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Head of Programme, GOV.UK

Government Digital Service

Apply before 11:55 pm on Sunday 15th February 2026



Government
Digital Service

Reference number

447507

Salary

£67,126 - £75,275

£67,972 - £75,275 (national) Based on capability. The base salary of this grade is £67,126 (national). Offers made above this will be made up with a specialist pay allowance.

Job grade

Grade 6

Contract type

Permanent

Business area

GDS - GOV.UK

Type of role

Digital
Information Technology

Working pattern

Flexible working, Full-time, Job share, Part-time, Compressed hours

Number of jobs available

1

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Location

Bristol, Manchester

About the job

Job summary

The Government Digital Service (GDS) is the digital centre of government. We are responsible for setting, leading and delivering the vision for a modern digital government.

Our priorities are to drive a modern digital government, by:

1. joining up public sector services
2. harnessing the power of AI for the public good
3. strengthening and extending our digital and data public infrastructure
4. elevating leadership and investing in talent
5. funding for outcomes and procuring for growth and innovation
6. committing to transparency and driving accountability

We are home to the Incubator for Artificial Intelligence (I.AI), the world-leading GOV.UK and at the forefront of coordinating the UK's geospatial strategy and activity. We lead the Government Digital and Data function and champion the work of digital teams across government.

We're part of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and employ more than 1,000 people all over the UK, with hubs in Manchester, London and Bristol.

Join us for rewarding work that makes a difference across the UK. You'll solve some of the nation's highest-priority digital challenges, helping millions of people access services they need.

GOV.UK makes it simple for everyone to interact with the government. Every day, we support millions of people to complete routine tasks to life-changing actions, from registering a death to paying their taxes. For over a decade, we have been the authoritative, accessible, and accurate home of the UK government online. But we want to go further. We want to reach more people in more of the places they expect to find us, to support more interactions with the government. That's why in recent years GDS has been expanding the

[GOV.UK](#) product suite to include new channels and interactions (such as the [GOV.UK](#) App, [GOV.UK](#) Social and [GOV.UK](#) Chat).

The GOV.UK directorate, in which this role sits, is responsible for the [GOV.UK](#) Website and [GOV.UK](#) Social, and for the 'information engine' which powers [GOV.UK](#) channels, including publishing tools, content, design system and analytics.

As the scale and scope of [GOV.UK](#)'s proposition expands, our programme operations and management need to evolve. This critical role will translate the [GOV.UK](#) directorate strategy into execution. It will ensure that delivery of the [GOV.UK](#) current operation is stable, efficient and compliant, whilst ensuring that strategic and transformation initiatives are prioritised, funded and delivered effectively.

Job description

As Head of Programme, you will be working closely with the Head of Delivery, the Head of Content Programme Delivery, and Head of Policy and Strategy to establish and lead the programme function for the [GOV.UK](#) directorate.

As the Head of Programme, GOV.UK you will be responsible for:

business operations - Have accountability for the day-to-day management of directorate-wide finance, procurement and workforce. Support the Director of [GOV.UK](#) to ensure that the directorate stays within its budget envelope Ensure compliance with government-wide spend controls Develop and maintain key relationships with DSIT and Product Group operations colleagues and agree formal and informal ways of working between [GOV.UK](#) and centralised functions to ensure strategic join-up Lead business planning, balancing BAU capacity with strategic investment

business case and assurance - Coordinate the production of investment approvals and business and benefits cases, ensuring appropriate specialist input and timely approval

governance and reporting - Working with the Head of Delivery, establish a clear governance process and reporting system, docking into Product Group and DSIT as necessary Coordinate directorate-wide, consolidated reporting and analysis for review by the Leadership Team or governance bodies Provide secretariat support for senior governance boards as needed

planning, scheduling and resourcing - Working with the Head of Delivery and the Head of Content Programme Delivery, maintain a directorate-wide strategic delivery plan Identify and track interdependencies across projects Recommend the allocation of resources across initiatives to optimise the organisation's return on investment Develop a commercial and procurement pipeline Develop strategies to address resource gaps Align organisational purpose, focus and structure to support delivery of the strategy across BAU and strategic activity Own the 'front door' and triage of incoming requests for work to manage demand and dependencies across Product Group, DSIT and OGDs and coordinate prioritisation decisions with the [GOV.UK](#) Leadership Team

leadership - Reporting to the Deputy Director for Strategy and Programme, you are an integral member of the [GOV.UK](#) Leadership Team You will lead the programme team, providing coaching, mentoring, and support, and ensuring each member of the team has the necessary management, tools and training to deliver high quality work You will lead [GOV.UK](#)'s private office

Person specification

We're interested in people who have:

proven experience in financial planning, budgeting, and forecasting within a complex project, programme or portfolio, and working with senior leaders to ensure fiscal responsibility

procurement and commercial expertise, managing end-to-end processes, including complex and high-value procurements, and overseeing contracts to ensure value for money and compliance with government standards

proven experience in workforce planning at scale, forecasting supply and demand, analysing gaps, and developing solutions to meet directorate strategy

demonstrable expertise in planning and scheduling within complex project, programme, or portfolio settings, ensuring robust delivery and decision-making support You can shape and amend an established programme to deliver against a new strategic plan alongside significant current operational delivery Using systems thinking to take a holistic view and optimise for the whole

strong experience in compiling high-quality business cases, reports and performance analysis, with the ability to translate complex data into meaningful insights for senior stakeholders

excellent communication, influencing and stakeholder management skills, with the ability to tailor content and delivery style to quickly establish credibility with different audiences, including senior leaders, technical teams and peers

an outcome- and delivery-focused approach Make processes work for the directorate, rather than seeing them as a blocker Eliminate waste, removing processes which consume resources but do not add value

proficiency in developing and implementing change strategies, engaging stakeholders, and fostering collaboration to ensure smooth transitions You use data-driven insights to monitor progress and adapt strategies for successful outcomes

experience in applying the above in a digital, agile, delivery context You have an understanding and experience of collaborating with the variety of disciplines involved in digital and agile programme delivery

Benefits

There are many benefits of working at GDS, including:

flexible hybrid working with flexi-time and the option to work part-time or condensed hours

a Civil Service Pension with an average employer contribution of 28.97%

25 days of annual leave, increasing by a day each year up to a maximum of 30 days

an extra day off for the King's birthday

an in-year bonus scheme to recognise high performance

career progression and coaching, including a training budget for personal development

a focus on wellbeing with access to an employee assistance programme

job satisfaction from making government services easier to use and more inclusive for people across the UK

- advances on pay, including for travel season tickets
- death in service benefits
- cycle to work scheme and facilities
- access to an employee discounts scheme
- 10 learning days per year
- volunteering opportunities (5 special leave days per year)
- access to a suite of learning activities through Civil Service learning

Any move to Government Digital Service from another employer will mean you can no longer access childcare vouchers. This includes moves between government departments. You may however be eligible for other government schemes, including Tax Free Childcare. Determine your eligibility at <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

Office attendance

The Department operates a discretionary hybrid working policy, which provides for a combination of working hours from your place of work and from your home in the UK. The current expectation for staff is to attend the office or non-home based location for 40-60% of the time over the accounting period.

DSIT does not normally offer full home working (i.e. working at home); but we do offer a variety of flexible working options (including occasionally working from home).

Things you need to know

Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence can be a useful tool to support your application, however, all examples and statements provided must be truthful, factually accurate and taken directly from your own experience. Where plagiarism has been identified (presenting the ideas and experiences of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, as your own) applications may be withdrawn and internal candidates may be subject to disciplinary action. Please see our [candidate guidance \(opens in a new window\)](#) for more information on appropriate and inappropriate use.

Selection process details

The standard selection process for roles at GDS consists of:

a simple application screening process - we only ask for a CV, responses to 2 knockout questions and a security check question Important tip - please ensure that your responses include how you meet the skills and experience listed in the person specification section above

a 60 minute video interview, including a short presentation, details of the presentation will be sent to interviewees at least 3 days in advance of the interview

Depending on how many applications we get, there might also be an extra stage before the video interview, for example a phone interview or a technical exercise.

In the event we receive a high volume of applications, we will conduct the initial sift against the lead criteria which is:

proven experience in financial planning, budgeting, and forecasting within a complex project, programme or portfolio, and working with senior leaders to ensure fiscal responsibility

In order to assist candidates with this role, we will be holding a virtual recruitment event on **Tuesday 10th February at 14:00 to 15:00** where we will introduce you to what it is like to be the Head of Programme Delivery at the Government Digital Service, the team that you will be potentially working with and a bit about how the application and interview process works within the civil service. There will also be time to answer any questions.

If you would like to join this recruitment open day session, please use this [google meet link](#) to access the session.

In the Civil Service, we use [Success Profiles](#) to evaluate your skills and ability. This gives us the best possible chance of finding the right person for the job, increases performance and improves diversity and inclusivity. We ll be assessing your technical abilities, skills, experience and behaviours that are relevant to this role.

For this role we ll be assessing you against the following [Civil Service Behaviours](#):

- changing and improving leadership
- seeing the bigger picture
- managing a quality service
- delivering at pace

We ll also be assessing your experience and specialist technical skills against the following skills defined in the Digital, Data and Technology Profession Capability Framework for the [Programme Delivery Manager](#) role:

- agile and lean practices
- commercial management
- communicating between the technical and non-technical
- financial management
- life cycle perspective
- maintaining delivery momentum
- making a process work
- planning
- team dynamics and collaboration

Recruitment Timeline

Sift completion: 19th February 2026

Panel interviews: w/c 2nd March 2026

Candidates that do not pass the interview but have demonstrated an acceptable standard may be considered for similar roles at a lower grade.

A reserve list will be held for a period of 12 months, from which further appointments can be made.

The Civil Service is committed to attract, retain and invest in talent wherever it is found. To learn more please see the [Civil Service People Plan](#) and [the Civil Service D&I Strategy](#).

Location:

Whilst this role's location is Bristol / Manchester, if you are a current Civil servant working in DSIT and based in London, you are also able to apply for this role. If you are successful, you will retain your London location and pay.

Please note that this role requires SC clearance, which would normally need 5 years UK residency in the past 5 years. This is not an absolute requirement, but supplementary checks may be needed where individuals have not lived in the UK for that period. This may mean your security clearance (and therefore your appointment) will take longer or, in some cases, not be possible.

For meaningful checks to be carried out, you will need to have lived in the UK for a sufficient period of time, to enable appropriate checks to be carried out and produce a result which provides the required level of assurance. Whilst a lack of UK residency in itself is not necessarily a bar to a security clearance, and expectation of UK residency may range from 3 to 5 years. Failure to meet the residency requirements needed for the role may result in the withdrawal of provisional jobs offers.

Sponsorship

DSIT cannot offer Visa sponsorship to candidates through this campaign. DSIT holds a Visa sponsorship licence but this can only be used for certain roles and this campaign does not qualify.

Feedback will only be provided if you attend an interview or assessment.

Security

Successful candidates must undergo a criminal record check.

Successful candidates must meet the security requirements before they can be appointed. The level of security needed is [security check \(opens in a new](#)

window).

See our vetting charter (opens in a new window).

People working with government assets must complete baseline personnel security standard (opens in new window) checks.

Nationality requirements

This job is broadly open to the following groups:

UK nationals

nationals of the Republic of Ireland

nationals of Commonwealth countries who have the right to work in the UK

nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities with settled or pre-settled status under the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS) (opens in a new window)

nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities who have made a valid application for settled or pre-settled status under the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS)

individuals with limited leave to remain or indefinite leave to remain who were eligible to apply for EUSS on or before 31 December 2020

Turkish nationals, and certain family members of Turkish nationals, who have accrued the right to work in the Civil Service

Further information on nationality requirements (opens in a new window)

Working for the Civil Service

The Civil Service Code (opens in a new window) sets out the standards of behaviour expected of civil servants.

We recruit by merit on the basis of fair and open competition, as outlined in the Civil Service Commission's recruitment principles (opens in a new window).

The Civil Service embraces diversity and promotes equal opportunities. As such, we run a Disability Confident Scheme (DCS) for candidates with disabilities who meet the minimum selection criteria.

Diversity and Inclusion

The Civil Service is committed to attract, retain and invest in talent wherever it is found. To learn more please see the [Civil Service People Plan \(opens in a new window\)](#) and the [Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Apply and further information

This vacancy is part of the [Great Place to Work for Veterans \(opens in a new window\)](#) initiative.

The Civil Service welcomes applications from people who have recently left prison or have an unspent conviction. [Read more about prison leaver recruitment \(opens in new window\)](#).

Once this job has closed, the job advert will no longer be available. You may want to save a copy for your records.

Contact point for applicants

Job contact :

Name : gdsrecruitment@dsit.gov.uk

Email : gdsrecruitment@dsit.gov.uk

Recruitment team

Email : gdsrecruitment@dsit.gov.uk

Further information

If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the Recruitment Principles and you wish to make a complaint, you should contact gds-complaints@dsit.gov.uk in the first instance.

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive you can contact the Civil Service Commission by email: info@csc.gov.uk Or in writing: Civil Service

Commission, Room G/8 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ.

