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OIA-2025-5326

30<sup>th</sup>

June 2025

[redacted]  
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Dear [redacted]

I refer to your email of 1 April 2025 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), information on New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) recruitment. I apologise for the additional time it has taken to address the various parts of your request below. This is because it took more time than expected to gather some of the requested information.

- *NZDF recruiting targets broken down by service for the last five years along with progress measured against those targets;*

The NZDF recruitment targets and attestation figures for the last five calendar years are at Enclosure 1. Note, the 2025 target figures are not the total targets for the calendar year, they are the targets as at June 2025. Attestation indicates that the candidate has not only met the pre-entry requirements, presented for training and accepted the offer of service, but has also sworn allegiance to the Crown.

- *Copies of memos or reports on recruiting effectiveness, issues with recruiting, plans to improve recruitment, produced since January 2024;*

Copies of relevant information are enclosed. Where indicated, information is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect privacy.

- *A cost breakdown by year of external spending on regeneration/recruitment, by year since (and including) 2020, including the name of any agency contracted to assist and the annual spend on advertising;*

Since the 2017/18 financial year, Clemenger BBDO have been contracted to run NZDF recruiting campaigns. These costs are publicly available in reporting to the Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Select Committee<sup>1</sup> by financial year. This part of your request is therefore declined in accordance with section 18(d) of the OIA. Note, the media partners for NZDF recruiting campaigns changed to MBM (media) and Special Group (creative content) in the 2024/25 financial year.

- *A breakdown of NZDF total spending on recruitment since (and including) 2020.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/scl/foreign-affairs-defence-and-trade/tab/business#filerformsearchtarget>

A breakdown of recruitment spend (advertising, media and publications) is publicly available in reporting to the Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Select Committee by financial year. This part of your request is therefore declined in accordance with section 18(d) of the OIA.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

**GA Motley**

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF

**Enclosures:**

1. Recruitment targets and attestation figures, 2020 – 2025
2. Defence Recruiting Situational Report, April 2024
3. Defence Recruiting Situational Report, July – September 2024
4. Defence Recruiting Situational Report, January 2025

Enclosure 1

Service	CY 2025 (as at June 2025)		CY 2024		CY 2023		CY 2022		CY 2021		CY 2020	
	Target	Attested	Target	Attested	Target	Attested	Target	Attested	Target	Attested	Target	Attested
New Zealand Army	246	210	651	433	756	474	698	460	833	646	611	458
Royal New Zealand Navy	41	41	347	200	333	158	348	197	207	164	268	230
Royal New Zealand Airforce	98	98	230	185	253	152	201	156	136	122	136	134

## DR SITREP APRIL 2024

### Building Momentum: Recruitment Success and Ongoing Improvement

This SITREP highlights Defence Recruiting's (DR) achievements over the past 12 months. These successes have been driven by the DR Action Plan and DDR Planning Direction Minute 13/2022. These accomplishments demonstrate DR's dedication to optimising the recruitment process and attracting high-calibre talent for the NZDF.

#### Past 12 Months

The start of the 2024 calendar year has enabled DR to measure significant improvements achieved over a 12-month period. These include:

- **Increasing the Prospect Pool:** Prospect account creation has increased by 3,000, widening the pool of potential candidates we can engage with.
- **Expanded Candidate Pool:** We have grown our candidate pool by 600 qualified applicants which, over time, will increase our selection pool and create competition for positions.
- **Faster Time to Hire:** Streamlining the application process has reduced time to hire by 70 days, enabling quicker candidate progression to selection and a better candidate experience.
- **Upward Trending Attestations:** We have increased the number of attestations by over 100, and attested more people YTD than at the same stage last year. Forecasting suggests DR is on track to achieve over 1,000 attestations in a single year (projected for 2025<sup>1</sup>) – exceeding previous annual records by a significant margin.
- **Projected Early Fulfilment on Demand Signal:** We have successfully reduced our projected timeframe to deliver on the demand signal (up to 1500 required attestations) by three years.
- **Award-Winning Campaign:** Based on volume of traffic generated to the Defence Careers website, the Codewords campaign has been the most successful NZDF recruitment campaign in several years. It continues to garner recognition in advertising and media circles, including silver medals in the Social Marketing and Best Strategic Thinking categories of the 2023 Pressie awards, and Silver in two Social Marketing categories at the Effie Awards.

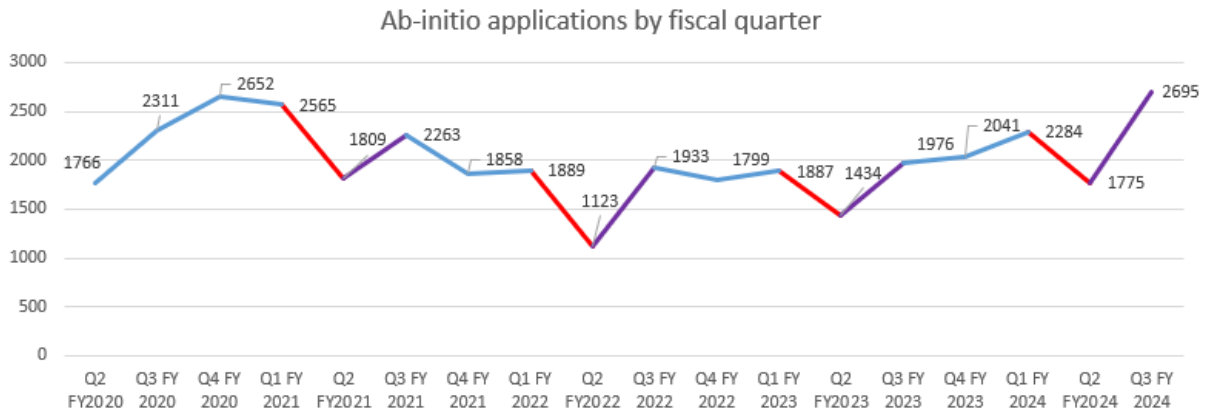
#### Past Six Months (Oct 23 – Mar 24)

**Ab Initio Applications.** As illustrated in the chart below, ab initio applications have seen a substantial increase by quarter against previous years. Q3 (Jan – Mar 24)

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to resourcing and funding

was the best Q3 performance since 2016, with a 35% increase compared to the same quarter last year. The preceding quarter (Oct – Dec 23) also saw impressive growth with 24% more applications than the previous year, and a remarkable 58% increase compared to Q2 of FY 21/22. The results of these increases will be felt in the summer intakes of CY 25.



This chart highlights Q2 ab initio applications since 2020 as a red line, and Q3 ab initio applications with a purple line.

**Optimising the Recruitment Process.** The following optimisation projects have been launched since October 23:

- **Simplified Entry Requirements:** Following consultations with the IWPWG, NZDC, and Service Representatives, revised academic Minimum Entry Requirements (MERs) for select trades were approved by CDF in December 2023. This policy update (DFO(T) 36/2023) simplifies the application process for qualified candidates and will be published in DFO 3, Chapter 6 on 03 May 24. All website, SOP, and manual updates are complete.
- **Proctored Aptitude Tests:** Implemented in December 2023, SHL aptitude test proctoring ensures test integrity for both remote and in-person assessments. This change also allows for a reduced stand-down period (three months vs. six months) and a third test for candidates after a year. This promotes fairness and equity while potentially expanding the pool of qualified applicants without compromising quality.
- **Enhancing Salesforce:** To enhance DR's Salesforce capabilities and address a backlog of critical tech projects, a temporary Salesforce Engineer was contracted in February. Their strategic impact has been immediate as they have tackled a range of tech projects and tasks, many of which had stalled for over 18 months due to a lack of in-house expertise. Tasks completed thus far include:
  - clearing over 80 items from the DR continuous improvement log,
  - undertaking essential data cleansing, and
  - reviewing and improving the architecture of our Salesforce tech stack.
- **Streamlined Provider Management:** A new Provider Management tool within the Salesforce candidate management system streamlines communication with key recruitment partners. In addition to improved communication, the tool will enhance data collection and analysis capabilities.

- **Force Fit Review:** The first comprehensive review of Force Fit in five years was conducted, ensuring compliance with health & safety regulations while effectively retaining candidates and preparing them for service fitness requirements.
- **DocuSign Integration:** Further enhancing Force Fit processes, DocuSign was introduced for vendor contract management. Building upon the provider management project, this enables efficient and secure handling of vendor agreements and will be expanded to other use cases in the near future.
- **Regional Audits:** In March 2024, the revitalised QATO role facilitated the first complete regional audits in several years. These audits identified strengths and opportunities for improvement across DR regions, which will inform future projects.
- **Marketing Automation Launched:** DR's first Salesforce Marketing Cloud journey was launched in February. This automates support emails for applicants who begin but don't complete their online applications. This tool promises further expansion into personalised marketing and communication initiatives throughout 2024.

## What's in the Works and What Does It Mean?

This section delves into the exciting projects currently underway at DR. These initiatives focus on streamlining processes, leveraging technology, and prioritising the candidate experience and are delivered under the DR Action Plan. By implementing these innovative approaches, DR is solidifying its commitment to continuous improvement and ensuring a strong talent pipeline for the Defence Force. Here's a closer look at what's in the works and what it means for DR's future success:

### Streamlining Policies and Procedures:

- **Consolidated Recruiting Policy:** The first iteration of a single, comprehensive recruiting policy document has been approved for publication. It will be published as an update to DFO3, Part 6, Chapter 1 (Military Recruitment and Selection) and will be the prime reference for all business related to NZDF Recruitment. The indicative date for publication is 03 May 24.
- **Tier Three MERs (Minimum Entry Requirements):** Education MERs for trades with NCEA L3 or higher requirements have been reviewed and will be published in DFO 3 Chapter 6 in August 24. This will see education MERS for all trades contained in DFO 3. References to education MERS in other documents will be removed to have one single source of truth for education entry requirements for each trade.
- **MER Review Framework (MERARC):** A framework is under development to ensure MERS remain relevant through regular reviews. The review process will also ensure MERS as listed in DFO 3 are up to date.



### Enhancing Quality and Consistency:

- **QATO Refresh:** The Plans Cell is revamping the QA function to establish a robust framework for continuous improvement, promoting consistency and efficiency across DR recruiting teams.

### Leveraging Technology for Efficiency:

- **Digitisation and DocuSign Integration:** DR is migrating key application documents to paperless DocuSign documents that integrate with the Salesforce candidate management system (including the provider management tool). This will improve the candidate experience, as well as processing time and document management.
- **Omnichannel Telephony System Integration:** A Salesforce-integrated omnichannel contact system is approved for implementation. Initially, it will enable the 0800 team to manage calls within Salesforce, leading to more efficient call handling with the expectation of expanding use and functionality in the near future.

### Improving Candidate Experience:

- **RealMe Integration:** This project will simplify the initial application process by allowing candidates to securely pre-populate their information using existing RealMe verification.
- **NZQA Integration:** Automatic retrieval of academic records directly from NZQA into candidate profiles will eliminate delays caused by manual submissions.
- **NHI Integration (faster processing, better experience):** Integration with the National Health Index will expedite the application process and enhance the candidate experience by automatically retrieving relevant information and reducing inefficiencies caused by self-reporting medical backgrounds.

### Targeted Talent Acquisition and Engagement:

- **Customer Data Platform (CDP) Development:** DR is building a CDP or its own Talent Marketplace using Salesforce Data Cloud. This will significantly improve DR's ability to target and engage talent with personalised and automated communication across various channels. The CDP will also integrate with key talent sources for direct engagement with high-value leads. This will result in better absorption of supply and demand fluctuations, better ability to predict performance and model do-ability, and will increase success rates.

### Investing in Medical Provider Training:

- **Medical Provider Onboarding:** DR is partnering with a training provider to develop online learning modules for medical providers conducting candidate examinations. These modules will cover medical standards, administrative processes, and other essential information. It will ensure candidates receive a

consistent medical experience regardless of location and which medical provider they use.

### **Marketing Automation for Targeted Support:**

- **Marketing Cloud Expansion:** Marketing Cloud will be used for new journeys in the coming months including:
  - **Aptitude Test Nurturing Journey:** This program will help candidates prepare for the aptitude test and re-engage those who weren't successful on their first attempt. It will increase test pass rates and re-test engagement, ultimately widening and diversifying the candidate pool.
  - **Welcome Journey for New Prospects:** This journey will guide new prospect accounts through key milestones in the application process.

Marketing automation will supplement, not replace, human interaction from the recruiting team by providing information to a vast pool of potential candidates.

### **Engaging and Retaining Candidates:**

- **Virtual Retention Project:** A range of webinars will target candidates to keep them engaged in their application journey through motivating content that also delivers information and tools to support their success at basic training and beyond.

### **Expanding Recruitment Outreach:**

- **RAP+ Project:** Building upon the existing Recruiting Ambassador Programme (RAP), RAP+ offers more in-depth learning content about recruitment, including critical entry requirements and intake-specific information. It's designed for personnel who regularly interact with DR's target demographic.

### **Conclusion**

DR's commitment to continuous improvement through these initiatives ensures a strong and sustainable recruitment pipeline for the Defence Force. By streamlining processes, leveraging technology, and prioritising the candidate experience, DR is well-positioned to attract and retain the top talent the Defence Force needs to fulfil its mission.

### **Further Information**

Contact Deputy Director Recruiting Plans, s. 9(2)(a)

Mob: s. 9(2)(a)



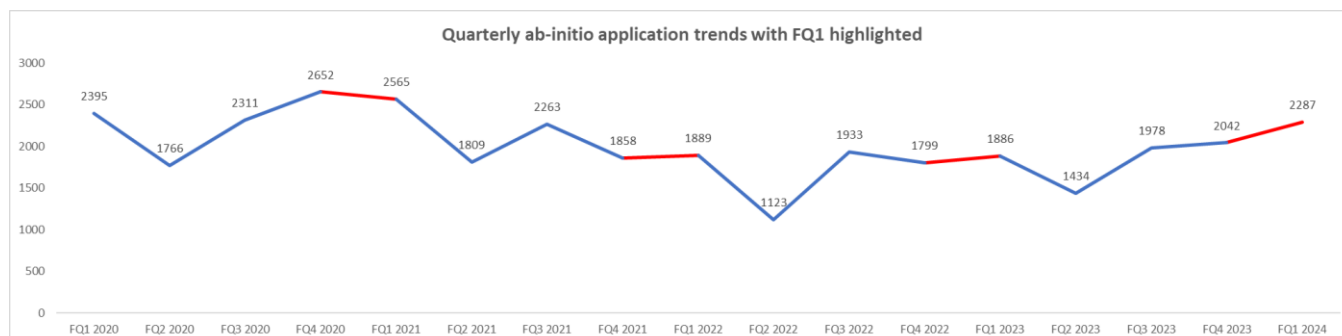
## Q1 RECRUITING OPERATIONS



*Defence Recruiting's Hui included the launch of its new vans. Here attendees stand in front of two of them. Expect to see them at an event near you.*

## DEFENCE RECRUITMENT ANALYSIS

This SITREP looks at recruiting trends as well as DR activities over the last quarter.



### Insights

This quarter saw a continued strong performance in the attraction space, with 2287 total candidates applying, a 12% increase from last quarter, and a 21% increase from FQ1 2023.

Since FQ1 2017, this has been the third strongest FQ1 in terms of applications, behind FQ1 2020, and FQ1 2021 (Note that FQ1 2021 was during the COVID pandemic which saw surges of applications).

Officer selection boards are underway for October; at this stage there are more candidates and a higher conversion rate than the July boards.

## ACTIVITIES OVER THE LAST QUARTER

DR conducted a large number of activities this quarter. Activities are driven by the DR Action Plan and the DDR Planning Direction Minute 13/2022 which remains extant. Some key activities are outlined below:

**Hui** The Hui is an annual opportunity for all three regions and HQ to korero, calibrate, celebrate success and understand the why, what and how we do our business, have a say on issues and continue our journey of continuous improvement. We also celebrated many civilian members on their five-year and 15-year commitments to the NZDF.

**Vans** DR has introduced three new VW Crafters into service. These vans are a vast improvement from the old recruiting bus. They are a recruiting multiplier acting as moving billboards, getting people and collateral to and from events, as well as having a place where candidates can do SHL tests and even medical assessments. We are only just beginning to explore the possibilities.

**Research into a broader target audience for recruitment** DR is working with IPSOS to explore what value propositions might reduce barriers to entry into the NZDF by 25-35-year-olds. The research has involved a quantitative analysis of 700 people and a qualitative analysis of six focus groups in that age group. Findings from the focus groups are now going to be used for a final piece of quantitative analysis.

#### **Defence Recruiting Action Plan (key activities on action plan in quarter)**

SHL proctoring, MER (Education) changes, SHL stand down reduction and new Navy swim and fitness MERs will all roll out on 04 Dec 23.

**SHL proctoring** Defence Psychology directed DR to introduce proctoring to ensure the integrity of the recruiting aptitude tests (SHL) which is a dependency for the MER (Education) changes and SHL stand down reduction. The addition of proctoring is a large body of work requiring changes to processes and tools, the purchase of IT (14 laptops have been purchased so far) and providing information to applicants. Originally planned to occur at the end of October.

**MER (Education) changes** These changes will roll out on 4 Dec. Draft amendments to the Careers website, DFOs, DFIs, SOPs and manuals have been completed.

**SHL stand down reduction** SHL proctoring allows the SHL stand down to be reduced from six months to three months. Additionally, there will be an allowance for a third test for certain candidates after a year stand down.

**Engage with MBIE for appropriate visa** Changes by Immigration New Zealand on 09OCT23 to the Skilled Migrant Category Visa (SMCV) requirements have forced Lateral Recruiting to cease processing applicants without either New Zealand Permanent Residency or New Zealand Citizenship. To be eligible for an SMCV, the applicant must meet one of the three following criteria: be employed in either a job requiring either six years of training to gain an NZ Occupational Registration, or a Doctoral Degree, or an income over \$173,511 p.a. As the only eligible role in the NZDF is a Medical Officer, the CPO is committed to working with MBIE to find a solution.

**QATO refresh** The reinvigoration of the QATO role has seen the first complete audit in several years. The audit findings have provided observations to allow DRHQ to have an objective view of the regions and identify strengths as well as areas for improvement. The two other regions will also be audited in due course.

**Standing Orders** The first draft of DR Standing Orders has been completed.

**Initial Health Checks** Candidates identified with a health condition following the Initial Health Check (IHC) must have additional checks when they get their medical record. It was found that 14% of candidates leave the pipeline due to IHC failures, but approximately 6% leave due to cost time and effort associated with providing medical documents; anything that reduces attrition will have a noticeable impact on attrition. Candidates go to medical practitioners and do not get complete answers and are therefore sent back to seek more information, which is both timely and costly. Templates with tailored responses have been developed to improve this process by extracting the correct information from medical practitioners.

**Projects/CI Log** DR staff have many great ideas that may improve DR. With limited resources, DR must prioritise to ensure control over work and also consider ROI and impact on the whole system. DR now has meetings to determine and track improvements – fortnightly for the CI Log (quick wins) and monthly for projects which require resources or may impact how DR does business. The result of this is DR is doing fewer projects, but is completing more.

**18-month planning cycle** DR Operations has promulgated its 18-month master schedule to the single services to help synchronise events to increase DR's ability to meet recruiting targets.

**Automation/Integration - NHI/Medical** Medical Practitioner onboarding DR has begun a project to improve the onboarding experience for Medical Practitioners to ensure they comply with NZDF and legal requirements when conducting examinations of candidates. It is also the start of the process which will ultimately lead to medical practitioners using the Salesforce portal for medical records to reduce the need for hard copies of medical documents, thereby reducing friction in the pipeline.

## DR SITREP FY Q2 2024-2025

### Continuing Momentum: Defence Recruiting Action Plan Phase 2

This update highlights Defence Recruiting's (DR) continued progress into the second quarter of Phase Two of the Action Plan. Following the foundation set in Phase One, Phase Two focuses on executing critical initiatives designed to improve volume, velocity, and the candidate experience. This will ensure we meet our mission of recruiting the right people at the right time and in the right trade to enable the NZDF to sustain its workforce and meet its outputs.

**Key Achievements This Quarter:** The following has been achieved since 1 Sep 24:

#### Technology Integrations

- **DocuSign Integration:** The DocuSign integration trial has been deemed a success, significantly reducing the average time to receive a signed Offer of Service from 38 days to just 47 minutes. We are continuing to expand the use of DocuSign, with plans to include medical documentation. DocuSign has been approved for use for Offers of Service across all intakes, with the medical documents by the end of the first calendar quarter.
- **Prospect to Apply:** Our 'Prospect to Apply' journey automates communication with candidates who abandon the online application process at prospect stage, encouraging them to complete it. Once applied via this journey, their response to a single survey question alongside their Service or trade preference is analysed by the 'system' and automatically places them in one of six market segments, or 'personas.' This allows DR to tailor automated messaging and suggest relevant trades, align with current trade targets and service priorities whilst optimising the people interface. The introduction of this intervention has seen an immediate rise in prospect to candidate conversion to a historic high (currently 42% and rising).
- **Civilian Application Portal:** The civilian application portal project presented DR technical staff with an opportunity to test recently released features on the Salesforce platform. The project focused on rebuilding the civilian vacancies page on the Defence Careers website, simplifying the civilian application process and simplifying the administration of civilian applications for Defence Force staff. This project is 80% complete and will be ready for full testing by civilian recruiting staff by the end of March 2025.

#### Advertising and Media Services

- **Website Refresh:** The Defence Careers website has undergone a significant refresh, featuring an updated look and a more user-friendly layout. The website now includes

Te Reo headings, an improved search tool and seamless integration of campaign and DPA content. The improvements enhance the user experience while progressing towards a culturally inclusive platform.

- **Marketing Campaign:** Our new marketing campaign, developed with our creative advertising and media services partners, is set to go live from March. Aligning with the Run Deep theme, the campaign focuses on the camaraderie and support provided by the NZDF whilst subtly displaying technology, capability and NZDF outputs.

### Information Security Management Guidelines

To ensure best practices and compliance with legislation such as the Privacy Act 2020, DR has formalized our Information Security Management System (ISMS) standards. While many of these practices were already in place, formal documentation and a compliance cycle now ensure these standards are maintained and regularly reviewed.

### RAP+

The RAP+ initiative aims to better equip DRYS team members to support their participants in the pursuit of a NZDF career. The first stage involves training targeted to the specific needs of each DRYS unit, helping them support trainees motivated to join. To date, training has been provided to NZCF and YDU. Future iterations of the program will include automated engagement journeys for those motivated to join but not yet eligible alongside those who are eligible and motivated with an intake some time off.

### Looking Ahead

DR will maintain the momentum of recent improvements into the next quarter. Key projects anticipated for launch include:

- **Success Profiling:** This tool identifies each applicant's unique needs, allowing for personalised engagement and processing. This involves a blend of automated online messaging and direct contact from our Candidate Engagement Facilitators and Recruiters. By automating routine communication tasks, the tool frees our human resources to focus on higher-need activities and candidates.
- **Chat bot:** To enhance the functionality of our website, DR will implement a chatbot designed to assist with user inquiries. This application makes use of existing technology available within our platform and will be integrated with the business knowledge available on the site. This will enable it to provide immediate, accurate responses to any questions related to recruitment within the NZDF.
- **RAP Rebuild:** The Recruiter Ambassador Program (RAP) is currently outdated and misaligned with our computer systems, resulting in a heavy administrative burden. We are in the process of refreshing the RAP to work within Salesforce, including drafting new SOPs to streamline the process for all involved.

Longer term, we continue to actively explore the integration of RealMe for seamless identity verification and Health NZ for efficient health information sharing. Additionally, a Military Portal refresh will occur to enhance the application experience for users, alongside a review of our candidate management process.

The development of the DR Talent Marketplace <sup>1</sup>continues to progress. Collaborative relationships based on enhanced data exchange between entities (established as a proof of concept at this present stage) will allow us to test our ability to target and direct source candidates based on their skills, interests, and qualifications.

Additionally, we are focussing on enhancing the accuracy of our supply forecasting.

### **Further Information**

Contact Deputy Director Recruiting, Plans, s. 9(2)(a)

Mob: s. 9(2)(a)

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<sup>1</sup> The DR Talent Marketplace refers to the future operating model for DR encompassing all aspects of supply, sourcing and engagement. It includes candidate engagement, predictive analysis and modelling and, success mapping and assurance.