



INTRODUCING..... INNOVATION SQUADS

1. What are Innovation Squads?
2. Using AI & Chatbots



1. What are Innovation Squads?



Innovation Squads:

- Solve problems and deliver on opportunities **at pace.**
- Six ambitious people, six weeks.
- Good communicators and collaborators.
- Squads are a mix of grades, work in a non-hierarchical, autonomous way.
- Senior Civil Servants support Squads by unblocking them, not by approving their decisions.
- Learning and development opportunities and senior leadership visibility for squad members.
- Squads aim to deliver tangible results - encouraging **more modern, less bureaucratic ways of working.**



The mission:

Prove to the department that we can reduce bureaucracy, increase efficiency and **be positively disruptive** by delivering a **high impact process improvement in 6 weeks**



Overall the pilot exceeded expectations in terms of the end results:

- ✓ We built products which could deliver tangible efficiency gains if rolled out.
- ✓ We experimented with innovative technology.
- ✓ We upskilled and inspired non-digital high performers to roll out process improvements in their own directorates.
- ✓ We produced actual career development opportunities.



2.Using AI & chatbots



Manually Scripted Chatbots:

The screenshot displays the Microsoft Power Virtual Agents (PVA) interface for a chatbot named "Contoso customer bot". The interface is split into two main sections: a "Test bot" chat window on the left and a "Topics" script editor on the right.

Test bot window:

- Header: "Test bot" with a close button and a "Track between topics" toggle.
- Chat history:
 - Bot: "Hello, I'm Contoso customer bot. How can I help?"
 - User: "I want to apply for a credit card"
 - Bot: "I'm happy to hear you want to apply for a new credit card."
 - User: "What is your full name?"
- Input field: "Enter your message"

Script editor window (Topic: "Apply for credit card"):

- Starts with a topic name "apply for a credit card".
- Step 1: "Message" (Text) with the response: "I'm happy to hear you want to apply for a new credit card."
- Step 2: "Question" (Text) with the prompt: "What is your full name?".
- Step 3: "Identify" (Text) with the variable: "Person name".
- Step 4: "Save response as" (Text) with the variable: "{x} global.fullName text".

Manually scripted chatbot "HR Harry"

- Answers common HR Questions.
- Manually scripted – requires responses to be written out.
- Built using MS Power Virtual Agents (PVA), accessible via Teams.
- Total control over the content.
- No code solution (easier to set up and maintain).
- Some AI capability we haven't explored yet.



Generative AI Chatbot:

The screenshot shows a chat interface with a dark header containing "GPT + Enterprise data | Sample", "Chat Ask a question", and "Azure OpenAI + Cognitive Search". Below the header are "Clear chat" and "Developer settings" options. The chat history shows two messages:

User: "Hi, how much maternity pay can I get at DLUHC?"

AI: "If you have at least one year of continuous service in the Civil Service, you are entitled to 26 weeks of ordinary maternity leave on full pay. If you decide to take additional maternity leave, you will also be entitled to receive Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) for the first 13 weeks of additional maternity leave. The remaining 13 weeks of additional maternity leave will be unpaid. If you have been continuously employed in the Civil Service for at least 26 weeks at the 15th week before the week the baby is due, you will be entitled to 39 weeks of maternity leave with SMP. The rate of SMP will be 90% of your average weekly earnings for the first six weeks. For the remaining 33 weeks (20 weeks ordinary maternity leave and first 13 weeks of your additional maternity leave), you will be paid at the lower statutory level or 90% of the average weekly earnings, if this is less than the lower statutory level. [1](#) [2](#)

Citations: [1. 2.Working_in_the_Department-21.pdf](#) [2. 2.Working_in_the_Department-22.pdf](#)

User: "What if my baby arrives early?"

AI: "If your baby arrives early, your maternity leave and pay will start automatically the day after the birth. You

Input field: "Type a new question (e.g. does my plan cover annual eye exams?)"

AI Chatbot "MS Azure Cognitive Search"

- Learns from the data its fed, able to generate human like responses automatically.
- Built as a proof of concept, **not production ready**.
- Ingested data from HR handbook PDF.
- Built using Azure cognitive search + ChatGPT.
- AI is a high risk space re: data privacy, bias etc.
- Requires technical capability to build and maintain.
- Cannot control responses, but can optimize them.



How far can we push the possibilities?

- Enable users to easily access HR information and action HR tasks
- Integrate this with existing systems
- Review internal methods and systems to improve information retrieval.
- Have an accessible channel to a single source of truth.
- Reduce the number of enquiries HR staff deal with.
- Make it more efficient and effective for DLUHC staff to self serve their own queries.
- Can we have a digital tool that can actions tasks on our behalf (e.g. book annual leave and review pay/benefits).



Find out more:

- [DLUHC Digital external blog](#)
- Innovationsquads@levellingup.gov.uk
- Please get in touch if you have any questions.



