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OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Helen Mills
HR Director
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology

[12] July 2024

RE: Emily Middleton - Exception 1 (Temporary Appointments) Approval

Dear Helen,

Thank you for your request to appoint Emily Middleton as Director General, Digital Centre (SCS Pay Band 3) in the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) for a period of up to 24 months, using Exception 1 (Temporary Appointments) of the Recruitment Principles (2018). The Commission's prior approval is required as Emily Middleton's appointment is at SCS Pay Band 3 grade.

Following the Machinery of Government changes announced on Monday 8th July 2024, the Director General, Digital Centre at DSIT is a priority role that should be filled immediately. This a new role within the department at a time when expectations are high, and there is substantial, long-term design work to complete. The post is a leadership position required to meet several developmental priorities at pace. This includes developing the overall scope and strategy for the Digital Centre for Government and delineating which elements of the public sector are within or outside the digital remit's capability. The role will also decide what projects should be prioritised for the Digital Centre and the funding required to deliver the department's digital ambition. Additionally, the appointee is expected to lead decisions regarding what functions and authorities the Digital Centre for Government needs to have ownership and or/oversight over. Responsibilities also extend to determining an appropriate organisational structure, considering how the key functions and disciplines across government should be collated to support the wider mission, and building relevant relationships within and outside the Civil Service.

The appointee is currently a 'Partner' at Public Digital, having been recruited by the former leaders of the UK's Government Digital Service to their consultancy. The appointee's experience in enabling national and subnational governments to set up and scale transformative digital units, including collaborating across departmental silos, accelerating delivery, attracting and retaining technology talent and reforming public procurement of IT, has meant Emily has demonstrated the skills and expertise necessary to perform this role. Internal discussions identified Emily as an ideal candidate to fulfil Director General key responsibilities, alongside informal discussions with the SoS and Permanent Secretary to ensure suitability.

The department views that the requirements for this role do not fit within the usual Civil Service skill-set. The appointment mandates an individual to lead within a complex organisational structure following Machinery of Government changes. It would be extremely challenging to successfully recruit externally at present, as potential candidates are likely to be deterred by the immaturity and uncertainty of the digital portfolio. Furthermore, Director General pay-levels - even at the highest end of the spectrum - are significantly lower than typical digital industry remuneration.

Importantly, once the new Digital Centre for Government is scoped, designed and implemented, the department endeavours to advertise through a fair and open competition.

**The Rt Hon Baroness Gisela Stuart of Edgbaston
First Civil Service Commissioner**



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Having considered the business case provided, I am content to approve the appointment of Emily Middleton using Exception 1 (Temporary Appointments) of the Recruitment Principles (2018), for a period of up to 24 months, concluding no later than 15 July 2026.¹ Please note, should the position at Director General level become available on a permanent basis, the department must seek to recruit via an external, fair and open competition at the earliest possibility.

It is important that Emily Middleton maintains understanding and adherence to all elements of the Civil Service Code whilst in post, in particular the requirements for objectivity, impartiality, integrity and honesty. Please also ensure that this extension is recorded in the relevant quarterly data survey return to the Commission.

Similarly, please ensure that Emily Middleton is informed of, and understands, the Business Appointments Rules and how they will apply to her at the end of this appointment.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/579758/Business_Appointment_Rules_for_civil_servants.pdf

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gisela Stuart".

Gisela Stuart
First Civil Service Commissioner

¹ Once Emily's dates are confirmed, please ensure you update the Commission.