also found a percentage of the calls were repeat calls – a problem it could tackle "right away", Taylor says.

"Ultimately, what S&T does is save resource," he explains. "So when people say to me, 'I can't invest in this, I just don't have the resource,' my counter argument is 'we need to invest in this because S&T frees up that resource'. It allows officers to go back to doing the things that they really want to do."

Taylor is preparing to kick off a programme to improve how the impact of science and technology interventions in

policing is measured, which he says is currently not as developed as it should be. "We have some good news stories, and we can talk qualitatively about what's being done, but I'd really like us to be systematic about being able to demonstrate value," he says.

This is one of his biggest challenges – and underscores his overall goal, which is to see more effective engagement with and investment in science and technology. "In a sense, our job is 'death by a thousand cuts' – not death, that's the wrong word. Achievement by a thousand cuts," he says. "It's the cyber expert in Hampshire who can accelerate his project so it supports local people in Southampton, which we then try and scale up nationally. It's never just one thing. It's about creating a system that works really, really effectively." ■

TAYLOR ON... TACKLING SEX-BASED VIOLENCE

The National Police Chiefs' Council is working with UKRI as it prepares to launch a fund for projects to tackle violence against women and girls, which will allow researchers to come into police forces as secondees to work on projects in that area.

Meanwhile, Taylor and his colleagues are working with the College of Policing to support work to tackle such violence in two main areas – filling in gaps in the behavioural science that could improve safety, and tech solutions. Behavioural science could help organisations like British Transport Police tackle assaults on transport infrastructure, he says. "Firstly, we want to make it as easy as possible for the victim to report, not just immediately, but subsequently; we also want to make it as hard as possible for a perpetrator to be able to commit an offence; and thirdly, we want to think about how a bystander might reasonably intervene.

"There is a body of literature in each of those areas, but we're keen on trialling different ways to encourage that community 'social good' or bystander intervention where it is appropriate." He likens this approach to research that has been done on suicide intervention at railway stations.

On the tech side, a number of apps are in development that scientists hope could help make public spaces safer. One example is the StreetSafe app that the Home Office launched last year, which allows members of the public to report areas where they feel unsafe. Police can then use the data to make improvements such as installing CCTV or street lighting or introducing night-time patrols.

UK Defence and Security Exports last spoke to *CSW* in March 2020. One rebrand and one global pandemic later, **Jess Bowie** catches up with UKDSE director **Mark Goldsack**



WORLD GLASS



SW last spoke to you two years ago. What are some of the major things that have changed for your organisation since then? What was the thinking behind the rebrand from Department for International Trade Defence & Security Organisation to UKDSE?

It's fair to say that a lot has changed. Two years ago, we were grappling with the earliest days of Covid. As well as trying to understand what it meant for us and for defence and security exports, we were redeploying staff to support the broader government response to the crisis. Now, we are emerging from the tail end of the pandemic and re-engaging globally. UKDSE has changed its working model to be more adaptable to hybrid working, like many others. But we have also invested effort in understanding better how the global defence and security market has been impacted by Covid, and how our potential customers and competitors have adapted. This has enabled us to ensure that our efforts are directed in the most effective possible way, taking a campaign approach in coordination with industry to tackle the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Part of that is reflected in our rebranding. Our brand needed to convey better our role as the government's lead on delivering defence and security exports for the UK, and the new name and logo does this.

The UK has seen a huge growth recently in security exports, and security and cyber exports have now overtaken defence exports. Given the former are often purchased by private sector organisations as well as other governments, what does that mean for UKDSE and for Security & Policing more generally? Is there less of a role for the UK government now?

We are extremely pleased with the growth in UK security and cyber exports; it represents a steady and sustainable increase in the performance of the UK security and cyber sectors overseas and is a testament to the quality and professionalism of UK products and services.

In regard to the role of Security & Policing, I should note that our international partners are key customers for UK security and cyber companies as they seek the reliable and trustworthy solutions that the UK can provide. UK Defence & Security Exports has invited high-level delegations from more than 70 countries to join us at Security & Policing this



“Government can play an important role in setting the conditions for export success - acting as facilitators to industry rather than simply holding hands through the process”

year, and this event continues to be the ideal setting in which those high-level conversations between buyers and sellers of security solutions can take place.

I'd like to say that there is always a role for HMG to play in support of promoting the best our industry has to offer our overseas partners. Of course, that role can vary depending on the nature of the product and the customer and, picking up on your point about the predominance of private sector customers, DIT's new Export Strategy offers a range of new tools to support companies of all sizes and experience, from coordinating large-scale integrated campaigns with major and experienced exporters, to supporting innovative and cutting-edge SMEs to become world-class exporters via the Export Support Service and Export Academy. In the defence and security sectors in particular, government can play an important role in setting the conditions for export success - acting as facilitators to industry rather than simply holding hands through the process.

What do you see as the key strengths and capabilities of the UK security and resilience sector, and how are these seen by international allies? What are our weaknesses?

Our security and resilience sector's products are known for their quality and reliability. The UK is also a leading innovator across the whole range of security capabilities, from protecting major event venues and securing borders to supporting first responders. Police and fire officers from around the world also rely on the world-class training and capacity building that our companies can provide.

The UK is recognised as one of the global leaders in cyber security innovation

and commerce. We are currently ranked number two in the ITU's Global Cyber Security Index and third in the Harvard Kennedy Belfer Centre's Cyber Power Index.

Naturally, we face stiff competition. Financial pressures created by the pandemic have encouraged governments to look closer to home for solutions and companies to sharpen their efforts. We are deploying a range of tools to increase the chances of UK success: enhanced market analysis to understand where UK-accessible opportunities are and what the competition looks like; improved campaigning processes to plan our efforts over the duration of an export campaign and use resources more effectively; and coordinated strategic comms planning to ensure our messaging lands effectively and delivers the desired impact.

How has the UK Security Exports Strategy affected cross-government working? Are silos in government still a problem for your organisation?

The need to join up across government is something that all of our ministers are seized by and we have very clear direction from the Defence & Security Exports Working Group to properly join up the dots. I have to give special credit to Home Office colleagues here, and particularly the Joint Security and Resilience Centre, for all of the work they have done to bring coherence to HMG/industry relationships through the security aspects of the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy and for reinvigorating the Security & Resilience Growth Partnership.

We are seeing similar join-up on cybersecurity as demonstrated in the National Cyber Strategy 2022, and our own recent appointment of Juliette Wilcox as DIT's new cyber security ambassador. >>



As international travel opens up again and Covid restrictions are lifted, how will the government support businesses seeking major export opportunities?

We are keen to get back to doing what has always been a part of core business for the UK government – providing direct support to UK industry efforts in overseas markets. Our international exhibitions calendar is already busy and we will, in due course, also be looking to restart work on trade missions matching UK expertise to global opportunities. We are working across HMG to ensure that our presence overseas is coordinated and effective in its support of UK interests, both political and economic.

You’ve previously said that in the future, defence exporters will need to think more about the sharing of IP to enable local manufacture and support, and help to build indigenous capability. Is the same true for the security sector?

We encourage and support UK security and cyber firms to engage in mutually beneficial partnerships with overseas firms. The sharing of IP will be a central issue for UK firms

and will be a vital consideration for UK firms entering into overseas partnerships. UKDSE works closely with UK firms and international partners to ensure that building indigenous capability remains central to our approach for cyber and security exporting.

What role does your team play in helping to ensure international requirements are shared and communicated with UK industry, so firms can play a leading role in selling into these markets?

It is essential that we maintain a close working relationship with industry, both to communicate information on global requirements and opportunities to industry, and to plan coordinated approaches to unlocking those opportunities for the UK. Our goal is to be able to do that early enough to set the stage for UK success.

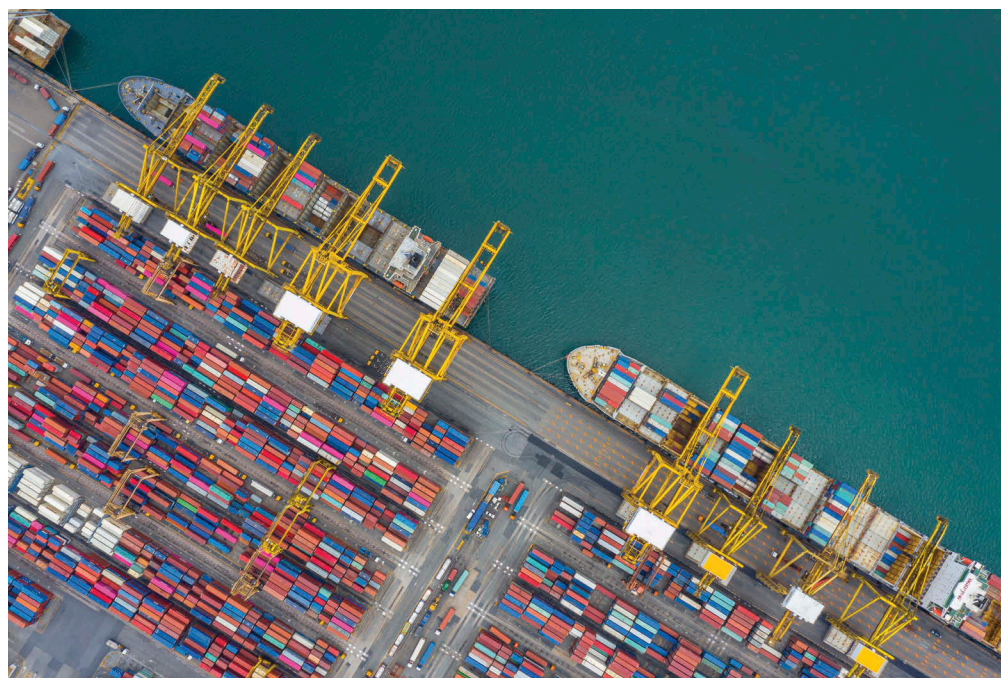
Earlier I briefly touched on our market analysis work. Historically we’ve

into the markets in which we are planning to operate. We have realigned our efforts to make better use of that insight: our understanding of perceptions of the UK and the UK offer, our relative market strengths in comparison to other national actors, our understanding of broader political factors which might impact on commercial decision making. This has helped us to develop a much richer picture of the global market. We use that picture, which can’t necessarily be shared directly, to inform our discussions with industry. This helps us agree a more productive approach which focuses on the opportunities where we have the greater probability of success and identifies the levers which can be used to improve our chances.

In addition, we have recently established export networks of companies that are centred around particular capabilities, such as those involved in securing venues for major events, protecting borders and so on, where we expedite the sharing of information on export opportunities that we learn about through our international networks, the United Nations and so on.

One thing UK industry has complained about in the past is that each country has different requirements. What role can HMG play in ensuring a coordinated or unified market with common standards – so that British security manufacturers don’t have to make 100 different versions of their kit, and can benefit from economies of scale? Can we even hope to achieve that?

Standards have been a key discussion point in many bilats in the security sector. My team engages with end users around the world to understand where HMG can add value in this area. We have been working closely with industry, trade associations and standards bodies to gain a deeper understanding of the role of standards in exports. Those conversations are essential to making progress on a difficult issue, and I am keen to encourage industry to talk to my teams and provide examples of where standards have been a barrier or an enabler to exports. ■



entering into partnerships and this needs to be carefully considered by the firms involved on a case-by-case basis. However, I am pleased that you raised the issue of building indigenous capability. This is key to the long-term sustainable partnerships envisioned by the Global Britain agenda

focused our efforts on collating information on opportunities from open-source information; this is very useful but doesn’t take advantage of the value that can only be added by government.

Our global, political, defence and trade networks give us a unique insight

PERFORMANCE ABRT



In the second of a three-part series, *CSW* assesses progress against key actions set out in the Declaration on Government Reform, and explores how volunteering can boost skills and support key priorities

When then-cabinet minister Michael Gove launched the Declaration on Government Reform, he described the plan as “the fruit of discussion between ministers and officials; collaborative working, candid challenge between us and honesty about what needs to change”.

The plan included 30 actions to be completed by the end of 2021, grouped under three headings – people, partnership, performance – to which, Gove said, ministers and officials were “collectively committed” and should be held to account.

In that spirit, *CSW* has assessed actions under the performance and partnership

headings and rated them green (the goal has been completed), amber (the goal is not completed but looks set to be before the end of the financial year) and red (the goal is not on track to be completed). Next month, we will complete our series with an assessment of the actions listed under “people”.

Eleven “performance” actions range from improved used of data to stronger spending controls. Together, they aim to “modernise the operation of government”, according the document.

For “partnership”, there are just four actions, primarily covering the way in which politicians and officials work together to create a “unity of purpose and of action that is shared across government”.





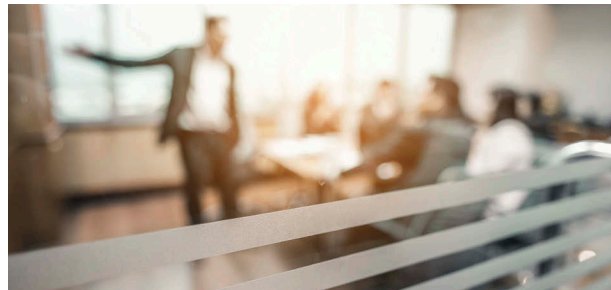
SET OUTCOME DELIVERY PLANS FOR EACH DEPARTMENT, AND ENSURE THAT EVERY DEPARTMENT HAS A DELIVERY BOARD WITH NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INVOLVEMENT TO MONITOR PERFORMANCE.

Outcome Delivery Plans – which list key priorities for each department and metrics on how those will be tracked – had already been published by the time the DGR was agreed in June 2021.

Departments are now working on updated ODPs to be published for the next financial year, and with input from the Treasury and Cabinet Office.

Despite this progress, we have rated this action as Amber because CSW was unable to identify – neither on departmental websites nor by

formal inquiries via both individual press offices and the Cabinet Office – a single department which has set up a delivery board with non-executive involvement to monitor progress against these plans.



IMPLEMENT CLEAR STANDARDS FOR ALL FUNCTIONS AND ENSURE THEY ARE USED CONSISTENTLY ACROSS GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY.

A 2021 review of government functions carried out by former Cabinet Office minister Lord Maude called for these cross-government groups to be given greater powers to set – and enforce – standards in their areas of expertise.

Each function has devised standards which set expectations for governance, roles and practices in their area of expertise. For example, the HR standards describe how departments should collect recruitment data, while the analysis

standards set out the key stages and features of a good analysis project.

In September 2021, a letter was sent to accounting officers saying that “all central government departments and their arm’s-length bodies should have a plan in place to comply with each functional standard in a way that meets its business needs and priorities.” From 2022-23, functional standards will need to form part of departmental business plans and statements on their use should be included in annual reports.

“[Standards will] make it easier for people to work together, and to hit the ground running when they move jobs”



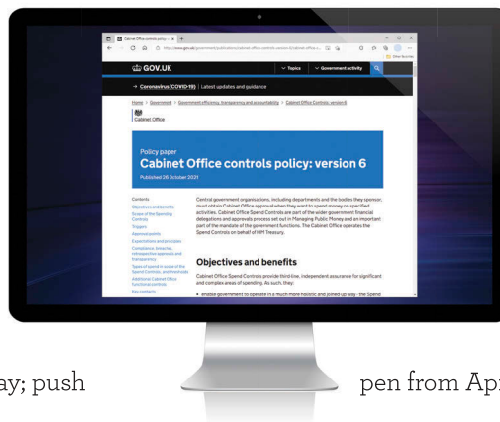
ENSURE ALL DEPARTMENTS ADHERE TO A STRENGTHENED SPENDING CONTROLS FRAMEWORK.

The DGR explicitly links spending controls to the system of functional standards, since these controls require departments to seek Cabinet Office or function-level sign-off for contracts that cross a designated spending threshold. Sign-off is only given if the department demonstrates it has met certain criteria based on the functional standards.

In his 2021 review, which also covered spending controls, Lord Maude described how controls enable departments to work together in a more joined-up way; push

departments to plan ahead more effectively; and “build visibility and data” about overall government spending in particular categories like IT or property.

Departments and public bodies are already required to receive Cabinet Office approval for certain consultancy and professional services spending, as well as large digital projects. However, the action has a rating of Amber since assurance of the controls has not yet been rolled out – CSW understands this will happen from April 2022.





ESTABLISH THE CENTRAL DIGITAL AND DATA OFFICE WITH A MANDATE AND THE EXPERTISE TO DRIVE DIGITAL AND DATA INNOVATION, INCLUDING EXTENDING THE USE OF DATA VISUALISATION TOOLS.

The Central Digital and Data Office was established in February 2021 – some four months before the DGR was published – though at that time a blog from civil service chief operating officer said the aim was to create



LAUNCH A SINGLE SIGN-ON FOR ONLINE GOVERNMENT SERVICES.

The OneLogin project, launched in September 2020, aims to replace 191 accounts and sign-in systems currently in use across government, including the GOV.UK Verify system, which was set up to serve a similar purpose but has suffered poor take-up from departments and the public.

Led by Government Digital Service, the project developed a prototype in 2021, as well as conducting detailed user research



a “council of non-executive experts” who would provide leadership for the DDaT function. By April 2021 the CDDO, led by chief executive Joanna Davinson, had more explicitly taken over the leadership of digital and data strategies in government. The office now conducts quarterly business reviews with departments, co-chaired with officials from the Treasury, to monitor departmental progress against DDaT commitments and priorities. A perm sec-level Digital and Data Board has also been set up to provide a cross-government view of these priorities.

and reviewing the lessons learned from GOV.UK Verify. In the Spending Review, the OneLogin project received £100m funding over three years. The team has not met the target of launching a completed sign-on service by the end of 2021, but is expected to do so within months as it works with the Disclosure and Barring Service to set up a new login system by April. Once this service has been set up, the team hopes to scale up quickly. In a blog published at the end of 2021, GDS director of digital identity Natalie Jones said: “We are working with other departments, directorates, agencies and individual services to build a clear, joined up and shared roadmap. It will enable services to understand when their required functionality will be available and give clear milestones and timelines for migration.”

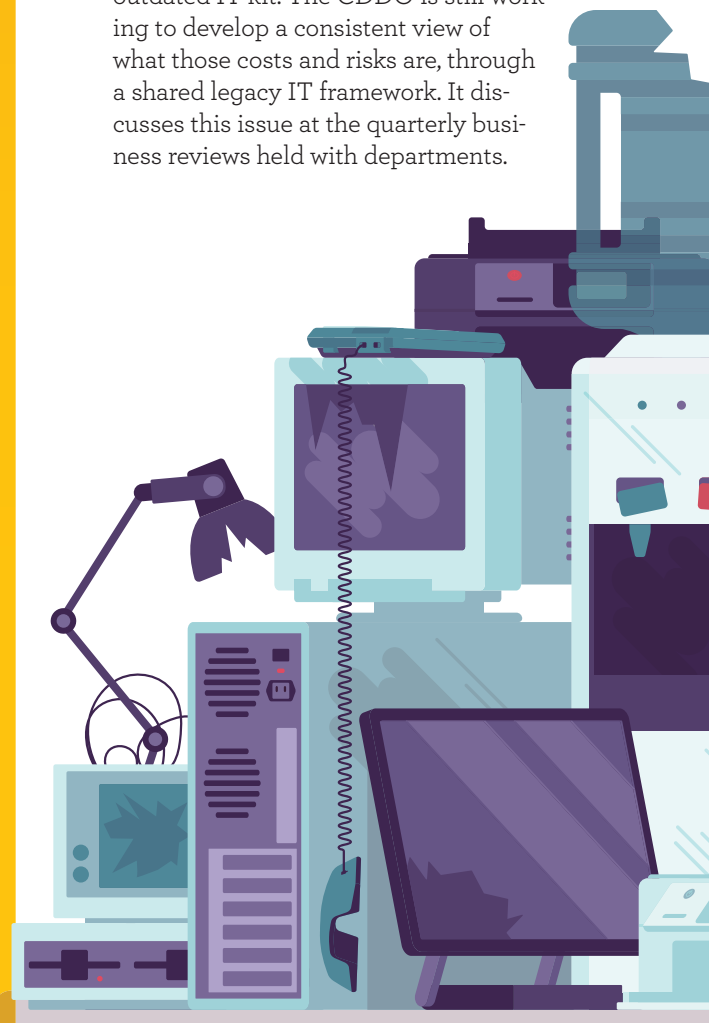


INTRODUCE MANDATORY REPORTING OF THE COSTS AND RISKS OF OUTDATED IT SYSTEMS, AND ENSURE THAT NO NEW IT SYSTEMS ARE CREATED WITHOUT INTEROPERABILITY WITH OTHER RELEVANT GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS.

The 2021 Spending Review included £2.6bn of funding earmarked to update legacy IT and mitigate cyber risks, on top of £600m invested at the 2020 Spending Review.

While funding is allocated to departments individually, the work is being supported centrally by the CDDO’s chief technology officer. At the time of going to press, this role was held in an interim capacity by Dan Bailey, who joined CDDO in August 2021 after a career in the private sector.

However, government has not yet achieved its aim of requiring departments to report on the costs and risks of their outdated IT kit. The CDDO is still working to develop a consistent view of what those costs and risks are, through a shared legacy IT framework. It discusses this issue at the quarterly business reviews held with departments.





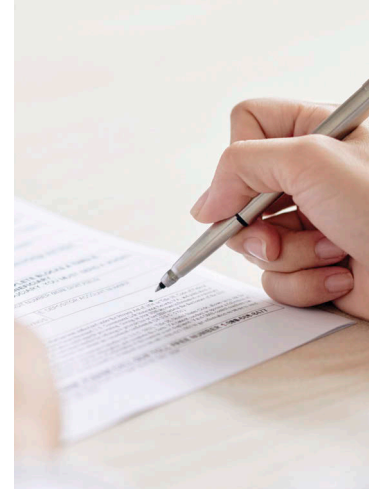
MOVE ALL ELIGIBLE MAJOR PROJECTS INTO THE GOVERNMENT MAJOR PROJECTS PORTFOLIO, PUBLISHING IT WITH THE NAMES OF DEDICATED AND SUITABLY QUALIFIED SROS FOR EACH PROJECT AS A CONDITION OF APPROVAL.

The Government Major Projects Portfolio was established in 2013 to improve the way government’s most costly and complex projects are run. At that point, it comprised 199 projects with a combined whole-life cost of £399bn. Over the years, projects have left the portfolio as they were completed or scrapped, while others have joined, but the general trend was that the portfolio shrunk in size – falling to 125 projects in March 2020 – but not in value. The total cost of those 125 projects was £448bn. The most recent figures show this trend had been stopped in 2021, with the portfolio growing both in size and value: 97 projects were added while only 19 left, bringing the total to 184 projects worth a combined £524bn.

A letter sent to the PACAC in February 2022 suggests that a further expansion has happened since then, in line with the aim set out in the DGR to ensure all eligible projects are listed. A list of Senior Responsible Owners for each of these projects has been published each year for several years.



INSTITUTE THE GOVERNMENT MAJOR CONTRACTS PORTFOLIO, TO IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MOST CRITICAL CONTRACTS.



A Government Major Contracts Portfolio has been in place since at least December 2020. A government playbook published that month discussing good practice for sourcing and contracting construction work said that the portfolio “tracks the government’s most complex and strategically important services to complement the Government Major Projects Portfolio”. However, the first meeting of the newly established Government Major Contracts Portfolio Board took place in February 2022, CSW understands. The GMCP includes 78 large or significant contracts, with 17 more expected to be added in due course once data around them has been through the appropriate validation processes.

“A new Evaluation Taskforce in the Cabinet Office will ruthlessly scrutinise the effectiveness of policies against the claims people like me make for them”

Michael Gove



SET UP THE EVALUATION TASK FORCE TO ENSURE CONSISTENT, HIGH-QUALITY IMPACT EVALUATION AND TRANSPARENCY, AND A REFRESHED DELIVERY UNIT TO DRIVE PROGRESS ON THE GOVERNMENT’S HEADLINE PRIORITIES.

include embedding experimental evaluation into flagship programmes such as Help to Grow and the Youth Investment Fund, to strengthen the evidence base for future decisions.

The latest No.10 Delivery Unit was established in May 2021 following a review of government delivery led by Sir Michael Barber, a former civil servant who led a previous delivery unit under Tony Blair. The unit is structured around the prime minister’s main priorities of levelling up, net zero, health and social care, education, jobs and skills and crime and justice. It was originally led by Dame Emily Lawson - former head of the NHS Covid vaccination programme – before she returned to the NHS in October 2021. Johnson had hoped to bring Dame Emily back to No.10 as permanent secretary, but this had not been confirmed as CSW went to press.

The creation of an Evaluation Task Force within the Treasury was first announced in the 2020 Spending Review. In 2021, the task force was given joint control of an evaluation accelerator fund worth £15m over three years to help government fill “strategic evidence gaps” around which policies work well. The SR21 document said the task force had worked with government departments in “important areas” to ensure spending proposals are supported by robust evaluation plans. Examples



COMMENCE A REVIEW PROGRAMME FOR ARM'S-LENGTH BODIES AND INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR DEPARTMENTAL SPONSORSHIP, UNDERPINNED BY CLEAR PERFORMANCE METRICS AND RIGOROUS NEW GOVERNANCE AND SPONSORSHIP STANDARDS.

Departmental arm's-length bodies were already subject to both "tailored reviews" looking at their individual structure and performance, and "functional reviews" that considered groups of ALBs and agencies – for example, those with regulatory responsibilities or those working in related policy areas – to identify opportunities for reform.

As the last public bodies reform strategy ran only until 2020, a new Public Bodies



Reform Programme has now been established across the Treasury and the Cabinet Office and is expected to publish new guidance for reviews of public bodies shortly. Meanwhile, departments have identified which ALBs they will

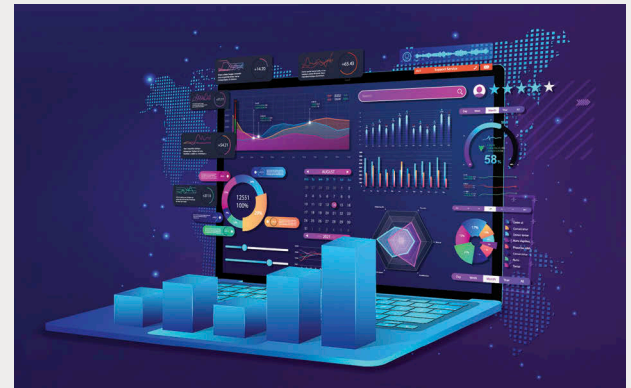
prioritise for review, and the Cabinet Office and Treasury team has delivered induction events for new public body non-executives to support their development and improve governance of these organisations.



ENSURE ALL DATA IS AS OPEN AS POSSIBLE TO PUBLIC AND THIRD PARTIES.

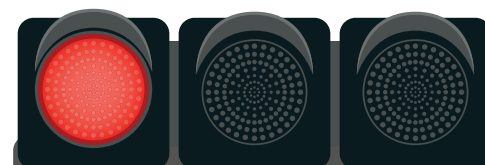
When CSW requested an update on this action, we were pointed towards two initiatives. Firstly, GDS and CDDO's work to help departments share data more readily by, for example, improving quality, availability and access to data as well as developing standards and assurance that can support data sharing.

Secondly, the Office for National Statistics' new Integrated Data Service, which gives researchers access to data from a range of sources – as well as visualisation and analysis tools – through a single, cloud-based system. The IDS was launched for private beta-testing in October 2021,



focusing on three policy areas and accessible only to government researchers. At the time, it was expected to be opened for testing by researchers outside government in spring 2022. CSW understands it is now hoped that it will be operational in 2023.

HMRC's Wellington Place hub in Leeds



PUBLISH A CENTRAL RECORD (DOMESDAY BOOK) OF ALL GOVERNMENT PROPERTY - DEPARTMENT BY DEPARTMENT AND AGENCY BY AGENCY.

With over 136,000 buildings covering 156 million square metres of space, compiling a Domesday Book of central government property is no mean feat. The Cabinet Office's latest *State of the Estate* report,

published in December 2021, made a step towards the goal by grouping property by portfolio (such as offices, courts, prisons) for the first time and noted that departments have started to follow new, centrally-mandated reporting standards which should also support the work. However, according to a letter sent by Cabinet Office minister Steve Barclay to the PACAC in February, "the scale of the activity required" to create the central record "has been more significant than anticipated and has also encountered some delays". So the database needed to fulfil this is still in the design and build phase, with core functionality expected to be ready for testing and a private beta rollout in the next financial year.



REVISE GUIDANCE ON CABINET COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE TO ENSURE RELEVANT SENIOR OFFICIALS ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE WHERE APPROPRIATE, AND TO REPLICATE ACROSS ALL RELEVANT COMMITTEES BEST PRACTICE ON TRACKING ACTIONS AND DECISIONS



HOLD EXTRAORDINARY CABINET MEETINGS AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR, BRINGING TOGETHER CABINET AND THE PERMANENT SECRETARIES, TO REVIEW PROGRESS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S KEY PRIORITIES

The National Security Council was the first ministerial committee to involve relevant officials as participants rather than simple record-keeping observers, but the approach came into its own as the UK prepared to leave the EU. The EU Exit (Operations) Committee – known as XO and chaired by Michael Gove – met daily to track progress of exit preparations and included a changing roster of officials. According to an Institute for Government analysis of the system, “giving officials a seat at the table, rather than have them sit silently at the back” meant that “ministers

were able to draw on their analysis and expertise throughout the meeting.

The XO committee sat underneath an EU Exit Strategy (XS) committee which included just five senior ministers. This model of having a small strategy committee and larger operational committee including relevant officials has now been extended to a number of policy areas – the latest list of cabinet committees published in October 2021 includes four examples.

CSW understands work has begun on the second part of this action, relating to best practice on tracking actions, but has not yet been completed.

In another example of government setting itself a task which had already been completed, CSW understands that this action is considered to have been fulfilled by the meeting between cabinet ministers and permanent secretaries at which the Declaration on Government Reform was agreed.

This was the first time all perm secs and cabinet ministers had met together and there was, according to the speech given by Michael Gove to launch the DGR, “a unity of resolve that we need to see these changes through”.

Another such meeting is expected to be arranged in 2022, when ministers and officials will restate their commitment to the DGR.

COMPLETE A REVIEW OF MODELS OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DECISIONS, DRAWING ON INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCES DURING THE PANDEMIC AND TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE ROLE AND DESIGN OF MINISTERIAL DIRECTIONS.



COMPLETE A REVIEW OF CIVIL SERVICE GOVERNANCE, INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF THE APPROPRIATE ROLES FOR SENIOR OFFICIALS, NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS AND MINISTERS

These two linked reviews form the core of government’s ambitions under the “partnership” heading. The full text of the document describes the “unique partnership that exists between Ministers and officials, who work together to create and deliver policy” as one of the great strengths of the UK system of government.

To improve this partnership, it says, there should be a “unity of purpose and of action” created by greater accountability and clearer roles and targets for both ministers and officials. Establishing this clarity will “create an environment that supports open, collaborative policy-making and well-judged risk-taking, with the focus on delivery”.

While the focus on international comparators may reflect ministerial preferences, the

commitment to learn from experiences in the pandemic may reflect the influence of cabinet secretary Simon Case. Speaking at the University of Newcastle last year, Case explained how he hoped to avoid making the same mistake as senior officials in the 1940s who did not set up a formal review of how the state performed during the Second World War and subsequently – according to Case and his one-time PhD supervisor Lord Hennessey – missed the chance to radically change Whitehall for the better. “To avoid the curse of the ‘missed opportunity’ now, we must hold on to the lessons we have

learned – good and bad,” Case said.

Neither of these reviews have yet been completed, but officials are finalising the scope and approach of each with ministers. Reviews are expected to start in the spring. ■





HELPING HANDS

As leaders aim to create a civil service that works more effectively with other sectors and better understands the people it serves, **Jon Franklin** argues that volunteering could be a vital force for change, as well as good

The Declaration on Government Reform sets out ambitions from the top for a civil service and ministerial team that “work better” in the future. The ambition is for government to become more open and “porous”. To this end, there are pledges to operate more seamlessly with institutions outside of government, to deepen the understanding of citizens

in all parts of the country and to continue investing in personal development.

Volunteering within the charity sector is one way to accomplish all three of these goals.

Some parts of the civil service work daily with charity and community groups, such as academy trusts, specialist health charities, organisations vital to the rehabilitation of offenders, or the groups which safeguard

our environment. But for many civil servants, the charity sector can feel distant. Indeed, new research by the Law Family Commission on Civil Society found that only one in five civil servants had any contact with charities as part of their job. But that is not down to a lack of interest. In total, 60% thought that there should be more engagement between policymakers and charities, while 40% believed their own department >>



should establish closer links with the sector.

There are good reasons for this. Involvement with the charity sector can be both motivating – fuelling the commitment to public service which brings many civil

carefully – but ultimately incredibly rewarding. The opportunity to work on new issues, alongside organisations on the frontline of some of the most difficult social challenges, was both eye-opening and energising. And the rewards of my voluntary efforts were not limited to just the charity and me. The experience helped me to develop stronger communication skills which I brought back into my day job in the civil service.

munication and digital skills together with charities into specialist mentoring roles and into technical ones, as CRM analysts, web developers and social media volunteers. Many charities are crying out for a few hours of HR expertise to help them to get their policies right, or someone to give a bit of advice about their financial systems.

The act of looking for opportunities can be daunting, with many charities looking for long-term, regular commitments. But if you look in the right places, the opportunities are there to fit any lifestyle.

Covid has driven a change in how volunteering is offered, to provide more flexibility for people to fit charity work around busy lives. Far more opportunities are now remote, such as helpline and admin roles. With charities such as Inspiring the Future, volunteers can provide virtual mentoring and speak at careers assemblies via Zoom, as well as offering CV support to school and college students over email.

Charity trusteeships are a tremendous way to develop leadership skills and to get a new perspective on making effective decisions, or on how to deliver change and improvements. And most trustee roles only require a few hours once a quarter – a couple for meeting prep followed by the meeting itself. Those who get really inspired and want deeper involvement can always take up the optional extras, like positions on remuneration, finance or risk committees, or informal roles supporting staff members.

The need in the voluntary sector for civil servants’ skills should not be underestimated: it is not just lawyers who can do pro bono work after all.

A civil service which volunteers more is one with greater skills and motivation,

that is better at delivering and more in touch with the citizens it serves. Every department has great examples of team members making excellent use of the volunteering days made avail-

able to them. There are opportunities to volunteer even with the most demanding schedules. Have you used your hours yet? ■

Jon Franklin is a former civil servant and chief economist at Pro Bono Economics

Good day's work Volunteers clean the banks of the Thames in London, but there are many opportunities to share skills virtually as well



servants into government – and informative, helping to ground the government’s work in the experiences of people civil servants might not otherwise encounter.

Volunteering itself provides a boost to wellbeing, as well as ample opportunity for self-development. For those looking simply to broaden their experience, there is an incredibly wide range of sectors, organisational sizes, geographic ranges and structures to get involved in. And for those who want to demonstrate strengths such as adaptability, strategic thinking, or being a learner, networker or challenger, volunteering can be invaluable.

This was certainly my experience of volunteering for a charity during my 13 years as an economist in the Government Economic Service. I found the two projects I worked on challenging and demanding – requiring me to plan and manage my time

Websites such as Reach Volunteering, Do IT and Volunteering Matters are good places to start when looking for volunteering opportunities. Many professional bodies will have links to pro bono organisations that can help you apply your skills in the social sector.

Pro Bono Economics – which counts many members of the Government Economic Service as volunteers – puts economists, accountants and data analysts to work on long-term projects, like cost-benefit analyses, or smaller ones, such as fixing up spreadsheets or putting together data visualisations for community groups. The Media Trust brings volunteers with com-

“Far more opportunities are now remote – volunteers can provide virtual mentoring and speak at careers assemblies via Zoom”



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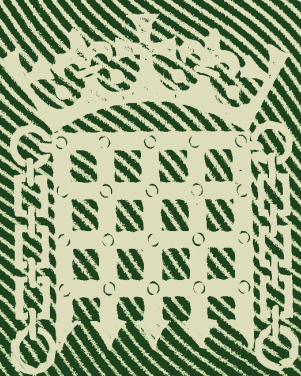
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IN THE HOT SEAT



Select committees have grown in importance so it's all the more crucial to prepare properly when it's your turn to give evidence, as **Stewart Jackson** explains

Although they've been around for over 40 years, since 1979 in fact, select committees have only very recently assumed the important and influential role as integral to the checks and balances of our unique uncoded British constitutional settlement. For many years, the media, the civil service, ministers, business and the third sector were both disinterested in and largely ignorant of the work of select committees, which then had handpicked members (chosen by the party whips) and achieved little of note bar the occasional worthy-if-dull report, which was frequently ignored by the government.

One major exception to this perhaps unfair caricature was the select committee on which I had the great good fortune to serve from 2012 to 2016 – the oldest and most prestigious oversight and scrutiny body in parliament, the Public Accounts Commit-

tee. PAC was first established in 1861, where it oversaw £69m of government spending – equivalent to £8bn now. Today it oversees £800bn worth. Similarly, the nineteenth-century PAC reported once a year in the summer rather than twice a week during parliamentary sittings, as is now the custom.

In these ferociously partisan times, it's pretty astonishing, too, that there has never been a public vote in a PAC meeting in over 150 years: decisions are reached by debate and are led by evidence and consensus. The committee prides itself on "leaving your party affiliation at the door" of the committee room. Amazing but true.

Still, unlike any other select committee, which are often clerked with a skeleton staff of maybe three or four officials, the PAC has the intellectual and repetitional muscle of the National Audit Office – around 800 accountants, auditors and lawyers – to fall back on.



The PAC is exceptional but the trend nevertheless in the last ten years has meant all select committees really count – for MPs, policy wonks, taxpayers and businesses, especially those seeking to safeguard and enhance their reputations and those who work to provide services for the government. Ever since the reforms in the 2010-15 parliament, which meant select committee chairs were elected by all MPs and individual members by their parliamentary party caucuses, the power of the whips has been broken and securing a seat on a high-profile committee can be lucrative, rewarding and career enhancing.

In truth, if you do the job properly, serving diligently on a select committee is hard work and not a task for which your demanding constituents are often likely to thank you for. They often assume if you're not in the chamber or the constituency, you must be skiving. It was ever thus. The media also

now understand in a way they never did before that select committee reports can be a rich mine of topical and interesting stories about waste, incompetence, corruption, risk-taking, arrogance and the like. They can also be a showcase for flamboyant and newsworthy witnesses and showboating and media-savvy chairs, like my old boss Dame Margaret Hodge, who chaired the PAC between 2010 and 2015 and who almost singlehandedly relaunched the committee as a trailblazer after a quiet few years. Dame Margaret put the massive issue of corporate tax avoidance front and centre of British polity as she slowly and methodically eviscerated business giants Google, Starbucks and Amazon in 2012. Others followed in her wake, such as Andrew Tyrie at the Treasury Select Committee and Keith Vaz at the Home Affairs Select Committee. The drama and sense of occasion present at key hearings have been great box-office entertainment on social and traditional media and, to be candid, has occasionally led those committees to chase ratings rather than inquiring solely into the efficacy of government policy or taxpayer value for money. In short, it's not been unalloyed good news.

That said, select committees fulfil an important function in holding ministers and, in the case of the PAC, senior civil servants to account. The reputation of a permanent secretary can be completely shredded by a poor committee performance, with ramifications within their department and for their ministerial team. They shine a harsh light on conspiracies and cock-ups, on ministerial failings and minor triumphs, on institutional and structural failings, and it rights wrongs that "the system" too often misses in the hurly-burly of governing a complex, multi-faceted, modern, rich democracy. They really can damage and maybe even break careers. The reason ministers hate appearing before them is not just because the evidence session is one of the few occasions that they are not in control and indeed adrift in front of a hostile committee and microphones and cameras, but that the preparation for the session will have meant many hours of homework and second-guessing potential gotcha moments and curveball questions with their officials and special advisors. Even veteran performers like Michael Gove make sure that they're ready for combat and that's

indicative of the fact that the government takes these grillings and the subsequent reports much more seriously than hitherto.

Ambitious civil servants know that ministers, permanent secretaries, special advisers, private offices, other departments and their contemporaries will be analysing their select committee performances with great interest and that thorough preparation is a necessity and not a luxury. Crashing and burning in front of MPs at a key witness hearing can be career limiting and certainly, at a minimum, embarrassing. I've seen more

“You can sink without trace but you can also save the honour and reputation of your department and win valuable career kudos”

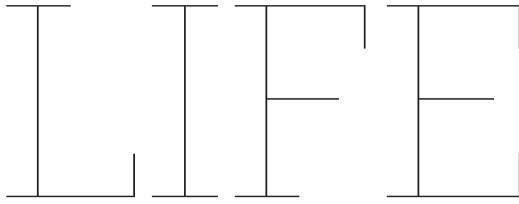
than one perm sec tongue tied, exasperated and crestfallen after a bruising encounter before the PAC.

That said, it's not a one-way street. Yes, you can sink without trace, but you can also save the honour and reputation of your department and win valuable career

kudos into the bargain, with a confident and compelling performance – well briefed but not a smart alec, authoritative but not pompous. Civil servants occasionally appear insular and passionately focused on their very particular work streams, but the very best civil service leaders have a strong strategic overview and a talent for exemplary stakeholder management.

Politics and government is a brutal world where your share price in credibility and influence can evaporate overnight. Why risk a disastrous outing before cranky members of parliament, followed up by a painful mauling in the media and an awkward board meeting or perm sec interview without coffee? Invariably, it works out. The MPs have a job to do, they understand you're a professional taking one for the team and the evidence taking goes without a hitch. Maybe the chair even takes a shine to you, but why take a chance? If you're a risk-taker, you might try to wing it. Otherwise, you'd be wise to get inside the head of your interlocutors and invest in proper prior planning and training. It might save your blushes and your promotion prospects! ■

Stewart Jackson is a Dods training associate and was MP of Peterborough, then a special adviser, from 2005-2018. He served on the Commons Health Select Committee from 2006-2007 and Public Accounts Committee from 2012-2016



BOOKS_FILMS_THEATRE_TV_
PLACES_MUSIC_HISTORY_FOOD
THINGS TO DO OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

BOOKS

An official of the golden generation

A collection of the late Sir Patrick Nairne's writings provides a fascinating counterbalance to breathless accounts of recent events, says **Sir Richard Mottram**

The historian Peter Hennessy has championed a golden generation of civil servants recruited in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War and at the top in the 1970s and early 1980s. Sir Patrick Nairne, who was permanent secretary of the department of Health and Social Security from 1975-1981, was a shining example. He went on to make further contributions to public service.

Today's civil servants may at first sight feel this was all a long time ago. We have all become used to breathless accounts of life inside government appearing with the briefest of intervals after the events described. This book is the opposite, both in its exploration of a full and rewarding life and its reflective nature, and is all the better as a result.

Moreover, readers with a broad interest in history will benefit, as well as those interested in public policy issues that Pat Nairne addressed in ways that are still relevant. The book is also a portrait of a marriage and of family life. While he was the epitome of the conscientious civil servant, he had wider interests in art and watercolour painting in particular, and these too are reflected - including in illustrations of a number of his paintings.

I had the good fortune to work briefly under him in the Ministry of Defence in the early 1970s when he held the top defence policy job, and remember his excellent relationship with then-defence secretary Lord Carington. Many of the pieces in the book illustrate his ability to

marshal and present complex issues cogently, in the best civil service tradition, which was so valued by ministers. In the 1960s, he had served as private secretary to the then-defence secretary Denis Healey. As Healey wrote in a letter of thanks when he left his office, "management has always been uniquely a Nairne forte", which added to his appeal for ministers, while it may be a worrying comment about the rest of the civil service at that time.

So what led to this book now and why its title *The Coincidence of Novembers*? The book essentially consists of pieces written by Nairne at different times now brought together and presented in chronological order in phases of his life: from family history and school days, through his service in the army in the Second World War, his truncated period as an undergraduate before and after the war, to his career in the civil service, and to his life after leaving the civil service. This material is all skilfully linked together by the book's editor, one of his sons, Sandy Nairne. The "coincidence" refers to the way in which significant staging posts in his life seemed to occur in Novembers in particular.

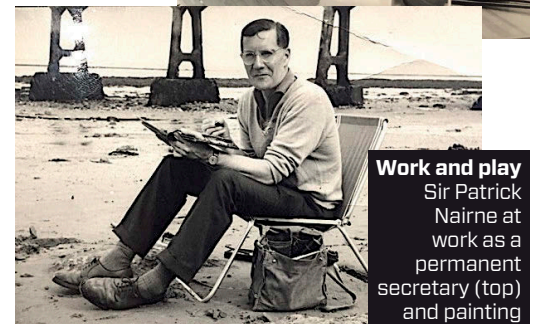
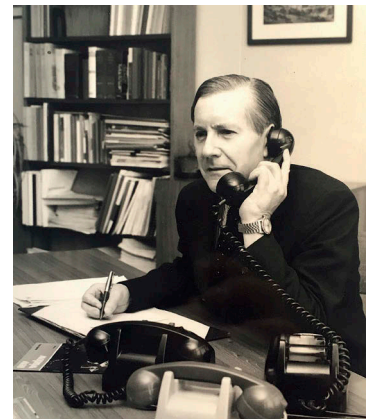
For those interested in military history, there are characteristically modest descriptions of aspects of his service as an intelligence officer in the Seaforth Highlanders, for which he was awarded the Military Cross.

For those interested in the debate over civil service career paths, having entered the home civil service in 1947, he was posted to the Admiralty, which was later merged into the MoD. After a variety of postings, all in the area of naval policy (as well as a period absent with tuberculosis), he became Healey's private secretary in 1965 and left on promotion to what would now be termed director level in 1967, aged 46. This was a dif-

ferent career path to some today, including in expectations of promotion and depth of expertise in departmental business.

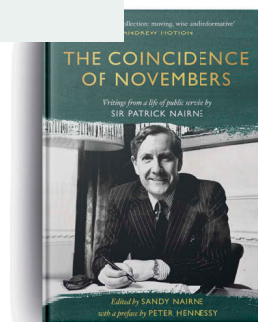
For those interested in public policy, there is much of interest. Examples include that he had headed the European Secretariat in the Cabinet Office at the time of the first referendum on membership of the European Economic Community and much later he chaired a commission on the conduct of referendums whose findings are explored here. He was, too, a member of the Franks Committee on the invasion of the Falkland Islands and writes in a fascinating way about their controversial conclusions.

A less happy coincidence than those described in the book was that its initial publication in 2020 was swamped by the impact of Covid. It merits visiting now, in less fraught times - in Covid terms, at least. ■



Work and play
Sir Patrick Nairne at work as a permanent secretary (top) and painting

› *The Coincidence of Novembers: Writings from a life of public service* by Sir Patrick Nairne
› Edited by Sandy Nairne
› Published by Unbound



Sir Richard Mottram is a former civil servant who served as a permanent secretary in four departments



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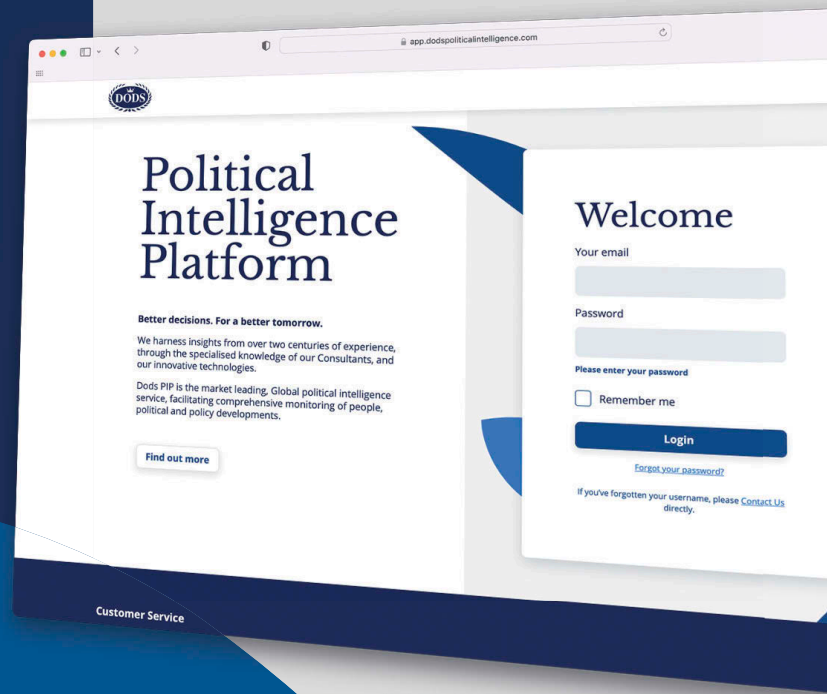
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