



Permanent Secretary

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

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30th PAC Report of Session 2022 – 23: Developing workforce skills for a strong economy

I am writing to you in response to Recommendation 6 with an update on the staffing position of the Unit for Future Skills and the plans for how we will assess and evaluate the Unit's impact.

Recommendation 6 – *the department should write to us with an update on:*

- *The staffing position of the Unit for Future Skills, and how any shortfall in resourcing is affecting the delivery of its programme of work; and*
- *How it plans to assess and monitor the impact of the Unit's work.*

The staffing position of the Unit for Future Skills

The Unit for Future Skills has grown rapidly during its inaugural year and was tasked with delivering output quickly. Within its first six months, while also developing its strategy and approach, the Unit published five dashboards:

- Career pathways dashboard
- Graduate outcomes dashboard
- Further education outcomes dashboard
- 16 to 18 qualifications dashboard
- Local skills dashboard

Products like the local skills dashboard have been iteratively improved to support local skills planning and delivery.

In order to deliver these outputs, the Unit for Future Skills is structured across four teams:

- Analysis - Development of new data, analysis and visualisations on skills and jobs for use by policy makers, employers and the public (largest team)
- Research and policy liaison - Delivering the research programme for the Unit including commissioning external work, building networks with academics and researchers, as well as policy teams within DfE and other government departments.
- Stakeholder engagement - Communicating work of the Unit across government and to external audiences.

- Business management - Strategy and programme management across projects; finance; governance; HR support; administration.

As of January 2023, there were 20 staff in post. Four new staff are to start by the end of February and the Unit continues to make further progress to reach the planned headcount of 30 by April 2023. The Unit's current resourcing will ensure all teams can deliver on the workplan for 2023.

Monitoring and assessment of the Unit

Decision makers throughout the skills system need access to robust and easy to use jobs and skills information to support investment in training and skills throughout the country. The Unit's work will supply more robust and timely data which will be better structured. It will also drive coordination to link relevant analysis and research, both across and outside of government, to provide a comprehensive information resource.

As well as being monitored by DfE performance management and accountability structures, the Unit's Board and the Chair, Sir Ian Diamond, will also hold the Unit to account for delivering outputs. They will look at evidence on the reach and impact of individual products and workstreams, but also test that the Unit as a whole is achieving its aims of improving data for decision makers.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Acland-Hood', written in a cursive style.

**SUSAN ACLAND-HOOD
PERMANENT SECRETARY**