Thanks to political blogger Dizzy for pointing out the excellent anonymous civil servant blogger “Civil Serf”. She appears to be a middle-ranking civil servant in an anonymous Whitehall Department who gives a fascinating and detailed portrait of everyday life in the Rolls Royce machine that powers the UK:

She makes some very incisive political points such as:

Then there’s the Gus O’Donnell effect – currently criticising the leadership in the Treasury? Hummmmm I think we are forgetting something Gus – you were the Permanent Secretary of the Treasury until 2 years ago? Most of your decisions contribute directly to this current crisis. Hummmmm would you like to resign? Nope, didn’t think so..

And some rather insightful organisational points:

(1) We don’t employ enough lawyers, accountants and other specialist staff which are all required to run ‘cottage-industries’ in collecting and reporting data to make it all work.

(2) We have appalling IT systems (I would swear my desk top is powered by a hamster setting fire to jaffa cakes…the incessant squeaking is driving me crazy!)

(3) We can’t penalise anyone for their poor performance because that’s seen as cruel, especially when we are contracting with charities and do-gooders that complain to journalists “Ooooo the DWP are reducing funding to a project supporting 50 unemployed disabled people in Cornwall…. how terrible” Tough choices are impossible…

And sometimes she is just cross:

Only a week ago I was trapped in a conference in Brighton (being chased about by some bloke from the Foreign Office who wouldn’t listen to me saying i’m engaged – YUK!) and watching the HMRC’s Finance Director stand up and give a speech about “getting it right first time”! Ho bloody Ho….

“She” is either going to get sacked, leave the civil service or publish a book very soon.

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