

## [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.

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## [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](mailto: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:

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## **[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.

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## **Press release: Children's vaccine 87% effective against circulating flu strain**

Public Health England (PHE) has published mid-season data on the effectiveness of this year's flu vaccines, alongside data from other countries, in [Eurosurveillance](#). The data suggest that the nasal spray flu vaccine is 87% effective in children aged 2 to 17 years against the main circulating strain, influenza A(H1N1)pmd09.

The vaccine given to adults aged 18 to 64 in at-risk groups is estimated to be 39% effective against the same strain. Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 has been the main strain circulating this season. As the number of cases is lower, a precise estimate for those aged 65 and over will not be available until the end of the season.

More children have been vaccinated than ever so far this season, with over five million children being offered the nasal spray. The vaccine has been offered to an additional school group (year 5), meaning that all children aged 2 to 9 years old are now eligible. As younger children have poorer hand and respiratory hygiene than adults, they tend to spread flu more easily, so protecting them is really important for protecting the rest of the population.

Vaccine uptake in children aged 2 and 3 is 43% and 45.2% respectively, and among school-aged children, this ranges from 56.2% to 63.9% depending on year group. Whilst these are the highest levels ever, there is still more that can

be done to increase uptake.

Dr Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation at Public Health England, said:

It is encouraging to see that this year's vaccines are offering a high level of protection against the main circulating strain of flu – particularly for children. Children tend to be 'super-spreaders' of flu, and so protecting them is crucial for protecting the rest of the population.

We're pleased that more parents have been taking up the offer of vaccination for their children – and encourage anyone who is eligible to do so every winter. It's the best defence we have against this unpredictable virus.

Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, said:

The most basic instinct for any parent is to do whatever they can to protect their child. Vaccinations save countless lives and are absolutely vital.

More children have been vaccinated this year to protect against flu, and it is a positive sign that the vaccine itself appears to be more effective than in previous years.

Our world-leading vaccination programme saves lives, and I urge all parents of young children to make sure their child is vaccinated against flu and other childhood diseases.

This season, people aged 18 to 64 in an at-risk group were offered the 'quadrivalent' vaccine in injected form (protecting against four strains of flu). A new 'adjuvanted' vaccine was also available for anyone aged 65 and over. The current data does not include estimations of effectiveness for this age category, as further data and analysis is required to calculate an accurate figure.

Data on the effectiveness of this season's vaccines against influenza B strains are unavailable, as these strains have not circulated widely this season.

## **Background**

People who are eligible for the flu vaccine this year included:

- adults aged 65 and over
- adults aged 18-64, with a long-term health condition
- children aged 2-3 via their GP practice
- school children in years reception, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
- pregnant women

- health and social care workers
- carers
- morbidly obese people

Adults with chronic conditions need the flu vaccine because people with respiratory diseases like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or asthma are seven times more likely to die if they catch flu, and people with cardiovascular problems like chronic heart disease or angina, or have had a stroke, are 11 times more likely to die.

The risk is far worse for those with chronic liver disease, who are [48 times more likely to die if they get flu](#).

We cannot predict with certainty which strains will circulate in the UK during winter. The World Health Organisation (WHO) makes recommendations for the composition of the northern hemisphere flu vaccine every year, and this is published six months in advance to allow for vaccine production times.

The adjuvanted trivalent influenza (aTIV) vaccine which PHE and the NHS recommended this year for people aged 65 and over, was licenced for use in this age group in September 2017. It has previously been used in other countries.

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## [Press release: Bankrupt nightclub boss sentenced for acting as company director](#)

Matthew Daniel John Sellars (40), from Bristol, received a nine month prison sentence at Bristol Crown Court on Thursday 7 February after he pled guilty to three counts of acting in the management or as director of a company while an undischarged bankrupt.

On passing sentence, HHJ Hart also disqualified Matthew Sellars from acting as a director of a company for four years from the date of sentence. This is a separate order in addition to any continuing bankruptcy prohibitions and prevents Matthew Sellars from directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company

The court heard that Matthew Sellars was made bankrupt at Bristol County Court in August 2016. Being made bankrupt comes with certain prohibitions usually lasting for 12 months, including acting as a director of a company without the court's permission.

However he ignored these restrictions when he continued to act as a director

of two companies.

Incorporated in June 2009, Norcrown was the company that acted as the trading vehicle for a nightclub called 'Chasers', as well as a bar called 'Chase Inn', both located in the same building on Regent Street in Kingswood, Bristol.

Matthew Sellars had been a director of Norcrown since it was incorporated and despite his bankruptcy prohibitions, continued to manage the company until it was wound-up in November 2017.

The court heard that in meetings with the Insolvency Practitioner charged with winding up the company, Matthew Sellars falsely maintained that he had been given relief to act as a director despite being bankrupt.

Members of staff also reported that Matthew Sellars continued to have the last say on everything, he had control of the safe and was always at the premises.

At the same time as Matthew Sellars was illegally acting as the director of Norcrown, he was also breaching his bankruptcy prohibitions in that he continued to be a registered director of another company called Combine Leisure Limited.

Arwel Jones, Director of Legal Services, from the Insolvency Service, said:

Matthew Sellars completely disregarded his bankruptcy restrictions and continued to run companies as though nothing had changed. This is simply not acceptable, something the court has made clear in passing a sentence of imprisonment.

Matthew Sellars appeared at Bristol Crown Court via video link as he is currently serving a 6-year prison sentence in connection with drug offences.

He received 9-months' imprisonment for each offence and these are to be served concurrently.

Matthew Sellars is from Bristol and his date of birth is March 1978.

NORCROWN LIMITED (Company number 06929769)

COMBINE LEISURE LIMITED (Company number 07957101)

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a

disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

The Insolvency Service administers the insolvency regime, investigating all compulsory liquidations and individual insolvencies (bankruptcies) through the Official Receiver to establish why they became insolvent. It may also use powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK. In addition, the agency deals with disqualification of directors in corporate failures, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

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

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