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Provision of Leadership Training for Hybrid Working

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## SPECIFICATION OF SERVICE

### 1.1. Background

Ofcom is the communications regulator in the UK. We regulate the TV and radio sectors, fixed line telecoms, mobiles, postal services, plus the airwaves over which wireless devices operate.

We make sure that people in the UK get the best from their communications services and are protected from scams and sharp practices, while ensuring that competition can thrive.

Ofcom operates under a number of Acts of Parliament, including in particular the Communications Act 2003. Ofcom must act within the powers and duties set for it by Parliament in legislation. Ofcom's principal duty under the Communications Act is to further the interests of citizens and of consumers, where appropriate by promoting competition. Meeting this duty is at the heart of everything we do.

Accountable to Parliament, we set and enforce regulatory rules for the sectors for which we have responsibility. We also have powers to enforce competition law in those sectors, alongside the Competition and Markets Authority.

Ofcom currently has approximately 1,100 colleagues across the United Kingdom (70 colleagues are Senior Leaders – SLG and we have a further 200 principals), and due to the pandemic, most colleagues are currently working virtually from their homes. This way of working has been in place since March 2020, though our offices are now open to colleagues to work from if they would like to and will ease alongside the nations' roadmaps for lifting restrictions. We are working on our 'reunite' plans which aim to warm colleagues up into socialising in virtual, hybrid or face to face way. We have embarked our journey of planning to return to work with our 'Future Ways of Working' (FWOW) programme. The initial stage of this programme is to run trials and test our proposed approach from mid - October.

In May 2020, we launched a significant programme of change to support our vision for 'One Ofcom', which aims to further improve the way we work together to deliver our purpose of 'making communications work for everyone'. This has been driven by significant growth to our existing duties as we take on regulation of Online Safety and Telecoms Security, through feedback from colleagues about how we can best work together, and from a fundamental change to how we work as a result of the pandemic.

Under our vision for 'One Ofcom', we have identified, who we want to be:

- A confident and connected organisation where everyone feels part of the whole.
- A respected thought leader in the UK and overseas, known for our world-leading research
- An independent regulator trusted for our reliable and sound judgement, working in the interests of people across the UK's nations and regions
- A fantastic place to develop your career, where everyone's skills and contributions are valued

To achieve our Ofcom vision, we have identified the following work priorities:

- Organisational structure & clear accountabilities
- Career and performance management
- Clearer strategy and planning and stronger leadership
- Diversity and inclusion
- Transforming our WOW and strengthening our location strategy

- Getting ready for Online Safety
- Understanding and skills, -tech, digital, data
- Commercial understanding and insight

Finally, earlier this year, we created our vision for Diversity and Inclusion where our leaders play a pivotal role.

Everything that *we do and deliver* within Ofcom should reflect our Ofcom vision, priorities, leadership framework and D&I strategy.

#### WE TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Diversity and inclusion is a personal purpose and mission for all of us. We all play our part, no matter who we are, what we do and where we are located.

#### WE ARE TRULY DIVERSE

We reflect the diverse society we serve, in many different ways. We need to do so, to better appreciate people's diverse needs and the challenges they face.

#### OUR LEADERS ARE ROLE MODELS

Our leaders set an example to others in how to live our values. They build diversity and inclusion into their daily decisions to make Ofcom a fantastic place to work for our colleagues, and to make communications work for everyone.



#### WE ARE CONNECTED TO COMMUNITIES

Our colleagues are deeply connected to communities and under-served groups, so we can hear consumers' voices and learn about the society we serve. We use our own advantages to boost others and create positive social outcomes. We encourage colleagues to participate actively in areas they care about.

#### WE ARE NATURALLY INCLUSIVE

Our culture means that everyone feels they belong, are valued and have a voice. We understand and celebrate many types of diversity, including combinations of identities. We know that every one of us brings diversity to Ofcom, and that we are all more than just our characteristics.

#### WE ARE FAIR BY DESIGN

We consciously design and monitor the way that we do things, the decisions we make and the systems we use so that they are fair and equitable for our colleagues and for the people we serve. We know that we sometimes need to support people differently, in order to treat them equally.

## 1.2. Overview of Requirements

As we embark on our Future Ways of Working programme and start a trial on hybrid working, we want to equip our 270-strong SLG proactively to thrive in this new setting – taking what we have learnt through the pandemic forward into the post-pandemic world. Ofcom has changed a lot through the pandemic – we have changed our structure, introduced new Groups, taken responsibility of two new important regulatory regimes, grown by 20% and had nearly 200 people join us remotely. We want our senior leaders to lead by example and help their teams embrace work after the pandemic. As a result, the trials starting in mid-October will be critical and the proposed training should help leaders maximise this opportunity to reset cultures, increase social interaction and forge bonds across teams and sites and practice their learnings in real time.

We acknowledge that we all respond to change at a different pace and our senior leaders should be open-minded and empathetic towards their team's feelings. We should also be mindful as we support and enable our colleagues to adapt to our future ways of working, of any barriers for particular groups of colleagues (such as disabled people, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, younger age groups, women and parents and/or carers), as we transition into a new model. The results from our equality impact assessments (as part of our Risk Assessments) can help SLG with this awareness. We know that the impact of the pandemic was not equal across all people, and it is likely that colleagues from different groups with protected characteristics in law, lower socio-economic background, and parents and carers were more adversely affected.

Ofcom profile is: 51% women, 49% men, 21% minority ethnic and 13% disabled. Past colleague survey data also suggests that people who grew up in upper middle class backgrounds are over-represented at Ofcom. For the purpose of this training the SLG profile is 58% male, 88% white ethnic and very few consider themselves disabled. There are also no colleagues aged under 30 years, of which the grad, apprentices and early careers population will likely sit in. Thus, it is important to help leaders to use a language that will resonate with their teams to land messages effectively.

Being an inclusive leader is more important than ever, especially because at Ofcom we take pride in how much we involve colleagues and care for the wellbeing of our colleagues.

We want to create training that will explore the challenges and potential opportunities of the trials and consequently the Future Ways of Working (FWOW) programme. We want to equip our senior leaders on three topics:

1. **Managing the transition to hybrid working** - this has a dual aim. The first aim is to acknowledge that *SLG may have different feelings* regarding going back to the office and need to respect and support each other (however it is required of them to lead by example). The second aim is for *SLG to help their teams* deal with the future ways of working. Under this topic, we want to explore the following:
  - a. Bring to life their 'worst fears'. In that way, they will be able to apply some of their learnings to any potential situations
  - b. Understand the different scenarios and the different spectrums of concerns/anxieties/response to change that team members may have as they return to the office
  - c. Learn how to have difficult conversations regarding the adaption of FWOW at a team, individual and personal level; manage expectations and listen to concerns and create buy-in.
2. **Making hybrid working fair by design** – this is about being an inclusive leader; understanding potential biases and difficulties that might arrive from the hybrid approach as well as learning practical ways to equip leaders in helping their team members that could struggle in the hybrid model:
  - a. Tackling unconscious biases e.g., favouritism of those that are in the office/same site (i.e. presenteeism)
  - b. Understanding the potential unintended consequences of hybrid working for specific group of colleagues
  - c. Reflecting on own behaviours and the impact it might have on other colleagues
  - d. Developing effective behaviours to be an inclusive leader with their teams who are diverse and at different stages of dealing with the changes associated with hybrid working.
3. **Fostering a thriving hybrid work environment** – this is about ensuring that our leaders foster an environment where teams can feel psychologically safe and flourish whilst working in a hybrid manner.
  - a. (Strategic driver) - explore how hybrid working can make a positive change for them, their teams and Ofcom; encouraging a positive mindset for all
  - b. Reflecting on own leadership style with respective teams to build accountability
    - c. Empowering teams to thrive whilst they work in a hybrid way (e.g. practical tips for boosting productivity, impact, engagement)
    - d. Leading by example to ensure team members are set up for success long-term.

Additional information to keep in mind:

- *'Managing the transition to hybrid'*. This will fall at the start of the trial, and therefore it makes sense to focus on how to manage staff with anxiety around returning to offices.
- *'The Hybrid Inclusive leader'*. We know that the pandemic and forced home working has had a really levelling effect for more junior colleagues and colleagues from the regions, so we need to focus on how we adjust our behaviours to maintain that throughout the transition to hybrid working.
- *'Making Hybrid working fair by design'*. The pandemic has exposed the inequality that exists in British society, meaning that, dependant on your socio-economic background, race, age, disability and gender, your experience of the past year and continuing co-existence with the pandemic will vary greatly
- *Our audience is our senior leadership group*. Thus, everything that we do needs to reflect their role as a leader and their responsibility to their teams.
- *We would like value-added in the design of all three modules*. As we are looking for a partner to work with us at this critical time, we would like to get your specialist input on what would add more value to each of the three modules. We want to address the three main topics but we are open on how this will be delivered and your ideas to make this land effectively with our SLG.

As a minimum, the service must deliver the following:

- We want to create an engaging, experiential, immersive experience that will open their eyes and hearts.
- We know that increasing awareness and training is just the beginning so we are looking for tools that they will be able to build on in a sustainable manner (pre, during and post modules).
- We want our senior leaders to leave each training with some practical tips that they can apply in real life to ensure that the trial period will be as successful as possible.
- The successful partner must take the lead in designing, preparing, and delivering short training sessions (not more than 90 mins) that tackle the topics posed above.
- Clarity of methods to be used in evaluating the training impact and behaviour change (as a minimum this would include pre and post-training methods). This should detail what will be evaluated, when and how the information/data will be collected and stored. Details should also be provided about how the evaluation approach will be conducted in compliance with data protection.

It would be preferable were the service also able to:

- Provide examples of similar work undertaken in the past.
- Show that their facilitators represent a range of protected characteristics.

**The proposed solution should adhere to the following overall principles**

- Be bold and creative and engaging. Increase awareness, provide practical tips & tools, build on the momentum to make it sustainable
- Advise on the best training blend approach/proposed delivery (e.g. drama, myth busting) and why?
- Ofcom is a very data driven organisation so anything that can build a case with stats would be the best way to get people's attention
- Interactive session, collaboration, exercises and reading materials
- Consider the consequences of training fatigue

- Colleagues to leave the session with a feeling of curiosity for more (e.g. motivation to be self-educated)
- Create a safe environment for people to share their thoughts without feeling judged
- Always link the take-aways with the importance of leadership, Ofcom's leadership model and their influence
- Each session should include a summary report lessons learnt/KPIs (including statistics on level of engagement, key takeaways, intended application, aspects of module that were most and least effective)