

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Justin Placide. I hope you've been enjoying so far the morning sessions of Civil Service Live, the virtual version. Once again, the Civil Service has proven that, you know, whatever kind of adversity comes against us, we're able to, you know, take that as an opportunity and change it into something and do something that we can be proud of, and that can help benefit everyone. Today's session is called 'Taking Charge of Your Future'. So this is an opportunity for you, yes, you - over 20,000 of you who have logged on for this particular event, so I would give you a virtual clap - to listen to some really lovely, friendly people. You can see some of their friendly faces on the screen right now. But we'll just give you their insights and their views of how things that they've taken and decisions they've made to help them, of course, take charge of their own future. So what I'm going to do, I'm going to introduce each one of them. And I'm only going to say their first name, because I believe we're all friends. We're all family in this situation. And then when I hand it over to them, of course, they will then give you a very short summary of who they are, what they do, and why, if they have time, why they are happy to be involved in this session. So without any further ado, I'm going to pass you on to one of our first panel members, Jae. How are you?

I'm very well Justin. Thank you very much. Hi, everyone. It's great to be here. My name is Jae Samant, I'm the Director General for Market Frameworks at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. It's fab to be here, although I'm petrified to hear there's 20,000 of you listening. So we'll all try our very best, no doubt, to keep you entertained. Handing over to Sarah.

Thank you Jae, and hello everybody. Equally, slightly terrified about the number of people who are online but very excited about the fact that this digital online way of working means so many more people can attend these events than ever can in person. So I think a real lesson for the future there and one particularly important for me being Sarah Healey, Permanent Secretary of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Hello, everybody, I'm Liz Barnes. I'm Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive of Staffordshire University. And it's just amazing to hear how many of you are taking this opportunity to invest in your own development and learning. Great to be here.

Okay, and then finally, thank you very much for that Liz, finally I'm gonna hand you over to a good friend of mine. Godfrey, how are you sir?

I'm really well thank you, Justin. And I think it's amazing that Civil Service Live is online this year. My name is Godfrey. I currently work at the Department of Transport where I work as the Private Secretary to Rachel Maclean MP, who is the Parliamentary Undersecretary of Transport. And I'm really excited to be here.

Excellent. And I can see that not only your face but also as well your body language.

So the main thing for me is trying to utilise the time as much as we have. As we all know, we have a captured or captive audience, depending on how you see it, and one of the first things I'd like to do if that's all right, is go out to the panel and ask you one of the questions that has actually been provided by the audience. So the first question goes as follows. And Jae, if that's all right, as you started off the

panel, would it be alright if you could be the first person to answer? Course. Excellent. Okay. So the first question goes as this: are there any plans to assist staff with progression? And is there any new development schemes on the horizon?

So, Justin, thank you for the question. I mean, I think that most departments run their own development programmes. And in addition, there are some programmes, which apply centrally across the Civil Service. So there's a sort of mix of both in terms of formal training. And then of course, there's on the job training, which in my view, is the very best kind of development that you can do. And then there's also mentoring and coaching and I'm a massive fan of mentoring and coaching and believe that it's something that has helped me with progression more than anything any formal training has. So I think there's lots already available and I think people shouldn't hesitate to ask for it, or to snap up the opportunity to do it.

Excellent. I really like that answer there Jae, thank you very much. And you're right. Sometimes it is also as well about people actually making sure that they're aware of what development opportunities are available, and exactly as you're saying, go and seize that. So if that's all right, I'm gonna pass the same question to Sarah. And Sarah, if you need me to repeat it, please don't be afraid, I don't bite.

Thanks a lot, Justin. Obviously, I don't want to repeat what Jae's just said, and I really agree with all of it. One of the points I would make about just to refer the reflections, one is: on the job learning absolutely vital. And as Jae says, often the most powerful way of learning more about what we do, I've definitely learned more doing than I have outside of the workplace. But you only learn those things if you have an opportunity to reflect on what's happened with your colleagues, with your manager, with your peers, with your mentor, with your coach. So I think always taking the time when you've done something new or difficult or hard just to reflect on how that's gone, learn the lessons of it, kind of think about what kinds of extra skills and capabilities you might need to be able to do it differently in future. And then lastly, just to emphasise, I think the point that we, I made at the beginning about this event: online learning which, for a long time, we've hoped would be a great saviour of time and enable people to do things in a bite sized way that's convenient to them. I think we've all learned a lot more about what the possibilities for that are in recent times.

Thank you very much, Sarah. Liz, if that's all right, I'll go over to you.

Thank you, I'm going to take a different approach that too often we sit around waiting for an opportunity to come to us. Actually, I think development's about taking hold of it for yourself, and thinking about how you develop yourself and look for opportunities that are outside of your role, have creative ideas, be innovative, and seek those chances to go and lead on an initiative and put yourself out there. But also look outside of your role, are there, you know, should you sit on a committee or you know, help a charity, but do those other things that bring value to you as a person and add to your experiences. So there is something about sort of being really proactive and focusing on your self development.

Oh Liz, that's really helpful and I do like that idea about being proactive, as I mentioned previously with Jae. And I really like the idea about, you know, taking control, but also as well, looking at things outside of your day role. I feel personally that there are a number of people who probably already do

certain things like whether they're a school governor, or whether they run, you know, some sort of club, and they don't realise that actually, that can help them when they bring that into their Civil Service role. So you emphasising that hopefully will really touch people's hearts who are actually online now. So thank you very much. And then last but not least, Godfrey sir. What are your views?

Thanks, Justin. Yeah, I completely agree with what everyone said and I'm not sure if Jaeë remembers, but in my first couple of months in BEIS, I reached out to Jaeë and asked for a quick 20 minutes coffee. From that session I learned so much and it's things I continue to do now in my current role at Department for Transport. I mean, getting involved with the BAME Network, like you, Justin, the cross Civil Service Race Network and the FAME Network. And that's where I really find, you know, support and guidance. And you meet so many amazing people, and you can just get involved in so many different things. So it will be, you know, getting involved in networks, reaching out to senior people for a quick 20 minutes virtual coffee, and just having a quick chat and just you know, asking those kind of tough, interesting questions so you can learn.

So, Godfrey, thanks for that. And that's a really good point about and I think that's probably one of the common themes amongst all of you as the panel, is actually being proactive and being confident in actually going and taking an opportunity, or trying to find an opportunity. Before I go on to the personal journeys part, if that's okay, I'd just like to ask a supplementary question. And it's partly about how do we help those people who may not have the same level of confidence as any of you. Happy for any one of you just to take that question, and then we'll move into the personal journeys part.

So if I may, I mean, I think that's where mentoring and coaching really helps. And you don't have to take on that role formally. But one of the things that I do, for example, is frequently send job adverts to particular individuals, you know, to individuals that I think could do it in the group and ask them if they'd like to have a conversation about it. And I find frequently, that there are people who are very shy or under confident and don't think of applying for things. And it's important for us as as leaders to sort of reach out and ask them to think about it and have a conversation and offer support.

Excellent. Jaeë thank you very much.

Can I just build on that Justin? Yeah, go for it Liz. So I think as well, there's something about recognising leadership at every level. And so it's not just about looking for the next task or job that's coming through, but if you want some activity to take place, we don't always need the same managers to take this on, we can look all through an organisation. So ask for those who've got an interest, Godfrey mentioned the fact that he looked at the BAME group, it's about recognising that there will be opportunities and that helps people to build confidence if we can give them something to lead on at any level, and in their particular area and something of interest to them.

Liz, thank you very much. Sarah looks like she wants to jump in. Go for it Sarah.

I want to really quickly say, I'm going to say something more about this in a minute, but sometimes I think building that confidence is partly about focusing on the things that you know that you can do. People too often focus on the things that they don't know or they don't feel confident in or they haven't

done before, instead of focusing on the things that they have done. So agreeing with Jaee, about the role of mentors and coaches and managers here in pointing out the things that people have done really well and things that they can feel confident about.

Excellent Sarah, once again, thank you very much, really helpful. I hope you've all enjoyed the typical icebreaker question to warm you up. Now, this is the hard part. So for each one of you on the panel, you have five minutes, if that's okay, to talk about your personal journey, and if that's all right I'm gonna go with Godfrey, if that's okay to start it off.

Thanks, thank you Justin, thank you so much. Okay, so I told you I currently work at the Department for Transport. Before that, I used to work at the Centre of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles, which is a joint team between BEIS and DFT. And before that I used to work on electricity policy at BEIS and before joining the Civil Service, I was at Transport for London for five years. I joined them on their graduate programme. And during my university days, I was a sabbatical officer which taught me a lot. So on reflection of my career today, I believe it's focused on three main things. The role I do has to make a positive difference to people, no matter their backgrounds. And the role I do has to challenge me to grow, that's what I've kind of figured out. And finally the organisation values, I work for must align with my personal values of, you know, professionalism, integrity, as well as a motivation to grow and learn. So, I believe the kind of three main barriers that, kind of, I faced early on in my career, you know - and I haven't really had that much of a long career - but I feel, you know, there's this concept that Michelle Obama talks about, which is the imposter syndrome. And I'm sure lots of people have heard about it. You know, before joining the Civil Service, I had no friends or family in the Civil Service. And, you know, it was it was kind of a steep learning curve to actually understand what it's like to, you know, write a submission, write a note, go through the clearances processes. And also I had this kind of little voice in the back of my head saying, you know, "You don't belong here, don't say too much, you may out yourself," cause I was very new to the Civil Service. But in particular, you know, being a BAME man, you know, when you're surrounded by lots of non-BAME people in meetings I attend, and if I have an opinion, I think, how would that come across? Do I come across angry aggressive or measured or considered? And I mean, what I've been, I've worked in lots of different kind of roles and lots of different industries. But then even with positive feedback and reassurance from my managers and colleagues, it's tough to kind of shake off the notion of, you know, imposter syndrome. I think, secondly, the lack of kind of role models, you know when you look up at the senior Civil Service, there's not many people that look like me, essentially. And my friend and mentor Brenda Thompson at MHCLG, she talks about the Civil Service looking like a pint of Guinness, you know, it's BAME and black at the bottom, but at the top it's essentially white. And you know, we need to shake it up and make it a latte, so I was really encouraged to hear what I heard from Rupert McNeil and Alex Chisholm, what they said at the start, something about actually looking at what the Civil Service looks like, and does it look like, you know, the Britain we want it to? You know, in fact, there are, out of the 1,049 individuals in positions of power, just 36 are BAME, and that's 3.4% of the total which is really poor and under representative. So, and lastly, a barrier that has affected my kind of career is the culture and nuances within language, the simple things like office banter, you know, some things I can understand some things I don't. So it's been a really steep learning curve, kind of learning that and learning the culture which I've really enjoyed learning. I guess it, you know, it's important to have those mentors and coaches and reverse mentors, you know, and you learn from them and understand. And that's why really, that's why it's really

great to hear people talking about reverse mentoring, because that's how I learned in my current role, and what I did in BEIS as well. So yeah, and I think, you know, top lesson or something, you know, I've learned from my career is to never stop learning. Because I genuinely believe, you know, if you're not confident, you know, you can learn from a mentor, you can learn from a coach, if you don't have skills in PMO, project management, you can go onto the wonderful Civil Service Learning and get some amazing courses on there. So I say you know, never stop learning, there's lots of possibilities out there. Something I do regularly, I kind of run into the Race to the Top Network events to learn, watch PMQs, follow journalists on social media just to learn what kind of conversations are happening, to improve my kind of knowledge of the Civil Service, and what's happening in society at the moment. So that's my little five minutes, and hopefully I've made your time. Thanks, Justin.

No, thank you very much Godfrey. And also as well, thank you very much for noting some points about your journey as a black man within the Civil Service. Of course, with the various different conversations that's going on at the moment with regards to race, I think, especially for the audience, it really is quite impactful for those people who class themselves as black or fall into the other AME part of that category, how important it is that they hear that voice. So thank you for that. So if that's okay, I'm going to move on to Liz next to talk about her personal journey. Thank you.

Thank you, Justin. So I've been in higher education for about 35 years now. And prior to that, I was a schoolteacher. And I won't go into how I ended up in higher education, but it was quite by chance, it was serendipity as opposed to planned. And I guess I'm going to start by saying that about my career path, because I don't think of a career path. I think it was more like crazy paving, for those of you that remember the 70s and 80s, when we had a thing called crazy paving. And it's actually about how you build your career and bring your different experiences both in work and in life into the person you are. And you know, when I started in a university, I don't think I had ambition to think about where I was going to be, it's literally one day at a time. And as I did each job and expanded my mind and went out and looked for other things I could do alongside, the next opportunity, I would either create it or be ready for it and looking. When I was interviewed for my first executive role in a university, I was asked whether I wanted to be a Vice Chancellor. And my answer was no. Because what I loved about universities was teaching, not that I was teaching then. But I was very close to learning and teaching and student experience, I thought "I don't want to run a big business." But I found that as I grew into that job, and I began to take on new responsibilities, such as managing a merger and managing an estate etc., that I realised I could do that next job up. And so there was always something about not trying to run too fast. And that thing about so often, I think, as we move on and up in our careers, we're already thinking about the what next - actually take the time to sit and really grow in the role that you're in and build your skills and experiences as you go. But I think a point somebody made earlier was actually about knowing your own strengths. When I went into higher education, my root's very much been in learning and teaching. But if you look historically, the kind of people that became Vice Chancellors were those that had been big career researchers, very serious research careers, and I just didn't follow that path. And so I never thought that I could be a Vice Chancellor.

But what I learned actually was about recognising what I was good at. And then filling those gaps. As you become a manager and leader and you're appointing people, appoint good people around you to fill your gaps. Don't try and spend ages, I think Sarah made the point, you know, you can go out and try

to fill all your own gaps and you can't possibly do it. You can't be great at everything. So there is that really important message about surrounding yourself with good people. I think the other thing is about recognising the importance that every role in an organisation brings, so I talk about myself as a Vice Chancellor. My responsibility is to be good in my role to lead and manage a large organisation. But I'm not the most important person here. Everybody has an important role to play and it doesn't matter what level you're at, it's about helping everybody to understand where they fit within the piece of the organisation. And recognising you're just one cog in a wheel and I see myself as sort of a caretaker, my responsibility whilst I'm looking after this really important organisation is helping it to get to a better place than it was in when I arrived. And that's not to say it was in a bad place. But then the next person comes in, and it's their job then to take it on again, bring their strengths and move it forward. And so I think it is about recognising it's not about just you, it's about the important role that everybody plays around you. And make sure you take time out and talk to those people and respect them. But the other thing is, admit when you get it wrong. You know, one of the things as you go on and up, you have to take risks. Of course, they're balanced risks, and you mitigate risk. But you take risks, and you get things wrong. And the most important thing is that you admit it. And I think one of the best things I ever did when I was a Deputy Dean, I sent an email around the school to which I was Deputy Dean, saying "I'm really sorry I got that wrong." I had lots of emails back within five minutes saying, "Wow, that's amazing. It's great to know you get things wrong!" You know, just come out and say it, it's a good thing to do. We learn from our mistakes, and it's about sort of the 'no blame' culture. And so be willing to make mistakes, but admit them, but also back your team. When your team go out and make mistakes, you have to stand up and take it on the chin with them. Don't put them out there and expose them. It is about that collective ownership and I think that's been - when I think about COVID-19, and how we've had to respond as an organisation, when I first came in, I led from the front. Now, it's more about making sure that we've got local ownership and people can get on and do what needs doing within their areas, because they understand their role far better than I do. And so it's about being able to shift as well recognising the kind of leadership you have to provide from day to day and I'd better stop because I think I'm five minutes in, but lovely talking to you.

Thank you Liz, thank you very much. I mean, in this whole digital era, and I'm pointing to Sarah as encouragement, we may need to get you to do an online blog or a vlog or something like that. I mean, I think definitely for me, and this is my personal opinion, as a civil servant, by nature I was brought in to be risk averse. So actually, you saying those things is actually quite encouraging. And also as well quite similarly, the point that you mentioned about being able to sit in your role and learn your craft in comparison to moving around quite a bit, that was also as well tying with a number of other people's views. But I think definitely now more than ever after the recent Michael Gove speech, where he slightly sort of hints to that kind of thing as well, it's definitely on us as civil servants' minds, especially with the up and coming transformation plans ongoing. But anyway, enough of me, I'm now going to hand it over, if that's okay to Sarah, if possible, just to share some of her views in her personal journey.

Thank you so much, Justin. And, you know, I really enjoy both of those contributions really, really fascinating. And I think some of the same themes in what I'm going to say actually, first of all, really, really resonates with me what Liz said about her career being crazy paving rather than a plan. Most of my career has been a complete accident, happy accident, let's face it, but an accident. I've got a really good friend, who always takes a job, he says, already thinking about what he's going to do in two jobs'

time and how this will get him there. And I have never done that. I've always tended to take a job on the basis of it being something I was interested in, or working for someone I wanted to work for. And on balance, I actually don't think those are bad criteria for choosing a job. So I'll recommend them to you. So generally, I really love work and I've really enjoyed all of the jobs I've ever done. And I like them as much when they're very busy and challenging as when they're going well and much easier to manage, which is something my family occasionally finds very annoying. And a bit of a theme of the first thing I was going to tell you about was sort of my experience of becoming a parent while trying to progress my career and how that felt and what happened to me. So I definitely thrive on being busy. And I also found what Liz said about things going wrong really resonates with me too. One of the things I've really learned during my career is how you cope with things going wrong and she's dead right, that admitting that they've happened is one of the most crucial things that you can do. And making sure that you're taking some of the responsibility. You're taking the responsibility for your teams, and not expecting them to be the ones that deal with something that has gone wrong, which is a collective problem. But actually, the most difficult time I ever had in my career was probably when I came back from maternity leave the very first time, I've got three children who are now nearly 16, 14 and, and nearly 12. But the very first time I came back, I simultaneously changed departments, I got promoted, and for the first time in my career, I needed to leave on time to collect my son. And I spent the first six weeks in a massive, massive crisis of confidence, the biggest one I've ever experienced, and I'd just taken on too much change at once. And to be honest, I couldn't really remember how to work.

I found it almost impossible to speak in meetings which anyone who's ever been in a meeting with me will find really surprising. And I didn't even know how to write. I couldn't work out how to just do sort of the basics of my job. And for about six weeks, I felt like a rabbit in the headlights, and was really struggling. And it did pass, but it was a really unsettling experience. And it's never ever happened to me again in the same way. But I have learned that you should never panic about how a job feels for the first six weeks, three months, six months, you will settle into it and you'll get used to it, and sometimes also you need to give yourself a bit of a break when other things have changed in your life and not try and take on too much professional change at once as well. And then, just going back to that theme about confidence. When I was coming back from maternity leave after my third baby, my then Permanent Secretary tried to persuade me to apply for a Director job, which was a promotion for me on return. And I'd obviously gone off on maternity leave thinking I'm going to have three children under the age of five. And I should probably work part time and kind of dial things down a bit. And he was very keen for me to do this. And I spent a lot of time protesting to him that I hadn't ticked all the necessary boxes. So I hadn't done a finance job, I'd actually never worked in private office. You know, I really needed to do more of these things before I could contemplate getting this promotion. But he'd been appointed to the Civil Service from outside as a Permanent Secretary. So he was taking absolutely none of it, took none of these objections seriously at all, and told me to just get on with it, which I did. And sometimes, you know, you shouldn't need someone to push you over taking those risks. But sometimes you do need someone to remind you that actually, you should focus on the fact that you're the best person for that job, even if you haven't necessarily done absolutely everything in the job description or done absolutely everything you feel you ought to have done in order to take a leap to the next level. And then my last tip, which I think is really, really important at the moment actually, as we start edging into the summer after what has I think for everyone been a really busy few months, which is that however much you thrive on pressure, which I do, everyone, absolutely everyone, needs a

break. And before I came back to be Permanent Secretary at DCMS, I spent three years working on EU Exit negotiations. And it was really, really a challenging three years and at various points, I was properly exhausted, trying to balance both work life, travel, my home, my family, my friends. And actually, I was almost finding it impossible to kind of cope with solving problems in front of me. And it is funny that after even a few days off, or a week or two weeks holiday, the world looks like a really different place. And problems which were big problems oddly have just by themselves become much smaller problems and ones that are much easier to deal with. So just to remind everyone before the summer starts, that you're really no help to anyone, if you're tired and your judgement will inevitably go, so it's vitally, vitally important to take a break and look after yourself if you're going to perform at your best. Never ever think about it as an extra or a nice to have.

Oh, Sarah,

I just want to congratulate you on that. You've managed to help give us part of your personal journey, which as you're saying is a bit crazy pavement. I think we may have to hashtag or copyright that Liz. But at the same point, actually put out a message to all of the audience to help them with their wellbeing. And I think, you know, coming from a point of being able to interview people such as yourselves and speak to you and ask you these questions, it's really important that you can be able to get the mix of being able to answer directly, but at the same point, encourage other people to do more, take risks, look after themselves. So I just want to thank you so much. Now, Jaee, I've kept you waiting. As they say, I've kept the best till last. Oh dear. No pressure. So as they say, this is going to be about you now. So if that's all right, if you can share a couple of examples of your personal journey. As Godfrey mentioned earlier, I've been lucky to work in the same department as you. I've also as well been lucky that people come and talk about you directly to me, all good things, by the way. And I think that in itself, just goes to show how impactful and once again, I'm saying to all of the panel, in your own ways, you're impactful, but I'm saying personally, I know Godfrey, as well as I know Jaee, but other people talk about this lady. So I would just like to say thank you for being you. And now I hand it over to you.

Goodness me. That is a quite a hard intro to live up to. Thank you very much, and thank you to the other speakers who've genuinely been so inspiring. So I have been a civil servant for 28 years, I've worked in seven departments. My first posting was in Westminster Jobcentre. And it's left me with a sort of lifelong respect for colleagues who do frontline delivery, but also left me with this burning ambition about how policy must make a difference in the real world. And most of the jobs I've done in the Civil Service have been policy jobs. And aside from the seven departments, I've also had secondments to the BBC, and to the Big Lottery Fund. I'm going to share with you sort of, I suppose some of the big lessons that have helped me to tackle challenges and to grow. The first is that before I joined the Civil Service, I was a graduate trainee in banking, straight out of university, not because I was turned on by banking, but because I didn't know what I wanted to do, and it paid well. And I hated it. I was desperately trying to be somebody that I wasn't, I was trying to be sort of earnest and serious and focused and none of those are things that I am, I'm a raging extrovert, I'm of Indian origin, I talk a lot. I'm passionate about handbags and good food and Bollywood movies. And, you know, nobody in the graduate training programme looked or sounded like me in banking. And I resigned as soon as I could. And I joined the Civil Service with a determination never to try to be something I'm not, to try and

to be the best of me, but never to try and be somebody that I'm not. And actually, it has served me extremely well in the Civil Service. Our culture is profoundly different, of course, organisationally, from banking, which has helped massively, but actually, to know myself and to be myself have been the two things that have really been like North stars for me, and they've really, really helped me. I looked and sounded very different in the Civil Service, as well, by the way when I joined, but in some ways, my sort of my gobbiness or my reverence or just being very different, actually seemed to serve me well, until of course, I progressed to a particular point when it potentially became an impediment. My second big lesson was about sort of dealing with adversity, because let's face it, folks, you know, we're all going to have a period in our lives, when things are difficult, whether it's the job that you're in, or things happening in your personal life, etc. I've loved most of the jobs I've done in Civil Service, and I've done quite a lot as a person with a low boredom threshold. But I had one job, which I loved, but I worked for somebody who was a hideous bully, and mercifully, there's not many of those around in the Civil Service, but this one was. And I allowed this individual to entirely crush my self confidence. I was Deputy Director, I applied for three Director jobs. I was interviewed in the same week, and I I crashed and burned in all three of those interviews, because I felt about this high. And I left the organisation, went on a secondment for a year laterally, which enabled me to sort of regain my mojo, but also made me really think to myself, why did I allow one individual to crush me to that extent? And I realised how much I needed external validation and how unhealthy that was to that degree. So ask yourself the question that occupational psychologists always say. They always say that the best predictor of future performance is past performance. If people are telling you you're rubbish, listen if it's about half a dozen people telling you that in different roles, but if it's one individual saying that to you, and that's contrary to everything you've previously heard, really quiz yourself about that and try and remember what you've achieved, what you've delivered and how well you've worked with people.

My third lesson was the opposite of Sarah's. Sarah's was about sort of focus on what you can do well, which I think is really true. But I think also really practice what you can't do well, we can't be brilliant at everything, I'm certainly not. And two brilliant Permanent Secretaries that I've worked for that I reported to: Alex Chisholm in BEIS, and Martin Donnelly before him in the department for Business Innovation and Skills, both rather hideously forced me to do things that I hated doing. And Martin made me go to weekly meetings with Jeremy Heywood who was the Cabinet Secretary, the cleverest person I've ever met, and I'd be petrified of having meetings with him because I'd always think "He's going to see the hole in my argument in 10 seconds," which he did, by the way, but being made to go every week for nine months made me feel like I'd graduated from a 12 year old in the headmaster's study to an 18 year old in the headmaster's study. So fundamentally, practice helps. The second was Alex Chisholm, who was bewildered by the fact that although was a raging extrovert, I hated doing these kind of big stakeholder events, where you meet, you know, hundreds of people that you don't know, etc. It's my idea of hell. So in my development programme, he made me say that I would do at least six of them a year. And I still hate them, by the way, but I've now developed a technique for dealing with them. So practice what you're not good at, because it helps. It won't make you brilliant, but it'll make you a little bit more comfortable and a little bit more confident. I'll stop there. Thank you.

Oh, no, Jaee, thank you very much. And once again to the 20,000 people who are listening to this taking charge of your future. I hope you're managing to pick up some some tidbits, some hints, but not just writing them down, actually go out there and put them into practice. You know, for the for the next

two days, we have various different sessions which are helping you, the audience. And, you know, the panel are saying these things, and I can only encourage you to listen, to take action. And if you do query any of these things, as a number of the panel have already said, go and ask, go and find out, because the main thing is that you have to take charge of your future. We can't help you do that. We can assist, we can guide, we can inform, but you have to do it. So I just want to say thanks to the panel. I'm looking at time, we have five minutes, but also as well we have a number of questions in Slido. So if that's all right, I'm going to put you back on the Q&A hotspot. And if that's all right, I'm gonna point out people to answer the questions if people feel comfortable with that. And the first question goes as this. What advice would you give to line managers helping their staff take charge of their career? And I will go with Liz, if that's okay.

I think the first thing is about being self aware and exploring self. So just spend that time finding out what it is you think you're good at. I think the point Jae made as well about practising things you're not so good at, so often I have the conversation about, what kind of job do you think you want in the future? And go out and have a look at some of the jobs out there and then come back, and let's identify where the gaps might be. And how can we build your experience so that you are better prepared for that future. So there is something about exploring your own skill set and experience and how you get yourself to where it is you want to be. But take your time to do it. Just don't be in a hurry to get there. So I think that's where I would start.

Excellent. Thank you very much, Liz. Godfrey, if that's okay, and I'm going to hold you to time because there's other questions in there so if you can fit in a minute, be really great.

Yeah, I'd just say, you know, have the conversation, have a chat, talk to people who you think, talk to the people in those roles where you think you'd be good at. Have a chat and see if you actually enjoy the promotion or have a, you know, honest conversation, ask those tough questions, those questions no one ever likes asking. So you just ask the question.

Thank you. Sarah?

Yeah, I think you've got some really great tips from that already. In a sense, one of the most important things is to make the space to have that conversation and sometimes line managers, you can get so focused on the task, and so focused on talking about the things that you're delivering that you don't take the time to actually think "Well, actually, where is this person going and how can I assist them to do as well as possible moving out of this job into what they do next?" Also really important to remember that that is a thing that is really helpful for you because you are creating a relationship and a bond with that person who is going to carry on and do something else and be successful, might come back to work with you again. And actually, their development is good for you and good for the whole Civil Service.

Thank you very much, Sarah. And Jae?

So I agree with everything everyone else has said, I actually think it's really important for line managers to get to know their own team as individuals. Each of us is different. You want your line manager to

know you and to understand your strengths and your development needs. It's also really important for the line manager to help to create some space for that individual to reflect and to grow. And then as the person, as the member of staff, as somebody who's learning, it's really important for you to be honest with yourself and self aware.

Thank you very much. I'm looking at the time, we've only got two more minutes. So if that's okay, because there has been a lot of really great advice that you as panellists have given us, could I just ask if possible, what two takeaways do you think you could share with our audience? I will go with Sarah first.

Two takeaways? Well, I'm just going to pick up on some of the themes of what I said. So, number one, have a holiday and look after yourself. And number two, do try as much as you can, to have the confidence to believe that you can do the next thing even if you're not feeling certain about it at that particular time.

Excellent. Thank you very much. And then Jae, if you don't mind.

Mine would be to know yourself and to be yourself. So the know yourself sounds bleeding obvious, except it isn't. People frequently don't really know what drives their satisfaction and their wellbeing. It's not necessarily the next promotion. It could be something entirely different. So knowing yourself and having the courage to be yourself are both I think critical.

Thank you. Liz? I'm going to build on that because I think a key thing here is job satisfaction. It's really important you enjoy what you do. I think Jae made the point, if you're not enjoying a job then move out of it. But satisfaction won't come from the pay packet. So don't be driven by the pay packet, sideways moves really work but picking up, I had a quote here, which I always liked, it was by Henry Thoreau: "What lies behind us, what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us." And when we bring this into the open miracles happen, it's all about you and what you can bring.

Thank you, Liz. And then Godfrey, if that's okay, either one or two.

Yeah, I'll give you two Justin. I think firstly, get on reverse mentoring lists, grab a mentor, grab a coach, you know, my reverse mentee, Sarah Harrison, she opened my eyes to a world of opportunities and encouraged to believe in myself, and push boundaries and pursue ambitions. I think my second tip would be, a great friend Rob Neil always talks about, like Sarah said, look after yourself, eat well, sleep well, keep good company, and you know, be the best that you can. Regulate your time on social media. Your career is not a sprint, the window's open, study equal to your ambition, and continue stepping up to that place, you know, and look after yourselves, smile, show your hearts, and welcome the best in everyone you meet. And you will soon work out and work out really soon.

Thank you very much, Godfrey. And thank you, Liz, Sarah and Jae. I know we've gone over time by one minute so I do apologise to the audience. But I think it's so important, especially with the theme of what this session was, which was about taking charge of your future, that you're willing to invest a bit of extra time to help you. And wherever you are, I would just like to say, it's been a pleasure. I hope you

enjoy the rest of the other Civil Service sessions. I hope to see some of you again tomorrow where I'll be hosting. And I would just personally like to give a round of applause to the panel and wish them all the best and hope to see you or speak to you soon.

And applause to you too Justin, thank you for hosting.

Take care everyone. Thank you.