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**PLAYBOOK 2022**

GOVERNMENT  
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MAGAZINE

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# INTRODUCTION



At Government Transformation, we gain an unrivalled perspective on what's happening in the public sector when we bring together the government leadership community for our conferences and online events.

By creating a knowledge-sharing opportunity for so many varied government and health organisations, we're able to capture the big issues occupying the minds of transformation leaders across the Civil Service, local government and healthcare.

As chair of the Government Transformation Show, Citizen Experience Show and LocalGov Transformation Show, I've been fascinated to be part of these conversations. In this new Playbook we share key takeaways from those leaders. It's essential reading for anyone working in the sector, either in government or as a commercial partner.

These firsthand perspectives from dozens of senior transformation leaders help you understand what works, what doesn't, and why.

We've grouped the reports into two sections - Digital Transformation and Cultural Transformation. It's been proven time and again that while technology can be a powerful enabler of change and offer new ways to deliver services to citizens, without an accompanying change in organisational culture, the digital revolution won't happen.

**DAVID WILDE**

GM For Government  
Government Transformation Magazine



THESE FIRSTHAND  
PERSPECTIVES  
FROM DOZENS  
OF SENIOR  
TRANSFORMATION  
LEADERS HELP YOU  
UNDERSTAND  
WHAT WORKS,  
WHAT DOESN'T,  
AND WHY.

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# OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN 2022

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Government Transformation's GM for Government David Wilde looks at the key themes that have emerged in our conversations with public sector leaders in 2022.

## **A NEW ERA FOR LEADERSHIP & TEAM MANAGEMENT**

Post-Covid, we spent a lot of our time talking about leading teams in a new working world and some of the tensions around offices versus home and hybrid working. A lot of the conversations were certainly focused on how to lead teams that by nature are going to be much more disparate, spread around and doing different things. We're recognising that the days of line-of-sight management are long gone - it's all about managing outcomes and being clear about purpose.

## BUILDING ON INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

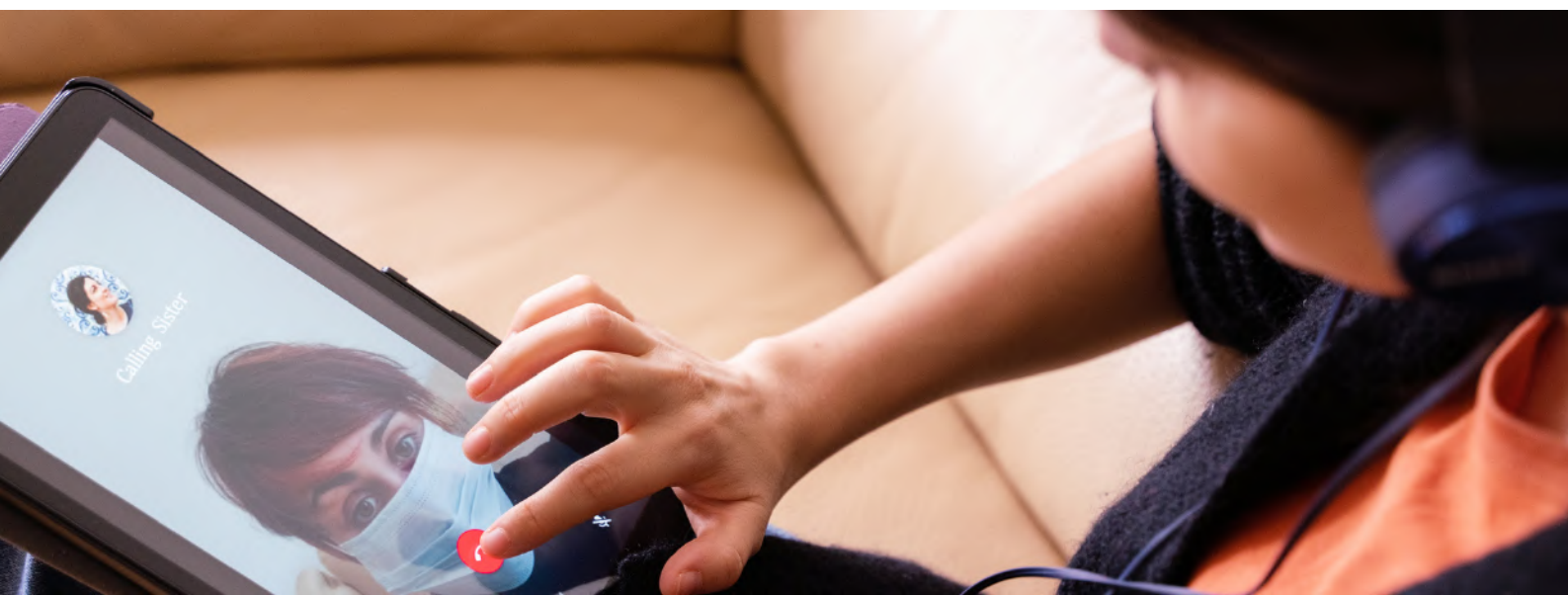
There is recognition that Whitehall departments cannot go back to operating in isolation, they must continue to collaborate. Through all of the speakers at the conferences, it was great across such a mix of departments to hear about the level of crossover and a recognition of how they work together. With health, HMRC, and DWP all working together - these are not acronyms you normally associate with working together, but they recognised that they had to in times of crisis, and have continued to do so afterwards, which is positive. The Civil Service is a collaborative enterprise rather than a series of splendid towers, operating in isolation.

## USERS, USERS, USERS

Universally across central and local government. we kept hearing that recognition about user-centred design and building services around the user experiences. Whether it be citizen or resident, it doesn't really matter. It's about actually who you're there to serve, rather than who your institution is.

That ethos has to be supported by investing in user research and research in data - recognise the wealth of data you have, but also spend time, effort and money in understanding what that data is telling you. It's integral to that user research piece.

Compared to two years ago, the conversation has evolved from understanding what user-centred design is in challenging periods of crisis, to a much more mature set of conversations. They centre on recognition of the value in the investment, and recognition and acceptance that user-centred design and citizen-centred design and delivery are the business of government, not government as the business of government.



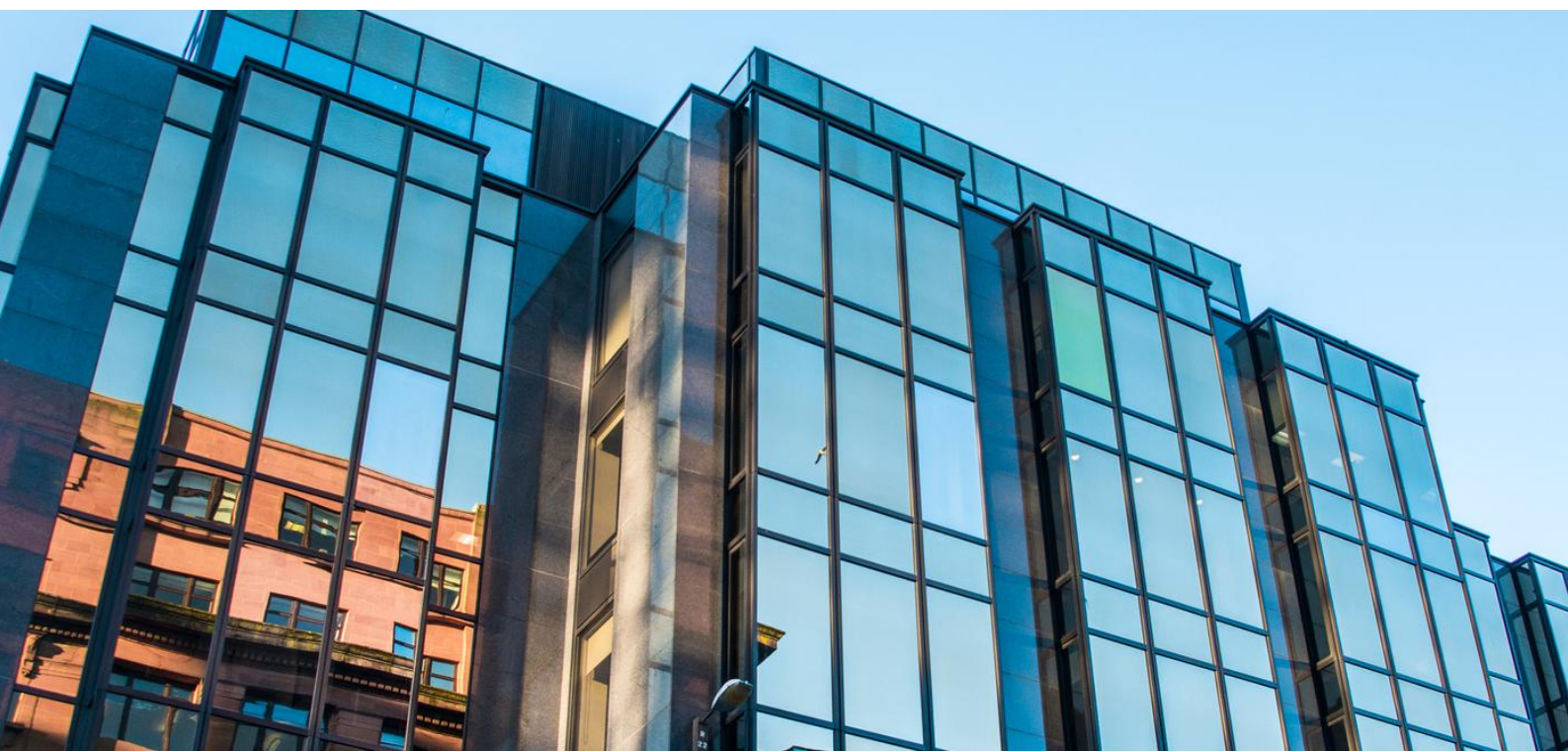
## SHARED GOVERNMENT HUBS

One of the things that really resonated with me was the creation of the regional government hubs that we heard being used and endorsed by a whole range of Whitehall departments.

Whether it was Birmingham, Leeds, Central London or Canary Wharf - the feedback was that these are good, professional, quality working environments. People arrived and the systems worked, they could log on to do business, they saw other Civil Servants from other departments, and worked together in the same space. The collaborative workspace is happening in the Civil Service, so the challenge for wider public services is to get on that bus - this is the way forward. And the other thing that they all mentioned was, it was so refreshing to have the sites near transport hubs, rather than in industrial parks on the edge of towns and cities.

## FLEXIBLE WORKING - A KEY TO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

It's not unique to government, we're seeing it in all sectors, but there are clear tensions around the extent to which you offer workforce flexibility. If you have to deliver services in certain places in certain ways, and you're open to the public, people still need to be there and that's accepted as the reality. But the strong message from everybody around workforce recruitment and retention is that hybrid, flexible working is now a top-ticket item for recruitment and retention. It's mentioned in interviews, where it never used to be. It's a reason for people choosing to apply or not.



## THEORY TO REALITY: THE POWER OF AI

We're not talking about what AI is anymore. We're talking about the value that AI is driving and the extent to which it's moving to deeper learning. So the big story that came out of the 2022 Government Transformation Show was a conversation that's deeper and more wide-ranging around artificial intelligence as an active learning tool. It was refreshing we weren't talking about machine learning and AI and autonomous stuff - it was all AI working in a continuum.

## SELLING THE VALUE OF UK PLC

The international flavours of the conversations were fascinating because, before Covid, there was Brexit of course. It was interesting hearing from people at the Department for International Trade and the Intellectual Property Office about the recognition that the UK and the Civil Service are learning how to sell the country as a place to invest in and as a place to do business with.

That's a big challenge for the Civil Service because it's not something they've really had to do a lot historically. But in a world where we're not part of a large economic bloc anymore, and we're building our own economic relationships, that means that sales and sales capability have to become part of the ethic of public service.

That's always been the case in local government - we heard that in some of the local government sessions, where actually there's a long track record around economic development and reimagining the future of place - maybe there's something we can learn from each other in that space?



An aerial night view of London, featuring the Shard on the left and the River Thames. A complex digital network of white lines and circular nodes is overlaid on the city, symbolizing digital transformation. The background is a deep blue gradient.

PART ONE

**DIGITAL  
TRANSFORMATION**

# MAKING DIGITAL PUBLIC SERVICES **CITIZEN-CENTRIC**

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What opportunities are there for public services to be delivered differently to reflect shifting citizen requirements and new technical capabilities?

Executives from the Intellectual Property Office (IPO), the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and Adobe, shared their experiences as part of an expert panel discussing how to continue transforming digital services while keeping the citizen at the heart of the design process.

The IPO has a five-year transformation programme that aims to make it the best intellectual property office in the world - both for customers and staff. Although some legacy systems are still holding the IPO back, Sarah Whitehead, Deputy Director Customer Experience at the IPO, hopes the organisation's ambitious transformation programme will help her team reach the point where they can deliver outstanding and customer-focused services fit for the modern age.





"We want to make user journeys as seamless and easy as possible. By digitising our services, we can free up our people from doing data entry and use their time to add value for those customers that need additional support."

Customers today have high expectations and expect a quality of service similar to that experienced in private sector services like online banking or e-commerce platforms. They are also demanding greater transparency and to be kept informed about every stage of the process they are going through.

"Customers want to know what's happening, when they'll hear from us and what they can expect. And that kind of self-service is something that we're seeing coming through. They're looking for us to offer a similar quality of services and facilities seen in the private sector."

**SARAH WHITEHEAD, DEPUTY DIRECTOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, IPO**

## UTILISING CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Raising awareness and managing expectations are important elements of the IPO's transformation programme. Although the first version of a product might not be perfect in its first iterations, continuous improvement and quick delivery ensure that steps are taken in the right direction.

Essential to this steady improvement is gathering customer feedback - as well as acting on it. Whitehead said that the IPO encourages its customer base to share feedback on their services. Demonstrating the results of what has been done as a result of that feedback increases trust and also shows that customers are actually being listened to.

"We've got a group of critical friends that we engage with regularly before we proceed, which I think is incredibly useful". We then make sure to tell customers that we are acting on their feedback. I think it's easy for customers to feel like they're telling us things, but they don't necessarily know that we are acting on it."

Whitehead uses the IPO's blog as a channel to share and promote the work being done and the changes implemented as a result of the feedback collected. The government body has also set up a unit that brings all customer insights together in one place, making it easier to identify the trends and themes that need focusing on.

"User research and making sure that the voice of the customer is built in right from the very beginning is absolutely essential to developing new services and improving our existing services, and it's at the heart of everything that we do," Whitehead said. In the IPO's case, user research takes place in a number of different formats, using a broad list of personas representing diverse customer groups. Although the office has its own panel of users that they can contact for its research, Whitehead recognised the limitations of this approach, so they have also partnered with an external recruitment agency that helps the IPO to make the user research as robust as possible.



## DIFFERENT CHANNELS FOR DIFFERENT CITIZENS

Joining up the customer journey and reducing duplication are basic levers to improve citizen engagement, according to Neil Bacon, Senior Digital Strategist at Adobe. This requires inclusive design of processes, systems and technologies that can add value to the customer experience. "If we can get all of that right, a lot of the positive digital experience that comes as a result of it will actually happen."

Bringing offline and online interactions together requires bringing together data from multiple sources, whether that is a CRM or a contact centre, to extract insights consistently that can result in automation of services or other applications. But accessing a service online or offline should not compromise its quality. "It's about breaking down the metrics, the whole journey, and building that data-driven operating model.

Similarly to Whitehead, customer feedback (and complaints) are key to the UKHSA, said Robert Currens, Deputy Director of National Operations (Service Excellence) at the public health department. A lesson drawn from his previous work at HMRC and DWP is that an omnichannel approach does not always fit customer needs and instead a multi-channel way is more suitable.

Image: Timon Studler, Unsplash



"We've found that a customer is more likely to pick up the phone than pick up the phone and engage with the digital side of things as well," Currens explained. "Whereas somebody that's digitally minded would likely go through the digital process and at the same time use the phone to see which process is quickest and best for them."

Although the demand for digital keeps growing and government responds accordingly, Currens states that the vulnerable customer that will not engage with a digital product should always be kept in mind to avoid exclusion. This means maintaining face-to-face functions and a consistent and accessible telephone contact centre. However, the challenge remains in identifying which channels do customers prefer to use.

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THE CHALLENGE  
NOW IS  
UNDERSTANDING  
WHICH  
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PREFER TO USE  
WHICH CHANNEL  
AND WHEN THEY  
WANT TO SWITCH  
BETWEEN  
CHANNELS."



Image: Arlington Research,  
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# JOINING UP CITIZEN SERVICES IN A COMPLEX OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

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Joining-up citizen services in a complex and siloed government ecosystem is extremely challenging. Four public sector leaders from HMRC, DWP Digital, NHS Digital and Adobe joined *Government Transformation* magazine to talk through these challenges - and discuss how an effective data-sharing environment can help overcome them.

## CHALLENGES IN IMPROVING SERVICE ECOSYSTEMS

Improving service ecosystems as complex as those found in government comes with significant obstacles. For Mary Barber, Customer Engagement Transformation Director at HMRC, the main one is the cost attached to modernisation.

“It’s relatively straightforward to digitise single services, we all found ways of doing that during Covid. I think one of our challenges is often getting the business case to stack up to get the investment to make some of those changes, particularly to our mortgage products.”

In addition to the financial implications attached to the creation of better services, Barber mentioned data sovereignty, which she said often gets confused with accountability, or even a proxy for it. Data sovereignty rules regulate who can access sensitive data but a lack of a consistent approach can present hurdles to interoperability.

“Organisations have to transform their operating models in order to make that work. Some operating models will get smaller, some will get larger, and some will disappear. It is quite hard for government to take the stance of sharing best practices for efficiency. I think that has to be the mantra of the next five years.”

Funding is also a pain point being tackled by Daniel Wintercross, Associate Director at GP IT Futures, a programme at NHS Digital. Collaborating closely with NHS England, GP IT Futures is working on transformation projects assessing how the NHS can improve its use of data exchange across the healthcare ecosystem.

Although putting together a business case demonstrating the positive impact of a project may be relatively straightforward, going through the mechanisms and governance channels to get funding for the projects can be a tough process.

“Getting funding to do really important pieces of work is quite difficult sometimes in government and the NHS, even if you're able to articulate how there are secondary benefits, and that you're an enabler for incredibly critical pieces of work across a wider ecosystem.”





Legacy was also identified as a pain point at the time of joining-up citizen services and improving the service ecosystem. "You can redesign one service, but you still have another service on that legacy piece - so you still need to work on the legacy piece plus the new thing at the same time."

"For me, understanding the end-to-end service and lead intent is the first principle on which we can base everything, but in terms of our prioritisation it's legacy, because what's behind all this are finite economic decisions about what we need to do against that budget for the greatest impact on your visitors' experience."

**SIMON KING, DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF USER CENTRED DESIGN, DWP DIGITAL**

Neil Bacon, Senior Digital Strategist at Adobe, agreed that legacy remains an important challenge for improving services and customer experience within government: “You need that foundation of the house to be really solid so that you can start to build on top of that the analytics, the insights-driven, the AI tools, the automation that needs to happen in order to drive some of the great user experience.”

## PROMOTING EFFECTIVE DATA SHARING ACROSS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Lack of data interoperability and siloed departments remain a barrier to achieving better citizen services. According to a recent global survey conducted by Adobe among public sector staff, most respondents think they are either ‘effective’ (55%) or ‘highly effective’ (16%) at giving users control over how their data is used. However, almost a third said it was still ineffective (22%) or highly ineffective (8%).

“You always hear about interoperability and having that single view of the patient across the NHS - we’re clearly not there yet,” said Wintercross, highlighting the legacy and complexity challenges attached to the sheer size of the NHS, one of the biggest employers in the world made up of thousands of organisations.

“I think we have to get into a position where we're able to build services that transcend different organisations to ultimately provide those outcomes for the citizens and public that we serve,” Wintercross added.

To improve data sharing across government, King said that his department recently began a project with HMRC using hashing technology to allow them to share data between organisations using trusted networks, without compromising privacy. He also pointed out the potential of digital twins in this complex environment, where innovation has to be approached with caution because of the impact that failure could have on citizens.



“In terms of interoperability of data, digital twins allow us to start creating some specific models about what actually happens in these processes. Then we can start to use models to see what would happen if we did this and get answers,” King said.

“That allows us to try things and understand them in a very low-risk environment because we’re not in a place where we can try stuff and if it doesn’t work that’s fine - this is about people being paid their benefits or being able to feed their children on a weekly basis.”

Like DWP, HMRC has a data remediation programme that is allowing them to fix some of the issues arising from having huge legacy systems going back decades. A unique records programme using SAP and other tools is allowing them to cross-match citizen records to avoid duplication.

But making better use of data does not only benefit operational activity: it also has a positive impact on improving the customer experience. HMRC is working with GDS on a single sign-on so customers can use the same identity verification (such as their unique consignment reference) to apply for different services.

“From a customer point of view, if you're already registered for your passport, if you can also be registered for tax, well, why not?” said Barber. “We're challenging some of those assumptions that you have to be registered with every single government organisation.” She concluded: “Let's join things up for the customer with data and cross-government data at the heart of how you make that work on an ongoing basis.”





# HOW TO **ACCELERATE** PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

How can government departments increase their impact by doing more, sooner? Four public sector experts shared their experiences and advice on how to successfully accelerate service delivery during a panel hosted by Government Transformation's GM for Government, David Wilde.

## **THE ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCKS FOR DELIVERY ACCELERATION**

For Alexis Castillo-Soto, Deputy Director of Digital and Data at The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), there are two building blocks to support quicker decision making and better outcomes in government: technology and people.



Whereas he considered tech “the easiest one to frame”, the “people part” has traditionally been more challenging. Although the tools for transformation were there, the right culture was missing. Enter the pandemic, when government teams had no option but to provide services at speed.

“Covid changed the mindset for a lot of people: things had to be done immediately, output driven. Right at the beginning of the pandemic, we received a commission on a Monday and by Tuesday afternoon, we had a new service up. Previously, that was unheard of.”

**ALEXIS CASTILLO-SOTO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL AND DATA  
AT THE DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL  
STRATEGY (BEIS)**

## THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE PROCESSES

Having clear processes that everyone understands is also an essential ingredient said Doug Ward, Deputy Director of Business Systems and Insight at Innovate UK, the non-departmental public body responsible for supporting business growth in the country. Having those defined processes is helping him and the wider organisation empower teams to work effectively and make a positive impact.

“For me, on the IT delivery side, when I’m prioritising one thing over another it's about having the information on what my team is trying to do and how they intend to do it,” Ward said. “More importantly, why and what they want to achieve from that. “It's having the right people in the right place to make the right decision with all the data so you don’t have to come back for more information or follow-up questions.”

Processes are also important for Simon Body, UK Parliament’s Chief Technology Officer. Understanding the process flow and identifying the processes that can be streamlined is helping him and his unit create the foundations for quicker decision-making in the future.

Body is also using the ‘fast follower’ approach: a strategy that allows his team to avoid mistakes made in the past by others by adopting best practices. “Maybe an area of the business has achieved something - it may not be exactly the same, but it may be very similar. We can use the same tools or capabilities much better moving forward. That helped us streamline processes considerably and will help us towards more automation moving forward.”



## USING AUTOMATION TO FOCUS RESOURCES WHERE THEY ARE NEEDED

If government wants to accelerate delivery and access to public services, departments must understand why citizens are contacting them, Kevin McCarthy, from experience management software company Sprinklr, told Government Transformation Show delegates.

“The best service you can design is a service where people can help themselves,” McCarthy said. “Most people don't actually want to call you, they do so when they can't find another way to get the information or the access they need.”

Understanding interactions with service users and categorising them into contact drivers can offer organisations the information they need to make the decisions that will have the biggest impact. It also enables them to use the data necessary to find tools via which citizens can obtain the information they need by themselves - without having to speak to an operator in a contact centre. By automating as much interaction as possible, resources can be re-routed to areas where human assistance is needed, McCarthy said. He added: “The critical thing is to be able to improve access to information and free up time for agents and staff to focus on those customers that need that kind of human interaction.”

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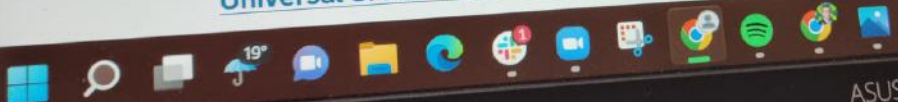
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## ACCELERATING SERVICE DELIVERY

The four panel speakers concluded the session by sharing their top priorities for accelerating service delivery. Although this endeavour usually requires a combination of various elements, Body chose procurement as essential for its success. Moving fast was also Castillo-Soto's advice, who recommended delegates to "deliver fast, but make it sustainable."

Ward added that being able to control the delivery yourself - whether that is data, contracts, people or any elements needed to make it happen - will ensure this desirable flexibility of pace.

Having a unified system to manage customer interactions and channels, coupled with AI that can understand what citizens are calling about, was McCarthy's key takeaway for a successful delivery acceleration.

"If you get those two things right, the possibilities are endless. Without that it's much more difficult," McCarthy said.



IF YOU DO  
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# WHAT ROLE WILL AUTOMATION PLAY IN THE FUTURE OF **CITIZEN SERVICE DELIVERY?**

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What citizens expect from government services and service delivery is often compared to the digital standards and products found in the private sector. We asked a panel of executives from the Department for International Trade (DIT), UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and software company Sprinklr, to assess the role automation will play in bridging this 'expectation gap' - and in making citizen services more inclusive.

## **THE EXPECTATION GAP**

Covid-19 has played a key role in shifting customer expectations. During lockdowns, consumers and businesses increasingly switched to digital and citizens today expect government to offer the same variety and quality of services found in the private sector.

Meeting these expectations has become a priority for public sector organisations in the UK. The gap between customer expectations and service delivery is a “very real” issue at DIT, according to the department's Chief Engagement and Design Officer, Anais Reding. Although the organisation is already making progress on its ongoing automation and self-service journey, businesses dealing with DIT expect it to have the capacity and resources required to meet their digital expectations as found outside government.

“Really often, when we talk about self-service and automation, we’re talking about web chats. The irony with that (and I know this from sitting through some of the user research sessions) is that customers actually prefer to have the one-to-one contact that we offer but they want to know that we can offer web chat because they build confidence in the ability that we have of supporting them.

“It’s a Catch-22 situation that we need to deal with as a government organisation - can we justify investing in it just so that we can demonstrate that we are capable and our services are worth engaging in?”

Government departments deploying automation to bridge the gap between customer expectations and service delivery are already reaping the benefits. Thanks to automation, the public sector has the possibility of freeing up human resources to focus on more complex service delivery, said Mark Abrami, Senior Director at Sprinklr.

“Expectations are being set by what's happening in the private sector,” Abrami said. “It shouldn’t be a cause for concern though because we know that advances in technology mean that the public sector can hugely benefit from being able to deliver repeatable light citizen engagements through automation.”





In the case of UKHSA, the organisation has relied heavily on automation and digital since the beginning of the pandemic to provide essential services to citizens. In this climate, customer expectation versus demand came to the fore of the team of Jamey Johnson, Director of National Operations at UKHSA.

“Because of the continuous changing scenarios during Covid as new variants came in, travel rules changed and vaccines got rolled out, what we asked customers to do changed frequently. How they engaged with our services as we developed them changed frequently as well.”

***JAMEY JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL OPERATIONS, UKHSA***



A clear trend in this transformation of customer expectations has been a growing appetite from customers to deal with services themselves. Automation and self-serving became crucial to deal with the scale of operations during Covid, so this change in customer expectation was also a business benefit for the UKHSA since it released the pressure on the contact centres and other overstretched resources.

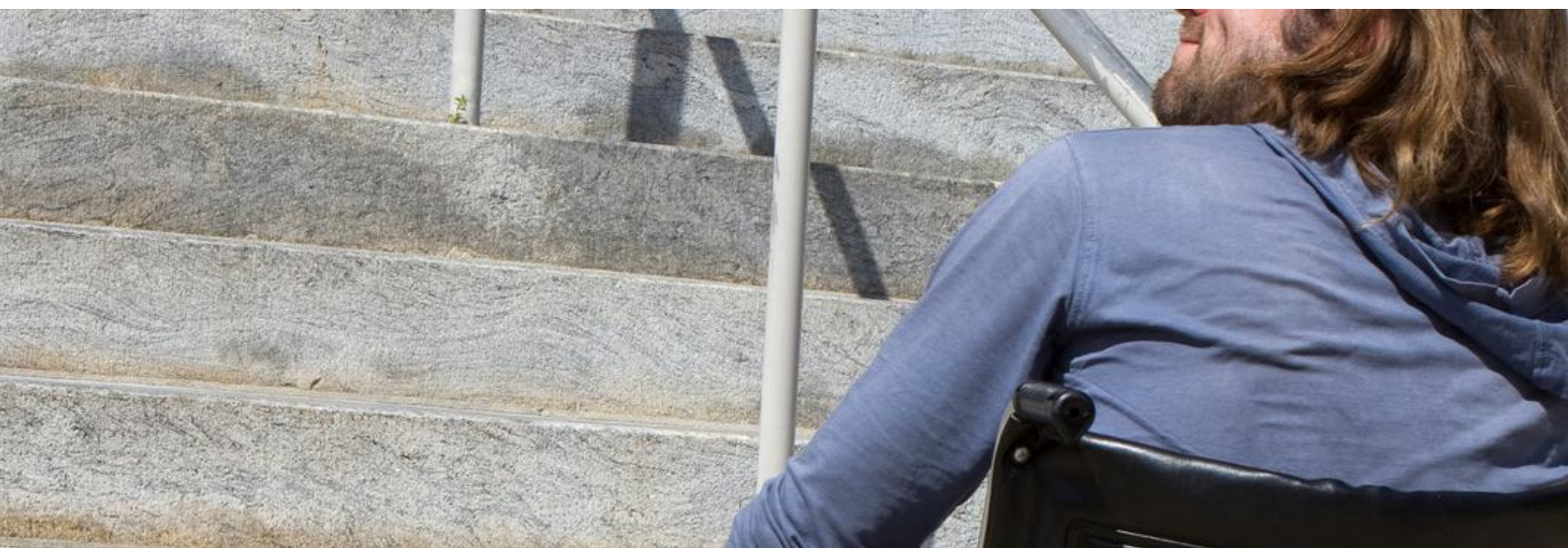
Johnson mentioned the example of PCR test bookings. Instead of calling a contact centre, he asserted that the overwhelming majority of people preferred to book tests online and find the most convenient test location by themselves. "They were feeling ropery and rubbish because they had Covid and didn't want to spend 40 minutes on a phone queue and then half an hour to a contact centre handler. They'd much rather do that themselves."

## **ADDRESSING DIGITAL EXCLUSION**

The momentum gained during the pandemic also offered the ability to open much more inclusive services. Working in partnership with a visual impairment charity, UKHSA could offer people blind or partially sighted people to take a Covid test from home through an assisted video call.

"In some ways, the pandemic has been positive for this purpose because people have been at home at home and the ability to access services in traditional ways has been really disrupted," Johnson said. "We've got a real chance to move forward on some of these digital exclusion challenges that we faced as an organisation previously."

Making digital services, including the Covid vaccination pass, as simple and user-friendly as possible has been a priority to ensure that citizens use them. However, for those people who remain digitally excluded and do not have access to these online services, it has been essential to work with them and their communities on the front line to ensure that they also have access to these services.



Sprinklr's Abrami suggested to government organisations create programmes and services with the average citizen in mind, but also thinking about all those groups and communities with specific needs and who may have different digital access requirements. He added that human resources freed up by automation could be given the task to focus on digital exclusion and how to make services that reach everyone in society."

Although DIT deals with businesses that on average have a higher digital literacy than the groups dealt with by other departments, such as DWP, the issue at hand is understanding how far they can go with digital, said Reding.

"We certainly know that businesses will face the same accessibility needs as anyone else," she continued. "But in terms of digital assistance, given that we've got one-to-one channels that are built into the offering that we provide to businesses, I think that's where we are trying to find the balance.

"We still need to work on that service and content design to make sure that that one-to-one support is really used where it is needed by businesses, or where it can provide the most value to the UK economy so we can support at scale as much as possible."



THERE WILL BE A NEED FOR VERY BROAD SERVICES FOR THE GENERAL POPULATION, AND A NEED TO CAREFULLY ANALYSE EVERY MOVE TO PURSUE THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION."





# KEY ENABLERS FOR DELIVERING **MULTICHANNEL CITIZEN SERVICES**

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Government organisations are faced with legacy and emergent delivery channels which can be complex and expensive to maintain. How can we make service delivery sustainable for all users?

This was the focus of a discussion which featured key executives from the Department for International Trade (DIT), UK Parliament, Crown Commercial Service (CCS) and Pexip, chaired by Government Transformation magazine's David Wilde.

## **ENABLING EFFECTIVE MULTICHANNEL DELIVERY**

For Kevin Morley, Deputy Director of Customer Service at CCS, understanding the customer is the key enabler for sustainable multichannel service delivery.

Morley said that he learnt this lesson early in life by watching his mother work in a small local business, where she knew what her customers' needs and wants were.

"If you can take that to a macro level in organisations with hundreds of thousands of customers, you cannot lose in terms of what you are delivering as a service. If you understand what your customers want, you understand what they want next and you understand their challenges.

"That's the biggest enabler of any investment, whether it's digital or non-digital." Knowing where an organisation is going and what it wants to transform is also an essential enabler for multichannel service delivery, added Nick Ross, Head of Government at Pexip. During his career, he has been involved in programmes which took so long to deliver that the foundational technologies underpinning them became obsolete before the project was deployed.

"That's a real risk by the very nature of rapid tech developments," Ross said. "In huge disruption industries like mobile, TV and travel service, the design must be approached with agility. Tools can be really expensive to buy and implement, so there needs to be an awareness of platform lifecycles and the risks of building legacy systems."

Simon Body, Chief Technology Officer at the UK Parliament, agreed that understanding legacy systems - how they can be used and how they are holding back an organisation - is essential to move forward. However, it is not always legacy technology that holds up progress. On any journey, you start off with a great vision and a great idea, but then the dependencies and the hiccups start coming through. What we're trying to do now is make sure that we've identified what we can reuse, and what we need to replace."





Miranda Pottinger, DIT's Deputy Director, Chief Product and Delivery Officer, pointed out that legacy processes and legacy culture are also common obstacles hindering transformational projects.

For Pottinger, securing the basics should be the foundation of any service delivery offering. This includes understanding who you are designing the customer journey for and good data management.

"For me, it's all about adhering to the service standard principle of asking people to tell us once. Whether we do omnichannel, multichannel or single channel, we need to be able to share what we already know about people who have got in contact with us."

**MIRANDA POTTINGER, DIT'S DEPUTY DIRECTOR, CHIEF PRODUCT AND DELIVERY OFFICER**

## EFFECTIVE AND ADAPTIVE DESIGN

“Those interactions might happen months or years apart so we need to be able to pick up that thread very quickly - that’s why data management is really key for us.”

Designing from the perspective of the trader and not from the multiple siloed departments remains a challenge for Pottinger’s team, who is focusing on finding the best ways to collaborate across departments to ensure that user journeys are joined up, regardless of the customer interacting with DIT or any other government organisation. Using data to better understand the customer is also important for the CCS. During the next 18 months, Morley and his team will be focusing on understanding customer perceptions to come up with better services tailored to the users’ needs.

“We’re a £27 billion a year organisation and we have aspirations to go up to £50 billion a year with the same number of staff,” Morley said. “That means we’re going to have to listen to our customers and understand what they want from us and invest very strategically and very carefully in our digital portfolio to achieve that.”

Body agreed that listening to the customer is paramount, especially when the customer base is diverse and has different needs. Although the UK Parliament has a dedicated customer experience team, Body said there is always room for improvement, particularly when it comes to making better use of data and understanding analytics.



## INTRODUCING THE CUSTOMER PERSPECTIVE TO SERVICE DESIGN

At DIT, Pottinger's team is bringing the customer perspective to service design by combining in-depth discovery work with agile ways of working. One-to-one qualitative interviews to gather feedback are used in conjunction with prototype building and quick testing of products.

Pottinger asks: "How much data will businesses give us about themselves and their aspirations in order to get tailored support and services back?"

Recent AB testing of a couple of DIT services currently being used by traders suggests that customers are happy to part with more data than what Pottinger's team expected if that results in more personalised services for them.

"That data exchange definitely raises expectations," she concluded.



IF YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR CUSTOMERS WANT, YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WANT NEXT AND YOU UNDERSTAND THEIR CHALLENGES."





PART TWO

**CULTURAL  
TRANSFORMATION**





# EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT & PERFORMANCE IN A DIGITAL WORKPLACE

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Although government organisations had for years access to the digital tools required to enable flexible ways of working, it was not until the pandemic that they were widely used out of necessity because of the national lockdown.

Three executives from the Cabinet Office, Crown Commercial Service (CCS) and customer experience management company Medallia, discussed how lockdowns changed their organisations in a panel hosted by Government Transformation magazine.

Experiencing the benefits that a digital workplace unlocked contributed to a change in mindsets towards hybrid working. The challenge, however, is maintaining those gains and building on them.



The CCS is a large organisation with several offices across the UK, including major sites in Liverpool, Norwich, London and Birmingham. For Darren Thompson, Deputy Director of Corporate Pillar Operations at CCS, before the pandemic, flexible working meant travelling to meet colleagues and customers based on other sites.

Although his team had the digital capability to carry out online meetings, Thompson, who works in Newport, South Wales, said that discussions with external stakeholders would always happen face-to-face or by telephone. Even though staff had laptops and access to Google Meet, the prevailing organisational culture favoured physical meetings over online ones.

**"We've moved away from banks and banks of desks and set the office up for collaborative working and now we're on the road to fully embracing hybrid and digital working!"**

**DARREN THOMPSON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE PILLAR OPERATIONS AT CCS**

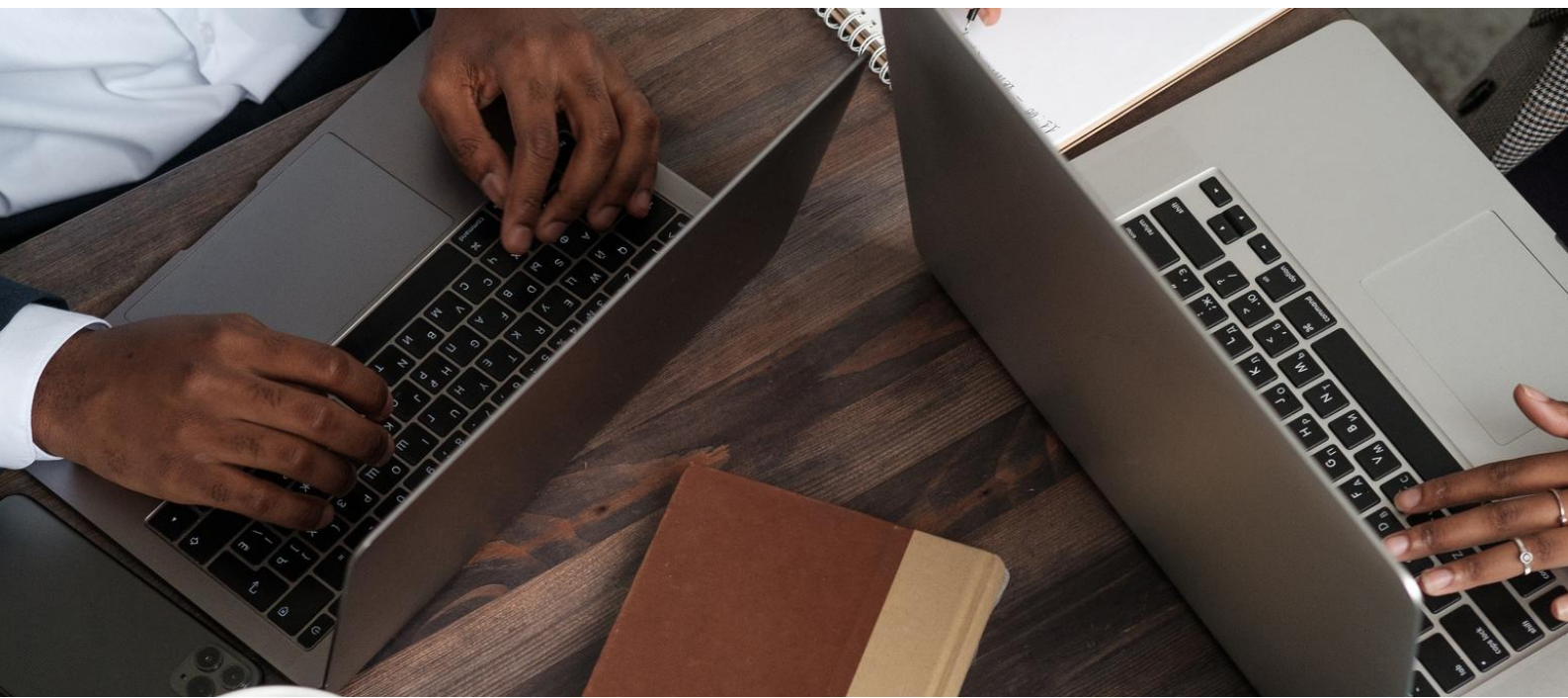
## INCLUSIVE MEETINGS

Pre-pandemic, the team of Tammy Noel, Deputy Director of Civil Service Organisation Development and Design at the Cabinet Office, also used to rely heavily on in-person meetings. Despite some initial challenges with working remotely, Noel and her team soon appreciated the benefits that digital ways of working unlocked, including the flexibility to quickly bring stakeholders from different departments and communities together thanks to video conference platforms.

"We were an in-person team that loved working in a face-to-face environment. In the wake of the pandemic, we quickly adapted and embraced holding our interventions online, developing new ways to engage with our clients and the wider community."

Whereas before Covid-19 organising physical meetings with stakeholders and clients from different organisations could take weeks, online meetings meant that this could happen on the same or the next day. Switching to a more digital work format colleagues to participate in meetings, solve the issues of geographical distance and better support varied accessibility needs.

"There's the geographical inclusion: a dispersed workforce emerges when you're all on an online platform. But there's also inclusion from a disability and a number of different perspectives because everybody shows up in the same way online. There is no barrier to entry because everybody has the same technology."



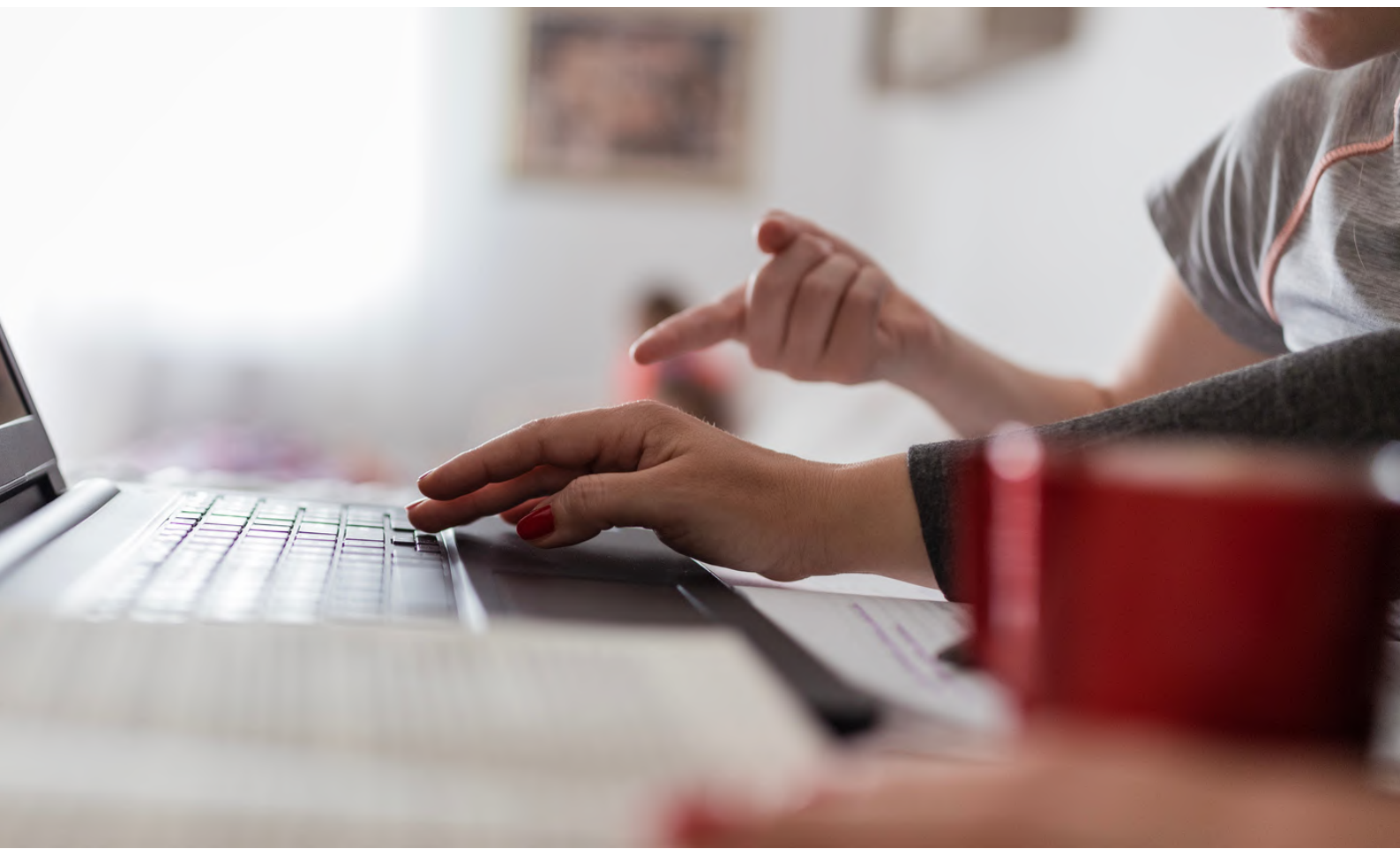
## A NEW WAY OF WORKING

Post-lockdowns, Noel's team has adopted a hybrid way of working that builds on the inclusion achievements from the fully-remote working setting of the pandemic while allowing for the occasional in-person meeting. The challenge now is ensuring that everyone has the same experience and that no one is excluded because of the format they chose to join a conversation.

"When we're working in a hybrid way, how do we ensure that we still create those inclusive spaces if we have people in the room and we have people online? We have to ensure that if you're in the room, you have your laptop open, so that everybody can see everybody's face".



WE ENSURE THAT EVERYTHING WE'RE DOING WILL CREATE A MUCH MORE INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCE FOR PEOPLE."



## MAINTAINING THE DIGITAL WORKPLACE WINS OF THE PANDEMIC

According to Melissa Arronte, Solution Principal of Employee Experience at Medallia, an essential building block to maintaining an effective digital workplace is empowering employees to provide feedback. In her experience, organisations can unintentionally exclude people or make hybrid working more difficult for employees because they are slipping back to pre-pandemic mindsets.

In Arronte's view, it is essential that leaders listen to their employees and make adjustments by providing easy tools and platforms where they can share their concerns and solutions to their problems. This can include enabling video surveys where employees can record themselves instead of filling out email surveys.

"Empower those employees to say, "this isn't working for me!". Imagine they could just click a button on their intranet or a tool where they can regularly go and share their ideas, for example, on how to include everyone in meetings. Let's make this as easy as possible!"

Arronte said that video conferencing tools such as transcripts have the capacity to provide better insights into meetings inclusivity than traditional minutes as they give a more accurate account of who participates in those calls.

She added: "We need to continually hear from employees: How is it working for you? How do we need to adjust? Are they still talking about being excluded when they're in another location?"





## HOW THE PUBLIC SECTOR **CAN ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT**

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Amid the current skills crisis, how can the public sector compete with the corporate world in attracting and retaining talent? Is recruitment in government broken?

During a candid conversation at the Government People Show, Mark Adam, Chief People Officer at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Andy Headworth, Deputy Director of HR at HMRC, and Matthew Lewis, Public Services Director at recruitment company Hays, joined Government Transformation's David Wilde to discuss what is behind these burning issues. These are the session's key actionable insights.

## WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF RECRUITMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR?

Behind the “big tax machine” of HMRC lies a 60,000-strong workforce operating across 25 different professions. The department attracts thousands of new recruits each year. The challenge, however, is retaining that talent. “Retention is one of our bigger challenges in a market that's gone crazy,” Headworth said. “The private sector is offering humongous salaries all over the place.”

The situation at MoJ, also a big organisation employing 89,000 staff and 19,000 new hires a year, is similarly challenging. “I think we're all feeling this,” concurred Adam. “It's got tougher. The market has tightened and whether that comes through cost-per-hire, attraction rates or conversions, it's feeling tough.”



YOU NEED TO ACCEPT THAT YOU ARE IN A MASSIVELY COMPETITIVE MARKET!”





According to Lewis, the battle for skills has never been harder and the public sector is now the most difficult market in which to attract talent. According to reports by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), there are 1.3 million live jobs in the UK, a figure that has been rising quarter on quarter during the past 12 months.

**“You need to accept that you are in a massively competitive market,” said Lewis. “Of those 1.3 million vacancies, 160,000 are in professional technical, 70,000 in technology... So you're competing against multiple organisations at any one time for that very narrow, niche talent. I think the question is, as much as we are good, are we good enough? My observation of the world of public services is that there is certainly room for improvement.”**

***MATTHEW LEWIS, PUBLIC SERVICES DIRECTOR, HAYS***

## WHAT ARE THE KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT?

One area that could benefit from reform is the Civil Service recruitment process, which is still lengthy and complex, particularly for those who come from outside the public sector. The speakers pointed out the protracted job descriptions and complicated grading system, which can put off many candidates and prevents government from being more inclusive and diverse. An overemphasis on qualifications might also exclude people who have acquired experience through less conventional paths or could not afford an education.

“I think we need to be a lot less lazy about how we design and present our jobs,” Adam said. “We kind of assume that people understand what goes on in the public sector and I don't think we always present ourselves in the right way in terms of being really clear how that job translates.”

MoJ has been introducing gamification in its recruitment process to attract more candidates, as well as hiring almost 2,000 apprentices during the last year to gain first-hand experience of working at the MoJ. “We need that rather than the conventional advert on Civil Service Jobs [website] and hope. I think that's the bit that we need to make the shift from.”

Headworth agreed with Adam that the Civil Service should think outside the box when designing and promoting its job vacancies - something that requires a shift in mindsets. “2,500 characters is way too long for a job spec that we post out and we are doing a lot of work around trying to reduce those substantially to the 500-600 mark at the moment,” Headworth shared during the panel. “We need to align ourselves better to the private sector and the way that the candidates there expect to apply for a job. Changing longstanding behaviours is a challenge there, and that's something we're doing.”



## THE PUBLIC SECTOR VALUE PROPOSITION

Working for the public sector has the unique selling proposition of contributing to societal progress. Although the salaries offered cannot compete with those from corporations in the private sector, the panel speakers agreed that the Civil Service and wider public sector should better exploit its value proposition.

"We can lead by our values," Adam said. "I do think we create fantastic working environments that we don't get across to people. Our ability to tailor the proposition around people is a massive part of what I think public service can offer, we just don't make enough of it, and the stories are what will bring that out."

Headworth added: "When we're talking to people about career opportunities, we do have something that the private sector doesn't have: we have that scale, we have the variety, we have that global reach a lot of organisations don't necessarily have." Being able to articulate this value proposition could fix some of the issues that remain in public sector recruitment, creating a strong position to compete for the best talent against the private sector.

"You want to attract people that aren't in the Civil Service or haven't even thought about working in the Civil Service," Lewis added. "So think about ways and means by which to attract and engage with those different candidate groups."





# HOW PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS CAN CREATE **MORE INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES**

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Despite ongoing efforts to increase inclusion and diversity within organisations, there's still an urgent need to ensure that public sector leaders are representative of the societies and communities they serve.

During the Government People Show, executives from the UK and Canada joined Government Transformation's GM for Government, David Wilde, to discuss ways in which organisations can foster truly inclusive and diverse workplaces.



For Seyi Okuribido-Malcolm, Director of the Anti-Racism Secretariat at Canada's Department of National Defence, diversity and inclusion are about elevating and integrating the voices of those who are traditionally marginalised and bringing them to the policy and decision-making tables. Within her department, there is a focus on inclusive leadership that fosters a culture valuing diversity and is committed to fighting racism and addressing systemic barriers.

"It's creating an environment where employees feel empowered, but also safer. When you have that in place it will lead to an environment of belonging and inclusion."

**SEYI OKURIBIDO-MALCOLM, DIRECTOR OF THE ANTI-RACISM  
SECRETARIAT, CANADIAN NATIONAL DEFENCE**



## TRUE DIVERSITY

She adds, however, that diversity does not equal inclusion, and inclusion is not diversity. Whereas diversity is “who is in the room”, inclusion means “who has influence in the room”. Additionally, anti-racism work, which also differs from diversity and inclusion, looks at the change required at individual and systemic levels to understand where and how barriers within an institution can be dismantled, and how a better system can be co-created.

“Having increased numbers of diverse people alone will not support inclusion,” Okuribido-Malcolm added. “We see this in our ability to recruit diverse people, but not our ability to retain them. To reach inclusion requires a fundamental shift in mindset.”



IT'S ABOUT  
CREATING AN  
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## EXAMINING RECRUITMENT POLICIES AND PROCESSES

This change in mindset requires re-examining policies and processes through a lens that aims to increase racial equity and equity of other traditionally marginalised groups, such as women, disabled people, religious minorities or gender diverse individuals.

“In terms of how big of a challenge, this a big challenge,” added Okuribido-Malcolm. “And I say that because, fundamentally, you're asking people to acknowledge that the way that we've been doing things is not yielding the results we're looking for. And that's not always an easy pill to swallow.”

Although change is usually accompanied by resistance, Okuribido-Malcolm said that if productive, it can actually help challenge blind spots and develop stronger and more inclusive solutions that work for a broader scope of people. This type of resistance differs from the unproductive kind, where there is inflexibility and unwillingness to listen or understand.

“Part of the work that we do for equity, diversity, inclusion is when we do come up against resistance, it's having that wisdom in our ability to discern what's productive resistance and what's unproductive resistance,” she added.

## USING DATA TO IDENTIFY BARRIERS

Like most organisations, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) still has work to do when it comes to diversity in leadership. Philippa Bonay, Director of People and Business Services at the ONS, said that although the department has good levels of disability and LGBTQ+ representation among the most senior positions, improvement is still needed for women and ethnic minorities.



To improve this situation, Bonay's team has launched a new inclusion, culture and wellbeing app that gives all ONS directorates the ability to look at all of their information by a protected characteristic across the employee lifecycle. This, in turn, helps leaders to identify where the problems are and set objectives against them. "We know that the data is really important because that is what's driving action," she added.

However, Bonay stressed the importance of qualitative over quantitative data: "If somebody is saying it and feeling it, that is a data point within itself." Echoing the panel, Bonay said that having diversity does not necessarily mean that an organisation is inclusive, so the leadership at ONS is working towards an environment that promotes a sense of belonging: "The behaviours that we display and how we allow people within an organisation to play their part is really important," she added. "We know that the data is really important because that is what's driving action." To help build an inclusive culture, the ONS offers sponsorships, mentoring and championing, and everybody within the organisation has an inclusion and diversity objective: "At the senior Civil Service level and top-level team leaders, it's becoming much more granular."

Equally important for Bonay is making sure that the application process is inclusive and gets away from "Civil Servant speak". That includes doing webinars to demystify roles, changing the language used in the adverts, and reaching out to organisations, networks and community groups across all protected characteristics.

They are also working to ensure that existing people within the organisation remain and do not face obstacles to progress in their careers. "It's about the sustainability of what we do," added Bonay.



## DISMANTLING THE MYTH OF MERITOCRACY

A topic widely discussed during the panel was the concept of merit. Jill Minne, Strategic Director of HR at the Northern Ireland Civil Service, questioned its use: “What evidence is there to show that this apparent merit principle is working? It’s not working very fast.”

An issue with targeted recruitment programmes is that some candidates perceive they are unfairly disadvantaged over others and that applicants are not assessed on merit. But like Minne, Okuribido-Malcolm also challenged this notion of merit and its power structures: “How do we define merit? Who defines merit? And who is benefiting from it?”

According to research quoted by Minne, disabled people need to apply six times more often than those who are not disabled before being successful. She thinks that the focus should be on removing the barriers with interventions such as the Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) recently introduced by the Northern Ireland Civil Service. GIS is a positive action measure that aims to guarantee greater access for disabled applicants to the interview stage of the recruitment process.

“Designed interventions like GIS are not removing the merit principle: they are removing the barriers that people have”, Minne said, adding that removing those barriers should be “as much for your existing workforce, as it is those that you're trying to attract.”



## CREATING SAFE SPACES AND ELEVATING EXISTING TALENT

Effectively communicating inclusive strategies and career pathways were cited as a key step to fostering fairer workplaces by Sarah Luxford, Partner (DDaT) at people intelligence business GatenbySanderson.

"I think there's certainly something to understanding the type of organisation that you're joining. To have the support and an environment that is psychologically safe and you are free to be who you are."

The ongoing skills crisis requires public sector organisations to invest not just in short-term solutions but also in mid-and long-term initiatives: "I'm talking about education, about upskilling digital skills and capability," Luxford added.

This presents an opportunity to reach out to new talent across diverse communities and networks, but also to nurture and promote existing employees. "Encourage individuals who perhaps might not have thought about going for a role before or don't think that they have the right qualifications."



A SENSE OF CONFIDENCE MATTERS,  
PARTICULARLY WHEN IT COMES DOWN  
TO DIVERSITY."





## THE ROLE OF HR IN EMBEDDING **PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSFORMATION**

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HR is critical to providing the means of embedding positive change within the public sector - and also to shedding light on the reality of the employee lifecycle, with a view to making it more sustainable, according to senior execs at the Met Office, Ofwat and Qualtrics.

Speaking at the Government People Show, the panel discussion 'HR Transformation', supported by Qualtrics, explored how HR teams are acting as a catalyst to improve how the wider organisation attracts, develops and retains employees.

For HR transformation to succeed, it must be embedded within the whole organisation, said Tammy Lillie, Chief People Officer at the Met Office: "People are the organisation and actually to embed it, and to live and breathe it, the people are paramount."



Jas Bilen, Director of People at the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat), agreed that people service, or HR, has a vital role in embedding organisational operational transformation. However, he added that HR departments should build on that and be a challenger to the organisation.

*"We've got to look at our processes, using technology, making that whole employee lifecycle journey much better, and bringing that to surface, using some of our informal networks. It's very much about telling the story, understanding the narrative, the vision and what we want to get to, and using those channels to bed in that change."*

***JAS BILEN, DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE, WATER SERVICES REGULATION AUTHORITY (OFWAT)***



Organisations need to rethink the relationships with their employees and understand that people are looking for purpose: “Employees are looking to understand what the organisation's package is offering, what it means to them,” said Bilen.

## EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Panellists agreed that there is still work to be done on how workplaces articulate their value proposition and improve the employee experience.

Simon Daly, Employee Experience Strategist at Qualtrics, said that post-pandemic, staff are increasingly demanding more flexibility and far better physical and digital workspaces. Wellbeing and the ability to disconnect are essential to workers - and employers need to be creative in how they trigger productivity on the back of this.



LISTENING TO  
FEEDBACK IS  
ONLY 50% OF  
THE PUZZLE.  
THE QUESTION  
IS - IS THERE  
ACTION  
HAPPENING  
OFF THE BACK  
OF IT?”



## CONTINUED PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ensuring that continuous professional development (CPD) is accessible and promoted is important to ensure that employees remain engaged and as a way to support staff retention. A live poll carried out during the session showed that 17% of delegates think that their organisation supports CPD in every way possible for staff retention, while the majority could clearly see at least some efforts being made, even if more can be done.

At Ofwat, Bilen and his team are looking at ways to ensure that learning and CPD are embedded in the culture of the organisation and that people can take time off their busy schedules for it, whether in a classroom or through informal learning, to ensure they are up to date in their career pathways and where they want to go.

Creating a sense of community is also important for Lillie. During the last 18 months, the Met Office has reinforced the value of professional standing among staff.

“We currently already pay professional fees, and if you need to get to a level of professional registration, there is a one-off award,” Lillie explained. “[It’s] realising that people are not always staying in the same organisation all their lives. So the profession is really important, and how that travels with you.”

From feedback to action

Gathering employee feedback can help organisations transform their practices but as the speakers remarked, unless feedback is followed by outcomes, it becomes useless.

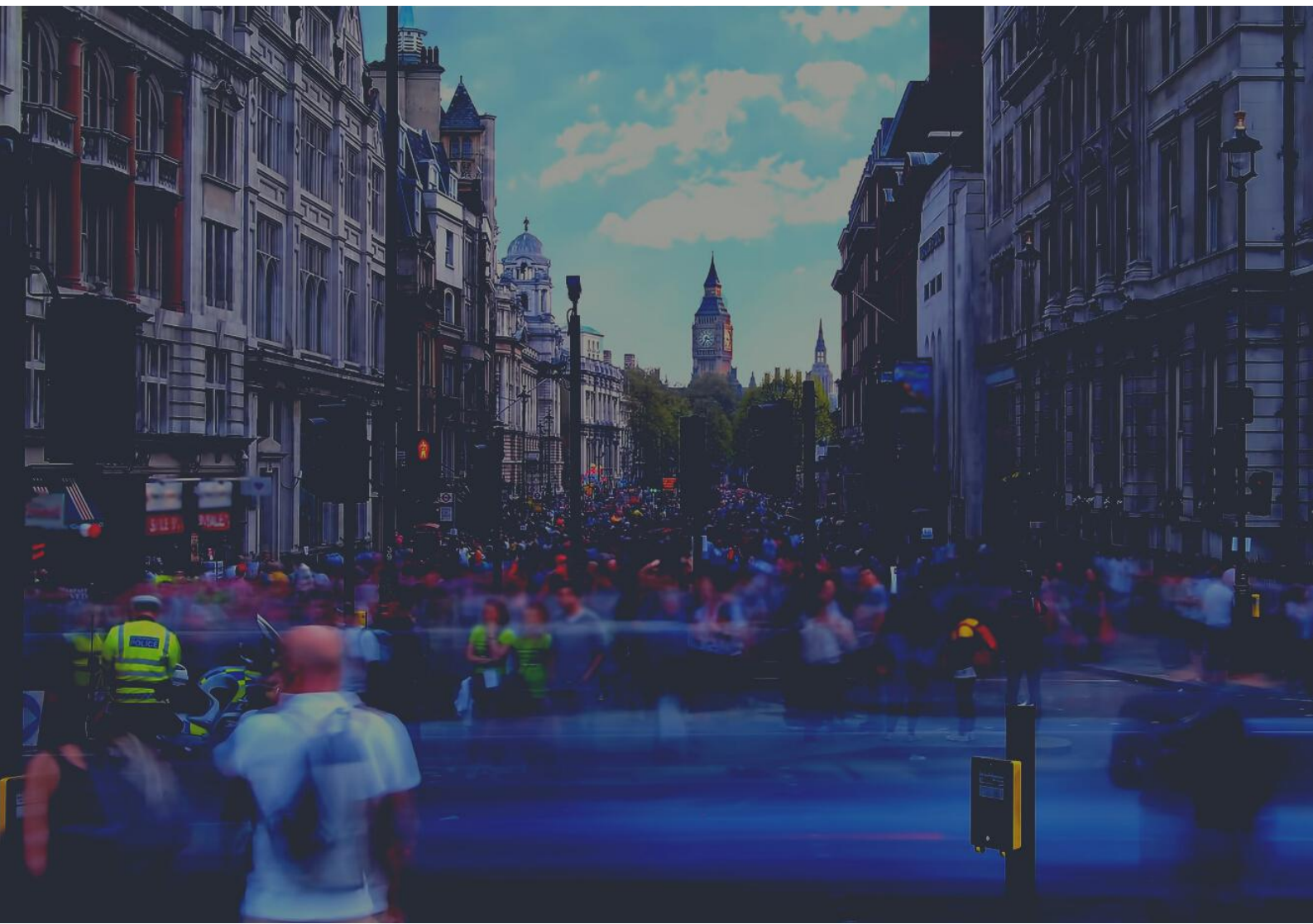


## FROM FEEDBACK TO ACTION

“If you don't take action, I think it's probably worse than anything,” added Lillie. There are cases, however, where some matters are outside HR's control and Lillie said that it's important to explain that to employees.

Bilen agreed that honesty is hugely important and that feedback should be made as simple as possible, in particular, explaining what can and cannot be changed. “I think sometimes we'll collect feedback and nothing happens with it, and that's really frustrating for our people,” Bilen added.

“If you're asking for feedback and there's something you can't do, I think acknowledging it and explaining and responding is really important. And that can then keep the cycle of feedback going and people are willing to engage with you and tell you how they're feeling.”





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