

Blog for 22 Jun 2006

My blog starts here . . . [send comments]

Hello, and welcome to my blog - where I'll be publishing my news and views about how we work in the Home Office, the future, making things better, celebrating our successes, and perhaps even the odd joke!

I asked the senior management of the Home Office to attend an event yesterday, where the Home Secretary and I began discussing with them how we're going to transform the department. There was lots of feedback and I am keen to involve everyone in the Home Office in this discussion. I want to hear the views of all. So please, vote in the poll on my homepage, and send me your views. And if you have anything else you'd like to say, just send it to xxxx – I will be looking at this feedback regularly and posting as much of it as I can back on these pages. So check back regularly for updates – or even better subscribe to get emails every time I update this page by clicking the link in the top right corner of this page.

David Normington
Permanent Secretary

Blog for 23 Jun 2006

How can we make the Home Office fit for purpose? [send comments]

Your comments in response to my poll about how we can make the department fit for purpose make very interesting reading. Here's the first feedback update, as promised. I'll be adding more of your emails later today, so don't forget to check back later. Or you can always subscribe to get an email reminder each time I update my blog by clicking the "subscribe" button you see in the top right of this page. If you want to add your views to the discussion then vote in the poll, (or click the "send comments" link above to comment directly on what you read on this page - your comments will appear at the bottom of the page) or email me on anything you want to say in general at xxxx

David Normington
Permanent Secretary

Blog for 30 Jun 2006

Don't be shy - I want a new culture where all are heard [send comments]

I agree with those who say we should listen more to staff at Grade 7 and below and to those at the frontline. I spent my first three months doing just that and didn't get the leadership team together until after I had heard from, and seen the work of, literally hundreds of staff all over the country.

But leaders also matter. When organisations are going off track, it is the leaders and managers who are at fault. We gave a lot of time over to discussing leadership at the SCS conference last week. You can read copies of my and the Home Secretary's speeches where we set out our aspirations and expectations for achieving reform in the Home Office.

Why can't more people make their voice heard in the Home Office? There seems to be a frustration that people can't get their message through. I want to change all that. Please also be bold enough to put your name on your contributions: I want a culture where people are praised for contributing constructively to a discussion, not penalised.

I would also like to hear your thoughts on my blog, and on the new “Our Organisation” website. Check back soon - I'll be updating again, and adding a new poll question about how we work together, early next week.

DAVID NORMINGTON

Blog for 5 Jul 2006

Fancy meeting me for lunch? [send comments]

In my last blog update I asked you to give me your thoughts on my blog and the new Our Organisation website. I am grateful to those of you who have responded thus far. And I'd like to offer you the chance to make your voice heard at my staff lunches.

Short notice I know, but I will be holding a lunch tomorrow (Thursday 6 July) to listen to views on how to reform the Home Office. (This will be filmed as part of a video to tell the story of the reform process to all staff across the organisation.) I have a few places left, so if you would like to come along tomorrow and share your thoughts please email my office xxxx to book your place. And even if you can't make it tomorrow, I'll be holding more lunches shortly, so let my office know if you'd like to come to a future event.

This is your opportunity to have your say to me in person!

More thoughts from me about your thoughtful feedback in the next couple of days . . .

David Normington

Blog for 12 Jul 2006

If you haven't seen much of me lately . . . you soon will! [send comments]

I have just spent 20 minutes reading the latest batch of comments. Thanks to everyone and keep them coming. I am disappointed to read the messages about pay. I know not everyone reads my global messages but just before Easter I said I had heard horror stories about failures in the pay system. I apologised for this and said we had to do better. I am very sorry there are still problems.

There are lots of other comments about training, HR, leadership, staff cuts, use of consultants and senior management visibility – all of which I take to heart. But on the last of these, don't underestimate the dilemma for all of us at senior levels in trying to balance our time. In a very large organisation like the Home Office I will never get round to everyone so I have to use blogs, videos and messages to supplement face to face meetings. And, frankly, in the last very pressurised weeks I haven't had time to get out of my office enough – something I regret and intend to put right over the next few weeks.

David Normington

There is a Code of Conduct for David's blog, please take the time to read this before submitting your comments.

Blog for 28 Jul 2006

I haven't got blogger's block, honestly . . . [send comments]

I have been accused of getting blogger's block so here are 3 quick comments:

- 1) The current tone of comments on the blog is a bit sceptical and downcast – can anyone cheer me up please?
- 2) I have seen about 500 staff face to face since we published the Home Office reform plan. The face to face discussions are much more up beat.
- 3) My own summary of how it's gone so far is: P.M. and Home Secretary pleased; stakeholders and colleagues in other government Department's positive; public reactions mixed, some negative; staff in the Home Office a bit sceptical.

What do you think?

David Normington

Blog for 7 Aug 2006

Reasons to be cheerful [send comments]

Thanks to those who have offered me cheerful thoughts (and by the way, I was not seeking to discourage more negative ones). I agree most with those who say there is a huge commitment across the Home Office – lots of people love their jobs and know they are making a difference. I have seen that during the last four days in my walkabouts in 2MS, Croydon and Cleland House. Generally I would encourage people not to be too affected by negative media comments (there was more of it on Sunday). The best response can only be to be more determined than ever to prove them wrong.

To the person who wonders whether anything changes as a result of comments on the Blog: I see the Blog as part of a continuing conversation between me and Home Office Staff, supplementing other ways of me finding out what is going on and what is on your minds. I have already taken to heart comments about the need to improve HR, pay systems, and people management. And, finally, to the person who offered to send me her home made malteasers fudge, thank you, but it sounds a bit too rich – I can only take chocolate in small doses! Nice thought, though.

David Normington