

Press release: City slickers rub shoulders with public sector as thousands of civil servants leave Whitehall

- Over 6,000 civil servants to move into Canary Wharf as part of an effort to save money and reduce Whitehall office buildings.
- Public-sector staff from eight departments are now operating from UK financial district including HMRC, OfGem and MoJ.

The UK Government officially opened its Canary Wharf Hub today as part of its long-term Civil Service transformation to reduce fragmented government office buildings from 800 to 200, by 2030.

Moving departments into the new Canary Wharf hub will result in £24 million of savings per year. Furthermore, the average cost per sq/m in the Canary Wharf building is £700, compared to £950 for Whitehall buildings.

The Government Property Agency is expected to deliver £3.6 billion worth of savings over 20 years. Of which, £2.5 billion will be delivered by the Hubs Programme. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is the largest occupier of the Government Hub, with 2,000 of its people benefiting from the flexible, collaborative work environment.

Oliver Dowden, Minister for Implementation, said:

It's great to see public and private sector staff rubbing shoulders here in Canary Wharf. This hub is one of 14 across the country already announced which will use cutting-edge design and innovative technology to deliver smarter public services that reduce vacant space across the government estate.

The government has saved £300m per year in running costs, through the disposal of over a thousand properties since 2014. By the end of this Parliament, we will have established a network of around 20 multi-agency government hubs across the UK that utilise efficient smarter working practices and are accessible to the communities they serve.

The Canary Wharf building had previously been used by Barclays PLC and was selected as a Government Hub due to its excellent transport links, which will be further enhanced by the opening of Crossrail in the future.

Steven Boyd, HMRC's Estates Director, said:

I am pleased that HMRC is delivering Phase 1 of the Government Hubs Programme, including being commissioned to deliver the Canary Wharf Hub with Government Property Agency. More than 2,000 of our London-based people are already benefitting from the facilities the hub has to offer; including modern, flexible workspaces with great IT and excellent transport links. Bringing our teams from across London together in Canary Wharf is already showing the benefits of collaboration and modern ways of working.

Through smarter property management, and the uptake of modern, more efficient working practices, vacant space has been reduced across the government estate by 73% since 2014.

This forms part of the Government Estate Strategy, published earlier this year, which seeks to provide a government estate that works for everyone. It aims to drive growth and opportunity by moving government jobs to centres of excellence in areas across the UK with particular strengths and skills, to house the Civil Service in modern, flexible workspaces. This will open up the workplace to a more diverse Civil Service that better reflects the people it serves and the places where they live.

Note to editors

- For more information please contact the Cabinet Office Press Office on: 0207 276 7545.
- The hubs programme is part of the government's broader SmarterGov campaign, launched to drive innovation, savings and public service improvement across government and wider public sector.