



Cabinet Office

Civil Service Apprenticeships 2021/22 Strategy

Ensuring the Civil Service continues to deliver high-quality apprenticeships

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Contents

Foreword	3
Our Commitment	5
The Case for a 2021 to 2022 Strategy	6
Supporting Post-Covid Economic Recovery	6
Integration of Apprenticeships with wider Civil Service changes	6
Adapting to the changing skills needs of the Civil Service workforce	7
The new Government Curriculum and Apprenticeships	8
What it means for our apprentices in practice	9
Case Study	10
Case Study	11
Routes and Pathways to Apprenticeships	12
Measuring Success beyond a Numerical Target	13
Long-Term Career Progression	13
A Civil Service for Everyone	13
Annexe A – Success Measures	14
Embedding Apprenticeships	14
Accountability and Governance	14
Apprentice Experience	15
Branding and Marketing	15
Contract Management	16
Effective Measurement	16

[Back of contents page – for printed publications. This page is blank]

Foreword

In July 2016, the former Prime Minister set out the government's mission to create a country where everyone has the chance to go as far as their talent and hard work will allow regardless of background. The Prime Minister reaffirmed this commitment in June 2020¹ with increased energy to ensure opportunity is spread across the whole of the UK. The Civil Service continues to share this aspiration and recognises there is still more to be done to build on the progress we have made in the past five years.



2020/21 has also presented the country with the greatest challenge it has faced in a generation. The impact of Covid-19 has disrupted lives and is causing economic hardship across the UK. The Civil Service has a role to play in supporting the government to 'build back better' on behalf of citizens and communities everywhere.

A strong pipeline of Civil Service apprentices is fundamental to making these ambitions a reality, building a workforce that reflects society and will play a full part in levelling up the country. Our additional responsibilities, post-COVID, make this the right time to revisit the Apprenticeship Strategy first published in January 2017; and also, to ensure that we maximise the potential of the Apprenticeship Levy, the flagship reform introduced in 2016 to improve the UK's skills base.

For this reason, we are revising our approach to apprenticeships, split across two clear phases:

1. Extending the ambitious targets we set for the Civil Service. In 2021/22 the Civil Service will deliver apprenticeship starts equal to 2.3% of its current workforce in England. We will continue to work with the Devolved Administrations (DAs) to ensure that high-quality apprenticeship opportunities are available to all civil servants, regardless of their place of work.
2. In parallel, working with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, we will review the Civil Service's approach to apprenticeships and which elements – as an employer – have the most bearing on quality: for example, the relevance of the training; the value of outsourcing; the speed of progression, alignment with T Level Industrial Placements for 16 to 19-year-olds; Work Placements and Internships.

Five years since the launch of the Apprenticeship Levy and our Apprenticeship Strategy, it is the moment to pool our collective experiences, reflect again on our goals and consider afresh how best to achieve them.

The recently published 'Better Training, Knowledge and Networks: the New Curriculum and Campus for Government Skills'² will guide us in this work.

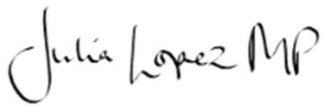
¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-economy-speech-30-june-2020>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-new-curriculum-and-campus-for-government-skills/better-training-knowledge-and-networks-the-new-curriculum-and-campus-for-government-skills>

Civil Service Apprenticeships 2021 to 2022 Strategy

As the department with responsibility for the whole Civil Service, we are delighted with what has been achieved over the past five years including the delivery of the government target of 30,000 starts by the end of March 2021. This increases our drive to see this strategy fully embedded across the Civil Service, ensuring the increase of skills for our civil servants, creating opportunities across the whole of the UK and leading the way for the public sector.

We recognise that only by doing so can we build a country, economy and society that works for all.



Julia Lopez
Parliament Secretary for the Cabinet Office



Alex Chisholm
Civil Service Chief Operating Officer

Our Commitment

The Civil Service continues to recruit large numbers of apprentices across the country, into a range of roles and professions. The legislative target of achieving 2.3% of our workforce for the current year, April 2021 to March 2022, will help us to ensure that apprenticeships remain at the forefront of our strategic workforce plans and capability pipelines. The Civil Service saw year on year growth against the 2.3%, with 2.1% in 2019/20, our commitment is to build on this progress in 2021 to 2022.

The Civil Service's aim for apprentices is about more than just numbers. It is our commitment to improving social mobility and strengthening the skills base of the Civil Service, through high-quality training and development, embedded in professional career paths and accessible to all prospective and existing staff. Apprenticeships are not linked to age or background and opportunities should be available to help everyone fulfil their potential – this is all part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee. Reforms and investment will mean better quality apprenticeships are available across the country, leading to a more prosperous, productive and fairer country.

We are committed to:

- offering apprenticeships to people across the UK of any age, any background, any level and any profession;
- developing an 'apprenticeships first' culture within the Civil Service;
- continuing to develop and strengthen our corporate functions to drive this agenda forward;
- enhancing greater accountability through improved governance, collation and use of data and management information;
- ensuring our apprenticeship strategy, approaches and measures links to our wider Civil Service aims such as delivering a Civil Service for Everyone, Places for Growth and developing Great People; and
- continuing to share best practice approaches and collaborate with our wider public sector colleagues to improve apprenticeship provision.

The Cabinet Office will support departments to achieve the Civil Service's commitments on apprenticeships through strategic leadership and monitoring. It remains the responsibility of the departments to ultimately deliver the numbers and quality of apprenticeships. They have agreed to achieve 2.3% of their workforce in England as apprenticeship starts, with similar levels of growth in their UK Home Civil Service workforce outside of England.

This strategy is intended to apply to the UK Home Civil Service. While the legislative and Civil Service target of 2.3% of the workforce as apprenticeship starts annually applies to England only, the Civil Service expects to see similar levels of growth among UK home civil servants employed in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We are engaging with the Devolved Administrations, as well as UK Government departments that employ UK home civil servants based in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, to ensure that high-quality apprenticeship opportunities are available to all civil servants, regardless of their place of work.

The Case for a 2021 to 2022 Strategy

The original business case for apprenticeships, as published in the 2017 Civil Service Apprenticeship Strategy³, remains as strong as ever and continues to provide the foundation for the drive for increasing apprenticeships in the Civil Service.

This 2021 to 2022 strategy is intended to respond to the specific short and medium-term challenges the Civil Service currently faces including:

- supporting the UK's post-Covid economic recovery;
- integration of apprenticeships with wider Civil Service reforms; and
- adapting to the changing skills needs of the Civil Service workforce.

Supporting Post-Covid Economic Recovery

It is estimated there are almost 1.7 million people currently unemployed because of the impact of Covid-19, in addition to thousands of young people whose final year of education has been disrupted before they enter the labour market.

To support the creation of jobs and rebuild our economy we must continue to enhance the range of jobs and opportunities for learning through apprenticeships across our organisations.

The Civil Service has adapted and responded to the challenges apprentices have encountered as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, publishing guidance on 'Providing apprenticeships during the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak'⁴ and we must continue to recognise and respond to these challenges across the public sector.

A 2021 to 2022 strategy gives the Civil Service the short-term flexibility to respond to these issues and the latitude to change course in future.

Integration of Apprenticeships with wider Civil Service changes

The Civil Service is currently undergoing several changes to the way it delivers services; we will ensure the apprenticeship strategy aligns to these as they develop. This presents an opportunity to align the apprenticeship strategy with these wider strategic aims. Cabinet Office will look to converge apprenticeships with our 'Emerging Talent' strategy for 2022 to 2023 and beyond that will cover Apprenticeships, T Levels and Schools Outreach with links to the Fast Stream and similar programmes.

A 2021 to 2022 strategy allows the Civil Service an opportunity to align apprenticeships with wider activity in areas such as the Estates Strategy, Talent Strategy and wider strategic workforce

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/586181/The_Civil_Service_Apprenticeship_Strategy.pdf

4

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957704/Providing_apprenticeships_during_the_coronavirus_COVID-19_outbreak.pdf

planning to ensure that apprenticeship recruitment is sustainable alongside the wider reforms occurring within the Civil Service.

Adapting to the changing skills needs of the Civil Service workforce

Our apprenticeship strategy will continue to focus on ensuring that all our civil servants have excellent opportunities to develop the right skills at the required levels. This will be delivered by using current apprenticeship standards and development of others where there is the identification of specific capability and skills gaps within the Civil Service such as universal administrative core abilities and areas where highly technical expertise is required including the Civil Service's grasp of science and data.

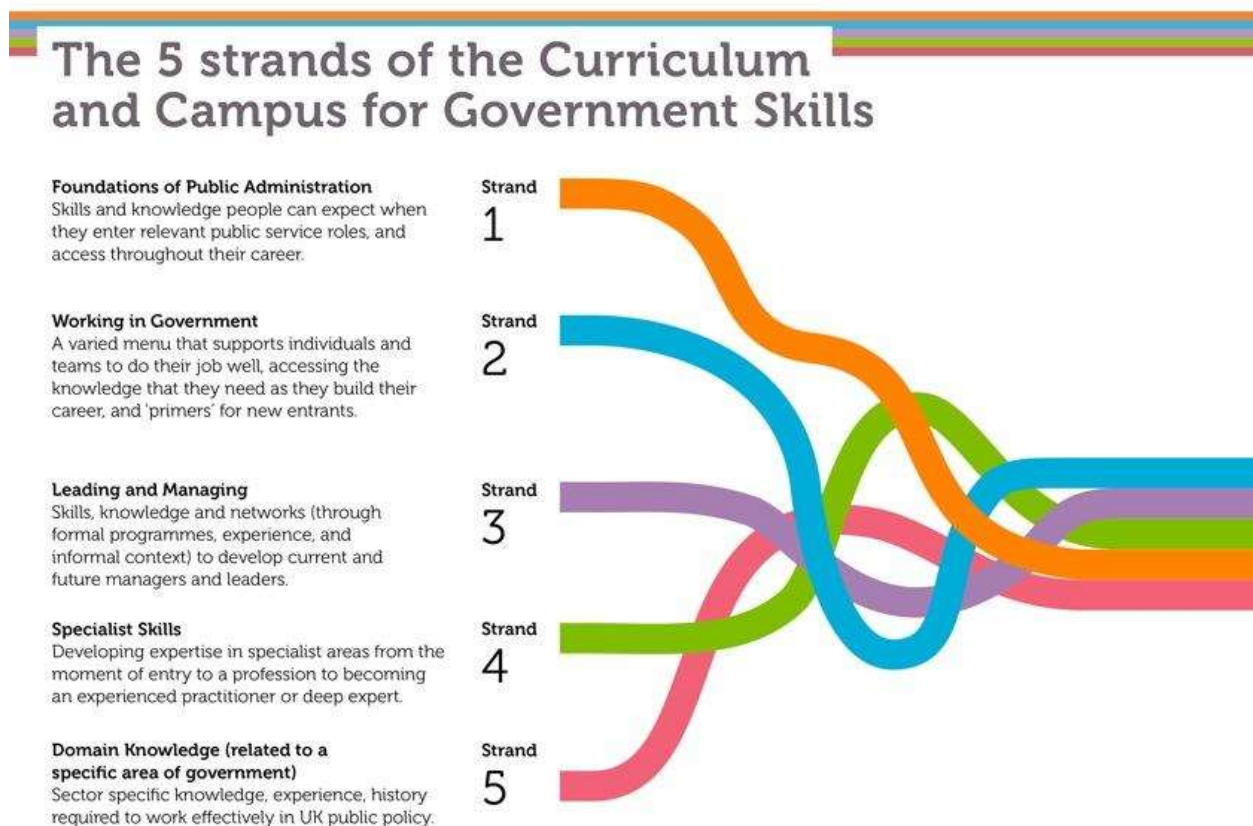
For example, current standards include the level 3 Operational Delivery officer ensuring the needs of the public are met in our many contact centres or a Level 6 Chartered Surveyor apprentice developing the skills and experience needed to offer property advice to businesses and individuals. Future skills needs have led to the introduction of new Standards where required, such as the Level 6 Cyber Security apprenticeship and Level 7 Senior People professional.

Through the continued development and use of new standards with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) and learning providers we will ensure these apprenticeships are contextualised and relevant for our organisation's needs.

Moreover, our approaches will work congruently with the Civil Service's recently published five core curriculum strands⁵ that will enhance the required skills and development of our people. This will strengthen the resilience and flexibility of our workforce that will also enable us to grow our own talent further reducing reliance on external consultants and expertise.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-new-curriculum-and-campus-for-government-skills/better-training-knowledge-and-networks-the-new-curriculum-and-campus-for-government-skills>

The new Government Curriculum and Apprenticeships



The new Curriculum and a Campus for Government Skills shows how we will develop better skills, knowledge and networks across five strands, with the aim for the country to build back better.

Our approaches must enhance and embed clear career development pathways across all of our emerging talent agendas including Schools Outreach activities, Kickstart, T Level qualifications and Apprenticeships strengthening accessibility to opportunities ensuring all our people can reach their level of potential irrespective of background or which part of the country they are from.

The Cabinet Office Apprenticeship Coordination Office will continue to provide robust and effective commercial intervention to support Civil Service employers, suppliers and apprentices and drive apprenticeship quality while ensuring best value.

Our 2021/22 strategy allows the Civil Service a period to reassess its current offerings and take steps to respond to any new gaps that have emerged in quality of learning or ability for apprentices to continue to progress their careers; ensuring apprenticeships develop great people for the future Civil Service.

What it means for our apprentices in practice

Strand 1 – Foundations of Public Administration

“My apprenticeship has equipped me with the confidence and skills to pursue a career in the Civil Service. The wider range of professional development opportunities on offer and the support of my colleagues has empowered me to continuously challenge and improve my capabilities.”

Alex, Level 4 Business Administration apprentice, Cabinet Office.

Strand 2 – Working in Government

“A big part of my role is writing The Message to Her Majesty on behalf of the Vice-Chamberlain on a daily basis, relaying all the daily goings-on in the House and in the Chamber.”

Flora, Level 3 Business Administration apprentice, Cabinet Office.

Strand 3 – Leading and Managing

“I feel proud and thankful that I was able to provide an essential service like Universal Credit to the public during a time of national crisis.”

Matthew, Level 2 Business Administration apprentice, Department for Work and Pensions.

Strand 4 – Specialist Skills

“You are such a fundamental cog in such a great scheme of things. When I leave the house, I see people and think how great it is that everyone is using an app I helped develop. It’s all a bit surreal sometimes.”

Charlotte, Level 4 Cyber Security Technologist apprentice, NHS Digital.

Strand 5 – Domain Knowledge

“I’ve had the chance to contribute to a variety of work, including ministerial submissions, working with stakeholders, policy professionals in other government departments and delivering team-building events. All of this enabled me to explore so many avenues to build new skills.”

Nichola, Level 4 Policy apprentice, HM Revenue & Customs.

Case Study

Nikki Hanmer, level 4 policy apprentice

Apprenticeships aren't just for teenagers, and age is no barrier. When mum, Nikki Hanmer, 27, wanted to change career, she set her sights on a Civil Service apprenticeship and hasn't looked back.

Hello, I'm Nikki Hanmer and I'm a recent graduate of the first ever Policy Apprenticeship for HM Revenue & Customs.

I joined HMRC in late 2018 after a decade working in retail and marketing, I was keen for a new challenge, and craved the opportunity to change my career path.

I decided to go for an apprenticeship where I could learn new skills within a structured programme, allowing me to build a strong foundation to fulfil my future career goals.

As a full-time working mum to a nine-year old daughter, I'd always found it a challenge to find any time to dedicate to my own development. But, with my daughter growing up fast, an apprenticeship gave me the ability to do just that, while maintaining that all-important balance between work/home life.

I was the oldest of my cohort, with most others recently leaving education which felt daunting in those first few classroom-based workshops. I felt a little out of place to begin with but I was also determined to succeed.

I believe that my work experience and strong work ethic was critical to my success on the course. Before long, I began exploring networking opportunities within my own department, determined to find other apprentices who – like me – were a little bit older, or had children, so we could learn from each other.

Ministerial submissions

I've had the chance to contribute to a variety of work, including ministerial submissions, working with stakeholders, policy professionals in other government departments and delivering team-building events. All of this enabled me to explore so many avenues to build new skills.

I saw my apprenticeship as a chance to try a variety of work. I really wanted to gain a deeper understanding and appreciate the range of work done by the Civil Service, while building my portfolio to support my learning journey.

My line managers go above and beyond to support me, they've always ensured I have the right work to compliment my study and answer my never-ending questions!

Push yourself

To anyone considering a Civil Service apprenticeship, if you're willing to push yourself out of your comfort zone, learn new skills with on-the-job training and work hard, then give it a whirl.

Now after two years, I am a fully qualified newly promoted Civil Service apprentice. Yes, I've got a certificate confirming my achievement. But what I've also gained is lasting friendships, new skills, a new-found inner confidence and a promising new career.



Case Study

Matthew I'anson, level 2 business administration apprentice

Making the leap from growing up in care to a Civil Service career and working on the frontline during Covid-19 didn't happen easily. Matthew I'anson recalls his experience joining the Civil Service through the Talent Diversity Internship Programme

My name is Matthew I'anson and I work in the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) as part of the Security Profession Capability team.

I joined the Civil Service through the Talent Diversity Internship Programme (TDIP) and enrolled on a Level 2 Business Administration apprenticeship as part of the scheme's offer.

Like everyone on the TDIP scheme, I grew up in care. I spent most of my childhood in foster homes, as well as some time in a residential children's home in Spain. Unlike many care leavers, I did well academically and went on to study at university. Yet, after graduating, I found myself without many prospects and ending up working in fast food for five years.

I decided to apply for the Civil Service when my partner told me about the TDIP scheme. He worked for the Civil Service. I knew from his experience that the Civil Service was a good place to work, having seen first-hand all the help, support and development opportunities he received.

Joining DWP

When I applied to the TDIP scheme, I didn't even know which department I would be working for, let alone which area or team. Shortly after my interview, I learned that I had been successful and was offered a role in DWP, within Security and Data Protection.

I started my new job at the beginning of March 2020 and, in the space of three weeks, I was redeployed from my new role in Security into working on the frontlines of Universal Credit during the Covid-19 crisis. Now I was based in a job centre in Leeds.

This was a challenging start to my experience. I had only just started to settle into my normal team and was still learning about DWP and Security and Data Protection within it. I had also just started my apprenticeship and was a little worried about how this would affect it.

As it turned out, my time working in a jobcentre and later in the Virtual Service Centre was a challenging but hugely rewarding experience.

Proud and thankful

I feel proud and thankful that I was able to help provide an essential service to the public during a time of national crisis.

I've been lucky enough to have some great experiences and opportunities. I have been selected to sit on the Security and Data Protection senior leadership team board to represent an alternative viewpoint.

I have now experienced directly the help, support and development opportunities my partner told me about. My advice about Civil Service apprenticeships? Go for it!



Routes and Pathways to Apprenticeships

We continue to have three main routes through which we will identify apprentices:

External recruitment

Where appropriate apprenticeships will be offered when recruiting externally including using the new apprenticeship matching service.⁶ Going one step further, we will encourage an ‘apprentice first’ approach where entry-level roles are initially considered as an apprenticeship, as appropriate. This will include encouraging 16 to 21 year olds, through our schools outreach and Civil Service Industry Placements, to consider an apprenticeship as an alternative to university.

Internal opportunities to retrain and upskill

We will target apprenticeships where there are capability gaps within the existing Civil Service workforce.

Evolving the current apprenticeship provision

Building on collaborations with the professions, functions and departments, and strategically aligning to career paths and embedding into workforce plans. We will continue to flex our apprenticeship offer to meet the needs of the Civil Service as a whole, identifying gaps in existing apprenticeship standards, working with employers to develop new apprenticeships for the wider economy.

For these routes to be maintained and optimised, the Civil Service will need to evolve the processes and practices established from the previous apprenticeship strategy. Embedding best practice across government departments, professions and functions to ensure the best candidates are recruited into the correct apprenticeship roles. Actively establishing recruitment campaigns that are open and accessible to all candidates, ensuring we develop a Civil Service that is visibly and confidently representative of the society it serves.

⁶ <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://apprentice-support.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/employer&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1614164868958000&usg=AOvVaw2PZYqHEceRfA0YGAKbJmNM>

Measuring Success beyond a Numerical Target

Now that apprenticeships are well established and integrated across government, the need to focus on quality and rigour has become increasingly important as the apprenticeship landscape evolves. This document is intended to do exactly that. Guiding departments in their development of apprenticeship strategies and setting the level of ambition for apprenticeship programmes across the Civil Service.

The success of the Apprenticeship Programme is focused on six main areas:

- Embedding Apprenticeships
- Accountability and Governance
- Apprenticeship Experience
- Branding and Marketing
- Contract Management
- Effective Measurement

A list of measures and goals to monitor progress against each strategic aim can be found at Annexe A.

Long-Term Career Progression

The Civil Service will track our return on investment by monitoring the progress of former apprentices as they continue their careers. This will ensure that apprenticeships represent a real career alternative, help to understand the impact that training had on the apprentice's career outcomes and the demonstrate the benefits they have brought to the business.

A Civil Service for Everyone

Apprenticeships are an opportunity for all. Our diversity commitment is to ensure all regions across the UK have equal access to apprenticeships to support the government inclusion agenda. We will have a data-driven approach to inform the right policy interventions, allowing for enhanced diversity and social mobility. We will therefore support all aims to increase the percentage of apprentices from ethnic minority backgrounds, monitor the socio-economic and educational backgrounds of all our apprentices and halve the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people.

Annexe A – Success Measures

Embedding Apprenticeships

Ambition		Delivering...	Outcome
1.	Embedding apprenticeships ensuring they are part of wider strategic thinking on resourcing	...workforce projections that identify apprenticeship roles ...recruitment campaigns throughout the year for large scale recruitment	...early talent strategies in each department ...cross-government schedule of campaigns that can be published on the Civil Service Careers website
2.	A full range of relevant Standards are being used across departments.	...a wide variety of professions, levels and qualifications covered by existing Standards	...data collected demonstrates the range of Standards on offer across departments ...register of apprenticeship roles
3.	Apprenticeship strategies are aligned with wider strategies including Estates, D&I, and Workforce Projections	...long term, sustainable numbers of apprentices across the Civil Service	...joined up departmental approaches to apprenticeships which are congruent across strategies

Accountability and Governance

Ambition		Delivering...	Outcome...
1.	To continue with internal Civil Service boards and ensure accountability of targets	...senior stakeholders will have a clear understanding of their responsibilities towards targets on recruitment, completions and conversions.	...regular meetings, feeding into HR Function Board

Apprentice Experience

	Ambition	Delivering...	Outcome...
1.	To improve the day-to-day experience of apprentices	...the sharing of best practice in areas such as line manager training, induction and networking	...apprentice satisfaction score improves over the year
2.	To develop career pathways for apprentices	... support for apprentices who are near to completion, allowing them opportunities to continue to develop and clear options of next steps	...increased numbers of apprentices completing their apprenticeships, moving into permanent roles in the Civil Service. Exit surveys showing good support towards the end of training.

Branding and Marketing

	Ambition	Delivering...	Outcome...
1.	To develop external engagement plan to promote Civil Service Apprenticeships	...key information about opportunities within the Civil Service on the Civil Service Careers website and through social media	...regular updates included on the website ...traffic to the website monitored and sees increase in visits as content is refreshed and updated
2.	To develop network of apprentices who are willing to support outreach work	...sharing experiences with potential apprentices	...outreach work supported by group of apprentices through blogs, visits, website content

Contract Management

Ambition		Delivering...	Outcome...
1.	To increase accountability for learning providers on the quality of provision	...better quality training for apprentices ...better management information available to departments on their provision	...apprentice satisfaction score linked to learning experience ...apprentice satisfaction score linked to increased starts and completions
2.	To increase the number of quality learning providers available to deliver learning	...allowing departments to have choice over which learning providers to work with	... apprentice satisfaction score linked to increased number of learning providers

Effective Measurement

Ambition		Delivering...	Outcome...
1.	To develop and embed a high-quality data collection across the Civil Service, aiming for 100% coverage and completion of the data request.	...a robust baseline of data to develop strong targets and metrics of success.	...apprenticeship level/ type/ profession/ location, as well as demographic data of apprentices.
2.	To improve the tracking data for apprenticeships once they have completed programmes	...a better understanding of progression and benefits of apprenticeships	...evidence of where apprentices go after completion of their apprenticeships.

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