

Reforms planned to create new digital capability within DWP

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has today announced, following an Independent Review, that she has accepted recommendations to create a single new digital function within DWP. This will bring together colleagues from BPDTS and DWP Digital.

The news follows the conclusion of a [Tailored Review into BPDTS](#), which is a standard review process during the lifetime of every arm's length body. The review strongly commended BPDTS's performance and contribution to DWP, citing its successful operational performance, quality of leadership and overall calibre of people. It found strong evidence of BPDTS's contribution to improving the resilience of DWP's technology and bringing new capabilities into the department.

The joining of these 2 functions will create a simpler, stronger digital offering which is greater than the sum of its 2 parts. It will better equip the department to deliver its strategic goals of joined-up customer journeys across digital-first channels. The aim is for this to happen on 1 July 2021.

This will also strengthen the Digital, Data and Technology profession in government, supporting the Government Transformation Strategy's ambition to 'have one of the most digitally skilled populations of civil servants in the world'.

Loveday Ryder, CEO of BPDTS, comments,

Despite existing as 2 separate functions since our inception, we have been united in our common goals, our work ethic and our desire to make a difference through digital. Our commitment is the same – to deliver better services for 85,000 DWP colleagues and 20 million customers.

We will be working alongside our colleagues in DWP Digital and in wider DWP to make this vision of united digital excellence a reality. Now more than ever, digital services need to be quicker, simpler and offer the best user experience possible. Continuing to make the most of the digital expertise BPDTS has as part of a new super-function offers a truly exciting opportunity.

When talking about today's announcement, Jeremy Moore, Chair of the BPDTS Board, added

I and my fellow Board Directors are incredibly proud of what BPDTS has achieved. Our people now have the opportunity to join with their DWP colleagues to help build a new digital function, to use

their specialist digital skills and so support many millions of people across the UK, many of whom may be at a critical juncture in their life

Lump Sum Digital Interventions Call – OC00S20X1772

Call to run a project to help address the digital divide in response to Coronavirus. To deliver additional bolt-on activity to existing ESF projects. 100% ESF 'Lump Sum' based funding.

UK Government Trade Hub launched to support Scottish businesses

- New hub launched by UK Department for International Trade (DIT) to help thousands of businesses in Scotland thrive internationally
- Based at government's new Edinburgh HQ, Queen Elizabeth House, the Hub will help businesses in Scotland recover from the coronavirus pandemic
- This comes as UK Export Finance (UKEF) appoints first renewables-focused export finance manager in Scotland

A new Trade Hub dedicated to helping businesses in Scotland thrive and grow internationally has been launched today, providing much-needed support for thousands of companies in economically challenging times.

Based in Edinburgh's Queen Elizabeth House, a UK government HQ opened last month which will house 3,000 civil servants from multiple departments, the UK DIT's new Scotland Hub will provide businesses with greatly increased trade support.

Through the Trade Hub, businesses will be able to utilise the UK government's global networks, expertise and influence, as well as world-leading credit agency, UKEF, to grow their overseas trade and build back from the impact of coronavirus. Leveraging the strength and reach of the UK government, the hub will deliver effective services for people and businesses in Scotland.

UK Government Exports Minister, Graham Stuart MP, today met with Scottish businesses and representative organisations, including FSB Scotland, NFU Scotland, the Scottish Council for Development and others, to discuss the

support available for companies in the region.

UK Minister for Exports, Graham Stuart MP said:

One of the UK Government's key priorities is to champion all four parts of the UK and demonstrate how beneficial a strong Union is for all. This specialist Hub for Scotland will provide businesses with the support and guidance needed to boost their profits and harness their full potential.

Trade is crucial to the UK's recovery from coronavirus and will be the foundation of our relationships across the globe after the transition period ends this year. I want to ensure that businesses in Scotland benefit from our new trade deals with the world's biggest markets, as we remove barriers that they previously faced.

UK Government Minister for Scotland David Duguid said:

This new UK Government Trade Hub in Edinburgh is fantastic news for Scottish businesses. It will help them make the very most of the global trade opportunities once the EU transition period ends.

I urge Scottish businesses to work with the Trade Hub to expand their export business, especially Scotland's famous food and drink sector. This is a real boost for Scottish produce. Recovering our economy from coronavirus is a national effort. We are working as one United Kingdom to support businesses in Scotland.

The Trade Hub will be based in Queen Elizabeth House, the UK government's new flagship building in Edinburgh. It is a clear demonstration of our commitment to strengthening the Union and delivering for people in Scotland.

In another first, UKEF has appointed a specialist to focus on renewable exports and to support energy transition in Scotland, further demonstrating the continued commitment to supporting energy companies across Scotland and helping them succeed abroad.

Having previously worked to strengthen the outreach of UKEF's regional network of Export Finance Managers, Alistair McMillan takes up this new role. He will support companies that wish to export renewables as well as those wishing transition from other forms of energy, using his 25 years of experience in the international finance and trade arenas.

The announcement follows the allocation of £2 billion of direct lending to green projects in the latest budget. This additional finance will support clean growth projects as global economies shift away from fossil fuels to renewable and low carbon solutions.

Gordon Welsh, Head of UKEF's Business Group said:

I am pleased to make this announcement which demonstrates UKEF's continuing commitment to energy transition and clean growth. We look forward to supporting energy companies across Scotland and helping them succeed abroad.

In Queen Elizabeth House, DIT will be joining the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland, Office of the Advocate General, HMRC, HM Treasury, Cabinet Office, the Office for Statistics Regulation, the Information Commissioner's Office, and the Government Actuary's Department. Additional UK government departments are expected to confirm occupancy in the coming months.

The UK government building will be fully occupied as soon as it is safe to do in a Covid-secure way.

Work is also underway to set up a flagship UK government building in Glasgow. The Edinburgh and Glasgow buildings are part of the UK government's commitment to delivering excellent public services for people in Scotland, building a strong civil service outside London and leading the way in local regeneration.

Commissioning letter to the Biometrics and Forensic Ethics Group 2020/2021

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New chair of the Skills and

Productivity Board confirmed

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has today (29 September) announced that Stephen van Rooyen will be the new chair of the Skills and Productivity Board (SPB).

The SPB – which was first announced in [October 2019](#) – will play a central role in driving forward the government's ambitious FE reform programme. The Board will provide expert advice on how to make sure the courses and qualifications on offer to students across the country are high-quality, and aligned to the skills that employers need for the future and that will help grow our economy after the coronavirus outbreak.

Stephen van Rooyen has been selected as Chair of the SPB due to his extensive business experience, and as a thought leader in technology, engineering and communications. In Stephen's current role as EVP and CEO, UK and Europe at Sky he has been a strong advocate for apprenticeships, launching ambitious schemes across technology, journalism and business functions.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I'm delighted to announce the appointment of Stephen van Rooyen as the chair of the Skills and Productivity Board.

Stephen has a wealth of experience across the technology, engineering and communications sectors and will be able to share his vital insight and leadership with the panel. He also a keen and proud champion of apprentices, having taken Sky's apprenticeship programme from strength to strength.

He will lead an expert panel who will provide important advice on how to tackle the nation's skill challenges. The board will play a key role in helping us to rebuild our economy post-Covid-19 and deliver our bold skills agenda. I look forward to working with him to level up opportunity across the country ensuring people have the skills they need to progress.

Stephen van Rooyen, EVP & CEO, UK and Europe at Sky said:

Given the pace of change in business and in workplaces today, and the economic challenges of COVID, the new Skills and Productivity Board has a key role to play in developing our skills economy for current and future generations. It is a privilege to contribute, and I'm looking forward to working with the panel and the government to drive this important agenda

The work of the SPB will be carried out by a panel of five leading skills and

labour market economists, supported by Department for Education officials. The panel will undertake independent research and analysis in response to questions set out by the Secretary of State and Chair. Applications for panel members closed earlier this month and appointments will be made in due course.

The government's forthcoming FE White Paper will set out detailed plans to build a high-quality further education system – one that unlocks potential, levels up skills and boosts opportunities for people across the country.