**Digital Voices Evaluation Report**

1. **Introduction**

The Women in Digital subgroup ‘Building our reputation as employer for choice for women’ developed the Digital Voices Pilot Programme. The programme was designed to give women within DWP Digital a voice, build their confidence in their communication skills and to create a bigger pool of female speakers. This report will use the Leadership and Management framework developed by Excellence Squared. The framework uses ten key principles to help identify and develop leadership and management ability for the present and the future.

1. **Leadership and Management Framework for the Digital Voices Programme**

***2.1 Principle One – Strategic Positioning***

The digital voices programme has provided improved outcomes in the short time it has been running. It has produced a team of effective leaders who inspire, are more confident and are empowered. The Digital Voices are adaptable and take personal responsibility for tasks set by the programme and externally. The Digital Voices programme gave the opportunities to take their communication skills and leadership development to the next level, proactively promoting DWP and DWP Digital - championing Gender diversity. As a result of the Digital Voices programme we wanted to contribute to the Civil Service 2020 vision to be the most inclusive employer and to attract women into digital roles building the reputation of the DWP as being the employer of choice.

***2.2 Principle Two – Governance***

The Digital Voices programme adheres to the following DWP Policies:

* Social media policy
* Civil Service Code
* Standards of Behaviour
* Departmental Security Standards including GDPR.

***2.3 Principle Three – Leadership Principles***

The Digital Voices programme also championed the Civil Service Leadership Statement by doing the following:

* Showing pride in and passion for public service, communicating purpose and direction with clarity and enthusiasm.
* The programme showcases values, professional excellence and expertise.
* The programme has an evaluation process in place to continually improve future versions of the programme.
* The programme facilitates to promote people to be team players and challenge any un-collaborative behaviour.
* The Digital Voices programme was set up to champion both difference and external experience, recognising the benefits it will bring to our employees, customers and the Civil Service.
* The programme was set up to invest in the capability of DWP Digital employees to be effective leaders and communicators now and in the future.
* The Digital Voices programme engages participants, providing the opportunity to develop their Building Capability, Collaborating and Partnering and Leading and Communicating competencies.

***2.4 Principle Four – Leadership Behaviours***

Digital Voices has provided the confidence for people to speak out and speak up. It has enabled participants to challenge positively and have confidence in their own abilities and skills. It has helped to showcase positive behaviours for effective leadership and collaborative team working.

The Digital Voices programme has had support from the Senior Leadership team in terms of funding and support.

To create an awareness of the programme Digital Voices utilised the ‘a brilliant civil service awards’ to raise the profile cross government, to champion gender diversity and highlight effective leaders.

***2.5 Principle Five – People Engagement***

At the last people survey the engagement across DWP Digital was between 50%-60%. The intention of Digital Voices is to contribute to improving this score.

The participants liked the style and format of the communications with the lunch and learns and the newsletter were the favourites.

The participants liked the support they received from the Digital Engagement Team, Friends, internal and external speakers and other Digital Voices co-founders.

Every one of the candidates embraced the opportunities presented to them.

***2.6 Principle Six – People Development***

The main aim of the programme was to build confidence and communication skills and to champion gender diversity. As individuals, each participant was looking for a different needs and outcomes.

Candidates had a wide range of reasons for joining the programme with main ones being needing build confident in their abilities, to improve morale and to provide networking opportunities. All of the digital voices performed as a cohesive team.

There was limited share my stage opportunities which were often London centric and the candidates preferred a staggered approach to speaking opportunities, following the sit on stage, lead a market stall, talk on a panel, share presentation, lunch and learn, solo presentation route. They would also like speaking opportunities to be more locally diverse and could benefit from external speaking opportunities as well as internal. The Digital Voices could set up a database of external events with speaker opportunities and use the Whatsapp group to promote these. Also create a diary of tech events where they can go along to listen and watch how other digital professionals present, build a network and give ideas for blogs and vlogs.

***2.7 Principle Seven – Recruitment and Selection***

Firstly, we carried out a fact-finding exercise to see establish who would be the ideal candidate for the Digital Voices programme. This included selection criteria and bench marking applications standards. Consideration was given to the selection approach whether or not it would be competency based. Also, we had to consider what format the application would be given it was a ‘Digital’ programme. The Digital Engagement Team proactively promoted the opening of the recruitment exercise on social media. Each application was sifted based on the bench marking criteria and the candidates were informed by email that they were successful.

***2.8 Principle Eight – Financial and Commercial Awareness***

The Digital Voices co-founders team developed and submitted a business case for the Digital Voices Programme to Mayank Prakash to create an awareness of the programme. There was no formal budget for the programme pilot and the programme was resourced by volunteers. Any minor expenses were either picked up by T &S of the participant’s current departments or the digital engagement team. For a BAU programme a small budget sourced from the professions/departments training budgets of 5%-10% is recommended.

The Digital Voices programme pilot was promoted on social media. Internal and external speakers were recruited to participate in the Lunch and Learn sessions and to offer share my stage opportunities. The co-founding team came up with a list of potential speakers within their networks.

***2.9 Principle Nine – Succession Planning***

Digital Voices will be visible and have the confidence to speak up and speak out. The current participants have asked to be mentors for the next cohorts. The plan is to open the programme cross government to all female identifying employees but also to create opportunities for male identifying speakers in Lunch and Learns and other events.

Based on the findings from the evaluation, the feedback from participants and the development team and the observed benefits of the pilot, the Digital Voice programme needs now to progress into Business as Usual status.

All the people involved with the Digital Voices pilot can use this as evidence for their work objectives and positive outcomes for performance management reviews.

Future participants can expect all the elements of what went well and also additional elements which have been identified as part of the evaluation.

***2.10 Principle Ten – Anticipating Future Business and Leadership Needs***

Within DWP Digital we need to improve gender diversity in all digital roles, in particular leadership roles, inspiring leaders of the future.

We are going to promote DWP as the employer for choice for women. We will provide role models and encourage mentorships, coaching and sponsorship to women in and outside the DWP organisation whilst building up a pool of affiliates.

We will showcase the innovation of Digital, DWP and the Civil Service confidently as a market leader.

1. **Recommendations**

Following the evaluation of the pilot programme, the following recommendations have been identified to move the Digital Voices Programme into a Business as Usual phase:

* A communication strategy – sharing newsletter with friends, a Linked-In Digital Voices Page, Line Manager Engagement, use of CS local and cross government communication channel, celebrating successes and promote of the digital voices programme.
* A process for collecting MI on the programme and how to measure success including measures of payback for the business.
* Digital voices funded management team/ownership and resources to run BAU activities – preferably with DWP Digital ownership. Monies to be taken from professions/departments budgets of 5%-10%.
* Follow up and work with other agencies interested in developing similar programmes or include them in the current DWP Digital Voices.
* Line Managers invited to induction day to learn about their commitment and support required for each individual
* A more robust sift and selection criteria and feedback process including anonymization.
* A choice of video application or the form for the application questions.
* Breakdown of the championing gender diversity to elements of tasks such as attend diversity events, encourage women to join DWP etc.
* Provide opportunities for Digital Voices to build an event such as a hackathon etc. for more face to face work.
* Promote digital voices in the hubs – market stall, lunch and learn etc.
* Add a social side to the programme – meet ups, planning presentations, hackathons, networking tech events.
* A diary of tech events, how friend can support digital voices at events, rolling programme of lunch and learn sessions.
* A volunteer database of mentors and stakeholders.

**Appendix A**

**Responses from participants and friends**

**What went well – Communications, Application Process and Statistics**

*Communications*

* Weekly news letter
* Lync and Learn sessions
* Communication with Digital Engagement Team
* Whatsapp Group with other fellow Digital Voices
* Induction to the programme gave clarity of what to expect
* As a ‘guest’ I had the opportunity to get feedback for my own personal development
* Strong support from Digital Engagement Team – I could go to them anytime
* Get to know of events in advance so you can book ahead
* Regular weekly keep in touch to keep you on track when doing the day to day job role
* Participants liked the style and format

*Application Process*

* Not having to fill in competencies
* It was a short application form
* It was an on-line application process
* It was simple and honest and more personal application process
* It was not too descriptive
* Clarity of questions and it let you submit the form even if you did not answer a question
* The application process gave a diverse range of candidates from different job roles
* I got on it!

*Statistics*

* Access to data in individual workbooks

**What we could do better – communications, application process, statistics**

*Communications*

* Be clear. What are you looking for in Digital Voices?
* Friends to come to Induction so they can meet us
* Forward diary of plans, events etc.
* Support at other hubs outside of Leeds and Manchester
* Social Intranet Group
* Graduate stories – to motivate new participants
* Let friends know who the rest of the cohort is so they can ‘informally’ support them
* We don’t want it to finish
* Timing- mentor meetings
* More face to face engagement…let’s explore the tools we can use
* Sharing our experiences

*Application Process*

* Longer programme and more time to plan travel etc. before launch date
* Ensure candidates have discussed their application with their Line Managers and gain buy-in to the programme
* Say it is not a strict word count
* Let current digital voices recommend a future candidate or friend
* Give choice of type of application (not just one) i.e. video

*Statistics*

* What are the measures of success?
* Definitely more Qualitative findings needed rather than Quantitative?
* More benchmarking/temperature check of feelings/confidence at start, middle and end of programme

**Additional Elements- Communications, Application Process and Statistics**

*Communications*

* Evaluation of newsletter – should go to friends and sponsors too!
* More collaboration tools – Appearin, Skype, Teams, Facetime, sli.do etc.
* Introduce everyone at start of induction session, not just Digital Voices
* Friends perspective – understanding period of time programme is to run for and objectives so we can prepare for needs
* Set up a Digital Voice Linked In group to promote the programme

*Application Process*

* Learn about Digital Voices before people apply. i.e. Open day, Civil Service Local events, Civil Service Live, Profession/Line of Business Conferences, Lync and Learn Sessions etc.

*Statistics*

* Measure of levels of commitment – what is the optimum for the individual?
* What has happened next …..Outcomes and next steps. Return on investment for the business?
* Need to do Qualitative Questionnaire/Research?
* Growth of friends and participants
* What platforms/social media applications have been successful for exposure?
* Flexibility of content- Which/what is the most valuable/popular?

**Feedback – Communications, Application Process, Statistics**

*Communications*

* Keep the network going
* Self-invest and set up own sessions
* Wasn’t sure if it was full-time or work around day job
* Wasn’t sure what to expect in the programme

*Application Process*

* It seemed like a long form
* Consider the length of the programme-it felt rushed
* Engage with managers to encourage participation
* Get commitment to the programme
* A stricter benchmark for increased number of applicants
* Feedback for candidates on their application from the sift

*Statistics*

* Who is going to gather the statistics and who is it to be reported to?
* How do we justify financing the programme?

**What went well – Usefulness, Return on Investment, What is Missing?**

*Usefulness*

* Meeting up provides great support
* Keep the newsletter with the links
* Keep the lync and learn sessions on-going

*Return on Investment*

* Joining network up/establishing a network
* Created more diverse leaders!
* Promote and encourage diversity and equality
* Recruit more women because more women will apply
* Increased confidence
* More diverse voices in meetings
* Share & Learn around DWP in the UK
* Bringing in new skills & more dynamic leadership
* Knowledge of other roles & how we solve problems
* Increased balance in senior roles
* Increased profile of DWP to work here
* Created women in technology support group

*What’s missing?*

* N/A

**What could we do better – Usefulness, Return on Investment, What is Missing?**

*Usefulness*

* First meeting was a bit rushed to get all people to attend

*Return on Investment*

* How might we get more introverted people to join? Do you have to be confident already?
* What if I’m not doing so much to balance equality yet?
* Better promotion- might of missed opportunities for women to apply
* Add extra element of recruitment in benefit for return on investment for business
* Barriers around getting time/time commitment for managers

*What is Missing?*

* N/A

**Additional Elements – Usefulness, Return on Investment, What is missing?**

*Usefulness*

* Working with friends- unsure about the support needed
* More graduated speaking opportunities – 1. Sit on stage, 2. Share the presentation, 3. Lunch and learn solo, 4. Do own presentation at Civil Service event
* Replay facility for Lync and Learn sessions and face to face events

*Return on Investment*

* All women stage – have a session with men to inspire them to become affiliates/friends to women’s digital voices
* What’s in it for me? – Line Managers and Senior Leadership Team

*What is Missing?*

* A rolling participation period – participants become ‘friends’
* Highlight hotel near event so everyone can meet up more easily
* A great social element – book same hotel, meet for food beforehand
* More lightening talks about a range of different subjects
* A hackathon event on improving and championing gender equality/recruitment
* Work with public and private stakeholders to build the first Equality conference
* Progression plans for digital voices and friends
* Cross government collaboration tools if programme to delivered across government
* Robotics for sifting/monitoring social media feed on Digital Voices

**Feedback – Usefulness, Return on Investment, What is Missing?**

*Usefulness*

* Unsure about the expectation of the friends
* Location of the speaking opportunities/notice – tend to be London centric.
* Digital Voices to share checklist of tasks

*Return on Investment*

* Friends sharing their Digital Voices journey
* Link into Investors in People, CIPD, Apprenticeships etc?

*What is missing?*

* Friends to share their digital journey and top tips
* Friends to share lessons learned from their experiences – sharing reflective practice
* A Digital Voices Champion and Business Sponsor
* Support from the SLT of the DWP Professions
* Who is going to own Digital Voices BAU? Ownership of costs of running- shared across business lines, departments, professions?
* Face to Face Action Learning support sessions
* Digital Voices project
* Volunteer bank of internal and external supporters