

Leaders in Analysis – an interview with Aakash and Jane

Diverse and inclusive leadership is vital to ensuring a diverse and inclusive workforce. During our first 'Leaders in Analysis' event, held on 18 September, two senior analysts – Aakash Dillon-Patel (Deputy Director CFO Group, HMRC) and Jane Whittaker (Director, HMRC) – shared their career histories and offered advice to ethnic minority analysts from across the Government Analysis Function (AF).

Tell us a bit about your career. How did you get to your current role?

Aakash: My Civil Service career began in 1999 as a temporary statistical officer in HM Treasury (HMT) in the tax policy team. I then moved to the Analytical Division in HM Customs and Excise, now HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) where I've spent most of my career.

I was promoted to Grade 6 in 2014, joining Corporate Finance as head of HMRC's performance reporting team, responsible for performance data on the Department's Key Performance Indicators. I joined the Senior Civil Service (SCS) in 2017 on temporary promotion as Head of the Performance and Risk team, taking the role permanently in 2018.

Recently, I've supported the Exiting COVID-19 Programme, helping the board understand the lessons learned from our response to the pandemic and the implications for HMRC's future operations.

Jane: I joined the Civil Service nearly 30 years ago as a recent graduate on the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Fast Stream. My first role was as an Assistant Statistician in the Scottish Office and I then moved to the Department of the Environment (as it was previously called) where I had several roles in statistics and social research.

I transitioned into a Grade 7 role working on social surveys and surveys of housing conditions but was aware that my experience was all in social statistics, rather than economics. I made the conscious decision to move to a role in the Inland Revenue (now HMRC) to gain different experience.

I was promoted to the SCS in 2002. When HMRC formed in 2005 (merging the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise) I helped to build a multidisciplinary analytical team for the new department. In 2011 I moved into an operational role, working on tax compliance for large businesses, where I focused on ensuring that the team was utilising data efficiently. I now manage a team of roughly 500 people as Director of Knowledge, Analysis and Intelligence.

Are there any defining moments that stand out as having made a real difference to your career trajectory?

Aakash: I developed a resource allocation model to support HMRC's Spending Review 2010 reinvestment package to help secure over £900m reinvestment. This role gave me considerable exposure to SCS discussions as a Grade 7 and huge insight into what leaders really need from analysts.

There were times when others pushed me to progress. A former colleague encouraged me to find a role that would demonstrate my wider capabilities. I reached out to Jane, who was working in an operational area of HMRC and offered me a role in her team (provided I didn't wear shorts – something I was known for at the time!). This was the best sideways move I've made as only eight months later I was promoted to Grade 6.

Jane, and Jon Thompson (former HMRC Chief Executive Officer) were two leaders that showed real confidence in me. I never thought I'd reach Grade 7, so when I was recommended for, and secured, my first SCS position I was shocked. It's hugely important for leaders to visibly support their team members to progress.

Jane: When I joined the Inland Revenue it was a very different working environment to what I had experienced previously, and I didn't really like it. I quickly learnt to get stuck in and seek more information to improve my wider understanding. Through perseverance I was able to demonstrate that I was capable and helped colleagues to recognise the value of thinking about their analytical requirements more strategically.

Like Aakash, I was fortunate that senior leaders encouraged and pushed me to believe in myself, particularly during my transition from Deputy Director to Director. At other times, knockbacks triggered me to consider moves. After an unsuccessful promotion application, I explored other routes. I took a move to outside the analytical field within HMRC and gained a lot from this experience. There are huge benefits of moving between teams and roles to gain experiences that broaden your horizons and allow you to understand the wider picture.

What advice would you give an analyst looking to develop and progress in the Civil Service?

Aakash: Consider roles that aren't purely analytical. As analysts we can offer invaluable input in other ways. We often find ourselves immersed in technical detail and forego softer skills. As you progress, technical skills often take precedence and there are fewer available analytical roles.

Personally, I have a broader set of softer skills and by moving into a different type of role I was able to use these alongside my technical skills to secure a Grade 6 role. I'm lucky to work in a department that has varied opportunities, from operational delivery to policy and some of the biggest

transformation programmes in government. It is possible to stay in one department but if the opportunities don't exist, be brave enough to move.

Jane: It's true that non-technical skills become more important as you progress; for example, excellent people leadership skills are vital at Grade 6 and above. Considering roles outside your analytical profession will expand your skillset and open the door to more opportunities. You'll gain valuable insight into bigger picture strategic thinking, which will ultimately make you a better analyst and help you to progress within your profession too if that's the path you want to follow.

It's also important to remember that sometimes you will fail. Not all projects, ideas or job applications are successful and determination, more than anything, is vital. That said, if you aren't receiving sufficient support through your line management chain it's important to ask for it. If you don't know anyone working at a higher grade within your profession or directorate, reach out to a confidante outside of those areas.

There are multiple opportunities for mentoring across departments, professions and functions or, if you have a mentor in mind, approach them – I guarantee they'll be flattered and most will try to help in any way they can!

What does a truly inclusive working environment look like to you?

Aakash: A truly inclusive environment needs to go beyond ensuring we have the right number of people that tick boxes, whether ethnicity, gender or other under-represented groups. People from all backgrounds can offer a wealth of experience and we should embrace all those unique characteristics to ensure the Civil Service truly represents the population that we are here to serve.

Jane: A truly inclusive working environment to me is one where everyone can thrive, and where we value the different life experiences that individuals bring to our analytical community. At the moment, I am really focusing on how I and my Deputy Directors can improve the support we offer to colleagues from different backgrounds to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to progress in their careers.

What would you like to see discussed at our next Leaders in Analysis event?

We are planning a series of events in the series and would love to hear from you with thoughts and suggestions on what you would like to see us cover. Is there an area of development you would like to know more about or a particular role you would like to understand in greater detail? Contact the team today to share your views analysis.function@ons.gov.uk

Work starts 6 months ahead of schedule on £51 million A19 upgrade

- major A19 improvement scheme starts half a year ahead of schedule which will improve journey times and cut congestion for people using busy Downhill Lane junction
- early construction underlines clear government commitment to quickly levelling up and accelerating Northern transport infrastructure
- Transport Minister also holds latest virtual Northern Transport Acceleration Council (NTAC) meeting to discuss local transport priorities

The A19 is set to benefit from £51 million worth of upgrades that have begun 6 months ahead of schedule, underlining again the government's commitment to quickly levelling up Northern transport infrastructure, Transport Minister Baroness Vere announced today (8 October 2020).

The multi-million-pound improvement scheme at the Downhill Lane site, led by Highways England, will significantly improve journeys through the busy junction. In particular, commuters will benefit from reduced journey times and less congestion, including for the thousands of people working at the nearby Nissan factory.

The above image shows what the Downhill Lane junction will look like after the upgrade.

Alongside today's announcement, Baroness Vere will also virtually chair the latest round of discussions with local members of the Northern Transport Acceleration Council (NTAC), including North of Tyne Mayor Jamie Driscoll and Chair of the North East Joint Transport Committee Cllr Martin Gannon.

As well as discussing the numerous benefits today's A19 upgrade works will bring to the region, the council will discuss various other local transport projects that are a priority for Northern leaders.

The Department for Transport launched the NTAC earlier this year, to give Northern leaders a direct line to ministers to accelerate transport projects.

Transport Minister, Baroness Vere said:

I am delighted work has started early on this important road upgrade for the North East; it's another example of our commitment to levelling up Northern transport infrastructure and to bringing projects forward where we can.

It's also the sort of accelerated works we want to achieve through NTAC in the future, to help us build back better and create more

reliable, more connected and better quality transport options.

Chief Executive of Highways England, Jim O'Sullivan said:

By bringing forward the start of this multi-million-pound scheme, communities in the North East will benefit from the economic growth, jobs and homes that large engineering projects of this kind create.

The A19 scheme is the latest example of Department for Transport investment in the region, following the completion of the new Nexus Metro Satellite Depot. The depot, completed this month, is a key milestone in the Metro's Fleet Replacement Programme, possible thanks to over £330 million funding from the department.

NTAC is part of the government's wider efforts to use infrastructure investment as a way to lead economic recovery following coronavirus and to improve people's access to opportunity and quality of life in the North.

[More than £1m in refunds secured for care home residents](#)

Press release

The CMA has secured more than £1 million in refunds for those NHS funded residents at Care UK premium homes who paid an unfair additional fee towards essential care.



This fee, which in most cases was above £300 per week, was charged to certain residents receiving a special type of funding from the NHS called 'Continuing Healthcare'. This funding is designed to cover the costs of essential care

for people with long-term complex health needs.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) considers that Care UK broke consumer protection law by charging this additional fee because it is unfair and contravenes NHS rules. Under these NHS rules, residents funded through Continuing Healthcare must not be required to pay towards their essential care.

Following the CMA's action, which comes as part of a wider probe into the sector, Care UK has agreed to offer repayments to NHS funded residents whose fees went towards their essential care, and more than 160 residents at over 20 Care UK premium homes will be offered compensation by the end of November 2020. The majority of those affected will receive a pay-out of more than £1,000, with some receiving substantially more based on their circumstances.

On top of this, the care homes provider has also signed formal commitments – otherwise known as an undertaking – to stop charging this additional fee altogether for residents at its homes.

Michael Grenfell, Executive Director of Enforcement at the CMA, said:

Older people receiving Continuing Healthcare funding are some of the most vulnerable in our society and should not be expected to pay extra fees for their essential care.

That's why we've worked hard to secure refunds from Care UK for those who paid these unfair fees.

We are pleased to see Care UK committing to make repayments as quickly as possible, and to stop charging this additional fee altogether, which is good news for all current and future residents.

Notes to editors:

1. More information on Care UK's undertaking can be found on the [care homes case page](#).
2. Care UK, as referenced above, consists of Care UK Health and Social Care Holdings Ltd and Care UK Community Partnerships Ltd.
3. All mentions of 'essential care' refer to a care package that meets a specific individual's health and social care needs.
4. Care UK's 'premium' care homes offer enhanced features, including additional communal facilities beyond those found in its 'standard' homes.
5. The additional fee referred to in this press release was charged in Care UK's premium homes in England.
6. Whether a resident will receive a repayment, and the amount of any repayment, will depend on the circumstances of each resident who has paid the additional fee. The CMA will not be publishing details of the amounts provided to individuals.
7. The CMA can only secure refunds for those that paid the additional fee

- from 1 October 2015, as this is when its redress powers came into force.
8. Care UK will be contacting eligible individuals during November 2020 via letter. However, it may take longer where Care UK has difficulty identifying those to contact, for example where the refund would return to the resident's estate.
 9. If you believe that you or your family member is eligible and you have not been contacted by Care UK by the end of November 2020, then you can contact CHC.Fundingoffice@careuk.com.
 10. In agreeing the undertaking, Care UK makes no admissions, express or implied, to any breaches of the law.
 11. The CMA opened an investigation into a number of care homes providers in June 2017 due to concerns that some of the contract terms and/or practices they use may breach consumer law. The investigation is currently focused on the charging of large upfront fees.

Published 8 October 2020

[UK statement to the WTO General Council: DG Selection Process](#)

Thank you, Chair.

And at the outset, I'd like to pay tribute on behalf of the United Kingdom to you and your co-facilitators for handling this process with such professionalism and integrity.

The way in which you have charted the way ahead for the membership at each stage; how you laid out the criteria behind your recommendations; how you sought Members' views across the rounds of confessionals – all have been exemplary and highly reassuring.

And I want to personally thank you for all that you have done to support the WTO's decision-making process at what is such a critical time.

I would also like to salute the eight candidates that have taken part in the process thus far. From the moment nominations closed, through the presentations to the membership in Geneva, and during the weeks thereafter, the campaigns have been positive and forward-looking.

Any one of the eight candidates would have made an excellent DG. In particular, I want to thank my fellow nominating Permanent Representatives for all of their positive engagement on behalf of their nominees and the engagement of their teams as well, I know they've all put in a huge amount of work into these campaigns.

Following the recommendations of the Chair and his facilitators, the United Kingdom will withdraw the candidacy of Dr Liam Fox. We are extremely grateful for the confidence and support and time that Dr Fox received from the membership during his campaign and I'd like to thank all of you on his behalf and on behalf of the UK.

And although Dr Fox's candidacy will not now be taken further forward, we believe that his messages about the importance of finding a Director-General with a dedicated track record of commitment to the multilateral trading system, aligned to the political experience necessary to bring new momentum to our discussions here, have resonated widely amongst the membership.

The United Kingdom will continue to deepen our engagement with the WTO and we firmly believe that a healthy and prosperous world rests on a predictable, rules-based international trading system.

So once again Chair, many thanks to you and your colleagues for your wise stewardship. The UK sincerely wishes the very best to those candidates going forward, and we look forward to working closely and cooperatively with the new Director-General.

Thank you very much.

[Science Minister at the Foundation for Science and Technology](#)

Thank you.

It's wonderful, genuinely, to be here today to talk about one of our greatest and most significant challenges, which is the levelling up agenda.

As you can tell from my accent, I'm not from down South. And as you probably also know from my bio, I don't have a degree, in fact, I very sadly left school after my A-levels without really having any major success in them.

Subsequently, I've spent my whole career in a variety of businesses and latterly, politics.

And therefore, that means I'm somewhat unique, as far as science ministers go.

However, science and research have always been important to me. I've had a life-long fascination with engineering – inspired by the wonders of the Industrial Revolution – which I've bored my children with for many years – and they study the landscape of the Midlands, from the Grand Central Railway to Ironbridge and indeed the amazing Silk Mill in Derby, which I'm reliably

informed is the first ever factory in the UK.

And, had I been more focused at school, I may well have ended up in a career in engineering – continuing that great Midlands tradition.

So, science and innovation have always been something that matters a great deal to me, it's an agenda which is genuinely close to my heart. One which shapes and defines me as a person, and also as your minister for science, research and innovation.

Anybody who knows me will know that I've never shied away from innovating throughout my career – and I've tried to foster creativity and innovation in all of the places that I've worked.

And throughout my life, I have had a deep appreciation of just how crucial science and innovation are to our future as a country.

And it's been confirmed by what we've all seen in the last 6 months or so.

From the amazing partnership between the University of Liverpool and Unilever on new materials for industrial processes, to the climate research being done by the British Antarctic Survey, who I visited recently and they talked about their studies of 50,000 year old polar ice, and I actually got to hold some in my hand. And as it melted, I listened to air from 50,000 years ago. That is just so incredibly exciting.

These are vital programmes, not just for the economic benefits that they bring, but also for tackling the major challenges, such as climate change, that face the world.

Science, research and innovation will help us build a better world for the future – and I truly believe that.

And, of course, this does have an impact on everybody, in ways that we already take for granted.

I can remember my first ever calculator – a big advance from the slide rule that I used for my O Levels! But my granddaughter will grow up surrounded by technology and these technological wonders – which, when I was a child, could only be found in science fiction in the pages of Isaac Asimov.

So science and innovation will, I honestly believe, allow us to build a more sustainable world. It will give us a safer world.

And it will give us a fairer world.

Underpinned by new knowledge, and its amazing value and impact on the world.

But, while we are all surrounded by the wonders of technology, we must not forget that for many people, our research and development sector is an unfamiliar place.

It's a totally different walk of life.

It is seen as a sector that enriches the major cities in London and the South East, but leaves little for the rest of the country.

I want every person in my constituency, and throughout the country, to be touched by the advances in science and technology.

But the challenges and opportunities in Derby are very different to those in Oxford, Cambridge, or London.

So, I'm calling on you, as scientists, to better understand the range of challenges and opportunities across the entire country.

This includes having a better understanding of the lives led by people from more diverse backgrounds than are represented in your profession.

And I want you to put your minds to research projects which directly address different people's needs.

Put simply, we need to renew the social contract for research.

This means doing 2 things.

First, we need to make it as easy as possible – as attractive as possible – for the results of our scientific and research system to be translated into better jobs,

better products,

better services,

and a better quality of life for more people, all over the UK.

For this, we'll need to work together to foster a rich and vibrant ecosystem of innovation, to connect research and industry, academics and policymakers, and institutions and civil society.

We'll need to use our immense capacity for creating new knowledge as the fuel for our recovery, building our understanding of places into our decision-making at all levels, and attracting the private investment to deliver growth.

And we'll also need to develop the models of training and skills that allow more, and more, people to benefit from a more vibrant knowledge economy, and to participate in it.

Second, we need to deepen the interaction between science and society.

This means, for me, seizing every available opportunity to inspire even more people about the incredible work we are doing in the UK. Building excitement about the amazing things that we are doing.

And engaging people in the work – whether that's the families and communities who are affected by science, or the people who can enrich our understanding of issues, or those who stand to benefit most from more inclusive engagement.

And I believe we need to build trust in what we are doing. Because in this age of flat-earthers and anti-vaxxers, it's ever more important that we build trust in the knowledge that comes from science and research. And build mutual trust between those doing research and those affected by it.

The critical success factor is your vision,
your enthusiasm
and your application.

Now let me turn to an important point. It seems to me there are some people involved in science who remain deeply bought into notions of exclusivity.

Now, don't get me wrong. There is a real value in wanting to be the best – and in taking bold action to ensure that we can be the best and can succeed in the UK.

And we mustn't ever undermine that.

Indeed, in my view, we must strengthen it.

But by obsessing over narrow indicators of success, we run the risk that our funding and assessment systems become disconnected from the diverse needs of our nation.

And we risk neglecting the contributions that so many people already make to our R&D sector all around this country.

From lab technicians to administrators. From industry staff scientists and technologists, to innovators in all walks of life.

To those adopting and using technologies, as well as those inventing them.

And the local leaders and institutions around the UK who have the networks and insights that bring our R&D system to life.

It is absolutely vital that we now start to harness the potential of more people across our R&D system.

To do this, we need to include different sorts of people from all sorts of places in our discussions.

We'll need to collaborate across boundaries and borders to find the best solutions.

That means building better interfaces between government, funders, institutions and local leaders.

Put simply, we need to be more willing to listen, and more willing to work together.

We all need a change in mindset.

Now, I know there is more to be done to the levelling up debate than the things I've just talked about.

We of course need to have proper, informed debates about the best ways to achieve our aims and the right role for R&D investment.

That is exactly why I established a [Place Advisory Group](#) to help develop our Place Strategy for R&D.

But we mustn't forget that 'levelling up' is about much more than straight economics, or funding models, or winners and losers.

It's about how science, research and innovation can help us to become a more inclusive economy, and a less divided country.

It's about how we can secure equality of opportunity and embrace diversity and difference.

It's about how we can strengthen connections across our country so that more people and places can benefit from the UK's status as a science superpower.

And it's about building trust and respect.

In short, it's about building the kind of country we all want to be and can be part of.

I'm excited by this opportunity, and believe that together we can do this. The only way is up, for us all.

Thank you.