The digital skills gap in government

Survey findings

December 2015
Introduction: Digital skills survey

Government’s austerity and reform agenda means delivering the same or better with less resource. Civil service headcount is down nearly one-fifth since 2010.

Further cost reductions will be difficult without major service redesign, and significant contribution is expected from digitally-enabled business transformation.

To improve data about the availability of the digital skills needed to achieve this transformation, we undertook a survey of central government digital leaders in August 2015.

This document sets out:

- The survey findings and digital leaders’ views on current position on digital skills and how needs are being addressed
- Thoughts on future areas for consideration

Part One: Overview  Sets out the context and summarises the survey findings

Part Two: Survey results
Part One

Overview
Importance of digital skills for government

- “Digital” is more than just technology, websites, internet – it requires radical, flexible operating models, designed around users and data; with a much lower cost base.

- UK digital skills gap across all industries exacerbates the government’s situation, even before considering demands of transformation.

- There is a risk of unsustainable cost reduction or service deterioration if government is unable to deliver transformation to any significant degree over next 5 years.

- Major transformation programmes are underway in most departments, with some digital service successes. But the focus to date has been mainly on the “front end”.

- The change required is complex. The civil service needs to secure different skills and capabilities.

Source: NAO, *ICT in government Landscape review*, 2011
Summary of survey findings

- Widespread acknowledgement of skills gap.
- Range of initiatives introduced, with some success.
- An ongoing perception gap: Digital and Technology (DaT) professionals have a wider perception of DaT, recognising the importance of business change, while others in their organisations have a more limited focus on IT and technology. This has implications for planning of reform and transformation programmes.
- Recruitment, market conditions and procurement processes remain significant challenges.
- Funding, cultural issues, career paths and cross-government competition are all perceived to have a negative impact on developing staff and improving capability and capacity.
- Pay seen as a problem for recruiting specialist, experienced people skilled in integrating and transitioning from ICT to digital.
- Possible need for more focus on specialist capability below senior civil service.
Respondent views on constraints

- **78%** External market conditions
- **67%** Limited supply
- **58%** Procurement constraints
- **56%** Business disengagement
- **50%** Organisation culture

Percentages of respondents saying these factors impact negatively on efforts to recruit, retain and develop staff or acquire temporary resources with the needed digital skills.
Future areas for consideration

Current initiatives go some way to delivering the needed skills, but there are broader, systemic issues to tackle.

- **Embedding digital within overall business strategies; building the required capability**
  - Is there realism about the scale and pace of transformation achievable within available resources and skills?

- **Aligning the digital and commercial operating models**
  - How can flexibility be improved for recruitment and procurement processes?

- **Insourcing**
  - Consider central guidance to support the structure, roles and standards required to move from outsourcing to insourcing.

- **Clarity over role of HR**
  - The NAO does not generally see HR driving change enablement skills, but few people commented on this.

- **Responding to market conditions and external environment**
  - Consider more radical alternatives, such as partnerships.

- **Addressing loss of talent to other sectors**
  - Prioritisation to draw in needed skills, especially for cyber security and data analytics.
Part Two

Survey results
About our survey

- To improve data about digital skills across government, in August 2015 we undertook a survey of digital leaders in departments and agencies.

- We sought to elicit views on their perceptions of the current position, how it is being addressed and whether the current efforts are sufficient to mitigate the risks to transformation.

- Our questions were framed around 5 themes (left).

- We asked 72 digital and technology leaders across 45 departments, agencies and arm’s length bodies (ALBs) and received a 50% response rate, covering 14 major departments and 15 agencies / ALBs / non-ministerial departments. See details.
About: surveyed views in 5 key areas

The buttons at the top allow you to navigate between these five sections.

- Leadership
- The emerging profession
- Skills gaps
- Barriers and challenges
- Central initiatives and guidance
Leadership: key findings

- There are not many DaT leaders in place.
- Most of those in place have not been long in post.
- A significant proportion have good private sector experience, but do not have public sector experience.
- There is reasonable penetration on boards, less at main board.
- DaT is typically a small proportion of overall workforce.
DaT people in leadership roles

Q4: How many people would you estimate are in DaT leadership roles in your organisation? (Percent of responses, n = 36)

- Over 20: 19%
- 11-20: 11%
- 6-10: 25%
- 2-5: 31%
- 0-1: 14%

Most organisations have a small group of digital leaders – around 70% have 10 or fewer
Length and experience of DaT leadership

Q1b: When did you take up your current position?
Q1c: Was your last role a DaT one and if so, in what sector?
(Number of responses, n = 36)

Length of time in position

- Over 5 years: 2 (5%)
- 2-5 years: 8 (22%)
- 1-2 years: 11 (31%)
- Less than 1 year: 15 (42%)

Total: 26 (73%) have been in post for under 2 years

Previous role

- Yes, central government: 11 (31%)
- Yes, wider public sector: 15 (42%)
- Yes, elsewhere: 8 (22%)
- No: 2 (5%)

Just over half (53%) said their previous role was related to DaT in the public sector
DaT leaders at board level

Q1a: Do you sit on the main board or an operational (or other) board below the main board in your organisation? (Most senior respondent from each organisation shown; number of organisations, n = 29)

- **Main Board**: 8 (8 in Ministerial Departments, 0 in Other)
- **Operational Board**: 7 (7 in Ministerial Departments, 4 in Other)
- **Other**: 3 (2 in Ministerial Departments, 1 in Other)
- **None**: 1 (1 in Ministerial Departments, 0 in Other)

Note: For the purposes of this question, HMRC is included within Ministerial Departments because of its size.
Board experience of DaT

Q3: How many people on the main board of your organisation have DaT experience? (Number of responses, n = 36)

No DaT or change experience on some main boards

- **Digital or IT strategy**
  - None: 5
  - 1 to 3 years: 21
  - Over 3 years: 3
  - Don’t know: 7

- **Digital or IT operations**
  - None: 5
  - 1 to 3 years: 19
  - Over 3 years: 5
  - Don’t know: 7

- **IT enabled change**
  - None: 4
  - 1 to 3 years: 16
  - Over 3 years: 9
  - Don’t know: 7

- **Business transformation**
  - None: 1
  - 1 to 3 years: 15
  - Over 3 years: 16
  - Don’t know: 4

- **Other**
  - None: 4
  - 1 to 3 years: 2
  - Over 3 years: 2
  - Don’t know: 3
Wider resources and expertise

Q2: Approximately how many people are there in your organisation overall and roughly how many do DaT jobs?

Proportion of DaT resource to overall workforce in organisations surveyed is low (6%) based on estimates from DaT leaders, but higher than ONS actual data for the IT profession in 2015 (2%). This needs further investigation.
Emerging profession: key findings

- Most digital leaders feel that DaT is about business change and transformation.
- Most organisations see DaT as mostly about IT – differing perceptions leads to an understatement of its importance.
- The main way organisations recognise DaT professionals is by job titles rather than pay differentials or career paths.
- Previously mandated Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) is no longer the approved standard framework in government.
- Most organisations recognise a skills framework, at least in part.
- DaT leaders feel they are breaking down the barriers between IT and business.
Perception of digital and technology

Q7: In your view, which of the following statements reflects the way digital and technology is viewed in your organisation?  (Number of responses, n = 36)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Best reflects my view</th>
<th>Best reflects the views of my organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business change/ transformation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/social media</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New technology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web front ends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something else</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continuing gap in perceptions between DaT professionals and rest of organisation
Q5: Do you feel that the new digital leader roles are breaking down the barriers between the business and IT in government organisations?  
(Number of responses, n = 36)
Recognition of DaT skills

Q8: Does your organisation recognise DaT skills in any of the following ways? (Number of responses, n = 36)

- Having a separate functional head: Yes - 30, No - 5, Don’t know - 1
- Use of specific job titles: Yes - 29, No - 5, Don’t know - 2
- Use of pay differentials for people with DaT skills: Yes - 14, No - 18, Don’t know - 4
- Provision of a specialist career path: Yes - 12, No - 21, Don’t know - 3

Most recognition by appointing separate functional heads and use of job titles

Less recognition in terms of pay differentials or specialist career paths
Use of skills frameworks

Q9: Do you have a skills framework for DaT staff in your organisation?
Q11: Have you experienced any issues when applying a framework within your organisation?
(Number of responses, n = 36)

Most people used some skills frameworks; but half of those found issues such as:
- Frameworks too big and complex
- Inflexibility and poor fit to job roles
- Lack of take-up and understanding
- Lack of mandate to enforce

Note: the figure combines results from Q9 and Q11 of the survey
Nature of skills frameworks

Q10: Which of the following skills frameworks do you use within your organisation? (Number of responses, n = 26, excludes not used and no answer)

- **BCS Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA)**: 8 used in full, 14 used in part
- **GDS DaT Skills matrix**: 3 used in full, 16 used in part
- **Other external framework**: 1 used in full
- **Framework developed in-house**: 1 used in full, 7 used in part

Range of different frameworks used with no clear standard
Skills gaps: key findings

- Estimates of the gap show shortfalls across all areas.
- Most organisations need to improve capacity and capability in key technical specialisms.
- Mixed response to effectiveness of approaches to developing capability – learning from colleagues preferred to formal training.
- Use of consultants and systems integrators expected to decline in the next 5 years – with more use of partnering.
- Design and development, organisational awareness and skills frameworks are most commonly cited as initiatives taken.
- Few believe current initiatives will fully close the gap.
- Most organisations measure the benefits of skills initiatives - capability assessment method is the one mostly used.
DaT skills needed and available for change

Q12, Q13: Please estimate your strength in numbers of people available to do DaT enabled current change projects (Q12) and needed to do change/transformation over the next 5 years (Q13)

- Business Strategy & Planning
- Technical Strategy, Architecture & Planning
- Digital Leadership
- Digital PPM & Change Management
- Business Modelling & Organisation Design
- Agile Delivery
- Commercial & Procurement
- Design & Development
- Information Security
- Data Analytics
- Cyber Security
- Digital Forensics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic skills</th>
<th>Needed</th>
<th>Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Strategy &amp; Planning</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Strategy, Architecture &amp; Planning</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Leadership</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital PPM &amp; Change Management</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Modelling &amp; Organisation Design</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change skills</th>
<th>Needed</th>
<th>Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agile Delivery</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial &amp; Procurement</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design &amp; Development</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Security</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analytics</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical skills</th>
<th>Needed</th>
<th>Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cyber Security</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Forensics</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimate of current DaT resources against future needs shows shortfalls across all skills areas.
### Capacity & capability for DaT technical skills

Q14: For the following technical skills, indicate whether you feel that your organisation needs to improve its capacity (numbers) or capability (skills) or the way these roles are supported (Number of responses, n = 36, excluding responses stating no need or don’t know)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Skill</th>
<th>Need to improve capacity</th>
<th>Need to improve capability</th>
<th>Need support from the centre</th>
<th>Need support from external organisations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital Forensics specialists</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber Security specialists</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analytics specialists</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Security specialists</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Effectiveness of development approaches**

Q15: In your view, how effective have the following approaches been in developing your organisation’s DaT capability? 
(Number of responses, n = 36, excludes nil answers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Very ineffective</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Neutral effect</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning from colleagues/on the job learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externally provided classroom training</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internally provided classroom training</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externally provided self-guided training or e-learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internally provided self-guided training or e-learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeships</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Academy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On-the-job learning is the biggest driver of skills growth.

Despite stating some approaches were ineffective, no respondents offered further specific comment.
Initiatives to address the skills gap

Q18: In regard to the 3 broad skills categories below how much will applying the initiatives you have identified close the skills gap? (Number of responses, n = 36)

Only 8% believed their initiatives would fully address the gaps.
Measuring the benefits of initiatives

Q19: Does your organisation measure the benefits of its initiatives aimed at improving DaT skills? (Percentage of responses, n=36)

- Yes, all: 3 (8%)
- Yes, some: 18 (50%)
- No: 15 (42%)

The most commonly cited methods were:
- Capability assessments
- Recruitment, retention, promotion statistics
- Via Skills Manager/ Head of role job
- Via project and benefits delivery
- Benchmarking and baselining
Use of external specialists

Q16: To achieve your transformation objectives over the next 5 years, do you plan to make more or less use of the following? (Number of responses, n = 29)

- Contractors: 11 plan to make more, 7 plan to make less, 1 no view.
- Consultants: 14 plan to make more, 10 plan to make less.
- Systems Integrators: 16 plan to make more, 6 plan to make less.
- Partner organisations: 20 plan to make more, 9 plan to make less.

Over half of organisations plan to make less use of consultants and systems integrators.

Two-thirds of organisations plan to make more use of third party partner organisations.
Barriers and challenges: key findings

- Financial position and budgets, cultural issues, career paths and competing priorities have largest negative impacts on developing existing staff.
- Market conditions, pay and recruiting processes have largest negative impacts on recruitment and retention.
- Procurement processes have largest negative impact on obtaining external resources.
- Funding and pay seen as biggest challenges to developing capability and capacity.
- Fewer than half of respondents were positive about their organisation’s workforce plans.
- Most leaders feel that they have the capability to deliver transformation on the scale required.
## Barriers to developing existing staff

Q20a: What impact, if any, do you think that the following have had your organisation’s ability to develop the DaT skills of those people you already have in your organisation?  
(Number of responses, n = 36, excludes ‘don’t know’ or no answer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Negative impact</th>
<th>No impact</th>
<th>Positive impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial position / budget</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational culture</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career paths to senior levels for specialists</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority of DaT relative to other issues</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management spending priorities</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies based performance management</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of support from HR</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of business area engagement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff allocation to jobs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Digital Skills Survey 2015, 31*
## Barriers to recruitment and retention

Q20b: What impact, if any, do you think that the following have had your organisation’s ability to recruit and retain the right people from elsewhere?
(Number of responses, n = 36, excludes ‘don’t know’ or no answer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Negative impact</th>
<th>No impact</th>
<th>Positive impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The amount you are able to pay</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil service recruitment processes</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External market conditions (demand, scarcity and competition)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people available with the required skills</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of working in the civil service</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal market conditions (cross government competition &amp; pay differentials)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial position/ budget</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion prospects for DaT staff</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the figure shows the top 8 negative impacts
## Barriers to effective resource procurement

**Q21:** What impact, if any, do you think your organisation's procurement processes have had on the acquisition of temporary resources?  
(Number of responses, n = 36)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Negative impact</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>No impact</th>
<th>Positive impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procurement lead times</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usability of frameworks</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment thresholds</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract durations</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation criteria</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local and central conditions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the figure excludes categories where respondents answered there was no significant positive or negative impact.
Challenges to growth of DaT skills capacity

Q22: Please list the biggest challenges to the growth of DaT skills capacity in your organisation has faced over the last 12 months

- Pay: 18
- Market: 11
- Support from HR: 10
- Procurement: 8
- Priorities: 7
- Image: 6
- Competition: 4
- Change: 3
- Funding: 3
- Politics: 3
- Recognition: 3

The biggest challenge in the last 12 months for growing skills capacity was pay (24%)
Challenges to growth of DaT skills capability

Q23: Please list the biggest challenges to the development of DaT skills capability within your own business unit over the last 12 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding and budgetary problems</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other priorities</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational change &amp; culture</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor external skills transfer</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership issues</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market conditions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor image of government</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching &amp; Training</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Competition</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR issues</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central support</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement process</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The biggest challenges in the last 12 months for growing skills capability internally were, again, funding and pay.
Factors supporting skills development

Q24: How important have the following been to the development of DaT in your organisation? (Number of responses stating ‘very important’ or ‘fairly important’)

- Having a digital strategy
- Having an IT strategy
- Identifying retaining and developing high performers
- Recruiting high potential employees
- Having the right digital leaders
- Training and development delivery
- An environment that supports innovation
- Relying on external suppliers
- Managing collaboration with partners
- Procurement and commercial support

Legend:
- Very important
- Fairly and very important combined
Training and development spend

Q25: Roughly what proportion of your organisation’s training and development spend is on DaT related skills?  
(Number of responses, n = 36)

- None: 0
- 1-5%: 13
- 6-10%: 1
- 11-20%: 2
- Over 20%: 6
- Don’t know: 14
Sufficiency to deliver transformation

Q26: Do you believe that your organisation’s approach to DaT capability development will be sufficient to deliver transformation on the scale envisaged? (Number of responses, n = 36)

- **Yes**: 23
- **No**: 13

Of those answering NO the main reasons given were:
- Capability
- Capacity
- Leadership
## Workforce planning

**Q27:** How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about workforce planning in your organisation?
(Number of responses, n = 36, excludes nil responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic workforce planning is understood and practised</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce planning is an integrated part of the business planning cycle</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our workforce planning ensures we are ready for business transformation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications matter for DaT job allocations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DaT recruitment and selection activities comply/align with business objectives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We identify DaT development opportunities for specialist staff</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understanding, practice and integration of workforce planning with the business cycle are the areas where good practice is being followed the least.
Central initiatives: key findings

- Most initiatives by the strategic centre of government are regarded as helpful or very helpful.
- A greater role for the centre is envisaged in co-ordinating and facilitating as well as supporting skills development.
- Central guidance is mostly considered to be relevant and mostly adhered to.
- Organisations want to see more practical best practice guidance from Cabinet Office.
- Respondents feel the centre focuses too little on developing lower level positions and somewhat too much on higher levels.
- Departmental awareness of capacity and capability in ALBs was generally felt to be low.
Helpfulness of central initiatives

Q28: How helpful, if at all, have you found the following central initiatives and services for DaT skills building in your organisation?
(Number of responses, n = 36)

- GDS DaT Skills Matrix
- Major Projects Leadership Academy
- Skills Framework for the Information Age support
- Capability Plans
- Government Digital Service Recruitment Hub
- DaT Fast Track Apprenticeships/Fast Stream
- Placing GDS staff in your organisation
- Civil Service competency and skills framework
- Digital Academy
- GDS Service Manager training programme
- DaT Talent Grid
- Cabinet Office Skills Audits
Central support for future development

Q29: What role if any do you think Cabinet Office should have in DaT skills development for government in the future?

We asked respondents to answer in their own words. The most commonly cited roles related to co-ordination, facilitation and support.
Use and relevance of central guidance

Q30: Which statement best describes how you use Cabinet office guidance?
Q31: How relevant do you find Cabinet office guidance on DaT matters?
(Number of responses, n = 36)

Organisations overall find Cabinet Office guidance to be “mostly relevant”, and adhere to most aspects of it.

Use

- We adhere to every aspect: 6
- We adhere to most aspects: 24
- We adhere to some aspects: 6
- We don’t use their guidance: 0

Relevance

- Fully relevant: 6
- Mostly relevant: 20
- Partly relevant: 10
- Not relevant at all: 0

Digital Skills Survey 2015, 43
Central engagement

Q32: To what extent is Cabinet Office engaging with you and using its influence over your organisation in order to improve DaT skills? (Number of responses, n = 36)
Enhancing central guidance

Q33: What could Cabinet Office provide that would help you to improve DaT skills in your organisation?  
(Number of responses, n = 36)

Greatest demand is for more sharing of best practice

We already use this provided by Cabinet Office
We would use this if it was provided by the Cabinet Office
This would not be useful to us
Don’t Know / No View
Focus on different seniority levels

Q34: To what extent do you think that Cabinet Office focuses on each of the following? (Number of responses, n = 36)

...higher level positions (SCS)

- Far too much
- Somewhat too much
- About right
- Somewhat too little
- Far too little

...lower level positions (below SCS)

- Far too much
- Somewhat too much
- About right
- Somewhat too little
- Far too little

Possible demand for more focus on lower level positions
Q35: How aware do you feel that central government departments are about their Arm’s Length Bodies or Local Offices in terms of their DaT skills capacity and capability? (Number of responses, n = 36)

- Only 22% of respondents felt that departments are somewhat aware.
- No respondents said that their departments are very aware.
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents felt that departments are somewhat unaware or very unaware of DaT capacity and capabilities in their ALBs.
About: surveyed views of digital leaders

The survey

- Online questionnaire in August 2015.
- CDO, CIO, CTO or equivalent in central departments and arm’s length bodies (ALBs).
- 36 people responded (50% of 72 people asked).
- Quantitative questions asked for information about skills levels and resources, and the services provided.
- Qualitative questions asked for opinions on initiatives and guidance to support skills management, and the key skills requirements challenges.

Respondents

- BIS
- Cabinet Office
- DCLG
- DECC
- Defra
- DfE
- DWP
- DH
- DfT
- FCO
- HMRC
- Home Office
- MOD
- MOJ
- 15 agencies/ALBs/non-ministerial departments