



Emran Mian
Permanent Secretary
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
22 Whitehall
London SW1A 2EG
www.gov.uk/dsit

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP
Chair of Public Accounts Committee
Houses of Parliament
SW1A 0AA

14 July 2026

Dear Sir Geoffrey,

Thank you for your letter of 16 June 2026 regarding progress on implementing recommendation 3 from the Committee's report 'Use of AI in Government'.

Strengthening digital and AI capability is essential to delivering modern public services. Our approach is to address this through a coordinated programme of workforce reform, capability development, leadership accountability and performance management, brought together through the Roadmap for Modern Digital Government and the forthcoming Digital Workforce 2030 Strategy.

This letter explains how these interventions combine into a coherent plan, how progress will be measured, and how we intend to report publicly on delivery.

Coherent plan to close the digital and AI capability gap

The Government's objective is to build a sustainable digital, data and AI workforce capable of supporting the modernisation of public services and meeting the growing demand for digital and AI expertise across government. Progress will be measured against the ambition for the Digital, Data and Cyber Profession to represent 10% of the Civil Service workforce by 2030, compared with approximately 5% today. We do not

have clear AI demand forecasts, but will set out a plan for growth of Digital and AI skills as part of our Digital Workforce 2030 work.

GDS's strategic approach has been set out through the Roadmap for Modern Digital Government, and the forthcoming Digital Workforce 2030 Strategy will set out greater specificity. Together, these will provide the framework through which government is addressing workforce shortages, strengthening leadership capability, improving recruitment and retention, and increasing the movement of expertise between the public and private sectors.

In addition to setting out strategic intent and partnering with departments to help them accelerate, GDS also works to remove systemic blockers that limit pace of change. It is for departments however to determine specific local digital transformation objectives and investments. GDS works with departments to monitor and evaluate through the half yearly 'Digital Business Review'.

In support of this strategic intent, GDS has a broad programme of impactful change projects and talent products that will be delivered throughout 2026/27:

- Publish the Digital Workforce 2030 Strategy by Q3 - Cross-government digital workforce strategy providing cross-government guidance on responding to the current changes shaping digital workforces, as well as setting out a long-term visions for digital, data and AI capability across government through the Civil Service Strategic Workforce Plan.
- Launch the Government Cyber Capability Framework (Public Beta) by Q3 – Capability framework providing clear definitions of cyber skills, career pathways and proficiency standards across government.
- Launch Get Tech Certified by Q3 – Free technology learning and certification programme providing access to vendor-led training and industry-recognised certifications for all civil servants.
- Implement Strategic Digital Pay Reform Proposals by Q4 – Digital, Data and Cyber pay framework reforms designed to improve recruitment, retention and competitiveness for specialist digital and AI roles.
- Pilot the Returnship Programme by Q4 – supporting experienced professionals who have been out of work for an extended period to return to digital careers through structured placements, specifically into Senior Software Developer roles.
- Deliver multiple cohorts of the AI and Data Scientist Accelerator programmes throughout 2026/27 – intensive upskilling programmes enabling existing civil servants to progress into advanced AI, machine learning and data science roles.
- Deliver Digital Fast Stream cohorts – Graduate entry pathways developing future digital leaders and specialists across roles including Delivery Management,

Product Management, User Research, Business Analysis, Data Science and Software Engineering

- Continue delivery of TechTrack – Cross-government digital apprenticeship programme building a pipeline of digital talent through apprenticeships in priority digital professions.

The Government does not regard any individual intervention as sufficient in isolation. Rather, the intended outcome is delivered through the combined effect of these reforms. Progress will be assessed against workforce, leadership and capability measures and reviewed regularly through established governance arrangements. This will enable government to determine whether reforms are delivering the intended outcomes and whether further action is required.

Metrics, baselines and governance arrangements

Progress will be assessed through a structured performance framework and Digital Business Reviews, aligned to the Roadmap for Modern Digital Government. The principal outcome measured is growth of the Digital, Data and Cyber Profession towards 10% of the Civil Service workforce by 2030 from a baseline of approximately 5% today. Additional indicators include recruitment and retention rates in priority digital and AI roles, uptake and completion of capability programmes, adoption of the Digital, Data and Cyber Pay Framework, reduction in reliance on contingent labour and participation in initiatives designed to support movement between sectors.

The Government will also assess whether digital leadership and decision-making capability are strengthening across the public sector. This includes monitoring implementation of Blueprint commitments relating to digital leadership representation, adoption of senior profession standards and participation in capability development activity.

Oversight is provided through the governance arrangements of the Government Digital and Data Function. As Head of the Government Digital and Data Function, I chair the Digital Executive Committee, supported by the departmental Director General level Chief Digital and Information Officers acting as Deputy Heads of Function. This is complemented by Digital Business Reviews with Permanent Secretaries, which provide a mechanism for reviewing departmental progress and identifying areas requiring further attention, but also report against spending review metrics and roadmap commitments to hold teams to account for delivery of key programmes. I also attend the Heads of Departments forum, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, where I meet with other permanent secretaries to discuss, shape and agree the direction of travel on digital transformation and capability needs across all our organisations.

Where evidence indicates that progress is insufficient, government will consider what further action is required. This may include additional support to departments, refinement of existing interventions, strengthened assurance activity or, where appropriate, consideration of further cross-government measures to address barriers to recruitment, retention or capability development.

Public reporting and transparency

The Government remains committed to ensuring that digital and AI capability across the public sector is strengthened in a measurable, transparent and sustainable way. To support the Digital Business reviews mentioned above, GDS has established a Digital Performance Framework to provide a unified, cross-government approach to assessing digital and technology performance, with consistent metrics for both departmental capability and service outcomes and is continuing to develop and refine it with departments. As the framework is embedded, we are working with departments to improve data quality and consistency to ensure that reporting is robust, comparable and meaningful.

We intend to publish performance data from the framework as it becomes sufficiently mature and consistent across government. However, in the first instance, we will publish cross-government metrics through *A roadmap for modern digital government*, providing transparent, comparable insight into delivery against key outcomes - our approach to this was set out in [our first quarterly roadmap report](#). As the framework develops, and data quality continues to improve, we intend to publish more detailed performance information, in line with the ambition set out in *A blueprint for modern digital government*.

We will continue to work across departments to ensure delivery is coordinated, outcomes are clearly tracked, and progress is reported publicly in line with the Committee's expectations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emran Mian', written in a cursive style.

Emran Mian
Permanent Secretary
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology