

FOR SENIOR
MANAGERS AND
PROFESSIONALS

public service magazine

SPRING 2018

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of mind**

*The big culture shift on
workplace mental health*

**Paymasters and
generals**

*Defence Permanent
Secretary Stephen
Lovegrove talks to PSM*

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In this issue

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Welcome

Craig Ryan, Editor



Twenty years ago, in March 1998, the FDA published the first issue of *Public Service Magazine*. The cover featured a “scary skeleton” face superimposed on

a picture of a ghostly figure on a grand staircase, which might just have passed for somewhere in Whitehall. The headline was: “Ghost in the machine: who’s afraid of digital government?” It was all a bit scary and new in those days.

PSM marked a big step forward in the union’s communications. Our mission was threefold: to keep members fully informed; promote the FDA’s aims and values; and encourage debate about the issues that matter to members. The content, format and (I hope) our covers have improved in 20 years, but the mission remains the same.

Now, as the FDA prepares to celebrate its centenary next year (see p30), we’re anticipating another leap forward with the forthcoming launch of our brand-new website. The new site looks gorgeous and will allow us to bring you lots more coverage of the issues that matter to you, much more quickly – as well as online access to everything in PSM. I can’t wait.

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News

Share your news with us at psm@fda.org.uk

Impartiality

Brexit Minister forced to apologise for undermining civil service

Brexit Minister Steve Baker (pictured) has been forced to apologise for undermining the civil service and failing to challenge unfounded conspiracy theories in the House of Commons.

In what FDA General Secretary Dave Penman described as an “extraordinary scene”, Baker told the Commons on 30 January he did not believe the analysis of his own department because he thought civil service forecasts are “always wrong”.

His comments came after leaked forecasts produced by the Department for Exiting the European Union (DEEU) suggested that the UK’s economy would be worse off in every scenario after Brexit.

Baker suggested that the document was “an attempt to undermine our exit from the European Union”, describing it as “a selective interpretation of a preliminary analysis”.

Penman criticised Baker’s comments, claiming that they “not only insult the dedicated professionals working in his department and across the civil service but epitomise the current state of affairs in government”.

He added: “How can civil servants in Mr Baker’s department, who are working harder than ever before, now have confidence in a minister who stands at the despatch box and openly questions their professionalism? The real question, however, is how can a minister prepared to undermine the Government he serves retain the confidence of the Prime Minister?”

Just two days later, Baker faced a further backlash after failing to challenge claims by fellow Conservative MP Jacob Rees-Mogg that Treasury officials had “deliberately developed a model to show



that all options other than staying in the customs union were bad, and that officials intended to use this to influence policy”.

Rees-Mogg’s accusations were based on a conversation that had supposedly taken place between Baker and Charles Grant, director of the Centre for European Reform think tank, and Baker agreed they were “essentially correct”.

In a robust defence of civil service impartiality, Penman described Baker’s failure to challenge Rees-Mogg as “the height of irresponsibility from a serving minister” and warned that his

“cowardly actions” were “beneath the office he holds” and risked “seriously undermining the Government he is a part of”.

After Grant himself came forward to challenge the claims and audio of the conversation was made available, Baker was forced to return to the dispatch box to “correct the record”.

Apologising to the House, Baker conceded that he “should have corrected or dismissed” Rees-Mogg’s assertion that Treasury officials were fiddling figures, and stressed that he “has the highest regard for our hardworking civil servants”.

Despite Baker’s apology, Rees-Mogg continued to voice his complaints, prompting a sharp rebuke from FDA General Secretary Dave Penman, who appeared on BBC’s Newsnight to urge the MP to “put up or shut up” and produce evidence for his claims.

Penman added: “His refusal to apologise to Parliament for repeating an unfounded rumour [...] followed by his reiteration of the claims today, is clear evidence that he’s prepared to sacrifice anyone or anything on the altar of his own ideology.”

Following the FDA’s interventions, a number of senior ministers spoke up in favour of civil service impartiality, with Home Secretary Amber Rudd saying she had “complete confidence” in the officials.

Rudd added: “We are envied the world over for the high standards of our civil servants, and I would say now more than ever that we need to make sure that we attract the best into our civil service to take on what is an enormous challenge in terms of leaving the EU.”

“How can civil servants in Mr Baker’s department, who are working harder than ever before, now have confidence in a minister who stands at the despatch box and openly questions their professionalism?”

Dave Penman

The cutting list

FDA in the news

March

Following a Newsnight investigation into bullying and harassment in Westminster, FDA General Secretary Dave Penman called for “radical reform” to protect staff working in the House of Commons.

[Downing St ‘concern’ at MP bullying claims](#)

BBC NEWS

The following evening, FDA Assistant General Secretary Amy Leversidge appeared live on BBC Newsnight and argued for the introduction of a “truly independent system” to tackle harassment and bullying.

Penman then published a blog post on HuffPost UK with a more detailed response, cautioning that, as the media was focusing on the individuals named in Newsnight’s investigation, there was a “real danger” the story could move on without meaningful reform.

[If politicians are serious about cracking down on bullying, here’s what needs to be done](#)

HUFFPOST UK

Penman “cautiously welcomed” the House of Commons Commission’s decision to launch an independent inquiry but insisted that it must look into specific allegations against MPs, after Leader of the Commons Andrea Leadsom appeared to rule out the inquiry dealing with individual cases.

[Westminster bullying claims: House of Commons approves independent investigation into allegations MPs mistreated staff](#)

HUFFPOST UK

Dave Penman then wrote directly to all Westminster party leaders calling on them to “put aside politics” and publicly back an independent inquiry that investigates individual cases.

[Westminster bullying: Party leaders urged by civil service union to back inquiry into allegations against MPs](#)

HUFFPOST UK



Obituary

Remembering Paul Jenkins: ‘the best of public service’

Sir Paul Jenkins – the outspoken former Treasury Solicitor and Head of the Government Legal Department – died on 26 February, aged 63.

Called to the Bar in 1977, Sir Paul joined the civil service two years later and remained for 37 years, rising to the role of Treasury Solicitor in 2006. He was also a Civil Service Diversity Champion and the first leader of the Government Legal Department (GLD), and was an undeniably passionate advocate for both equality and shared services.

Despite seeing it as personally “pretty meaningless”, Sir Paul recognised the “very powerful signal” sent by his position as a senior gay public servant who was voted onto media lists of influence. In a 2013 *PSM* interview, he said: “Being gay is not just for Elton John and Stephen Fry – it’s about ordinary people doing ordinary jobs, and that’s why it’s important to me.”

Sir Paul was also a long-standing member of the FDA. In the same interview, he told *PSM* editor Kay Hender: “I’m a huge fan of the FDA, I’ve been a member of the FDA since 1979 and I’m very proud of the fact I’m a member of the FDA.”

Sir Paul retired from the civil service in 2014, but the child of two public servants found it difficult to leave completely. When taking up what would become his final position as Master Treasurer at Middle Temple – a professional society for barristers – he needed a coat of arms with a motto. In one of his last interviews, he told *Civil Service World* that he would eschew the traditional Latin, instead opting for “Speak truth unto power”.

Cabinet Secretary Sir Jeremy Heywood called Sir Paul’s death “shattering news”, referring to him as “one of the finest public servants of his generation and the warmest, most vivacious of colleagues”. Jenkins’s successor at GLD, Jonathan Jones, called Sir Paul a “wise lawyer, proud public servant, loyal friend, incorrigible gossip, frank and funny tweeter, great human being”.

FDA General Secretary Dave Penman said Sir Paul “represented the best of public service – a respected professional, a charismatic leader, a champion for equality and an advocate for his union. We know many members will have fond memories of him and will be mourning his untimely passing.”

Working hours

FDA challenges Gove for peddling working hours “myths”

FDA National Officer Steven Littlewood has met with Environment Secretary Michael Gove to discuss reports that the minister had accused civil servants in his department of clock-watching.

The *Sunday Times* reported that Gove told Cabinet colleagues that his officials “work their 37 hours a week and then they go home, even if that is Wednesday afternoon”. He also reportedly asked whether civil servants “still work for 12 hours and get two days off”.

In a letter to Gove, Littlewood requested an urgent meeting and highlighted findings from the FDA’s own Working Hours Survey which found that the problem of excess hours is in fact endemic across the civil service. 95% of respondents in Gove’s Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) reported working more than their contracted hours every week, while 90% say excessive hours are a problem in the department.

He also pressed the Environment Secretary to clarify whether the reported comments were “an accurate record” of his views on working hours at Defra.

In his response to Littlewood, Gove acknowledged the “commitment, dedication, passion and hard work” of his department’s civil servants and said he takes the issue of excessive working hours “very seriously indeed”.



“Michael Gove’s comments on the working hours of civil servants paint a picture unrecognisable to FDA members”

Steven Littlewood

However, Gove refused to confirm or deny whether the quotes attributed to him by the *Sunday Times* accurately represented his views on Defra members’ working hours, saying that he “cannot, of course, comment on Cabinet discussions”.

Littlewood met with the Environment Secretary on 22 March and reiterated that the comments attributed to him “painted a picture unrecognisable to FDA members”.

During the meeting, which Littlewood described as “positive and constructive”, he advised Gove that many FDA members had reported their appreciation for his leadership in the department, which is why they were “so disappointed” with the comments attributed to him.

The Environment Secretary reportedly declared his gratitude to and admiration for civil servants and the FDA has pledged to work with the department on solutions to the problem of excessive working hours.

Littlewood added that he will “ensure that the agreed attention to reasonable workloads for members is now taken forward with the department” and called on the department to acknowledge that civil servants need “appropriate resources” to support their work and deliver government commitments.

Job vacancy

Civil Service Pensioners’ Alliance seeks new General Secretary

The Civil Service Pensioners’ Alliance (CSPA) is advertising for a new General Secretary, following the announcement that the incumbent, Mike Duggan, is to retire in Autumn 2018.

The CSPA provides bespoke member services and benefits, and campaigns on

issues concerning older people in general, and civil service pensioners in particular.

The organisation is particularly interested in candidates who have recently retired from the civil service, who have a good knowledge of public service pension schemes and an empathy with, and a willingness to campaign on, the challenges facing older people.

Based at the CSPA headquarters in Croydon, the position is full-time with a starting annual salary of £49,410, rising to £52,690 after one year. There is a paid annual leave allowance of six weeks,

excluding public holidays.

Anyone interested in applying for the job should request an application pack from CSPA Deputy Office Manager Marion McAuliffe, either by email to marion.mcauliffe@cspa.co.uk, by calling 020 8688 8418 or in writing to CSPA, 8th Floor, Grosvenor House, 125 High Street, Croydon CR0 9XP.

The closing date for applications is Friday 4 May 2018, with interviews for shortlisted candidates being held during the week commencing Monday 25 June 2018.

Leadership

FDA President joins Guardian public leaders board

FDA President Gareth Hills has been appointed to the editorial advisory board of the *Guardian's* Public Leaders Network.

Each year, the paper's dedicated section for public servants selects a range of leaders from its target audience to help provide expert insight and guidance on the issues covered. The 2018 board consists of nine leaders across the public sector, including representatives from central and local government, social care, emergency services and the voluntary sector.

Hills – a long-serving tax inspector at HM Revenue and Customs as well as President of the FDA – said he aims to provide the Public Leaders Network with “a ‘frontline’ view of public leadership”.

“2018 promises to be another challenging year for all public services

and all public servants, and I hope to use this role to shape debates on public leadership in a way that helps all FDA members, whether on the frontline or closer to Whitehall,” he added.

Following the advisory board's first meeting in February, Hills revealed that “one common theme quickly emerged – the real harsh and negative affect that austerity measures have had on public service, on public servants, and on the people we serve”.



“2018 promises to be another challenging year for all public services and all public servants”

Gareth Hills

ADC 2018

Melanie Dawes set to speak at FDA annual conference

Members attending this year's FDA Annual Delegate Conference will hear from one of the civil service's most senior officials, Melanie Dawes, when they gather in London on 11 May.

Dawes, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), has been confirmed as keynote speaker at the conference.

She also has substantial experience at the centre of government, serving as gender champion for the civil service, and sitting on both the Senior Leadership Committee and the Civil Service Board, which is responsible for the strategic leadership of the organisation as a whole.

Prior to joining the MHCLG, Dawes was Director General of the influential Economic and Domestic Affairs Secretariat in the Cabinet Office. She has also worked at senior level for HM Revenue and Customs and spent 15 years in the Treasury.

The ADC also offers delegates the chance to debate the key issues facing civil service leaders and set the priorities of the union for the year ahead.



Key topics set for discussion this year include equal pay, performance management, workload, harassment and bullying, and civil service impartiality.

Delegates will also have a chance to discuss the future development of the union, find out about professional development and networking opportunities, and learn about plans to mark the FDA's centenary in 2019.

The Annual Delegate Conference takes place on 10 May at Mary Ward House, Tavistock Place, London WC1. All FDA members are encouraged to attend as observers. For more information, email adc@fda.org.uk.

The cutting list

FDA in the news

February

The FDA defended the impartiality and professionalism of civil servants after Brexit Minister Steve Baker used two separate parliamentary sessions to criticise government economists and give credence to an unfounded accusation of bias among Treasury officials. Baker was eventually forced to apologise in Parliament for his comments.

Brexit minister Steve Baker in civil service row apology

BBC NEWS

Brexit minister forced into apology for maligning civil service

THE GUARDIAN

Brexit Minister Steve Baker has apologised for suggesting he'd heard about a pro-remain plot

BUZZFEED

Brexit boss labels his own officials wrong

METRO

Brexit minister Steve Baker attacks civil servants over leaked impact paper

THE TIMES

PM will not sack Brexit minister over civil service 'conspiracy theory' row

DAILY MAIL

Tory minister Steve Baker says sorry to parliament over civil servants Brexit sabotage row

POLITICS HOME

Jacob Rees-Mogg doubled down on the accusations that Treasury officials were “fiddling the figures” in Brexit forecasts, leading Dave Penman to step up his defence of the civil service in interviews on Sky News, Channel 4 News and the BBC News Channel. His comments also featuring on BBC One's national Weekend News.

This resulted in coverage on BBC Radio 4 and Radio 5 Live as well as significant coverage on regional BBC radio stations, including BBC Radio Wales, BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Radio Ulster.

Bullying

Westminster bullying probe must not duck past cases, says FDA

The FDA has given cautious backing to a new inquiry into the bullying and harassment of parliamentary staff by MPs – but warned that the probe cannot shy away from investigating individual cases.

In the wake of allegations – first aired by BBC Newsnight – that staff in Parliament have been subjected to systemic bullying and abuse, the House of Commons Commission launched a fresh investigation, with the search for an independent figure to lead the inquiry underway as *PSM* went to press.

The Commission, which oversees staff management in Parliament, has asked its non-executive members to find a chair and develop terms of reference for the probe, and the FDA has made it clear that there must be effective redress for staff who have been failed by the existing policies governing MPs' behaviour in Parliament.

FDA General Secretary Dave Penman has written to all of Westminster's major party leaders – including Prime Minister Theresa May, Labour's Jeremy Corbyn and the Liberal Democrats' Vince Cable – calling on them to publicly show their support for the independent inquiry and the need to investigate specific claims.

Following a meeting with Clerks in the House of Commons, Penman told the party leaders that the current complaints and grievance policy – known as 'Respect' – could no longer "carry the trust and confidence of staff", and called on them to back "an effective and properly resourced mechanism for investigating complaints and, where necessary, applying sanctions to MPs".

This new policy must, the FDA General Secretary added, "be fully independent of Parliament and the political parties" and "any independent inquiry into bullying must consider the individual cases of staff if they wish to bring these forward. There must be redress for those staff who have been unable or unwilling to raise complaints because of the failings of the Respect policy."

Penman's letter came amid indications from House of Commons Leader Andrea



"The standards of behaviour shown by MPs breach any basic principle of conduct in the workplace"

Amy Leversidge

Leadsom that the inquiry may not be asked to look at individual cases, a position the FDA believes will hinder its ability to learn effective lessons and secure a fair hearing for those affected by MPs' behaviour.

Responding to a question in the House of Commons, Leadsom said: "The inquiry into the bullying of House staff... will not be carrying out investigations into individual cases. That is exactly why I expect it to attract the Commission's full support".

But, updating FDA members on the union's position, Assistant General Secretary Amy Leversidge said the Commons authorities must not take a "year zero" approach that prevents past

cases from being heard.

"The standards of behaviour shown by MPs breach any basic principle of conduct in the workplace, and there must be redress for those staff who have been unable to raise concerns due to the failings of the Respect policy," she said.

"The independent inquiry must allow staff to raise complaints which can be investigated independently. This is also important for future bullying and harassment cases, because there is often the need to demonstrate patterns of behaviour – something which cannot be done if MPs decide to start again with a clean slate."

Meanwhile, the civil service has been reviewing its own policies for dealing with bullying. FDA members last year took part in a bullying and harassment survey, which has informed the union's negotiations with the review team led by DCMS Permanent Secretary Sue Owen. The review's findings are expected to be published shortly.

Revolving Door

Civil service starters, movers and leavers



Rob Macaire has been named as Her Majesty's new ambassador to Iran, succeeding **Nicholas Hopton** as the UK's man in Tehran. Macaire

first joined the Ministry of Defence in 1987, transferring to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1990, where he focused on the Middle East and counter-terrorism. He is the FCO's former Director of Consular Services, and moves to the Iran job after a stint as Director of Political Risk for oil and gas multinational BG Group and then as a language trainer. The FCO said in a statement that Hopton would be transferring to another Diplomatic Service post.



Elsewhere in the FCO, **Frank Baker** has been appointed as HM ambassador to Libya. Baker has been with the FCO since 1981 and was

previously the UK's ambassador in Baghdad and, before that, Kuwait City. Baker has spent a significant chunk of his career in Washington, having been posted there on secondment from 1996 to 1998 before again returning to DC as a political and military counsellor from 2000 to 2007, a period that covered the second Gulf War. He succeeds **Peter Millett** in the Libyan post.

Nick Jobling has taken over as interim Chief Executive of the Met Office, following the departure of **Rob Varley**. Jobling steps up from his former job as Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer of the national weather service. The Met Office said Jobling's appointment was "pending the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive in due course".

Professor Monojit Chatterji has been appointed for a three-year term as a member of both the Police Remuneration Review Body and the National Crime Agency Review Body, the independent bodies which

recommend pay levels for the police and the NCA respectively. Chatterji is Director of Studies in Economics at Trinity Hall, Cambridge and also a fellow of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. He has previously carried out work for the School Teachers Review Body, the Welsh Remuneration Board and the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA).



Baroness Stowell has been named as the next chair of the Charity Commission, succeeding **William Shawcross**.

Stowell has been a Conservative peer since 2011, and served as Leader of the House of Lords under then-Prime Minister David Cameron from 2014 to 2016. Prior to her political career, Stowell was a civil servant, having joined the Ministry of Defence in 1986 before transferring to the Downing Street Press Office. Her appointment as head of the charity regulator has met with some controversy, with MPs on the Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee rejecting her candidacy. Their objections were overruled by Culture Secretary Matt Hancock, who said Stowell would be "a brilliant chair of the Charity Commission".

Julie Lennard has been named as interim chief executive of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), taking over from Oliver Morley, who is moving on to become the new CEO of the Pension Protection Fund. Lennard joined the DVLA in 2014 as the agency's Director of Strategy, Policy and Communications. She has previously worked at the National Archives and the consumer organisation Which?.

Have you or someone you work with recently joined or left the public service? Please let us know at psm@fda.org.uk

My alternative career



Paula Houghton
HMRC Training and Development Manager

As a teenager, all I wanted to do was join HM Armed Forces. After university, I joined the Royal Navy but my career was cut short by an accident - so that would be the obvious choice for my alternative career, wouldn't it? Well, maybe, but if I am looking back and can choose anything, perhaps it should be something I never did.

I spend a huge proportion of my own time working with teenagers these days. I currently run two Air Cadet squadrons and I love almost every minute of it. The opportunity to offer experiences to kids who wouldn't otherwise get them - climbing, kayaking, target shooting, camping, flying and a whole host of other things - is the most rewarding thing in the world.

You haven't lived until you've seen a 13-year old's excitement when they land after flying their first loop-the-loop! So, if I could convince somebody to pay me for it, I would be working in that area.

Organising

Better representation for FDA Fast Stream members

The FDA's Fast Stream section committee was set up last year to boost representation for Fast Stream members. Damon Fairley looks back on a successful first year and sets out the committee's priorities for the year ahead.

Just under a year ago, the FDA Fast Stream section committee was established to provide an enhanced representative structure for Fast Stream FDA members. As the recognised trade union for Fast Streamers, the FDA has always provided a strong voice for these grades and has achieved much, not least the mid-scheme pay uplift for centrally-managed Fast Streamers. By setting up the section committee, the FDA has been able to involve more members in their union and provide grassroots representation to the civil service Fast Stream team, which manages the scheme across government.

In its first year, the Fast Stream section committee has been effective at representing members through a period of change within the Fast Stream. Among other things, we've played an active role in ensuring the move from HMRC to the Cabinet Office had a largely positive impact on Fast Streamers, with an increase in starting pay for centrally managed Fast Streamers to £28,000 and a more generous annual leave allowance. We've also been busy representing individual Fast Streamers in ongoing issues including disputes over end of posting reviews and securing reasonable adjustments for members with disabilities.

A key focus for the committee over the coming months will be continuing to raise the profile of the FDA amongst Fast Streamers. This year, we have organised a networking and Q&A event with Antonia Romeo, Permanent Secretary at

the Department for International Trade, and will be hosting an annual general meeting in April – this will be an ideal opportunity to meet and connect with other Fast Streamers, and we encourage all Fast Stream members to attend. Although our reach has improved over the past year, there is still much work to do and we are keen to ensure every Fast Stream FDA member feels supported, represented and involved in their union.

We have also taken a closer look at how our rep structure works, and intend to introduce some changes to improve members' access to our reps. We will continue to work closely with the civil service Fast Stream team – enhancing our already good working relationship – to raise and resolve the concerns and

questions that matter to our members.

If you are a Fast Streamer wanting to get more involved with the FDA, or would just like more information about the Fast Stream section or our events, please contact National Officer Steven Littlewood (steven@fda.org.uk) for further details.

Damon Fairley is Convenor of the FDA Fast Stream section committee.



Nominations are open for the FDA's new 'Impact Award'

The FDA is launching a new 'Impact Award' to celebrate the successes and hard work of branches and reps across the union, and the impact they have on FDA members.

The award will be presented for the first time at this year's Annual Delegate Conference, taking place on Thursday 10 May at Mary Ward House, 5-7 Tavistock Place, London WC1. Nominations can be made for individual members or for branches in the following areas:

Campaigning: where a local campaign has successfully engaged members and/or brought about a win for the FDA

Engagement: for increasing members' involvement in the FDA, achieving high levels of participation in branch structures or surveys, or regular successful events

Branch development: introducing new forms of communication, recruiting members to the branch committee, increasing branch activity levels

Recruitment: for significant recruitment of new members, reversing a declining membership, or recruiting members from unengaged areas or in challenging circumstances

Casework: where a significant win has been achieved – in a difficult case or one that has resulted in wider change within the department

Negotiation: where a win has been achieved for members collectively through negotiations with the employer

Nominations should detail the issue facing members, the work undertaken by the member or branch, the outcome and the impact it has had on members and/or the FDA as a whole. Nominations close on **23 April 2018** and should be sent to FDA Organiser Alan Bailey at organiser@fda.org.uk.

Learning new skills opens up opportunities for everyone



**Neil Rider
applauds one FDA
member's
contribution to
lifelong learning,
and explains how
a better civil
service**

**competency framework could
boost career flexibility.**

I'm delighted to start this column by congratulating longstanding FDA member Lisa McGuinness on winning a prestigious award for helping members develop their careers and build their skills. Lisa has played a pivotal role in developing the FDA's presence in Scotland – especially in the period since the independence referendum, after which she recognised the need for a much more bespoke approach for our members north of the border.

A serving HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) official, Lisa is also a committed trade unionist. She's been a member of the Association of Revenue and Customs (the section representing FDA members in HMRC) since 2006. She took a leading role in ARC's equal pay claim for women members, as well as actively campaigning for civil servants to work their proper hours. But it's Lisa's work on the FDA's professional development and learning services that caught the eye of the Scottish Trades Union Council, who've just handed her the Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning.

Lisa's leading role in learning and development has been her biggest contribution and greatest passion in her union work. Her work has had a real impact, both on people's careers and on their participation in the union movement. Of the 15 women who engaged in the first leadership course in Scotland in 2016, 13 went on to become actively involved in



**Lisa's work on learning
and development has
had a real impact, both on
people's careers and on their
participation in the union
movement.**

union leadership, and Lisa played an essential role in helping the FDA to deliver two major Women Into Leadership conferences. A big thanks to Lisa from all of us at the FDA and Keystone - and if you'd like to get involved in helping to deliver our courses, or know of an employer who might be interested, do drop me a line!

Competency refresh

FDA and Keystone members often tell me that one of the things they want most in their career is flexibility. They want to be able to take the skills they've developed and seek out new opportunities in other civil service departments, or in the NHS and the wider public sector. We've long believed that governments of all stripes need to do more to support this. The existing competency system is too fragmented, and is locking people

into their own departments by making highly specific and pretty inconsistent requirements for job candidates. That's bad for our members, as it constrains their horizons, but it's also bad for public services because it limits the sharing of valuable expertise and fresh perspectives across government.

That's why it was encouraging to get a preview of the new Competency Framework at Civil Service Live. The planned new system appears to strike a much better balance between experience, ability, behaviours and the technical and professional skills required in a job. But, as ever, the devil will be in the detail. As the Cabinet Office consults with unions on its plans, the FDA and Keystone will keep making the case for a competency system that removes barriers to success, and allows qualified people to apply for jobs across the civil service – regardless of the department they happen to work for. If you have any thoughts on what you'd like to see, please get in touch with me on neil@fda.org.uk.

Neil Rider is head of FDA Learn and Keyskills.

Meet the FDA

YOUR
UNION

Two people working for the FDA tell us something about themselves and what they do for members.

Amy Leversidge

Assistant General Secretary

Working in a call centre to fund her studies for a Master's in sociology proved a real eye-opener for Amy Leversidge, the FDA's new Assistant General Secretary. "It really was awful the way staff were treated," she recalls. "Decisions were made about you with no consultation, and there was no trade union recognition. One of the things that people would say all the time was: 'If we had a trade union, they wouldn't be able to treat us like this.'"

Amy's colleagues soon marked her out as someone they could turn to for support. "Although there was no recognition, staff could bring a mate in if they were in trouble," she explains. "People would ask me to go in and represent them – so I ended up acting as a kind of rep!"

After leaving the call centre, Amy started working in 2009 as a Research

and Policy Officer at the Police Superintendents' Association of England and Wales, where she dug into the detail as austerity started to hit the middle ranks of police forces across the country. After two years, she joined the Royal College of Midwives, where she worked as an Employment Relations Adviser for six and a half years. Her work at the RCM included organising the first industrial action by midwives in the RCM's 134-year history, in a dispute over NHS pay.

Amy, a keen runner and theatre-goer, was on honeymoon with her husband Stuart when she heard she'd got the FDA job. "I've always admired the FDA and thought: 'That is the union that I'd really like to work for'," she says. "It's got an interesting membership, it's

“The FDA has an interesting membership, it's sensible, pragmatic and really focused on members”

sensible, pragmatic and really focused on members." Since starting work in January, she says she has been struck by the real sense of "camaraderie" among the staff. Her biggest moment so far has, she says, been her appearance on BBC's Newsnight where she made the case for major reform in the oversight of MPs' behaviour towards House of Commons staff.

The Assistant General Secretary heaps praise on the FDA's "absolutely brilliant" reps in Parliament, who she says have "really been in touch with the members and know what members want us to do". Amy is leading the FDA's push for a fully independent inquiry into bullying in the Commons, which will investigate individual complaints.

"MPs need to give a reason why they can't be held to account for this," she says. "I think this is bigger than the expenses scandal, in terms of the impact it's had on people... It's for MPs to have that courage to give up their power and do the right thing."

Matt Foster

Esther Farnese

Office and Systems Manager



Esther started at the FDA after a diverse career that included stints with an insurance company, an advertising agency, a travel agency and oil multinational Shell. That was 20 years ago and Esther is now one of the longest serving members of FDA staff. "Before starting with the FDA, I'd wanted to work for a trade union for ages, and this is now the longest I've ever stayed with an

employer – and there's a reason for that," Esther says.

She credits the FDA's supportive culture as a big reason for the longevity of her career with the union. Initially working in accounts and membership, Esther admits that she "didn't know too much about IT" at first, but was given the chance to develop new skills through training courses and working directly with the union's IT consultants – all of which lead to her current job as the FDA's Office and Systems Manager.

According to Esther, a lot's changed at the FDA over the last 20 years. "Of course, the membership has increased and I think we've definitely raised our profile. We get a lot more publicity than we used to and we respond much faster. People will often say to

me 'I saw your boss on the TV!', which never used to happen."

Esther is also excited about the development of Keystone and the completion of the FDA's new head office building, which she believes will provide a lot of new opportunities for the union.

Away from the office, being a grandmother is the "biggest part" of Esther's life. But when she's not taking care of grandchildren, it's common to find Esther with a book in one hand (or both). "I've always got two books on the go," she says. "I'm a big fan of science-fiction but my favourite author is George Orwell by a mile. Nothing's ever topped him for me and his books are still as relevant today as they were in the 1930s."

Tommy Newell

Support when you really need it

If you're suffering from a chronic health condition, the last thing you need is your job making things worse. One FDA member tells Tommy Newell how the union became her "only refuge" at a troubling time and helped get her working life back on track.

Despite priding herself on her mental resilience and her conscientious work ethic, one FDA member found herself struggling after being diagnosed with a chronic condition that caused her severe pain and discomfort.

Following her diagnosis, she found her condition was having an impact on her work and personal wellbeing: "The effect on me of both the medication and the pain was fatigue. I wasn't particularly clear headed at the time and also it affected my resilience, particularly my ability to deal with stress."

The role she was working in could be high-pressured and required her to potentially work outside of normal working hours, with some overnight working. A specialist consultant had advised that doing this would exacerbate her health condition and wrote a letter to this effect. Unfortunately, her line-manager didn't offer any support or make any reasonable adjustments to help the member manage her work.

"I can't describe the stress that put on me," she recalls. "I don't usually suffer from stress but I didn't have the resilience to deal with this."

Going through this stressful time, the member described FDA National Officer Jane Cockram as her "only port of refuge".

"She actually understood the condition I was going through and the effects of both that and the drugs. In one sense I think she helped me keep my sanity because I was speaking to somebody that understood and recognised the problem. I wasn't getting that anywhere else."

As well as offering a compassionate ear, Jane supported the member to win the reasonable adjustments she needed



to get both her health and working life back on track. The main way of achieving this was through a formal request for an occupational health (OH) assessment, which Jane then helped the member to navigate.

"In my state of not being entirely clear headed or particularly resilient, having somebody that understood those procedures and was able to talk me through them and show me where it was going was fantastic," the member explains. "She really helped me identify the best way of putting the right words down to explain my situation, and also what questions I needed answering to get the reasonable adjustments I needed."

The OH assessment resulted in all of

the member's requests for reasonable adjustments being accepted, including working on an 80% workload and being taken off the overnight rota.

Another recommendation was for a temporary move to a different job until her health improved. However, when the employer claimed this would be difficult to achieve, the member was happy to accept a permanent move as an alternative.

With the support of the union, she settled into a new role that was more suited to her, and allowed greater flexibility to manage her condition and look after her health. Since the reasonable adjustments were put in place the member has noticed a marked improvement in her productivity, even earning a bonus in the first couple of months following the move.

Although clearly frustrated that adjustments weren't made sooner, her health is now improving as a result of the move and she is happy in her new job: "My pain days get less and less but I do have periods where it's bad, and my new employer is really good with it. It's just completely different, I feel valued and did not feel valued on my old team at all."

"Jane made me be able to stand up for myself at a time when I really couldn't. I needed somebody's help until I was better enough to be able to cope."

"She was a godsend. I don't use that word lightly, and I really do mean that."

On Your Case gives FDA and Keystone members the chance to share their experiences of problems at work and talk about how the union can help to resolve them. If you'd like to share your story, drop us a line at psm@fda.org.uk. If requested, anonymity is guaranteed.

Opinion

Got an opinion? Let's hear it at psm@fda.org.uk

Whitehall needs critical friends, not silent partners



A new study finds Whitehall non-execs are enjoying increasingly productive relationships with civil servants, but many feel frustrated by their limited role and a lack of engagement with ministers, writes Robert Hazell.

The Constitution Unit has just completed the first major study of non-executive board members in Whitehall (commonly known as non-executive directors, or NEDs). Our research, carried out by four former senior civil servants, found that non-executives are high calibre, committed people, whose expertise is greatly valued by the civil service. But NEDs find the role frustrating, and feel they could be much more effective if the system only allowed.

Non-executives were first introduced in the early 1990s, but received a strong boost in 2010, when Cabinet Office minister Francis Maude announced that departmental boards would include at least four NEDs, largely drawn from the commercial private sector. There are now around 80 NEDs in 20 departments.

They are high-calibre people, mainly from business but also other professional backgrounds, and usually very senior in their own fields. They are not in it for the money, or to build a CV; their motivation is one of public service. They contribute a lot more time than they signed up for: on average 45 days a year.



Most NEDs say they make their greatest contribution outside the board. This includes coaching and mentoring, advising on major projects and testing delivery chains. They feel that senior officials greatly value their advice and expertise, their mentoring role and willingness to take on extra tasks. One said: “the most valuable role I play is as a sounding board for senior civil servants”.

But NEDs expressed less satisfaction with the central part of their role, as board members. Few Whitehall boards are said to be working well, and NEDs say ministers fail to understand their purpose, dislike challenge, and find it hard to set priorities – especially if that involves dropping things to make way for

new projects. Typical of NEDs' responses was this terse comment: “Most helpful = support of the Perm Sec. Absent = input of the SoS”.

NEDs easily find affinity with Permanent Secretaries, with shared interests in leadership, management and delivery. But the key relationship is between the lead NED and ministers, whose trust and respect they need to gain. This takes time, and is not helped by recent high ministerial turnover as a result of the reshuffles after the 2015 and 2017 elections – and another in January 2018, which saw five new Secretaries of State.

The single departmental plan (SDP) is the vehicle for ensuring realistic planning is matched to resources. Framing and managing SDPs should oblige ministers to decide which projects to shed or downgrade. NEDs are closely involved, but there is still some reluctance to challenge ministers' wish to do everything, and point out the consequential risks of overstretch. NEDs could have a greater role, alongside Permanent Secretaries' duties as

“Non execs say ministers fail to understand their purpose, dislike challenge and find it hard to prioritise”

accounting officers, to seek ministerial directions before proceeding with programmes which are not feasible or offer poor value for money.

Our study found that NEDs are full of admiration for civil servants, and their strongest criticism is reserved for ministers. But some NEDs felt civil servants could be bolder with ministers. One commented: "I thought the Permanent Secretary should tell the Secretary of State that this course ought not to be followed. It is surprising there are not many more Accounting Officer minutes requesting directions." NEDs feel Permanent Secretaries could also be firmer with new Secretaries of State in explaining the role of the departmental board, and ensuring rigorous annual evaluation of board performance.

Many NEDs would like to be more involved more in policy making. "There's absolutely no point in having wonderful policies that can't be executed, and there's no point in executing daft policies," one said. Formally, NEDs are meant to advise only on implementation; but civil servants will often find them willing partners in policy making if they are willing to involve them.

A familiar refrain in our interviews was that the role of NEDs is too vague and needs clarifying. But when we probed this, and asked whether clarification means codification, we found no wish for NEDs to have more formal powers. They prefer soft power to hard power.

The only powers available to NEDs are those of persuasion and publicity. Because of the crucial need to build relationships of trust with ministers and senior officials, they have understandably been reluctant to go public. Their central concern is overload, now exacerbated by Brexit. But as Whitehall confronts the immense challenges of Brexit, non-executives may need to come out of the closet. They do the civil service and themselves no favours if they remain too silent for too long.

Robert Hazell is the founder of the Constitution Unit at UCL, where he is Professor of Government and the Constitution, and worked for the Home Office from 1975 to 1989. Read the Constitution Unit's report *Critical Friends? The role of Non-Executives on Whitehall Boards* at: bit.ly/critical-friends.

Civil servants won't settle for being stuck at the back of the queue



With the pay cap finally being lifted, the FDA will be pressing ministers to ensure civil servants don't get left behind, says General Secretary Dave Penman.

Ministers have been true to their word – not a phrase you hear often – and lifted the public sector pay cap.

In the NHS, unions (including MiP) are consulting members on an offer that will see rises of around 6.5% over three years, plus restructuring of some pay bands and, of course, pay progression – long gone from most civil service pay systems. Local government employers have offered around 5.6% over two years, with significantly higher rises for the lowest-paid. In Scotland, meanwhile, the Government has published its pay policy, which will see most public servants receiving 2-3% depending on their salary level, though the highest paid will get lower increases.

In each sector, union members will have to decide whether, after nearly a decade of pay restraint, this amounts to enough of a shift to merit accepting, but it does represent progress from an arbitrary cap that caused real pain across the public sector. Our online pay calculator (FDAFairPay.co.uk) will give you an idea of how far your pay has fallen behind in real terms.

We will soon learn how the Treasury plans to implement the lifting of the cap for the civil service and, of course, we eagerly await the recommendations from the Senior Salaries Review Body for the SCS.

We have raised directly with the Cabinet Office minister our concerns that, too often, the civil service has been the poor relation in public sector pay terms. Ministers and the Treasury can exert more direct control on pay in the civil service than elsewhere in the public sector. Our message to Government is that you cannot pick and

choose your favourite public servants. Jeremy Hunt made much of his special pleading for the NHS – but what about his civil servants in the Department of Health, without whom the NHS could not function?

Delivering justice for victims of crime requires prosecutors as much as bobbies on the beat, and schools and roads can only be built if HMRC collect tax and pursue evaders. The future of our economy will depend on the Brexit deal currently being negotiated by civil servants, and our ability to fund that precious NHS will rely on trade deals yet to be negotiated – again by civil servants.

Frontline or back office, civil service, teaching, local government or NHS – public services can only be delivered by the cooperation and dedication of a plethora of inter-related public servants. Ministers in each department, and collectively as government, need to ensure that the civil service isn't at the end of a queue this summer when it comes to lifting the pay cap.

This will be a crucial year for civil service pay. Expectations are running high, given the offers elsewhere and sweeping statements from ministers. If the Treasury shows some flexibility in its remit guidance – the document that sets out pay policy for the coming year, which is expected to be published later this month – then departments must show that they are determined to jump through the many hoops that will be required to secure additional funding.

We are already pressing civil service employers on this point and negotiations have already begun in some departments. As ever, the FDA will be a strong, pragmatic negotiator on behalf of members; never afraid to recommend agreement if it's in our members' interest, but equally unafraid to challenge if we feel there is more to be had. Whatever this summer's negotiations bring, it will be one of the toughest for the union in years. Our commitment, as ever, is to be honest with you and deliver the best outcome possible.

Going in with our eyes open

Defence Permanent Secretary Stephen Lovegrove is the man with the tricky job of delivering the government's expansive defence commitments on the tight budget set by the Treasury. Difficult choices lie ahead, he tells **Matt Ross** in our exclusive interview.

Stephen Lovegrove's career path makes him a rarity among permanent secretaries: a former consultant and investment banker, he entered the civil service in his late 30s via the Shareholder Executive – which managed government-owned businesses. And his 2013 promotion to Permanent Secretary at the then-Department for Energy and Climate Change was equally unusual: he got the job after PM David Cameron vetoed the recruitment panel's chosen candidate, economist and climate change expert David Kennedy.

Cameron explained that DECC's civil service chief, above all, would need "commercial experience and the ability to do deals"; his focus would be delivery, not policymaking. In an interview at the time he took charge, Lovegrove told me he was glad the main planks of DECC policy were already decided: "It means we can concentrate on implementation," he said.

Five years on – and nearly two years into his stint as Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence – it appears that, as so often in government, things didn't quite work out as planned. "My assessment that all the policy had been done when I arrived and that it was all about execution was probably a bit optimistic," he says now with a wry smile. "There was a lot of policy development there, and the Secretary of State changed – so it was not a policy-free zone by any stretch of the imagination!"

Indeed, in policymaking terms the job proved something of a baptism of fire. "Some of the public policy things we were doing were about as complicated as you could possibly imagine," he recalls. "If I'm honest, in some ways they were too complicated. The Green Deal was a case in point: it was an overly complicated instrument for a perfectly good end, but it didn't work and we had to close it down."

The stakes are, of course, higher still at the MoD, where policymaking has a different slant and several additional layers of complexity. In defence, Lovegrove explains, policymaking focuses on building capabilities to give "the nation the military wherewithal to do what it wants to do." And the wider policy framework is "very consciously created in conjunction with other parts of

Stephen Lovegrove: the making of Whitehall's defence chief

1989: Graduates from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, with a first class degree in English

1990: Joins Hydra Associates, a strategic media consultancy

1995: Joins Deutsche Bank, becoming head of the European Media Team

2004: Joins the Shareholder Executive, which managed the government's shareholdings in companies

2007: Becomes Chief Executive of the Shareholder Executive

2008: Appointed to the Organising Committee for London Olympics and Paralympics

2013: Appointed Permanent Secretary at the Department of Energy and Climate Change

2016: Becomes Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence

government, most notably the National Security Secretariat in the Cabinet Office, the Foreign Office, DfID, the [intelligence] agencies and the Home Office. Our policy role is avowedly pan-governmental."

After years of growing integration in defence and security policymaking, defence secretary Gavin Williamson's announcement in January that he'd be rethinking the MoD's aspects of the National Security Capability Review (NSCR) sparked concerns – with former national security adviser Peter Ricketts tweeting that "separating out Defence

from the Nat Sec Review was a step backwards."

Lovegrove, though, says firmly that "the defence review cannot be separated from a wider national security strategy; that would be crazy, and we would never dream of doing it". The new Defence Modernisation Programme (DMP), he argues, was required because the NSCR showed that "defence needed to spend some more time thinking through some issues around capability and sustainability which had arisen, peculiarly in the defence area, because of the changes we've seen in the last couple of years."

What Lovegrove is saying – very diplomatically – is that the MoD couldn't square its budgets, the savings currently falling out of its efficiency programmes, and the military capabilities required of it. The DMP is, he explains, designed to create "a clear-eyed assessment of the threat; a clear-eyed assessment of the capabilities we need to meet that threat; and a clear-eyed assessment of how we need to go about affording them – and if there are difficult choices that need to be made, I'm sure we will make them."

There is quite a lot of preparatory work to do, Lovegrove adds, "before we get to the stage where we think that the budget and the [required] capabilities are an exact match." As well as its defence priorities and its efficiency programmes, he says, the MoD must rethink its "operating model" and "make sure that we're in the best possible and most productive partnership with the industry that supports us."

This suggests the need for further changes at Defence Equipment and Support, the MoD's procurement agency, which in 2014 won greater autonomy and the right to sidestep civil service pay controls. But these reforms have already helped curtail the military's tendency to regularly alter contracts and specifications – producing "tens of millions of pounds of savings through better controls," says Lovegrove. And DE&S is now "moving on from some of the consultancy relationships, which are quite expensive, and hiring people in so that they're a durable and enduring resource rather than a bought-in service."

Using its pay freedoms, he adds, DE&S "has a model where people and teams are genuinely rewarded for hard work; and the corollary of that is that they're

“Even a large rise in the wage bill is dwarfed by a small fall in Defence Equipment and Support spending. It's got to be worthwhile for the taxpayer to do that.”

quite brisk about changing things when they need to, in a way that possibly the rest of the civil service finds a bit more difficult”.

So does DE&S's experience point to the need to pay higher salaries when the civil service must compete with business to hire in specialist skills? “There is a good case, yes,” he replies. “Its wage bill is a tiny fraction of the money that goes through DE&S every year; even a large rise in the wage bill is dwarfed by a small fall in DE&S spending. It's got to be worthwhile for the taxpayer to do that.”

For many MoD civil servants, though, the prospect is not of pay rises but of seeing their jobs outsourced: in 2015 the government pledged to cut their numbers by 17,000, or 30%. Tasked with saving £310m annually on the civilian paybill by 2020, Lovegrove says that outsourcing is not a “universal panacea”, but argues that “we need to be really thoughtful about which jobs need to be done by defence personnel and where we could get a better service, and possibly provide better careers for people, if jobs were in the private sector”.

To deliver such huge changes, Lovegrove will have to strengthen the ministry's ability to deliver reform programmes: at 31%, its 2017 Civil Service People Survey score for ‘leadership and managing change’ is some 16 points below the average for all Whitehall departments. Meanwhile its ‘learning and development’ score has sunk from eight points ahead of the average in 2009 to three points behind in 2017 – an embarrassing statistic, given Lovegrove's role as chair of the Civil Service Learning and Leadership Board.

“It's one of the areas that people are rightly dissatisfied with,” he concedes. “I think we've been guilty of squeezing learning out of people's work plan. We need to insist that people take time out of their professional lives for it.”

This dynamic has weakened learning for senior officials as well as more junior ones, he believes: “It's something that we've allowed to become less prominent over the years, and we need to start building that up again,” he says. “We need to invest in the leadership skills of our most senior people, and we haven't done as much of that as we should have”.

Here, there is firm progress to report: in September the Civil Service Leadership Academy opened a permanent base



“I think we've been guilty of squeezing learning out of people's work plan. We need to insist that people take time out of their professional lives for it.”

in Shrivenham, near Swindon, where the MoD's Defence Academy is also based. This is not, says Lovegrove, a resurrection of the National School of Government – closed by the coalition government in 2012 – but it does reflect a need for residential training to provide “a really intense focus over a couple of days in order to get the value out of [courses], which is why we decided it was important that there was a place where people could stay.”

One of the Academy's work strands focuses on the lessons of Chilcot – and, asked how he hopes such training can help shift the culture of the MoD, Lovegrove replies that “we don't have a particularly optimised culture for giving challenge. There are moments when it's really important that ministers and senior officials are exposed to the full range of options.”

He also wants to break down some of the long-standing barriers between the MoD and other departments. The ministry “is part of the civil service; it can't do its work except in service of other bits of the civil service; it can't do

its work without relying on other bits of the civil service; and it has a lot to learn from other bits of the civil service,” he argues. “So I don't see that there is any downside to trying to make the MoD more open.”

The ministry has much to teach as well as to learn, he adds, citing its skills in emergency management, planning, export promotion and international engagement. “So it's a two-way street – but I do think that the very distinctive culture of defence could open itself up a bit more to influences, not just from Whitehall but actually to wider society as well,” he says. “We want to lower the drawbridge a bit.”

The MoD will, however, always retain a unique world view – for it has a unique job to do. And like his predecessor, Jon Thompson, Lovegrove has clearly immersed himself in the ministry's culture. On his office walls a pop-art Tiger tank seems to burst out of its picture frame, whilst his bookcase carries a roll of toilet paper printed with Vladimir Putin's face. “A present from Ukraine,” he comments, deadpan.

As Lovegrove gets stuck into the Defence Modernisation Programme, working to balance the government's vaunting military ambitions with the Treasury's tight grip on the purse strings, he'll need to call on all the commitment, loyalty and expertise of his civilian and military staff. He will also need political cover from his Defence Secretary – and here, perhaps, his hand may be strengthened by Gavin Williamson's ambitions and connections.

So one last question: might the MoD's bid for a sustainable budget be aided by the fact that the Defence Secretary is on a set of manoeuvres of his own? Lovegrove does not, of course, answer directly. “The Secretary of State is very clear that defence in the UK needs to be prioritised and modernised,” he replies. “Defence is not something we can take for granted. The first duty of any government is to keep its citizens safe, and a lot of the responsibility for that falls to defence. There are threats in the world, and defence is here to try and make sure that we can deal with them – so I think a higher profile national debate about this is no bad thing.” I think that's a ‘yes’.

Matt Ross is a journalist and communications adviser to the FDA.

Last year's Stevenson-Farmer report set out an ambitious agenda for improving mental health and wellbeing in the civil service.

Craig Ryan explores the deep culture changes needed to make sure all civil servants can thrive at work.

All in the mind

In January 1974, at the height of the three-day week crisis, the head of the civil service, Sir William Armstrong, suffered a stress-induced mental breakdown. According to several accounts, Armstrong was found naked on the floor of the Downing Street waiting room, chain smoking and raving about the end of the world. The following morning, he convened a meeting of his Permanent Secretary colleagues and harangued them about preparing for Armageddon. Armstrong was admitted to hospital but was back at work within a few weeks. Three months later, he left

the civil service and became chairman of Midland Bank.

Armstrong's breakdown was hushed up and the lessons ignored. Although colleagues later said the warning signs had been there for years, Armstrong received no support and never talked about his mental health problems. The impact of severe stress and overworking on his ability to advise the Prime Minister at a crucial juncture in Britain's history was never considered. And the effect on Armstrong's own health – he died just a few years later – was perhaps greater than he knew.

On the surface, the contrast with

today's civil service couldn't be greater. Government Chief People Officer Rupert McNeil has spoken openly about his problems with anxiety and encouraged colleagues to do the same. Departments have health and wellbeing champions, and have rolled out a plethora of mental health initiatives in recent years, including mental health first aider training, expanded employee assistance programmes and networks where staff get together to talk about workplace problems and the impact on their mental wellbeing.

When Lord Dennis Stevenson and MIND chief executive Paul Farmer



published their independent review of workplace mental health, *Thriving at Work*, in October last year, the government not only accepted all the recommendations as an employer, but designated the civil service as an 'early adopter' of the mental health standards laid down in the report (see box). It was, and was intended to be, a clear signal that the civil service is now taking mental health seriously.

But it still has a lot to get serious about. The Stevenson-Farmer report says the scale of the mental health challenge in Britain's workplaces is "greater than we thought", and the civil service is no exception. According to MIND's Workplace Wellbeing Index, public sector workers experience poorer mental health than those in the private sector, with one in six describing their mental health as "poor" and 53% saying they regularly feel anxious at work. Research by Deloitte's puts the cost of mental health problems to the government at around £1,500 per civil servant every year – again, higher than the average for private sector employees.

Duncan (not his real name) is a senior manager with a large civil service agency who has suffered from stress-induced anxiety and depression for several years. Two years ago, he was signed off sick after visiting his GP. "I realised quite suddenly that I couldn't cope, but the problems had been building up for a long time," he says. "My workload was ridiculous – but so was everyone else's. There's this enormous pressure to be busy and to be just about coping, so I just tried to deal with it. But I wasn't sleeping properly, I was drinking a lot and things were starting to fall apart at home."

Although Duncan's manager was "not unsympathetic", Duncan didn't feel confident discussing his mental health. "I felt I couldn't cross that threshold, admit I had a real problem. You don't want to open up that whole can of worms – with capability reviews and assessments by [occupational health]. I was worried about my [performance review], my reputation, I was worried about being made redundant – everything really."

"Working in the civil service is demanding," says Faye McGuinness, head of workplace wellbeing at MIND, who works with the civil service leadership on implementing the findings

Stevenson-Farmer: key recommendations for the civil service

Permanent secretaries and agency chief executives to have performance objectives relating to employee mental health

Commitments to mental health standards to be written into Single Departmental Plans

Routine monitoring of employee mental health

Enhanced mental health training for staff at all grades, especially for line managers

Employers to identify staff at higher risk of stress or trauma and develop a national framework of support

Tailored in-house mental health support with signposting to clinical support

Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available to staff

Read the Stevenson-Farmer report, *Thriving at Work*, at: bit.ly/stevenson-farmer.



of the report. She cites long working hours, regular inspections, lack of interaction with colleagues, and cuts to budgets and staffing as factors that can put pressure on the mental health of all public sector workers.

"The onus should be on employers to support their staff through the difficult times, so they can come to work at their best, and in turn get the best outcomes for the people they represent – which is why implementing the

recommendations [of the report] is so important," says McGuinness.

Work across Whitehall is being led by Jonathan Jones, the Head of the Government Legal Service, who is also the civil service health and wellbeing champion, with support from the Civil Service Employment Policy (CSEP) unit in the Cabinet Office and wellbeing champions in each department.

Jones tells *PSM* that he has "identified strategic priorities to change the culture towards health and wellbeing in the civil service... These include emphasising visible leadership, enabling honest and open conversations about mental health, and encouraging an all-round healthy lifestyle."

Work is already underway in 18 departments to benchmark existing programmes against the standards set in *Thriving at Work*. The report identified areas of existing good practice and those where collective improvement was needed, Jones explains, "including how we communicate our offer on mental health to employees; how we continue to build line manager skill and confidence; and how we consistently support people with mental health conditions within the recruitment process."

The newly rebranded Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is widely recognised in Whitehall for being ahead of the curve on supporting workforce mental health. "When I joined the department in 2016, what really struck me was the openness within the [health and wellbeing] network, but also more broadly to talking about mental health issues," says Jillian Kay, the ministry's health and wellbeing champion.

"There were events going on where people were sharing their own lived experiences quite comfortably and openly, and similarly people sharing their own experiences online," she recalls. "So I sensed that in terms of breaking the stigma it's certainly a place where lots of people felt safe to share their stories, which felt like a really positive thing."

In 2015, the department introduced mental health first aid training and a mental health ambassador listening and support service. MHCLG now has 150 trained mental health first aiders and a thriving health and wellbeing staff network. Last year, it was chosen

to design and deliver the mental health awareness workshop at Civil Service Live.

Kay emphasises that engaging senior managers is crucial to shifting the workplace culture towards improving mental health. “I was a bit surprised to see members of the SCS on the mental health first aid training when I joined, but actually we’ve now trained 12 SCS members,” she says. “More than 40 first aiders have gone on to become mental health ambassadors, and they provide a listening and advice service to people who need it, including line managers who want to support their staff.” The ministry also runs specialised wellbeing workshops for senior leaders, including some facilitated by FDA national officer Jane Cockram.

Staff resilience and good mental health is very much a live issue for Kay as a manager. In her ‘day job’, she leads for the department on Grenfell recovery and resilience. “Some of our teams have been working with Kensington and Chelsea Council on support for all those affected by the fire. So I’ve got a set of staff who’ve had to be quite resilient over the last year,” she says.

“It really brings home the point that we’re trying to get across in the civil service: that we all have good and bad mental health at different times depending on what we’re experiencing. An important part of this is making sure that mental health isn’t a kind of niche agenda; it’s something that’s relevant to everyone – and it became really relevant to all of us over the last year.”

At the same time, the civil service needs to identify and meet the needs of staff who are at a higher risk of developing mental health problems because of the nature of their work; these may include “mainstream” civil servants like Jillian Kay’s MHCLG staff, as well as more obvious candidates like people working for the security services or the National Crime Agency.

“Departments are being supported centrally to identify teams where there may be a higher risk of stress and trauma, [and] to in turn identify tools and best practice to help all departments address these issues,” explains Jonathan Jones. “Because the support may vary according to the types of work, it’s right that departments lead this work as they’re closer to the detail.”

“We all have good and bad mental health at different times according to what we’re experiencing. It’s important to make sure it isn’t a niche agenda”

One of the persistent themes in the Stevenson-Farmer report is the need for employers to move away from the traditional ‘performance management’ approach, where mental health problems – if they were discussed at all – were tackled as issues of individual capability. This led to a ‘culture of silence’, where employees kept quiet about mental health problems for fear of demotion, reprimand – or worse.

Instead, says McGuinness, employers need “to create a culture where staff feel able to talk openly about stress and mental health, and know that if they do, they’ll be met with support and understanding rather than stigma and discrimination.”

This also means managers taking some responsibility for the mental wellbeing of their staff, something that is reflected in one of the Stevenson-Farmer report’s most striking recommendations: that civil service leaders should have the mental wellbeing of their staff enshrined in their performance objectives.

“It’s important that Permanent Secretaries and Chief Executives lead by example, and consider how they can be held accountable for the wellbeing of their staff,” says McGuinness. “Having performance objectives relating to

“Maybe more managers are willing to have supportive conversations now, but not enough to change how people feel.”

employee mental health is one way they can do this... Showing staff that employee mental health is a key priority, and one that they are willing to be measured against, is a step towards creating a positive culture where... staff feel able to talk about their mental health problems.”

This would certainly be an unprecedented step, with big potential to drive meaningful change. But how it will be implemented across the civil service remains to be seen. “We don’t yet have any other examples of this being done before,” admits McGuinness.

Since returning to work, Duncan says he has benefited from some adjustments to his workload and from taking part in a staff wellbeing network. “Colleagues have been much more supportive than I expected and [management] have been willing to make some changes, which have definitely helped me,” he says. But he still fears his career has suffered and doesn’t feel confident about pursuing promotion opportunities in the near future. “I still feel there’s this bit of a stigma hanging over me,” he adds.

Duncan still doubts many of his colleagues would be willing to discuss mental health problems openly with senior managers. “Maybe more managers are willing to have that kind of [supportive] conversation now, but I don’t think it’s enough to change the way people feel,” he says.

Whitehall has come a long way since Sir Robert Armstrong was reduced to rolling around on the Downing Street floor, and mental health problems are being discussed in a way that would have been unthinkable a generation ago. MIND’s Faye McGuinness, who has monthly meetings with civil service leaders to monitor progress, says: “We know there is a long way to go, and that change doesn’t happen overnight. But it’s positive that Government – and in turn, civil service employers – have accepted all the recommendations from the review and see the value in implementing them.”

For Duncan, the big challenge is ending the culture of silence around mental health, and that takes time: “In the end, it’s not about what support programmes there are, but whether people have trust and confidence to use them. I don’t think we’re quite there yet,” he says.

The collapse of construction giant Carillion has thrown into question the UK government's long-held attachment to outsourcing public services. Is cost-cutting to blame, or do ministers need to rethink Whitehall's whole relationship with the private sector? **Matt Foster** investigates.

AFTER THE FALL



The hastily-scrawled graffiti on the building site fence said it all: 'Carillion. Bust'. At the start of this year, 43,000 employees awoke to the devastating news that the construction giant had gone into liquidation, putting at risk their livelihoods and raising major questions about how and why their employer had been allowed to fail so spectacularly. Workers on the company's construction sites reported being sent home that same day and, as *PSM* went to press, more than 1,400 former Carillion employees had been laid off.

Already the blame game has started, and those arguing for an overhaul of Britain's corporate governance laws have a new case study to point to. When it collapsed, Carillion had one of the largest pension deficits of any FTSE 350 company, and was mired in debt – owing around £2bn to its suppliers alone.

But beyond the personally traumatic tales of lost jobs, unpaid bills and pensions at risk, Carillion's collapse has strengthened the hand of long-standing

critics of public sector outsourcing, and led to renewed questions about how the government manages its contractual relationship with private firms.

The firm was one of the biggest suppliers to the UK public sector, responsible for 450 government contracts covering everything from maintaining accommodation for members of the armed services to constructing key parts of the High Speed 2 rail link. Carillion provided catering for schools, looked after hospital buildings for more than a dozen NHS trusts, and managed prisons for the Ministry of Justice. It was deemed so important that it was named as one of

the government's "Strategic Suppliers", with a designated Cabinet Office official tasked with monitoring the firm's performance.

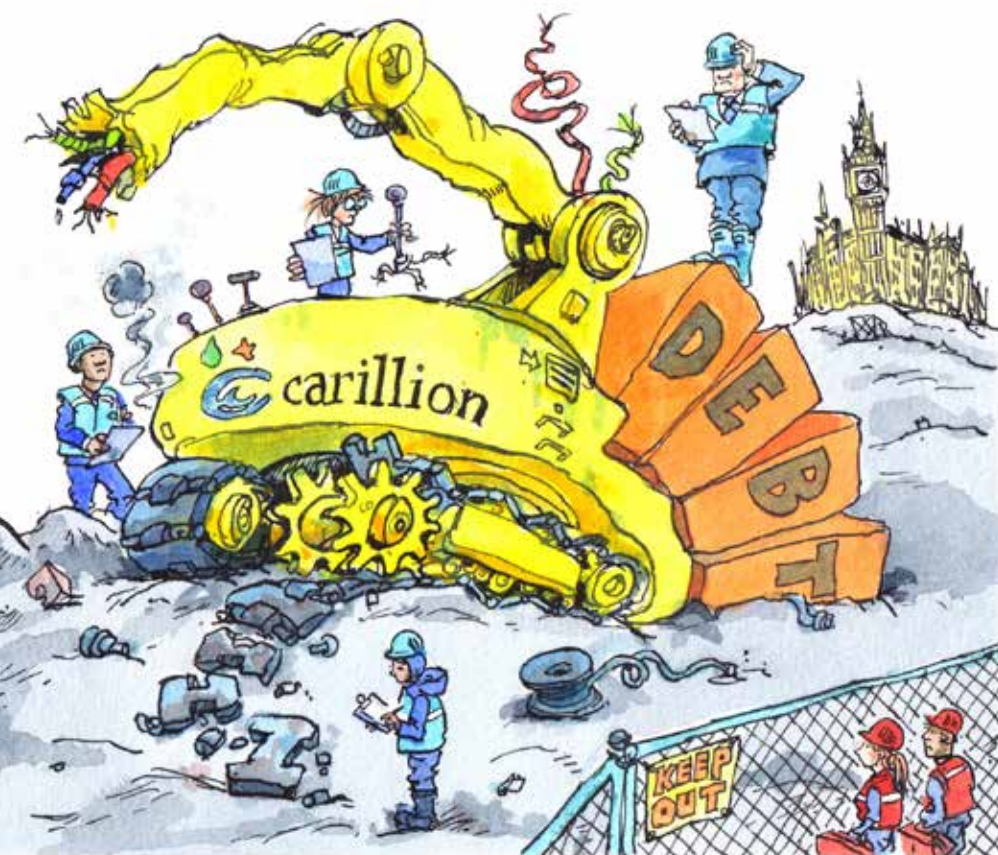
Warning signs

MPs demanded to know why key warning signs – increasingly late payments to suppliers, a major profit warning in July 2017 – were missed by government, which continued to award contracts to Carillion almost to the end. Ministers have fast-tracked the Official Receiver's own probe into the causes of Carillion's failure. And opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn has called for an end to what he called the public sector "outsourcing racket". So what is the state of play in the UK outsourcing market – and where should officials turn their gaze as they try to learn from Carillion's demise?

Professor Colin Talbot of Cambridge University has long studied civil service procurement practices and has advised organisations bidding for public sector contracts. He tells *PSM* that, while officials may have feared the worst for Carillion, the sheer size of such firms

“These are the people negotiating massive, multi-billion pound contracts. It's like fielding Ronaldo against a player from Stroud.”

Kerry Hallard, Global Sourcing Association



means public intervention can be highly risky. Firms like Carillion are “publicly listed companies who are heavily reliant on borrowing to keep them going,” he says. “If you do anything that makes it clear they’re in trouble, you’re likely to trigger exactly the sort of problem you’re trying to avoid”.

Talbot does believe that ministers’ tendency to see outsourcing as the solution to a whole series of public policy challenges – often for purely ideological reasons – has resulted in a marketplace dominated by big players who have moved far beyond their original areas of expertise. “Their core skill has become bidding for contracts with government, not doing whatever it is they were supposed to be doing,” he says. “You end up with Carillion – basically a building company – doing things like serving school meals.”

Nick Davies keeps a close eye on the government’s handling of commercial contracts as associate director of the Institute for Government think tank. He warns that the bidding process, which can run to “thousands of pages”, deters

smaller firms for bidding for contracts. “Clearly that favours organisations that have expert teams that are used to bidding day in, day out and for whom that’s the only thing that they do,” he tells PSM.

That’s a view echoed by Kerry Hallard, chief executive of the Global Sourcing Association, which represents specialist suppliers in areas such as IT and digital. She warns that the sheer time and energy involved in bidding for public sector contracts means the industry is “entering into a fairly monopolistic position with the really big players”. She points the finger at EU public procurement rules,

“ Their core skill has become bidding for contracts with government, not doing whatever it is they were supposed to be doing”

Prof Colin Talbot

which she says place heavy burdens on smaller suppliers. While her industry was overwhelmingly opposed to Brexit, she suggests the prospect of a procurement shake-up after the UK’s departure may be a “silver lining” for smaller players in the industry.

Austerity procurement

Hallard also argues that years of “austerity procurement”, with an excessive focus on driving down costs rather than long-term thinking about the quality of services, means that Whitehall is all too often “shopping as opposed to entering into a collaborative arrangement that focuses on the end goal”. She calls for a more “grown up” conversation between public and private sector, and says civil servants and ministers “need to accept that the service provider needs to – and must – make a profit from the work that they do. If not, why would they be in it?”

But are civil servants not right to be cautious following the string of high-profile outsourcing failures in recent years – such as the bungled security arrangements at the 2012 Olympics and last year’s early termination of the East Coast mainline rail franchise, to name but two? Hallard accepts that some parts of the industry need to change their behaviour, but says the public sector needs to ditch “an ingrained mentality” which refuses “to accept the way that the private sector works”.

“I think there is over-compliance and a massive fear factor all the time about getting things wrong. That happens in the private sector as well as in the public sector. But more than anything, I think there is just a tribal sort of mentality of ‘I’m the customer, therefore I’m always right. You’re the service provider and you’ve just got to do it’. That’s not what a collaborative, forward-thinking partnership should look like.”

Skilling up in Whitehall

Senior officials have robustly defended the Cabinet Office’s relationship with Carillion, claiming that the civil service has never been as well-placed as it is now to weather such a storm.

Civil service chief executive John Manzoni has pointed out that many of Carillion’s contracts were run as joint ventures at government insistence, meaning that fellow suppliers could

Outsourcing

step in to ensure continuity of service. Ministers also moved quickly to put Carillion into the hands of the Official Receiver, with an instruction to keep vital services running – a “quite a deliberate act”, Manzoni says, which followed extensive contingency planning.

Manzoni insists officials went to great lengths to limit the risk to taxpayers. “This is certainly not an example of too big to fail,” he told MPs earlier this year. “This company has failed and its shareholders and lenders have been wiped out to the tune of billions of pounds. That’s genuine failure... What we’re doing is paying for services that the public sector is going to receive.”

Cabinet Secretary Sir Jeremy Heywood meanwhile denied claims that the civil service had failed to learn the lessons of previous contracting failures – in particular the 2013 scandal which saw firms overcharge the Ministry of Justice for the electronic tagging of offenders. He said the government had “absolutely prioritised” building its commercial capability in recent years, “bringing in more people from outside” and “having much more of a grip at the centre”.

The Cabinet Secretary added: “No doubt [the collapse of Carillion] is a bad outcome for the country, but the work that we have done in the commercial profession, trying to understand across 450 public sector contracts what will happen in this worst-case scenario, is work that ten years ago the commercial function in the civil service would not have been capable of doing. It would not have known where to start, frankly.”

But other observers say there is still scope for Whitehall to sharpen its commercial acumen, and they raise questions about whether the civil service is attracting the people it needs to hold its own in negotiating with suppliers.

Cambridge University’s Colin Talbot says commercial skills in government remain too generic, focusing on training people to design repetitive bidding processes rather than encouraging them to become real experts in the services they are buying. “One week they could be doing something on purchasing a new motorway, and the next purchasing catering facilities for the prison service or something,” he explains. Talbot also believes that the recent trend of centralising commercial expertise in the Government Commercial Organisation is



This is certainly not an example of too big to fail

Civil Service CEO John Manzoni

a backward step, aimed at cutting costs rather than improving procurement.

“Under the last Conservative government, before New Labour came in, they spent ages decentralising functions, including commercial management,” he says. “The argument there was ‘stick to the knitting’ – that the way to get high performing public sector organisations was to have ones which were very specialist and functional in a particular area, ones which developed a high degree of skill and knowledge about their own business. And therefore they were the best people to be buying stuff, rather than having a one-size-fits all, generic purchasing facility across government.”

The Institute for Government’s Nick Davies acknowledges that central government has become “a much more intelligent client than it once was”, but he too believes that individual departments must give more seats at the top table to commercial experts. “Most people at the top of departments tend to be policy professionals rather than commercial professionals, and there’s a question of when in the policy and decision-making process those commercial experts are

being consulted,” he says.

For her part, Kerry Hallard argues that Whitehall’s commercial function will continue to face an uphill struggle because of the “disparity of pay” between the public and private sector. “These are the people negotiating massive, multi-billion pound contracts,” she says. “It’s like fielding Ronaldo against a player from Stroud. Can you have the same matching skillset when the private sector is paying somebody £500,000 and the public sector has somebody on £90,000 or £100,000 a year?”

Talbot agrees: “You need people who intimately understand the business that they’re buying for – and you need to pay people to do that. Purchasing managers in the private sector are quite well remunerated. That’s why quite a lot of public servants go over to the private sector when they get those skills.”

Unpicking the causes and policy implications of Carillion’s collapse will be no easy task, but it has given the opponents of outsourcing a powerful argument for radical change. The onus is now on ministers to explain how outsourcing can work better for the public – and how they will invest in the people they ask to fight for taxpayers’ interests whenever the government signs on the dotted line.

Matt Foster is Communications Officer at the FDA and a PSM staff writer.

"Broken, divisive and demotivating"



The latest FDA survey of members in the senior civil service gives a decisive thumbs-down to the pay system. **Tommy Newell** looks at the results and explains how they shaped the union's evidence to the pay review body.

Only 4% of senior civil service (SCS) members believe the current reward framework is fit for purpose and more than two-thirds have seriously considered leaving the civil service in the last year, according to the findings of the latest FDA survey, conducted in December and January.

Only 8% of the 457 respondents are satisfied with overall pay arrangements, with pay progression highlighted as a particular bugbear: 92% of respondents say they are not satisfied with the pace at which they are progressing through their pay band.

One member explained: "The lack of pay rises is depressing enough, after almost a decade, but the lack of ANY progression rubs salt in the wound."

The survey findings suggest lack of progression is leading to other problems in the pay system, with 36% of respondents saying they are paid less than people they are managing on a lower grade, and only 14% seeing a clear link between their performance and their pay.

Looking elsewhere

68% of respondents have seriously considered leaving the civil service in the last 12 months and 24% say they want to leave as soon as possible; many members cite frustration with pay as a key factor.

"Despite being promoted into the SCS and getting a top box [marking] in four of the last five years I now earn less per hour worked in real terms than I did

five years ago," explains one member. "Erosion from pension contributions, higher tax, little or no consolidated increase in pay and a far longer and costlier commute, have led to me looking outside the civil service for jobs."

Another member comments: "The current pay and reward system is broken, divisive and demotivating. Pay is poor and my frustrations have increased to the point I have successfully found a role outside."

The higher salaries often offered to external applicants were also a major cause of disillusionment among respondents. "I'm getting really fed up with being taken for granted," one member explains, "and I see external advertisement after external advertisement for jobs at my grade offering a salary level which will never be a reality for me... Why wouldn't I leave?"

The survey highlights the widespread view that pay prospects are better outside the civil service, with 92% of respondents saying they believe they are paid less than people doing similar jobs in the private sector. Yet, of those of those who want to leave the civil service, only 40% say that they wanted a private sector job.

Over to the review body

The FDA used the survey to prepare its joint submission – with civil service union Prospect – to the Senior Salary Review body (SSRB) in January. It makes the case for "fundamental reform to the SCS pay framework" and a real-terms pay increase for all members of the SCS.

The Government's own proposals include shorter pay ranges to be determined by profession; a commitment that the bulk of SCS 1 staff will earn a minimum of £70,000 by 2020-21; and further restrictions on pay rises for promoted or transferring SCS staff. The government also wants to restrict awards for people above the proposed new pay ranges or those not classed as "high performers".

FDA Assistant General Secretary Naomi Cooke branded the Government's proposals an act of "political cowardice" which offered only "vague long-term commitments" instead of meaningful reform. While acknowledging there were "some positive moves on flexibility with non-consolidated awards", it was "too little in terms of reform, and too meagre in terms of funding," Cooke said.

She added: "Far from an evidence-led workforce pay strategy, slavish adherence to a rigid cost envelope reflects the exact same approach adopted for most of the last decade. The fact that not one more penny has been allocated means the 1% pay cap has been scrapped in name only, and our members will once again fail to see a meaningful rise in their pay.

"This grudging approach speaks volumes as to the lack of urgency and the lack of regard the Government has for its own staff."

The FDA will keep members fully informed about the SSRB's report, which we expect to be published in June.

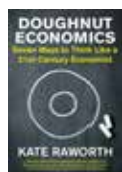
Books

Our look at the latest books on work, politics and public service

Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st Century Economist

By Kate Raworth

Random House Business paperback, 384pp, £9.99



Oxford academic Kate Raworth's *Doughnut Economics*, now out in paperback, caused quite a stir when it was first published last year, with *Guardian* eco-warrior George Monbiot comparing it, somewhat fancifully, to Keynes's *General Theory*. That seems like a misreading of the book's purpose, as revealed by its subtitle: Raworth isn't offering a theory or a model, but a well-grounded appeal for us to think differently about economics.

Raworth's 'doughnut' attempts to describe, in a simple picture, a goal for economics; the discipline's lack of purpose, she argues, has allowed "the economic nest [to be] hijacked by the cuckoo goal of GDP growth". The inner ring of Raworth's doughnut (there's no jam, today or tomorrow), "the social foundation", represents the basics we need to lead fulfilling lives – enough food, good education, decent healthcare and housing, political participation and so on – while the outer ring represents the limits of what the planetary ecosystem can bear. The aim of economics is to get us into what Raworth calls the "safe and just space" between them – and to keep us there.

To do this, Raworth argues we'll need to "design" an economy – she uses the word pointedly – which works in harmony with the natural and social world in which it is embedded. And that work of design has to recognise that much important economic activity takes place outside of the market, in the household, the government and the "commons" – the sphere of sharing, voluntary work and community co-operation.



“Economists, Raworth suggests, need a metaphorical career change: “discard the engineer’s hard hat and spanner, and pick up some gardening gloves and secateurs instead”

Along the way, Raworth says we will have to discard “an economic mindset rooted in the textbooks of 1950, which in turn are rooted in the theories of 1850”. What if demand curves don't always slope down? Suppose our complex and ever-changing economy is never at equilibrium. Imagine that what

mainstream economists call “external shocks” – environmental degradation, financial crises, social unrest and technological change, for example – are actually inherent to the system. What happens if perpetual economic growth is no longer necessary or even desirable – or, more uncomfortably still, necessary but no longer possible?

Such thinking has been gaining ground for some years, through the work of dissident economists like Steve Keen, Ha Joon Chang and the late Elinor Ostrom, and in response to the global student movement Rethinking Economics. The discipline must also join other sciences in embracing “systems thinking”, Raworth says, and “stop searching for the economy’s elusive control levers and start stewarding it as an ever-evolving complex system.” Economists, she suggests, need a metaphorical career change: “discard the engineer’s hard hat and spanner, and pick up some gardening gloves and secateurs instead”.

As well as diverse system thinkers and scientists, Raworth draws heavily on the work of the greatest economic dissident of all, John Maynard Keynes himself. When we finally get to grips with all this, Raworth feels sure Keynes will be “waiting to greet us, ready to get to work on figuring out the economics – and the philosophy and politics too – of the art of living in a distributive, regenerative, growth-agnostic Doughnut Economy”.

How we get there will be up to us – “we are all economists now”, Raworth says. Despite the “very real possibility” of complete breakdown, she believes “there are enough people who still see the alternative, the glass-half-full future, and are intent on bringing it about”. With Trump in the White House and so much of the new economy in the hands of powerful oligarchs, it's hard to share Raworth's optimism. But then again, we owe it ourselves to try.

Reviewed by Craig Ryan

People Power: Remaking Parliament for the Populist Age

by Richard Askwith

Biteback, 128pp, £10.00



Richard Askwith's punchy polemic opens with a depiction of Westminster – the building and, by extension, the whole institution – as redolent of decay, decrepitude and despair. He writes: “Even the MPs look worn out, going through the motions of ill-attended debates as listlessly as zoo animals. It is hard to believe that these pasty, fretful, well-tailored creatures... belong to the same species as the multi-coloured... restlessly modern crowds outside”. The whole impression is rather more Poe than Pugin, but this is perhaps to be expected of a volume in a series entitled ‘Provocations’, which also includes works entitled *The Myth of Meritocracy* and *The War on the Young*.

Askwith's target is the mismatch

between the public's expectations and the performance of Parliament. He discusses at some length how the our increasing access to information and misinformation impacts on the political system. While limited access to information might not have exactly made MPs' lives blissful in the past, it did enable them to assume that their policy decisions were unlikely to be challenged by those outside the charmed Westminster circle.

At times, Askwith's comments on the impact of social media on politics feel like statements of the obvious, but that

doesn't make them any less true. So, too, with his observation that there has been no effective attempt to realign the way Parliament works with this new reality.

Askwith's most eye-catching proposal is that the House of Lords should be replaced by a randomly-selected People's Chamber. The approach he suggests is: “Everyone eligible to vote is also eligible for selection by lot to serve... for a fixed term of, say, four years. Service is compulsory, well-paid and prestigious. The People's Peers can wear ermine and, if they want, use titles.”

This is, by Askwith's own admission, blue sky thinking. However, overall the book offers a timely exploration of an issue which needs to be tackled if democracy is to keep pace with the times.

Reviewed by Anne Grikitis

It's hard to believe MPs belong to the same species as the multi-coloured, modern crowds outside

Off the shelf Reviews by Matt Foster and Tommy Newell

The War on the Young by John Sutherland

Biteback, 144pp, £10



Switching sides after his last provocation, *The War On The Old*, which lamented shockingly poor dementia care and a smouldering social care crisis, 79-year old Sutherland casts his “rheumy eye” at intergenerational conflict from the side of the young. Sutherland is witty and often outrageous as he outlines the financial crisis now plaguing a generation: student debt “scalped from the pay packet before the recipient even sees it”, the “one-in-a-million lottery ticket” of home ownership, and the shift towards a low-wage, insecure gig economy. Avoiding sneering condescension about millennials “glued to their phones”, Sutherland argues that, if the older generation has not explicitly drawn up policy to suck wealth from the young, it has certainly sat back and been happy to benefit from it.

Fall Out: A Year of Political Mayhem by Tim Shipman

Harper Collins, 592pp, £9.99 (paperback)



Following *All Out War*, his 2016 warts-and-all guide to the Brexit referendum, the *Sunday Times* political supremo Tim Shipman has pulled it off again, bridging the gap from David Cameron's resignation to the fallout from Theresa May's disastrous snap election. As before, it's tightly focused on the Westminster bubble, with some choice anecdotes about May's leather trousers, David Davis and Boris Johnson's spat over a grace-and-favour country pile, and a hearty dose of four-letter words too choice for *PSM* (largely attributed to May's now-departed special adviser Fiona Hill). Even if some of the juicy conversations recounted word-for-word seem suspiciously one-sided, Shipman is enviably well-sourced, and future historians will no doubt pore over this first draft as they try to work out how we got ourselves in this mess.

The End of British Party Politics? by Roger Awan-Scully

Biteback, 192pp, £12.99



Leaving aside the oft-discussed question of what went wrong for the Tories in 2017, Awan-Scully probes the increasingly disconnected nature of politics across the UK's four nations – never more apparent than during last year's general election. Voters and parties in Northern Ireland have long recognised the separation between local politics and the politics of mainland Britain, and Awan-Scully offers a robust argument that a “different kind of nationalism” is now fuelling the divide between England, Scotland and Wales. Arguing that the House of Commons ‘increasingly resembles the European Parliament’ may verge on hyperbole, but Awan-Scully offers an interesting but ominous view of how the national question in British politics could shape the future of a much less ‘United’ Kingdom.

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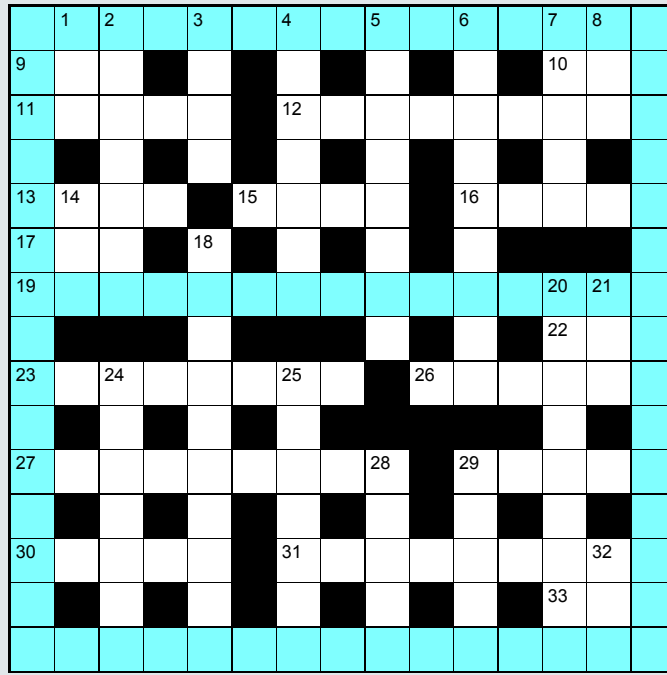
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Crossword

Cosy Reading by Schadenfreude

The first two lines of a poem (19 words) are to appear in the clockwise perimeter starting at cell 17 and continuing horizontally from cell 19 to 21 inclusive. Solvers must highlight the three clued entries which can be arranged to form the poet's full name (18 letters in total).



ACROSS

- 9 Wicket east of the old wood (3)
- 10 Georgia's pursuing a military commander (3)
- 11 Antelope are seen in two US cities (5)
- 12 Orsino's lover stirred into breach of trust (9)
- 13 Animosity worried Henry at the front (4)
- 15 Engineers filling the empty box perhaps (4)
- 16 Any awful very loud worthless Glaswegian (5)
- 17 Kentish town husband leaves for what reason? End of life! (3)
- 22 Very old large heraldic pair of wings (3)
- 23 Hardy character touring now rugged heart of Finland devoid of urban areas (8)
- 26 Mollusc for eating before start of December (6)
- 27 Easing, once more experiencing taking ecstasy (9)
- 29 Lily not working on set (5)
- 30 Italian friars in the middle of half rations (5)
- 31 Capital prince invested in collapsed Peru lawsuit (9, hyphenated)
- 33 Regularly fickle president (3)

DOWN

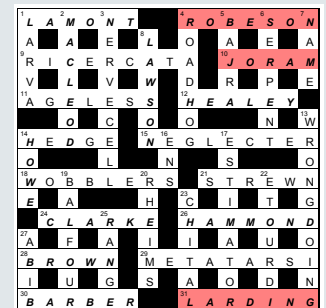
- 1 Somewhat undue yearly reversal in Victoria (3)
- 2 Expected data we distributed around India (7)
- 3 Porter turned up with new style (4)
- 4 Young rodent always allowed outside (7)
- 5 An old king I see suffering from an emotional disorder (8)
- 6 Cultivated LA bed containing water that can be drawn off (9)
- 7 Gunners drink before a spicy Indian dish (5)
- 8 I work south of Spain (3)
- 14 English philosopher's short affirmative answer (3)
- 18 Uncomfortably hot state of agitation at work in south Gabon (10)
- 20 Exercise too much for all to see before shower (9)
- 21 Stunned king with overdose (3)
- 24 Foolish person carrying a black jumper (7)
- 25 Incentives strangely limit us (7)
- 28 Window above newspaper chief was wide open (5)
- 29 Advance secures river navigation system (5)
- 32 It includes the ultimate in black WI music (3)

Win and learn!

There will be a prize of a free FDA Learn/Keyskills course or workshop, worth around £150, for the first correct entry drawn after the closing date. Find out more about the courses on offer at: www.fda.org.uk/professionaldevelopment/FDA_Workshops.aspx or www.wearekeystone.org.uk/keyskills-courses. Solution in next issue.

Solution and winner

Tinmen?
by Schadenfreude



The thematic items (in bold italics) are the last and present twelve Chancellors of the Exchequer. OSBORNE, MAJOR and DARLING are clued as anagrams (highlighted).

Winner: Dr. Mike Steward, HMRC (retired).

How to enter

Crossword entries should be sent by 1 June 2018 to: Public Service Magazine crossword, FDA, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London SE1 7NQ or by email (with 'PSM crossword' as the subject) to psm@fda.org.uk. Please provide an email address so we can tell the winner how to claim their prize.

2019: Celebrating 100 years of the FDA

FDA President Gareth Hills outlines plans for the FDA's centenary celebrations next year, and asks for your help in bringing the story of the union's first 100 years to life.

We all love a celebration – birthdays, religious festivals, New Year, anniversaries, the list is long and diverse. And next year the FDA has its own special anniversary to celebrate – 2019 marks our centenary as a union.

The history of our first hundred years is rich with events, people and stories that we can all be rightly proud of. Last summer, the FDA's Executive Committee agreed that a working group should be established to commence planning for our centenary. It's a small group, but one that's lucky to benefit from the many talents and vast experience of past President and current FDA Trustee, Sue Jarvis. I'm sure many of you will know Sue and will recognise how fortunate we are to have her involved.

The group has already started planning events and activities to mark the centenary. We want to celebrate the FDA's contribution to the working lives of its members and the union's achievements during its 100-year existence.

We'll be looking at the ways the FDA has promoted the interests of senior staff in the civil service and given them a voice. We want to highlight how the FDA speaks up for civil servants, who cannot publicly defend themselves, and keeps making the case for the impartiality and professionalism of people in public service. We also want to showcase how the FDA's distinctive voice has influenced and helped to promote wider trade union interests and values.

Initial activity is focused on researching FDA history and identifying the people who have contributed significantly to the

“ We want to tell the FDA's story through its key people - the founding members, the first woman to lead the union, and the people who took part in the strikes in the late 1970s ”

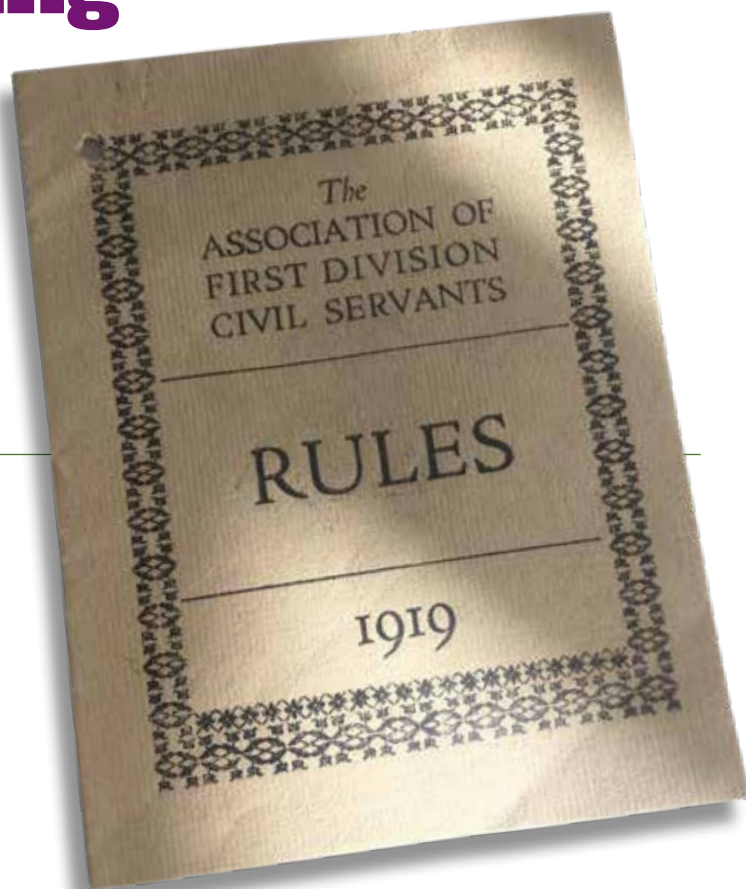
development of the union. Ideally, we want to tell the FDA's story through the stories of key people in the union's history, such as four founding members, the first woman to lead the FDA, those who took part in industrial action in the late 70's, and many others. More work needs to be done on this and on identifying other significant individuals and events in our history. The group has already identified a number of key people who, we believe, will be able to assist us in our work.

The history of the FDA is the collective history of all our members, past and present, so we would love to hear from you and get your help in bringing the union's story to life. Let us have your

stories of the unsung heroes of the FDA, of local activity that has made a real difference, and the campaigns that have inspired you. Tell us about what the union has done to help you, and what you've done to help the union and your fellow members. It would be great to hear lots of success stories, but I'd also love to hear about the characters you've met through the union – we're looking for humorous as well as serious stories!

We will be announcing the centenary plans later in the year, including details of the events that will be taking place and how we will make sure that the celebrations are representative of the diversity of our membership across the nations and regions of the UK. Our planned celebrations will be made all the better by having your authentic stories. I'd encourage you all to put your thinking caps on and get in touch with us.

You can share your story by emailing us at info@fda.org.uk.



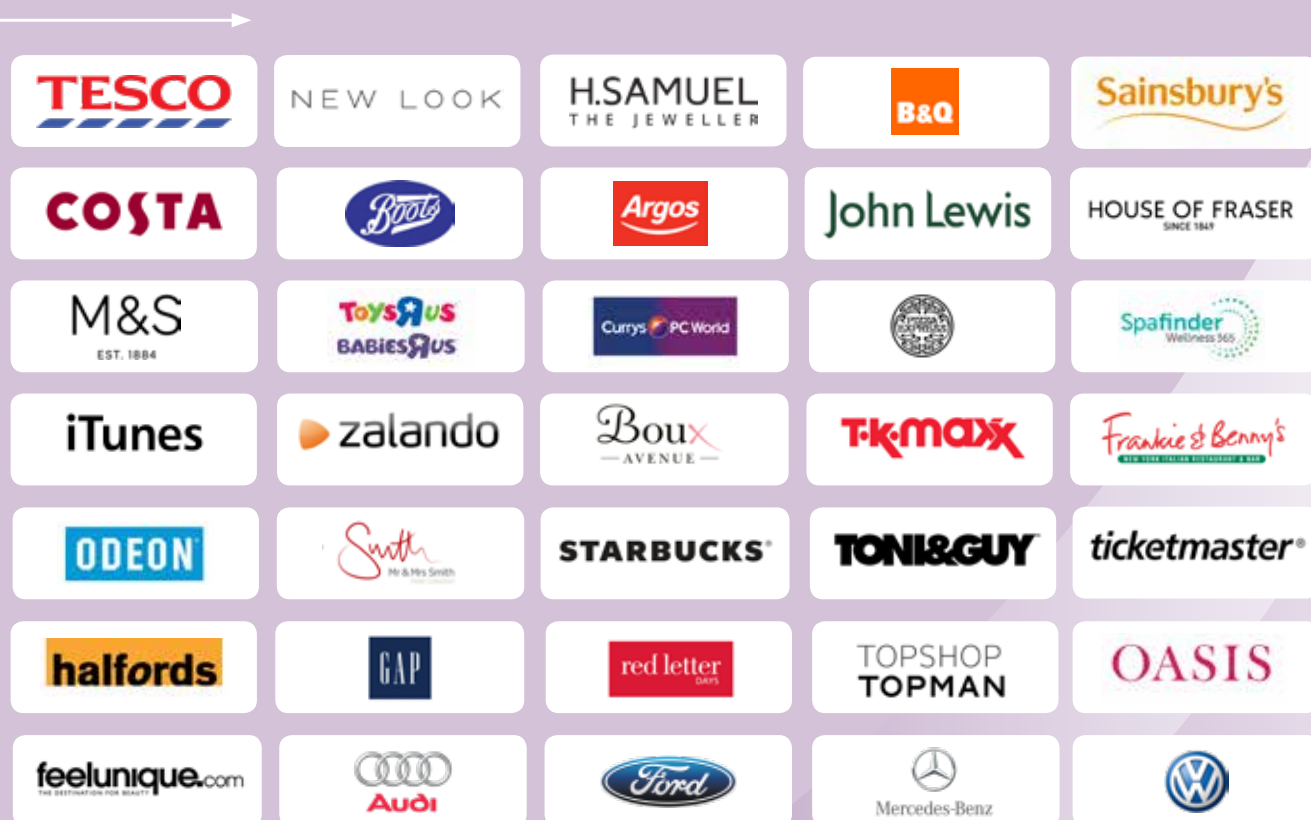
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