Making Effective Decisions

* analyse and use a range of relevant, credible information from internal and external sources to support decisions
* invite challenge and where appropriate involve others in decision making

In my previous role working in the Department for Work and Pensions, I was in the Fraud, Error and Debt (FED) division on the Horizon Scanning team, specifically researching Data Regulation, Privacy and Ethics (DRPE). I was tasked with researching how the landscape of DRPE could change in the coming decade and affect FED. I was new to DRPE, however I used a PESTLE (political, economic, social, legal, technological, ethical) framework to ensure that I approached the new problem via a range of perspectives. This included reviewing previous legal cases such as Ed Bridges v. South Wales Police myself and various online articles exploring their own interpretations of the new precedent set, reading articles by experts in Fintech investment on how the new Data (Use and Access) Bill would change the landscape of Open Banking, and finally examining the public disapproval of potential DWP powers related to accessing bank account information. In general, my approach ensured that I was informed by a wide variety of relevant sources; furthermore, my excellent academic record has given me confidence in being able to distinguish credible and non-credible information. The result was that, when I presented my final recommendations and forecasts to the team, I had synthesised enough of my research to form my own specific forecast and contribute to our team’s final product, the Trend Deck. This was especially important as others in my team had been unsuccessful on forecasting DRPE, feeling unable to learn new things about such a complex area.

Communicating and Influencing

* ensure communication has a clear purpose and takes into account people’s individual needs
* share information as appropriate and check understanding

While working in the Horizon Scanning team at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), I was tasked with presenting emerging issues in Data Regulation, Privacy, and Ethics (DRPE) to colleagues with varying levels of technical understanding. Many had limited familiarity with topics like Smart Data and Open Banking, and there was concern that these complex issues could alienate parts of the team.

My task was to communicate my research in a clear, engaging, and accessible way—ensuring everyone could contribute meaningfully to the discussion. I designed and delivered a workshop to present my findings, using plain English, relatable examples, and visual explanations to explain new legislative and regulatory developments. I also adapted the presentation in real time, responding to colleagues’ questions and tailoring explanations based on their roles and existing knowledge. To ensure continued understanding beyond the session, I circulated a follow-up slide pack with annotated notes and additional reading.

The result was a highly successful session: colleagues who had previously disengaged from DRPE issues commented that they finally felt confident contributing. My manager noted that the clarity of my communication had brought new energy to the group’s discussions. Additionally, the written brief I submitted to summarise DRPE risks was widely circulated across the division with only minor edits, further highlighting my ability to communicate technical ideas in a way that is both accurate and accessible.

Delivering at Pace

* act promptly to reassess workloads and priorities when there are conflicting demands to maintain performance

In my previous job as a Summer Intern at the Department for Work and Pensions, I joined just three days before the 2024 General Election was held on July 4th. As such, not only was I settling into my main function in the internship, which was to, over the course of 5 weeks, fully research the potential future of Data Regulation, Privacy and Ethics in the UK - I was also tasked with explaining, annotating, and summarising complex policy documents, issued either as papers by think-tanks, or speeches (such as by the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the King), as soon as they were published; finally, I would have to link these documents back to Fraud, Error, and Debt, as that was my specific division.

By using my excellent written communication skills and adapting my style to meet that set by others in the civil service - whose own summary papers I was quickly learning from - I was able to provide detailed, relevant analysis quickly without foregoing quality, or progress on my main research task concerning data policy. In one instance, I corrected several mistakes I found in a paper on AI from the Tony Blair Institute concerning basic economic language, and improper citations.

The result was the gratitude of my manager, as well as several emails from others in the department thanking me for my quick and easily-digestible work. My manager noted my excellent written communications and continued to set me summary and evaluative tasks throughout my placement.

Alternative answer:

In my previous role as a Summer Intern at the Department for Work and Pensions, I joined the Horizon Scanning team in the Fraud, Error and Debt (FED) division just three days before the 2024 General Election. Despite the steep learning curve, I was immediately tasked with two simultaneous responsibilities. The first was to independently research the future of Data Regulation, Privacy and Ethics (DRPE) in the UK over a five-week period. The second was to monitor and summarise a series of rapidly emerging policy documents—ranging from think-tank reports to major political speeches, such as those by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the King. These summaries needed to be clear, digestible, and directly relevant to FED’s policy priorities.

I adapted quickly by studying internal briefing styles and mirroring the tone and clarity expected within the civil service. I used my strong writing and analytical skills to produce summaries that were both swift and accurate, without compromising progress on my main research task. In one instance, I annotated a Tony Blair Institute paper on AI, identifying weaknesses in its economic terminology and citations, helping shape the internal response.

The result was strong feedback from my manager and multiple emails from civil servants across the department thanking me for the quality and clarity of my work. My manager highlighted my written communication as a key strength and continued to delegate time-sensitive briefing work to me throughout the placement.