



CABINET OFFICE
LONDON SW1A 2AS

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

4 November 2020

Dear Chair,

Target implementation dates for Fifty-Eighth Report on Strategic Suppliers and One Hundred and Eighteenth Report on Challenges in Using Data Across Government

I am writing to inform the Committee of changes in the target implementation dates for recommendations in the above reports, as set out in the [DAO letter of 12 June](#).

Fifty-Eighth Report on Strategic Suppliers

In the above report, the Committee made a recommendation (8) that the Government should look at the lifetime cost and value of a contract, not just the bottom line at the point the contract is commissioned, and that the Government needs to get better at managing contracts through their life by facilitating a significant uplift in skills. In our Treasury Minute Progress Report of February 2020, the Government indicated that the original implementation date was December 2019. However, the target implementation date has since been delayed to March 2023.

For clarification, the December 2019 date refers to identification and training of gold contract managers. The overall programme target was March 2022.

Good progress has been made in upskilling staff who manage contracts. As of August 2020, just over 10,000 people have registered for training with just over 7,000 having achieved accreditation at various levels. For all gold and silver contracts (those deemed most significant and critical) 2,200 people have been identified in departments and 400 have commenced their training. Face to face training has paused due to Covid19 and the programme is developing virtual versions of the training to be able to restart in November 2020. Due to the Covid-19 delay, the programme deadlines are being reviewed with a possible 12-month extension to March 2023. Any changes will be shared with PAC when agreed with the Civil Service Board.

One Hundred and Eighteenth Report on Challenges in Using Data Across Government

In the above report, the Committee made a recommendation (4) that the Cabinet Office and the Government Digital Service should identify and prioritise the top 10 data standards that would benefit the Government, and should specify their use in new systems from 1 April 2020 and monitor implementation by departments. In our Treasury Minute Progress Report of January 2020, the Government indicated that the original implementation date was Spring 2020. However, the target implementation date has since been delayed to Spring 2022.

In spite of this delay, significant progress on data standards across government has been made this year. The March 2020 Budget settlement included funding for a Data Standards Authority (DSA), which has been established and is being led by GDS. The DSA will bring departments together to: determine data standards to use across government, drive adoption and improve collaboration on data. The DSA will also address implementation incentives across government and make departments accountable for applying standards. The DSA works closely with ONS and other public sector bodies.

Additionally, the collaborative work between DCMS and the Government Digital Service in the Cabinet Office will help bring the public and private sector together, and ensure interoperable standards, specifications and schemes are adopted.

Further to the Government's last update to the Committee, the first six months have seen the delivery of critical groundwork for the DSA. Governance for the DSA has been established in the form of a Steering Board and a supporting Peer Review Group. These governance bodies bring together subject matter experts from across government and have determined a core work programme and priority categories (for example, metadata, identifiers, transport, and data types). The Government is working through priority projects, such as Covid19 response, to extract use cases where specific data standards need to be identified and adopted. An initial package of 3 metadata standards was published in August 2020 by the DSA. The DSA has also driven uptake of the API catalogue, to improve understanding and reuse of existing government APIs.



Alex Chisholm

Civil Service Chief Operating Officer & Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary
Email PSAlexChisholm@cabinetoffice.gov.uk **Telephone** +44 (0) 20 7271 8822