

Government response: DIT is attracting top talent to trade team

The Department for International Trade is building a world-class team to develop our future global trading arrangements after Brexit.

A 'Comment is Free' article on the Guardian website on Friday 4 August incorrectly reported that a Canadian trade negotiator was the "first candidate" for the Department for International Trade's (DIT) Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser, claiming that he turned down the job after a pay dispute.

It also incorrectly asserts that we have no trade lawyers.

DIT was established by the Prime Minister in July 2016 to support UK businesses to break into overseas markets, promote the UK as a place to do business and trade with, and negotiate and implement our new global trading arrangements as we leave the European Union.

To do this we need to build a new major capability which was not previously required in the UK government. We have made huge progress in doing so over the past year, and shall continue to do so over coming years.

Here are the facts:

- [we appointed globally respected trade negotiator Crawford Falconer](#), to the DIT Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser role
- Crawford was the top candidate and our first choice: to suggest otherwise is completely false
- with 25 years of public service in international trade and foreign affairs as New Zealand (NZ) Deputy Secretary and Vice Minister for International Trade and Foreign Affairs, and former NZ Ambassador to the WTO, he will lead the new profession within the UK Civil Service
- since its formation in July 2016, DIT's headcount has increased to a global workforce of over 3,200 people
- DIT continues to build on our trade capability – the trade policy team has grown significantly from 45 in June 2016 to over 300 today
- the trade policy team now includes policy and country specialists, as well as expert economic analysts and lawyers
- as with many other government departments, DIT has its own team of dedicated lawyers
- currently there are over 20 lawyers working specifically on trade issues and are based at DIT – this will grow as we enter further talks and negotiations
- there is significant demand for roles at all levels within DIT – in one round of recruitment for 96 roles, the department received 1,608 applications
- our Permanent Secretary and Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser roles

received 111 and 58 applications respectively