

News story: No Fast Track application window in 2019



Where Brilliant begins

The Civil Service Fast Track is currently under review. This is an exciting opportunity for us to evolve the program, but it does mean that for 2019 we will not be open for applications.

We will have more details on the Fast Track soon but in the mean time please have a look at the other opportunities we have for [apprenticeships within the Civil Service](#).

Civil Service Apprentices are involved in some of Government's most exciting and challenging projects. As an apprentice you help to develop and communicate vital policies that make a difference to the public up and down the UK.

You will have the opportunity to develop specialised skills and many go on to have permanent roles in the Civil Service. These cover a range of areas including cyber security, engineering and overseas diplomacy.

We currently run around 50 departmental and profession apprenticeship schemes across all government departments including economics, communications and customer service. They are open to people of all ages and career backgrounds.

Published 22 February 2019

Press release: Company conned small

businesses to sponsor sham drug campaigns

Courts shut down a Stockport-based company that targeted small businesses to sponsor sham drug awareness campaigns for schools

Press release: Company conned small businesses to sponsor sham drug campaigns

Data (Northern) Limited was wound up in the public interest on 18 February 2019 in the High Court in Manchester by District Judge Obodai. The Official Receiver has been appointed as liquidator of the company.

Stockport-based Data Northern was incorporated in February 2010 and the company was concerned with producing drug awareness booklets for schools.

The colour booklets, 'Are You on Drugs', were 40 pages long and provided information around dealing with the effects of a variety of drugs and alcohol. However, the booklets were authored by the director of the company, Ashley Thorley, who had no formal training.

Complaints were received about the operation of the company, which resulted in confidential investigations conducted by the Insolvency Service, on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Following a successful application to have Data Northern placed into provisional liquidation in November 2018, the court while considering the petition heard that the company would target small businesses before persuading them to sponsor drug awareness 'campaigns' that were carried out in conjunction with schools.

The campaigns were supposed to see schools receive the drug awareness booklets as an additional resource and in return, the benefactors would receive a 'certificate of sponsorship'.

The most common sponsorship rate offered was £179 but amounts varied from client to client, anywhere between £50 and in one case, all the way up £13,000.

However, the majority of schools contacted by investigators did not receive the booklets, while those that had been sent the materials felt they were of

poor quality and did not use them.

Investigators were also able to demonstrate to the courts that Data Northern falsely implied to the sponsors that the company was running a charitable campaign in conjunction with schools and incorrectly claimed that sponsors had agreed to a rolling programme of sponsorship by issuing multiple invoices.

Approximately 80% of total sponsorship received by Data Northern was based on this type of bogus consent and between April 2015 and April 2018, Data Northern secured more than £880,000 from small businesses

Additionally, Data Northern employed aggressive and misleading debt collection techniques, such as falsely threatening court action or claiming that bailiffs had been instructed. The company also failed to keep adequate accounting records.

Scott Crighton, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Data Northern targeted small businesses and exploited their generous and benevolent nature, misleading them into believing they were contributing towards a worthy charitable cause. This couldn't have been further from the truth as our investigations showed that the company was only generating revenue for itself.

The strong actions of the court has prevented further loss to the business community and is a warning to other companies solicited in this way to exercise discretion before agreeing to purchase advertising space.

All public enquiries concerning the affairs of the company should be made to: The Official Receiver, Public Interest Unit, 2 Floor, 3 Piccadilly Place, London Road, Manchester, M1 3BN or email: piu.north@insolvency.gsi.gov.uk

Data (Northern) Limited – company registration number 07159588– was incorporated on 16 February 2010. The company's registered office is at: Unit 1 The Business Park, Chichester Road Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 4BL.

The petition was presented under s124A of the Insolvency Act 1986 on 13 November 2018. The Official Receiver was appointed as provisional liquidator of the company on 30 November 2018 by HHJ Halliwell, a Judge of the High Court.

Company Investigations, part of the Insolvency Service, uses powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Further information about live company investigations is available [here](#).

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is available [here](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

Press release: New Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner announced

Sara Thornton to take up role to help combat modern slavery.

Press release: New Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner announced

Sara Thornton, a police officer with more than 30 years' experience, will take up the role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to help spearhead the UK's response to this devastating crime.

Ms Thornton, who is currently Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and formerly Chief Constable at Thames Valley Police until 2015, was selected for the important role by the Home Secretary Sajid Javid following a competitive recruitment process.

The role was created as part of the landmark Modern Slavery Act 2015 and has a UK-wide remit to give independent advice on modern slavery issues and how they should be tackled.

Ms Thornton will be expected to:

- encourage good practice to drive an increase in the identification and protection of victims of modern slavery, and to ensure the provision of enhanced support for all victims and survivors in the UK
- drive effective prevention of slavery and human trafficking offences
- promote an improved law enforcement and criminal justice response to modern slavery across the UK
- engage with the private sector and promote policies to ensure that supply chains are free of slavery
- foster constructive and targeted international collaboration to combat modern slavery

Tackling Modern Slavery was made a key government priority by Prime Minister

Theresa May when she was Home Secretary.

The role is designated for three years with Sara Thornton taking up the role from this May.

Sajid Javid, Home Secretary, said:

The fact that modern slavery still exists in the shadows of our communities is totally unacceptable. We are doing all we can to banish it from society and give victims our full support.

Sara has dedicated her career to protecting people in need and I look forward to the valuable insight and advice she will provide as the new Commissioner.

Ms Thornton said:

The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner was created to spearhead the UK's fight against human trafficking and modern slavery and has a key role in preventing these vile crimes and supporting victims.

I am looking forward to bringing my long experience as a chief constable and in national policing to bear in this important role.

Good progress has been made in recent years and I am committed to build on that and do what I can to consign this crime to history.

Frank Field, who is leading an Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act with Maria Miller MP and Baroness Butler-Sloss, said:

I have met Sara Thornton to discuss our findings on the role of the Commissioner. I look forward to working with her.

Ms Thornton has worked in policing since 1986, when she joined the Metropolitan Police. During her 33 year career within policing she served as Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police from 2007 until 2015 and was appointed the first Chair of the NPCC in 2015. She has also received the Queen's Police Medal and, in 2011, was awarded a CBE.