

Actuarial placement programme at GAD – Zeeshan's story

What are you studying?

I am studying Mathematics with Economics at the University of Leicester. I'm working at the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) as an analyst for my 'year in industry'.

Have you always been interested in an actuarial career?

I have always enjoyed studying mathematics and it's one of my strongest subjects. This degree in mathematics with economics has enabled me to gain a broader understanding of the real-world application of mathematics. This further grew my interest in the analytical and statistical type data. So, I chose modules closely related to this. These have led me to investigate a career that is a combination of everything I enjoy.

I'm fascinated by actuarial work as it involves the core competencies of statistics, probability and assessment of risk. To me this career path offers challenging yet rewarding incentives.

What drew you to doing a placement programme?

I knew it would give me a chance to put classroom theory into practice. It would allow me to understand real-world applications of theory learnt at university and achieve a much deeper understanding of my degree.

I felt that working in an actuarial role for an extended period would allow me to gain valuable insight and exposure to the actuarial world. It would also offer me the chance to make a material difference in my role. This first-hand experience of actuarial work has helped prepare me for my future career.

Finally, one of the perks of earning as a student is that I have savings going into my final year and, more importantly, I can fund my summer holidays!

What interested you about GAD?

When researching GAD, I found it to be the perfect sized department. It was not too big where hard work could be easily overlooked, and it was not too small where there would be limited exposure to a variety of projects and diverse areas of focus.

What do you most like about working at GAD?

I like that I am not treated as less capable than, for example, other graduates and analysts even though I am on a placement programme. This really

motivates me to be proactive on all my projects and make the best contribution that I can.

I have developed my skills and knowledge by asking a lot of questions to my team, manager and other seniors. They are always willing to help and to see people develop. If I am not sure about anything, I am taught in a way I can understand and given the opportunity to implement what I have learnt.

The fact that I am surrounded by highly experienced people who have consistently supported me in my work and given me advice has been incredible for my personal development.

GAD also provides a rotation scheme and I have been able to work in 2 completely different areas within the actuarial field ie pensions and insurance and investment. This has given me a lot of exposure and, as I said before, it's been fascinating to apply the theories I learnt at university in practice at GAD.

What projects have you been involved with at GAD?

I have been involved in several interesting projects such funding valuations for the public service pension schemes, annual pension scheme accounting disclosures (where I took on a leading role), the transition of GAD's pension valuation software, the personal injury discount rate and the sale of the student loan book. All these projects involved an exciting and dynamic learning process.

I always look forward to upcoming projects because I know I will learn something new and become more project-oriented in my approach.

What do you think of the social life at GAD?

GAD is a great place to work. I have found that there is a strong emphasis on the importance of work-life balance at GAD. Because of the flexible working hours, it is easy to make plans with friends and families, so you don't feel like you are missing out. The best part is everyone at GAD is very sociable and friendly. We have sports clubs such as badminton, cricket, football and many more. There really is something for everyone!

What advice would you give to someone considering a placement at GAD?

My advice is to research the different areas of work. This information is easily available on the GAD website. It would give you a better understanding of the work you could be involved in and what an actuarial career could entail for you.

Being a university student means you might already have a lot of useful transferable skills. It's important to showcase the relevance of these skills and how you would be able to apply these during the recruitment process and your placement.

I would strongly encourage someone on their placement to ask as many questions as you possibly can. Your colleagues will know that you are here to learn.

I am certain that, like me, other placement students from GAD will return to university with more experience, knowledge and skills to complete their degree successfully, and in a better position to pursue a career as an actuary.

Finally, a placement at GAD can be very challenging so the most important advice I would give to someone is to treat every single obstacle as an opportunity to learn and to continue developing.

Lord Carlile to lead independent review of Prevent

The government has today (12 August) announced that Lord Carlile has been appointed as the Independent Reviewer of the Prevent programme, which safeguards vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism.

Prevent is one of the four strands of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, [CONTEST](#).

In January, the government announced the creation of the Independent Review of Prevent as part of the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act.

Security Minister Brandon Lewis said:

Lord Carlile brings a wealth of experience and skills to this role. As the former Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, he showed independence and rigour and I am pleased he has agreed to lead this review.

Prevent is vitally important in stopping vulnerable individuals being drawn into terrorism and has been instrumental in turning people's lives around for the better and keeping our communities safe.

Our Prevent Network across the country – from mentors giving individual support, to raising awareness of the dangers of radicalisation – works tirelessly to tackle all forms of terrorism.

We are continually improving and evolving the programme, and I look forward to seeing Lord Carlile's recommendations on how we can learn more about what works and where we need to improve.

Independent Reviewer of Prevent Lord Carlile said:

The nature of the terrorist threat is ever-changing and government policy must evolve in order to tackle it.

I look forward in my new role to seeing Prevent work in action and hearing views from supporters, critics and everyone in between to see the evidence of what is and isn't working. The review will be strongly evidence based.

As the former Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, I have a strong track record of asserting and sustaining my independence of government in assessing the effectiveness of legislation, and this role will be no different.

The review will focus on the current delivery of the Prevent programme and make recommendations for the future and is expected to report to Parliament by August 2020. The terms of reference for the review will be published shortly.

The purpose of Prevent is to safeguard vulnerable people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, by engaging with those who are identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation or targeting by terrorist recruiters.

Prevent deals with all forms of terrorism, including Islamist and extreme right wing, and does not focus on any one community.

As part of Prevent, the Channel programme provides tailored support for a person vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and works in a similar way to safeguarding processes designed to protect people from gang activity, drug or sexual abuse – with individuals offered dedicated support and advice. Since 2012, 1,267 people have been successfully supported through the scheme.

Of the 394 individuals who received Channel support in 2017/18, 179 (45%) were referred for concerns related to Islamist extremism and 174 (44%) were referred for concerns related to right wing extremism.

In 2018/19, 203 community-based projects were also delivered by Prevent reaching over 142,000 participants. Of these projects, 47% were delivered in schools, aimed at increasing young people's resilience to terrorist and extremist ideologies of all forms, including right wing extremism.

As one part of the CONTEST strategy, Prevent, alongside Pursue (stopping terrorist attacks happening in the UK and overseas), Protect (strengthening protection against a terrorist attack in the UK or overseas) and Prepare (mitigating the impact of a terrorist incident if it occurs) comprise the four strands of the strategy.

[Dounreay to hold supply chain event](#)

Six framework contracts were awarded to organisations [earlier this year](#) to deliver a number of construction, demolition and engineering projects that will take decommissioning of the site into a new phase. This is expected to see historic wastes from the site's shaft, silo and low level waste pits retrieved, repackaged and consigned to modern waste facilities.

The framework contracts, worth up to £400 million, are due to last up to 4 years with the possibility of extensions up to an additional 3 years.

Head of Commercial Services Jane MacKenzie said:

Dounreay is jointly hosting this event with all of the companies that have been appointed a Decommissioning Services Framework contract. This is an opportunity to find out more about the type of projects we expect to deliver and discuss opportunities for other businesses to get involved and support them.

The event will be held on 5 September in Wick, Caithness and is only available to companies who register in advance. Spaces are limited to 2 per organisation and registration is available [here](#).

Once the UK's centre of fast reactor research, Dounreay is now aiming to be recognised globally for decommissioning excellence. The work is being delivered by Dounreay Site Restoration Limited, a company owned by Cavendish Dounreay Partnership, on behalf of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

[Crime news: extension of 2017 crime contract to 31 March 2021](#)

We are extending the 2017 standard crime contract by 12 months to 31 March 2021. Contract extension notices are being issued to individual providers to notify them of the extension.

Why is this happening?

This is being done so that we can consider the outcome of Ministry of Justice reviews into criminal legal aid and the means tests before we put a new crime contract in place. These reviews are due to report towards the end of summer 2020.

Next Steps

Providers do not need to take any action for this extension to take effect. We will issue the new schedules before the end of March 2020.

Further information

[Standard crime contract 2017](#) – to download ‘headline intentions on extending the 2017 standard crime contract’ document

[Criminal legal aid review](#)

[Means test review into thresholds for legal aid entitlement thresholds](#)

Funding for Violence Reduction Units announced

Eighteen PCCs have been awarded £35 million to set up specialist teams to tackle violent crime in their area, the government has announced today (Monday 12 August).

The Violence Reduction Units will bring together different organisations, including the police, local government, health, community leaders and other key partners to tackle violent crime by understanding its root causes. The new units will be responsible for identifying what is driving violent crime in the area and coming up with a co-ordinated response.

The announcement follows a roundtable at Downing Street, hosted by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, bringing together the police, probation and prisons and leaders to discuss how to cut crime and improve the criminal justice system.

The Prime Minister has vowed to give police the powers and resources they need to urgently tackle serious violence, cut crime and target county lines gangs.

Recruitment of 20,000 new police officers – a commitment made by the Prime Minister when he took office – will begin next month. Yesterday, the Home Secretary confirmed that all 43 police forces in England and Wales can use enhanced stop and search powers.

Policing Minister Kit Malthouse said:

To beat knife crime we must do two things: first we need assertive, high profile police enforcement and second, we need a coordinated

approach to the long term solutions to violence in society, especially amongst the young. These new units should help us get results on both

APCC Serious Violence Deputy Lead, Marc Jones PCC said:

This funding to tackle serious violent crime is welcome.

We know that that best way to reduce violence in our communities is to invest in preventative measures, adopting a whole system public health approach, and that PCCs are best placed to deliver this work locally.

We will continue to work with the Home Office and our partners to ensure long term investment for all police force areas to tackle the scourge of serious violence.

The cash is being awarded after PCCs in the 18 areas worst affected by serious violence secured their provisional allocation through successful bids.

Each unit will be tasked with delivering both short- and long-term strategies to tackle violent crime, involving police, healthcare workers, community leaders and others.

The £35 million for violence reduction units comes from a £100 million serious violence fund announced in March.

Force Area	Original surge allocation (April 2019)	Additional surge allocation (May 2019)	Final funding for Violence Reduction Unit (August 2019)
Metropolitan Police	£17,000,000	£3,840,000	£7,000,000
West Midlands	£6,000,000	£1,620,000	£3,370,000
Greater Manchester	£4,000,000	£800,000	£3,370,000
Merseyside	£3,500,000	£700,000	£3,370,000
West Yorkshire	£3,000,000	£1,020,000	£3,370,000
South Yorkshire	£2,000,000	£580,000	£1,600,000
Northumbria	£2,000,000	£320,000	£1,600,000
Thames Valley	£1,500,000	£440,000	£1,160,000
Lancashire	£1,500,000	£320,000	£1,160,000
Essex	£1,500,000	£260,000	£1,160,000
Avon and Somerset	£1,500,000	£220,000	£1,160,000
Kent	£1,500,000	£160,000	£1,160,000
Nottinghamshire	£1,000,000	£540,000	£880,000
Leicestershire	£1,000,000	£400,000	£880,000
Bedfordshire	£1,000,000	£380,000	£880,000
Sussex	£1,000,000	£340,000	£880,000

Force Area	Original surge allocation (April 2019)	Additional surge allocation (May 2019)	Final funding for Violence Reduction Unit (August 2019)
Hampshire	£1,000,000	£260,000	£880,000
South Wales	£1,000,000	£200,000	£880,000
Total England & Wales	£51,000,000	£12,400,000	£34,760,000