

Minister says government must rediscover its 'revolutionary spirit' and up the pace on digital transformation

- Government Digital Service challenged to make online services more ambitious and user-friendly
- Call for government to go 'further and faster' in bringing forward services that anticipate users needs, as seen in the private sector
- Minister announces creation of Chief Digital Information Officer post to drive transformation across government

Cabinet Office Minister, Oliver Dowden, has said the government must improve the way it uses technology, to make sure people get the best possible services online.

Speaking in front of an audience of technology experts and government officials at the Sprint 19 conference in central London, the Minister said the Government Digital Service (GDS) must go further and faster to bring forward technological advances in its services.

He said:

I remember when GDS was created. I remember the excitement, the pace, the revolutionary spirit centred around making things better for users – and we must always challenge ourselves to continue breaking new ground.

I want to know that in five years' time, my successors will still be invited around the world to talk about the work you're doing now – so the challenge is to keep moving forward.

The Minister told the audience that improved online services would free up civil servants' time and save taxpayer's money, allowing investments to be made in hospitals, schools and the police.

He also set out an ambition to drive a new wave of digital transformation, in which online services are integrated and data and digital identity are used to proactively help the public – for example by prompting those claiming childcare online to look at information for parents on support in the early years.

And he revealed that the Government is already working to integrate services, data and information around key life events – like having a baby, setting up a business, and what to do when a loved one passes away – in order to support

citizens.

During his speech at the Southbank Centre, the Minister also announced that he was creating a powerful new Chief Digital Information Officer role, to lead the government's digital transformation.

Recruited into the most senior level of the Civil Service as a Permanent Secretary, they will be responsible for delivering cross government strategies and working across different departments to drive more rapid change in how they deliver digital services.