

Introduction

We have agreed a new organisation strategy for OfS, which will be launched imminently. This builds on our original strategy and establishes how we will achieve our four regulatory objectives, with a renewed focus on ensuring that providers comply with the minimum requirements.

In our new organisation strategy, we make the following commitments...

Efficiency & effectiveness

We will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our systems and processes

Reduce regulatory burden

We will seek to reduce regulatory burden... (so providers can be) unencumbered by unnecessary bureaucracy

Develop skills & competencies

We will continue to develop the skills and competencies of our staff and equip them with the right tools and technologies

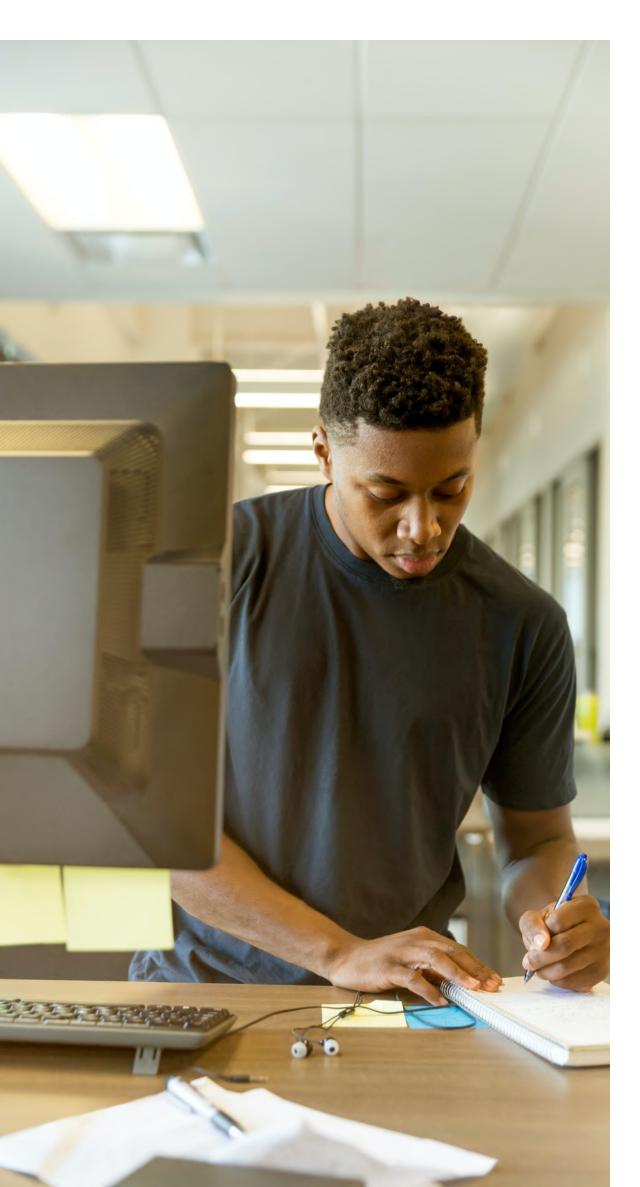
When we were established in 2018 there was an initial programme of work that helped us establish our technical foundations. That has left us with a suite of best-in-class cloud-hosted applications that give us a great technical foundation to build from.

In 2018 there were lots of new processes we had to create, with supporting practices, procedures and software. We have had to build many of our digital workflows from scratch - there are areas where we have made good progress and areas that still need a lot of work.

COVID was a catalyst for adopting new digital ways of working. One example is that we have moved much of our events programme online – this has led to a large increase in attendances, made OfS more accessible and lowered the cost of delivery.

A lot of the good work we have done utilises good digital practices – conducting user research with students, adapting to change, building solutions that we trial with our prototype team and then adapt, and adopting digital collaboration practices.

Much of this digital strategy is about how we can continue to do that, while addressing how we will go about offering a better experience to the providers that we regulate, ultimately improving the student experience.



Vision for change

Our digital strategy outlines an approach which will help us deliver some of the objectives within our organisation strategy, running for three years between 2022 and 2025. It covers the experience we provide to our users, how we operate as an organisation, how we utilise data, our digital culture, and how we deliver and implement digital change.

Our vision for digital is...

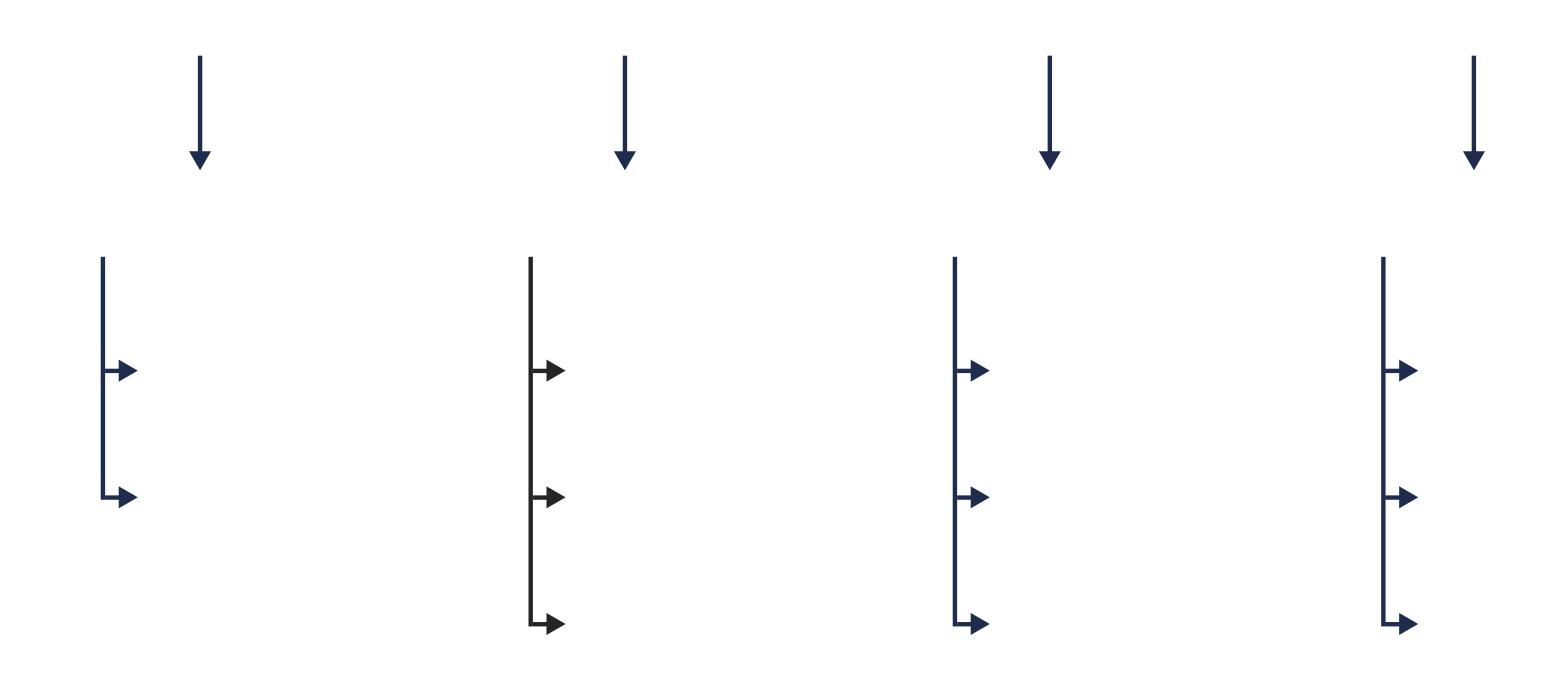
We will improve the student experience by using digital to more effectively regulate providers, and we will deliver value to the taxpayer by improving our organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

We will achieve this through focusing on:

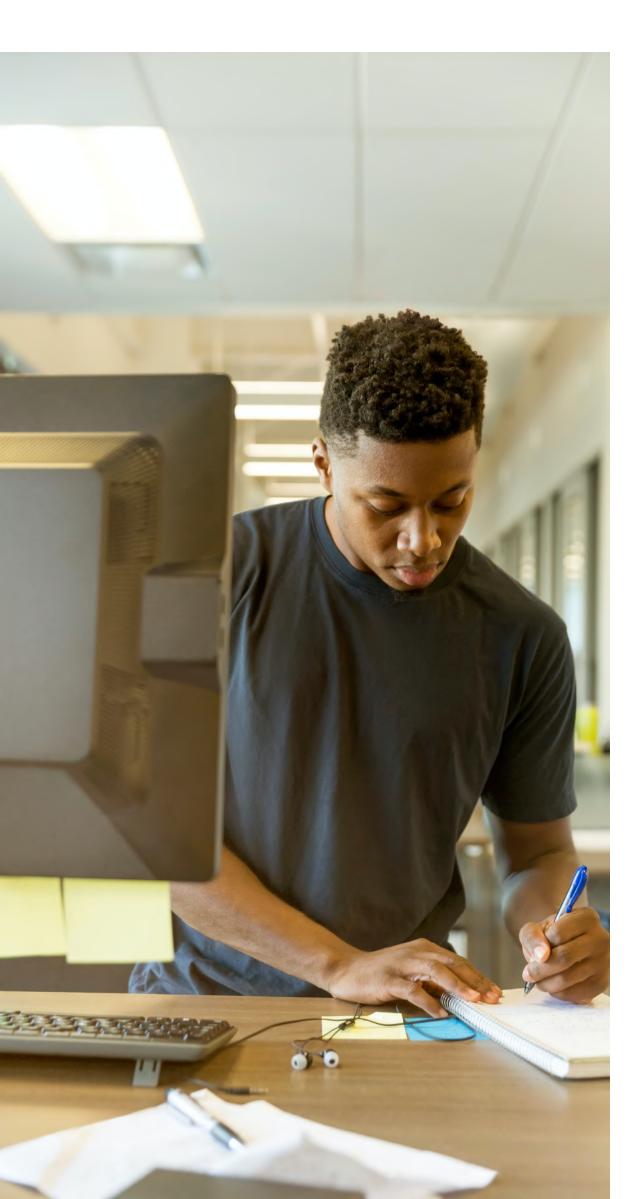
- Improving the Provider Experience, by developing our digital solutions to make it easier for providers to share information, report events, upload data, and see their history with us.
- Increasing our Organisational Efficiency and Effectiveness, which will help us deliver value for money to the taxpayer and providers that fund our work.
- Improving our Transformation Delivery and Digital Culture, enabling us to effect organisational change and develop our digital ways of working.
- Ensuring we **Value and Utilise Our Business Data** so that we can use data intelligently and analytically to measure our performance and identify areas for improvements.

Strategy structure

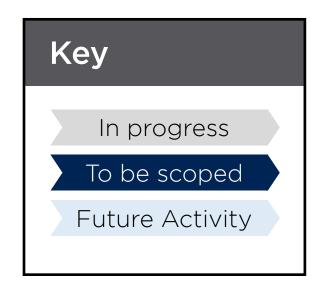


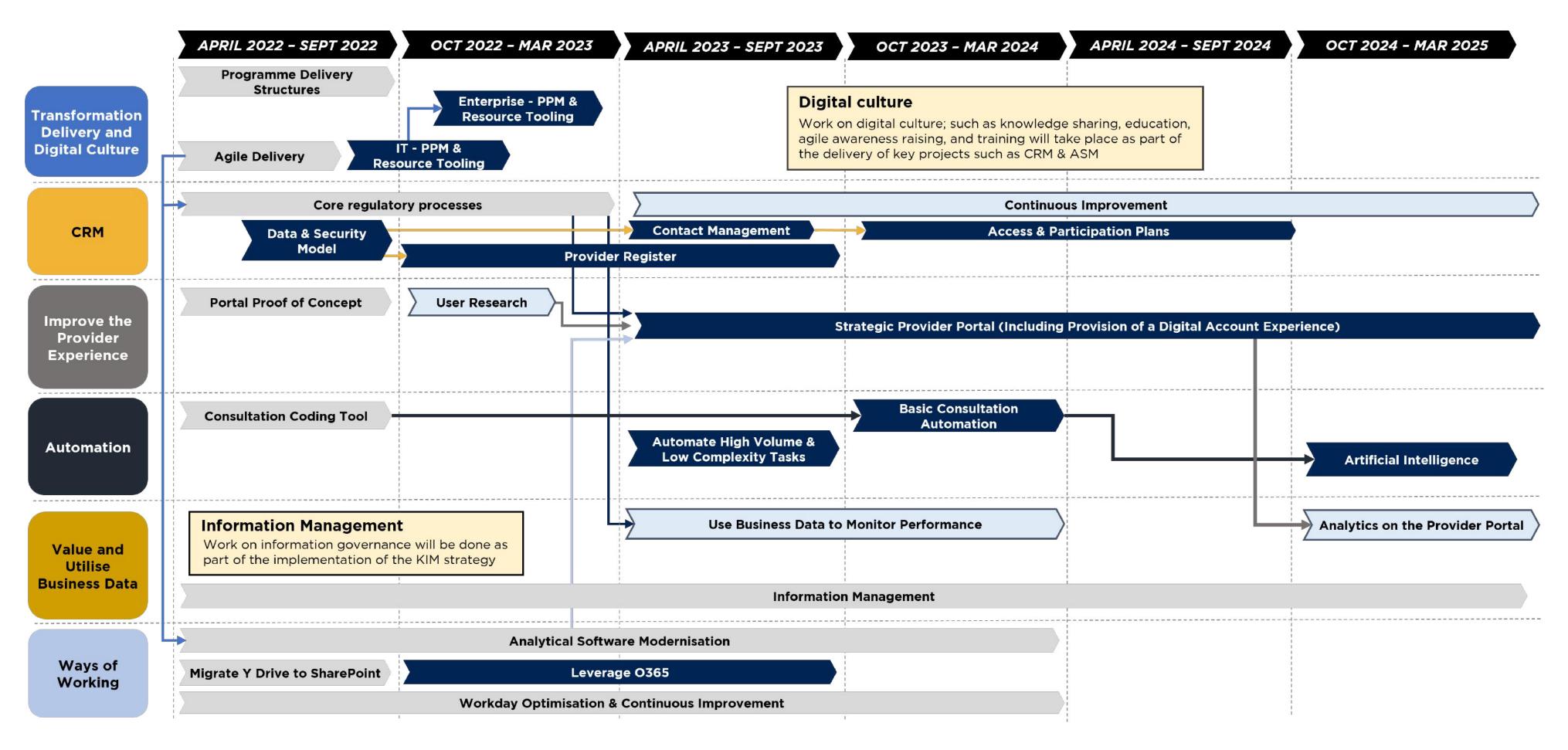


Missions

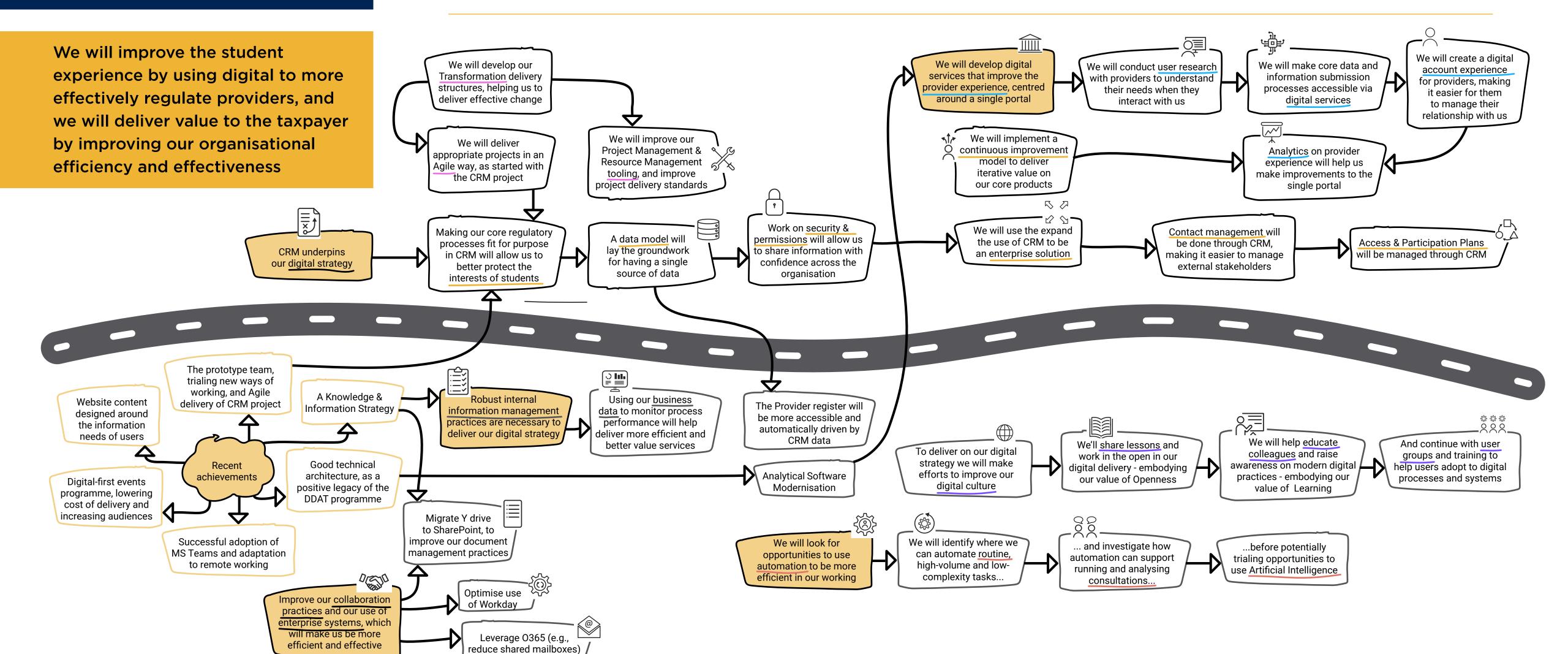


Roadmap - Timeline





Roadmap - Visual



Description

These design principles were designed by the Government Digital Service

They were first created as part of the **www.gov.uk** website development in 2011. They were published in April 2012 and have since been adopted and used across government.

These design principles have informed some of the key objectives in the digital strategy.

Office for Students will be adopting these design principles moving forward. Further information about each principle is available at www.gov.uk/guidance/government-design-principles.

Design Principles

- Start with identifying user needs
- 2 Do Less
- 3 Design with Data
- 4 Do the hard work to make it more simple
- 5 Iterate. Then iterate again
- 6 This is for everyone
- 7 Understand context
- 8 Build Digital Services, not websites
- 9 Be consistent, not uniform
- Make things open: it makes things better





We will develop our digital solutions to make it easier for providers to share information, report events, upload data, and see their history with us.

Improve the provider experience

Objective 1: Build online digital services

To perform our role as a regulator we rely on providers sharing information and data with us on a wide range of topics, including student performance, access and participation, their internal operations, etc. The data we collect informs the basis for our decision making and gives an insight into how well providers are complying with our regulatory framework. We will make it easier for providers to share data with us, and look to make these processes as simple and effective as possible.

Understanding providers' needs is key to achieving this; we will work with providers to develop our digital service offering and deliver a streamlined and user-friendly experience. We will use digital technology to realise this, implementing a webbased portal where providers can manage their regulatory requirements.

Objective 2: Create a digital account experience for providers

Within the portal for managing interactions, we will provide an account experience for providers, that provides key information, dates and news items. By creating digital accounts for providers, we will create a tailored experience which gives them access to the information and tools to manage their own regulatory obligations. This will make it easier for us to get the information we need from providers in a timely way, and make it simpler for providers to fulfil their obligations so they can focus their efforts on their students.

We will use the portal as a platform to offer services which allow providers to view their action history, see upcoming deadlines, guidance and reminders to complete tasks. To maximise the value of this service, we must align it to the needs of the users and validate our assumptions with targeted user research.



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Improve the provider experience

Build online digital services

Required activities

- Conduct user research to establish value demand, user need and provider requirements
- Design forms and workflows for submitting key information (surveys, A&P plans, regulatory information, etc.)
- Portal to be delivered by CRM and ASM programmes of work using Agile delivery techniques
- Decommission the current Extranet portal

Risks

There is a risk we focus too much on replacing the existing technical functionality at the expense of delivering an improved service for our customers – this will be mitigated against by conducting user research

For staff this will mean

- Improved, more streamlined methods of corresponding with and managing registered providers.
- Portal will allow better data sharing, which will empower our colleagues to perform their regulatory duties and will reduce the amount of time they spend locating information and chasing providers for submissions.
- Clearer channels of communication with providers – leading to better levels of service.

Assumptions

We have enough dedicated internal resource to design and deliver the portal.

This will be measured by

- Benefits realised from ASM & CRM programmes.
- Reporting and analytics linked to the portal
- Feedback from users confirming that changes have made improvements to the provider experience

Dependencies

- Provider portal needs to integrate with CRM, which will become the master source of provider data.
- Dependent on effective collaboration between ASM and CRM teams to ensure a joined up, effective service for all users.

Objective Ownership

'To be agreed'



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Improve the provider experience

Create a digital account experience for providers

Required activities

- Conduct user research with providers to establish key priority requirements for improving their experience.
- Design the portal, in a way that is consistent with the website brand guidelines and user experience.
- Establish Agile project team to incrementally deliver new functionality to portal.

Assumptions

- There is an appetite and understanding within the organisation about the importance of this objective.
- That the portal will be accessed via the OfS website.

For staff this will mean

- A reduction in the volume
 of failure demand relating to
 provider correspondence and the
 information available to providers,
 freeing up staff time.
- By providing a more dedicated service where providers can access useful, relevant information relating to regulation and their obligations, we will reduce the effort required of them to meet our demands. This will provide us with more timely, correct information and also allow our colleagues to dedicate more time to key regulatory activity.

Risks

- Other internal workstreams/ projects take priority over this.
- That we don't resource the user research adequately to maximise the benefits.

This will be measured by

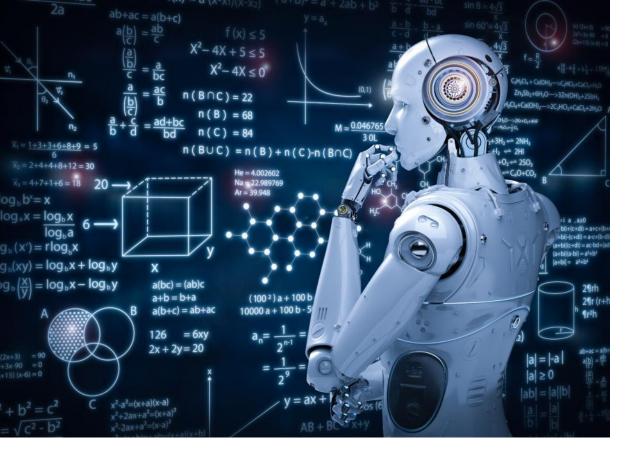
- Reporting and Analytics which link to the Portal.
- Timeliness of responses from providers.
- Feedback from users confirming that changes have made improvements to the provider experience.

Dependencies

Reliant on the Provider Portal being delivered by CRM and ASM projects.

Objective Ownership

'To be agreed'



Improved organisational efficiency and effectiveness will help us deliver value for money to the taxpayers and providers that fund out work.

Organisational efficiency & effectiveness

Objective 1: Use automation effectively to support human decision making

We want to be smarter about how we make decisions, using automation to reduce manual processes and to support our analysis. We will review the way we collect and process data we receive from our stakeholders and identify means of leveraging our tools to streamline and automate processes.

This will start with streamlining high-volume, low-complexity processes, but we may also investigate opportunities to use Artificial Intelligence and more advanced uses of automation.

Objective 2: CRM system to be an enterprise solution

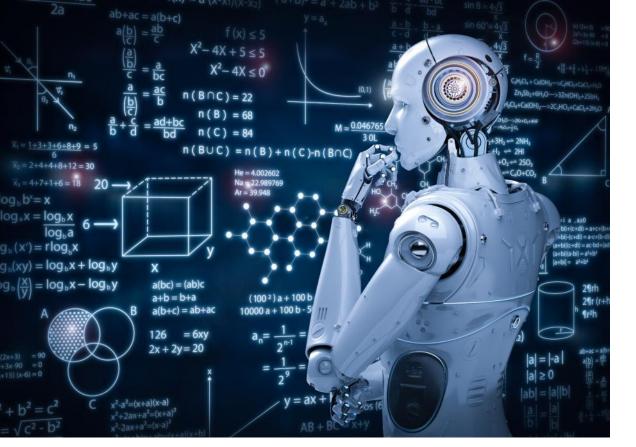
Our CRM platform is an important enabler that underpins several of our strategic goals. It needs to support the delivery of our core regulatory processes. It will form the basis of both an updated provider register and a provider portal. It will help us manage contacts and communications with stakeholders, access and participation plans, and funding data.

The initial priority is to continue to make the CRM fit for purpose for our core regulatory workflows. This will allow us to regulate in an effective and efficient way. We will then define a data model and security model to ensure that the CRM platform can operate as a single source of truth for data, and can be used to share sensitive information in an appropriate way. We will develop a programme of work that will help us realise the potential of the CRM platform to be the foundation for our digital services.

Objective 3: Consistent ways of working

In order to operate more efficiently we must make use of the systems we have and the way we use them. This will create consistency and reduce complexity and costs. Duplication and siloed working are a common problem in the organisation, where processes are driven by information which already exists elsewhere. To combat this, we must focus on using our enterprise systems to manage our data and facilitate collaboration.

As with the CRM initiative, we need to improve how we share information internally, keeping accurate, central sources of data which is available to those who need it. We will reduce the use of shared mailboxes and shared drives, in favour of more visible, traceable options available through our Microsoft products and Workday. This will help our colleagues to work together, reduce manual processes and improve record keeping and compliance.



We want to be smarter about how we complete routine tasks, using automation to reduce manual processes and to support our analysis. We will review the way we collect and process data we receive from our stakeholders and identify means of leveraging our tools to streamline and automate processes.

This will start with streamlining high-volume, low-complexity processes, but we may also investigate opportunities to use Artificial Intelligence and more advanced uses of automation.

Organisational efficiency & effectiveness

Use automation effectively to support human decision making

Required activities

- Review consultation process and possibilities offered by automation
- Run a Proof of Concept to prove the value of an automated consultation response analysis tool.
- CRM and Consistent ways
 of working workstreams will
 automate processes due their
 underlying enterprise technology
 and workflow automation
 capabilities.

For staff this will mean

- Staff will spend less time dedicated to manual, repetitive processes.
- Automating processes will make staff available to perform valueadded activities such as analysis and decision making.
- Faster access to information will drive faster decision making

This will be measured by

- Reduced time taken to complete consultation process
- Reduced time to complete affected regulatory processes

Dependencies

The CRM workstream will be responsible for identifying and delivering much of the regulatory process automation.

Assumptions

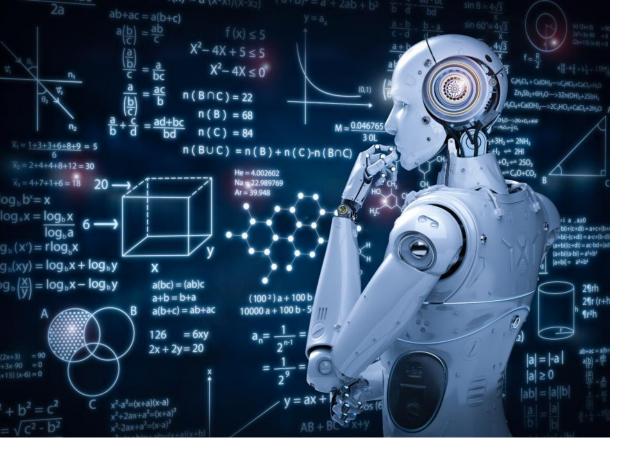
Our leadership and colleagues are aware of the benefits and efficiencies that automation can deliver.

Risks

Consultation analysis is a specialist activity and there may be some legal push-back to using advanced automation tooling to assist the activity.

Objective Ownership

• 'To be agreed'



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Organisational efficiency & effectiveness

CRM system to be an enterprise solution

Required activities

- Identify an organisational-level SRO for CRM
- · Establish data model
- Establish security and permissions model for
- Continue the CRM work for core regulatory work as the main priority
- Expand CRM use to enable workflow between CASP, Legal and AIS.
- Use CRM for enterprise contact management.
- Create a strategic provider
 database in CRM which serves as
 the master source of Register data
 and feeds the published version of
 the Register on the website.

Assumptions

The regulatory process is complex and varied and will need to be well defined before systems are reconfigured.

For staff this will mean

- Reduced operational risk by using CRM as a central store of regulatory data
- More efficient processes due to workflow automation in CRM
- Improved collaboration and reduced information siloes between business areas
- Reporting and metrics to help manage tasks and workload
- Better collaboration through improved visibility of work

Dependencies

- Alignment between the business and project team regarding Agile delivery principles.
- Effective programme level prioritization and resourcing to ensure projects are delivered.

Objective Ownership

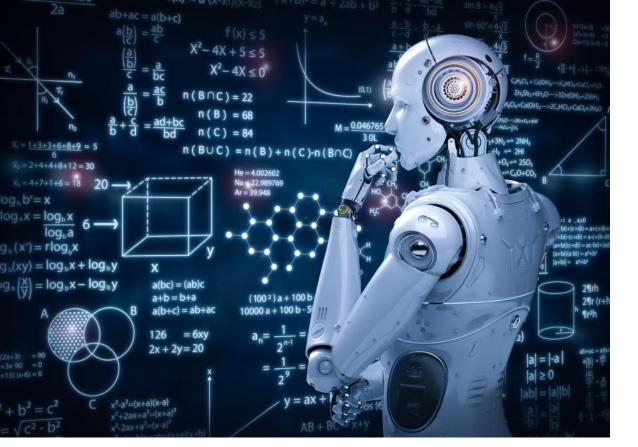
• 'To be agreed'

This will be measured by

- Reduced number of data breaches
- Feedback from users expressing increased satisfaction towards
 CRM
- Increased general use of CRM across organisation
- Reduced time to complete regulatory action

Risks

- User adoption could be a challenge because CRM is not well regarded due to poor implementation originally.
- Future work needs to be designed for the users – this can be mitigated by first understanding user needs and value demand
- Underestimating the resource and time required to complete this wide-reaching piece of work.



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Organisational efficiency & effectiveness

Consistent ways of working

Required activities

- Migration of Y Drive data to SharePoint
- Continued roll-out of Workday functionality and continuous improvement practices, focusing on improving the end user experience
- Continuation of CRM project which will help remove need for offline/ workaround processes
- Review of collaboration practices in OfS - targeting the removal of shared mailboxes and promoting collaboration through enterprise tools.

Risks

- Securing user adoption could be a challenge if changes are not actively endorsed by senior management.
- This initiative might not be seen as a priority because current processes do work - they're just not efficient.

For staff this will mean

- OfS are able to deliver better value for money from existing investments
- Better consistency and easier-todocument operating processes and procedures
- Less duplicated data-sets, leading to reduced risk of inaccuracy or data loss
- Greater transparency between different directorates
- Reduced technical complexity
 (making it easier for IT to support and maintain core systems)

Dependencies

- Dependency on effective change management to deliver and embed new working practices.
- Commitment to developing our digital culture is crucial for ensuring that consistent ways of working are upheld.

Objective Ownership

'To be agreed'

This will be measured by

- Increased use of our enterprise tools
- Reduced number of shared mailboxes and usage of them for managing internal and external services.
- MI and analytics which are available in CRM and Workday.
- Less risk and non-compliance in relation to our data.

Assumptions

- We have resources and the right skillsets to support and successfully embed these changes to the ways of working.
- There will be some processes/ practices which will stay the same because they are low frequency, or complex processes which would require a lot of effort to change without proportionate benefits.



We will continue to develop the skills and competencies of our staff, equip them with the right tools and technology, and develop our digital ways of working.

Transformation Delivery & Digital Culture

Objective 1: Build our Transformation Capabilities

There are significant improvements we want to make to how we work and how we use data and technology. To be able to deliver on these ambitions, we need to develop our capability to deliver transformational change.

This means having the right skills and capacity in Programme and Project Management, enabling us to manage and communicate change effectively, ensure benefits are identified and realised, and co-ordinate complex streams of activity. This is critical for us to be able to deliver some of the key goals of this Digital Strategy and to ensure we are delivering services which help us to regulate in the interests of students.

Objective 2: Use Agile Effectively

We will develop our Agile delivery capabilities to ensure higher quality products that are built around the needs of users. This is particularly important where we are developing new products and digital services that will underpin much of our work, such as our CRM project, our data collection processes, and our development of a single customer portal.

By Agile we refer to the way we deliver value when managing projects and developing software. It requires delivering in an iterative manner, developing strong feedback loops about what works and what doesn't, and working in a collaborative way between the delivery team and the product owner. Work must be driven by value demand and user need. We have started this with our CASP prototype team and CRM project, and will continue with the ASM project.

Objective 3: Develop our digital culture

We will develop our digital culture, both in how new work is delivered and in how digital ways of working are embraced within the organisation. This means; focusing on delivering value for users, utilising our technical platforms, using data to inform decision making, being open to change, being transparent in how we work, learning as we go, and having a healthy risk appetite. This will help us realise benefits from the work we put into developing our digital service and aligns with our organisational values, of Ambition, Openness and Learning.

To achieve this we will communicate openly, increase opportunities for cross-learning and collaboration, and support our leaders to help them lead by example. In the future we would like to embrace opportunities for innovation, but need to focus our intentions on developing our basic digital infrastructure.



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Transformation Delivery & Digital Culture

Build our Transformation Capabilities

Required activities

- Hire dedicated expertise in Programme Management (completed)
- Put in place appropriate governance structures for transformation activity (underway)
- Review project delivery model
- Improve PPM tooling
- Provide guidance for implementing change successfully

Risks

One of the benefits of the current approach is that projects are managed by staff who understand the work they do – risk of losing local knowledge and context if approach to project management is changed.

For staff this will mean

- Increased expectations about the quality of project management, with increased support, capacity and training materials to reference for those delivering projects
- Staff should see a higher success rate of digital project delivery
- Staff should feel more confident and prepared when adopting new ways of working (that relate to information, data and technology)

Dependencies

Endorsement and support from Directors on Digital Strategy and subsequent Transformation

This will be measured by

- Benefits realised from programmes
- Documentation showing programme management standards being followed

Assumptions

That OfS do not have the budget/ appetite for a dedicated change manager, and therefore delivery of change activities will need to be incorporated into expectations of project management.

Objective Ownership

'To be agreed'



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Transformation Delivery & Digital Culture

Use Agile Effectively

Required activities

- Run key projects (including CRM, Portal, ASM) using Agile delivery techniques
- Provide guidance, skill and support where projects that have been recommended to use Agile
- Provide coaching for senior leadership, so that they can understand basic principles of Agile and consider how they can enable and empower Agile delivery from a strategic perspective

Risks

Lack of understanding of what effective Agile delivery is – this can be mitigated against by knowledge sharing, upskilling and effective communications.

For staff this will mean

- A change in how some projects are delivered – some staff may have the opportunity to move into the 'Product Owner' (as CASP have already done), working closely with Scrum team.
- It will mean a shift in how technology is adopted.
- Most importantly, it should lead to cultural shift as to how work is done; building effective, trusting relationships between IT and business, putting user needs first, and working openly

Assumptions

At the start-up phase some projects are already being informed on where Agile is an appropriate delivery methodology.

This will be measured by

Subjective opinion of David Heron, David Parker, and Sarah Trewella – but measurements could include:

- Frequency of user research
- Improved quality of products (measured through defects reported)
- Frequency of releases
 In the Digital Discovery, 'we work in an Agile and collaborative way, across directorate boundaries to improve digital services quickly & effectively' was rated 1.6 out of 5. This rating should improve

Dependencies

Effective change delivery skills, and adaptation as releasing frequently changes how users adopt technology. This will require support from Prototype team, with potential

Objective Ownership

• 'To be agreed'



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Transformation Delivery & Digital Culture

Develop our digital culture

Required activities

- Digital awareness sessions, tailored for different stakeholders
- Continuation of user groups, to learn and share good practice
- Share good practice across projects (through open retros, show and tells, lightning talks)
- Share good practice across other government bodies, such as DfE etc.

Risks

There is not enough skill and capacity in non-technical delivery roles (Scrum Master, User Researcher, Design, Change Manager), leading to early projects failing

For staff this will mean

- Support staff will continue to be provided support to adopt digital solutions
- Expectation staff will be expected to adopt to digital ways of working, but will be supported to do so
- Education there will be opportunities to learn about digital ways of working
- Involvement there will be opportunities for staff to get involved with how digital services are designed

Assumptions

That, once more tangible progress has been made, projects such as CRM project can be used as Exemplars / demonstrators to show the organisation how effective digital delivery should be done

This will be measured by

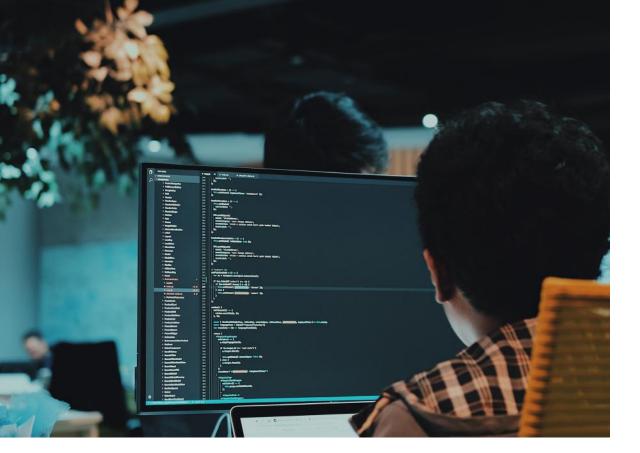
- Consulting with staff in 3 years time to see if improvements have been made to digital ways of working
- Revisiting the digital maturity model, to see if the Digital Design Authority think progress has been made

Dependencies

This depends on Directors leading by example and making digital a strategic priority for the organisation

Objective Ownership

• 'To be agreed'



We will use data intelligently and analytically to measure our performance and identify areas for improvements.

Value & Utilise Our Business Data

Objective 1: Use reporting and analytics to improve the provider experience

On our website we present information and content that we think could be of value to students. We conduct research with students to understand their perspective, and to validate our assumptions about what the purpose of our website should be.

We augment this insight with data we get from the website which shows us the content that users find most useful. We will apply the same ethos, techniques and research approaches to how we work with providers when we develop a digital portal that makes it easier for them to interact with us and submit data.

Objective 2: Robust internal information management practices

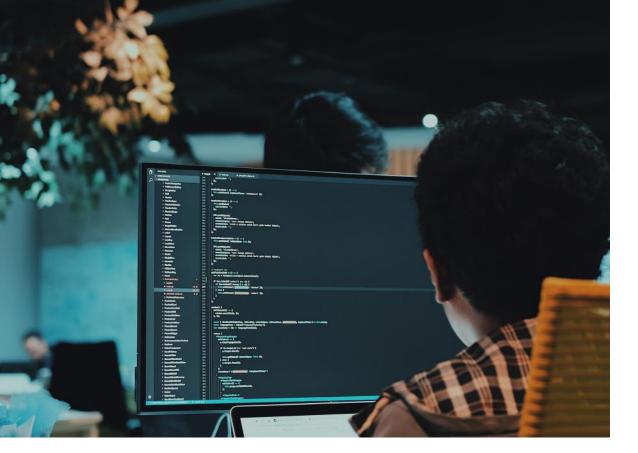
We have recently produced a Knowledge and Information Management strategy. The vision of this strategy is "for OfS to be a trusted, knowledgeable regulator that protects and maximises the value of its information in a collaborative and open culture." It addresses ownership, tools, asset registers, and legislation, to provide a holistic view of how information management practices and culture can be improved across the organisation.

Achieving this is a critical part of us realising our digital ambitions, as robust structures, processes, procedures and culture will allow us to share information with confidence and to operate in an open and efficient way.

Objective 3: Monitor process performance

Since we were established in 2018, we have put in place lots of new processes for regulating providers. Now that these processes are more mature we are making efforts to standardise and document them, and ensure we have appropriate digital solutions to help us manage our workflows and our data.

As we work towards achieving this, we will develop robust measurements and reporting mechanisms for our core processes. We will use modern analytics tools to evaluate our data and identify opportunities to remove failure demand and efficiently deliver value demand. This will include metrics such as response time, cycle time and customer satisfaction, focusing on the timeliness and quality of the service we provide. This will give use greater transparency of how we are performing as an organisation, so that we can be confident we are operating effectively and improving the student experience.



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Value & Utilise Our Business Data

Use reporting and analytics to improve the provider experience

Required activities

- Set-up Google Analytics, and heat-tracking tool
- Train Product Owner and/or Business Analyst on how to use web-tracking technology
- Regularly review data
- Triangulate findings with user research
- Conduct A/B testing, using eye tracking, with provider representatives

Risks

There is no capacity for a Scrum team or developers to work on identified improvements once the product has gone live.

For staff this will mean

This activity does not impact the majority of staff, but the promotion of this way of working is important for demonstrating to the rest of the organisation how Digital services should be delivered.

Conduct collaborative knowledge sharing sessions with External Relations, who work in a similar way on the website.

Assumptions

That the Provider Portal will be webbased.

Objective Ownership

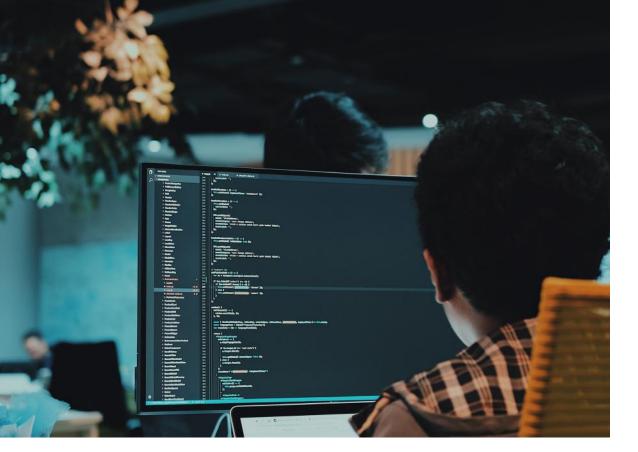
'To be agreed'

This will be measured by

- Existence of user-experience metrics that are actively monitored over time
- Number of improvements identified and worked on
- Feedback from users confirming that changes have made improvements to the provider experience

Dependencies

- The CRM needs to be in a position to start work on the Portal (i.e., the data and processes involved need to be managed effectively internally before they can be designed for providers to use)
- Funding will be required for heattracking tool



We have recently produced a Knowledge and Information Management strategy. The vision of this strategy is "for OfS to be a trusted, knowledgeable regulator that protects and maximises the value of its information in a collaborative and open culture." It addresses ownership, tools, asset registers, and legislation, to provide a holistic view of how information management practices and culture can be improved across the organisation. Achieving this is a critical part of us realising our digital ambitions, as robust structures, processes, procedures and culture will allow us to share information with confidence and to operate in an open and efficient way.

Value & Utilise Our Business Data

Robust internal information management practices

Required activities

- Proactive publication of information and datasets as outlined within the KIM Strategy and the Data Strategy
- A review of the security model and permissions structure in CRM, before it can be shared more widely across the organisation
- Monitoring and reporting of security incidents and information losses
- All records management systems, including CRM and SharePoint comply with information governance requirements
- Decommissioning now defunct systems and filling plans, including the Y Drive

Assumptions

That there will be sufficient capacity within Governance team to embed improvements across the organisation

For staff this will mean

- Completing any mandatory training on information governance
- Understanding basic best practices around information management, including understanding their individual and team's responsibilities, knowing how to report breaches
- Using records management effectively, by tagging records appropriately and understanding retention schedules
- Knowing where to go to for expert advice and support

Risks

- The Governance team do not have capacity to deliver change on top of their business as usual activities – this can be mitigated by support from Programme and Project management
- OfS are at risk of reputational damage and fine if information governance processes are not robust and adhered to

This will be measured by

The KIM strategy outlines how it will be monitored and updated on an annual basis, but recommend that it includes:

- Size of Y Drive
- Number of data breaches
- Use of records management system

Dependencies

- CASP KIM project, which is addressing use of information management within the Directorate
- Support from Programme and Change management skills to help implement change

Objective Ownership

'To be agreed'



Since we were established in 2018, we have put in place lots of new processes for regulating providers. Now that these processes are more mature we are making efforts to standardise and document them, and ensure we have appropriate digital solutions to help us manage our workflows and our data.

As we work towards achieving this, we will develop robust measurements and reporting mechanisms for our core processes. We will use modern analytics tools to evaluate our data and identify opportunities to remove failure demand and efficiently deliver value demand. This will include metrics such as response time, cycle time and customer satisfaction, focusing on the timeliness and quality of the service we provide. This will give use greater transparency of how we are performing as an organisation, so that we can be confident we are operating effectively and improving the student experience.

Value & Utilise Our Business Data

Monitor process performance

Required activities

Some areas of the organisation (such as prototype team) are already doing this or are attempting to do this already

- Identify appropriate data metrics
- Create dashboards and reports
- Assign business owners
- Create summary reports for Directors
 Group

Risks

- Capacity is not dedicated to working with business areas to undertake the required activities – this will lead to this objective not being delivered
- Insufficient capacity from data analysts / engineers to prepare data and produce reports and dashboards

For staff this will mean

Referencing reports and dashboards to monitor process health and to make decisions

Using enterprise solutions effectively, and understanding the impact of using workaround processes that are not tracked

Assumptions

- Project management capacity to deliver project
- That Power BI is included within OfS Microsoft Licensing

This will be measured by

- The existence of dashboards and reports, and evidence of their usage
- Evidenced improvement over time

Dependencies

There are areas of the organisation that rely heavily on spreadsheets for their business processes (e.g. Access & Participation) – they depend on having use of a suitable software solution to make it easier to manage and report on data

Objective Ownership

• 'To be agreed'