



Civil service reform: one year on report

“The Department for Education (DfE) has made significant progress in delivering its change programme, which takes forward Civil Service Reform in DfE. At the heart of our approach is the zero based review we announced in the Civil Service Reform Plan, which focused our efforts on the delivery of our Ministers’ priorities. We have: restructured areas within the department and its executive agencies to ensure our resources are aligned to these priorities; looked at our corporate service functions to ensure they are as cost efficient as possible; and begun work to rationalise our estate. Continued delivery of the reform agenda remains amongst our top priorities in the months ahead.”

- **Chris Wormald, Permanent Secretary**

Total FTE Head Count Reduction between Q2 2010 - Q4 2012: -35% (-1,965 FTE)¹

Employee Engagement Index in 2012 (CS benchmark 58%): 50% (down 3 percentage points on 2011)

Progress against department-focused actions in the Reform Plan

Action 2: Digital by default DfE’s [Digital Strategy](#) was published in December 2012, with two key projects in progress. We will carry out a Digital Capability Review in Summer 2013. Internal areas of focus are digital governance and the formation of a community of subject matter experts to champion and embed digital principles.

Actions 3 and 4: Shared and sharing services DfE became part of the DWP Shared Service in 2009, and will join the second independent shared service centre (ISSC2) in 2013-14. DfE already shares commercial and property management services, legal services (from TSol) and has entered into the cross-government arrangements to share internal audit services from 1 April 2013.

Action 5: Open policy making DfE has introduced five policy tests for policy-makers to consider when making and delivering policy. These tests provide the foundation to embed better policy making into the department and are sponsored by both the Permanent Secretary and the DfE Head

¹ DfE has abolished 11 non-departmental public bodies and created four new executive agencies (two of which have subsequently been merged) since May 2010, centralising the provision of corporate services in the process. This activity, as well as the impact of DfE’s change programme has so far delivered a 35% reduction in headcount (1,965 FTEs) between May 2010 (5,575 FTEs) and April 2013 (3,610 FTEs).

of the Policy Profession. We have not yet submitted a bid to the Contestable Policy Fund but are actively developing open policy proposals in the department for consideration by the Secretary of State. We are also considering other sources in addition to those provided by the Cabinet Office, including fellowship schemes to embed industry and sector knowledge into the policy formulation process within the department.

Action 6: Matching resources to government priorities

DfE is leading work in this area, conducting a zero based review during the recent business planning round to ensure resources are allocated to Ministerial priorities, whilst at the same time delivering administrative reductions of 50% over the course of this Government. In addition, DfE has introduced termly meetings with Ministers to review priorities and resources allocated to them, a significant step forward in ensuring the department's workforce remains assigned to its delivery priorities.

Action 9: Management information

The Quarterly Data Summary completion rate for Q3 was 100%. DfE is seeking further improvements to the MI service it receives from DWP Shared Services as well as developing in-house interim solutions (such as the Workforce data pack for the DfE Management Committee). A Management Information Development Board has been established to ensure key principles are adhered to (including using standard sets of reports) with the current focus on driving up compliance.

Action 12: Skills, learning and development

DfE has adopted the new [Civil Service Competency Framework](#). We offer five days of learning and development to all staff. 100% of staff have signed-up to Civil Service Learning. The [Civil Service Capabilities Plan](#) has been communicated to staff. DfE has introduced a talent programme, which identifies high potential deputy directors to participate in a 12 month development programme. We have also introduced set learning months, focusing on areas intrinsic to the changes we want to make through our change programme, covering areas such as continuous improvement, policy making and flexible deployment.

Action 14: Secondments and interchanges

We are currently developing a secondment/exchange programme for 2013/14, but progress is being made with 5 inward secondments and 2 outwards to the private sector. A further 18 secondments were made to other non-government organisations such as schools, charities, voluntary sector organisations and local authorities.

Action 16: Departmental Improvement Plans

DfE was not one of the five pilot departments. Work has not yet begun on our Improvement Plan, which will be published in 2014.

Action 17: Creating a modern employment offer

DfE has adopted the new performance management framework. The new Terms and Conditions for staff will be implemented from June 2013.

Creating modern workplaces

DfE is reducing the size (from 12 buildings to 6) and cost (c£7m savings in 2012/13) of its estate. DfE is a leading Department in the efficient use of its workspace, maximising retained assets further through enhanced flexible working practices and IT innovations, and sub-letting unwanted space to others. IT systems have been designed so that staff can work anywhere in the estate and improvements to video conferencing facilities have been made following the DfE zero-based review.

Wider reform in DfE

A new suite of policies supporting organisational change has been implemented and as part of DfE's zero-based business planning, many areas of the department are now moving to a flexible deployment model, to enable the expedient allocation of resource to new priorities. Work is well underway on the merger of the National College for School Leadership and the Teaching Agency, two of DfE's executive agencies.

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