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Private Secretary - Products and Services (P&S)

Government Digital Service

Apply before 11:55 pm on Tuesday 4th February 2025

GDS

Reference number

388154

Salary

£55,403 - £66,400

£61,005 - £66,400 for London and £55,403 - £61,939 for other location, based on capability. The base salary of this grade is £61,005 for London and £55,403 for other locations, Terms and Conditions apply for Civil Servant applicants.

Job grade

Grade 7

Contract type

Permanent

Business area

GDS - Product and Technology

Type of role

Administration / Corporate Support

Working pattern

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

Number of jobs available

1

Contents

[Location](#)

[About the job](#)

[Benefits](#)

[Things you need to know](#)

[Apply and further information](#)

Location

Bristol, London, Manchester

About the job

Job summary

The Government Digital Service (GDS) exists to help government make brilliant public services that empower people in the UK. We work at the very centre of government to drive digital transformation, focused on users. We build and maintain common capabilities, products and tools for others to use and create great public services that are accessible, inclusive and easy to use.

The Product & Services Directorate (P&S) within GDS is responsible for the GOV.UK AI enabled app and common component products that provide shared systems, technology and processes, making it quicker and cheaper to build great public services that are consistent for users:

GOV.UK AI-enabled App: building a personalised and proactive relationship with users, making it easier to interact with government

GOV.UK Pay: enabling public bodies to take online payment

GOV.UK Notify: allowing public sector organisations to easily send high volume emails, text messages and letters to users

GOV.UK Forms: a digital form builder which allows anyone in government to easily create accessible online forms in minutes, without technical knowledge.

Job description

We are looking for a highly-organised, proactive, and dedicated individual to provide exceptional support to the Director of Products and Services within the Government Digital Service. The role is a challenging one with a high level of exposure and responsibility - you will be exposed to decision-making from the most senior leaders in the civil service, and government.

You will lead and be part of a friendly, high-performing private office team and join a wider community of private office professionals across GDS, the Cabinet Office and beyond, who work together to support the digital transformation agenda in government.

The ideal candidate is an experienced and professional private secretary with a background in a corporate environment. You will have excellent communication and multitasking skills, and thrive in a fast-paced environment. Your ability to anticipate the Director's needs, adapt to changing priorities, and work well under pressure will be key to your success in this role.

You will be responsible for keeping the Director's day on track, ensuring they are well prepared with context to meetings, and have insight from a range of topics to hand. You will also support their SMT to identify the priorities for the Director, and make sure they are delivered.

As a Private Secretary, you will:

- Support the Director, keeping their day on track, shaping their meeting agendas and gathering materials as needed; coordinating logistics for meetings and events; following up on issues and actions as appropriate

- Accurately interpret and convey their view to other members of the Senior Leadership Team

- Understand and help to articulate their priorities, supporting the wider leadership team to deliver those priorities

- Assess reports and papers, reviewing and commenting on drafts and ensuring a consistently high standard of advice, support and ambition

- Liaise effectively and work in partnership across a range of internal and external stakeholders, maintaining professionalism and discretion at all times; as well as building and maintaining effective working relationships with other Private Offices, including the Permanent Secretary and Ministerial Private Offices

- Lead the private office, enabling the smooth running, high morale and high performance of the team, and work with the Director to identify opportunities to continuously improve the function of the office

- Manage and identify information that should be shared; escalating issues and risks where necessary, whilst maintaining the strictest confidentiality regarding sensitive information

- Prepare, manage and edit correspondence, presentations, and reports on behalf of the Director, ensuring accuracy and adherence to company guidelines

The duties/responsibilities listed above describe the post as it is at present and is not intended to be exhaustive. The job holder is expected to accept reasonable alterations and additional tasks of a similar level that may be necessary.

Person specification

We are interested in people who can demonstrate:

Previous experience supporting SCS preferably, or C-level executives within a digital context

Sound judgement and strategic thinking, especially in anticipating risks and opportunities providing mitigation where necessary

The ability to work on multiple complex issues at pace and concurrently, maintaining attention to detail

Experience producing accurate insights and recommendations on a broad range of topics, being able to provide recommendations based on the evidence available

Strong communication and engagement skills, with a good ability to persuade and influence others at various levels of an organisation on sensitive and complex issues

A proactive, solution-oriented mindset, with the ability to anticipate the Directors needs and take initiative.

Adaptability and flexibility, with the ability to work well under pressure and adapt to changing priorities

Expertise in Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook) and other relevant office software - G-Suite would be an advantage

Exceptional organisational skills, ability to prioritise effectively, understanding the risks of any reprioritisation

Benefits

The benefits of working at GDS

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 27%

- 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

- paid volunteering leave

- 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 children's holiday play schemes across different locations in central London

- 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

GDS offers hybrid working for all employees. This means that everyone does some working from home and also spends some time in their local office. You'll agree to your hybrid working arrangement with your line manager in line with your preferences and business needs.

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>

Things you need to know

Selection process details

The standard selection process for roles at GDS consists of:

Application stage - CV and two application questions. As part of your application, you will be asked to submit an anonymised CV demonstrating your previous work history. It is essential that your CV meets the skills and experience listed in the person specification above. You will also need to answer two application questions based on the person's specifications. Failure to submit your CV and complete the application questions may result in your application being unsuccessful.

Video Interview stage - no more than 60 minutes.

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.

While we value the use of AI technology to enhance our daily work, we also value the personal touch and urge applicants to write cover letters without the use of AI to emphasise their own unique experiences.

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.

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

Previous experience supporting SCS preferably, or C-level executives within a digital context.

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](#):

- Managing a quality service

- Changing and improving

- Delivering at pace

- Making effective decisions

Recruitment Timeline:

Role closes on Tuesday, 4th February 2025

Sift will be commencing from Wednesday, 5th February 2025

Panel Interview will be week commencing Monday, 17th February 2025

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.

We are an equal opportunity employer and value diversity at our company. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, colour, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status or disability status.

Other information: Occasionally, business pressures, priorities or critical delivery may mean that we move you into a different team or work area within GDS. This will always be within the same grade and discipline within which you were hired, but does mean that your focus or objectives may shift in order to deliver GDS business.

You may be aware that there are plans for the Government Digital Service (GDS) & the Central Digital & Data Office (CDDO) to move into the

Department of Science, Innovation & Technology (DSIT). This move is to bring together the digital transformation of public services into one core department. The move itself will offer huge opportunities whilst allowing DSIT to lead the way and drive forward the new Government's digital agenda.

As the announcement is relatively new, we are awaiting more detailed information. Therefore, we encourage you to apply for this role, and will keep you informed with updated information throughout the application process.

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.

The Civil Service also offers a Redeployment Interview Scheme to civil servants who are at risk of redundancy, and who meet the minimum requirements for the advertised vacancy.

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 : gds-recruitment@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk

Email : gds-recruitment@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk

Recruitment team

Email : gds-onboarding@digital.cabinet-office.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-recruitment-complaints@digital.cabinet-office.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.

