



Department
for Education

Department for Education update to the Review - Departmental Improvement Plan

Foreword by the Permanent Secretary

The Government is delivering an ambitious programme of reform, aimed at raising educational standards and closing the achievement gap between rich and poor. Since 2010, the department has made considerable changes to its delivery model: reforming its Arms Length Bodies and becoming a more delivery focused department as the number of schools converting to become Academies and Free Schools increases.

In 2012, assisted by consultants Bain and Co., the department undertook a fundamental review of itself. We considered what we do and how we do it, in order to determine what our future role, shape and size needed to be to allow us to respond to future challenges and provide best value to the taxpayer in a period of continued financial constraint.

The DfE Review, published in November 2012, found that ALB Reform and the structural changes since 2010 provided a solid foundation going forward up to 2015 and there was no case for further significant structural change. Instead, it placed an emphasis on increasing our effectiveness by considering our processes and how we operate, both at an organisational and individual level.

The main features of this world-class department would be that it is:

- **Smaller** – An agile organisation that matches its resources flexibly to the priorities that add most value and operates effectively with few staff and locations.
- **Continuously Improving** – Has a culture which doesn't tolerate cumbersome ways of doing things and encourages and supports everyone to fix what slows us down or gets in our way.
- **Data Driven** - An organisation which knows what adds value because it constantly tests its decisions and work by measuring their impact.
- **Customer Focused** - Delivers an excellent service (policy, delivery, information) to our customers whether that be Ministers, schools, children and families, or colleagues.
- **High performing** - Attracts, retains and develops a high performing and engaged workforce.

Since November 2012 the department has set about delivering this vision. The focus up until around September 2013 was predominantly on reducing our size and cost by reducing number of people and sites, increasing focus on performance management, prioritising our work, and establishing more flexible models to resource it. Alongside these changes we have begun to make changes to how we deliver our day to day work. But there is much more to do.

In producing this plan we have reflected on what we have achieved since the DfE Review and considered analysis of our performance data, people survey, capability audit, conversations Management Committee has been having with staff on all sites, and independent analysis from the Institute for Government.

This analysis demonstrates that the vision the DfE Review established for a world-class department remains what we must aim for and good progress is being made. The Institute for Government confirmed this when it wrote in its November 2013 report:

One year on from publishing the Department for Education Review, DfE is well positioned in the change process in comparison to other Whitehall departments. Many of the fundamental building blocks for successful change are in place: the Review has real credibility and stronger buy-in than might be expected at this stage; the senior leadership cadre is engaged and anxious to seize the opportunity to transform the department; and there are already examples of the Review having had a positive impact on day-to-day work.

We now need to build on this solid foundation by reinforcing with all members of staff our vision for the sort of department we are trying to create, and demonstrating how the changes being made will ensure the excellent practice we find in many parts of the department is being replicated consistently in everything we do.

As a leadership team, we also need to do more to listen to staff and understand how to best help them to improve those internal processes which at times can get in the way of them doing the most value adding work. Empowering staff in this way will help improve how staff perceive the changes. But it will also allow each of us to be as effective and efficient as we can be as we strive to raise educational standards and close the attainment gap between rich and poor.

This plan brings together the various strands of how we are improving how the department operates and sets out how we will take forward the next phase of realising the vision set out in the DfE Review.

Contents

Assessment of performance

Coalition priorities p5

Assessment of efficiency and innovation

Administration expenditure savings p7

Customer service p7

Digital strategy p8

Management Information p9

Matching resources to priorities p9

Ways of working p10

Assessment of capability

Addressing skills gaps and managing talent p12

Performance management p13

Assessment of Strategic Risk and Leadership of Change

Communicating as a leadership team p14

Integrating non-SCS into change p15

Driving a new culture and ways of working p15

People survey p16

Improvement Planning p17

Metrics to Measure Improvement p18

Assessment

Performance

Summary

- The department is making good progress delivering coalition objectives.
- Improvements have been made in the quality and clarity of financial and workforce management information.
- We need to do more to simplify and improve how we use and report data on performance.

Coalition Priorities

The department's overarching objectives are to raise educational standards whilst reducing the achievement gap between rich and poor. As set out in detail in our Mid-Year Report, good progress has been made since April 2013 on all six coalition priorities. Highlights include the following.

Increase the number of high quality schools and introduce fair funding;

- *390 academies opened (219 converters and 171 sponsored academies).*
- *Opened the largest ever number of new schools (118) – 93 free schools, 13 Studio Schools and 12 University Technical Colleges (UTCs).*
- *The proportion of schools' funding which is allocated on pupil needs increased from 71% in 2012-13 to 90% in 2013-14.*

Reform the school curriculum and qualifications;

- *The national curriculum review concluded with the new national curriculum published on 11 September 2013 for first teaching in September 2014.*
- *Reforms to GCSEs have prioritised English language, English literature and mathematics. New content for those subjects was published on 1 November 2013, on track for first teaching from 2015.*
- *The proportion of state school students entering for the EBacc combination of subjects rose to 35.4% (from 21.8% in 2010) on the basis of provisional figures.*

Reduce bureaucracy and improve accountability

- *Her Majesty's Chief Inspector announced that the percentage of schools rated as good and outstanding has risen to 78% (from 70%) and the number of schools graded 'requires improvement' has fallen to 19%.*
- *Revised school inspections handbook published for the autumn 2013 term.*

Train and develop the professionals who work with children;

- *The total number of initial teacher training entrants in 2012/13 was 34,880. This included 20,480 on a primary programme (98% of the target) and 13,350 on a secondary programme (107% of target).*
- *The proportion of postgraduate new entrants with a first class or 2:1 classified UK degree is 74%, compared with 71% in 2012/13 and 66% in 2011/12.*
- *Social Worker programme delivery: over 3,000 expressions of interest from potential 'Frontline' candidates and 'Step Up to Social Work' cohort on track to have over 300 participants.*

Introduce new support for the Early Years;

- *'More Affordable Childcare' was published on 16 July 2013, completing the Childcare Commission's work and setting out Government plans to reduce regulation, help parents with the cost of childcare and encourage growth in supply.*
- *On 1 September statutory entitlement to early learning for 20% of two year olds came into effect.*

Improve support for children, young people and families, focusing on the most disadvantaged:

- *The attainment gap between pupils receiving free school meals (FSM) and their peers at KS1 has narrowed between 2011 and 2013 by 3 percentage points in reading and writing (15% to 12% in reading, 18% to 15% in writing).*
- *1,997 schools delivered summer schools, attended by 58,200 disadvantaged pupils – a significant increase on 2012 (1,780 schools and 39,000 disadvantaged pupils) – around 50% of all disadvantaged year 7s reached.*

Efficiency and Innovation

Summary

- The Department is on track to achieve its target of reducing our admin budget by 50% in real terms from 2010-11 levels by 2015-16.
- Continuous Improvement techniques are already helping the department provide a better and more efficient service for our customers. But we must continue to focus on increasing our capability and engaging staff to fully realise the benefits.
- More agile structures have been put in place to flexibly move staff to top priorities. Evaluation of the impact these approaches are having on our ability to get people with the right skills into the right jobs at the right time will allow us to refine our approach.
- Ministers and officials are reviewing priorities and resource more frequently. The mechanisms and management information used to do this are regularly tested as prioritisation becomes increasingly important given ongoing budget constraints.
- It remains true that focusing on our processes and how we operate, both at an organisational and individual level - our ways of working – will have greater impact on organisational effectiveness than structural changes.
- We need to develop more sophisticated measures of the impact our changes are having and maintain momentum and build on the improvements already made.

Administration Expenditure Savings

The DfE Review identified potential to reduce the administrative budget of the department by 50% in real terms from 2010-11 by 2015-16. We are on track to deliver this. To date the admin budget has reduced by 32% in real terms (excluding depreciation).

Like other departments, reductions in headcount make the most significant contribution to savings. Since May 2010, the department's workforce has decreased by 40%. Since the launch of the DfE Review, reductions of 356 FTE have been made (from 3719 FTE in October 2012 to 3363 FTE in December 2013) and further staff reductions are likely in 2014-2015 as a result of planned site closures and other efficiencies. Other notable savings have come from:

- Closing our Lime House site in Nottingham in November 2013, saving £750k per annum.
- Sites in London, Runcorn, Cambridge, Bristol, and Guildford are all on schedule to close by the end of April 2014 saving an additional £2m per annum.
- Additional sub-tenants secured in London are now providing £1.25m per annum.
- Re-configuring how we use our London site will release more space for sub-tenants and we have secured HS2 and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority which will provide a further £2.7m revenue per year.

Customer Service

As a result of the creation of our Executive Agencies and the growth of the Academies and Free Schools programmes the department now has a much higher proportion of staff engaged in delivery than it did in 2010. This shift away from strategy creation and policy requires a greater focus on streamlining our processes and making sure they deliver for our customers. Even in our more traditional policy roles, the importance of delivering our department of state functions such as parliamentary questions, freedom of information requests, correspondence and advice to Ministers, in a way that is efficient and meets their needs remains crucial.

Continuous Improvement methods and approaches, first piloted in the private sector, can help us do this. They provide a structured way to consider whether processes – big or small - are meeting customer needs, providing value for money and allowing the people

running them to be as efficient as possible.

To date our Continuous Improvement Team has trained almost 200 staff in the techniques and 41 awareness raising sessions have been delivered to over 1,000 staff.

Significant projects in the Executive Agencies, and in Infrastructure and Funding Directorate which delivers Academies and Free Schools are underway and beginning to deliver benefits as shown below.

<p>Cost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STA ~£50k cost saving following review of the maladministration end to end process • ESD Education Data Division (EDD) Estimated 10% FTE reduction in KS2 results reporting process • EFA - Staffing for funding down from >90 to 60 current to 40 FTE by end of financial year • EFA - 6 FTE saved on improved handling of insurance • Academies Group (AG) – reduction of 5 FTE in ACOD • Free Schools Grp review of impact assessments has seen efficiency savings of 1.4 days FTE per project • (Projected AG - full programme of CI work could yield 15-20% admin saving over 2 years) 	<p>Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STA – 6 month reduction in time taken to resolve all maladministration cases from 2013 testing over previous yr – and equivalent 1.5FTE resource saving • AG - Reduction in average time to Academy Order stage from 50 to 30 days and reduction of up to 10 days in securing Ministerial agreement for sponsored projects • AG – reduction of ~5 days in DfE resource per project. • AG – closer work with EFA on project handover has resulted in more consistent flagging of risks • (Projected AG - reduction in consultant grant spend of £0.7m in 2013/14 • Finance – projected 40% reduction in Purchase Orders following the incorrect route)
<p>Learning and Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable savings in learning through in-house delivery vs procuring externally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~£110k (~150k inc cohort 3) Practitioner training • ~£18k (~ £53k by March 2014) Champion training • ~ £3.5k (~18k by March 2014) Leaders training • Increased CI capability across DfE (see previous slide) • Increased knowledge of CI across the Department • CI becoming part of the day to day language • STA - ~40% reduction in internal meetings via revised governance arrangements 	<p>Customer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDD saw 30% reduction in customer enquiries on the 2013 Spring School Census • STA - improved relationship with schools concerning maladministration measured by improved customer feedback • AG – Customer satisfaction up 18% (93%) in ACD • EFA – Customer Satisfaction up 10% and Customer demand queries re: funding allocations down from 4000 in 11-12 to 550 in 13-14 • 97% Parliamentary Questions were answered on time in July compared to 35% in Jan

Digital Strategy

The department for Education published its Digital Strategy in December 2012 and has taken significant steps to meet its targets.

All of the department’s web content will have been transferred to GOV.UK by the end of March 2014 and we are redesigning and building services such as the Education Funding Agency’s Customer Exchange Service, and the Online Academies Conversion Service to make it easier and faster for customers to serve themselves and interact with the department. They will also allow us to reduce costs over time. The Digital Strategy is being refreshed in April 2014 and will identify further opportunities.

Our Social Media Team is also working with policy and delivery teams to harness social media to communicate directly with stakeholders. We have run a variety of twitter chats on various policies and are regularly collecting suggestions for improvements from schools via these. A digital learning month in the summer of 2014, with workshops and guest speakers from the private sector, will help raise digital capability.

Management Information

The DfE Review stressed the need to make sure we have accurate information at the right time and in the right format to make our decisions. Financial and workforce reports have been redesigned to improve the insight they offer. However, recent reconsideration of performance management information found opportunities to simplify. Too much low-grade information is being reported, and often in a non-visual or narrative manner which makes it difficult to draw useful insight.

Over the coming year we will take steps to improve the quality and usefulness of reporting. Key actions will be to:

- **Rationalise reporting** so that Ministers and Board Members see only the information they need to see and escalation routes are clear;
- Create simpler **summaries of performance** against the most important strategic department-wide KPIs and metrics. These will provide a better overview of delivery across the whole department and greater insight;
- **Automate the collection and dissemination of reports** where possible;
- Use the latest data visualisation techniques to improve the user-friendliness of reports;
- Explore the potential for improving IT such that Big Data can be used to improve transparency and intelligence in the system.

A network of the most competent users of data across the department – Data Champions - has been established to raise capability by sharing their expertise and challenge how data is collected, analysed and presented.

Matching resources to priorities

The DfE Review said we need to get better at deploying people with the right skills into the right jobs, at the right time. We need to prioritise activity which has the most impact and have structures that allow us to move staff with the right skills to those areas quickly.

Following the DfE Review, regular performance reporting to Ministers has been adapted, with a greater emphasis on how resources are being deployed on priorities. This offers a more structured opportunity to review whether our priorities are still the same, to scrutinise progress, and deploy resources accordingly.

Each part of the business has also reviewed its processes for deploying resource. In more delivery focused areas, such as the agencies and IFD, much of the work was already organised into projects with clearly defined deliverables and start and end points. In other parts, which have a greater focus on long term maintenance of policy, new flexible resourcing structures were put in place from September 2013 onwards. We now estimate around one third of the department is being flexibly deployed.

We are piloting a self-assessment tool designed to help groups and divisions challenge themselves on the impact their particular model is having. A cross-department evaluation in May 2014 will highlight and share best practice and consider whether there is any benefit to standardising any of the approaches across the whole department.

Ways of working

The DfE Review prioritised a number of aspects related to how the department and its staff go about their work. There has been good progress in these areas but the focus up until around September 2013 was predominantly on reducing our size: both the number of people and sites, prioritising our work and establishing more flexible models to resource it. Alongside, these changes, we have begun to progress the changes required to improve how we operate and go about our day to day work. In this next phase we will renew focus on tackling these vital elements which will improve how we deliver for Ministers and ensure the department remains a great place to work. Highlights so far on include:

How the department develops and delivers policy

The department has developed a set of Policy Tests which are widely used in both the development of policy and in the operational delivery of policy. These set out clear expectations for how staff should approach developing and delivering policy. These are widely understood and well regarded with the cross-government Policy Profession Board asking all departments to follow DfE's lead in developing something similar.

How the Department stores and shares its knowledge

The department's knowledge management IT systems were successfully upgraded in August 2013. There is a lot of work required to embed the cultural and behavioural changes required to demonstrate good maturity on Knowledge Management. As well as ensuring all our systems are user friendly, senior managers need to lead by example and set and hold staff to account to clear standards.

We are trialling an approach in some directorates which sets some mandatory basic minimum standards, gathers metrics on compliance and holds individuals and leaders to account. If successful we will consider rolling this out more widely.

How the DfE has reformed its approach to governance

Since the election we have:

- Strengthened top-tier arrangements with clear roles for the Board and each of its Committees – Management, Performance and Audit and Risk;
- Introduced monthly reporting against delivery plans, impact reports which provide Ministers with in depth-analysis of the impact each of our policies are having, at points in the year when new data is available.

However, in reviewing progress we have identified that our SROs would benefit from additional training and a clearer statement of how they should undertake the SRO role. We will be rolling out a new training programme for SROs in March 2014. This will in part be delivered by the department's successful graduates of the MPLA programme run by the Said Business School in Oxford.

How we work across our sites

Over the last year work has focused on making preparations for sites to close and supporting staff through these changes. In December 2013 our Management Committee began a quarterly programme of visits to each of our sites – “Talk to the Board” - to talk to all staff about how change is being managed and felt. It is clear from these discussions that we need to do much more to make it as easy as possible for staff on different sites to work together – the reliability and availability of video conferencing remains an issue. Whilst each site has its own strong identity and culture there is still a sense amongst non-London staff that we are too headquarters-focused, when it comes to visibility of senior leaders and the provision of training and learning opportunities.

Assessment of Capability

Summary

- The department has a highly capable, knowledgeable and motivated workforce that is committed to taking up learning and development opportunities.
- The increase in the proportion of our work that is delivery calls for a shift in our mix of skills – with a particular need for more commercial and programme and project management skills.
- Directorates local capability plans are providing tailored programmes for their staff to address our priority skills gaps.
- We will take regular stocktakes of organisational capability and provide the strategic direction that allows directorates and individuals to consider their own needs and those of the wider department when developing learning and development plans.
- We have made progress in improving how we manage under-performance. However, the need to continue to build line managers' confidence and skills to tackle this remains critical and we are putting in place support and training to assist.

Addressing skills gaps and managing our talent

Our people are vital to the success of the department in raising standards and closing attainment gaps. The DfE Review set out our aim to have the right people, with the right skills in the right roles. We were clear that in order to achieve that aim, we would need to make changes to our ways of working and raise our capability.

We have made good progress over the first year of the Review. We restructured some areas of the business, selecting staff in some business areas using new role descriptions which redefined the skills we need. We raised expectations about individual performance and adopted a more robust approach to under-performance. We have run a rolling monthly programme of cross-department learning events with guest speakers from the public and private sector. We also brought in staff with new skills and created more opportunities for high-quality learning and development.

We can, however, be more systematic in our approach to raising skills and capabilities. In Autumn 2013 each part of the department considered the skills required to deliver Ministerial priorities over the next two-to-three years. Making judgements about current capability at each grade and quantified their skills gaps.

Overall, these assessments showed our priority skills gaps to be: use of data, Programme and Project Management (PPM), commercial skills, and leadership and management. These are consistent with our drive in year one of the Review to become more data-driven; to apply the policy tests more widely and our shift to more project-based working. They also signal an immediate need to build programme and project management skills and commercial capability, particularly in our operational delivery teams. Specific actions plans have been developed for each of these

The analysis does show the scale and nature of skill gaps vary from directorate to directorate. So each directorate has a tailored capability plan, which staff and line managers are using to tailor individual learning and development plan to address their particular priorities and they will report on progress and impact to Management Committee quarterly.

Across the whole department we will:

- Renew efforts to encourage all staff to use their 5 days of learning per year to develop required skills.

- Develop a new leadership and management development programme for grade 6 and 7 staff to increase their effectiveness at raising the skills and capabilities of their teams.
- Extending the talent development programme below the SCS grade for high potential grade 6 and 7s.
- Encourage BME and disabled staff to get involved in the Positive Action Pathway Scheme. This talent development scheme aims to build and retain a diverse talent pipeline.
- Continue to bring in new skills and specialisms on a flexible basis, whilst continuing our drive to be as small and efficient as we can be, for example the Fellowship of Policy Experts.

Performance Management

DfE introduced a new performance management approach in 2012/13 using the Civil Service model. The approach is designed to raise the bar of what is considered acceptable performance. It improves the quality and rigour of performance management, by ensuring performance assessments consider both delivery against objectives (what was done), as well as the level of skills and capability demonstrated (how it was done) and suggesting that at any point in time it is likely that around 10% of an organisation would need to improve their performance. The introduction of this new system has brought new focus to addressing under-performance and targeting those identified as needing to improve.

Since August 2013, we have introduced:

- support and challenge sessions for all managers with staff assessed as needing to improve. These are an opportunity to discuss issues relating to their case and complete an action plan.
- follow-up support from HR Group to ensure action is being taken and to support managers address any emerging issues.

We are also monitoring progress against those identified as needing to improve their performance in March 2013. To date around 40% have left the department, mostly through redundancy or voluntary exit; around a third have improved and are now performing adequately. The line managers of those still remaining and any additional staff identified as needing to improve at the mid-year point are being closely monitored to ensure clear plans are in place to support under-performing staff and take formal action where necessary.

However, we still need more highly-skilled people managers who can bring out the best in their teams, supporting and challenging poor performance and leading staff through change. We are designing a new leadership and management development programme that will build line manager capability and equip team leaders with the necessary tools and training.

Assessment of Strategic Risk and Leadership of Change

Summary

- The department is well placed at this point in the change process with strong engagement amongst the SCS.
- Results of the people survey suggest the scale and pace of change so far has had a negative impact on staff engagement and how they perceive change is being managed, but there remain positive improvements on learning and development.
- The next phase of change needs to build on this and focus on:
 - Communicating as a leadership team on cross-departmental issues
 - Support leaders in how they are managing change and help them to
 - Continue to embed changes to ways of working and behaviours

One year on from the publication of the DfE Review the department asked the Institute for Government to consider how well placed, at this stage, the department is in implementing the DfE Review's ambitions.

Their full report can be found [here](#). They concluded that:

“One year on from publishing the Department for Education Review, DfE is well positioned in the change process in comparison to other Whitehall departments. Many of the fundamental building blocks for successful change are in place: the Review has real credibility and stronger buy-in than might be expected at this stage; the senior leadership cadre is engaged and anxious to seize the opportunity to transform the department; and there are already examples of the Review having had a positive impact on day-to-day work.”

However, to continue to build on this positive start they suggested the next stage focuses on three particular aspects of how change is being led and perceived by staff. We have used these findings to develop the priorities and actions set out in Section 2 of this plan.

Communicating as a leadership team – Senior leaders need to be seen to drive cross-Departmental issues and reflect openly on progress. IfG found that:

- Staff see good communication in their particular parts of the business but do not see senior leaders communicating as a team or leading cross-cutting issues which impact across the whole department.
- Implementation of the *Review* has been devolved to individual Directorates and below, meaning that staff are not clear how change “adds up” across Directorates.
- The non-SCS in particular want an honest assessment of both the progress of the change programme to date and the challenges that remain if the department is to fulfil its aim of becoming world class.
- Feedback from Ministers on the change programme and their experience of its progress is limited.
- Staff want to know how leaders see the changes from the *DfE Review* connecting into wider civil-service reform and to DfE stakeholders.

Integrating non-SCS into change – There is a need to build engagement and ownership of the change programme with team leaders and address concerns held by the non-SCS more widely. IfG found that:

- Broadly the SCS are more engaged in the vision. They are able to articulate what we are trying to achieve and see it as an opportunity to be better and address long standing frustrations. This is likely to be a direct result of prioritising engaging this cadre so they can pass the message on. For example, in the last year the department has established termly SCS conference to engage them in the vision, establish clear expectations of their role in motivating staff, and an opportunity to debate and challenge.
- However, the vision of a world class department has not yet been grounded with non-SCS, who want to know what this means for them in practice and for their future role in the department.
- There is a pronounced drop in engagement with the change programme and ownership of elements of change between deputy directors and Grades 6/7 in the department, with more junior staff further behind still.
- Non-SCS based outside London had additional concerns about receiving sufficient support from London and being seen to be valued and engaged with by the rest of the department.

Driving a new culture and ways of working - Keeping the bar high and fulfilling the leadership side of the bargain to empower staff to shift culture and behaviour.

- SCS in particular are anxious to seize the opportunity the Review represents to improve the department and establish it as a world-class provider of education and children’s services.
- A key element of the implicit bargain with staff is continued improvement in DfE’s ability to allocate resources in response to ministerial priorities and to ease capacity issues across the department.
- Similarly, a key test for the Review’s credibility is whether leaders visibly follow through on selection by enforcing performance management measures and consistently keep the bar high across the department.

People Survey

The themes the Institute or Government found are echoed in the 2013 People Survey results. The department's engagement index has fallen, from 56% in 2012, to 51%. The department has experienced a significant amount of change following the DfE Review and it would be expected that this would have an impact on staff engagement. The impact of this change is also reflected in the four point decrease in the leadership and managing change theme score. Directorate and Agency leadership teams have already devised action plans to improve engagement within their own business areas. However, it makes clear that a significant organisational priority over the next year must be improving how change is led and managed. A number of initiatives are underway to ensure that there are improvements in this area, including Change Leadership workshops and open sessions with staff and senior leaders to understand what would help engagement in this area.

Improvement Planning

The assessment we have undertaken has not found any reason to deviate from the objectives set out in the DfE Review's vision to create a world-class department.

We have made good progress, in particular on reducing our size and cost by reducing number of people and sites, increasing focus on performance management, prioritising our work, and establishing more flexible models to resource it. However, the scale and pace of change has at times been challenging for staff. We must now ensure that we focus on how we lead and manage the next phase of change, demonstrating the positive impacts that changes are already having across the department so as to raise the engagement of non-SCS staff to the same levels as we find amongst the SCS.

In particularly we will focus on:

- **Raising our leading and managing change capability**

Our leaders need the skills to lead and manage change; inspiring their teams to put the principles of the DfE Review into practice and supporting staff through the pace and scale of change. We are developing a formal programme of change leadership development for the SCS and grades 6 and 7 which will equip leaders with these skills.

- **Increase the visibility of leadership**

We have clearly understood that staff want greater visibility of the leadership team and to gain a better understanding of the vision for the department as a whole. We have therefore launched a programme of events where a member of the Management Committee or Director team will host a staff event, on one of the main DfE sites, every week through 2014. These sessions are being used to communicate the vision and gain feedback from staff.

- **Better understanding of the impact of our change activity**

Directorates are already developing their own metrics and self-assessment tools to measure progress. We will evaluate these tools' effectiveness and share best practice. To complement these we will run a monthly impact and engagement pulse survey on the key question from the People Survey which drive engagement – namely managing change and leadership. Further in depth evaluations of key objectives such as better policy making, continuous improvement, flexible resourcing, performance management and becoming data driven will allow us to continuously improve in these areas.

Metrics to Measure Improvement

Improvement being made	Measure being used to measure progress	Date for Review and who undertakes it	Trigger for mitigating action
Improving capability to deliver the Department's priorities			
All directorates have capability plans in place which set out how each will address their skills gaps. Our priority skills gaps are use of data, Programme and Project Management (PPM)/delivery, commercial skills, and leadership and management.	An audit of skills gaps in the summer of 2013 set a baseline. This audit will be repeated in April 2015.	Directorates will report quarterly to Management Committee on the progress they have made in raising capability levels and performance. The Audit and Risk Committee monitors Finance and IT capability on a quarterly basis.	Skills gaps not narrowing.
By the end of the year all staff have a development plan in place which includes how they will take their 5 learning days a year.	95% of staff having a development plan in place that reflects directorate priorities by June 2014.	Directorates will report quarterly to Management Committee on progress.	Less than 95% of development plans in place by June 2014.
Continue to improve capability through robust performance management.	Mid-year and end-year assessments are in line with guided distribution and plans in place for those identified as needing to improve.	Directorates report to Management Committee after mid- year and end-year assessments. Management Committee receive monthly reports on the plans in place for those identified as needing to improve.	Significant variance from guided-distribution. Significant proportion of plans for those identified as needing to improve not in place.

<p>Building strong recruitment routes into the Department by continuing to recruit high quality graduate interns into junior roles and exploiting Civil Service Resourcing's commercial interchange scheme to bring in staff from the private sector into key specialist roles.</p>	<p>Monitoring of those recruited into the department and audit of skills gaps.</p>	<p>Quarterly reports from Directorates to Management Committee and HR data on 0065ternal recruitment.</p>	<p>Skills gaps not narrowing, insufficient recruitment through new routes.</p>
<p>Improving the engagement of staff</p>			
<p>Improve management and leadership of change.</p> <p>Management Committee and Directors will run weekly engagement workshops and staff events with staff from all sites and grades. We will implement a monthly impact and engagement survey (including questions about SCS visibility) of staff to assess levels of engagement and gather suggested ways to improve further.</p>	<p>Attendance at and feedback on workshops.</p> <p>Results of monthly impact and engagement survey.</p>	<p>Monthly reporting to Management Committee.</p>	<p>Feedback poor or impact and engagement pulse survey results show decline.</p>
<p>Improve the capability of managers to lead and support staff</p>	<p>Monthly engagement pulse survey to include</p>	<p>Monthly reporting to Management Committee</p>	<p>Engagement pulse survey shows decline.</p>

through change which is a key driver of engagement. A formal programme of change leadership development is being developed and rolled out to the SCS, G6s and G7s.	question about how change is led and managed.		
A department wide list of staff suggestions on how to fix inward facing factors which get in the way of them being as effective as possible will be considered by Management Committee and the actions being taken to address publicised.	Plans to resolve issues are delivered to time.	Monthly reporting to Management Committee.	Slippage to delivery timescales.
Reducing our costs and seeking further opportunities to be more efficient in how we operate			
<u>Estates</u> Complete reduction of sites from 12 to 6 by April 2014. Complete consolidation of space to reach a 7:10 desk ratio by Summer 2014. Seek further opportunities to sublet vacant space on all sites.	Target reductions to estates costs met.	Quarterly reporting to Management Committee.	Projected reduction of estates costs over the financial year vary significantly.

<p><u>Digital by Default</u></p> <p>The DfE website will close by the end of March 2014 with all content migrated to GOV.UK</p> <p>Beta versions of the Education Funding Agency's Customer Exchange Service, and the Online Academies Conversion Service will be delivered by the end of March 2014.</p> <p>An internal digital month is being planned for summer 2014 to build digital leadership skills through training, workshops and expert speakers.</p>	<p>Feedback on digital month.</p> <p>Target costs savings and benefits realised.</p> <p>Directorates' quarterly reports to Management Committee on the impact the implementation of their capability plans is having on identified digital skills gaps.</p>	<p>Quarterly reporting via the Civil Service Reform reporting process.</p>	<p>Slippage to planned delivery.</p> <p>Digital skills gaps do not narrow.</p>
<p><u>Improved IT Service</u></p> <p>Explore the potential for improving IT such that Big Data can be used to improve transparency and intelligence in the system. Ensure that the IT platform is stable to ensure that staff can operate effectively and that we provide the best possible payment</p>	<p>Education Funding Agency targets for payments to schools are achieved.</p> <p>IT opportunities to improve the service are taken.</p>	<p>Quarterly reporting via the Civil Service Reform reporting process.</p>	<p>Slippage to planned delivery or degradation in service.</p>

service to schools.			
<u>Continuous Improvement</u> <p>Raise Continuous Improvement awareness and capability through training.</p> <p>Deliver savings and benefits using Continuous Improvement techniques.</p>	<p>Numbers trained and numbers attending CI awareness raising events.</p> <p>Monthly impact and engagement survey will assess understanding and use of CI.</p> <p>Savings and benefits attributable to CI are monitored.</p>	<p>Quarterly reporting to Management Committee.</p>	<p>Savings or benefits not materialising.</p> <p>Monthly impact and engagement survey shows that whilst staff are aware they are not using the techniques.</p>
<p>Reduce our paybill to enable us to meet our admin savings targets.</p>	<p>Workforce management information.</p>	<p>Monthly reporting to Management Committee</p>	<p>Significant variance to paybill from projections.</p>
<u>Better Policy Making</u> <p>Improve awareness and use of Policy Tests.</p> <p>Recruitment of Policy Fellows in April 2014.</p> <p>Increase policy making capability by rolling out a DfE specific policy training programme.</p>	<p>Annual survey of the use of the Policy Tests</p> <p>Fellows recruited to timescales.</p> <p>Feedback from Ministers.</p> <p>Permanent Secretary monthly policy submission review panel.</p>	<p>Monitoring meetings led by the Department's head of Policy Profession</p>	<p>Ministerial feedback does not reflect improvements in policy work.</p>

Improving how we use and present data and evidence to make decisions			
Drive improvements in how data is used through more streamlined, targeted and innovative approaches to presenting data via department reporting mechanisms.	Board and committee feedback on the quality of reports.	Monthly performance reporting process.	Lack of evidence that data is being used to drive decisions Poor feedback from boards and committees
Establish a network of Data Champions to raise capability and drive improvement in how data is used and presented.	Every Group has a Data Champion with a clear plan to make improvements.	Monthly Data Champions workshops to discuss progress with the Permanent Secretary.	Data Champions and plans not in place and benefits not being seen.
Strengthen governance and programme and project capabilities			
Strengthen our governance mechanisms by: rationalising reporting; creating simpler targeted summaries of strategic performance; automating the collection and dissemination of reports where possible; and, use the latest data visualisation techniques to improve the user-friendliness of reports.	Board feedback on the quality of reporting.	Alongside the monthly governance and reporting cycle.	Feedback is that improvements are not being seen.
Rollout development	SROs participating	Monthly reporting to	Feedback from

programme for all SROs. Directorates addressing PPM and governance skills gaps through their local plans.	in the programme or an equivalent. Audit of skills gaps.	Management Committee.	participants is that the course has not improved their ability to carry out their functions.
Improve how we deploy our resource to get the right skills, into the right jobs at the right time			
Establishment of flexible resourcing models across the Department improves ability of managers to get the right skills, into the right jobs, at the right time. Staff perceive improvements in their opportunities.	Monthly impact and engagement pulse survey will include questions testing this. Self assessments by Directorates against Department-wide flexible resourcing criteria. Annual evaluation of flexible resourcing to report in May 2014.	Monthly reporting to Management Committee on the results of the impact and engagement pulse survey.	Impact and engagement pulse survey shows decline. Annual evaluation shows no improvement in impact, or unnecessary duplication of activity.

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