



Civil Service QUARTERLY

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Feature

Voice, choice and control: the Girl Summit 2014

Bagging the benefits of the carrier bag charge

Measuring school success

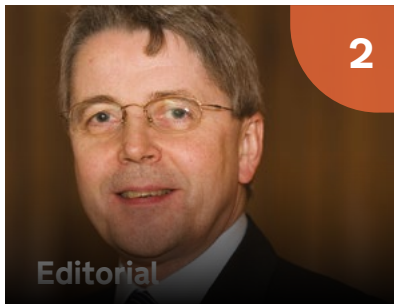
Review of *The Blunders of Our Governments*



Civil Service

#CSQuarterly

Contents



Civil Service Quarterly opens up the Civil Service to greater collaboration and challenge, showcases excellence, and invites discussion. If the Civil Service is to be truly world-leading it needs to collaborate more, learn from experts outside the Civil Service, listen more to the public and front-line staff and respond to new challenges with innovation and boldness.

Any civil servant can write for Civil Service Quarterly – contact csq@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk

Cover image: Picture: Jessica Lea/DFID. Breaking the cycle of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C).

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Editorial

» Civil Service Quarterly July 2014



Sir Jeremy Heywood

The summer 2014 edition of Civil Service Quarterly leads with a tremendously important issue: what the Civil Service is doing to reduce some of the dangers that girls and young women around the world face. The number of girls subjected to forced marriages and female genital mutilation in some areas of the world, highlighted in Liz Ditchburn and John O'Brien's article, is shocking. The 2014 Girls Summit, co-hosted by the UK Government and UNICEF, is due to take place next week, and I would encourage people inside and outside the Civil Service to think how they can support this cause.

The theme of protecting and nurturing children runs through other articles in this edition. Tim Leunig's article looks at changes to the way the quality of teaching in secondary schools is measured; and Ian Wright's article discusses improvements made to child maintenance arrangements where parents have separated.

The other salient theme to this edition of Civil Service Quarterly is the value of evidence and testing. Duncan Selbie's forthright interview on his role in Public Health England has evidence at its heart; Matthew Quinn's article on the introduction of a charge for carrier bags in Wales is informed by evaluation of the policy's impact; and Pete Thompson's reflections on his career show him tracing a route through roles where testing and evidence sometimes inform life-and-death decisions on questions of defence and national security.

The effective dissemination

and use of the best available evidence to underpin decision making, in all branches of the Civil Service, is of paramount importance; and there are evident dangers if we do not make use of it. Sir David Normington's review of *The Blunders of Our Governments* – a challenging book by the academics Anthony King and Ivor Crewe – is a salutary read for all public sector workers. If we are to aspire to be among the very best, as I believe we should, we in the Civil Service need to be open about and learn from previous mistakes.

Recently I visited Ark Conway Primary in Acton where I saw an education trial which forms part of the What Works Initiative. What Works, and other new structures such as the Major Projects Authority, are intended to ensure that Government decisions are made on the best evidence, and are subject to thorough and incisive re-examination.

With the help of such initiatives, we will significantly reduce the risks of committing costly and embarrassing blunders. But I believe the message is applicable much more broadly across the Civil Service: we must avoid complacency. It is never enough just to assume we have the right answers to the tough questions we face: we must be able to prove it.

Sir Jeremy Heywood
Cabinet Secretary

Let us know what you think by email (csq@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk) or on twitter [#CSQuarterly](https://twitter.com/CSQuarterly).


Voice, choice and control

» **Women everywhere should have the right to decide when and whether they have children. No child should be malnourished – undermining their health and future potential. Together we can wipe killer diseases like malaria and TB off the face of the planet. Liz Ditchburn, Director of Policy at the Department for International Development (DFID), and John O’Brien, Director of Safeguarding at the Home Office, write about one way the Civil Service can make a difference.**

Every year, the Department for International Development (DFID) takes a huge development issue and rallies a global movement for change around an international summit, at which we bring together governments, charities, businesses and activists, to agree transformative policy and funding commitments.

These summits have led to significant results. At our Nutrition for Growth event last year, over 100 organisations committed to improve the nutrition of 500 million pregnant women and young children. Progress since then includes the expansion of programmes in Africa and Asia to address the immediate and underlying

causes of under-nutrition, and the development of a number of new research partnerships to identify innovative solutions to this global challenge¹.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has been a key partner in recent years. In 2012, the London Summit on Family Planning  achieved ground-



Picture: Russell Watkins/DFID. London, 11th July 2012. Prime Minister David Cameron and Melinda Gates talk about family planning issues and volunteering with young people at the London Summit on Family Planning.

1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nutrition-for-growth-one-year-on>.

breaking commitments to enable 120 million more women and girls to use modern contraception. Two years on from the summit and progress has been good. We are working with Family Planning (FP) 2020 (a global partnership that supports the rights of women and girls to decide whether, when and how many children they want to have) to drive forward and monitor progress against summit commitments. FP 2020 is promoting national accountability for summit commitments by publishing progress online². As a result of the summit, countries such as Zambia, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Niger and Kenya now have family planning action plans.

Key essentials for a successful summit

The format and nature of each event is tailored to the objective we are trying to achieve. Some are about gathering support to scale up efforts, like the successful Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) replenishment³ in 2011, where major public and private donors committed funding to immunise more than 250 million of the world's poorest children against life-threatening diseases. Others are aimed at achieving significant shifts in thinking and acting on particular issues. All must have at their core a few key essentials:



Picture: The Children's Investment Fund Foundation/DFID. Bill Gates at the Nutrition for Growth event today (8 June 2013).

- An issue which captures the public's imagination, like saving children's lives, giving women in other countries the same opportunities we have in the UK, and helping people help themselves.
- A clear 'ask', like providing more money or resources, showing your support for change (on social media etc.), or legislating and using your influence.
- The political will to take on the challenge. In the UK, this often means the active involvement of the Prime Minister.
- An active and engaged civil society, to help galvanise governments and support citizens. ▶



Picture: Martin Malungu/HarvestPlus.

² <http://progress.familyplanning2020.org/fp2020-progress>.

³ <http://www.gavialliance.org/funding/how-gavi-is-funded/resource-mobilisation-process/gavi-pledging-conference-june-2011>.

Voice, choice and control

Girl Summit 2014

Later this month the UK will hold its first Girl Summit. This event, co-hosted with UNICEF, will mobilise global efforts to end the practices of child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) and female genital mutilation (FGM) within a generation. This year, for the first time, the event will focus on issues from both the international and the domestic perspective, because these practices are not limited to the developing world – they happen to British girls, both here and overseas. The Government recognises that we will not see an end to these practices unless we work together, stepping up our efforts both at home and partnering with other countries' efforts overseas, to end FGM and child, early and forced marriage forever. The Prime Minister David Cameron, the Secretary of State for International Development Justine Greening and the Home Secretary Theresa May want it to be a breakthrough moment for millions of girls and women here in the UK and around the world.

The Summit is being organised jointly between

DFID and the Home Office, with additional involvement from other departments, including the Department of Health and the Department for Education. The Home Office and other domestic departments are working together on a cross government package of domestic announcements to be made at the summit, including significant new measures to tackle FGM and forced marriage here in the UK. The Girl Summit follows on from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's recent Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, the largest ever summit held on this issue. One aspect of the Global Summit was to examine the impact that sexual violence in conflict has on women and girls, and this complements the broader UK Government support for girls and women across the world.

The Girl Summit issues have, in the past, been considered too difficult to tackle, or people have avoided them for the fear of being accused of racism or cultural imperialism. Millions of girls worldwide are affected by FGM and child, early and forced marriage every year, causing a lifetime of physical and mental damage.



This year's Girl Summit will:

- Be about changing values and behaviours, overseas and in the UK.
- Engage the UK public, including diaspora groups, on these issues.

The main outcomes will be:

- Sharing What Works - learning and celebrating success.
- Agreeing an agenda for change - securing commitments to action.
- Engaging people for change - inspiring a generation to declare support to end CEFM and FGM.





Picture: Jessica Lea/DFID. Breaking the cycle of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in Burkina Faso.

Voice, choice and control

In England and Wales it is estimated that over 20,000 girls under the age of 15 could be at high risk of FGM each year. FGM is a form of violence against women and girls, and one of the most extreme ways in which girls and women are controlled and disempowered. In high-prevalence countries – such as Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia – FGM is carried out because it is considered essential for marriage.

Girls who marry young are often under pressure to have children soon after marriage. In low and middle-income countries, complications from pregnancy and childbirth are a leading cause of death among girls aged 15-19⁴. Victims of forced marriage can suffer physical, psychological, emotional, financial and sexual abuse including being held unlawfully captive, and being assaulted and repeatedly raped. In 2013 in the UK the Government's Forced Marriage Unit (a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office Unit) provided advice or support in 1300 cases (covering the

A High Level Event team, led by Alice Hall (Leader of the Girl Summit Team in DFID's Policy Division), has been put together from across DFID and the Home Office to manage the event. They are working closely with our co-hosts, UNICEF, as well as the key domestic Departments including Cabinet Office and No.10. The Nike Foundation which has pioneered new approaches to girls' development is a key partner offering strategic advice, creative input, finance and resources. The team are securing policy commitments, liaising with civil society, managing invitations and organising speakers. As well as achieving maximum value for money by securing a low-cost venue and sponsorship. It is a huge challenge to ensure that we end up with an event that is truly inspiring, runs smoothly and, most importantly, delivers real change for millions of girls and women in this country and overseas.

UK and British nationals overseas), but we know that this does not reflect the full scale of the abuse, and many more cases are not reported.

Progress

The good news is there is a growing movement for change. In 2012, the regional grouping of African Countries

at the United Nations passed a resolution calling for a global ban on FGM. In December last year, Ministers of Education and Health from 21 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa committed to eliminating child marriage by 2020, and in May 2014, the African Union (AU) announced a two-year campaign to end the practice.

Last year DFID launched a programme that will work in 17 countries to support the Africa-led movement to end FGM. DFID also has a flagship programme on child, early and forced marriage in Ethiopia's Amhara region, which focuses on engaging with the whole community to change attitudes, and will soon be scaling up this work. In Asia DFID is working in India, Bangladesh and Nepal to address some of the drivers of child marriage, including support for protective legislation, quality education and



4 Early Marriages, Adolescents and Young Pregnancies WHO 2012.



economic empowerment.

We are also stepping up our efforts to end these practices here in the UK. Forcing someone to marry is now a criminal offence in England and Wales under new legislation that came into force on 16 June 2014.

In February this year, to mark the International Day of Zero Tolerance to FGM, eight Government Ministers signed a joint declaration to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to end this terrible form of abuse. In addition, the Department of Health has announced that all acute hospitals will report information on the prevalence of FGM within their patient

We hope everyone reading this will join in our big moment later in July to add their voice to the chorus. We have launched a social media pledge campaign where people will be able to play their part by pledging support through their Twitter or Facebook accounts. We have launched a social media pledge campaign at www.girlsummitpledge.com where people can show solidarity with those who are affected by these issues. Please add your voice and pledge your support ...tell your friends, networks and colleagues too.

population each month; the Home Office has launched an awareness campaign aimed at mothers from communities where FGM is prevalent; and in April, the Department for Education issued updated guidance to schools that contained specific information about FGM.

The Girl Summit 2014 will

bring together heads of state, practitioners, survivors, charities, the diaspora and the private sector. We know from past experience that if we can build momentum around a big event like this, working with international and domestic partners, we can achieve a transformative shift.

IN THE GAME OF LIFE
THE HARDEST SETTING IS
YOUNG GIRL IN A
DEVELOPING COUNTRY

HEALTH	
WEALTH	
RIGHTS	
POTENTIAL	



Globally more than
125 million
girls and women
have undergone
Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

UK aid from the British people is
working to reduce the practice by
30% in at least 10 countries
in the next 5 years



Bagging the benefits of the carrier bag charge

» Governments aren't often praised for introducing new costs on an everyday item. But the introduction of the single-use carrier bag charge in Wales has won the support of retailers and consumers alike, says Matthew Quinn from the Welsh Government.

With an estimated 445 million plastic bags used in Wales in 2009, the single-use carrier bag had become a symbol of our throwaway society at a time when reusable alternatives are readily available. When the Welsh Government introduced its plans to become a zero-waste nation by 2050, reducing the environmental impact of single-use carrier bags was one of the first steps in the long road ahead.

Plastic bags contribute between 0.1-1 percent of visible litter in the UK with around 2 percent ending up on our beaches. Although this may seem small, they are a highly visible form of litter which can take hundreds of years to biodegrade. The Welsh Government recognised that intervention was needed to control the issuing of single-use carrier bags. Following a 2009 poll by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in which 88 percent of respondents said they had 40

disposable carrier bags hoarded at home, consumers needed a strong message about how a small change in their purchasing and disposal behaviours could quickly deliver a large change for the environment. Evidence from countries such as the Republic of Ireland, Bangladesh and China indicated that imposing a charge or ban reduced consumption of carrier bags and litter.

Welsh carrier bag charge

Starting as a public petition to address a growing issue, the idea of charging for carrier bags was developed into a proposal that went through the consultation and legislative process, before becoming a law that changed the way single-use carrier bags are thought about today in Wales.

At the outset it was important to agree the definition of a single-use carrier bag and what types of bag to include. Is what it's used for important? What about the

thickness of the bag and its size? Should paper and biodegradable bags be included? And what level should we pitch the charge? It needed to be enough to influence behaviour change without placing an unnecessary burden on retailers or the public.

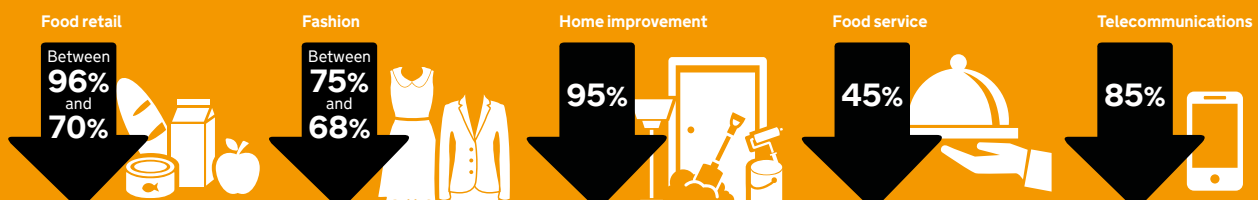
Introduced in 2011, the scheme is simple. It places a 5p levy on the purchase of all single-use carrier bags irrespective of the material they're made from. No retailer is exempt; consumers are charged a minimum of 5p per bag whether packing up the weekly supermarket shop or bagging a Saturday night takeaway. The proceeds of the levy are then donated to good causes.

This simplicity was important in winning over the support of retailers and consumers, and it set the Welsh approach apart from schemes in places elsewhere. Last December the parliamentary



First year (2012) reductions in use of plastic bags among various retail sectors

(source <http://wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2012/carrierbags/?lang=en>):



Environment Audit Committee praised the Welsh scheme as easy for consumers to understand and straightforward for retailers to run.

Welsh carrier bag charge – how it works

All retailers, irrespective of their size or line of sales, are expected to charge consumers a minimum of 5p for the purchase of any single-use carrier bag.

These bags include:

- paper
- plastic
- part plastic
- recycled and
- degradable plastic

Bags from other materials, such as hessian or cotton, and the stronger plastic ‘bags for life’ are exempt from the scheme.

There are a few exemptions to the scheme beyond this. These include, for example, food stuffs that are not pre-packed such as loose fruit or fast food fries.

Working with retailers

From the start the Welsh Government’s Local Environment Quality team recognised that long-term success depended on backing by the retail sector. Their challenge was to develop a scheme that would work for all retailers, from the big four supermarkets to small-scale independent traders.

Early stakeholder engagement and an open-

minded approach proved essential to negotiations. The Welsh Government set the wider scheme parameters and worked with the retail sector from the outset to discuss the particulars of how the scheme would work.

Some were concerned about the knock-on administrative effects of implementing the scheme. For example, the original proposals required all companies to keep detailed records of net proceeds from charging for carrier bags. Smaller retailers, due to their limited staff capacity in comparison with larger employers, felt this would be an unhelpful extra call on their workers’ time. Following their feedback the regulations were amended to reduce the administrative burden on small and medium-sized enterprises by requiring only those retailers with ten or more full time employees to keep such records.

Whilst all retailers in Wales are required by law to charge for single-use carrier bags, several consortia representing the larger retail sectors said they would prefer to see a voluntary approach to the donation of the net proceeds instead of being legally required to do so by the Single-Use Carrier Bags (Wales) Regulations 2010. After a year of negotiations with the sector, retailers entered into a voluntary agreement with the Welsh Government to

donate the net proceeds of the charge to a good cause of their choice.

Working closely with a range of different stakeholders enabled us to deliver a scheme that meets the Government’s commitment whilst being tailored to the differing needs of retailers across the sector.

Benefits beyond aims

Reducing the environmental impact of carrier bag usage – from production to disposal – was, and remains, the over-riding aim of the scheme. A Welsh Government study¹ six months in found a 90 percent reduction in carrier bag usage for some retail sectors, while a similar study² by the waste reduction agency WRAP recorded an 81 percent fall in usage in the major supermarkets between 2010 and 2012. As a knock-on effect of reduced demand, the manufacture of unsustainable materials fell, road miles shrank through fewer deliveries, and fewer bags in circulation meant that fewer end up as damaging and unsightly litter. ▶



1 <http://wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2012/carrierbags/?lang=en>.
2 <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/carrier-bags-reducing-their-environmental-impact>.

Bagging the benefits of the carrier bag charge

Independent research³ carried out by Cardiff University reported that 82 percent of shoppers claimed to reuse their bags following the introduction of the charge, compared to 61 percent prior to the charge. In March 2013 studies⁴ into behaviour trends by Exodus Research reported that 70 percent of shoppers were observed reusing their bags.

Yet the benefits reach beyond environmental factors. Retailers are saving money by purchasing fewer bags, and are building community networks through their charitable donations. The Association of Convenience Stores reported that one member had saved up to £14,000 a year: big bucks for a small independent retailer. Meanwhile the Co-operative Group has seen costs fall⁵ and an 81 percent reduction in carrier bag usage in their Welsh stores thanks to the scheme.

And then there are the beneficiaries of the charge; retailers pass on the money raised through the sale of single-use bags to good causes of their choice, from schools and small local community groups to national charities. As of April 2013, over £4 million has been passed on to good causes since the introduction of the charge.

Beneficiaries include the RSPB who have received over £1 million from Tesco as a direct result of the Welsh bag charge. The money has been used to support several Welsh based RSPB projects such as enhancing the visitor experience at the charity's Carngafallt site. Locally-run charities such as the Snowdonia Society, which received around £800 from a chain of family-run convenience stores in North Wales, are also benefiting.

Next steps

Three years on from the introduction of the charge, the Welsh Government continues to gain insight into how to reduce the usage of single-use carrier bags and to measure the impact of the charge to date.

A review of the first three years of the charge is due to start in autumn 2014 and will be undertaken by a specialist independent organisation. The review will investigate if bag purchasing trends continue to drop, whether single-use carrier bag litter has reduced as a result, the effect the charge has on businesses in Wales, and the effectiveness of the voluntary agreement in encouraging retailers to donate the proceeds of the charge to good causes.

Proposals are also in place to cut down further the production of unsustainable materials by bringing other types of carrier bags into the charge. The Environment Bill consultation, which closed in January 2014, included proposals to enable an amendment to the Climate Change Act to bring this into force, if evidence and monitoring demonstrate that there is a need.

After success in the supermarkets, the next stage of the Welsh Government's consumer insight work will focus on the high street shopping behaviours of the younger generation. Branded bags by the latest on-trend retailers are as much a fashion accessory as the items they hold. Encouraging youngsters to change their behaviour and opt for more sustainable bags is the next challenge.

At a glance — carrier bag charges in the UK

On 1 October 2011 Wales became the first UK country to introduce a charge for single-use carrier bags.

Northern Ireland followed in 2013 and the requirements of the 5p levy there are similar, but not identical, to the scheme in Wales. Retailers in Northern Ireland are required to pass the proceeds of the levy (£4.1 million in 2013/14) to the Department of the Environment. These funds are used to support community-based environmental projects. To encourage shoppers to reuse their bags, the 5p levy will be extended to reusable bags (retailing at less than 20p) in January 2015.

Retailers in Scotland will be required to charge for carrier bags from 20 October 2014. The charge will be similar to the Welsh scheme both on the scope of the charge and voluntary donations to good causes, but due to the differences between the Climate Change Act 2008 and the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 there are some administrative differences.

The UK Government will introduce a 5p charge in England in the autumn of 2015. The charge will be broadly similar to the Welsh model. However in England it will focus on single-use plastic bags and businesses with fewer than 250 employees will be exempt. The UK Government is developing standards to enable an exemption for biodegradable bags to be introduced at a later date. As is the case in Wales, the UK Government wants and expects retailers to donate the proceeds to good causes.

3 http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/waste_recycling/substance/carrierbags/attituderesearch/?lang=en.

4 http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/waste_recycling/substance/carrierbags/behaviour-study-on-use-of-carrier-bags-2012/?lang=en.

5 <http://www.thegrocer.co.uk/opinion/the-grocer-blog-daily-bread/bagging-order/354328.blog>.

Measuring school success

» English secondary schools are held accountable in two ways. The government publishes data about exam results, and Ofsted inspects schools, taking the data into account. But a major shift in how success is measured for GCSEs is coming, writes Tim Leunig, Chief Analyst and Senior Ministerial Policy Adviser at the Department for Education.

The UK's school accountability framework is generally seen as world-leading, with the OECD's education head Andreas Schleicher telling Parliament this year that "strong public accountability" is an important part of "the most successful education systems".

Prior to 2010, a school was "above the floor" if three in ten pupils were awarded 5 or more GCSEs of grade C or better. Schools failing to meet this standard were deemed to

be "below the floor". Such schools would be inspected by Ofsted. Should Ofsted confirm that the school's performance is poor, a change of management would follow.

This approach encourages schools to concentrate on C/D borderline pupils. Getting a pupil from Cs to A*s, or from Fs to Ds gets no credit. It also means that intake, not the quality of teaching, largely determines whether a school is defined as doing well. A

grammar school will never be below the floor, whereas some schools have intakes that are much more challenging. This makes jobs in schools with challenging intakes more pressured, and less attractive.

These criticisms have been widely understood for some time. One education expert, Loic Menzies, wrote "I hate the distortive effects of the 5 A*-C at GCSE accountability measure. Don't all teachers? Doesn't any parent who has seen the effect it has on their children's education?"

We took the overwhelming consensus that the previous system was not fit for purpose



Measuring school success

seriously. As civil servants, we set ourselves a number of criteria by which to judge any proposals. These criteria embodied Ministers' aims.

1. Can a school do well, whatever its intake?
2. Does a school improve its score if any pupil improves their grades?
3. Are we rewarding schools that do well in English and Maths?
4. Are we rewarding schools that do well in traditional subjects?
5. Are we rewarding schools that offer a broad and balanced curriculum?
6. Are we rewarding schools that achieve A and A* grades?

This led us to a set of proposals in the consultation document. The first criterion led us to argue that schools should be judged not on their pupils' results per se, but on their pupils' results given their grades at age 11. The second criterion led us to argue that all

pupils should be included, and that every grade should count. The third criterion led us to argue that English and Maths should be double weighted in the calculations, reflecting their importance for young people. The fourth criterion led us to require that at least three further subjects were traditional academic subjects, as defined by the English Baccalaureate. Criterion five led us to assess schools as to how well they do over eight subjects, rather than the current five. The final criterion led us to propose that every grade improvement should be reflected in the proposals, rather than just having a C threshold.

The Department for Education maintains the National Pupil Database, which records the grades of each and every pupil. This allowed us to model different ideas against these criteria very accurately. Analysts were key and worked tirelessly to analyse and present their conclusions. We were able to assess the likely number of schools that would be below the floor, as well as to look at the likely behavioural responses from schools. For example, some schools currently offer a curriculum that is tailored to an accountability regime that does not require many traditional

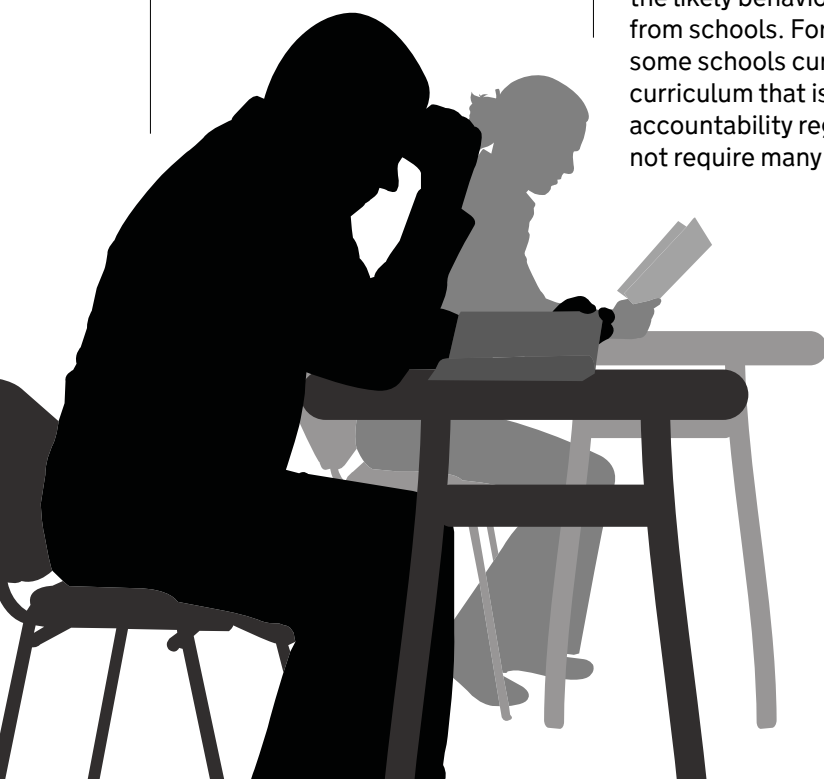
academic GCSEs. It is clear that these schools will change their behaviour to offer a more appropriate mix of subjects.

The consultation document was broadly well-received, with generally supportive responses from parents, teachers, heads, and educationalists. Notwithstanding the positive response, we took concerns seriously. For example, the consultation document proposed keeping a C threshold in English and Maths, but all of the maths organisations argued that this distorted maths teaching, with too much "teaching to the test" and too little development of deeper learning and understanding. We listened, and took out the C threshold in both subjects.

The new system has at its core the progress that all pupils make in their time at secondary school. All pupils count equally, so there is no incentive for schools to prioritise any pupil over another. A school's intake of pupils doesn't matter, because the new system is based on the progress pupils make, not their final attainment.

Schools will receive points for grades in 8 GCSE subjects. A G grade gets 1 point, up to 8 for an A*. English and Maths have to be in the mix, and are doubled weighted, reflecting their importance. A further three subjects have to be traditional academic subjects (sciences, humanities, languages) and three are open – they could be more academic subjects or creative or vocational subjects.

Each pupil's GCSE score is compared with that of other pupils who performed equally well at age 11. This gives us a measure of the pupil's progress relative to reasonable expectations. A school's progress score is the





average of its pupils' progress scores. This is the key measure: if pupils in a school average half a grade lower than the same mix of children typically achieve elsewhere, the school is below the floor, and will be inspected. Furthermore, every school will have to declare their progress score on their website. Parents will know whether children typically learn more or less in each of their local schools. The formal national accountability system will support local, informal, accountability at the school gate.

It is generally good practice to pilot major changes, but in this case that would be difficult. Accountability affects how children are taught for five years. A pilot would take at least that long – and that would be five more cohorts of children who would suffer the distorting effects of the current system. For that reason we will not be piloting the new system, which takes effect from 2016. We are, however, allowing schools to opt in a year early, if they would like to do so. Many have said that they will, recognising that the

new system is a fairer approach.

The proposal has been universally welcomed. Graham Stuart, (Conservative) chair of the Education Select Committee described it as “an educational breakthrough”, while by his (Labour) predecessor, Barry Sheerman said it was “the best statement I have heard from a Minister since 2010”.

Independent experts agreed. To quote Loic Menzies again: “it is *the* most important (positive) change the Coalition is making in education.” One head described it as “a real game changer”, while another said “these new measures are challenging and fair”.

ASCL, the principal heads' union stated that they had argued “for a change to this kind of measure for many years”¹. Even the NUT, who argue against quantitative accountability measures, described the changes as a “step in the right direction”, particularly welcoming “the move away from a ‘spotlight’ on pupils on the C/D borderline”. The Local Schools

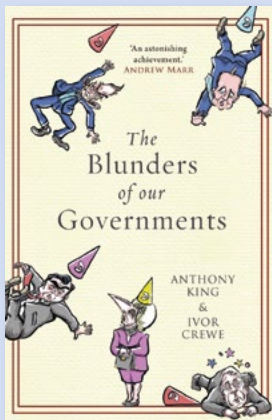
Network, who have been critical of most of the current government's changes said that “this is one of the most well-thought out papers to come out of the DfE recently, asking the right questions and raising the right issues”.

The likely impact of these changes is large. University of Bristol academics looked at the effect of changes in the accountability system in Wales. They found that the abolition of accountability worsened grades in around three quarters of schools, to the same extent as increasing class sizes by 8 people. This is a large effect. The ‘5 A-to-Cs’ standard covered all schools in England, but in reality schools had little incentive to care about pupils who were not close to the threshold. The new system means that schools will have an incentive to care about the progress of these pupils as well. There are some 300,000 such pupils each year, and therefore we expect that these changes will improve the education of around this number of England's children.



The Blunders of Our Governments – Review by Sir David Normington GCB

» For someone like me who has spent 40 years in and around Whitehall, *The Blunders of Our Governments* by Anthony King and Ivor Crewe is a compelling read.



“Our subject in this book is the numerous blunders that have been committed by British governments of all parties in recent decades. We believe there have been far too many of them and that most, perhaps all, of them could have been avoided.” (Page 1, *The Blunders of Our Governments*)

I watched many of these blunders unfold, thankfully from a safe distance. I knew many of the people involved. I was even directly involved in two myself – individual learning accounts and ID cards. The former was undoubtedly a blunder. I inherited it when I became Permanent Secretary at the Department for Education and Skills. My main role was to close it down as fraud approached £100 million; and then to appear before the Public Accounts Committee to explain the failure. The second

– ID cards – was underway when I went to head the Home Office. Many would say it was a policy mistake, but, on the authors’ definition (“blunder, a gross mistake; an error due to stupidity or carelessness”) I am not sure it qualifies as a blunder on the scale of others in the book. The politicians who gave birth to it knew what they wanted and the Home Office delivered on their commitment to have ID cards in at least a few people’s hands by 2010. No one suffered. No money was actually lost; though a lot was spent on a programme which never came fully to fruition.

But this book is not just a chance for people like me to have a painful walk down memory lane. It is very much a text for today with lessons for all politicians and civil servants. It is a “must read” for anyone coming new to Government.

The core of the book is 12 detailed case studies, plus a briefer canter through some of the IT disasters of the last 30 years. Complex stories are told with brilliant clarity and simplicity. They are all the more powerful because there is no malice and no exaggerated attempt to pin blame on individuals. Politicians generally come out of it worse, but only because more is known about their role; and the authors

accept that in almost all the cases the intentions of the individuals concerned were laudable and honourable.

Some of the blunders, like the poll tax, the Child Support Agency and tax credits are well known. One or two, like the late 1990s public/private partnership to modernise the London Underground, never hit the headlines, though the authors describe it as a “blunder-plus, one of the most idiotic decisions made by a British Government in modern times”. As policies, programmes and projects plummet to disaster, there are times when you can hardly turn the page for fear it will get worse: for the Exchequer, for innocent, vulnerable citizens, or for both.

The later part of the book seeks to draw out the lessons learned and here it is stronger on analysis than on solutions. The list of lessons is familiar and the authors have to a large extent drawn them from interviews with experienced politicians and civil servants. But that begs the question, why then aren’t the lessons learned? Why don’t things get better? A recurring theme in the book provides, I think, most of the answer.



“ A common feature of the “blunders” is the extent to which policy development gets separated from the realities of the world. ”

In the worst cases policy is developed by small groups of like-minded people in Whitehall who share the same set of assumptions and fail to test those assumptions outside the group. The group often assumes that there is only one way of doing things: a common example until recently was the assumption that the private sector is always superior in know-how and efficiency. They often have little understanding of how people on the receiving end of the policy will behave or react – what the authors call, “cultural disconnect”.

In the featured case studies all this is frequently made worse by “operational disconnect”. “No feature of the blunders we have studied”, say the authors, “stands out more prominently than the divorce between those who make policies

and those charged with implementing them...Most of the policy makers responsible for the blunders...assumed they had done the hard bit when they had decided what Government policy should be. Clearly they were wrong.” If you are reading this in HMRC, DWP or any other big operational department, you are probably already cheering the authors on.

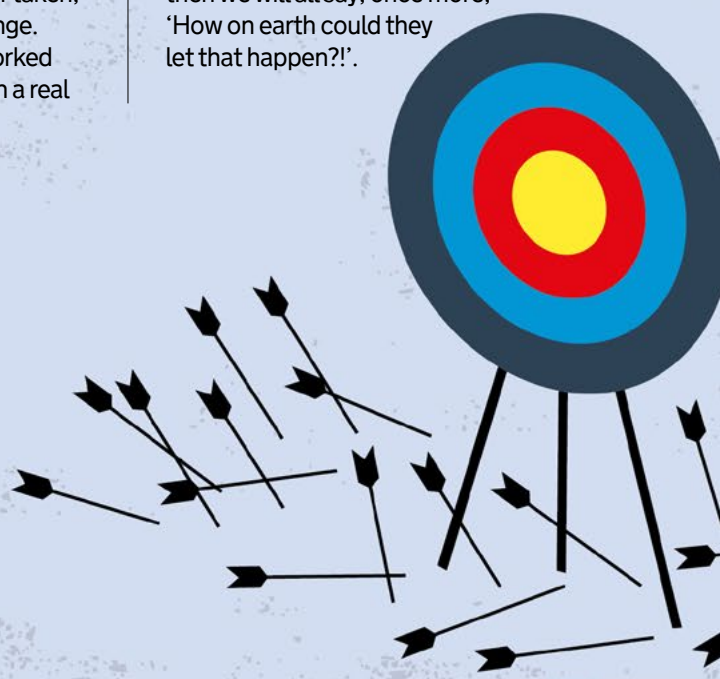
There is one other factor, which can seriously increase the risk: the authors call it “Ministers as activists”. Their argument, which I believe is broadly true, is that since the days of Margaret Thatcher, Ministers have been judged by how active they are: by their ability to get things done, to set short deadlines, to drive things forward. This can sometimes make it difficult for civil servants to get their concerns and reservations heard. Those who have expressed doubts or argued for slower implementation, say the authors, have increasingly seen their careers blighted and been characterised as the blockers of change.

There is a real dilemma here. My most exhilarating time in Government was when I was working for active Ministers with ambitions to change the world for the better. If risks are never taken, then nothing will ever change. But the best Ministers I worked for combined activism with a real

desire to listen to, and license, dissenting voices; and to test policy ideas to destruction. We need more of that kind of Minister, and more encouragement to civil servants to make the obligation to “speak truth to power” a reality.

The book ends at 2010 but has a Postscript about the performance of the present Government. This is the weakest part because, as the authors admit, it is far too soon to make such judgments. They produce a list of possible mistakes which the Coalition has made, but none yet is a proven blunder.

However, what seems to me likely, having read this book, is that somewhere in Government right now – maybe in several places – a blunder is brewing, despite the great efforts being made to minimise blunders through initiatives like the Major Projects Authority and the Implementation Unit. It is likely to be the result of well intentioned policy objectives being disconnected from operational reality, driven forward by activist Ministers working with a like-minded group which fails to get or hear the advice they need. The problem is that we won’t know where the blunder is, until it comes blinking into the light; then we will all say, once more, ‘How on earth could they let that happen?!’.



Resource nationalism

» Is the UK economy at risk of countries or companies restricting the supply of key resources? Ian Mitchell and Serina Ng, economists from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, assess the risks.

Last year, a new horizon-scanning programme was established in the UK Civil Service. Its job is to identify a wide range of potential opportunities and threats, and bring together experts from across the Civil Service and externally to obtain new insights and challenge.

At an early stage, the oversight group for the programme – the Cabinet Secretary’s Advisory Group, chaired by Sir Jeremy Heywood – identified ‘resource nationalism’ as an

area for investigation. They commissioned a community of departments, led by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), to undertake a study into what the evidence was saying and what the potential policy implications are.

Why is resource nationalism an issue?

Resource nationalism refers to negative, anti-competitive action designed to restrict

the international supply of resources.

Alongside well-known key resources like energy, food and water, a wide range of other natural resources are used in everyday products – for example, the materials in the components of our mobile phones, computers and rechargeable batteries. Many of these are not widely known, but could be important to the UK economy.

Demand for resources is growing – there are expected to be more than



3 billion extra middle-class consumers by 2030¹. This should create opportunities for UK manufacturing businesses to grow and prosper; but in some cases the natural resources or reserves required are unevenly distributed around the world. This uneven distribution represents a potential risk to supply chains.

There can be incentives for countries to act in a way that restricts the international supply of a natural resource. For example businesses or nations may expropriate resources or change the terms on which they are extracted, to capture profit, or ensure they can satisfy their own domestic demand. These acts of resource nationalism can impact on UK economic activity through higher supply chain costs or, in the most extreme circumstances, disrupted supply.

Although it may not be the main driver for short-term restrictive behaviour, there is, however, a strong profit incentive to maintain supplies to the global market. In the long-term, countries with valuable resources are likely to best maximise returns by accessing customers overseas as well as domestically. Experience with other resources such as oil and gas bears this out. It is extremely unlikely for the supply to be completely cut off, as profits are still to be had in the global market.

While innovation and

technology can change the nature of existing markets and help create new and better products that require less of these unevenly distributed natural resources, this process takes time and money. In the meantime economic damage from supply constraints could be considerable.

Individual businesses are likely to assess and manage risks to their own supply chains. The work of the Defra-led team considered the complexity of identifying economy-wide risks and potential impacts.

‘Critical metals’

Our analysis indicates the risk of resource nationalism may be higher in some lesser-known metals and minerals than the higher-profile resources such as oil, coal and gas. These materials are essential in everyday products such as mobile phones, computers and rechargeable batteries.

There are numerous studies that have attempted to assess which critical minerals and materials are at risk of disruption to supply². An EU study³ of 41 metals and materials identified 14 metals that are both of global economic importance and have supply risks including concentration of supply, stability of producing countries and ease of substitution. These are shown in Figure 1 circled in yellow.

The European Commission formally adopted this list in 2011, using it to support trade negotiations and challenge trade distortion measures, and has committed to update it every 3 years⁴. The Commission also implemented the Raw Materials Initiative in 2013⁵, an integrated strategy to respond to different challenges related to access to non-energy and non-agricultural raw materials.

None of these metals are physically scarce. However, the UK relies on imports of these critical 14 metals to satisfy the needs of our manufacturing industry, including those embedded in products and components. They are not only used in many consumer electronic products but are also critical raw materials for wind turbines and hybrid car motors, key developing industries. For example, the motors of some hybrid vehicles require up to 1kg of neodymium oxide⁶ which is reliant on neodymium, a ‘rare earth’ element largely mined in China.

Inevitably, the list of critical metals and minerals will alter over time. As noted above, high prices and supply risk can drive innovation, and some businesses are addressing risks of supply through development of other technologies; the fast-changing consumer environment can make demand for previously essential items disappear; and new supply of a resource can



1 McKinsey Report, November 2011: Resource Revolution: Meeting the World’s Energy, Materials, Food and Water Needs.

2 For example: US Department of Energy: 2010 Critical Materials Strategy; Defra: A review of resource risks to business and an assessment of future viability; Defra & BIS: Resource Security Action Plan: making the most of valuable materials, SEPA: Raw Materials critical to the Scottish Economy 2011; Science and technology committee: Strategically important metals 2010-12, British Geological Survey: Risk List 2012.

3 http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/raw-materials/files/docs/report-b_en.pdf Note the European Commission has released an updated list as this article was going to press, available here http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/raw-materials/critical/index_en.htm.

4 The list was formally updated in May 2014.

5 <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2011876%202013%20INIT>.

6 For example http://www.toyota-global.com/innovation/environmental_technology/technology_file/plugin_hybrid.html.

Resource nationalism

Figure 1: EU 14 critical raw materials identified by supply risk and economic importance



also help limit the impact of resource nationalism, making, for example, previously mothballed production sites economically viable⁷.

But at present, substitution of these metals is difficult. Although often used in small quantities, they are critical to manufacturing processes. Therefore any restriction that limits physical supply could disrupt the whole production process. It is clear that some acts of resource nationalism could do real economic harm to individual products, companies and supply chains.

Political motivations

The underlying motive for acts of resource nationalism is often to increase or maintain national access to resources and the revenue flow from them. For example, export

restrictions and quotas are ways of securing a reliable domestic supply at the expense of other countries. Windfall taxes or compulsory nationalisation can raise governments' revenue.

Geographical production concentration can create a situation in which countries and or nations can gain from resource nationalism. Producer concentration is a factor in several key metals: notably Brazil for niobium, USA for beryllium, China and South Africa for platinum group metals and Congo for cobalt (see Figure 2).

It may not be headline grabbing news, but there have been a surprising number of acts of resource nationalism for these lesser-known but important materials. Although there are few cases of more extreme action, like co-ordinated attempts to

manipulate global prices, an OECD study⁸ found incidents of export restrictions on 8 of the EU 14 metals in 39 isolated incidents. Of these, China is responsible for 33, particularly in the markets for rare earth elements and tungsten.

Although there are incentives for engaging in resource nationalism, doing so can often back-fire – no country is immune to the impacts of retaliation by others, or from their customers developing alternative supplies. This can reduce the likelihood that the risks identified are realised.

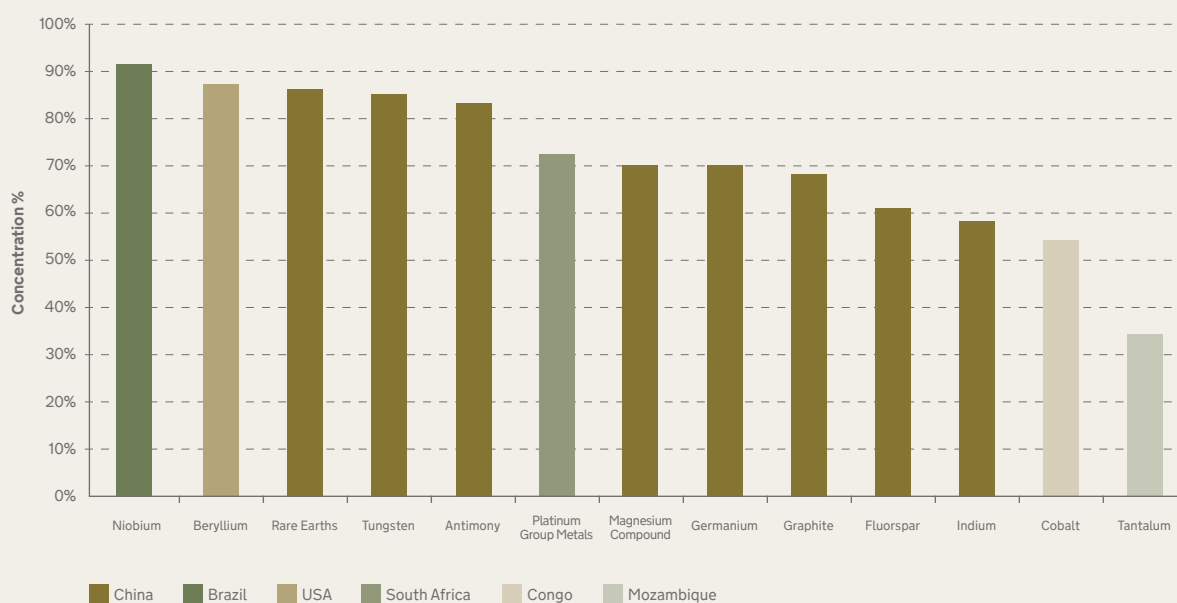
So what can be done?

The Civil Service is already drawing on its strengths to minimise the risks – using its global influence to increase international



7 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/23/us-toyota-rare-earth-idUSTRE80M0JK20120123>.

8 <http://www.oecd.org/tad/ntm/43934153.pdf>.

Figure 2: EU 14 metals - Proportion of global output in main producer country (2012)

Source: US Geological Survey 2013

awareness and promote the benefits of trade, working with a range of partners, including the EU and other international institutions. Many states are part of trade blocs, with unified trade barriers and regulation which adds a supranational dimension to aspects of resource nationalism. Nations must work together, and alongside international institutions and trading blocs in order to tackle market barriers and supply chain issues.

Within the framework of the European Union's raw materials trade strategy, several actions have been pursued including rules on export restrictions in all bilateral Free Trade Agreement

negotiations⁹. Secondly, the EU, jointly with the USA and Mexico launched a successful World Trade Organisation (WTO) challenge, to China's export restrictions on a number of key raw materials¹⁰.

Domestically, we have been working in partnership with business to better understand resource issues as part of the Resource Security Action Plan¹¹, working for example with the electrical sector to catalyse action and seek commitments on design for longer life, keeping products and materials in circulation for longer¹². And, through the Technology Strategy Board, the UK Government is participating in projects such as the Great

Recovery¹³, bringing together participants across the supply chain to stimulate innovation in design and recovery of these materials.

So the next time you pick up your mobile phone or tablet, pause to think about what exactly is in your device and how it got there. Resource Nationalism will remain an important and evolving risk for businesses and governments to monitor and counter. That's why it is important for the Civil Service to be prepared for the potential future, joining-up expertise across and beyond Whitehall to understand and address the issues that affect major areas of policy.

9 The EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA) includes the prohibition of duties, taxes or other fees on exportation, and the upcoming EU-Singapore FTA includes the prohibition of duties, taxes or measures of an equivalent effect on exportation. The EU and Central America, and Colombia/Peru trade agreements include a prohibition of export duties or taxes, with some minor exceptions.

10 This challenge, which covered bauxite, coke, fluorspar, magnesium, manganese, silicon carbide, silicon metal, yellow phosphorus and zinc, was launched in November 2009. A second successful WTO case was launched in 2012 against export restrictions applied by China on rare earths, tungsten and molybdenum.

11 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69511/pb13719-resource-security-action-plan.pdf.

12 <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/industry-action-electricals-sector-set-boost-uk-economy>.

13 <http://www.greatrecovery.org.uk/>.

How I got here

» **Pete Thompson is Deputy Chief Executive of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, a government agency that applies science and technology to the defence and security of the UK. How did he get there?**

I've had a varied and interesting career so far. But it could so easily not have happened.

Leaving university in 1992, having just completed the research for a PhD but still struggling to finish the write-up, jobs were hard to come by – or they were if you wanted a career in science and weren't looking to stay in academia.

I got lucky by getting an interview through the “milk round” (a process where graduates left their details with prospective employers at recruitment fairs).

However, having prepared for one type of job in “the Ministry”, when I turned up at the interview it seemed they were looking for specific skills in another area. Thinking on my feet, I nodded politely at the point when they check you are at the right interview, then spent the next 45 minutes extolling

the virtues of being a broader systems-level thinker and not an expert in “ion mobility spectrometry”! Bingo – that was what they wanted! As I've come to learn over the years, few things in science and technology for defence or security are exactly what they say on the tin.

I spent the next five years applying niche technology ideas to national security challenges, supplying “kit” for use in the field the very next week. Often it would come back broken, which taught me that clever technology is only part of the story.

During that time I worked with some folks who have gone on to do some pretty special things including someone who, in 2013, led the team that provided the key chemical analysis to support the government's policy on Syria.

Malvern and the Mojave

My early career, in what was then the Defence Research Agency, later the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency, was at two of their sites in Dorset – both of which have since closed as government labs. After the Defence Research Agency, I moved to Malvern in Worcestershire to take a promotion, becoming what I would now describe as something between a project manager and programme manager. Not being an expert in remote sensing of the battlefield (spotting tanks under trees using radar, and things like that) I brought little technical background to the area; but found a niche in helping world-class scientists focus on the customers' needs (rather than the sophistication of the science).

By 2000 I found myself in California, assessing sensors on board Predator Remotely-Piloted Air Vehicles - now regularly in use in Afghanistan. Flying alongside one over the Mojave Desert in a four-seat aircraft, possibly one of the first Brits to do so, was one of many memorable events in my career. A year later, following 9/11, I was leading a team trying to bring remote surveillance techniques into service in Afghanistan to help find the perpetrators of the events in New York and Washington. We worked with colleagues in the U.S to get “tech” to the front line



Pete Thompson



quickly, and we succeeded. We got an enormous sense of the impact technology can have if you get it into the hands of the right user at the right time. As a result of this work the whole team received a Meritorious Citation from the U.S. Government.

Dstl and counter-terrorism

By now the organisation I had joined in the early nineties had become the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and I moved to take on wider management responsibilities across the organisation. Big Data, as it is known now, was merely medium or maybe slightly-oversized data in 2008; but I became increasingly motivated to apply it to specific security challenges. We wanted to move away from having to ask “Something bad has happened, what do we do?” to stopping the bad thing happening in the

first place by making the best use of all kinds of information. This led me to become Head of the Counter Terrorism Science and Technology Centre within MOD. This was an interesting job, as most of the science and technology community in the MOD, as well as the rest of government, were unsure of our role. I had 8 months to turn it round. That doesn't sound very long, but given the quality and drive of most of the people in the Centre it wasn't as difficult as it might sound. We worked out who our 3 or 4 key senior stakeholders were, identified what they wanted from us and then went all-out to give it to them.

We created an innovation lab (Google may have been just ahead of us at the time). This was all about having a different work environment: the soft furnishings and walls you could write on were just part of encouraging a different mind-set to problem solving, and to making breakthroughs

on the most difficult issues. For me innovation occurs at the interface between seemingly disconnected disciplines, and enabling those conversations away from the laboratory or computer was a way of achieving that. At our innovation lab we pursued emerging technologies for numerous counter terrorism activities. I remember watching a screen with two of our team “tweeting” messages to each other and tracking them across London, whilst reading what they were saying. Quite advanced for the time.

We also led a transformation of how we approached countering Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Instead of focusing on how best to deal with the device once it was in place and ready to cause injury and damage, we focussed on how to stop it being there in the first place; or, if it was there, how to detect it before we got anywhere near it. This was a real example of making the best use of data and



Picture: MoD. The Unmanned Aerial System, Predator aircraft ready for take-off on the runway.

information we had available. We took people who were experts in their field but knew nothing about this subject (I had some previous on this...), and asked them what they would do.

By early 2009 we had taken the IED challenge to as many people inside and outside of government as we could, seeking the inventors in their garage as well as industry experts, leaving no stone unturned in seeking to prevent the deaths of servicemen and women and injuries in action. One team, 12 months, 8 companies contributing 1 technologist each, no Intellectual Property issues or commercial drivers: Dstl

scientists and military personnel all working together towards a single goal.

By then I was overseeing Counter-IED Science & Technology across MOD, and leading our Support to Operations activities for Dstl as part of my role as a Programme Director. Support to Operations is a catch-all for the embedded civilian support Dstl provides to the military in times of conflict and crisis. Since 2002, we have deployed 670 posts in the various operations we support. A typical period in the field can be four months, and during that time our scientist will advise the operational Commander, often reaching

back to the lab and our wider innovation network (including academia and industry), to provide technical advice in the field within hours. For example, Felicity Brantingham, one of our scientists, has been to Afghanistan three times in different roles, and is keen to go there again. She worked on a project that could only have happened because of the commitment to invest in certain key technologies that we believed would have an impact on operations in the future. The future came a bit quicker than we expected, but with strong international collaboration we were able to rapidly field both smart scientists and





technologies that helped to remove many of the precursors to IEDs from the battlefield before they became bombs.

What next?

I spent a hugely informative year in Whitehall, contributing to Defence Reform and leading the science and technology contribution to a White Paper, *National Security Through Technology*, before taking on my current role as Deputy Chief Executive of Dstl. The current role encompasses organisational and technical strategy for the lab, bringing together technical and people

issues, communications, strategic relations, governance and assurance.

The last three years have been a necessary learning curve, as we wrestle with financial challenges, a shrinking Civil Service and our desire to operate successfully at the centre of an innovation “system”, working with the best of the best in industry, academia, other government labs and international partners. Working internationally, both to support UK interests abroad as well as accessing technologies and systems not available in the UK is incredibly important and something I am proud to contribute to. It takes me

to exotic sounding locations around the globe, but usually only to spend long days in facilities with no windows.

What next? The future is less predictable than ever before, and there will be even greater reliance on technology for Defence and Security. Dstl must be at the centre of that system to meet our customers’ needs and access the best technical solutions.

From that first interview in 1992, I’ve recognised the importance of agility and seizing opportunities as they arise – I will encourage my people to do the same, and will continue to do so myself as I continue to develop my fascinating career as a Senior Civil Servant.

Reforming child maintenance – taking a fresh approach

» Supporting separated families and securing children's futures is a powerful motivator for Ian Wright, Change Director for Child Maintenance at the Department for Work and Pensions, as he helps to deliver a fresh approach to child maintenance.

The challenge is a powerful one – to produce a system of child maintenance that meets the needs of the two and a half million separated families in Great Britain and in particular the one in three children not living with both their biological parents.

The evidence suggests that it's important that both parents remain actively involved in their children's lives, because children tend to enjoy better life outcomes when the same two parents are able to give them support and protection throughout their childhood¹. Children who have a positive relationship with both parents are more likely to do better at school, stay out of trouble, have higher levels of self-esteem and develop healthier relationships as an adult.

In the past the child maintenance landscape has largely been focused on one thing – the Child Support Agency (CSA). The CSA frequently made the headlines in the 1990s and early 2000s:

“ Payers angry at victimisation – the agency has created a nightmare world say fathers facing demands.

Guardian, 18 September 1993

CSA drove my gulf hostage son over the edge.

Daily Mirror, 4 January 1994

Child support complaints up by a third.

BBC, 3 July 2001

Even after the implementation of a new system in 2003, the CSA was struggling with an IT system that was totally inadequate and notoriously riddled with defects. Cases were regularly disappearing off the system. The number of expensively-managed clerical cases hit 100,000 and the IT system was costing £74 million a year in operating costs alone.

The message was clear – child maintenance wasn't working. Reform of the whole landscape of child maintenance was needed to help parents reduce levels of conflict after a separation and work together more effectively.

The child maintenance landscape

Turning to the statutory service doesn't need to be the default option. Government intervention is expensive (every £1 of maintenance collected costs the taxpayer 35p) and it can also put an unnecessary barrier between parents, reducing the incentive to collaborate and increasing levels of conflict.

What is child maintenance?

Child maintenance is usually money that the parent without the main day-to-day care of a child pays to the other parent to provide help with a child's everyday living costs. This includes things like food and clothes, and helping to provide a home. Sharing the care of children and buying things directly for them can also be considered to be maintenance.

1 Coleman, L and Glenn, F, 2009, When Couples Part: Understanding the Consequences for Adults and Children, One Plus One.



Picture: Department for Work and Pensions

There's another way, as Susan Park, Child Maintenance Group Director, explains: "Family-based child maintenance arrangements are often the best option for everyone involved. They can be arranged privately without Government intervention, are flexible and can be easily tailored to individual circumstances. Working together to agree a child maintenance arrangement can also help reduce conflict and keep both parents involved in their children's lives."

We knew there were opportunities to help parents to collaborate in the interests of their children – but we had to do more than just provide a statutory scheme. So, we set out a twin approach. Firstly, supporting parents to work together on the whole range of issues faced following a separation. Secondly, providing a reason to pause

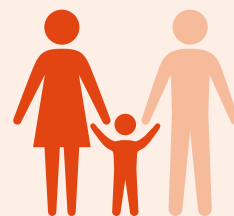
and think for parents. Providing an opportunity for them to think again about whether they could set up their own family-based child maintenance arrangement.

Supporting parents to work together

Child maintenance is just one of the many issues that parents face following a separation. The Help and Support for Separated Families initiative, working in collaboration with the voluntary and community sector, helps co-ordinate existing support services for those going through a separation.

A reason to pause and think

In December 2012 we started to introduce a new statutory child maintenance scheme. To make sure this is only used by those who really



2.5m
separated families



1 in 3
Children not living with biological parents

Every £1 of maintenance collected costs the taxpayer

£1



Reforming child maintenance – taking a fresh approach

Help and Support for Separated Families initiative



A Steering Group of experts from the voluntary and community sector, academia and across Government set out their vision for how child maintenance could be transformed to provide better co-ordinated support for separating and separated parents.

The Steering Group came up with an approach where the Government acts as an enabler to help co-ordinate support services that already exist. This consists of:

- A web application that can sit on existing websites; co-ordinated telephone networks; and local and face-to-face support.
- A new quality mark promoted and endorsed by stakeholders, so people know they are dealing with organisations they can trust.
- A new Innovation Fund testing and evaluating a range of interventions that help parents to work together in the best interests of their children. Seventeen voluntary and private sector organisations have already been awarded funding.



Picture: Department for Work and Pensions

need it, in 2014 we are doing two things.

First, we are introducing charging for use of this scheme. This includes an application fee (we will not apply this fee to victims of domestic violence or abuse or to applicants aged 18 or under) and ongoing charges for use of the collection service. Charging is designed to act as an incentive, encouraging parents to think again before automatically putting in an application. Both parents have a responsibility to set up an effective arrangement and both will make a financial contribution towards the cost of the service, which remains heavily subsidised by the taxpayer.

Second, we will begin gradually closing cases in the existing CSA schemes. By closing existing scheme cases – rather than just moving them to the new scheme – we will encourage clients involved with these cases to think again about their child maintenance arrangements.

Building a new system

Even with incentives and support, for some parents a statutory child maintenance service is the only option and in 2012 we launched a new child maintenance scheme supported by a new IT system. In the past the system has been the source of so many issues – remember those headlines?

We've been intent on learning from the past in building this new system, and there are plenty of lessons to learn. So, we've done things





Picture: Department for Work and Pensions

differently: we used off-the-shelf – tried and tested – software packages instead of building a complicated new system from scratch; we made sure there are very few data transfers from those existing systems that have been so problematic; and we designed the system in conjunction with our policy and operations colleagues – using their practical experience and knowledge.

Denise, who came from operations to work on the programme, says: “My 18 years operational experience means I’ve a firm grasp of what will work and what won’t, on a practical level. One of my roles on the programme has been as a subject matter expert and I checked process maps, compared processes with child maintenance policy and made sure the design of the new system met client

and business needs.”

Marcus had five years experience working in operations before joining the programme. He says: “My role was to make the systems and processes as seamless and friendly as possible for caseworkers, so we can focus on managing client relationships instead of fighting with the system. A big part of making things easier is that the system will issue the right letters at the right part in the process automatically.”

A different approach to implementation

More than just designing and building the system differently, we’ve also learnt from the past: introducing the new scheme and system using a pathfinder approach. The pathfinder approach

means, instead of going live with a ‘big bang’, we carefully controlled the volume of applications to the new scheme, and ramping up the number in stages over 12 months. This safe and slow build-up allowed us to be confident in the performance of the system from go-live – it has meant we are constantly learning and improving and have avoided those headlines which dogged us in the past.

We initially micro-managed every application and proactively made sure everything was working as we intended. This meant we could spot problems and quickly resolve them before they were visible to our clients. We constantly assured colleagues that we’d only increase volumes to the new scheme when we were content that everything was working as it should – a promise we stuck to, and



Reforming child maintenance – taking a fresh approach

which bought us a great deal of support.

Tom McCormack, Programme Delivery Director, picks up the story: “The first few weeks were pretty much as we expected – we did find issues along the way and as we came across them we fixed them.

“We were able to identify the wrinkles and deal with them while we had a small number of cases. For example, we identified an issue with setting up Direct Debits. When setting them up everything looked fine on our system, but the final step did not work – meaning that the payment was not set up correctly at the bank. Micro-managing the system meant we were able to fix this before clients even knew there was a problem.

“Part of the reason to go live with the new scheme and system as a pathfinder was to test and assure our new systems and processes, and spot and resolve issues in the real working environment – it achieved that.”

An important part of our pathfinder approach was having a series of escalation points for colleagues to raise issues to, Tom continues: “Our aim was to make sure we provided the necessary support to colleagues when all self-help avenues had been exhausted. The next step was for colleagues to discuss it with their team leader and then one of the operational support floor-walkers we had in place in each site. If resolution was not possible, then issues were raised to an Area Advice Centre and filtered to a National Advice Team. It’s all about client service – getting and keeping cases moving,

improving colleagues’ understanding, and applying lessons learnt.

“Learning was shared with colleagues through face-to-face education events, and guidance is available in new and improved procedures for caseworkers to refer to when needed.”

A learning approach


The pathfinder approach allowed us to identify a number of areas to focus on before we completed our rollout. We worked hard to capture the experiences and learning from colleagues in the initial stages, to prepare new colleagues joining as the rollout continued.

For example, feedback from training and from operational performance led Training Design colleagues to expand one particular aspect of training for team leaders, to include additional learning on topics such as work allocation and querying.

All with the aim of making workflow more efficient and the service parents get better.

We also used the pathfinder to test our clients’ experiences – identifying some crucial client touch points in the application process to see if our clients’ experience matched up to the experience we intended. The touch points included things like how long it took for our initial information pack to be sent to the applicant, how long it took for a provisional calculation letter to be sent, and whether the clients responded to the letter.

This has helped resolve some initial issues, and monitor which interactions have the biggest impact on our clients’ experiences.

The pathfinder has been a real example of learning by doing, allowing us to introduce the new scheme and system in a way that worked best for clients and avoid the mistakes of the past. 

The benefits of a pathfinder approach

You can test your systems, processes, and clients’ and colleagues’ journeys in a live environment with controls in place to manage issues.

- You can make improvements and learn before you roll out fully.
- Colleagues in future ‘waves’ benefit from more robust processes, communications and training.
- Clients benefit from micro-management of their cases as processes are embedded.
- Assurance can be given to Ministers that the system is working well before any additional rollout occurs.

Rebalancing the child maintenance system

We're well on the way to providing encouragement, incentives and support to parents to make their own family-based arrangements for child maintenance, while maximising value for the taxpayer. When parents can't come to their own arrangement, then the new, more effective and efficient,

statutory scheme is there to support them.

I'm pleased that we're learning from the past to fulfil our vision to support separated families and secure children's futures by providing a child maintenance system that meets the expectations of children, parents, stakeholders, the Government and its taxpayers. That's a powerful motivator for me.

Interview with Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive of Public Health England

» Trying to shift the nation's attitudes to healthcare is an important, but difficult task. Civil Service Quarterly interviewed Duncan Selbie, who has a key role to play as Chief Executive of Public Health England.



"I'll tell you a story by way of introduction..."

Duncan Selbie cares deeply about the mission of Public Health England: to protect and improve the nation's health. And he tells a good story. So good, in fact, that Civil Service Quarterly has to wait twenty minutes to get a word in.

There is a lot to say about the restructuring of health responsibilities, and the creation of Public Health England in April 2013. But Duncan is clear that it isn't the most important thing. What comes first is the public's health.

"The NHS has achieved a huge amount. But what it hasn't done is also notable.

It could address to some extent the consequences of poor health. What it hasn't done — and it never could — is address the drivers of good health."



Picture: PHE

Having joined the NHS aged 17, Duncan made his way up to become Chief Executive of a major psychiatric service, of a strategic health authority, and of an acute teaching hospital. But he doesn't rely on his personal experience. Throughout the interview, he talks about 'the evidence'.

"As a nation, politically, through the media, through our own selves if you like, we

conflate good health with the role of the NHS, and it's simply wrong. This is not a hug-a-tree moment; the science and evidence behind this is as strong as anything we do in clinical medicine."

On a whistle-stop tour of key studies, Duncan talks about reports by Derek Wanless¹ and Michael Marmot². If the nation is to be able to afford a top-



1 Securing Our Future Health: Taking a Long-Term View, 2002.
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/consult_wanless_final.htm.
2 Fair Society, Healthy Lives, 2008.
<https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/projects/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review>.



quality health service in years to come, Wanless told us, people need to engage better in managing their own health. Marmot's contribution was to reveal the power of social factors on our health.

"Marmot was making the argument, from the evidence, that there are many other things that drive good health before you get to health care. About half of everything that matters about length of life, and quality of life when alive, are the choices that people make. About a further third, the environment in which people find themselves, and there's a genetic component as well, your start in life in the genes you inherit. But only after that do you get into the impact of healthcare itself."

If Public Health England is to protect and improve the nation's health, then it needs to work in new ways. And the evidence suggests this means influencing people's choices and their environment.

"So if half of the facts affecting good health, length of life and life without misery in it, are the choices we make, health inequalities are largely driven by the width of your choices. And those that are wealthier, and are better off and have often had a better educational experience have wider choices.

"Who are the most relevant to people, who can reach them and make a difference? Well, it's not us. Local government, the big retailers, the big corporates, the voluntary sector, they are reaching

people the statutory services can't reach, in relevant and meaningful ways."

2013 reforms and the role of Public Health England

Public Health England has brought together experts from the Health Protection Agency, the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse and elsewhere as part of the Civil Service. At the same time the Department of Health has decreased in size as responsibility for the day-to-day running of the NHS has transferred to NHS England. This has shifted the emphasis from a health civil service focused on healthcare to one concerned with health more broadly.

Changes happened locally as well and Duncan argues that of the big changes that happened in 2013, the biggest was giving the 152 upper-tier and unitary local authorities the statutory duty to improve the health of their residents.

"Half of the people that were in the public health profession, in Primary Care Trusts, have moved into local government; and they've been given what the NHS was spending on the public health service. I'm saying that with some care because what the NHS was spending on the public health service before was 3% of its budget. Not 13%, not 30%, but 3%."

Given what Wanless, Marmot and others have shown about the importance of and the mechanisms for improving good health, this sounds like a small budget. But Public Health England is working to support the new arrangements in a variety of creative ways.

"What's hoped for is that we'll be a fearless exposé, a defender for the public's health; and that's a difficult one in a political environment. Because the public's health is political. I mean we've agreed that it's political, which is why we've given it to local government; and we exist to serve the local system, led by local government.

"One of our contributions is to publish the evidence on health issues, like with obesity. The Daily Mail runs it as 'So-and-so's the fattest place in Britain', but we don't do it to tell people they're wrong, or to put local authorities in a league table, or to tell people what their priorities should be. That's been tried before, and in any event local government don't react well to being told what to do."

They are also looking to use technology, and the behavioural sciences, to help make a difference.

"We need to find maybe four or five big corporates that are relevant to people — so Sainsbury's, Tesco, Lidl, have millions of people on their databases — to reach people. So let's say I went to Tesco on Sunday and I got a till receipt and it said I bought various things, and it said you've saved £2.21. I think Sainsbury's do the same thing. What if we gave Sainsbury's the algorithms, that they could personalise to their customer database, so they give their customer base advice about how they could improve their health. It doesn't have to cost customers anything more, but it may help them make



Interview with Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive of Public Health England



Picture: PHE

choices that are better for their health.”

Public Health England do a range of other things too. “We have nine or ten responsibilities which are unique. They happen to be with Public Health England, but they are unique for the nation. They are well-regarded internationally — we earn 40% of our income, about £175 million, through the science that we do and the services that we offer.”

PHE as an organisation

Public Health England has a compelling mission (“what’s not to like about protecting and improving the nation’s health? I mean, honestly, it’s a cracker”), and motivated staff. That much is clear from the 2013 people

survey results³.

Equally clear, however, is that fact that this new organisation faces challenges of leadership, change management, and organisational purpose.

Duncan does not try to duck the issue. “I suppose what I’m supposed to say is: ‘Look, nine months in, we’ve just brought together 130 different organisational cultures — what can you expect?’ Well I expect a lot more than that. I was very concerned [about the people survey results], because we have such a compelling mission. What people have said is that they feel good about what they do, they feel they’re making a difference. It’s just this organisation...!”

Setting up Public Health England has been

a difficult process. “I’ve got people on every conceivable term and condition. I wasn’t able to offer them access to the Civil Service Pension Scheme on any comparable basis, so they’ve been brought in on their existing terms and conditions, but the consequence is no pay rise. And if we thought the health service was an organisation that had rules about recruitment and procurement and the like, it’s as nothing. At some level, of course, it’s entirely understandable, because the Government needs to prove it’s dropping its costs; but this has been far from straightforward.

“In this sort of organisation we need people to move through and out, it’s important for new experience. I need people moving in and out of the health service, I need people moving in and out of local government. But how am I going to get people to come into this organisation? Because their first question will be ‘Why should I give up my right to this, that, and the next thing?’

These sorts of challenges are familiar to many public sector organisations. But Duncan believes Public Health England faces more unique challenges.

“A big part of it, and I’ll be completely blunt about it, is our scientists and public health professionals did not want to be in the Civil Service. Their perception of being in the Civil Service was to be constrained, to be suppressed. This is anathema to our people, who are used to having the freedom to speak and to publish. And to be told at the same time that you won’t get a pay rise...”



“So we’ve put in months of effort to reach agreement about our freedom, to speak and to publish. The code of conduct for our staff incorporates the Civil Service code of conduct but it goes much further than that, and it enshrines as a contractual right for our people that they have a right, and ultimately a duty, to speak the truth. And no other organisation that I know of in the Civil Service has that enshrined as a contractual right.”

The right behaviours

The weaving together of different terms and conditions, and establishing the new code of conduct are important structural points. But Duncan expresses himself strongly on the significance of ‘softer’ steps.

“Often organisations say ‘We care about our people, our people are our greatest asset’ — they take the usual words and jumble them all up. But it’s all rubbish, if you’re at the wrong end of it. Because you say that’s not what I think, that’s not been my experience.

“People don’t leave organisations because they’ve been asked to do too much work, or because of pay, they leave because of their manager. What matters to them is their immediate line manager. What I’ve got to do is create an environment and a culture based on a set of behaviours that are present in high-performing teams, organisations that do better.”

Not for the first time, Duncan emphasises what research has shown works. “One behaviour people search for is alignment between what you say and what you do. If you say ‘I care about X, Y, and Z...’ but you do A, B, and C, they

know you don’t care about X, Y, and Z. But more importantly, they say ‘Well, if you’re not telling the truth about that, what else aren’t you telling the truth about?’

“Another important behaviour is ‘keep your promises’. Because the evidence says people expect you to. So don’t be cautious about making promises, just know that if you make one people expect you to try, even if you can’t deliver on everything you’ve promised.

“And the third behaviour, in no particular order, is ‘speak well of each other’. Someone is always listening. There are no secrets. I didn’t know when my mother said ‘If you’ve got nothing good to say, don’t say anything’ that she was quoting academic research; but this is straight from the evidence about high-performing teams.”

How are Duncan and his team going to make a positive difference to the behaviour of the organisation?

“I’ve got a big part to play in modelling these behaviours and saying what matters. You wouldn’t put me on the sofa on Daybreak to talk about obesity, or put me in a laboratory to have a good look at a tuberculosis case or, frankly, anything that involved our version of frontline care. But that’s not what I’m for. My job is to create a team capable of extraordinary things.

“So what I’m emphatically not saying is ‘It’s early days, what do you expect?’ I’m saying ‘It’s early days; blimey, this isn’t good’. We need to make it better. As part of this we’re trying a concept from John Lewis.

“The role of the registrar team in John Lewis is to be an assurance of leadership behaviour throughout the

organisation. They are independent, autonomous, and report straight to the Chief Executive. They walk the floor, they talk to people — anyone can talk to them about anybody’s behaviour. Their job is to help the individual and, if necessary, intercede. John Lewis invest hugely in assuring the behaviours of their managers and their leaders.”

This is about winning

Duncan’s passion for his organisation, and that organisation’s mission, is clear. He paints a picture of what he wants Public Health England to be.

“We need to be fierce, and independently fierce. Not policy-makers, but informing policy. And being fearless about what we say — but not stupid.

“On standardised packaging for cigarettes, when the Government changed its mind and said ‘we’ve decided not to go ahead at the moment and wait for more evidence’, we were very disappointed.

But my point about not being stupid is that having the evidence isn’t always enough, the timing also needs to be right. So we are delighted about the independent review of standardised packaging”.

“We don’t want glorious defeat where the commentariat says ‘Isn’t that marvellous, Public Health England is out there being a pain in the arse, that’s exactly what the public health service should be about’. No. The public health service should be about winning.



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