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Alex Chisholm
Civil Service Chief Operating Officer
and Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary

Dame Meg Hillier
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee,
House of Commons,
London,
SW1A 0AA

7 June 2023

Dear Chair,

Digital Transformation in government: addressing barriers to efficiency

Additional Response

I would like to extend my thanks for the invitation to give oral evidence to the Public Accounts Committee on Monday 22 May.

During the hearing, we agreed to provide the Committee with supplementary information in support of the evidence we gave regarding apprenticeships.

Digital, Data and Technology apprenticeships

Data provided by the Civil Service Apprenticeship Unit (CSAU) shows that, between December 2021 and December 2022, the departments that grew or largely maintained their apprenticeship numbers, with fluctuations within satisfactory ranges accounting for completions, are:

- Attorney General's Department
- Charity Commission
- DCMS
- DfE
- Defra
- DIT
- DLUHC
- DWP
- Food Standards Agency
- FCDO
- MOD
- MOJ
- National Crime Agency
- Office of Rail and Road
- Ofsted
- United Kingdom Statistics Authority

Departments reporting the largest decrease in numbers over this time frame are:

- BEIS
- Cabinet Office
- DfT
- DHSC
- HMRC
- Home Office

It is worth noting that changes to the recruitment of apprentices will not be reflected in the number of apprentices in departments until the following year. Apprentice numbers regularly fluctuate year to year as apprentices begin and finish their courses at different stages throughout the year. External factors such as the impact of Covid-19 on recruitment during 2020-21 and the wider context of overall Civil Service headcount also play a role.

Rest assured that we are intent on reversing the decline in DDaT apprentices in Cabinet Office.

More widely, the Committee will be aware of our work to enhance and expand the Digital, Data and Technology profession in government. Overall, we have increased the number of recorded specialists by 10% since the establishment of the *Transforming for a digital future: 2022 to 2025 roadmap for digital and data*. Apprentices are a core part of our thriving digital community, as are graduates and interns, and we are committed to ensuring that the trend in reduction of apprentices is reversed. Indeed, since the report was published, the number of recorded apprentices has increased by 6.2%.

The Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO) is currently working with departments and commercial teams to address some of the barriers to fully utilising the apprentice levy in government, including through increasing supplier choice.

We are also enhancing our early talent offer by piloting programmes which we hope to scale up: we've delivered a Summer Diversity Intern Programme; the DDaT fast stream; Tech Smart Futures (20 students from low socio-economic backgrounds); Software Developer Graduate Programme; in addition to DDaT Apprentices.

I trust the information shared provides an overview of this area. I look forward to updating you on the progress of this work in the future.

Yours sincerely,



Alex Chisholm

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