

## NON-VERBATIM MINUTE

### DETAILS

<b>DATE:</b>	24/05/2022
<b>TIME:</b>	2-3pm
<b>METHOD:</b>	In person, Committee Room 1, Palace of Westminster
<b>THEME:</b>	Digital skills and work: The Role of Businesses
<b>CHAIR:</b>	Lord Clement-Jones, Officer, Digital Skills APPG
<b>SPEAKERS:</b>	Jane Dickinson - Digital Skills Lead, The Open University Professor Marco Mongiello - Pro Vice Chancellor, The University of Law Business School Faye Van Flute - Policy and Partnerships Manager, Lloyds Banking Group Dr Phil Richards - Chief Innovation Officer, JISC John Park, Senior Government Affairs and Public Policy Manager for Google Cloud

### MINUTES

Lord Clement-Jones opened the meeting and explained she was chairing it in the absence of Julie Elliott MP, who was indisposed with another commitment.

#### Jane Dickinson, Digital Skills Lead, The Open University

In her remarks, Jane said that businesses need to embrace skills development for digital success, and help people on the road for a rewarding career. Her suggestion was that people need to be at the heart of the strategy.

Jane pointed to data from McKinsey and Microsoft, which has demonstrated anything between 3 and 7 times the transformation that has taken place than we would have normally seen, in the digital skills gap. Furthermore, data from a Skills and Success report from last year found that three quarters of leaders felt that they didn't have the requisite technology skills to manage their digital skills.

Jane reflected that more needs to be done to help businesses understand what technology can do in their context, and deliver practical strategies to help them to implement the technology to drive efficiencies in their market.

She referred The Open University's Open Learn platform, to which they had an unprecedented number of visitors. When surveyed over their motivation to come, 25% said that they sought to boost their employability, and 25% indicated that they wanted their employers to provide a bit more direction in their learning.

She concluded that Government could help in removing barriers to lifelong learning, and that organisations involved need to be agile and flexible when helping to develop skills. She believed that it's about changing the way that we collaborate, to understand how the huge tapestry of digital skills attract and retain employees.

### **Professor Marco Mongiello – Pro Vice Chancellor, The University of Law Business School**

Professor Mongiello opened to explain his role and perspective on the role of businesses in supporting closing the digital skills divide. He outlined that it is important that we focus on the stakeholders involved in digital skills, and provide an explanation of how they can remain relevant.

He believes that we need to enable students to understand how they can keep up-to-date with changing requirements, as there seems to be some anxiety from students thinking that their job could be replaced by computers.

Looking at the bigger landscape, he said it can be intimidating for the younger students to develop specific skills which don't allow them to change careers. Therefore, we need to look at people's skills in the digital space through a digital passport. He believes that this will give people the confidence to engage with digital skills.

### **Faye Van Flute, Policy and Partnerships Officer, Lloyds Banking Group**

Ms Van Flute opened to apologise that her colleague Jemma Waters, Head of Digital Impact and Inclusion Team, was unable to attend. She said that digital inclusion and the role of businesses is something that Lloyds Banking Group have been documenting for a while.

She pointed to recent evidence which demonstrated that people do actually want to have the opportunity to learn at work. Therefore, the motivation to upskill is there but the pathways to doing so are not.

She said that there is a need for us to think about what skills are needed for the here and now, and also in 5 years time. She said that in a large organisation such as Lloyds, they are privileged to think about workforce capability, however, this isn't the same for smaller and micro businesses. She said that knowing where to go for training is important, just as is having the right engagement with businesses.

She concluded that Lloyds Banking Group are about to launch a new report that will outline the Top 10 Digital Skills needed for the future workforce. This is about the basics, such as the ability to access your payslip online.

### **Dr Phil Richards, Chief Innovation Officer, JISC**

Dr Richards opened to provide an overview of JISC and the growing portfolio it has for digital and data services. He pointed to their recent survey called the *Digital Experience Insights*, which, putting aside statutory surveys, is the largest university survey in the UK.

He mentioned that data from the survey demonstrated that when they started collecting in 2017, 75% of student respondents said that they could see that digital skills would be important in their future career, but only 50% felt prepared for it.

He further said that JISC has built a digital capability diagnostic tool, which gives one a colourway profile in terms of the digital skills they possess. More recently, the organisation have launched a digital elevation tool, as a benchmarking tool for further educational leaders.

He concluded to outline a digital immersion tool, which has been developed, in conjunction with Siemens. He said that the tool has seen benefits in the application of the digital capability diagnostic tool, in supporting senior managers and lecturers to see how the workplace is changing, and also what tools might be available to support.

## John Parks, Senior Government Affairs and Public Policy Manager for Good Cloud

Mr Parks began by outlining Google Cloud and its role in the digital transformation space. He said that they work across the financial services sector, and that one of their main customers is the English Football Association.

He said that digital workspace, the organisation's collaboration tool, has allowed people to work together online but also help people return to work. He believed that in the skills space over the last 6 months, most conversations that have been had with businesses and the public sector have demonstrated that skills are at the top of everyone's minds.

He outlined that there currently a skills mismatch, as there are a lot of people with skills but not to support a digital transformation. He further outlined some of the challenges in the sector, including how to support underrepresented groups. He believed there is a massive opportunity to bring people further away from the labour market into these jobs.

He concluded to question how we support people to get more formal qualifications, such as leveraging apprenticeship training around digital skills. His final remark outlined that he is keen to better help organisations understand the skills need of the future, and then what policy interventions are necessary to help people get to that point.

## Questions and Answers

In the Q&A session, Baroness Uddin made several remarks on digital exclusion, and further asked how the organisations are ensuring that those who are disadvantaged are part of the process. She referred to some data she was recently given on Bangladesh, which round that in the last few years there has been an 80% increase in women joining startups.

Baroness Verma further came in to express concern around digital exclusion. She expressed some concern at including those who had been in the workforce for a period of time.

Lord Mackenzie further said that given that we need digital skills, and that the movement of government is increasingly online, we are seeing a lot of elderly people feel left behind. He believed this would leave a negative legacy.

Most of the panel expressed concern at ensuring digitalisation of services is as inclusive as possible. One such example was given, where there now exist British Sign Language variations of services, as well as a range of languages outside of English, for those whose first language is different. Several of the panel said that companies such as the ones that the panel represented, have a leadership role in increasing diversity.

Baroness Verma subsequently said that we need to remember that human contact is important, otherwise we might inadvertently reinforce exclusion. She expressed concern at the direction of society in an increasing lack of personal interactions.

The panel came back and several said that they have worked hard int their organisations to include previously excluded groups. General opinions expressed focused on increased collaboration, at a local, regional and national level.